

FROM THE DIRECTOR



This issue of *Stewardship Spotlight* features our responsibility as it relates to the children God has entrusted to us.

The decision on guardians for minor children is often the primary reason for parents to complete their first Will. They may not yet have many assets, but determining who would raise our children is very important.

Nearly 30 years ago, this concern over the guardianship of our (then) two minor children motivated us to call Barnabas Foundation. Since that time on several more occasions, as our family and financial circumstances have changed, we have met with Barnabas Foundation Estate Planning attorneys.

Whether you need to establish your first Will or you need to update your Estate Plan now that your children are grown, the caring Christian professionals here at Barnabas Foundation are always ready to assist you.

And, as I transition the leadership of Barnabas Foundation to Jim Bakke, I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to share in the important ministry of this great organization.

Serving the Lord with you,

Henry Doorn, Jr. – Executive Director

Stewardship of Your Minor Children

What we do with everything God has entrusted to us when we go to heaven can have significant eternal impact. For those of us with minor children, they are, without a doubt, the greatest gift God has given us stewardship over. However, we often fail to take the time to create a legal Last Will and Testament to spiritually and financially protect them, should the Lord call us home.

It's very natural to consider family members, first, when choosing guardians for your children. If you have family members who love the Lord, this is definitely a great option and a blessing. If not, keep in mind that Christ's blood is more important than family blood. This is a very personal decision that should be committed to prayer. Proverbs 22:6 tells us, *"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."* Your Will should transfer stewardship of your children to people who love Jesus and who will raise them in God's Word and point them to the cross. Every other provision in your Will pales in comparison to this one.

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NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR APPOINTMENT

We are pleased to welcome James Bakke, J.D. as the new Executive Director of Barnabas Foundation.

Jim comes to us from World Vision where he has served as National Director of Planned Giving since 2007. Prior to joining World Vision, Jim served Barnabas Foundation as an Estate Planner and then as Director of Planned Giving Services



for nearly a decade. Jim began working with Henry Doorn, the current Executive Director, to begin the transition process in December.

Henry comments, "I am thankful that God has led Jim to accept this position of leadership for Barnabas Foundation. His professional experience combined with his passion for our ministry and the current strength of our service to member organizations, bodes well for the future."

Our staff and board are blessed to welcome Jim back to Barnabas Foundation and look forward to God's blessings as Jim takes on leadership of the organization.

DOES YOUR WILL PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS?

Relationships? Sibling relational issues have been around since Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-16). Joseph and his brothers weren't always buddies either (Genesis chapter 37). Protecting your children's relationships is a very important aspect of writing a good plan of stewardship for your Last Will and Testament. I'm sure you've heard some awful stories. Even the best of families stop speaking to each other over the division of property when their parents pass away.

The good news is there are some easy things you can do to help ensure your children are still hugging each other, long after you're in heaven, through prayerful and thoughtful planning. One way to do this is by creating a Letter of Instructions (also called a Personal Property Memorandum).

A Letter of Instructions is typically attached to your Last Will and Testament. It spells out who you want to receive certain items of personal property. The reality is that children will fight over a quilt that grandma made before they'll fight over \$50,000 in cash. When push comes to shove, things of sentimental value are truly important to people.

So as you develop the right plan of stewardship for your estate, sometimes the Letter of Instructions is actually more important than the Will. By expressing, in writing, which child gets which item of sentimental value, you are protecting your children's relationships and this is far more important than any money you have.

As you write your Letter of Instructions, concentrate on things that couldn't be replaced in a fire. Also, take time to ask your children if you have anything that is important to them that they would want to receive when you're gone. Chances are you will be surprised by their answers. If any of your children desperately want the same personal item, you'll be able to solve this problem, during your lifetime, before it becomes an issue when you're gone.

GREAT NEWS!

The IRA Charitable Rollover gifting opportunity has now been made permanent. Legislation was finally passed in December, allowing those who are 70 ½ or older to contribute up to \$100,000 a year tax-free, directly to charity from traditional and Roth IRA accounts.

In December, President Obama signed into law the "Protecting Americans From Tax Hikes Act of 2015." To learn more, please visit our website at www.barnabasfoundation.com/individuals.

Minor Children *Continued from front*

There are other important aspects of choosing the right guardians for your minor children. Many young couples have a great love and respect for their parents, and sometimes consider naming them as guardians of their minor children in their Will. In this situation, it's critical to consider the age of your parents. If your parents are too elderly, you wouldn't want your children to lose a second set of parents before graduating from college.

Another issue to consider is whether or not it would be in your children's best interest to remain in your community. The impact of being sent to live with guardians in another state or community could further devastate your children. Imagine if your children, in addition to losing their parents, were to lose their home, their church, their school and all of their friends in the same day.

Lastly, some parents name an adult child, in their twenties, to raise their minor children. This is typically not a good scenario. It's very difficult for the younger children to respect the authority of their older sibling as their parent and it can ruin relationships between the children. Naming your eldest child as guardian of the younger children should be a last resort.



18601 North Creek Drive, Suite B
Tinley Park, IL 60477-6238
www.barnabasfoundation.com
1.888.448.3040