

**There are a number of reasons why you may need to update your estate plan:**

**Family.** Has your family situation changed? Perhaps you had small children when you first designed your estate plan. Now, they are grown and self-sufficient without a bequest from you. A death in your family may have occurred, changing your situation and requiring a change to your estate plan.

**Finances.** Has your financial situation changed (or is it about to change)? Perhaps you are contemplating selling a business or real estate, or planning your retirement. It could be that through the Lord's blessing the size of your estate has increased so that estate and gift tax consequences are now a concern.

**Ministry.** Do you want to have a greater and more lasting impact for God's kingdom? You can, by adjusting your plan to more fully include Christian ministries. Perhaps your estate plan omitted gifts to Christian causes altogether. This has resulted in an estate plan that does not fit your values and is not the legacy you wish to leave as your last statement concerning what you believe is most important.

**In addition, there are many common misconceptions about estate planning, which include:**

**The purpose of estate planning is to avoid taxes.** God calls us to be good stewards of everything He has entrusted to us. We are obligated to handle our finances in a way that honors God and His kingdom. A thoughtfully prepared estate plan will not only embody your final goals and wishes, but will also honor God in the allocation and transfer of the assets He gave you to manage.

**Estate Plans are only for the wealthy.** Estate planning is for everyone - it is simply the process of deciding where your assets should be distributed after your death. Most people underestimate the value of their estate. When assessing your net worth, don't forget to include the face value of insurance policies, retirement benefits, and the value of your home. If you do not prepare an estate plan, the state has one prepared for you and will determine the guardianship of minor children and the recipients of your assets.

**If I have a Will, my assets will avoid probate.** A Will does not provide a "probate avoidance" guarantee. The better solution for making certain your assets will not be subject to probate court intervention is to place them in a Living Trust. A "Living Trust" is simply a Trust you create while you're alive, rather than one that is created at your death under the terms of your Will.

**I can simply name my children as beneficiaries of my life insurance and retirement benefits (instead of preparing a Will or Trust).** Sometimes people will try to avoid the time and costs associated with preparing an Estate Plan by simply naming their children as beneficiaries of their life insurance and retirement benefits. The unintended consequence of this is that children may receive cash distributions from these benefits as early as age 18. Additionally, income tax may be avoided by funding the kingdom causes close to your heart with retirement benefits.

This is general information and is not intended to be tax or legal advice. Please consult your own advisors.

- I am interested in a confidential, no-obligation, estate plan review.
- I am interested in help developing or updating my Will or Estate Plan.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Return in envelope or call our friends at Barnabas Foundation toll-free (888) 448-3040**

*Christian Reformed Home Missions is a member of Barnabas Foundation. The Foundation's goal is to help caring Christians make tax-wise decisions and strengthen support for ministries close to their hearts.*

