

Something Really Worth While

Your guide to making and changing your Will





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“ I wanted to see what was worth while for men to do under heaven during the few days of their lives. ”

Ecclesiastes 2:3b

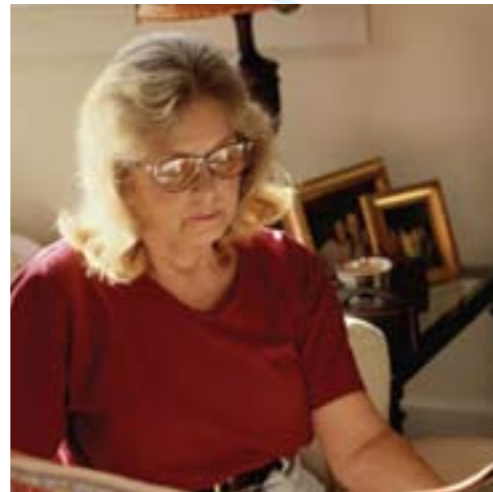


Reasons to make a Will

- To be a good steward and take the opportunity your Will provides to express your Christian beliefs and values in a practical way.
- To choose people you know and trust to be your Executors and carry out your wishes for your estate. Without a Will, the probate court will appoint an administrator to do the work for you.
- To minimise your tax liability and maximise the amount which goes to your family and your favourite charities.
- To have peace of mind knowing that close family will not have to sort out complicated and time-consuming legal wrangles which might arise if you have not made a Will. The main beneficiaries in such a situation could be the lawyers.

Failing to make a Will may be the greatest financial risk you ever take, and those closest to you could end up paying for it.

If you are 20 years old or more, you should bear this important matter in mind. It is a mistake to think, as some people do, that you are 'too young' to make a Will. Remember the words of Jesus to the rich man who was planning a long retirement, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you.' Luke 12:20



The provisions of the intestacy law which apply if you die 'intestate,' *ie*, without a Will, could be bad news for your surviving relatives, as the estate will be divided according to the intestacy rules. These are rules which will dictate how your possessions can be distributed, but it may not be the way you would wish. For example:

- Your spouse may not be provided for as you would have wished. It will depend on the size of your estate. If your estate is over a certain limit, your spouse will receive only a portion of it, and difficulties can arise because a trust may have to be set up;
- There would certainly be no provision for your church, your friends or your favourite charities;
- If you are single and do not make a Will, in some cases, everything you own will go to the government. So it is vital, if you have no immediate or extended family, that you set down your wishes in a Will.

“Reader, if you have not done it already, make your Will before you sleep.”

John Wesley



“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

1 Timothy 5:8



+ Consulting a solicitor

A Will is one of the most important documents you may ever produce, so it makes sense to seek professional advice in writing it. The danger with home-made, DIY Wills is that you can end up with a Will which is either unclear or legally invalid, and it may well cost a lot of money to attempt to put it right. It may be impossible in some cases.

For example, Warren Burger, former Chief Justice of the USA Supreme Court, left behind a self-written Will. He gave his entire estate to his two children. But he failed to give any power to his executors and made no provisions for estate taxes. These apparent oversights cost the estate thousands of dollars.

It is advisable to seek expert help especially in the following circumstances:

- if several people could make a claim on your estate when you die because they are dependent on you financially;
- if your permanent home is not in the UK, or you are not a British citizen;
- if you live here but you own property overseas;
- if you own all or part of a business.

Is it very expensive to use a solicitor?

Making a Will is much simpler and cheaper than most people think.

Charges vary for drawing up a Will and also depend on the complexity of the Will. For example, the cost of writing a Will for a single person is less than for a married couple. You can find out the cost before deciding which solicitor to use.



It will save the solicitor's time and your money if you give some thought to what you want to see in your Will before your visit. See page 11 for some ideas.

Where can I find professional help?

- If you have used a solicitor for buying or selling a house in the past, you could consult them.
- Friends may be able to recommend someone to you.
- MAF will be able to help you find the name of a Christian solicitor in your area or put you in touch with The Lawyers Christian Fellowship.



“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.”

Proverbs 31:8

✦ Contents of my Will

Providing for your immediate family comes first, as the Scriptures direct us.

After that you may want to include friends, your church or a favourite charity that you have supported during your lifetime. It is important that you get the name, address and registered charity number correct.

Three different ways in which you can leave money or gifts to family, friends or charities are outlined below:

- A **Pecuniary** bequest is a gift of a fixed amount of money. Always bear in mind that inflation gradually erodes the value of this type of gift, which means your Will may need regular updating.
- A **Specific** bequest is a gift of a particular asset or item of property and must be clearly identified in your Will.
- A **Residuary** bequest is a gift which comes from the residue of your estate once all the other bequests have been made, and any debts, liabilities and taxes have been paid. A bequest of this kind to MAF would make a real difference in changing many lives for the better.



“God has given us two hands – one to receive and the other to give to others.”

Billy Graham



Think of making arrangements which will minimise the burden of Inheritance Tax on your estate:

- **By making a charitable bequest.** Leaving a legacy to a Christian charity is not only an act of thanksgiving to God but can also bring tax advantages. Inheritance Tax is not payable on any gift passing to a charity. As the gift is deducted before tax is calculated, this means that a charitable gift will reduce the tax burden on the whole estate.
- **By setting up a Trust** to leave your estate to others whilst at the same time helping to reduce the amount of Inheritance Tax due.





Drawing up a Codicil

A Codicil is for people who have already made a Will, but who wish to make minor changes to it without having to rewrite the whole Will. This can be done very simply through your solicitor. A Codicil must confirm all the unchanged contents of your Will, and it must be signed and witnessed in the same way – otherwise it is completely invalid.



**You will find a Codicil form at the back of this brochure.*

✦ Changing my Will

You can change your Will at any time. This could be:

- at the birth of a child or grandchild;
- the death of a beneficiary;
- should you marry, divorce or separate;
- when you want to add another person or organisation to your Will;
- or simply when you change your mind about something.

The simplest way to change your Will is by making a Codicil*. Do not attempt to alter or change your Will by writing on it after it has been signed and witnessed. It could waste a lot of time and money to attempt to prove that the alterations were genuine and that the Will has not been tampered with.

A Codicil must be signed, witnessed and dated in the same way as a full Will. It is usually kept with (not attached to) the Will. There is no limit on how many Codicils can be added to a Will. However, if a number of minor Codicils accumulate over time, to avoid confusion and upset later on, it might be better to make a new Will.

If you want to make substantial changes to an existing Will, it is probably best to consult a legal professional about a new Will. Remember that a Will is automatically cancelled by a marriage (including remarriage after divorce).



“**Freely you have received, freely give.**”

Matthew 10:8b



† Some common questions

■ Where do I keep my Will?

Once a Will has been made, it should be kept in a safe place along with any Codicils which have been added. There are a number of places where you can keep your Will – at home, with a solicitor or at a bank. Remember to tell your executors or someone close to you where to find it.

■ Who pays for my funeral?

All expenses, funeral and legal, are met from your estate.

■ What about instructions for my funeral service?

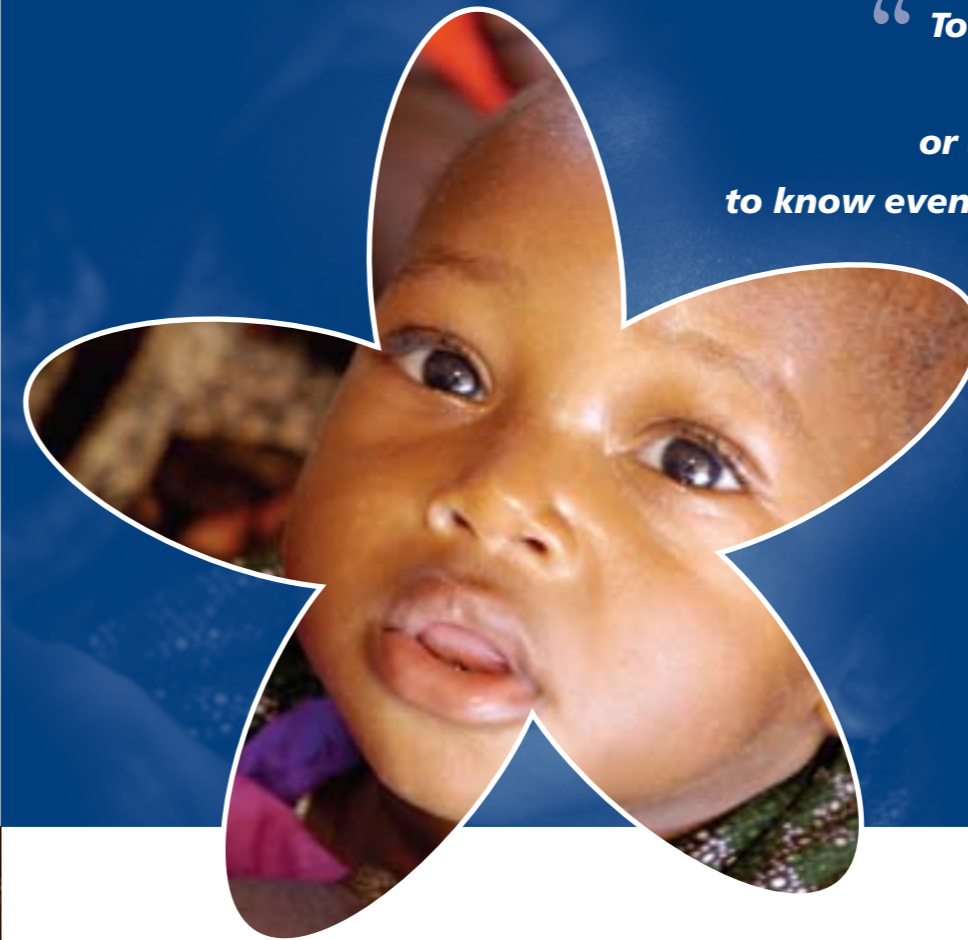
It is very sensible to think these things through and write down any special wishes you might have, perhaps about the readings or hymns you wish to use, or whether you wish a charity to benefit from donations in lieu of flowers. Remember to tell your executors or close family where to find your instructions, so they can make sure things are done as you wish.

■ How do I ensure that my wishes for my body are carried out?

It is quite common to use a Will as the place to express such wishes. But there may be some delay between your death and your Will being read, so it is important that close relatives and your executors know of these wishes.

■ Who will look after my pets when I die?

It is the legal responsibility of your executors to look after your pets until the formalities of 'proving the Will' are completed. However, to help them, it would be best to consider leaving them to someone as a specific bequest.



*“ To leave the world a bit better,
whether by a healthy child,
or a redeemed social condition;
to know even one life has breathed easier
because you have existed,
this is to have succeeded. ”*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson
American poet and author*

Before you go to your solicitor, it will save time and money if you have already thought about the answers to the following questions:

■ Who are my executors?

Ask one or two people if they would be willing to take the responsibility for implementing your Will. The people most commonly appointed are family and/or friends, banks or solicitors. You should always approach anyone you are thinking of appointing as an executor to see if they agree to take on the responsibility, since the job involves a good deal of work and responsibility.

■ Who do I want to be the guardians of my children?

They may or may not be your executors.

■ What do I own, what do I owe and what am I owed?

Please use the form in the pocket at the back of this brochure to help you think about this.

■ Who do I want to benefit in my Will?

■ What about arranging for powers of Attorney?

■ What other questions do I need to ask?



✦ Sorting out the legal jargon

Administrator	The person appointed by the court to deal with an estate where there is no executor named in a Will. The process of sorting out an estate is called 'administration'.
Beneficiary	Any person or organisation who benefits from a Will by receiving gifts of cash or property.
Bequest	A gift included in a Will (also known as a legacy).
Codicil	An addition to a Will which makes some alterations but leaves the rest of it intact; eg. it may increase a cash legacy, add beneficiaries, or change an executor or guardian. Codicils are best used where there are straightforward alterations to the terms of the Will. In this way, you can make a bequest to charity quite easily without having to rewrite your whole Will. We have included a form which gives you a sample of the kind of wording suitable for a Codicil.
Estate	The total of everything owned by a person at their death.
Executor	The person or persons appointed by the testator to see that the estate is distributed according to his/her wishes. Being an executor does not prevent someone from benefiting from the Will, and may actually be an incentive for them to complete the administration promptly!
Grant of Probate	The official document from the High Court establishing that a Will is valid, or 'proving the Will'. This provides the executors with the written legal authority to deal with the property of the estate.
Inheritance Tax	This may be payable on the total value of the estate at death, but certain exemptions and reliefs are available. No tax is payable on property passing to a person's spouse or a charity. But tax may also be payable on the value of large gifts you have made in your recent lifetime. This tax was formerly known as 'estate duty' and 'death duty'.
Intestate	An 'intestate person' is someone who dies without making a Will, or leaves an invalid Will. Their estate is distributed in accordance with 'intestacy rules' laid down in law.
Legacy	A gift included in a Will (also known as a bequest).

Legator/Testator	The person making the Will.
Pecuniary legacy	A gift of a specific sum of money given in a Will.
Residuary legacy	A gift from what is left in the residue of the estate after expenses, debts, all pecuniary legacies and specific bequests have been made.
Residue	What is left in an estate after all the specific bequests and pecuniary legacies, expenses, taxes and liabilities have been paid.
Specific bequest	The gift of a particular asset or item of property, but not money.
Testament	Another name for a Will.
Witness	The person who watches you sign your Will and then signs it in your presence. In English law you must have two witnesses to your Will for it to be valid. These persons should not be beneficiaries of your Will or the spouse of a beneficiary.

Scottish law is different. If you live in Scotland, we have included an information sheet at the back of this brochure to help you.





✝ What is MAF?

Mission Aviation Fellowship is a Christian organisation whose mission is to fly light aircraft in developing countries so that people in remote areas can receive the help they need.

MAF helps the Church to reach the furthest corners of the earth with the blessings of the Gospel of Christ. In this way, MAF demonstrates faith in action for the neediest of all by bringing health and healing, relief from hunger, freedom from ignorance, and the Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every three minutes an MAF plane is taking off or landing on a mission of mercy:

- Enabling the work of aid and development agencies, missions, national churches and other local groups.
- Carrying the dedicated teams bringing healing and relief for body, mind and spirit.
- Flying across deserts, jungles, mountains and swamps.
- Giving hope to far-flung communities which might take days or weeks to reach by land, where roads may be non-existent or impassable for half the year.



“ We are concerned for poor and needy people and support you because you take God’s love to them. ”

MAF Supporter

By leaving a legacy to Mission Aviation Fellowship, you will be helping others to find eternal security, as well as sharing in bringing long-term practical help to the poorest people in our world, by ensuring that aircraft are ready to respond to emergency situations.

Donations in Wills are vital to the future of MAF – without money left to us in the past, we wouldn’t be able to carry out all the work we do today. MAF depends on gifts in Wills for a vital 20% of its income.

“ Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. ”

James 1:27



+ An invitation

We invite you to do *Something Really Worth While* and leave a legacy to Mission Aviation Fellowship.

Your legacy will help to secure MAF's long-term future, enabling it to go on reaching vulnerable people by *flying for life* all year round to the ends of the earth.

It doesn't matter if you can't afford to leave a large amount – it is still important to us, because we understand that it represents your commitment and dedication to the spread of God's love in the world.

If you decide to leave a legacy to Mission Aviation Fellowship, it is completely up to you whether or not you tell us. But we would appreciate it if you did so we can plan ahead and use our resources more efficiently.

You can use the Confidential Form included in this pack. Of course, this is simply a statement of what you intend at present. It does not bind you in any way, and will be treated with the strictest confidence.

Thank you for considering this invitation to make a difference through MAF.





*May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace
as we put our trust in Him, so that we may
overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit:
and may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son
and Holy Spirit be upon us and remain with us always.
Amen*



Mission Aviation Fellowship

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