

“We Don’t Inherit the Land from Our Parents, We Borrow it from Our Children”

by Tom Wilkinson, Vice President, Development

So goes the Native American proverb. I first read that saying in a cooking magazine, of all places. Several years ago, *Saveur* magazine did a feature story on a Native American farm family in New Mexico. The farm had been in the family for many generations, and did a thriving business in organically grown produce native to the desert southwest. The patriarch of the family quoted the old saying, and he and his family lived by it.

Change just a couple of words and here’s what we get, “We don’t inherit *our church* from our parents, we borrow it from our children.” When we adopt that attitude how does it change us? As stewards of the church today, how will we prepare it for our children? What legacy will we leave to those who come after us?

The answers to those questions should shape our giving as well as our living. How can we plan our giving today to ensure there will be a church in our children’s future? One way is to give generously to support our church’s program today. A strong financial base in the present sets the stage for future ministry. Another way is to make a planned or deferred gift that will nourish mission and ministry after our lives are over. A bequest from a will or living trust is the simplest way to leave a legacy for the future. Other options could include naming your church the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement plan. Still other ways include Charitable Gift Annuities and Charitable Trusts that combine a legacy gift to the church with income today.

What we do with our estate says a lot about how we lived. Are we committed to our family and the future of our children and grandchildren? Are we committed to the future of our church and other worthwhile causes?

Please consult with your attorney or financial advisor to see if any of these options might be appropriate in your situation. The Florida United Methodist Foundation is available to consult with you, your financial planner or attorney. Call, click or write us at 800-282-8011, extension 106, www.fumf.org, or P.O. Box 3767, Lakeland, FL 33802.