



November, somewhere along the line, has been designated 'Wills' month. Whether this is a commercial ploy I'm not sure, but, as the days shorten and outside distractions become less palatable, attention is drawn to pressing admin matters. A pleasure or a scourge? I didn't not go to technical school for nothing (3 negatives!!) Certain childhood buddies of mine relished learning shorthand, typing, secretarial and book-keeping skills. They were also good at games and maths – not me!

Back to 'wills' – sometimes referred to as leaving a legacy. The dictionary defines 'legacy' as "something handed down by a predecessor" – which widens things out nicely for the purpose of this blog. As old age creeps up, I have been reflecting on what sort of legacy I would like to leave behind when I depart this world. There's been an element of procrastination here, as I rather superstitiously thought (think) about 'tempting providence', as the saying goes. But it is a pressing consideration for old and young, living with the uncertainty of our present situation. Questions like "what sort of world do I want for my children and grandchildren and beyond?"; "What action can I take now to facilitate that vision?" A legacy of 'farsightedness' is a positive attribution. I think of the farsighted person who, years ago, bought the chunk of land opposite St Mary's Church from the local farmer for use as a car park and community space.

Leaving a legacy should be considered in a holistic sense. As well as the obvious monetary and physical objects we leave, there are the emotional and spiritual aspects which are, in some respects more important and lasting. To some extent we are all creatures of what the 'life card' has dealt us. I can say that both my parents were emotionally scarred in their formative years by the war, and left

behind a negative emotional legacy to their children, but it seems wise to cultivate self-awareness, and, whether re-visiting or compiling our wills, we should take time to reflect in a holistic way on what we hope to leave behind.

Vanessa Blythe from Peace of Mind Services offers some interesting thoughts to reflect on, from the biblical perspective, of leaving a legacy:

### **Following God's Example:**

*"The Bible is God's will and testament. It reveals the good news of the gospel that Jesus Christ was and is the provision of God that he put in place to restore mankind's relationship with himself after Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden. Jesus is God's executor, the person responsible for dealing with God's estate, the earth and all that dwells in it. As the executor, Jesus has, and still has, control over his Father's assets, to pay off any and all debt, and to distribute inheritance to the beneficiaries, according to the terms of God's will".*

### **Consideration of the environment:**

We are called to be stewards of or caretakers of what the Lord has give us (Ps 24:1) and one day we will be called to account for our actions/management (Luke 16). Making a will (and thus leaving a legacy) makes us think about how we can use the possessions God has given to us to provide for our family, leave an inheritance to our successors, do good (philanthropy) and share with others.

### **Love and Action:**

*"The chief cornerstone of the Christian faith is the fact that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. God demonstrated his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. This was love, and is love, in action. We are called to be witnesses of Christ. We are called to be his voice, his hands, his feet, in a world that needs to hear, to see and experience the redemptive power of God in their everyday life. (The act of) making a will requires thinking about those we leave*

*behind and how we can help them in the days after our passing. (It) provides an assurance of our love and concern towards them. It is love in action,”*

### **Giving:**

The evidence of God’s love working in us and through us is demonstrated in our giving, (Ecclesiastes 11, 2 Cor: 8, Acts 20: 35).\*

### **Hope for the Future:**

In Genesis 22: 17 & 18, God set out the legacy of Abraham by saying, “I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the sea-shore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

In the New Testament the Bible tells us about the inheritance God has in store for us, here on earth, and in heaven for those who believe and receive Jesus Christ by faith. He is good news for us today and he’s good news for the next generation(s) – your family members or whoever comes to your heart.

### ***Food for Thought:***

- **What good news would be your legacy?**
- **What is the legacy of COVID? Is it all negative?**
- **For those in paid employment: what legacy would you like to leave from your working life?**
- **What can you do now to begin to lay a foundation for such a legacy?**

Recently I received a written eulogy of the life of Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) founder Stuart King. By all accounts he was an extraordinary man who will

be long remembered. The tribute contained these words chosen to describe his character, which was shaped and molded by his faith: “wise, humble determined, unassuming, grace, witty, mischievous sense of humour”.

What we leave behind in terms of material possessions will, in time decay, but what we leave behind in terms of our spiritual attributes and character will live on.....

I include a prayer written by a Reader predecessor of mine, Carole Henderson, who died at a tragically early age but, who has left this legacy:

**Almighty God**

**You asked for my hands**

**That you might use them for your purpose.**

**I gave them for a moment then withdrew them for the work was hard.**

**You asked for my mouth to speak against injustice**

**I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.**

**You asked for my eyes to see the pain of poverty**

**I closed them for I did not want to see.**

**You asked for my life that you might work through me.**

**I gave a small part that I might not get too involved.**

**Lord, forgive our calculated effort to serve you**

**Only when it is convenient to do so**

**And only with those who make it easy to do so.**

**Father, forgive us, renew us, send us out as usable instruments**

**That we may take seriously the meaning of your cross. Amen.**

*\*The Church of England has produced an informative booklet called Church Legacy: Gifts of Faith, Hope and Love, which is available in church or at [www.churchlegacy.org.uk](http://www.churchlegacy.org.uk)*