



The Mission Endowment at your Church

A mission endowment is designed to allow a church to look toward the future, and provides a vehicle for the congregation to receive bequests or other, larger charitable contributions. It should not take away from current contributions and stewardship programs.

Only the income from the mission endowment is used, and the endowment's principle continues to be invested and grow.

Giving to a mission endowment can have appeal to your congregation's members and friends because their gifts will continue to provide benefit to the church long after they are gone.

How to set up a Mission Endowment

1. *Form an Ad Hoc committee.* One person on this committee should be the driving force: an attorney, accountant or someone with business experience is helpful. (Eventually the fund will need an investment account. It is essential that no member of the committee be in a position to benefit materially from the investment.)
2. *Draft an Endowment Agreement,* which includes the following:
 - a. The name of the Mission Endowment
 - b. The purpose(s) to which the Mission Endowment will be put
 - c. Guidelines for establishing named or restricted funds within the Mission Endowment
 - d. Investment and management policies of the Mission Endowment
 - e. Gift Acceptance Policy
 - f. Distribution Policy.

3. *Secure approval by the congregation* for official adoption.
4. *Sign the Agreement.* The Mission Endowment Agreement is placed into effect by the appropriate church authorities.
5. *Form an Endowment Committee to administer the Mission Endowment,* whose responsibilities include:
 - a. Investment decisions
 - b. Acceptance of gifts
 - c. Distribution decisions
6. *Select a foundation or investment firm* to hold, invest and distribute the funds; set up a bank account to receive donated funds and disburse distributions.
7. *Publicize the Mission Endowment* to your congregation's members and friends. Explain how church members can amend their wills or trusts to name the Mission Endowment as a beneficiary.

Participation by the Church's Pastor(s) and Leadership

A commitment by the pastor to a fledgling Mission Endowment highlights the importance of this effort to the church's members. A pastor's enthusiasm motivates church members on the Ad Hoc committee to devote the time and effort necessary to follow through and establish the Mission Endowment. For this reason, the pastor may wish to be named as a member of the Endowment Committee.

Sometimes pastors and church leaders are reluctant to ask congregants for money, preferring to leave that task to a stewardship or finance committee. However, elderly church members with no close relatives may be delighted to learn that they can name their church home as a recipient of their estate. Even those who are reticent to talk about giving may be able to solicit contributions to secure the future of the church when such requests are put in terms of a gift to the Mission Endowment. Such a request to your church's members becomes a win-win situation, offering peace of mind to those who are undecided what to do with their estate, and giving benefit to the church for years to come.