



# Design For Ministry™

## Depth Perception

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### Is it a gift when you designate?

The short answer is yes. However, the more designation placed on a gift the more the answer becomes no.

Let's say Anna Prescott gives \$10,000 to her alma mater for scholarships. She designates but it also is a gift. She releases control of the money to the organization that established and manages the funds. Anna designates. The school administrates.

What if Anna goes further, asking that this donation becomes scholarships for astronomy students – a specific scholarship category the school did not yet establish? What if Anna says the gift must be used for this purpose or she will look elsewhere? If the school agrees to Anna's request, the lines between designation and gift begin to blur. Anna designates and still releases control of the funds to the organization, but her expectations require new policies and bring new financial management complications. This might be good for the organization. It might not. So much depends on Anna's heart. Does Anna truly appreciate her alma mater? Does she really care about a quality education for astronomy students? Did she cooperate with the alma mater to determine the best use of this money? Is she merely attention seeking?

What if Anna gives this \$10,000 along with a five-page contract describing how funds should be managed, the minimum amount for scholarships, qualifications of recipients, and that she or a descendant will be consulted? Here Anna has probably moved beyond designation to demand, and beyond gift to transaction -- both parties expected to provide benefit for the other. Many institutions say they would never accept such a gift. But would they if Anna's gift were \$10,000,000 instead? Would it be so easy to turn up the nose?

In this last scenario it might Anna and the alma mater may very well work out something of mutual benefit. Perhaps it might even benefit students! Yet the institution is wiser still to thank Anna for her intent, her interest in the school that educated her, and her interest in future education – but to say no thanks -- even if the amount is \$10,000,000. Why? Because a trust relationship is absent. An astute development officer that cares about Anna more than her gift will say this up front. "Your gift has wonderful possibilities. Why don't let this perk for six months or so and have a conversation again? In the meantime, we want to help you become better acquainted with the astronomy department – its personnel, facilities and dreams. When you are ready to make this gift, we want you to be assured we are worthy of it and would discharge it in a way that helps us provide top-tiered education. If you feel you can't do it with us, we want to help you find the right type of place you can trust. We don't want to deprive you of the joy of giving."

***"mission-driven organizations puts mission first – even when it comes to money."***

Some of you will take issue with this, but I would like to point out mission-driven organizations put mission first – even when it comes to money. Christian organizations with belief in the abundance of God hold a commitment to mission that goes deeper still. Their deepest relationships are with those who give rather than those who make demands. -mark

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