School Fund-Raisers - NO

Jeanette VanEgdom

The Ways and Means Committee had met. The first meeting of the Ladies' Circle in the fall was the time for the members of the society to vote what projects were to be adopted to work on during this school term. The purpose of the organization was to strive to unite Protestant Reformed women to promote interest in and give moral support to our own school, as well as to arrange for public programs, such as singspirations, etc. Finances will be freewill offerings at each meeting and at public activities we sponsor. The money received will be used for the school, with the advice of the principal and Board approval... all this according to the constitution of one of our Protestant Reformed School Circles, as written originally. But things change, and the fund-raisers began.

Are these necessary? Should there be fund-raisers at all, or just freewill offerings?

At some time in our church history, there were Ladies' Aid sales in the church basement. Women did their work eagerly, getting ready by sewing, doing embroidery work, quilting, and baking. Then came the big night. Some people could only donate a little, some a lot, and others not at all. Then again, some didn't come because they were too poor to buy, while others, with money, could buy without stopping. This caused hard feelings and coveting. Because of the offense to some, the Ladies' Aid sales were stopped.

I could name a person who, because of lack of time or interest, bought something to donate to the sale. Bringing it to the auction that evening, that individual bought it back for less than she paid for it in the store. Wouldn't it have been better just to donate the money for the item and what they paid at the sale to the school, without having to go through all the hassle? People, however, seem more willing to give if they get something for it in return. Here, it seems, greed would be a sin fallen into. Also, there is the competition of outdoing the neighbor, and the sin of pride, which reveals itself in displaying how much one has brought or bought.

I don't think fund-raisers are necessary. From the viewpoint of the parents, the responsibility of the instruction and bringing up of children is primarily and principally theirs, as they answer "Yes"

to the third baptismal question. Others in the church also have a calling. The "let-the-parents-take-care-of-their-own-kids" attitude must certainly be condemned, but as parents we pledge to bring up our children in the "aforesaid doctrine." Giving for the causes of the kingdom, the Christian School, is giving that comes *first.* Giving for kingdom causes ought to come first, from the cream of the paycheck, not as an after-thought, or only if you think there will be enough for the rest of the month. We, as Christians, must get our priorities straight. We should give freely. We must give as liberally as we receive. We must contribute as we are able (Deut. 16:17), or as the Lord has prospered us (I Cor. 16:2).

We must give with cheerfulness. The Lord loves a cheerful giver. This implies that the giver *wants* to give. The giver has faith, faith in the promise of God that all other things shall be added unto him. He knows that giving, rather than receiving, is blessed. The giver is thankful. He is aware that he has been given everything as a blessing by God's grace. He gives *regularly,* as an example to teach his children the blessedness of giving.

For the Bible believer, tithes and offerings are God's method of financing. Therefore, fund-raisers should not be necessary. Free-will offerings give all in the church the means to help support the school. These are taken in worship services, singspirations, and so forth. Another reason for not supporting fund-raisers is this: Many wish to solicit the support of the community in our fund-raising activities, such as selling candy or coupon books to friends, or soliciting donated items from area businesses for auctions and bazaars. In this way we show the weakness of not being able to support ourselves. We, as parents and fellow believers, should support our own schools. We should not have to rely on the world to support us.

Auctions and bazaars, types of fund-raisers, are no longer free-will offerings. Soup suppers and singspirations lean more to having freewill offerings to support our school, but some wish to charge so much per plate, often excluding the poorer members this way. They no longer have the important sense of giving from the heart, and whatever they can. They have to buy things for a price to support the school.

Preparing for auctions and other fund-raisers as making crafts for the bazaar, contacting people, even the time spent setting up and cleaning up afterwards, can take away from something more important. The time could be better used for studying catechism with the little ones, supervising

homework, reading aloud, singing God's praises and studying His Word, and preparing for and attending societies. That, too, is fellowship, which some people stress as being the reason for sponsoring various of the fund-raising activities.

Usually, it is not so much a matter of poverty, but of pure carnality, that keeps us from giving; so we really don't need these fund-raisers. Because of our carnality there is so much more satisfaction in spending money for that second car, for that cabin at the lake, for trips and bowling, or even such unnecessary things as candy and cigarettes, as well as a host of other things we might mention. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

However, if we are in dire need, the churches have a responsibility, through the diaconate, to help their members who cannot pay their tuition. If the need requires, do not hesitate to appeal to the mercies of Christ for financial aid and spiritual comfort.

It should be the deepest desire of the hearts of covenant parents to see their children instructed in the truth of God's Word. That Word is a priceless treasure for which they will sacrifice all. So, if the parents and church cooperate and give faithfully, there should be no need for fund-raisers.

In our Christian stewardship, we confess, "All that I am I owe to Thee." Let us fulfill our calling and be cheerful and thankful in our giving. If we are not exercising good stewardship, the elders of the church may need to instruct us in our God-given calling. If we do exercise our good stewardship by faithfully giving, we can do away with the fund-raisers.

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School Fund-Raisers-YES

Karen Karsten

I can vividly recall the scene. Having enrolled my first child in kindergarten, and eager to be involved in school-related activities, I attended the first meeting of the Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School Mothers' Circle in Walker, Michigan. After routine business, we finally came to the list of "ways and means" for the next year. I was amazed at the number of projects on which we had to vote. But what followed in the election of ways and means completely overwhelmed me. As project after project was passed