

speech through it all. It tells me  
that this world is in the darkness  
of sin, but that The Sun of  
Righteousness is still out there!

And He will rise with healing in  
His wings!  
*Oh God, how great Thou art!*

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*Are you, or have you ever been, a member of a school Mothers' Circle? If so, you've almost certainly worked on a "fund-raiser." Think back — did you ever spend hours (or, better, days) on a project and, after it was all over, wonder whether the end made all of those means worthwhile? I know I've seen bone-tired mothers slump in a chair after an exhausting day's work and lament, "There's just got to be a better way!"*

*What about that? Is there a better way? Might it be that, in spite of all of our good intentions, we are helping nevertheless to perpetuate a financial problem that ought not to exist? Or are projects by Mothers' Circles and Boosters' Clubs legitimate means to raise much-needed funds — means which might even have side-benefits which go beyond the raising of money?*

*If you've ever wondered about this, you'll enjoy reading the views which follow. Mrs. VanEgdom, of Doon, Iowa, knows what it's like to work on fund-raisers. In addition, she has herself taught for a good number of years in our school in Doon, so she knows too what it's like to be on the receiving end of the benefits for which the fund-raisers are held. On reflection, nevertheless, she says "no." Mrs. Karsten knows too, from personal experience and hard work in the Mothers' Circles of two different schools (Hope [G.R.] and Heritage), and has seen and appreciated many benefits of the efforts of support groups. She says "yes."*

*For their viewpoints, read on. And if you'd like to add your own, please feel free to jot down your ideas and send them to the editorial office of Perspectives. We'll be happy to share them with our readers.*

# 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 free-will 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 out-doing 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

Almost unanimously by this group of mothers, I began to wonder how we would ever be able to organize and plan so many activities. I certainly lacked the skills. During that first year I did much observing and asked many questions. By the end of the year, I was quite convinced that the Hope School Mothers' Circle was a very remarkable organization, a vital support group in the functioning of Hope School. That was seven years ago and today I have three children in Heritage Christian School and am an active member of the school's Fundraisers. What I realized seven years ago, I am most convinced of today — our schools *need* supportive fund-raising groups.

But what are the benefits of such groups? The first benefit is obvious — funds for Christian education. The funds from Mothers' Circle projects are often thought to be used for educational frills, nice little extras to make school a bit more pleasant. And some funds are used for that purpose. But when I look over the list of major purchases by the Heritage Fundraisers in the past two years, I find a number of educational essentials such as textbooks, desks, and computers. With the rising costs of educational materials, our school boards have come to rely on the school's fund-raising groups to help carry

this financial load. And it is surely a privilege to shoulder some of this responsibility!

A second important role our fund-raising groups play in our schools is that of providing an excellent means of communication between the faculty and parents. The fund-raising projects themselves get our parents into the school where they can observe firsthand the newest bulletin board display or Johnny's latest art project hanging in the hall. Aside from the fund-raising projects, most of our Mothers' Circles provide the school with a variety of non-profit activities such as room mothers for each teacher, operating the school library, and serving refreshments at various school functions. All of these activities, along with the fund-raising projects themselves, are ideal avenues of communication and interaction between the parents and the staff. This close contact with the daily school life of our children helps us to understand the stresses and joys our children face each day and the challenges and problems our teachers face in educating them. Those of us with busy families must often remind ourselves that what goes on in school is indeed our business. It is so easy to wave good-bye to our children in the morning and let our teachers take over until 3:30. But if our schools are to continue to offer

