



Midwest Messenger



“To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and forever. Amen” Jude 25

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Greetings from the Board of Trustees!

We have great news for the society!! Going into the evening of November 19, we needed about \$75,000 to reach the next benchmark of \$1,200,000. The generous freewill donation at the promotion supper of \$27,000 narrowed the gap to \$48,000. Subsequent church collections, donations, interest, and pledges have brought in the remaining funds to bring us to the \$1,200,000 benchmark. With joyful hearts we give thanks to our gracious Heavenly Father who has so blessed us to provide the financial means to provide for the covenant instruction of our children.

Reaching this benchmark moves us toward two important steps. First, breaking ground for a building in the spring, and secondly, opening in a temporary facility in August of 2008. Let's see how reaching \$1,200,000 factors into both of those.

To break ground in the spring of 2008, several things have to happen. Now that we've reached \$1,200,000, the Society has to approve the final plans for the school. In the

spring the Board will go on a drive for an additional \$300,000 to bring us to \$1,500,000. The Board is confident that money will be raised in cash and pledges, but it is going to take commitment on everyone's part. When we reach the \$1,500,000, we can plan for a groundbreaking. It is an ambitious plan, but remember, we're striving for a best case scenario. One can see it's a tight but realistic timeline, and reaching the \$1,200,000 really helps us to meet this goal.

The best case goal of opening in a temporary facility in the fall of 2008 would require the hiring of some staff. Now that we've reached the \$1,200,000 benchmark, we can ask the Society to approve the hiring of staff. While theoretically one could hire such staff later, there are two very compelling reasons why doing that as early as possible is preferable. First, we would want to give such staff as much time as possible to get the curriculums and classroom material ready for teaching. Secondly, contracts are typically offered in early spring, and as we'll be starting with a new staff, it would be best to be in the hunt the same season as everyone else.

We also note the building committee has been working overtime (meeting at least three times in one two-week stretch) to make sure everything is ready to present to the Society for approval when we reach the \$1,200,000. The Board approved the building committee's recommendation that J&J Construction of Hull be our general contractors for the building. J&J is preparing a maximum guaranteed price to construct a building basically according to the floor plans and model that was presented the night of the promotional supper. A maximum guaranteed price means just that. When the Society votes approval of a floor plan, it will include a guaranteed price that will not be exceeded. Should the general contractor encounter some savings during the construction, those would be passed on to the Society. So when the Society votes on a floor plan, they will vote assured that the price will not exceed a guaranteed amount, and it might be a little less.

In a final note on board actions, at our last meeting the board received the resignations of Warren Boon and Steve Kooima, who will be taking up their duties as elders in January. The board hopes

to have special elections for new board members in the near future.

This month we continue looking at an article written by Professor Engelsma entitled "A Covenant School," which first appeared in the Spring 1994 issue of *Perspectives in Christian Education*. In this excerpt, Professor Engelsma explains how a covenant school is different than other schools, including other private schools.

"Does [the fact that our schools are grounded in the covenant] make any difference? Does it make any practical difference as far as the actual education is concerned that our school is a covenant school? Specifically, does it make a difference of any importance between our covenant schools and the private schools of a religious nature that are arising in our country?"

It makes a radical difference.

First, if we view our school as a covenant school, we will maintain it for God's sake, for God's glory. The work of establishing and maintaining it will not be a work of self-love, the self-love of protecting our children from drugs, a hippie-life, etc. The work of establishing private schools today is in many cases nothing more than self-love. Our Reformed confession, the *Belgic Confession*, warns us in the article on sanctification that there is a danger that we "never do anything out of love to God,

but only out of self-love or fear of damnation" (Art. XXIV). It teaches, correctly, that a work done out of the motive of self-love or out of the motive of fearing punishment is not a good work. Only a work done out of the love of God is a good work. Now we want our work of establishing Christian schools to be a good work. Our main purpose in Christian education must be that our children grow up to know and serve the Lord so that He may be praised by them. With the motive of the love of God, let us parents send our children, pay the costs, and encourage our teachers. With this motive, let the teachers labor, giving their all. With this motive, let the Board work.

Secondly, if we view the school as a covenant school we will persevere when maintaining it gets tough, even tougher than it is now. The school is, with us, a matter of principle, not mere expediency. Our support is an act of obedience to the covenant God. Neither will we give up because of the imperfections of the school. The teachers will not, even though the imperfections hurt them. We parents will not, although the imperfections pinch us. There is a place for self-denial and sacrifice.

Thirdly, the nature of the education will be different. In many of the schools that are called Christian, instruction is given that tends to be positively harmful to our children, because there is no covenant conception. They work in their Arminian evangelism. I know, many of them claim that they do not teach doctrine. As a

matter of fact, neither does our school teach doctrine. Teaching doctrine is the duty of the home and of the church. Nevertheless, the doctrine that the school stands on necessarily comes through. Many of the religious schools regard the children as small heathens who have to be saved by a decision for Christ that the school feels itself bound to obtain. These schools urge patriotism and decency, but they have no sense of the truth of the Heidelberg Catechism, that a holy life is a life that is lived out of thankfulness to God for His redemption of a person from sin. Indeed, many of them cannot give this instruction and admonition because they deny that the children share in redemption, being ignorant of the covenant."