

# Friday Focus

## From Emory

### *The Monument of Trust*

Around us, the excitement builds as the construction of our soon to be completed lunch pavilion continues in full force. Almost daily I answer questions or receive comments from the school staff or community about how big this structure is going to be or how nice it looks, or “When is it going to be completed?”

Right now we are looking at seeing full completion sometime during the upcoming Christmas holidays, and we should begin using it soon after we return from the Christmas Break! **Hallelujah!**

The size and significance of this structure are reasons our architect said from the beginning that he was not going to call it a ‘pavilion,’ but rather put the title of “Lunch and Concessions Facility” on his drawing. It truly is going to be a magnificent building and a great addition to our campus!

The pavilion project fits the pattern of every other campaign, structure, or project that the Lord has seen fit to bring to our school, as it was not quite three years ago that we began talking about the feasibility of utilizing a ‘pavilion-type’ structure to take care of our need for a cafeteria. The years have shown the Lord faithful in that every physical need that has ever existed here has been fulfilled in a way that has exceeded what we ever dreamed possible at the beginning- as is the case here! God’s faithfulness to Providence is nothing short of breathtaking.

And, yet, each addition to the campus causes us to reminisce about the earlier history of the school when we functioned just fine without many of the ‘luxuries’ our students and staff enjoy today. In fact, several of us remarked just the other day that every basketball team at PCS should have to hold at least one practice in the breezeway parking lot (where the faint lines for a ‘full-court’ are still visible if one looks hard enough), just to re-acquaint each player and coach with our roots as a school, and help them realize how blessed we are to have such wonderful facilities and programs. Prior to having our gym (yes, we DID function as a school before there was a gym or a grammar building), our basketball teams practiced in the parking lot of the school and played games off-campus in a rented public school gymnasium.

Let’s not forget the numerous blessings we enjoy daily here, keeping in mind that these things we possess are simply the vehicles for doing the work at hand and not the object of our mission. It is easy to begin to worship the created things rather than the Creator as we enjoy His gifts, and to sometimes fall into a trap of expecting His blessings instead of *being* His blessing. I was convicted recently of beginning to slide down that slippery slope.

There is so much more to this pavilion story that has not been told. As I stare out at it now from my office window, I recognize that the sentiment I feel in my own heart represents a monument to the faithfulness of the Lord, as God’s hand is obviously touching our little school once again.

I have watched this project since its inception as an idea and a vision, and seen God's hand at work in ways that are magnificent and in others that are small and seemingly insignificant to those who don't know the inside story.

Along the way I have watched numerous seemingly circumstantial events unfold in ways that would cause a Hollywood screenwriter to scoff (if he were reading a proposed script) and throw it into the trash because it is not a believable story; not only the events themselves, but the timing of their occurrence. This whole experience has been an encouragement to my own personal faith.

And then it hit me. The symbolic nature of this gift is certainly representative of God's gracious gift to each one of us, but it also justifies why we are here and the trust under which we operate. Let me explain: the pavilion donor came to see me recently, and he delivered the check for the project. Upon handing it to me he said, "This should cover the costs charged by the contractor. If there are additional charges, let us know, and we will take care of it."

I was so humbled and nearly blown away that I could only gasp. I was speechless. All I could think to say was "Thank-you" and "Wow." The generosity and the trust shown by this gift were overwhelming. After he left, I struggled not only with dealing with the magnitude of the gift, but also with my own inability to find words that I could have used to respond in a socially acceptable way and that would have in some sense expressed the gratitude that I was feeling in my heart.

As I was expressing to Darlene the guilt I felt in not being able to verbalize this gratitude appropriately, the Lord laid something on my heart that was even more overwhelming. He caused me to recollect that this *is* truly an incredibly generous gift to the school, but it is not unlike many others that have preceded it, and I should not be overwhelmed by how God chooses to use people He decides to use to make something happen, nor by the timing that He uses. When He gets ready, He will get it done. Why the surprise?

Also in this process, the Lord has reminded me: buildings *are* important. We have to have them. But monetary gifts, no matter how large, are not any more significant than the families that have trusted our school (that is me and you) with their most precious possession: their child and his/her future academic, social, spiritual, and physical needs. **THAT** is an incredible show of trust and faith equal to any monetary or physical gift that we could ever receive.

We are blessed as a school family, not only with our physical plant and the gifts that the Lord uses to expand His kingdom here. But the richest blessing we possess is the opportunity to be used of Christ in helping expand His Kingdom through the children that have been entrusted to us.

Any school or organization can construct facilities or memorials which can serve as monuments. Our privilege is that we are building monuments for eternity in the relationships, scholarship, and faith of every child, parent, and staff member with whom we come in contact.

**That** is the real blessing and gift!