



Pastor's Perspective — Facebook and the Gospel

By Ron D. Lindholm, Senior Pastor



Facebook is one of the more popular social networking sites on the Internet. Users can add friends and send them messages and tell them information about themselves. They can also join various interest groups that can connect them to larger constituencies.

This past fall, I established an account. It's nothing that I ever aspired to do. Rather, it was at the urging of a missionary colleague. At first, I declined. I was concerned about wasting time, but I later relented. My primary reason for relenting was to have access to information that was being shared on an extended-family account, but also to see what the rage was all about and what the medium might have to offer that could prove helpful in advancing the cause of Christ.

Since then, I have added a number of friends, some of whom date back to my high school days and before. It's been interesting, but I must tell you that I've not pursued it with the passion of some, including some of you who are numbered among my friends (a list that may become shorter with this article)—for everywhere I look I see danger, and from your own experience, some of you are familiar with that.

One of the dangers for those who get involved with Facebook and become immersed in its culture is that they would buy into the Facebook worldview that encourages them to see their lives as the most interesting ever lived. The evidence of having done so is that you begin to share with the world every turn and movement of your life. Does it really matter whether you belched after drinking your RC Cola?

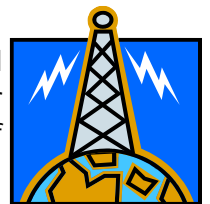
Another danger is that they would come to the point where their virtual world and relationships become so real that they replace the real ones. Farmville and Fishville are not reality. That should be obvious, but there are some who spend so much time there and elsewhere that you would think they were. Not long ago, a friend sent out a request for help. They had come to the point of being unable to distinguish between friends in the real world and those who were virtual friends.

The Bible teaches that life and its fullness reside in Christ. Like us, He lives in the real world—and it's in the real world that we are called to tell others about Him and to build up His church. I think Facebook can be a tool used toward that end, but my guess is that it won't be used in that way unless we are intentional in doing so. This is something that we need to work on.

Ted Siemens' Visit

Our missionaries, Ted and Dawn Siemens, serve with Trans World Radio in the Netherlands. Ted will pay a visit to Fellowship in January while in the States for a Trans World Radio conference.

Ted will join us for the [Men's Breakfast](#) to be held on Saturday, January 23 at 8:00 AM, and will provide a challenge from God's Word. Don't miss this great opportunity to encourage one another in the Lord, while also strengthening our relationship with Ted. Sons and guests are welcome. If you have an interest in helping with the breakfast, please see Pete English.



Ted will also be with us throughout the day on [Sunday, January 31](#). He will provide the Bible message in the morning worship service and give a ministry presentation during the evening service. A love offering will be received for the Siemens family. Please plan to be in attendance as we benefit from Ted's ministry, learn more about the Lord's work through Trans World Radio, and seek to encourage this missionary family.

Serving the Body of Christ in the New Year

Pete English and Doug Mount were elected to the office of Deacon at the December Annual Meeting. They join Joe Robinson and Ron Wasserstein as Fellowship's Deacons for 2010. Ron is serving in the area of Outreach, Joe in Christian Education, Doug with Property and Facilities, and Pete in Missions. Please pray for these men as they assist our Pastors and provide leadership in these important aspects of church life and ministry.

Numerous other church members have agreed

to serve as Church Officers, Officials and other leaders in this new year. Their appointments will be brought to the church for approval at the January Annual Meeting to be held on January 27. We are thankful for their willingness to serve the Lord and His church. Please pray for each one as they build up the body of Christ through their ministry. The annual reports from our church leaders, committees and organizations will also be reviewed at the January Annual Meeting. Please plan to attend.



What's Your Resolution?

As those "bought with a price" our priorities should reflect those of our Savior who loved the church so much that He "gave Himself up for her." As you evaluate your life and make commitments for the New Year, consider these suggestions:

- * *Become a church member.* This is a simple yet profound way of tangibly expressing your commitment to Christ and His people.
- * *Commit yourself to corporate prayer.* As we pray together we receive God's grace to help in times of



need, seek direction for our church and its ministries, and gain access to the infinite resources the Lord makes available for the advance of the gospel.

- * *Encourage one another.* Buy up opportunities to gather for worship and fellowship and to invest in the lives of your church family. As we do so the Lord uses each

one of us to help the body of Christ grow.

- * *Attend Sunday school.* Through this important disciple-training ministry, we enable whole families to grow in their understanding and application of God's Word and in their ability to use that Word in ministry to others.
- * *Serve sacrificially.* Prayerfully consider whether you are maximizing the gifts and abilities the Lord has entrusted to you. Then speak with a Pastor or Deacon about opportunities at Fellowship.
- * *Share boldly.* Have compassion for those who are lost in their sin and respond by reaching out with the life-changing message of the gospel.
- * *Give cheerfully.* In so doing we acknowledge the Lord's ownership of all we have, express our gratitude for His gracious provisions in Christ, and support His work in our community and around the world.

Christmas Missionary Offering

Through the annual Christmas offering \$5,580 was given for our missionary families. This enabled the church to present each family with a gift equal to 143% of their monthly support provided by Fellowship. Thank you for your generous expression of appreciation for the ministries of our missionaries.



Money Matters

We praise the Lord for His faithful provision in meeting our needs in 2009, and especially in allowing the church to eliminate our mortgage! Weekly giving to the General Fund averaged \$5,530 in the 4th quarter and \$5,324 for the year. With the elimination of the mortgage and the decision not to reallocate all of those budgeted funds, the budgeted weekly need drops to \$5,290 for 2010.

December Giving Per Week (General Fund)	\$5,376
Weekly Need	\$5,689
2009 Total General Fund Giving	\$276,850
2009 Total General Fund Need	\$295,842
2009 Total 50@1 Giving	\$30,900
2009 Total Special Missions Giving	\$20,015
2009 Total Building Fund Giving	\$1,556

Youth Ski Trip



Young people grades 7-12 are invited to participate in a ski trip on January 29 to Whitetail Mountain Resort in Pennsylvania. Slopes are available for all skill levels. Prices, which include ski rental and a lesson, range from \$72 (beginner) to \$95 (advanced). Parental consent forms must be turned in to Pastor Stuart no later than January 17.

Calendar

Jan. 12	Nursing Home Ministry (2:00 PM)
Jan. 23	Men's Breakfast with Ted Siemens (8:00 AM)
Jan. 27	December Annual Meeting (7:30 PM)
Jan. 29	Youth Ski Trip
Jan. 31	Ted Siemens at Fellowship (AM & PM Services)
Feb. 5	Women's Heart Friend Party (7:00 PM)