



Pastor's Perspective — The Risk of Relativism

By Ron D. Lindholm, Senior Pastor

It is not uncommon to hear people in Bible-believing churches like ours decry the relativism of our day—the notion that there is no such thing as absolute truth and that different peo-

ple can define truth in conflicting ways and still be correct. But if we would stop and examine our own attitude toward interpreting the text of the Bible, we may discover that we are guilty of a relativism all our own. It often starts with the question, "What does this verse mean to you?" We also hear it in those replies that say, in effect, "This is what it means to me" even though what it means to them may absolutely contradict what it means to others. It's also seen too in that situation where the one who asked the question is left to marvel aloud how "the reading of the Bible is a matter of personal interpretation and how one verse can mean one thing to one person and something else to another."

Over the past few months, I've been constantly reminded of these things in writing the course notes for a module I'll be teaching at a Word of Life Bible Insti-

tute graduate seminary in the Philippines later this month. Through a pastor colleague the Lord has opened a door for me to teach on the subject of Hermeneutics, which has to do with the principles and methods of interpreting the Bible.

The main issues addressed by hermeneutics revolve around the question of meaning: What does the text mean? Meaning is the message that the author intends to convey through the text. Seen in this way, the meaning of a text is something that never changes because it is rooted in history in the communicative intention of the author, which has been inscribed in the text and addressed to the intended audience for the purpose of conveying something to them. Or, to put it in other terms, the text means what it meant when it was first written. This is why we must establish the original historical and literary context of a biblical passage before we attempt to address the issue of meaning. To do anything less is to run the risk of not only missing the meaning of the text, but slipping into relativism.

Strengthening Our Participation in the Gospel



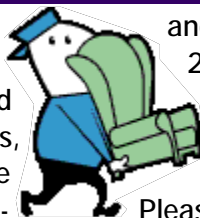
Our annual Missions Conference will take place on September 11-13. This year's theme, "God's Word Is Not Chained," is taken from 2 Timothy 2:9. The conference will challenge us to more fully appreciate the fact that God's Word accomplishes its purpose of calling out God's people to receive the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. With this truth more fully in our grasp, we will respond by proclaiming the gos-

pel by God's power, serving the Lord faithfully in the midst of hardship while equipping others to carry on the work of preaching Christ. Programs are available in the church foyer.

Our church family is encouraged to participate in each of the conference sessions from Friday to Sunday, taking advantage of this opportunity to be challenged from God's Word and the testimonies of Dean and Julie Blood, Travis and Becky Gravley, and Phil and Kitty McMillen. Pray for these missionaries as they minister to us, and for the Lord to use us as an encouragement

Reaching Out at Purdue University

We are thankful for the ministry of our missions team, consisting of Pastor Odom, Robert and Russell Mahoney, and Sherry, John, Joel, Jessica and Rose Wasserstein, who assisted our missionaries, Paul and Geri Briggs, with their annual furniture giveaway ministry on August 9-16. Over 100 volunteers helped distribute about 600 pieces of furniture



and numerous other household items to about 275 of Purdue's international students. We are also grateful for the love offering of \$2,091 received at Fellowship, which fully covered the cost for the team's housing and meals. Please continue to pray for the Lord's work in the lives of the students touched by the giveaway.

Ladies' Retreat: All of our ladies are encouraged to participate in a women's retreat on September 18-19 at the home of Wendy Marshall in Stafford, VA. Sherry Wasserstein will lead a discussion-oriented study of two women from the Bible—Leah and Priscilla. In addition to the encouragement from God's Word, our time of retreat also affords a wonderful opportunity to deepen our relationships with one another that we might be more actively involved in building one another up in the Lord in the days ahead. The cost is only \$25. Please plan to come! A sign up sheet is in the church foyer.

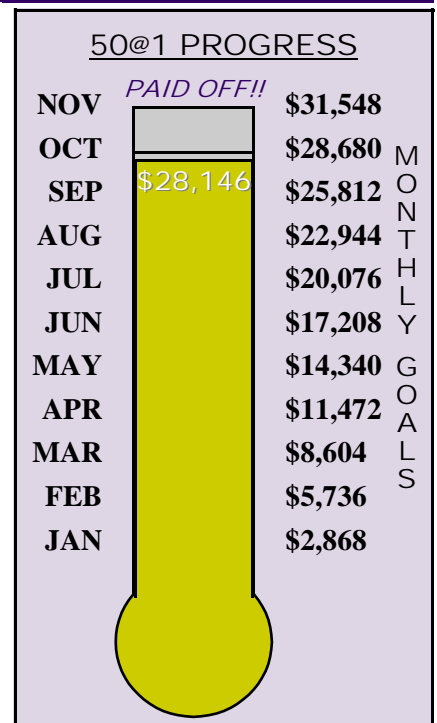
Money Matters

Giving toward our mortgage payoff effort was a remarkable \$8,473 in the month of August—about 27% of our goal. Through this wonderful provision the Lord continues to show us the depth of His goodness and the extent of His ability to meet every need. Only \$3,402 is now required to meet our goal of eliminating the mortgage by Thanksgiving. These are truly exciting days for Fellowship as we consider what the Lord will enable us to do as a church as the funds

August Giving Per Week (General Fund)	\$5,138
Weekly Need	\$5,689
Year-to-Date General Fund Giving	\$185,236
Year-to-Date General Fund Need	\$199,124

previously devoted to the mortgage are used to strengthen our ministry here at home and through our missions ministry around the world.

General Fund giving continues to be a concern as average weekly giving for August was well below the weekly need. Please continue to remember this need in prayer, trusting the Lord to supply while asking Him to help us close a \$13,888 shortfall in General Fund giving for the year.



Holding Forth the Word of Truth

Through Fellowship's *ESL* ministry we seek to reach the nations here in our own community. Our ministry to many of our students is one of planting and watering the seeds of the gospel. The Lord gives us the privilege of seeing Him use that seed to bring some of our students to saving faith in Christ. The value of this seed-sowing ministry was impressed upon us recently. One of our original *ESL* students—who was with us during our first year of classes—has since returned to her homeland. This student often visits Northern Virginia during the summer months. This year, while with us, the Lord worked in her heart and drew her to Himself during a Sunday morning worship service. What a joy to see this student trust in Jesus as Savior, nearly 6 years after the seed was first planted in her life!



Our Thursday night *ESL* classes (7:00-9:00 PM) resume on September 10. We covet your prayers for this ministry. See our Director, Brian Platt, if you would like to help.



Awana begins a new year on Sunday, September 20 (5:30-7:00 PM). This is a year of transition for this ministry, as Doug Mount assumes the role of Commander and veteran leaders Nancy Gardner and Gina Irving begin service as Sparks Director and Cubbies Director, respectively. We thank the Lord for giving us a dedicated leadership team and look forward to the privilege of reaching boys and girls with the gospel of Christ and training them to serve Him this club year. Please pray for those serving in new leadership roles, and for our ministry in the lives of our clubbers and their families. Our desire is to strengthen the families of our church through this ministry, and also reach whole families with the gospel.

Calendar



Sep. 8	Nursing Home Ministry (2:00 PM)
Sep. 10	Thursday <i>ESL</i> Classes Resume (7:00 PM)
Sep. 11-13	Missions Conference
Sep. 18-19	Ladies' Retreat
Sep. 20	<i>Awana</i> Resumes (5:30 PM)
Sep. 26	Church Picnic (4:00-7:00 PM)
Oct. 3	Men's Breakfast (8:00 AM)

Plan to join us on Saturday, September 26 (4:00-7:00 PM) for our church picnic on the church grounds. We will enjoy games, fellowship, and good food. Invite a friend or neighbor to come along.