



Looking Back, Looking Forward

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It's hard to believe that we're entering the final weeks of 2016.

It will soon be time to retrain my brain to write 2017 instead of 2016! Some files will need to be cleaned out or new ones will need to be created for the upcoming year. The year 2016 will soon be a memory.

I'm trying to take some time this month to personally look back and reflect upon the past year. Where did I achieve my goals; where did I miss the mark? Where have I taken steps forward? Where have I stalled out or even regressed? What were the surprises that occurred over the past twelve months, whether pleasant or unpleasant?

Did I steward money wisely? Did I invest my time and resources in worthwhile efforts? Did I miss opportunities along the way? Did I move forward or backward physically? Did I move forward or backward financially? Did I move forward or backward spiritually? Did my family grow closer together in the past year? Did I grow as a father and husband? Am I more like Jesus now than I was a year ago? Am I growing in my self-awareness and thus able to love and serve others more faithfully? Have I served my coworkers better in 2016 than in 2015? Where have I seen growth in the past year? What areas of my life need the most attention as I look forward? Am I spending more time with people who don't know Jesus? Is there fruit being produced from the way in which I live my life?

It's not always easy to look back and ask these types of questions. 2016 offers more than its fair share of failures as I review my own experience in 2016. There are certainly some wins and advances too, as well as times where I can clearly see God's grace at work in my life. But it's also humbling to look back and realize that there were missed opportunities and situations which leave me asking "what would things be like now if I had only ..."

If I had only handled that conversation differently?

If I had only reached out to that person when I felt prompted by the Spirit?

If I had only invested my time in something more productive than binge watching TV?

If I had only been quicker to offer grace and forgiveness?

If I had only put my best efforts into that project?

If I had only been willing to take a risk?

If I had only been able to recognize God's voice?

We need to take an honest look back. It helps us as we try to look forward. The best leaders I've ever known have an amazing ability to look back with a sense of honesty – celebrating the good while owning or naming what was less-than-good. We need to look back.

I'm also trying to take some time to look forward to 2017. None of us have a crystal ball, so it's futile to try to predict what 2017 will bring, but I can look forward armed with what I've learned from 2016 so that I can continue to become the disciple Jesus calls me to be.

I'd encourage you to take some time to look back at your own experience with 2016 and glean all you can from the last twelve months. Celebrate what's worth celebrating, own the short-comings and commit to move forward knowing that Jesus is calling you to step forward with Him.

Christ's Peace,

Lance

Midwest Region Conference Seeks New Regional Director

The Midwest Region Conference has begun the search for their next Regional Director. Applications are due on or before December 31, 2016. Follow these links to find the [Job Description](#) and [Application Form](#). Be prepared to include your current resume including your church membership, ministerial credentials, education, employment history and three references with contact information. All packets will be considered in full confidence.

All materials should be sent electronically to Pastor Scott Bons, MRC President and Search Committee Chairman at scottbons6504@yahoo.com. For questions or for more information you can also call Pastor Scott at (217) 820-3999.