



Don't Give Up

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In a few hours, 2016 will go into the history books. I know that some will be glad to see it go while others will look back on the past year with gratitude. Some of us had banner years while others continue to deal with the painful realities that 2016 introduced or continued.

I assume that there are some who carry a certain sense of weariness as 2016 comes to a close. I know that for my pastor friends, the week following Christmas often brings a bit of an emotional let-down and a certain sense of weariness. The first Sunday of the New Year rarely competes with the euphoria of Christmas. This is often magnified by the physical, mental and emotional exhaustion that results from the busyness of the holiday season. Life has a way of wearing us down.

We enter 2017 knowing that our world still faces some tremendous challenges. Our own nation is plagued by division, contention and fear. There are nearly daily reminders that our world is home to unimaginable violence, tragedy and danger. Many of us face personal struggles and trials: illnesses, financial uncertainty or dysfunctional relationships which show no signs for improvement in the near future. The constant presence of such overwhelming issues can deplete our strength, drain our hope and leave us weary.

Then there's the fact that we have an enemy. He's real and he loves to deceive. He seeks to kill, steal and destroy. He regularly whispers words of discouragement and despair into our hearts and minds: "You're a failure." "It will never get better." "God couldn't possibly love you when you act like this." "There is no hope." "You are beyond God's reach." "Your work is not making any difference." "God must have forsaken you for this terrible thing to have happened." His discouragement is unrelenting and exhausting.

For those of you who are struggling against the feelings of weariness right now; please, don't give up.

This beautiful picture is entitled "God's Story" by artist David Arms. It's prominently displayed in my office because I find I often need to be reminded and encouraged by its beautiful message. We live, work and serve in this "already but not yet" time; Jesus has won the victory through His death on the cross and His resurrection and one day, He will make all things new with a new heaven and new earth. He has established His Kingdom here on earth and He is bringing all of history toward its consummation.



Don't give up. Don't listen to the lies of the enemy. Let the words of Galatians 6:9-10 encourage you as you look ahead to 2017: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

I don't know what 2017 will bring, but I do know that Jesus is advancing His kingdom and invites us to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. I know that it's easy to become discouraged or to grow weary in this fight. Don't give up my brothers and sisters. Don't believe the lies of the enemy. Remember God's Story. Don't stop serving and doing good, for God's Glory and the good of all of creation!

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.