

Senior Pastor

By Brandon Lemons, Senior Pastor

Looking Ahead by Looking Back

Attempting to move forward while looking backward is generally a risky proposition (it's one of those "don't try this at home" activities). Yet as we flip the calendar into 2011, I believe it's helpful to review the significant things that happened at Friedens Church in 2010. While it is unhealthy to dwell in the past, a clear understanding of what God has been doing recently will help clarify where He is leading us in the future. So, what happened in 2010?



Spiritual Growth

Since ministry is about people, it is appropriate to begin by looking at what God has been doing among the people at Friedens. From a "numbers" perspective, it was exciting to see 9 individuals take a significant step of obedience by being baptized, and 13 took a big step of commitment by becoming members of Friedens Church. On a deeper level, I've seen significant life transformation during 2010. From individuals making first-time commitments to Christ, to people stepping out of their comfort zone to pray aloud in a group for the first time, to mature Christians seeking a deeper understanding of the Bible, it is very encouraging to see God at work in people's lives. So, how does this help us see what's ahead? Well, since God's mission for us is to make disciples, we will continue to focus on intentionally helping people grow spiritually. We aren't going to be satisfied with simply "going through the motions" of "doing church." Whether a person is 9 years old or 90, our goal is to see them growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ.



Teamwork & Unity

During 2010, I have been very encouraged to see people pulling together to accomplish things that couldn't otherwise have happened. I think of the Spring Workday, when 45 people came together to transform the inside and outside of the church



building. I think of the youth room renovation, when volunteers saved the church hundreds of dollars by doing the work themselves. I think of the Forever Families event in October, when the church family pulled together for an incredibly successful and encouraging morning. Not only did we accomplish a lot in these activities, but people grew closer to one another. So, how does this help us see what's ahead? We desire to see everyone at Friedens connecting with one another in healthy ways, and we will work to see this happen. We will encourage you to be involved. We will passionately pursue unity within the church, which also means dealing directly with influences that undermine the church's unity.



Clear Communication

We took significant steps forward in 2010 in clearly communicating what is happening at Friedens. I specifically think of the *Friedens Connection* newsletter and our website. So, how does this help us see what's ahead? Since clear communication is essential for unity and for keeping our focus on our mission, we will continue to seek ways to communicate clearly in all we do.



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Intentionality

During 2010, we sought to increase our intentionality in making disciples. We started by crafting a new mission statement that centers us on the Gospel and defines a clear process for making disciples. We also became more intentional in our church activities. I think of the increased focus on the Good Friday service, Thanksgiving Praise & Pie, and the Baptism Picnic. One of the results is increased involvement: 180 people attended the 2010 Good Friday service, which is more than the previous three years combined! Over 100 people attended the Baptism Picnic, which combined the spiritual significance of baptism with edifying fellowship. In addition, Ignite and Blaze also became more intentional in their ministry. So, how does this help us see what's ahead? We are going to continue to seek intentionality in what we do. This means asking of everything the church does: "How does this help us make disciples?" If there is a way to improve a ministry's disciple-making effectiveness, we will seek to do so.

So as we look ahead to 2011, let's pray that God works powerfully in our midst to increasingly build us into a healthy, disciple-making church!

