

the word in twenty ten



2010

church leaders consider the new year

compiled by
Terrence A. Fossen and Timothy Willson

a word from the editors

A new year represents a fresh start, filled with opportunities and plans, and as 2010 started many of us took time to look at the big picture. At the start of a new year, we ask ourselves about our priorities, our habits, our goals, our relationships.

Church leaders have the added responsibility of thinking about the priorities and goals of a community, and in many pulpits there are January sermons that seek to cast a vision for this year.

We can't be at every church or hear every sermon, but we were curious about these messages, and fascinated by the similarities and differences between them. We invited a variety of church leaders to send us a summary of their key thoughts for this new year; we hope you will be challenged and encouraged as you recognize that a Sovereign God is at work among us, calling us anew to His purpose.

As we follow Him together, we know that this will truly be a happy new year.

Blessings,

Terry Fossen and Tim Willson
Taylor College and Seminary



TAYLOR
SEMINARY • COLLEGE • E P WAHL CENTRE

theWordintwentyten

choices | ken macdonald, terwilliger community church

We can be grateful for certain Seasons of Life which call us toward reflection. Reflection is good for the soul. We move quite quickly in our everyday journey so any opportunity to slow the RPM's and reflect is always good! Breaking into a brand New Year is occasion for reflection. We wonder what roads we will travel this year? Mostly we wonder about significance. Is my life significant? Do I make a difference for anyone? Am I making a difference for God? Where can I sharpen in 2010?

The theme for 2010 in worship is not exactly summarized with such questions...but I think they serve as drivers for what I sense God wants to say to us. As we move into 2010 the most accurate theme is *CHOICES!* I've come to appreciate that there is something even more important than our dreams: quite frankly, it is our choices! As we move into the year ahead, let's see what God wants to say to us through His Word with respect to "The Choice of Roads."

James 1:22

theWordintwentyten

*Ken MacDonald is the senior pastor at Terwilliger Community Church in Edmonton, AB (currently meeting on the Taylor campus).
ken@tcchurch.ca*

just, for jesus | terry fossen, taylor college and seminary

Hanging in my office is a framed album cover (from the early 1980's) featuring Keith Green's provocative lyrics *'no empty words; no white lies; no token prayers; no compromise'*. Needless to say, Keith Green's prophetic voice still reverberates uncomfortably true into our consciousness; his thoughts cut, unceremoniously, into our private lives. I used to think that Keith Green was employing a bit of a 'hyperbole' when lining up *'empty words & white lies & token prayers'* as veritable 'equals'. I don't think that anymore. In fact, I am convinced that this world's dearth of attentiveness to the transformative 'things' of our Lord is directly correlated to faith 'words' from lives with no faith 'substance.'

As I peer into the year (even the decade) ahead, my expectations remain somewhat 'blurred' by the 'mists' of 'missed' possibilities. All I can see, for sure, are those tangible, waiting opportunities to *act justly & to love mercy & to walk humbly with God.*

Micah 6:8

theWordintwentyten

Dr. Terry Fossen is Vice-President of Taylor College and Seminary in Edmonton, AB. He has served as a senior pastor for over 20 years, and has served on the mission field in Nigeria. He can be reached at Terry.Fossen@Taylor-Edu.ca.

doers of the word | jeremy putz / central baptist church

Each year we gather together as pastors and staff to slow down enough to hear God's direction for our church. Each year I am amazed (although I shouldn't be) by the power, the clarity, and more than anything the consistency with which the Holy Spirit speaks. Last spring as we met together, the Spirit spoke a similar thing to each person involved. He was saying to us, "It's time to get rolling. It's time to put the rubber to the road. It's time to move past being listeners into being doers. It's time to act." Jesus teaches (at the end of his Sermon on the Mount) that we are a privileged people, but that we need to be careful with how we steward such privilege. Our privilege is that we have the Word of God, the teaching of Jesus Christ himself. We have the textbook for life from the creator of life. The stewardship question is, "What will we do with that textbook?" Jesus says if we decide to implement it, we will be like the man who builds his house on a foundation. If we don't implement it, if we hear Jesus' teaching but we don't live it, if we hear the words that could give us life but we choose instead to stay in the place of death, then we are like one who builds his house on the beach. When the storms come, and they will--they come to all of us--when the storms come, our house, our life, our eternity, everything about our existence will shatter to pieces and be washed out to sea. Wow. James says (1:22), "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." Don't just hear it; do it. You've been offered life; don't choose death. *Father, may this be the year that your church in Edmonton, in Canada, in North America and throughout the world moves past the place of hearing to the place of doing, to the place of obedience. May this be the year that I move to the place of obedience.*

James 1:22

theWordintwentyten

Jeremy Putz is Senior Pastor at Central Baptist Church in Edmonton, AB, and is an alumnus of Taylor Seminary.

www.centralbaptist.ab.ca | jeremyputz@gmail.com

God works for good | ryan cochran / Ebenezer Baptist

The providence of God works for good in our lives as we seek him, in prayer, for the purposes he is calling us toward.

In summary, this is what I am sharing with my congregation to start 2010: We are looking at the story of Joseph (from the book of Genesis), which is a story about God's providential work in Joseph's life which led to God's blessing for Joseph, for Israel, and for all the nations.

As we seek out God's purposes for our lives, in prayer, and ask him to empower us to live out those purposes, then we can be confident that God will "work out all things for good" for us, in seasons of joy and suffering.

Rom. 8:28

theWordintwentyten

*Ryan Cochran is Senior Pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Vancouver, BC.
ryancochran@rockofhelp.com / www.rockofhelp.com*

my sheep hear my voice | lee bertsch / zion baptist

From blogs to books to seminars, there is no shortage of ideas when it comes to good things for our church to do this year. Our culture adds its voice to the mix urging us to think and feel and respond to things a certain way. There are also our own inclinations pushing us this way and that.

Jesus remains the *Lord of Life* and the *Head of our Church*. Even if it is not always the first word, he must have the last word. So, we must learn to be better listeners to him, to become more familiar with the language of God and with the tone of his voice through the scripture, to find quiet spaces.

"He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (*The Revelation of John*).

John 10:27

theWordintwentytens

Lee Bertsch is senior pastor of Zion Baptist Community Church, and is an alumnus of Taylor Seminary.

lee@zbcc.ca / www.zbcc.ca

yes! | tom anderst / sturgeon valley baptist church

Back to school, back to work, back to bills, back to “reality.” As I look forward into 2010 I could get my heart rate up to 190 by piling on all I “need” to do or by considering all the uncertainties before me. I then look at the New Year with an “Oh, no!” attitude.

But that won't do me (or those around me) much good. Instead, I need to give this year and all of its potential to the Lord. I need to trust Him to lead me. I need to stop and think about Psalm 99:1 – “The Lord reigns.” Yes, Lord.

So what does that mean for me? Where do you want me to focus? Lead me and I'll follow. You know so much better what it is that I really need to do. You will unfold the uncertainties one step at a time. *Thanks Lord that I don't (we don't) have to go into 2010 alone.*

A New Year – Oh, Yes!

Psalm 99:1

theWordintwentyten

Tom Anderst is senior pastor of Sturgeon Valley Baptist Church in St. Albert, AB; he is a graduate of the University of Calgary, Taylor Seminary and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

pastortom@svbc.ab.ca / www.svbc.ab.ca

rightly-oriented | travis wilkins / north pointe community

This year, my desire is to experience God like I never have before in my life. In order for that to happen, there are some things that have to change in my life, a mind-set that has to change so that I can experience him to the fullest. Often times we fall into the trap of thinking that we have to behave a certain way to earn God's favor. That's backwards! We don't earn our relationship with God; He's taken the initiative to pursue a love relationship with us, and extends an invitation for us to join with Him in His work. However, there is a lifestyle we can live that enables us to experience the fullness of what God wants to do in our lives.

In order for us to be rightly-oriented to God and His work, we need to live a God-centered life. If you're like me, you face that constant struggle between being self-centered and God-centered; the essence of sin is the shift from a *God-centered* life to a *self-centered* life. On the flip side, the essence of salvation is when our lives are focused on God.

God-Centered Living is characterized by:

- Confidence in God* (He is our provider, and we can depend on Him),
- Being Focused on God and His Activity* (listening for His voice, asking how we can be about His business), and
- Humility* (God does great things, not so we can be elevated, but so that He can be lifted up).

So, my question is this: *What do I need to be rightly-oriented to God?*

Matt. 6:33

theWordintwentyten

Travis Wilkins is a member of the pastoral team at North Pointe Community Church in Edmonton, AB. Travis says this sermon was inspired by (and adapted, in part) from Henry Blackaby's best-selling book, Experiencing God.
twilkins@northpointechurch.ca / www.northpointechurch.ca

your own true friend | john stackhouse / regent college

William Law (1686–1761) is not one of my favourite spiritual writers; I find him too “heroic,” an impossibly demanding combination of moralist and mystic. Surprisingly, then, as I have been re-reading David L. Jeffrey’s superb anthology of 18C writers, *A Burning and a Shining Light: English Spirituality in the Age of Wesley*, I came across this line, at once stirring and comforting, in Law’s great tract, *A Practical Treatise on Christian Perfection*: “Be but your own true friend.”

As we are now well into the new year, my prayer for myself and for you is that we will treat ourselves properly, as our own true friend. Of course we need true friends, not just imaginary ones! Of course we need counsel from others more expert, more insightful, less biased, and less sinful than ourselves. Amen and hallelujah for such company! Still, wherever you go, at least there you are. And if, as I think it’s Parker Palmer who puts it this way, “You are the gift you have to give to the world,” how are you stewarding that gift? With a whip? With high-fructose corn syrup? Or with wisdom and love?

I know, I know: With a few semantic moves, Law’s advice becomes a sappy, syrupy New Agey bromide: “Be your own best friend!!!” One needs to dot the “I” in “friend” with a tiny flower or heart and the outrage is complete. Nonetheless, Law’s older English and his temperate use of “true” rings true to me. “*Be a true friend to yourself.*” What would you want from a truly good friend? Treat yourself that way. If stern old William Law can say it to us, we certainly can say it to ourselves.

Prov. 14:8

theWordintwentyten

Dr. John Stackhouse is a renowned scholar and a popular speaker; he currently holds the Sangwoo Youtong Chee Chair of Theology and Culture at Regent College. You can read more from Dr. Stackhouse at his excellent blog: <http://stackblog.wordpress.com/>

the Spirit's presence | lawrence schmidt / renaissance

We have started 2010 with some clarity on two sermon themes that will likely take our church well into the spring season, past Easter.

The first will be a sermon series on the Holy Spirit. This series will outline the role of the Holy spirit, His importance in the life of the believer, and how our church can pursue the Spirit's presence in our individual lives and in the life of our church body.

The second series of 2010 will examine what scripture says about the end times. Reflecting on various views and how scripture intersects with our current world condition and position in history.

John 16:13

theWordintwentyten

Lawrence Schmidt is senior pastor of Renaissance Community Church in Edmonton, AB, and is an alumnus of Taylor Seminary.

lawrence@renaissancechurch.ca / www.renaissancechurch.ca

holding God's hand | robert sandford / riverbend baptist

Series on prayer to start the year; spending some time talking about the call to hospitality for God's people; and then coming to Easter with a strong emphasis on evangelism by focusing on the "seven words of Christ" from the cross. Not sure where God is going to take us from there yet - I'll just trust the Lord to make that clear in the coming days!

Prov. 3:5-6

theWordintwentyten

Robert Sandford is pastor of Riverbend Baptist Church in Edmonton, AB; he is an alumnus of Taylor Seminary.

riverbendbaptist@telus.net

moving ahead together | darren platt / steele heights

What is the purpose, vision and values of our church?

- *passionate devotion to God
- *refining character, calling and competency
- *unleashing compassion
- *reproducing people of faith
- *promoting Godly order
- *living beyond ourselves
- *building relationships that matter

Heb. 10:24-25
Matt. 5:14-16

theWordintwentytwo

Darren Platt is the senior pastor of Steele Heights Baptist Church in Edmonton, AB; he is an alumnus of Taylor Seminary.
darren@shbc.ca / www.shbc.ca

TAYLOR

*developing Christ-minded leaders
who make a difference in the world*

www.TaylorSeminary.ca

© 2010 Taylor College and Seminary. All Rights Reserved.

This e-book may be freely copied, printed, posted online or otherwise shared
as long as there is no charge, and as long as all content
(including credits and this copyright notice) remains complete and unchanged.