



Family Renewal Initiative

www.familyrenewalinitiative.org

Bimonthly Newsletter

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Christmas: Not All Experiences Are Equal!!

I view Christmas through rose-colored glasses. How about you?

For me, many Christmases past have included snow, warm fires in the fireplace, large and loving family gatherings, Christmas eve services, beautiful Christmas trees and most of all, a family who loved and supported each other.

But I know that families are as diverse as cultures and that my experience may be closer to the ideal than the norm. Many of you have not had the rich experience of a loving family. Christmas may bring about stress, rather than “comfort and joy”. For you, I pray that as adopted Children of the King, that you are experiencing more of the joy of the true meaning of Christmas than you have had in the past. May the Father who so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him would have everlasting life, grant you the Joy of Christmas as you rejoice in Him.

Sadly, many, many families will have even more stressful Christmases this year than many of us have had. Hundreds of broken families, single moms and dads and hurting children in the Eastern Panhandle will struggle with anger issues,

drug addiction, job loss, ill health, and homelessness while we prepare for our family celebrations. There are individuals and families around us who have gotten involved with things that they shouldn't and feel like there is no hope. They are operating in survival mode, because they don't see any other options. They may be from dysfunctional homes where survival mode was the norm. These desperate people have no one to turn to and may have never experienced a loving Christian family or how it cares for one another.

The Family Renewal Initiative wants to change that! Our Loving Father has commanded us to minister to hurting people with love and even sacrifice. Our Example, Jesus Christ, would extend a hand to these families and their children and would share the Good News that we are all sinners, but that we can be adopted by the King of the Universe. He paid the price for our sins with the blood of His Son. We believe that many people in the local church want to help hurting people, but they don't know any. We believe that now is the time for the FRI to put loving Christians in contact with hurting and hopelessly lost sinners (like we were!). Our

goal is to minister to their physical needs while living out a joyful Christian life and sharing our testimonies with them.

How can you help? I'm glad that you asked!

We need Christians who see what we see, that the fields are white unto harvest. We need you!! We need families who have an extra bedroom to host children for short terms while families work with our professional staff to resolve crises in their lives. We call these Host Families.

We need Support Friends who may be able to donate a bed or clothes or a ride to a doctor's appointment or a variety of other needs. We need Volunteer Church Coordinators, who help to coordinate FRI activities within the local church and its volunteer.

We need people that we call Family Friends who can minister both to the Host Family and to those being

helped. See “Hosting is Not for You?” on the next page.

In short, if you believe that God has called us to minister to the broken and the hurting and if you realize that this is a real and growing population in our society, we need YOU!

FRI is burdened for the many families that will have a sad, lonely, cold, and empty celebration of the birth of the Christ child this year. We are actively seeking to help, but we can't do it without you. Wouldn't it be wonderful if, because you opened your heart to others this Christmas and in the coming year, there was a family who came in from the cold and could celebrate next year as Adopted Children of the King? Please join us.

Contact Illona Roman at 304-620-2788 OR send an email to Info@FamilyRenewalInitiative.org to express interest and to hear about next steps. Thanks, and may you and yours enjoy a warm and blessed Christmas celebration this year!

Terry Smathers, Board Chair



Hosting is Not For You? How about Being A Family Friend?

Friends, we know that hosting children or small families is not for everyone. Many don't have an extra room to minister to children for a few weeks or months. We also know that not everyone's gifts and passions fit this specific role in the FRI ministry.

Does that mean that you can't be a part of our ministry? ***Certainly not!*** Let me tell you how you can use your gifts of mercy, hospitality, exhortation, and evangelism to serve in Jesus' Name.

Family Friends serve in many ways. One Family Friend had the privilege of befriending a man whose wife had taken his stepdaughter and moved away. The man had a daughter at home and needed help because he had to work. A host family hosted the daughter and this Friend reached out to establish a relationship with the man, listening to his life story and understanding his situation. The Friend had the opportunity to share his testimony and eventually the Gospel. These men met four times before the father and daughter rejoined their family.

While the man didn't receive Jesus as his Savior, he heard the Good News. He heard the difference that salvation can make in a life, and he saw the love of the Family of God lived out to his whole family.

Family Friends can also serve the host families! If you have the gifts of mercy and/or helps, you can provide a few hours of childcare to give a break to the host family. You can provide a meal, deliver groceries or take coffee to the parents and listen to them or serve them in other creative ways. All these things provide real-life, hands-on assistance to people who have never seen the love of Jesus Christ demonstrated.

We need Family Friends. Can you help? I believe that you will be blessed greatly, and you may provide the link to the Family of God that someone needs to have their life transformed. Please call Illona Roman at 304-620-2788 or email info@FamilyRenewalInitiative.org. May God bless you!

Two Families Need Help Right Now!!!!

We are ministering to two families this Christmas season who can use our help. One family has 3 girls, ages 3, 4 & 16 while another family has 2 ½ year old twins. For specific items that are needed, such as clothing, dolls, booster seats, etc., please contact Illona at 304-620-2788 or via email at Illona.Roman@FamilyRenewalInitiative.org. Your thoughtfulness can comfort a family in need this Christmas!

Drink GREAT Coffee, Give Great Christmas Gifts and Support Family Renewal Initiative!

FRI has teamed up with a nonprofit coffee roaster called Gobena! Board members have enjoyed Gobena for years and now, we invite you to join us and to support the Family Renewal Initiative at the same time. If you order Gobena coffee **through this link** (<https://my.gobena.org/stories/family-renewal-initiative/?id=794>) **(IMPORTANT – Only this link will support FRI)**, FRI will receive 50% of your purchase. Please try this great coffee, bless your family and friends with it this Christmas and support the FRI, all at the same time! Thanks!

Would You Remember Hurting Families In Your Year End Giving?

Would you consider a one-time gift or even a monthly gift for the coming year? Your generous gift would allow us to minister to hurting families in Jesus' Name through the local church. Go to: www.FamilyRenewalInitiative.org and click on the donate button. God bless you!

Receive our Bimonthly Newsletter Online!

If you picked this newsletter locally and you don't want to miss it in the future, let us know!
Email: info@FamilyRenewalInitiative.org and your newsletter will come to you directly and hot off the press!

We wish you and your family

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year !!!!!!!!!