

The Tozour Times

News from 2016

Glancing Back

At the start of every new year, we take time to glance back at the year just past. 2016 was a year of blessings, challenges, and answered prayers.

It seems incomprehensible that Angela and I launched out into evangelism in June of 1994. How quickly twenty-two-plus years have passed! In these two decades, we've been privileged to be in every state and to preach in all but four or five of them (This past year we ministered in twenty-one states.). Serving the Savior, preaching the Good News, fellowshiping with Christians all across the land, and enjoying the benefits of travel—it's hard for us to imagine a more blessed life!



Growing Up

Angela and I celebrated twenty-three years of marriage in May. Then I crossed a personal milestone in October: my 50th birthday! We were in New Jersey where I grew up and were able to celebrate with some dear family friends. Rather than focusing on the aches and pains that creep up and the extra pounds that collect, I meditated on the statement in 2 Corinthians 4:16 that “though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” Here’s a thought: Your body may be breaking down, but—if you’re a Christian—your inner man can be stronger and healthier with each passing day! It’s a worthwhile endeavor to be “nourished up in the words of faith” (1 Tim. 4:6) and to “exercise [oneself]...unto godliness” (1 Tim. 4:8). With age can come wisdom and godliness.

As we parents advance in age, it’s a joy to see our children develop in stature and spiritual growth. I often joke, “We’ve got a big family—only three kids; but our oldest girl is six feet, our second daughter is 6’2”, and our third—well, she’s four feet...’cause she’s only six!”



Briana (20) is in her junior year at Pensacola Christian College studying graphic design. She is really maturing in her walk with the Lord and is developing the gifts He gave her. She’s been doing free-lance design work for some of our pastor friends and churches we’ve ministered in over the years. We sure miss her at home!

Heather (17) is a junior in high school. In addition to keeping up with her home-school studies (at least five or six hours daily), Heather helps Angela each night in the children’s meetings. She leads singing, plays here ukulele for accompaniment, runs the games, makes balloon figures for the kids, and genuinely loves those children in class. She’s a delight to her parents and a super older sis to Lanae.

Lanae (6) started kindergarten back in August. She’s excited to be learning how to read. In fact, she’s excited about nearly everything! (This is the child who hasn’t taken naps since she got beyond infancy.) She loves to set her stuffed animals around the table with her during school. They are her classmates.

Angela is the backbone of the family. I am so very grateful for the bride the Lord gave me and for the mother she is to our daughters. She’s the secretary for our ministry, the children’s worker in our services, the accountant, the school teacher, the spiritual counselor and tutor for the kids, etc. She has so many roles; I don’t know how she juggles all of them. How glad I am for this “help” God made suited just for me!

Going Abroad

One of my earnest prayers for 2016 was that the Lord would open the doors to us for missions endeavors overseas. Our Father was gracious to grant **two** such trips.

With our Briana being in college, she doesn't get to travel much nowadays. When a friend of mine offered me some "buddy-pass" privileges with Delta Airlines, I thought of our church missionaries in **England**. Joshua and Melissa Booth have been in our church since their youth. They now serve at Congleton Baptist in a town about forty-five minutes south of Manchester. In July, Briana and I used the flight privileges to spend a week with the Booths.

Our main ministry was to encourage our friends and to help anyway we could. Preaching was limited to one service, but we were able to assist with preparation for their approaching Holiday Bible Club (like VBS in America). Briana used her artistic abilities to create wall decorations for their Olympics-themed outreach.

We also really enjoyed doing some touring and sightseeing with Josh and Melissa. Briana was able to experience both **Wales** and **Scotland** for the first time (We went to Conwy Castle in Wales and Edinburgh Castle in Scotland.). We were profoundly impressed by the captivating beauty of the landscape in the U.K. and the dire spiritual needs of the British people.



Right after Thanksgiving, the rest of the family and I took a two-week trip to **New Zealand**. Another family sent out of Eagle Heights Baptist (our home church) serves at Victory Baptist in Ashburton, New Zealand, on the South Island. Our missionaries, Mike and Nancy Grove, had us come to head up a family conference at their church. We were partnering with a group from home that included Pastor and Mrs. Franseen, Nancy Grove's parents, our friend Sherry Kruger, and Duncan Aldridge (a home-schooler who was able to come for his senior trip).

During the family conference, our pastor and I preached. Angela and our daughter Heather headed up the children's ministry. Everybody helped with set-up and cleanup in the school where the church meets. Even Lanae, our six-year-old, swept, vacuumed, and served however she could!

Another way we were able to serve was by "letterboxing." Anyone can put materials into mailboxes (letterboxes) in New Zealand. Our team covered many city blocks in Ashburton putting the Gospel of John and book of Romans booklets into mail slots. One visit really stood out to me. There was a crowd of twenty-somethings gathered on the street at a drinking party. I approached them and said, "I'm giving out Bibles for Christmas. May I give you one?" About ten or so gathered around me, and seven or eight of them took the Scripture. (This was unusual because the Kiwis are not typically open to conversations about spiritual matters). One guy said, "You're from America? You've been here for one week, and you're out here giving out this message when you could be home drinking or partying instead? This must be important to you!" I said, "Yes, it's the most important news in the world. One day you'll wish you had made it your top priority. I hope you'll read what I've given you." I then showed him how to use the marked edition of the John/Romans book. He said he would read it. I've prayed much for that crowd since we met.



In addition to ministry (which included five or six public school Bible clubs), we were able to do a good bit of touring. All of us agreed that New Zealand is one of the most beautiful places we've ever seen! From majestic snow-capped mountains to glacier-blue rivers and quaint harbor towns, the country is a feast for the eyes. Lanae especially enjoyed seeing yellow-eyed penguins unique to this land.

Gaining Ground

In the year ahead, we will cover much territory. We'll start in the Southeast (Hey, birds have enough sense to head south for the winter!), be in the Mid-Atlantic states come spring, and then spend seven weeks in Hawaii this summer (That's for six different churches, **not** for condo shopping. ☺) By late summer and autumn, we will be in the West, spending 2 ½ months in California.

We'd love to see you along the way (check out our itinerary at tozourministries.org). Above all, would you pray for us? Ask the Lord for souls, spreading of the Gospel, spiritual growth, safety, and sustenance. We are grateful for your friendship over the years and for your partnering with us. May the Lord bless each of you in 2017.