

# The Tozour Times

## News from 2020

### *Covid, Chaos, and Crisis*



With the start of a new year, many churches were announcing their themes for the next twelve months ahead. Since this was 2020, few could resist developing a theme related to “vision”: a 20/20 perspective, Clear Vision for the Coming Year, Seeing as He Sees, etc. But we had not gotten a quarter into the year before circumstances crumpled the plans!

The year started off with an impeachment effort against the President. Then came COVID-19, followed by riots in various major cities, and culminating with an election that completely flipped in the wee hours of the morning (after the election). The corona virus did more to shape 2020 than any events this year (with the possible exception of the election).

Crowd sizes became extremely limited, masks became mandatory in many states or cities, and “social distancing”—a previously unheard of term—became “common speak” in America. Churches were particularly hard-hit as they were forced to limit crowd sizes or close doors and to resort to live stream and video uploads. 20/20 vision morphed into “adaptive refocusing.”

Amidst all of these things, we are so very grateful for the extra time we have enjoyed together as a family—bike rides, walks through the woods, playing games, visiting a drive-thru safari where we were able to feed lots of animals (including giraffes!), etc. Some very special memories have been made this year for sure!

### *Creative Coping with Crises*

Churches figured out quickly that technology was the key to communicating the Gospel message during distancing demands. For evangelists, many found themselves “unemployed” as revival meetings were cancelled. By God’s grace, we did not miss ANY meetings in 2020 except for camps (about six weeks) and one church in Canada.

It was amazing how we could carry on during lockdowns! Many churches did Facebook Live posts or video feeds. The week of Easter Sunday, I preached at a rural church in the mountains of Pennsylvania. We did drive-in services on Easter (when most churches in the world were closed)! We estimated 100 people present in vehicles as I preached from a flatbed trailer.

The same week, I commuted to a church 100 miles away where I recorded seven different messages in two days (changing outfits between each sermon). These messages would be broadcast the next week, saving me from driving back up from Virginia.

A couple of meetings were done by pre-recording in one state and uploading the video for meetings in another state. Through it all, though we had fewer meetings than normal this year, the giving was more generous than ever! Truly, our Father is Jehovah-jireh (the Lord our Provider).



## *Calendar Keepsakes*

Despite the challenges of 2020, there were some definite highpoints for our family.

- Pastor Franseen's retirement  
On March 8<sup>th</sup>, I was privileged to preach a retirement charge for our senior pastor, Bob Franseen. Pastor had served our church for over 30 years, starting as a Christian school teacher, then serving as school principal, then assistant pastor, eventually interim pastor, and ultimately senior pastor for over a dozen years. How glad we were to honor Bob and Pat Franseen!
- Pastor Bryan Shaffer's inauguration  
In the middle of March, our church welcomed Bryan Shaffer as the new pastor of Eagle Heights Baptist Church. Pastor Bryan grew up in the Kansas City area and has a true burden to reach souls in Kansas City. Imagine the challenge for him, his wife Vanessa, and their two young children coming to a new church just as COVID was entering the scene!
- Lanae Tozour's baptism



On May 24<sup>th</sup>, while at our home church, I had the privilege to baptize our youngest daughter, Lanae. She was nine years old at the time, and it was a joy recounting how she had trusted Christ as her Savior when she was five years old. What a delight it was to have her beg me to baptize her "the next time we go home"! Her grandparents, the Wessberg cousins, and Aunt Candace were there to witness this special event.

- Mom and Dad Wessberg's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
The week Lanae was baptized, the Wessberg siblings (Angela, Lanissa, and Michael) were able to get together with their families to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of their parents. Lars and Phyllis Wessberg were not only married a half century ago, but they also launched out into full-time ministry at that time. We all gathered at Michael and Candace's home for many days of fun and memories.



## *Concluding a Crazy Calendar Year*



My mom fell and broke her hip in July (during a Tozour family reunion week). In the hospital, we learned that Mom has very advanced cancer (breast, lungs, etc). With COVID slowdowns, we kids have been able to spend lots of extra time with her. She is handling the battle very well despite its toll on her.

More than any other message this year, I have preached from Psalm 91, "In the Habitation of the Most High." I've wanted to remind people that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7) He is our Refuge, our Fortress, our Shield and Buckler. We need not fear disease, destruction, disruptions, or devious politicians. Our God is in the heavens, and He rules over all the

dominions of men! Let us trust Him more than ever as we turn the page of a new calendar year. We serve a faithful Savior!