

So what is Joel doing if he is not traveling?

Good question.

Yes, what I (Joel) am doing has changed greatly because of COVID. My last trip to anywhere was with Jeannie to Nicaragua in March, just a week before the COVID lockdown. In normal times I would have made at least a half a dozen trips since then and most of them would have been to destinations outside of the U.S.

So, if I am not traveling, what am I doing with my time? Let me give you a simple answer and then a more complex response.

The simple answer. ZOOM.

Zoom has allowed me to do virtually much of what I would have done in person before. In May I and others had planned a trip to a country in East Asia to encourage our Gospel workers and discern with them how the God might be inviting us to join the Spirit in new ways. Instead, we did this review virtually. In at least one sense it was better than it would have been if we had travelled to the region. Zoom allowed us to interview more people and get a broader range of perspectives. But we missed being present with people!

Learning from Rwanda

Zoom has also allowed us to do things we might never have considered before the pandemic. One of the challenges that the church in North America faces today is that of increasing polarization along cultural, racial and even political lines. In this we have so much to learn from the church in the rest of the world. Maybe, in particular from the church in Rwanda.

In 1994 there was a horrific genocide in Rwanda. At least half a million Tutsi's were murdered by the Hutu's. One of the greatest tragedies of this genocide is the fact that the majority of people on both sides were Christians. Yet out of this tragedy has come a compelling witness to



the power of Gospel-centered healing and reconciliation. The learning from Rwanda is now part of a workshop called "Healing Hearts, Transforming Nations." Healing Hearts, Transforming Nations has spread from Rwanda to many other countries in Africa as well as to Eastern Europe. Resonate missionary George DeVuyst is one of the international leaders for the workshop.

So what has zoom allowed us to do? George DeVuyst has dreamed for many years about how the workshop might also serve the church in North America. Now that dream is coming true. We are doing a series of five webinars to introduce the workshop to the church in North America. Next fall, we hope to do the first in person workshops in the U.S. and Canada. If you would like to register for the remaining webinars (next one is November 25) just fill out this registration form and we will send you the zoom link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZvxoAZpSv_jsnxib7_1hwzX_WPfMDgF8fglunfvuAYc-7RQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

The More Complex Response

Now the more complex response to what I (Joel) am doing.

The deeper response that I am spending a lot of time,

as I am sure each of you are, asking difficult questions. Difficult questions like: What might God be doing in this time which seems to bring us crisis after crisis? How might the Spirit be inviting the church to join in the Father's purposes and intentions? What does all of this mean for the role of mission agency I am part of, Resonate Global Mission? What does it mean for Jeannie and I on a personal level?

Of this much I am sure. We need to ask those questions from the right perspective. We need to ask those questions from a perspective of faith in the Good News of Jesus. We need to start from the premise the God remains faithful to his promise to make "all things new" in Christ.

Throughout Scripture when God's people were ready to give up hope God intervened and revealed completely new beginnings. I wonder if God is teaching us that in every crisis there is an opportunity for God to act creatively and reveal a deeper truth than we can see on the surface.

That is a little of what I am doing. I suspect it is also a little of what each of you are doing. I think we might even be called to do that together!

- Joel

- Good health
- More students for Jeannie as she teaches English virtually to children in China.

PRAYER:

- Believers in China who face growing restrictions on their activities.
- Healing and reconciliation across the divisions in the church both in North America and across the world as witness to our one Lord.



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