

New Roots Review

June 2020 Edition

What's Your Vantage Point? by Fred Wilgenburg



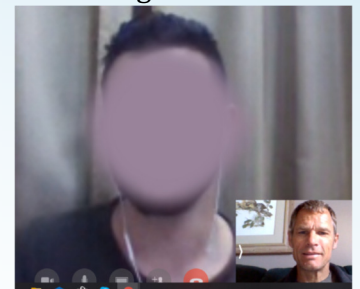
**NEW ROOTS
MINISTRY**

Has the whole world at one time ever been more anxious?! Technology, including computers, internet, and modern travel, has created a global society. There have been many upsides to that for me, like being able to befriend people in India, Syria, and Egypt through Facebook video chatting, and to be able to host remote-classes and events through Zoom (*most of the pictures in this newsletter*). One major downside is the potential for global pandemics, like COVID-19.

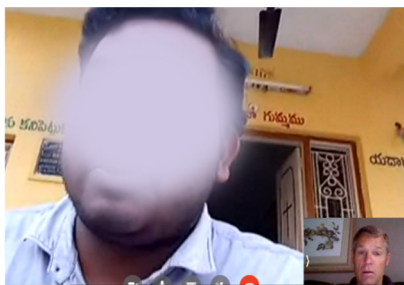


What are the different reactions to COVID-19? Much of that depends on your vantage point, on your perspective, on your point of view. Depending on where you live in the world or here in the US, it has been especially scary as there have been so many illnesses and deaths. For others, it has been a major, perhaps devastating, disturbance on life due to blanketed isolation-requirements on seemingly healthy people, causing loneliness and boredom for some, troubled relationships for others, and financial hardship for many.

Again, what are the different reactions? I have heard from many who have been afraid of physically catching COVID-19, or of seeing a vulnerable loved one catching it. As the chaplain at Smithfield Foods Sioux Falls, which was being described in April by major news networks as the COVID-19 “hot spot,” employees had good reason to be afraid as those testing positive seemed to increase by about a 100-a-day.



As a person of faith, though in my humanity I get anxious too, I know God is bigger than COVID-19. God, the great engineer of our bodies, designed things within us, like white blood cells, to help the body fight infection and disease, and God has given amazing intellect to medical professionals to understand biology and its fine details like genes and DNA. And, not only is God bigger than COVID-19, but I believe he is personal and loving, so he hears and answers prayers of people on behalf of COVID-19. And then, if I would catch COVID-19 and I were to even die of it, I will still be okay as I learn from Romans 8:35-39 that in Christ Jesus, nothing, including death, can separate me from the love of God. In essence, Philipians 1:21 tells me that I will not only be okay in death, but good—“For to me, —>



I have been video chatting on Facebook with this Indian pastor/new friend. He learned English in Bible college so we communicate easily. As 90% of his village is Hindu, he likes the moral support of a fellow Christian pastor. I like hearing about his work while he walks around his house, introducing me to family. *(Interested in knowing how to make these contacts? Just let me know.)*

This young man is one of 9 Mid-eastern (Syrian, Kurdish, Egyptian) friends of mine. We speak every 1-2 weeks by Facebook videochat, and we do some written communication, in helping him learn English better, and in blessing me by learning about his culture, religion, and goals. Often the conversations warmly touch on our faiths and we pray together. Eight of them are Muslim and one is a Christian. *(Interested in knowing how to make these contacts? Please let me know.)*



Donations are always appreciated!

Gifts can be given through the mail, or through our website—www.sfnewroots.com/donate/

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in this together,” usually from celebrities and news people who are sincerely seeking to be kind and helpful. But, that statement is only partly true. They often say that from a vantage point of much wealth or of remaining busy in a job. We hear others, usually physicians or government leaders, prescribing that we stay shut-down longer, and that health is always more important than other things of value, as they too say, “we’re in this together.” Well, again, that’s easier to say when your “other things of value” are well-protected and you have plenty of work. A faith-filled friend told me something which has stuck with me. She said, “Fred, we’re living in days of manna.” She got that from Exodus 16 of the Bible, when God gave his people, who were on an exodus in the desert, just enough manna (bread) and quail each day to get by. Perhaps these days of pandemic-effects can be “days of manna” for each of us, days of serious, personal reliance on God. Though that’s a vantage point we can each pursue, we can together encourage and pray for each other in attaining that. I write this, sensitive to the fact that not everyone has my vantage point, you know, the one of the 50-year old guy described above.

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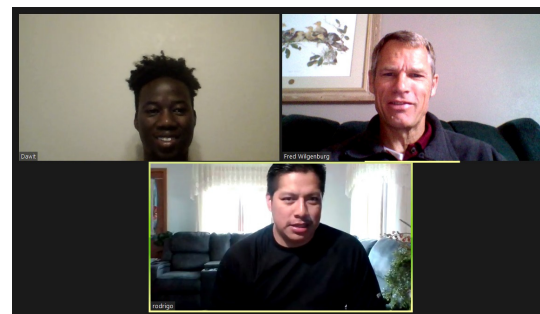
to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” I admit, my vantage point as a 50-year old guy who’s three daughters are out of the house and married is quite different from when I was a 30-year old young dad and husband, in the beginning stages of the development of a non-profit. While I’m not desiring death, because I enjoy living, whenever death comes, and it will as eventually the mortality rate reaches 100%, I will be okay, in Jesus. To read more about that, just click this link:

www.PeaceWithinReach.com/searching-consider-this/

On TV, we hear a lot of, “we’re all

What is New Roots Ministry?

It’s “a springboard for immigrants & their churches.” This is done through workplace chaplaincy (both as Fred is chaplain for 17 hours/week at Smithfield Foods & as we train & place bi-lingual chaplains on commercial farms), through Timothy Leadership Training, through hosting special educational events, through empowering refugee/immigrant pastors, leaders, and their churches, through offering unique Service Opportunities—serve in, or visit, stores owned by refugees or immigrants, then hear their stories, and through helping people navigate the American system and strategically achieve their goals, like education.



Doing Timothy Leadership Training classes by Zoom, rather than in person, isn’t quite the same, but it works..



Our “Church Between Borders” event ended up going virtual. It offered biblical insight, as well as a fresh way to talk about immigration, building community, and learning how to extend justice and mercy to our neighbors. Thank-you for the leadership offered by the CRC’s Office of Social Justice. If you would like video recordings of the 3 sessions, please email us.