

REIMAGINE THAT

World Mission: New Realities, Same Conviction

by Al Tizon, p. 44

To stay current in an ever-shifting culture, the church is being challenged to reconceive its approach to global missions. Serve Globally leader Al Tizon outlines seven convictions as a guide for how we make more disciples among more populations in a more just and caring world.

1. What experience have you had with world missions, either through your own service or in support of someone close to you?
2. Where do you get your news? If “awareness of the world around us is key to a truly faithful, engaged and relevant life,” how do you incorporate your knowledge of current events into your life as a disciple?
3. Tizon writes about churches that once received missionaries and are now sending their own missionaries. Have you seen or heard about these changes? What can we learn in our own setting from the global church?
4. What are your thoughts about Tizon’s statement that there may be “a correlation between the increase of short-term mission groups and the decrease of long-term missionaries”?
5. Today mission is both local and global. In what ways does your church minister “globally”?

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Theological Education: Seminary Disrupted

by Kurt N. Fredrickson, p. 54

Kurt Fredrickson explores how to reimagine theological education in a changing and increasingly diverse ministry world.

1. What training did you undergo to prepare for your current occupation?
2. How do you think long-distance, technology-driven educational opportunities will affect the formation of seminary students?
3. Making an analogy to our need for well-trained physicians to care for our bodies, Fredrickson says that we likewise need well-trained leaders in the church. In what ways do you think your church community could facilitate the training of your rising leaders?
4. Which of Fredrickson's thoughts on theological education do you find the most compelling? What did you learn from this article?
5. What are your thoughts about David Nyvall's analogy of the anchor and the sail to illustrate education at North Park Theological Seminary? In what ways could it apply to other areas of your life?

American Lessons

by Mark Won, p. 38

A Navy chaplain's letter to his younger self on race, faith, and fatherhood.

1. Where did you live when you were in junior-high school? What was the racial and ethnic demographic of your school?
2. Mark Won found it difficult to believe that his children are facing the same prejudice he faced as a child. What changes have you seen in conversations about race in your lifetime? What do you think has stayed the same?
3. Why is it necessary for Won to advise his younger self to make friends with the humble and wise rather than the smart and successful? Can you name a friend who is humble and wise? What does humility and wisdom look like in that person?
4. Courage is the repeated advice throughout the article. When have you needed the reminder for courage in your life?
5. What part of the letter impacted you most?

No Longer a Stranger

by Craig Swanson, p. 64

How one church embraces hospitality to their neighbors.

1. Describe an encounter where you experienced a welcome from a stranger. What did they do that made you feel welcomed?
2. Craig Swanson's church uses the proximity of the high school across the street as an opportunity for hospitality. In what ways do you reach out to your neighborhood? What connections does your church have with its neighbors and the surrounding community?
3. What is the difference between a visitor and a guest? What do you do to make people feel more like a guest than a visitor when they come to your home?
4. Bible scholar C.E.B. Cranfield is quoted as saying, "One is not just to wait and take the stranger in, if he actually presents himself at the door, but to go out and look for those to whom one can show hospitality." When is it best to bring people through your doors to extend hospitality? What does hospitality look like outside the walls of the church?
5. The article ends with the image of a loving father with arms stretched wide, an image also used to describe Jesus on the cross. What is the cost of such "arms wide open" hospitality?

Compass Bearings/Inaugurating a New Season

by Gary Walter p. 37

ECC President Gary Walter outlines steps on how to better follow the Lamb, instead of political elephants or donkeys, as ambassadors of the kingdom of God.

1. Gary Walter calls us to discipleship over partisanship. Since the election in November, where have you seen people set aside their differences in favor of relationship?
2. The first step Walter suggests is to “proceed in humility born of confession and repentance.” In your experience, how does confession and repentance give birth to humility?
3. How can we better understand the pain of those hurt throughout this past election process?
4. What are some specific ways we could pray for those in governing leadership?
5. What are your thoughts about the difference between making a point and making a difference?

Reality

by Jelani Greenidge, p. 42

Columnist Jelani Greenidge explores fiction's impact on reality.

1. Jelani Greenidge mentions *Pitch* and *24* as two fictional television programs with elements that are close to being reality. What TV shows cause you to forget that their story is not actually true?
2. In Nehemiah 2, the king notices Nehemiah's lament and asks the prophet why he is distressed. When do you think it's best to wait to share your story until someone asks? When do you think we need to initiate telling our story?
3. Scripture is full of visceral stories that call us to action. Why is this so much more effective than a biblical to-do list? Why do you think we tend to skip the story and look for prescriptive answers instead?
4. In what ways does your church incorporate the gifts of artists and storytellers? What creative arts do you most often use to express yourself?
5. Greenidge says we need more stories. How does listening to stories influence your view of a hurting world?

Is God in Control?

by John E. Phelan Jr., p. 43

Columnist John E. Phelan Jr. shares post-election thoughts on the reign of Jesus.

1. Name a person who has authority over you. What do you do when your opinion differs from theirs?
2. John E. Phelan Jr. claims the statement, “Whatever happens, Jesus is still in control,” is both true and dangerously naïve and irresponsible. What are your thoughts about Jesus’s reign in today’s world?
3. Phelan explains how his fatalistic upbringing looked toward the rapture. How do you respond when you hear people talking about signs and omens signaling the end times? Have you heard such predictions in relation to the current political climate?
4. Name one way that you see your church acting like salt and light to the world.
5. What are your thoughts about Phelan’s claim that “Jesus is on the throne but he reigns through the church”?

“Behold, I Make All Things New”

by Diana Trautwein, p. 61

Changes in how we do missions requires a willingness and desire to learn from others.

1. Diana Trautwein describes part of her experience serving as a missionary in Zambia as a list of dos and don'ts. How does that depiction compare to your own religious upbringing?
2. What bothered you most about her description of her mission experience?
3. What were your thoughts when Trautwein said that “more than a few Western traditions and beliefs having little to do with the gospel were being pasted on top of a culture that didn't need or want them”?
4. What changes have you identified in missions during your lifetime?
5. Trautwein states that we must “open ourselves to learning from the people among whom we work.” How does an openness to learning affect how a missionary, leader, or teacher is received?

Now and Not Yet

by Kathy Khang, p. 81

Columnist Kathy Khang writes about living with a lack of resolution after the election.

1. What stories of struggle are part of your own ethnic history?
2. Kathy Khang tells her story of being a Korean American person of faith. What insights from the article are new to you?
3. Khang says “unity is not assimilation or conformity.” How would you define unity, and how important do you think it is in these contentious times?
4. Why do you think Khang says she is “fairly certain Job and Naomi understood and lived in *han*”? How do their stories illustrate this concept?
5. Why do you think the article was titled “Now and Not Yet”?