

Coffee Futures

By Erin Chan Ding, p. 20

After years of conflict and harvest failure, producers in DR Congo are reclaiming a prosperous crop and building the church.

1. What do you usually order when you go to a coffee shop?
2. What did you learn about coffee from this article that you did not know before?
3. Why is it important that coffee producers in Karawa are now farming their own land rather than working on what were once referred to as “coffee plantations”?
4. How is coffee helping to build the church in DR Congo?
5. How does the Karawa Coffee Project change the way you think about missions?

Life at the Border

By Stan Friedman, p. 36

Behind the headlines, statistics, and rhetoric surrounding immigration are stories of individuals and a Texas community living with the daily realities of a complex issue.

1. When has your opinion about a person or organization changed after listening to their story?
2. What does the author mean when he says, “Normalcy can be jarring”?
3. How do you think the members of the McAllen community can both trust and doubt each other at the same time?
4. How does this article differ from what you have seen online or in other media about what is happening at the border?
5. What surprised you most from the sidebar story about immigration attorney Jodi Goodwin?

Making Space for the Kingdom

By Jill Riley, p. 44

How ten congregations, representing a multitude of nations, languages, and faith experiences have found a church home together.

1. In what community (work, neighborhood, church, school, etc.) do you find yourself among the most diverse group of people?
2. Margie Swensen refers to culture and theological differences that “flow together into the great river of God’s kingdom.” Which is easier for you to accept—cultural differences or theological differences?
3. Kenneth DeVon told John Parks that his international church was a crazy idea. When have you felt the Spirit move you to do something that was so crazy it could only be from God?
4. Wayne Park calls this model for church unity “intentional collaboration.” What do you think would be challenging about that for the individual churches involved?
5. What does it mean to “lead from ‘among’ rather than ‘above’”? Can you think of any examples or illustrations?

Heavy Lifting

By Linda Sladkey, p. 54

From circus school to national competitions, how one Covenanter discovered her inner strength—literally.

1. What was the last song you sang along to?
2. What is the most daring feat you have ever done?
3. Merideth Randles says she was a math nerd in high school, but she now has multiple athletic interests. What area of your life now would surprise your high school classmates?
4. Randles says, “When I feel my training gain traction, it gives me a broader sense of what is possible.” How could that statement apply to spiritual training?
5. Do you agree there is a parallel between the stress and recovery of our physical bodies and the stress and recovery of our spiritual selves? What biblical stories or passages reinforce that theory?

Resisting the Divide

By Jelani Greenidge, p. 35

Understanding that stretches across generations

1. Do you identify as a boomer, gen X, millennial, or other generation?
2. When does identifying someone as a member of a different generation become offensive?
3. Why might it be problematic to equate generational divides with racial divides?
4. Jelani Greenidge says, “Instead of lashing out when we’re feeling irrelevant, maybe we need to work to understand what the next generations are going through.” In what ways can you better empathize with people of a different generation?

Choosing Stillness

By Tim Hawkinson, p. 49

Finding the calm and confidence that can silence the inner fear-fueled voice

1. Where do you find peace and quiet?
2. What does emotional stillness mean to you?
3. Tim Hawkinson says, “I cannot shout and pay attention at the same time.” How would you relate your own experiences with that statement?
4. How do you find stillness in seasons of trial?

Can I Be Honest?

By Christine Chang, p. 57

Fixating on external things proves much easier than turning our focus inward.

1. Christine Chang begins her column with an “I’m so out of touch these days” moment. When have you discovered that a word or phrase you are using was out of date?
2. What do you think of Chang’s use of the phrase “Instagram currency” in her description of the meaning of “tbh”?
3. Do you think people really want honesty?
4. How honest do you feel you are with yourself?
5. How could genuine self-reflection become a daily spiritual practice for you?