

Overflow

The Institute for the Theology of Culture: New Wine, New Wineskins

To a Different Beat by Kelsi Johns

The 2-day “Drum Majors for Love, Truth and Justice” conference on November 20-21st led by civil rights leader Dr. John M. Perkins and Dr. Metzger addressed various issues. They informed, encouraged, and challenged church leaders toward a theology of engagement and Christian community development. Perkins, Metzger, and the community

leaders who joined them for panel discussions offered meaningful reflections that helped those gathered to keep marching forward to the beat of a different drum in community development work. We are witnessing today the need to break through social comfort zones and develop true community that takes us beyond simple acts of charity and affinity groups.

In the first session entitled “The Need of the Hour,” Metzger and Perkins discussed the need for raising up leaders and churches whose concern for the poor far outweigh their own self-concern. In the second session, Metzger challenged us with the statement that “none of us are free if one of

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A Word From the Director by Paul Louis Metzger

Consumerism is a great evil. In a consumer culture, those with the least amount of money and power to purchase consumer products have the least amount of value. Consumerism reduces our identities to what we buy and consume. In contrast to the consumer ideology, the Bible teaches that stuff was made for people, not people for stuff.

I have written at length about the diabolical nature of consumerism. And yet, I remember the words of one leading scholar who challenged a popular and prevailing critique of consumerism. He said something like the following: “While it is a great evil, our society is dependent upon consumerism to survive. If people stop consuming, the people who will be impacted most negatively will be the very people individuals like me wish to protect—the poor. Until a better economic system is put in place, we have

no real choice but to promote the consumerist economy.” While I am not as pessimistic about the fight against consumerism as this scholar is, his statement still causes me to guard against simplistic responses to consumerism.

The solution is not to stop buying, but to invest in community development and in buying more meaningful products—products that actually serve other people well, especially the poor. We need to build our economy around industries that actually promote the well-being of the poor, like the Advent Conspiracy’s purchasing of wells and products that go toward the building of wells for clean drinking water in places like Liberia. Closer to home, we can give a grocery store gift card or gift certificate to a neighbor who has lost his or her job and has a household of hungry mouths to feed. The best way to help the poor is to leverage goods and services

toward promoting concern for them, and for helping them take ownership of their situation by coming alongside of them and befriending and assisting them with their situation, receiving from them the enriching gift of their friendship. I can think of no better present for Jesus this Christmas season than such gifts and such communal presence. ■



Dr. Paul Louis Metzger is Professor of Christian Theology and Theology of Culture at Multnomah Biblical Seminary and Director of The Institute for the Theology of Culture: New Wine, New Wineskins.

Upcoming Events

December 10

Annual Ugly Sweater Christmas Party

7:00-9:00 PM

It’s time to dig through your closet to find that reindeer sweater you’ve kept from the 8th grade and join us in celebration of the Christmas season! Bring food to share and a white elephant gift (no need to purchase a gift, we love to promote our ability to recycle!). Everyone in the New Wine community is welcome! 2741 SE 87th Ave. Portland
Contact Crystal Santos at crystal.santos@gmail.com

January 23

New Wine Forum

10:00-11:00 AM

Multnomah A-Frame

Stay tuned for details!

Ongoing Immersion

Monday Night Dinners

Mondays 6:00-8:00pm

2741 SE 87th Ave. Portland

Mentorship

Engage the community of SE Portland by volunteering at Clark K-8 @ Binnsmead.

Contact Ben Malick at bmalick@multnomah.edu

For more event information, please visit new-wineskins.org!

These Are a Few of Our Favorite Things About New Wine by The New Wine Interns

A community of people pushing me toward a better understanding of Christ.

The variety of engaging topics presented at conferences.

The other Interns!

The opportunities to be challenged in thinking through how my theology is applied to real world issues.

The internship program—especially the bible study and teaching time with Dr. Metzger.

The afterschool program at Binnsmead—playing with the kids!

Open forums where we have space for discussion and are free to disagree.

Learning how to tangibly care about different issues.

A community that is willing to be a community and still tackle hard issues.

The Advisory Council—they're incredible!

The approach to relevant questions with theology.

Learning how to be a leader and to work side by side with different people.

The annual ugly sweater party where Dr. Metzger always wins with the ugliest sweater.

Contact New Wine!

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The Institute for the Theology of Culture: New Wine, New Wineskins, directed by Dr. Paul Louis Metzger, is an official program of Multnomah Biblical Seminary and is dedicated to bearing witness to Christ in contemporary culture.

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us is chained” (referencing a Lynyrd Skynyrd song); we have a hard time sensing that we are bound up together in solidarity with one another for good or for ill. In the third session, Perkins addressed the three R’s of his community development model:

relocation, reconciliation and redistribution. The second day of talks focused on spiritual formation and building a network of ministry and service partnerships where the church of the greater Portland-Metro area learns how to work with others toward helping the poor have a share in owning the pond.

This all requires a genuine paradigm shift. Right now, we live in a culture that tells us to congregate with those we like. We are often encouraged to sacrifice little and gain much. We are sometimes told to take back America and take out our enemies. But the gospel paints a different picture. And it is one that we, facing 21st century challenges, are called to respond to and participate in. Christ has called us to join him in his grand narrative of identifying with “the least of these.” But how do we get beyond the brokenness, the individualism, the segregation, and the gentrification to respond holistically and redemptively, struggling for solidarity with others through our union with Christ Jesus? ■

Please respond to this article and join the discussion at consumingjesus.org.

Kelsi Johns is a student at Multnomah Biblical Seminary. She spends much of her time exploring the beautiful city of Portland and writing for New Wine and its affiliated blog, consumingjesus.org. She can be contacted at kjohns1@multnomah.edu.



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Subscribe online at www.culturalencounters.org today!

The Wine Press by Rachel O’Brien with Jessica Howard

Q: “What good does dialogue do? Shouldn’t we be focusing our time and energy on action?”

A: As I was reading through John 4 I noticed the conversations, the dialogue, the give and take between Jesus and the woman at the well. He asks for some water, she answers, he tells of Himself, she tells of herself, they begin to understand one another, and she becomes his follower. Slowly, we watch as the Samaritan woman’s life is changed, her heart transformed, her dignity healed. There are several points where she responds to Jesus. He dialogues with her, and makes space for her to ask questions—just as he does with the disciples. Throughout

the gospels Jesus participates in crucial dialogues through which His true followers are determined. Some will question, some will follow, and some will leave. Not all those who question leave, not all those who are silent stay. That brings us to what dialogue and conversations with Jesus do? Though I wouldn’t say one good dialogue is the key to salvation, I see how Jesus uses it as part of his evangelistic mission. He is heard and hears those around him. He allows questions, even bits of doubt. The Savior of the world shows that he has the patience and space to dialogue—to connect, engage, and verbalize with others to reach them. Dialogue is bound up with evangelism as part of his saving work. Although we are called to be Jesus’ witnesses, often our best attempts at compassionate dialogue with others come up wanting. Should we abandon this very prominent tool of gospel proclamation with the Samaritan women—those outside the camp—of our day? Jesus used dialogue to move people from doubt to devotion. What about us? ■

Thank You!

Thanks to those of you who participated in our 4th Annual Benefit Dinner, which helped raise money for our College and Seminary interns. Your strategic support means a lot to us! Please be sure to visit the New Wine website to see pictures of this incredible evening.

Send comments and questions to newwine@multnomah.edu