

Overflow

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

A Missional Twisst by Kelsi Johns with Paul Louis Metzger

New Wine, New Wineskins' Spring conference on Faith and the Arts, "Created to Create," provided space for the Christian community to broaden its scope as to how the arts are so powerful and necessary for Christ's kingdom purposes. One of the ways in which this theme was powerfully explored was by Richard Twiss, a member of the Sicangu Band of the Rosebud Lakota/Sioux tribe and co-founder of Wiconi International. This ministry is devoted "to live and walk among the people 'in a good way' by following the ways of Jesus—affirming, respecting and embracing the God-given cultural realities of Native/Indigenous people, not rejecting or demonizing them." Twiss gave a powerful

perspective on how the arts intersect with his faith, and how the arts are expressed through his Native American heritage.

Twiss shared with us some of his tribe's artistic and beautiful ways of praying and worshipping. The tribe's approach is fluid and rhythmic, vastly different from the Western Evangelical traditional (stoic) approach. Along the way, Twiss explored the ways in which the dominant Western Christian culture tends to address Native Christian peoples: many dominant culture Christians wash Native Christians' feet at prayer rallies and build houses on reservations before returning home to their lives of affluence. These dominant

continued on page 4

Cultural Encounters:
A Journal for the
Theology of Culture



Volume 5 is available!

Featuring articles by Grant Macaskill, Brent Laytham, Eric G. Flett, Jim Harries, Amon Munyaneza, Charlotte Graham and Daniel Fan!

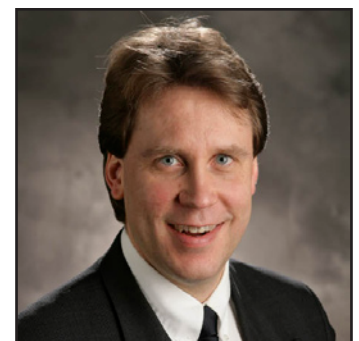
Subscribe online at
www.culturalencounters.org
today!

A Word from the Director by Paul Louis Metzger

Recent articles have been published in *Newsweek*, *Time*, and the *Christian Science Monitor* regarding the speculated collapse of the evangelical church. We can either fear the collapse and retreat inside our church walls, or break down those walls and make an even greater gospel impact. Evangelicals have a rich heritage of outreach to hurting people around the world, and we are reaching out compassionately in increasing measure in our surrounding communities. On the evening of June 15th, New Wine, New

Wineskins will be hosting an event in conjunction with several westside churches and the Palau Season of Service titled, "An Uncommon God and the Common Good: A Collapse-Proof Evangelical Church." Will you come and join us at Beaverton Foursquare on June 15th, as we fan the flame of this year's Season of Service with the Luis Palau Association, and as we celebrate what Portland area churches are doing to reach out beyond their walls? For more information, please refer to the New Wine website.

We look forward to seeing you there! ■



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

June 15th

An Uncommon God and the Common Good: A Collapse-Proof Evangelical Church
7:00-9:00 PM

Beaverton Foursquare Church

Evangelicals have a rich heritage of outreach to hurting people around the world, and we are reaching out compassionately in increasing measure in our surrounding communities. Come and join New Wine and friends as we fan the flame of this year's Season of Service with the Luis Palau Association, and as we celebrate what Portland area churches are doing to reach out beyond their walls.

For more details, contact:
newwineevents@gmail.com

September 26th

Lifestyle Evangelism in the 21st Century: Building Bridges to People Around You
8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

The aim of this workshop is to highlight the profound evangelistic and missional approach generated by Dr. Joseph Aldrich's classic book *Lifestyle Evangelism* (original copyright 1981) and what lifestyle evangelism looks like in the 21st century.

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

New Wine Prayer Requests

If you're wondering how you can help New Wine, New Wineskins, please take a moment to read our prayer requests. These are areas in which New Wine needs strength, courage, growth, and protection!

Pray for our Interns who have recently graduated and are moving on to new ventures: Ross Halbach, Laura Mettler, and Crystal Santos.

Pray for the "Uncommon God and the Common Good" event on June 15th: that planning would go smoothly and that leadership and speakers would be guided and protected.

Pray for new and continuing interns over the summer as they embark on missions trips, visits to family, summer school, work, and preparation for the next school year.

Pray for the next benefit dinner, from which proceeds go to help New Wine continue what it's been doing: that preparations would go smoothly.

Pray for the next issue of the journal, Volume 5, Number 2: that production would stay on time and our readership would increase.

Pray for staff transitions in New Wine: Sarah Kurth, who has served with New Wine for 2.5 years, will be resigning effective June 30. Please pray for her as she looks forward to further opportunities God will provide her for advancing His Kingdom purposes in the future.

Beyth Hogue, the current student employee responsible for coordinating *Cultural Encounters*, has accepted the full-time position beginning July 1. Beyth anticipates her graduation from Multnomah Bible College in December.

The Wine Press: A Strange Clarity by Rachel O'Brien

A strange clarity often emerges when we experience life in faraway places. This is how it was for me after returning from Jackson, Mississippi this week. I realized how much I have to learn. A group of us from New Wine, New Wineskins travelled again this year to visit the John M. Perkins Foundation. This time we drove from Portland to Jackson, all piled tight in my Honda, in two nights and two days. We arrived late Sunday afternoon, and the aura of the Delta region filled our car as we drew near to our destination. The slow moving river and heavy clouds weighed on us. We were there to experience another culture, and the surrounding scenery sent us lingering hints at just how different our time in Mississippi would be from daily life in Portland. We were there to reconnect

and maintain a friendship formed around the desire to learn how to speak and live the gospel redemptively and prophetically and to heal from wounds we did not know we had, including scabs that the American church still itches at but rarely addresses.

I spent my days working with the kids at the after-school program. I had high hopes of a poetry slam, so for my second lesson I had each kid draw a picture of themselves on their favorite day at the Perkins center. Some drew pictures of the day they had a water fight, or the day they went bowling; some just drew their favorite day at home. As they finished I asked them to write a corresponding poem; strangely no one asked how to do this. They went back to their seats and spat out poetry, just like that, in minutes. They then took turns

reciting their poems before the group. I longed for that sense of freedom; the sense that what they wrote, without input or validation, was worthy of being read before peers and elders alike. There was no shyness or shame in their voices. As I watched these young faces, already sensing the greater world around them, I was confident that our hopes for Mississippi might come to fruition for them—that they would enter into true freedom beyond the oppression of racial prejudice and poverty.

I am glad that places like West Jackson exist because it is there that I see parts of myself I would never otherwise see. It's in moments when I am the only white woman in a small school room amidst twenty young black kids that I sense my need to be a learner first

continued on page 3

Good Art at the Last Thursday Arts Festival in Alberta by Benjamin Malick

This spring I had the opportunity to lead a New Wine immersion event to Portland's Alberta Street's Last Thursday Arts Festival in Northeast Portland. The reason for choosing this venue was New Wine's focus on the Arts during the spring semester at Multnomah University.

When our group arrived on Alberta Street that Thursday evening, I unpacked for everyone how the night was going to unfold. Then I began to pass out bright purple latex gloves and black garbage bags to everyone. While my group looked at me in confusion, I explained that as a matter of our faith we were going to participate

in the beautification of the Alberta neighborhood. I wanted everyone to realize that Neighborhood clean-up is an artistic act of worship.

We divided our beautification efforts between Alberta Street, where the Arts festival takes place, and the surrounding neighborhood residential streets. Not too long after we began, I noticed the group really getting into the project. We were having a great time interacting with each other. Then we began noticing the neighbors paying closer attention to us. Folks on Alberta were giving us "thumbs up" and shouting "Thank-you" wherever we walked and worked. As we started moving off Alberta

Street and deeper into the less admired parts of the neighborhood, residents began to come out of their houses and meet us on the street as we were picking up garbage.

It would be good to pause for a moment and fill in some missing details so that you can understand a bit better why the people were so grateful. Through my cultural anthropology class at Multnomah Biblical Seminary this spring semester, I learned that in the 1990's the city of Portland along with private investors poured money into an extensive urban renewal "face lift" in Alberta's crime-infused

continued on page 3

“Alberta” continued from page 2

area. As property values in the area skyrocketed, many within Alberta’s long-residing African-American community were displaced because of unaffordable increases in housing and rental costs. The neighborhood around Alberta Street looks a lot different today than it did fifteen years ago. Now, the community is predominantly a mixture of young hipster white middle class Portlanders, with only a remnant of the traditional African community. On the last Thursday of every month, Alberta Street opens its sidewalks to experimental art vendors and performers. The hipsters and hippies come out in droves to hang out for this unique Portland block party, but the traditional resident community feels ignored and trampled upon. This background context will help you understand better the responses that evening from some of those who live in the community, including what one woman said to me that night: “Thank you so much! No one ever does this sort of thing, especially not around this part of the Alberta neighborhood. Everybody forgets about us down here.”

As our trash bags became full we took in a gorgeous sunset and deposited our restoration waste into a nearby dumpster. We finished off the night with some observations of the art work being displayed by the various vendors, and asked questions like, “What makes for good art?” and “What are the artists trying to communicate through their work?”

I also wanted to communicate to my group at the immersion event that good art takes

continued on page 4



Volume 5 of *Cultural Encounters* is now available! Issue 1 features articles by Grant Macaskill on religion and power, Brent Laytham on Pleasantville, Eric G. Flett on T. F. Torrance’s theology of culture and Jim Harries on linguistics and contextualization, plus essays by Amon Munyaneza, Charlotte Graham and Daniel Fan. Contact culturalencounters@multnomah.edu for details.

Autumn 2009 Benefit Dinner Plans Underway!

Every autumn New Wine holds a benefit dinner to raise funds and create strategic financial partnerships with the community at large. You may have attended one of New Wine’s benefit dinners in the past, and we hope you have good memories of those evenings—because we do!

The benefit dinner is the

one event each year which further enables New Wine to continue its efforts and events: conferences, forums, workshops, the journal *Cultural Encounters*, and the growing Internship program. You can help New Wine by partnering with us!

This year’s benefit dinner is in need of matching donations

and sponsorships, as well as table hosts. As a part of New Wine’s community called to help New Wine make a difference please pray about your strategic role at the benefit dinner.

Plans are already underway, so stay tuned for details! Contact newwine@multnomah.edu for more information.

“Clarity” continued from page 2

and foremost, and where I feel the pangs of my weakness and brokenness. Moments in faraway places like Jackson, Mississippi remind me of my rationale for attending an all-white church housed in an all-black church. As a result of our time in Jackson, Mississippi, I realized how much I have to learn from the black congregation here in Portland, and how much my own church needs the black congregation. So often, the white community at large has approached the black community from the standpoint of teacher to student; but we are all students and all teachers, and we have so much to learn from one another—white and black, and everyone else.

I am confident that just like my hopes for my Mississippi

students might come to fruition for them, so I am confident that my own church would move beyond enslavement to cultural isolation and homogeneity and enter into the fullness of the gospel with our black brothers and sisters in Christ. The church in all its diversity should seek the freedom to draw its own portraits, write its own poems, and tell them without hesitation. But we cannot do it as long as we tell our story with shame in our voices, and as long as we think we have nothing to learn from one another. As long as we merely itch at unhealed wounds from our pasts we have little to offer young poets in Jackson or anywhere else in the world. This is the strange clarity which came to me after returning home to Portland from West Jackson, Mississippi.

Our greatest thanks go to the Perkins Foundation for letting us into their lives in such a gracious and loving manner, to hold our hands, and prick our hearts with the love for the people to whom they so freely give and live among. ■

Send comments and questions to newwine@multnomah.edu



Rachel O'Brien is a student in the Master of Arts in Teaching Secondary English Program at Multnomah University. She reads, writes and believes in poetry. She currently tutors and mentors Hispanic youth in her North Portland community and lives in a garage. She can be contacted at robrien@multnomah.edu.

“Alberta” continued from page 3

many forms. We came away from that immersion event experiencing good art at the festival while also making good art by cleaning up other people’s trash at the festival. Renewing God’s creation by cleaning up the Alberta Neighborhood during the Art Festival will not win us accolades for being Picassos and Rembrandts, but it did bring a smile to the Master Artist’s face and two thumbs up from some of his traditional community masterpieces who reside in Alberta. ■



Ben is a student at Multnomah Biblical Seminary in the Master of Arts: Pastoral Studies program with an emphasis on Intercultural Studies. He is the point person for New Wine Immersion events and is passionate about mentoring and community development. He can be reached at bmalick@multnomah.edu.

Contact New Wine!

New Wine, New Wineskins
8435 NE Glisan Street
Portland, OR 97220
e newwine@multnomah.edu
p 503-251-6767

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.

“Missional” continued from page 1

culture Christians never truly enter into solidarity or mutuality with the indigenous community, while also ignoring its rich heritage of Native artistic expression and culture. The failure on the part of the dominant Western culture is twofold: we often fail to sense the beauty in the Native people’s ways of life and how they can enrich our own, and we fail to see that our attempts at connection—washing feet at prayer rallies or building homes on reservations—do not address core structural problems.

The structural disconnect between the dominant Western Christian culture and indigenous peoples ties in with the ways in which the mainstream Evangelical community generally tends to bypass structural evil. In chapter two of *Consuming Jesus*, mention is made of Dr. John M. Perkins’ baseball game analogy, which is used to illustrate the dominant culture’s blindness to structural problems. Two teams are playing a game of baseball—a white team and a black team. After seven



Hungry for dialogue?

Check out consumingjesus.org for more amazing articles, dialogue, and the forthcoming series “A Little Less Vanilla, Please!”

innings, it is discovered that the white team has been cheating the whole game. The score is 20 to 0, and the cheating team apologizes. The white team then wants to move forward and finish the game. However, there is still a major problem: the score hasn’t changed; it is still 20-0. This story illustrates Twiss’ own frustration with dominant culture Christians’ washing Native people’s feet at reconciliation events and then retreating back to their “big houses” in affluent communities. I remember clearly his frustration as he lamented this state of affairs: “meanwhile, we are stuck here on our reservation with clean feet.” Just as in Perkins’ analogy, the cheating team apologizes and then mistakenly functions as if everyone is now functioning on a level playing field. These overarching, complex, societal and structural ills are often being addressed with a quick-fix, charity mentality, but nothing more.

I am convinced that until we learn to need one another—existing in true community and solidarity as Christ’s body across racial and class divides, we are simply a nuisance to one another. We are only getting in one another’s way, if we don’t understand our mutuality as children of God. I believe that our Western individualism, affluence and lifestyles of privilege fuel partial ministry attempts to “reach out,” making Native people’s feet clean for a night, while never addressing the heart of the matter: seeking after our own hearts, and hands’ cleansing for a lifetime. This is where a challenge to the dominant culture church arises: we must change

this state of affairs by truly bearing witness to the trans-cultural gospel we profess by holistically and urgently addressing these complex social ills. But it takes time—a long time, and it takes not only acknowledging the long history of disadvantage and racialization, but will also require a slow journey ahead of entering into indigenous people’s lives and cultures, whereby there is mutual learning, respecting and valuing of one another’s lives and cultures. Only then can we truly move forward—together.

I came away from Twiss’s talk at New Wine’s conference with a more missional twist on missions: the dominant Western Christian culture of which I am part has so much to learn about ministry among Native peoples—repenting of the past that impoverishes Native peoples in the present, as well as being enriched by the worship experience of our Native brothers and sisters. Lord, wash my dominant Christian culture’s feet, our hearts, and our hands so that we can be beautiful instruments of peace for your gospel. ■

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.