



# the Vine institute

# Grapevine

# press

God's Kingdom without Borders

1.3 Edition

March 2011

## A Celebration of Cultures

Last December, *The Vine Institute* hosted *Kingdom without Borders: Festival of Cultures in Christ*. The colors, foods, music and sounds of other languages brightened the gray afternoon. Spending this time together contributed toward meaningful understanding and connections among the cultures represented. In learning, honoring and enjoying one another together we reflected the Body of Christ that God is creating in Utah.

Toward the end of the afternoon, Vietnamese spring rolls were being served to Cambodians. Tongan youth

choir members indulged in Navajo fry bread with a hot drink of fresh Papaya. Eritrean curry vegetables and Sudanese food were also enjoyed by many. The Tongan Brass Band & Choir performed as did a lively Sudanese group, to the delight of all there. Folks began to clap and sway with the rhythm of the music.

It was indeed a time to enjoy the diverse tapestry that God is weaving here in Utah, as we develop cultural competence by listening and learning from other's stories. We eagerly await our next celebration together!!



## The Next Evangelicalism

### by Soong-Chan Rah

The projection that by 2050 the population of America will no longer be predominantly white (Anglo) was stunningly confirmed by a prominent demographer at the 2011 Utah Refugee Conference. "Between now and 2050, 80% of the population growth of Utah will be from in-migration people (refugees + immigrants), their kids and their grandkids." So, what impact has this galloping diversification had on the white evangelical church in America?—tragically, almost none, according to author Soong-Chan Rah.

His book, subtitled *Releasing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*, gives us strong medicine for sure, but Soong-Chan's cry in the wilderness

Book reviewed by David Rowe

clearly deserves a hearing, given the kind of reality the above statistics herald. He cites a study showing "just 7.5 % of the over 300,000 religious congregations in the United States are racially mixed... [and] less than 4 % of Christian congregations are integrated." He sees this rooted in "our single-ethnic ministries focused on numerical growth over the biblical value of racial reconciliation and justice."

Soong-Chan, himself a Korean immigrant, claims the American evangelical church is growing exponentially among in-migration, ethnically diverse Christians. Consider Boston: in 1970 the city had 200 churches; in 2000 (just 30 years later) it had 412 churches, and the net gain

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## What is the 'real' Mission?

A year ago when *The Vine Institute* started, we expected our focus would be teaching Christian leadership training courses, concentrating among refugees and immigrants. But God has opened our eyes to the fact that He is changing the face of His people in Utah. Therefore, we realized that we must focus not simply on training refugee and immigrant community leaders. We are called to bring refugees and immigrants who love Christ together with mainstream Americans who love Christ. We must encourage relationships of mutual trust, honor, and appreciation essential to effective leadership training and community development within this Body of Christ that is rapidly transforming into a "minority majority." And we realize that as the community around us sees this incarnation of Jesus' way of love for the stranger, rather than living in denial or fear, God may



open their hearts also to the love of Christ.

The three essential elements of this mission are: **connecting** [building relationships of trust across cultures]; **educating** [cultivating growth in Christ by his Word and Spirit]; and **celebrating** [honoring and learning to appreciate what God is doing through others' cultural expressions of faith and life and worship].

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# Vine happening's in 2011

## Leadership Training

The Vine Institute offers practical Christian leadership training in culturally mixed peer groups.

## Multicultural Ministry Network

Many multi-cultural and ethnic leaders are creating a network that connects to identify best practices, share ideas and resources.



## Multicultural Ministry Workshop

MAY 21, 2011

In collaboration with other ministries, The Vine Institute will host a workshop with a national leader experienced in multicultural ministry to promote multicultural ministry collaboration within our community.

## Pentecost Global Day of Prayer Service

JUNE 12, 2011

An event also now in Utah celebrates the Global Day of Prayer which started with 45,000 Christians in Cape Town, South Africa in 2001. News of this city's transformation spread throughout that

country to other African countries and around the globe. On this Pentecost Day, people in all the world's 220 countries are gathering together, joining their many languages in one voice to God, "A Prayer for the World."

## Festival of Cultures in Christ

OCTOBER 2011

An event with food, arts and worship purposed to honor and introduce ethnic Christian groups to other Christians.

## Table Talk 3<sup>rd</sup> TUESDAY (most)

Table Talk is an informal monthly gathering with a pot luck meal.

(continued from page 1, 'Real' Mission)

As we reflect on the vision of the church that God gave John (Rev 7:9)—"a great multitude...from every nation, tribe, people and language"—our vision is seeing people experiencing Christ's love across cultures in Utah. And the mission God has given The Vine Institute to participate in making this vision a reality is to connect, educate, and celebrate many cultures in Christ.

Please join us in praying that God will use these efforts to build his Kingdom without borders here in Utah and across the world.

(continued from page 1, Next Evangelism)

was among in-migration communities. At the same time the shakers and movers and opinion-shapers of American evangelicalism remain almost totally white Euro-Americans even as the white church is in serious decline. In a February 2005 Time magazine cover story,

**The hope of American Christianity's revitalization lies in merging with the church coming here from beyond our borders.**

though, the 25 most influential evangelicals in America were profiled, and only two of them were nonwhites, perpetuating the American church's white, Western cultural captivity. Soong-Chan invites the white evangelical church to relinquish its power and embrace God's multi-ethnic church. The hope of American Christianity's revitalization lies in merging with the church coming here from beyond our borders. Does this not make the mission of The Vine Institute at least ten times more crucial than we ever dreamed?

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