

Texans plant one-of-a-kind church in Pacific Northwest

October 9, 2009

PULLMAN, Wash.—Leaders of Resonate Church in Pullman, Wash., believe church planters should never underestimate the power of genuine relationships, prayer, creativity—and good coffee.

Resonate Church, a congregation in Pullman, Wash., planted by Texas Baptists, offers ministries to students at Washington State University and the University of Idaho. (PHOTOS/Danielle Gallup)

Resonate Church has no permanent building—just three trailers filled with audiovisual systems and dozens of plastic buckets that transport everything needed to set up for worship. Leaders conduct worship in two cities on either side of the Washington/Idaho state line.

Most church business is conducted in a coffee shop. An illusionist, geologist, teacher and musician make up half of the staff, and all of the church's deacons are under age 35.

Instead of going through a membership class, newcomers to the congregation go through an "ownership" class. And many of those new members are college and graduate students.

Resonate Church in Pullman, Wash., grew out of the vision of Paige and Keith Wieser, graduates of Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches.

Together with two East Texas Baptist University graduates—Josh Martin

and Drew Worsham—and a couple of Washington State University graduates, the small group prayed for and helped to plant the church just two years ago.

In 2008, Resonate launched a second service in Moscow, Idaho. Matthew and April Young from Nacogdoches came aboard staff to shepherd the Moscow site.



Creative Arts Pastor Drew Worsham (with mic) and Worship Pastor Josh Martin (on guitar)—both graduates of East Texas Baptist University—welcome worshippers to Resonate Church in Pullman, Wash.

The Southern Baptist Convention’s North American Mission Board provides some funding for most of the Resonate staff. Several Texas Baptist churches—primarily Central Baptist in Livingston, First Baptist in Crosby, First Baptist in Nacogdoches and Heights Baptist in Alvin— also support the church’s mission.

Washington is one of the top two unchurched states in the nation, according to the Southern Baptist Convention’s North American Mission Board. More than 19,000 Washington State students live in Pullman, and another 12,000 students live a few miles down the road in Moscow, where they attend the University of Idaho.

This unchurched generation is waiting on God’s love to be demonstrated, Pastor Keith Wieser believes.

Resonate is on mission to reveal the story of Jesus in a powerful and meaningful way to college students—not through systems or programs, but through authentic relationships in an inviting community.

Essentially, Resonate Church relaunches every fall when the school year begins.



Pastor Keith Wieser—a graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches—preaches at Resonate Church in Pullman, Wash.

After the church served both campuses for a week by offering barbecues, concerts, magic shows and free breakfasts, about 300 students showed up the first Sunday to find out more about Resonate.

“This is my first time to ever attend a church service,” one girl commented. The experience radically changed her preconceived notions about church, she added.

“Jesus does not have to be made relevant for a new generation and mindset. He already is,” Wieser said. “We seek to find ways to

communicate and interpret the unchanging and authoritative truth of the Bible into the mindset of this generation.”

Intentional, compassionate relationships draw people, Resonate members note.

“If you come to Resonate, you can not slip out the backdoor or go unnoticed. People sincerely want to know your name and your story,” Kate-Lynne Logan said.

Resonate small groups meet in homes and are called villages. After enjoying a home-cooked meal, a village provides a safe environment where small-group participants wrestle with difficult questions and engage in spiritual dialogue.

Ten villages meet each week, with specific villages geared toward particular affinity groups such as college freshmen or international students. Resonate desires for 80 percent of the people who attend worship on Sunday to be involved in a village.

“The backbone of Resonate is how village functions,” Wieser said.

In villages, participants can move to a deeper level in their relationship with God and each other, Jessica McFaul noted.

“You get to dig deep into the sermon, meditate on the biblical principles presented on Sunday, and encourage one another to practically live out God’s plan for your life. It is a rare treasure,” she said.

Revealing biblical relevancy, missional living, authentic community and ongoing spiritual discovery are core values of Resonate.

“The reason I carve out time to be involved in Resonate is because it is a God-based community that makes an effort to draw people in and show them what following Christ can look like,” said BrynnWhitman, who has

attended the church since its launch two years ago. “The church as a whole exudes love for people and the people who make up the church support, encourage, and inspire me to trust Jesus unreservedly.”