

# Fresh Oil



October 2011

Dear Fellow Servants,

Back in the fall of 1990 Ruth and I visited the state of Vermont for part of our honeymoon. Having an early October wedding date afforded us the privilege of seeing the Green Mountains of Vermont in a whole different light. New England's tapestry comes alive in October turning the once-green landscape into a breathtaking array of golds, reds, yellows, and oranges. It occurred to me recently that the splendour of Vermont's fall colour would go unappreciated if we spent our time pining away for the green foliage that preceded this *change*. Uh oh, there's that nasty word again – *change*.

How is it, then, that so many thousands of people visit Vermont each fall for the express purpose of seeing all this...*change*? I believe Jesus has the answer for us by using the metaphor of the wine and the wineskins. Look at what He said in Mark 2:22:

***“And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins.”***

You cannot possibly appreciate nor embrace something new without first letting go of the old. New wine is bubbly and full of fresh gases from the fermenting process. It needs a new, stretchable container, one that will adapt to the change. Trying to make the old wineskin do the job that only a new one can do, Jesus says, will result in total ruin. The new wine AND the old wineskin will be lost.

Embracing change requires appreciating what we have learned from the past and using it as a springboard to help us latch on to the newer, fresher things God is doing. It's not a new gospel (although Jesus' teaching was new to the people at that time), just a different method and way of carrying out the kingdom work. We are faced with some of that here at First Baptist. We have seen God do some incredible things in the past, both recent and not-so-recent. But we can't live off that. We need to push forward and explore uncharted territory.

Ruth and I have visited Vermont in October on 2 other occasions besides our honeymoon year. Not once did I ever hear anyone complaining about 'all this dreadful colour taking over from the beautiful green.' No, they were there to enjoy and embrace the change! Can we do the same in the church? I think we can!

Your fellow servant,

*Pastor Brian*

*... I have been anointed with fresh oil*

PSALM 92:10

