

GOD IS BRINGING HIS NEW WINE

A new day is dawning in North America and with it, fresh hope — God is bringing His new wine. As we create “new wineskins” of simple house church networks, God wants to encourage us. New wine is coming and He’s led us to prepare.

This wineskin design isn’t so new. Jesus was caught using it. Pharisees confronted Him partying at Levi’s house with unsavory pals. He said, “No one pours new wine into old wineskins...new wine will burst the skins, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins” (Luke 5:37-38).

We try to follow the example of Jesus and the Apostles. Nicely crafted wineskins aren’t enough; real adventure comes as we work in the vineyard and He fills them up! Unless we get out with Jesus, we miss the new wine.

As a missionary, I’ve seen new wine of transformed lives flowing in other lands. In Erdenet, Mongolia, there was not a single believer twelve years ago. But God was working. A team of YWAMers won a small group of people to Jesus. A cell formed, grew and multiplied.

I visited in 2001. The church had grown to 55 cells and 1,000 people. Led entirely by Mongols, it has reproduced daughter and granddaughter churches across Mongolia and beyond. I joined believers gathered in a home. Worship, prayer and Bible discussion were in Mongolian. As a woman next to me translated, I was

amazed to hear one of their plans. Summer was approaching and they would take a camping trip to a lake. Sounded good — a nice break to have fun together. Then I learned the main goal. The town by the lake hadn't heard of Jesus. They'd go teach the gospel and plant a church. To them, this was just normal Christianity!

In the Middle East, I had dinner with an Arab believer. After hearing the story of Mongolia he said, "This could also happen in the Arab world!" My eyes bulged. "What would be the biggest obstacle?" I asked. "That's easy — the traditional church," he responded.

It's true. Old wineskins will burst. Institutional churches, even cell churches cannot hold the new wine about to flow in vineyards God is preparing here and around the world. Simple, house church networks will work (80 million believers in China would agree).

But to get new wine, we have to take the wineskin to the vineyard. Step out the door of the house. Overcome past disappointments in sharing our faith or inviting people to church. Throw parties like the one at Levi's house.

House church is a wineskin we can take anywhere, anytime. Take it down the street in our neighborhood. Take it to unreached immigrants settling in our cities. Get a bit more training and take it to some of the world's unreached nations. God's given durable, versatile, adaptable, reproducible wineskins. Don't hold back in fear; move forward in faith! A new day is dawning in North America and with it, fresh hope—God is bringing His new wine.

Author Info: Kevin Sutter trains and coaches YWAM church planting teams serving among unreached peoples. He and his family recently completed a 9-month trip visiting many of YWAM's over 300 church planting teams working in nations from West Africa across the Middle East and through East Asia. The Sutter family is also part of an emerging house church network in Northern California.

Plant simple house churches among unreached peoples here and abroad. Youth With A Mission, Urban Impact, Community Vision International and others have teamed up to create the INTERNATIONAL EXPRESS as a means to equip and place workers among the world's remaining unreached peoples. Learn more at www.InternationalExpress.org.