

## *Parable of the Mountain*

In a small mountain village the wind would blow gently, especially in the springtime.

High on a hill behind the village, the wind was much stronger. The people would climb there occasionally to feel the full force of the wind. The wind would blow down from the mountains, mussing their hair, cooling their faces, and taking their breath away. In time, the villagers built a little shrine on the hilltop. They put up four walls and a roof, but left wide open windows so people could still feel the wind.

Over time they built the shrine larger and finer. But some grew concerned about the rain. Occasionally the rain would come, and would blow in through the windows. The water was leaving stains on the walls and floors and seats.

That's why they put glass in the windows. Plain, clear glass, so they could still see out, see the mountains and the valley. They would come and enjoy themselves and watch through the windows as the wind moved the trees and swept the hillside. They could no longer feel the wind, but they liked the view.

But things happen over time. Eventually the villagers, growing more prosperous, decided to decorate the windows with paintings and pictures. Finally fine stained-glass panes replaced the earlier clear glass.

The shrine still remains. It is a beautiful place—well preserved and attended. Many people make their pilgrimage there. They enter the shrine, turn on the lights, bow in prayer, and remember what it used to feel like when the wind blew down from the mountains, mussing their hair, cooling their faces, and taking their breath away.

—From *Radical Renewal: The Problem of Wineskins Today*, by Howard A. Snyder (Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 1996), 65-66.