



# Awakenings

*"Only by love is love awakened."*

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## Inheriting the Earth

by Herb Montgomery

### Quotable Quotes

“Jesus parable of the Good Samaritan, like his teaching ‘love your enemies,’ confronts an impasse of total violence in his time by transforming it into the kingdom of God. Love your enemy—a hard saying—because there is no other salvation in an age of violence than the God who comes to us through our enemies, the God of Nonviolent Transformation. The end of the world is transformed in the beginning of a new world by accepting the truth of my enemy.”

—James W. Douglass,  
*The Nonviolent Coming of God*, p. 97

*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the **earth**. –Jesus (Matthew 5.5, emphasis added.).*

I want to look at an emphasis in the teachings of Jesus that many miss today. Today, those who bear Christ's name (Christians) are known largely (Praise God for the few exceptions.) as being focused on getting their ticket to heaven so that they can “get out of here.” They sing, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through.” What we have to realize, however, is that this mindset is strangely absent from the Jesus story itself and the Jesus that we find in that story. We must allow this absence to confront us.

Ponder the following three passages and notice their emphasis.

“You are the salt of THE EARTH. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.” –Matthew 5.13.

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, ON EARTH as it is in heaven.” –Matthew 6.10.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit THE EARTH.” –Matthew 5.5 (In modern preaching, we find ministers bellowing from their pulpits, blessed are the meek for they shall inherit Heaven. This is a subtle departure from the early church that began with the introduction of Gnosticism, what some call, “Christian history’s first heresy to burn through the church.” Gnosticism, for those who have studied this early phenomenon, is an unhealthy preoccupation with escaping Earth and getting to heaven.).

What we find in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is that Jesus was not focused on getting people out of this place to some far distant heaven. Instead, Jesus was focused on bringing the far distant Heaven (in the mind’s eye of people) very close, bringing it to Earth. In other words, Jesus wasn’t focused on getting people to heaven, but instead

on bringing heaven to people.

This traces back to the ancient Hebrew Genesis narrative itself.

Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” –Genesis 1.26.

God, according to the Hebrew narrative, made this Earth and gave it to us as our original home, which we lost to God’s enemy:

“The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me [by humanity in the beginning], and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours.” –Luke 4.5-7

Jesus also repeatedly refers to God’s enemy as the “ruler of this world.” – (John 12.31; John 14.30; John 16.11) Jesus saw his mission as being to save us and our home here from the enemy’s oppressive reign. He sought to restore us and our home, once again, to the original Kingship of Christ (see Colossians 1.13).

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All AUTHORITY in heaven and on earth has been GIVEN to ME. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” –Matthew 28.18-19 (Notice that Jesus is quoting the devil from the wilderness, saying that through his death and resurrection all that the enemy claimed as his own Jesus had won back and given back to us. See also Luke 11.21- 22).

John too ends his climax of canonical prophecy with God, not taking us to some Heaven to spend eternity with Him, but rather the breathtaking picture of God coming HERE to spend eternity WITH US!

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# Testimony

Hi Herb, I attended Redwood Campmeeting last month and heard you speak on the teachings of Jesus. Before attending I had been struggling with forgiving a cousin who sexually abused me for years as a child. I knew in my heart that if I had the chance to kill him I might just take it, and that really scared me. I expected campmeeting to be a break away from everything in life, but instead the topics of forgiveness and the peace teachings of Jesus really challenged me. I hated the night on forgiveness, but It caused me to start studying the character of Jesus on a daily basis. The whole time at campmeeting I was extremely conflicted, I argued a lot with Jesus, but by the end I had come to the consensus that Jesus is radical and that I loved Him and was ready to forgive. Jesus spoke to me through RHM and it has been extremely liberating and empowering to begin the process of forgiveness. I've learned that God doesn't stop there though, throughout the forgiving process there has also been a lot of healing. Forgiveness has allowed me to begin to tell my childhood secret to some close friends without being ashamed or feeling the "dirtiness" that had so long possessed me. Jesus has also changed my perspective of my cousin, instead of seeing a person that I hate, I see a person who doesn't have the hope, love and peace that I get to experience on a daily basis. "If it has flesh and blood, it isn't your enemy" (Three weeks ago I really hated this saying).

– Anonymous

## **Inheriting the Earth cont'd from page 2**

"I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.'" –Revelation 21.2-3.

Again, Jesus, contrary to many who bear his name today, lived in the headspace of bringing Heaven to Earth, not getting those from Earth to some Heaven beyond.

Now, I also want to address a rumor that is circulating about myself personally and RHM. It is usually not my policy to track down and correct every rumor that circulates about me. Typically, I simply let rumors and those who spread them run their course and let honest thinking people think things through with the hope that they would talk *with me* (rather than *about me*) if they have questions. Some today are saying, "Herb doesn't believe in Heaven!" Nothing

could be further from the truth. I absolutely believe in Heaven. However, I do not believe that Jesus teaches us to call Heaven our home. Being a Jesus follower, if we are actually going to follow the Jesus of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, this means being about *restoration* rather than *relocation*.

Now, some Christians today believe that we will spend some time in Heaven at some stage of the process of our transition from this present evil age to the age to come (Galatians 1.4; Ephesians 1.21). Also, it must be noted, that there are followers of Jesus who hold to an eschatology that doesn't even include ever going to Heaven, but that when Jesus returns here to this earth, it will be to reign here, and for his followers to reign with him. Nevertheless, for this week, I want to address those who believe that we will spend some time in Heaven at some point. There are some differences among the beliefs in modern Christianity about our potential time in "Heaven."

1. Some believe we go to Heaven at death, and when Jesus returns, he is only to coming back to pick everyone up down here still living and take them to heaven also so that we all together can spend eternity there, in heaven, with him. This is the headspace of "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through" that finds absolutely no resonating notes in the Jesus story itself, in my opinion.
2. Some of them believe that the time we spend in Heaven will be between death and His return, BUT that when Jesus returns, we will all spend eternity, ultimately here on Earth in an Earth made new.
3. Others believe that death is a sort of "sleep," waiting on a future resurrection (Martin Luther as well as some Anabaptists, such as Michael Sattler, believed this in the sixteenth century.) at Jesus return. We will then spend a temporary time in Heaven (not everyone believed this part in the sixteenth century) until a third return of Jesus to this Earth to spend eternity on this Earth in an Earth made new.

I want to address the second and third view above. Regardless of which of the two views you hold to above, in regards to my point this week, it's mute (again, I will add, that for option 1, I can't find any evidence for this view, in it's entirety, a n y w h e r e in the New Testament). In BOTH 2 and 3, whichever of those two some may hold, I want those who believe this to



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# MINISTRY UPDATE

## Alturas, CA

One thing that I love about “freely receiving and freely giving” (not charging for our services) is that it frees us up to visit small church body gatherings as well as larger ones. This is possible, as many of you know, because we only ever ask that our travel expenses be reimbursed. Alturas was definitely a reminder of this.

Alturas is a small town in Northern California with a population in the ballpark of only about 2,800 people.

It was requested that I come to share some material from my book, *Finding the Father*, with special emphasis on the sections that relate to the problem of human suffering. Granted, this is only a “philosophical problem” for those who simply say that God is good. For those who say that God looks like the person we find in the Jesus story, then we see not a God who is omnicontrolling over everything and where His will is always done. Instead, we picture a God who has to try twice to

heal and sometimes can’t heal. We see a God who is engaged in a formidable struggle against powers and wills opposing His own and preventing His will from being done “on earth as it’s done in heaven.” As Origen wrote in the third century, “[Christians] make a being opposed to God; devil, and in the Hebrew tongue, Satan, are the names which they give to the same being...when the greatest God indeed wishes to confer some benefit upon men, He has a power which is opposed to Him, and so is unable to do it...[God] is worsted by the devil.” (Origen of Alexandria (185-254 A.D.);



## *Inheriting the Earth cont'd from page 3*

notice; our potential time in Heaven, even if we do go there at some point, is ONLY TEMPORARY. Stop and think about this. Your time here on EARTH is not temporary. THIS is your

home. We lost it to God’s enemy, and Jesus rescued it back for us. (Revelation 12.10, 11.15) Even if we do, at some point, spend some portion of time in Heaven, our time IN HEAVEN is TEMPORARY. There, we will sing in Heaven (for those who believe we will spend some portion there), “This place [heaven] is not my home, I’m just a passing through.” We are going to be spending eternity HERE! (Revelation 21.2-3).

So, as a follower of Jesus, we should not be living as if “this world is not my home.” We can begin by simply no longer saying the statement, “we are just passing through.” This world IS our home. We have a lot of work to do yet. God’s will is not being done ON EARTH as it’s done in heaven, yet. We are called to put on display what life on this Earth, under the Kingship of Jesus does look like. It is the Bar Enasha (new humanity founded in Jesus) that we talked about last week. It is what Jesus called “the Kingdom”, which Jesus commands us to proclaim, “has come!”

I want you to ponder the following two texts:

“And he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and TO HEAL THE SICK.”—Luke 9.2

We live in a SICK world, and as a Jesus follower, our first concern should not be to leave this world behind, but to bring healing to our sick world around us. Jesus gave us a way to be conduits of healing to this world, and we are to

be about setting in motion that healing. We must be about restoration, not relocation.

In addition, this verse:

“I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.”—Philippians 1.23-26

Some view this verse as saying Paul was faced with dying and going to Heaven or that Paul was offered translation like the Hebrew Patriarch Enoch or the Hebrew Prophet Elijah. Regardless, I want you to notice Paul’s headspace, 1) To relocate and be with Jesus or 2) to remain here and continue in the ministry of restoration. Which did Paul choose?

In short, this world *is* our home. We are *NOT* just passing through. We are here to stay. Even if we do spend some time in the future elsewhere, it will be that location that we will “just be passing through.” We are spending eternity here. Eternity starts now! The Kingdom has come! This Kingdom, which is a radical new way of doing life, is based on a radical new way of seeing God (His character), ourselves, and others. We are called to put on display what the “age to come” (Ephesians 1.21) looks like in the here and now! We are called to be like weeds (We’ll talk more about this later.) in a garden, subversively crowding out, with one heart at a time, this “present evil age.” (Luke 13.19; Galatians 1.4)

Much to think about for sure.

Keep living in love and loving like Christ. Now go enlarge the Kingdom. Till the only world that remains is a world where love reigns. ■



Contra Celsum) And He is inviting US to engage in this warfare along side Him (see Ephesians 6.12).

It was a wonderful weekend for all who attended. It was filled with beautiful paradigms shifts as we all experienced more deeply the belief that God actually does look like that Jewish carpenter from 2,000 years ago.

So many today are hurting. The suffering on this planet is beyond our intellectual comprehension and our emotional capacity. If nothing else, this weekend left us with not

only a better philosophical answer to the contradiction of God's love and the monumental presence of human suffering, but hopefully also with the desire to actually get out and engage genuinely with those who are hurting to make a significant difference, just as our Mentor did two thousand years ago, and to today, in the here and the now, bring deliverance, along side Him, to "all who were under the power of the devil" (Acts 10.38; cf. 1 John 5.18, TNIV).

I am convinced that if more followers of Jesus were out there (praise God for those who are) making a practical

difference in the lives of those who are hurting around us, it would be infinitely easier for others to believe that the sad state of this world does not rightly represent the character of the God that we follow. It would be easier for them to accept that "an enemy did this" (Matthew 13.28).

For those who were praying for this event, thank you. It was a tremendous blessing for all who attended. Wherever you are today, make a difference. Love subversively. Love like Christ until the only world that remains is a world where love reigns.



## MINISTRY UPDATE

### Family Camp – Leoni Meadows Retreat Center

The Kingdom of Jesus is a radical new way of doing life based on a radical new way of seeing God, ourselves and everyone else around us. The Gospel, is the announcement that this Kingdom has come!

This last week, I had the incredible privilege and pleasure of being the "camp pastor" to a very unique family camp which happens each year to give families a chance to reconnect and deepen their love and commitment to one another. This year was spectacular on so many different levels. One of which was the unique occurrence that I actually was able to have my own family with me for the entire week. We had a blast.

My days consisted of four events each day with lots of events with my kiddos in between. At 7:00 a.m. each

morning, I moderated an open, mutually participatory style gathering where every day we looked at a different aspect of Jesus' Kingdom found in the beatitudes. THIS really was the highly of all the events in which I participated. Then for all the families present, at 9:00 a.m. we came back to look at some unique aspect Jesus' Kingdom. The children present repeatedly shared with me that their favorite morning was when we talked about being "weeds" for Jesus.

We talked about how a gardener is careful to weed their garden, lest the weeds crowd out all the other plants, taking over the entire garden. We looked at how Jesus said His Kingdom is just like that! It's a WEED (a mustard seed) that will subversively take over the garden of this entire world and we are called to be His weeds! (The kids loved being weeds for Jesus that day.) At 2:00 each afternoon, I gave a study on Jesus' teachings in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John showing how Jesus came to give us a radically new picture of what God was really like through inviting us to embrace certain moral ethics which are impossible to embrace unless one experiences a change in their picture of God. We looked at Jesus' teachings on nonviolence, Jesus' teachings on enemy love and forgiveness, the ethic of God's grace even for our own enemies, we looked at Jesus' teachings on sharing with the poor and how that affects our picture of God, and lastly on how Jesus calls us not to hierarchy, but to egalitarian, mutually loving relationships just as we find among the Godhead. This session was especially geared for the Parents. Each evening I spoke once again to everyone, kids and parents together. We, at that time,

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# Schedule

## SEPTEMBER 20-29, 2013

La Grande Adventist Church  
La Grande, OR  
541.963.4018

## OCTOBER 4-5, 2013

Gering Adventist Church  
Scottsbluff, NE  
308.632.6236

## OCTOBER 25-26, 2013

Pacific Union College  
Angwin, CA  
707.888.2274

## NOVEMBER 8-9, 2013

Richland Adventist Church  
Richland, WA  
509.946.8807

## NOVEMBER 15-17, 2013

North Dakota State University  
Fargo, North Dakota  
701.391.9131

# MINISTRY UPDATE

## Prescott, AZ – Arizona Camp Meeting

Putting “Jesus” back into the “gospel.”

The Kingdom Jesus came to establish involves a radical paradigm shift in how we see God, ourselves, and others. It calls for a radical reorientation of how we do life in the here and now.

This past week, I had the privilege of sharing at an Adventist “Camp Meeting” in Prescott, Arizona. For those who may be unfamiliar with the term “Camp Meeting,” this was a gathering of churches from all over Arizona to listen to a series of presentations from various authors and speakers from around the globe. I was one of those invited to speak.

I want to say up front that I’m deeply concerned with the Christian church in North America. I’m concerned that we are riddled with an unhealthy imbalance in the direction of “passive spectatorship” by contrast to the open, mutual participation of the first century church. To say the least, I was conflicted all week. I do believe that there is a place for teaching. However, the call to balance teaching with the fifty plus “one anothers” of the New Testament is ever in my heart. This week was definitely more on the teaching side and there were some topics that I felt necessary to share. I gave eleven presentations in ten days, which centered around four topics:

1. Christian Nonviolent Non-cooperation: Adventists are traditionally a “peace church.” Yet today, they are struggling with that part of their identity, as many peace churches are. As a dear Mennonite friend of mine says, “When patriotism runs hot, Christ’s peace teachings do not.”
2. We live in the economic narrative of the Kingdom based on abundance, gratitude, and sharing, rather than the economic narrative of this world, which is based on scarcity, anxiety, and accumulation. We looked at how helping the poor was really for *OUR* benefit to draw us out of one narrative and picture of God into the other.
3. Re-imagining the “Church” through the lens of open and mutual participation based on the nature of the Love within the Godhead, rather than the all too common models of passive spectatorship.
4. And walking the Earth, like Jesus, as the Pardon of God for all, even our enemies.

Remember, all of these radical teachings of Jesus are deeply rooted in Jesus picture of the character of His Father which Jesus calls us to embrace.

I will be giving this same series in July at another gathering, although next time it will be in the form of twelve presentations rather than eleven. I will also be posting them on our website for all those who would like to give it a listen. The series you want to look for will be titled, *Putting Jesus Back into the Gospel*.

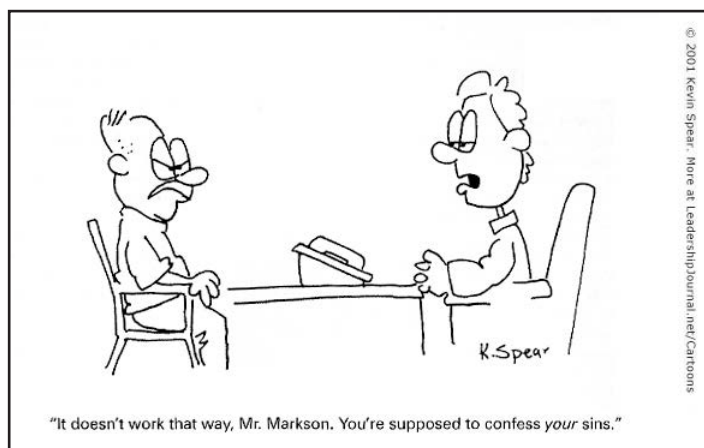
Every day I watched the Kingdom being enlarged in the hearts of those who attended. Thank you for your prayers and your support.

### Ministry Update: Family Camp cont'd from page 5

also looked at what it means to follow Jesus and be a part of His revolutionary new Kingdom of radical other-centered love.

This was an amazing week for me personally. I don't think there is anything that compares to watching little ones really capture, and grab hold of Jesus and His beautiful picture of the Father.

For each of you who saw this event on our calendar and were praying for this event, I want to thank you for your prayers. God showed up and we were all tremendously blessed. Thank you, each of you, for your support of Renewed Heart Ministries. Together we are changing lives for time and for eternity. Last week, it was families. And if you could have been there, you, like myself, would have gained a fresh appreciation for why Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me."



## Quotable Quotes

For God so loved the world that he gave [as a baby born in Bethlehem] his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him [follows him and his teachings] shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to SAVE THE WORLD through him. —Jesus (John 3.16,17)

And we have seen and testify that **the** Father has sent his Son to be **THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD**. —John (mentored by Jesus for three years; 1 John 4.14)

# HeartGroups Testimony

## HeartGroup – Kapolei, Hawaii

Have you ever enjoyed something so much that you just felt you were made for it? Well, that's what it was like this past summer when I received the immense privilege of spending a weekend with the HeartGroup in Kapolei, Hawaii. It was euphoric. On Friday night, we discussed what New Testament *ekklesia* must have looked like. Then, for the rest of the weekend, we discussed such topics as the ethics of Jesus' teachings on nonviolent non-cooperation, Jesus' definition of the Gospel as being "Kingdom" centered, and also the topic of radical enemy love and forgiveness.

This group has quite a few folks showing up each weekend—people who had negative experiences growing up attending traditional, Protestant-style church services, or simply have not spent much time attending church services in general. What is transpiring in this not-so-little HeartGroup is nothing short of breathtaking. They meet each weekend to share food and fellowship and to study. In short, they come together to worship! Once a month they also dedicate a whole day to doing some service project for the community that will help others as enlarge the Kingdom as well by putting on display the radical other-centered love of the Father. These guys are doing life together in a beautiful hybrid style, combining both the island concept of *ohana* (family or community) as well as the New Testament concept of being the body of Christ, with Him as the Head.

I learned so much by hanging out with this group during this time, and I plan on visiting a HeartGroup in Oregon in September of this year. If this group is any indication of what Jesus is doing through the HeartGroups network, I cannot wait to see what Jesus is doing through the group in Oregon!

If you have ever wondered whether you might be interested in starting a HeartGroup, please feel free to check out our HeartGroup page at [www.rhmheartgroups.com](http://www.rhmheartgroups.com). There, you can find out what a HeartGroup actually is as well as get in touch with one of our coaches if you need help getting started.

To all those who were praying for this event, thank you, sincerely. Jesus showed up among us, and all of us went away energized and further equipped to continue proclaiming, "Christ's Kingdom has come!" (Mark 1.15).



# Testimonies

Your message of the teachings of Christ along with your teachings of the words and culture used in biblical passages has changed my view of my heavenly Father so much. Thank very, very much. – C

We have been so blessed to have been able to have learned what our God is truly like through Herbs sermons, campmeetings and podcasts. Without this new revelation of God's true character I am sure I would have given up long ago. I was really upset and downcast, very depressed about week ago and I wrote to Herb. He wrote back and reminded me how special I was to God, that God was not doing this to me, but the enemy. I knew

that, but just to hear it from Herb, and the way he wrote with such compassion, broke my heart, but in a good way. I use the renewedheartministries.com website every week, I've listened to all the sermons sometimes 5-6 times, It takes a while to get all these things thought through and mused on. And yes even with this wonderful knowledge Satan can still get to me...But God's Love modeled through Herb, and the website and friends will overcome even the lowest Satan can push me. Thank You Herb and Crys, for ALL that you do. Don't let Satan get at you either (I know he's trying)!! I know, and I believe you have the truth for this last generation and God will WILL continue to strengthen you. Thanks for the care. – DC



## Featured Presentation



The early, first century church perceived in Jesus' Kingdom a new way of doing life, based on radical paradigm shifts in how they saw God, themselves, and the world around them. Included in Jesus' teachings about this Kingdom was Jesus' clear prohibition on hierarchy within it. They caught hold of Jesus' dream of an open, mutually

participatory community, which put on display the nature of the Godhead's love itself. This month we want to offer you Herb's presentation *Ekklesia!*, as our gift to you. As a follow up, it is our prayer that you will also check out RHM's HeartGroups page and take advantage of the many free resources available there to aid you in your following of Jesus, as together we put on display the breathtaking beauty of our God.

Renewed Heart Ministries provides its resources free of charge. Jesus commanded, "Freely you have received, freely give." We at RHM take this command very seriously. Philosophically we have a hard time charging money to people for things God has given us for free.

In order to do this, we are entirely dependent on the contributions of our supporters. If you would like to make a one-time gift or offer monthly support, please send your contributions to the following address:

**Renewed Heart Ministries  
P.O. Box 1211  
Lewisburg, WV 24901**

Contributions can also be made online at:  
[www.renewedheartministries.com](http://www.renewedheartministries.com)

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[www.renewedheartministries.com](http://www.renewedheartministries.com)