



RENEWED HEART MINISTRIES

α wakenings

"Only by love is love awakened."

::::: The Official Newsletter of Renewed Heart Ministries ::::: May 2016 :::::



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Herb Montgomery

“A disciple is not superior to one’s teacher. It is enough for the disciple that he become, like his teacher.” (Q 6:40)

Luke 6:40: The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

Matthew 10:24-25: The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

This week’s saying is the age-old adage, “Like teacher, like student.” We take on the characteristics of our teachers. This is why choosing an appropriate mentor or instructor is an important step in becoming who you want to be: your teachers shape the kind of person you become.

An example is a few years ago I wanted to learn how to throw pottery. I didn’t just go out and sit at the feet of any one who does pottery. I choose teachers who throw pottery well and whose style I also appreciate. Find teachers who, themselves, resonate with what you want to become.

This translates into every area of life. If I want to become something different than I already am, then I need to increase the diversity of those I allow to teach me. If I want to stay the same and never risk changing, then I need to choose teachers that are just like me. If I do the latter, though, it’s not likely that genuine, revolutionary learning can take place. It is likely that my old ways of thinking will only be reinforced and more deeply ingrained.

The saying of Jesus that we’re looking at this week appears in two different contexts in Matthew and Luke. A majority of scholars believe that Luke follows the Q text more closely, so we will begin with that.

Luke

Luke’s version follows the passage we looked at last week where Jesus asks, “Can the blind lead the blind?” The

passage invites us to choose teachers with developed senses of perception. If you choose teachers who are ignorant rather than aware,, you will share in their ignorance. As Jesus taught, fully trained students are like their teachers. So if you want keen perception for yourself, stop giving the seat of instruction in your life to those who cannot see. This could be one of the most revolutionary things some of us can do to change our lives: simply choose a different set of teachers.

This seems to me to be Luke’s emphasis as he shares Jesus’s saying. In this statement, Jesus is contrasting his teaching with the popular teachings of his time. Examples of contemporary teachings include the Pharisees’ drift away from Hillel to Shammai, and the idea that violent revolution was needed to overthrow Rome. For Luke, however the strongest teachings that Jesus competed with are the economic models of his day. Luke, much like *Sayings Gospel Q*, presented a world based on the economics of care. The Reign of God to Jesus is people taking care of people, a world where people come before profits, and where exploitation and subjugation give way to the predominant need, as opposed to being the means of an elite’s greed.

Matthew

Matthew’s gospel has a different focus: Jesus encouraging his disciples. When the disciples are mistreated, Jesus says, they are simply receiving the same treatment Jesus was faced with. This teaching has been helpful to me personally.

Whenever I am being lied about, misrepresented, or slandered because I’m teaching something found in the sayings of Jesus, I go back and reread the entire chapter of Matthew 10. It doesn’t make the treatment any more comfortable, but it does encourage me that I’m not alone. I’m standing in a stream that stretches far back before me and will continue on long after me. It helps me to think of all who have been ill-treated for standing up for what is right. I remember the saying, “Worse things have happened to better people.” And most of all, I realize that I’m in the right story. What I’m experiencing

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The Disciple and the Teacher

by Herb Montgomery

Quotable Quotes

“And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.” So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man’s house.”

– Mark 3:22-27

...Teacher cont'd from page 2

is nothing new, and Jesus was here before me.

Being Like Jesus

Recently my friend David Hayward at NakedPastor.com drew a sketch that sums up this teaching nicely!

<http://bit.ly/1T1iWtn>

What does it mean to be like Jesus? Do we really understand all that it means to become like the teacher we read about in the gospels?

Being like Jesus involves learning how to love, how to embrace those at the bottom of our society's various pyramids of domination, oppression, and subjugation. It also means learning how to work alongside those being marginalized and embracing accusation, rejection and possibly execution. There are many who have lived that kind of life. In history, that includes Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., but there are countless others who have also lost their lives for standing up to the status quo and working to make this world a safer home for all.

I've learned over the last few years that following Jesus doesn't only mean trying to teach the same things he taught. It also means standing in solidarity with those Jesus stood in solidarity with and having the courage Jesus had to keep standing with them even when threats arise from those who benefit from the way things are and who feel threatened by change.

Lucretia Mott, a historical figure I look up to, was fond of quoting William Penn's statement, "Men are to be judged by their likeness to Christ, rather than their notions of Christ." ^[1]

I've noticed that many of my fellow U.S. Christians have developed very strong notions about Christ at the same time that others perceive them as unlike him. (A fantastic read to understand this dynamic deeper is *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity...and Why It Matters*.) We may think we're being faithful by defending strong beliefs about Jesus and yet we miss that being faithful to him includes being faithful to the people he was faithful to. Faithfulness to Jesus means standing in solidarity with those in our day who are



discriminated against and marginalized as the Jesus we see in the gospels stood in solidarity with his marginalized peers.

Will this faithfulness come with accusations? Will we, like Jesus, also be accused of doing the work of Beelzebul? Quite possibly.

I appreciate Edersheim's comments on what Beelzebul meant.

"This charge, brought of course by the Pharisaic party of Jerusalem, had a double significance...We almost seem to hear the coarse Rabbinic witticism in its play on the word Beelzebul. For Zebbul (Hebrew) means in Rabbinic language, not any ordinary dwelling, but specifically *the Temple*, and BeelZebul would be the *Master of the Temple*. On the other hand, Zibbul (Hebrew) means *sacrificing to idols*; and hence Beel-zebul would, in that sense, be equivalent to *lord or chief of idolatrous sacrificing* - the worst and chiefest of demons, who presided over, and incited to, idolatry." (Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*)

Edersheim connects the name Beelzebul to Jesus's activity at Jerusalem's temple. Where I part ways with Edersheim is that I see Jesus's temple protest as being much more economic and not just religious. Jesus was protesting an economically exploitative system of which the Temple had become the center.

Don't miss that calling Jesus Beelzebul (the "chiefest of demons") was a response to his standing up to the status

quo religiously legitimizing the subjugation and marginalization of a certain sector of society. When your choices align with this type of action, people today might call you the chiefest of demons too.

Last week I mentioned a public hearing on a nondiscrimination ordinance in my town. At the hearing, I introduced myself as a husband, father, and director of a faith-based nonprofit in West Virginia. It was the "faith-based" part of my statement that some Christians in favor of discrimination latched on to. Those watching the hearing at home later told me that in one group's live streaming video, the commentator referred to me as a traitor, a wolf in sheep's clothing, and lastly "the devil." Jesus' words in Matthew are quite on point.

Losing much, but gaining much as well.

Over the last two years, I have lost much. I have also gained much. I used to preach about the love of a God in a way that anesthetized consciences and made my audiences passive about those who were being hurt. I regret that.

My path changed as I began to *listen*. Choosing to listen was not an intellectual choice; it was an intuition based on empathy. Others shared their hurt with me, and I chose to hear them. When we encounter the pain of others, pain that a system that benefits us causes, we have choices to make. We can choose to make excuses or blame the victims. We can choose to justify the way things are, as if change is not possible. Or we can

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Renewed Heart Ministries Weekly Podcast Now Has A Name!

Last week marked Renewed Heart Ministries' 168th episode of our weekly podcast. We began this podcast in 2011. We've recently decided to give our podcast a name—*Jesus For Everyone*.

This year we are dedicating the podcast (as well as our weekly eSights) to the sayings of Jesus believed to have been held dear by the early, first-century, Jewish, Jesus-community. These are a collection of sayings found in both Matthew and Luke, and referred to by most scholars as *Sayings Gospel Q*.

You can access our weekly podcast by three different methods.

You can listen directly by going to Renewed Heart Ministries' podcast episode page: renewedheartministries.com/Podcasts

You can access it through iTunes by going to: <http://apple.co/1rYmBQ9>

Or you can access it through your favorite RSS reader by pointing your reader to: renewedheartministries.com/podcasts/podcast.xml

We are excited to be on this journey with you of rediscovering, following and helping others rediscover the teachings and sayings of the historical Jesus. We believe these teachings have an intrinsic value in informing the work of nonviolently confronting, liberating and transforming our world into a safe, more just, more compassionate home for us all.

Till the only world that remains is a world where only Love reigns.

"The Kingdom of God is within you." – Jesus

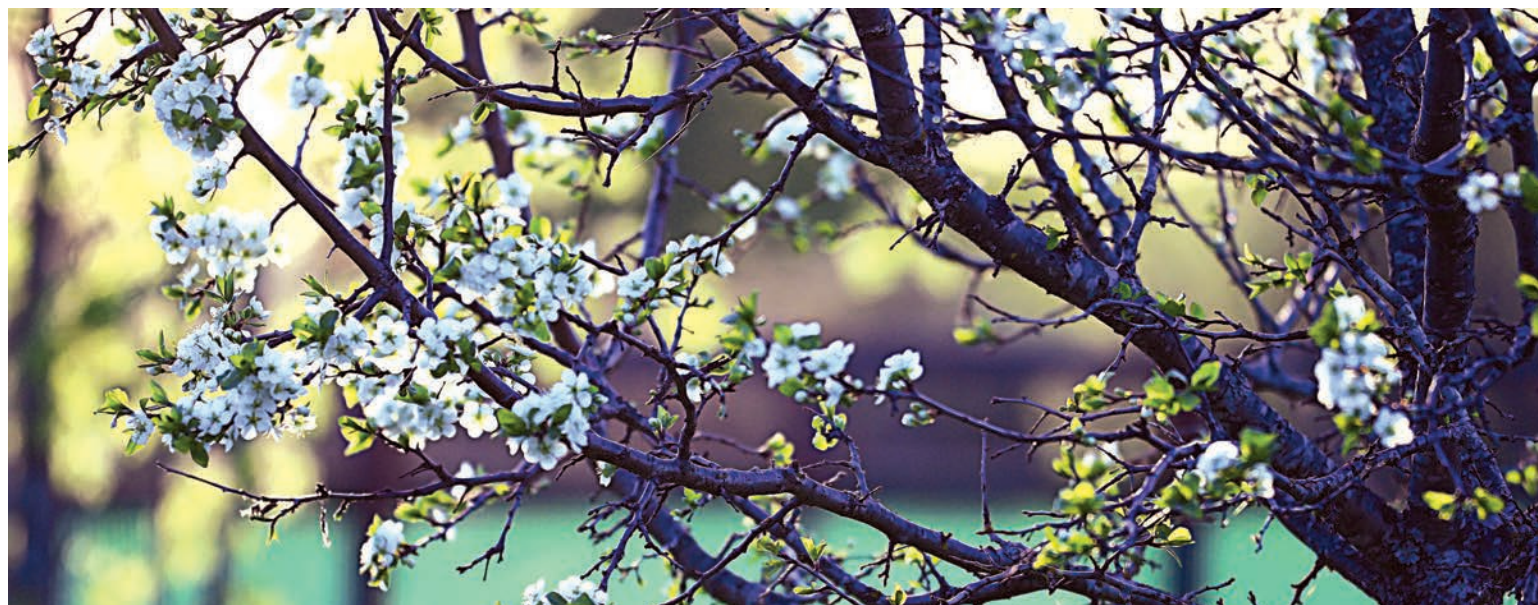


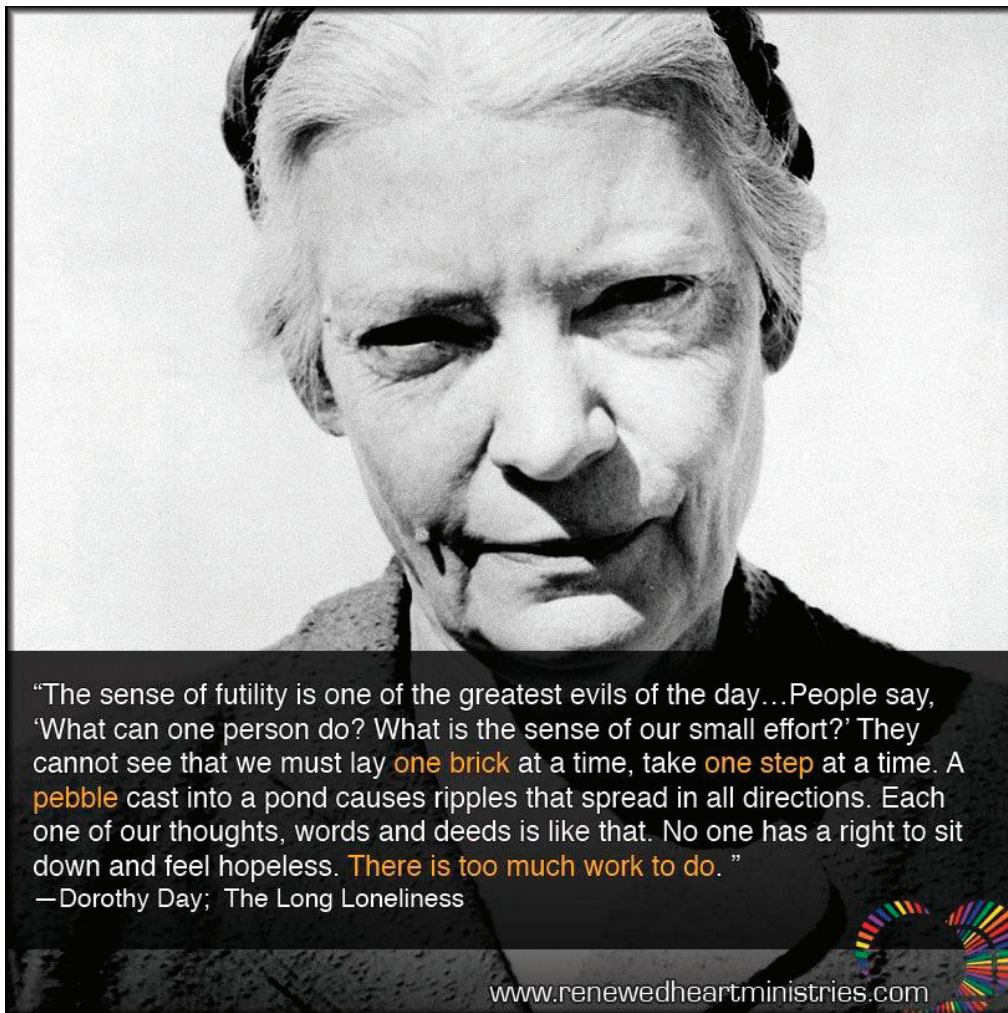
Testimonies

"I'd like to take this opportunity to express again just how much I love and appreciate you, my brother." –KG

"From the start we felt your authenticity and were moved by the challenging of old frightening ways of picturing Our Father. We learn so much from you and you have such a unique way of perceiving and understanding the Bible. I must admit the Revelation story still stumps me. We respect your message all the more because you have not had an easy ride through life. You really know loss and being let down and feeling deserted acutely, yet you have been able to see God as love like no other speaker I have ever heard. Thank you, Keep the faith" –L

"I love you and what you are doing! Thank you for speaking up. My whole perspective has changed over the last 5-6 years and I'm thankful that God brought you into my life at Redwood in 2006" –KB





"The sense of futility is one of the greatest evils of the day... People say, 'What can one person do? What is the sense of our small effort?' They cannot see that we must lay **one brick** at a time, take **one step** at a time. A **pebble** cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions. Each one of our thoughts, words and deeds is like that. No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless. **There is too much work to do.**"
—Dorothy Day; *The Long Loneliness*

www.renewedheartministries.com

...Teacher. cont'd from page 3

stop and choose instead to listen, to be humble, and to be honest.

My personal "disciples are like their teachers" journey, began for me two years ago with a post on Facebook about those who self-identify as LGBTQ. Today, after a lot more listening, I would say things differently, but this is where my most recent journey began:

<http://bit.ly/1rx0yj4>

I initially lost a lot of friends over that statement, and this ministry also lost a substantial amount of support from readers and donors. Two years on, we have almost recovered from those losses, and I have also gained new friends. These new friends are some of the most beautiful people that I had no idea shared this rock with me, and yet I still miss my old friends.

I haven't and couldn't "replace" my old friends, and wish that they would also choose a posture of listening. As my circle of friends has gotten larger, I often

wish it still included some of the people who used to love me and my work. I'm learning that they may have liked what I said or how I made them feel, but they weren't able to grow with me.

Where I stand today is where any student eventually stands: at the choice to focus on what I understand Jesus of Nazareth taught and to promote and apply those same things in my life. I'm not trying to simply make people feel good. Rather I'm now working with others to make our world a safer, more compassionate world for us all, to make our world a place where people take care of people and only *Love* reigns.

Peter Maurin co-founded *The Catholic Worker* with Dorothy Day, and wrote in 1936: "I want a change, and a radical change. I want a change from an acquisitive society to a functional society, from a society of go-getters to a society of *go-givers*."

And I'm grateful I've found a community of friends who are working toward the same goals. We don't always answer

some of the smaller questions the same way, but on the big ticket items, we are teammates. I've only gained this community by becoming more like "the Teacher." It is exponentially more rewarding and satisfying.

It was sometimes very scary to watch old friends change their opinions about me, sometimes publicly. But much happened in addition to that too. Jesus said that unless the seed falls into the ground and dies, it can't produce fruit. Death is necessary for resurrection. One of my favorite quotations from James Parkinson is from his book *White Theology*: "A theologian—speaking of resurrection, in a body not bearing the scars of their own 'crucifixion'? Impossible!"

To be like our teacher, Jesus, in rising to life means embracing the things that our teacher taught and the ill treatment that comes from people pushing back against those teachings as well.

So for all who have suffered push-back from teaching or living the values and ethics you have learned from Jesus of Nazareth:

A disciple is not superior to one's teacher. It is enough for the disciple that he [or she] become, like his [or her] teacher. (Q 6:40)

HeartGroup Application

1. This week, as a group, make two lists. First list the positive ways you hope to become like the Jesus of the Jesus story. On the second list, write out some negative ways you might become like Jesus. These could be similarities you would not necessarily want but that would also come with the more positive parallels.
2. Discuss as a group whether the items on the two lists can be separated and ways in which you don't think they can. Your answers may vary.
3. Choose one of the similarities from the first list to lean into this coming week, knowing that it may produce a similarity from the second list.

Above all, keep living in love, till the only world that remains is a world where only love reigns.

I love each of you dearly. ■

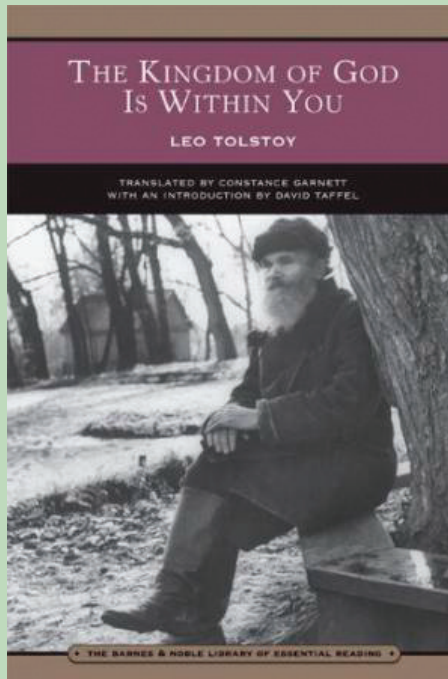
[1] Faulkner, Carol. *Lucretia Mott's Heresy: Abolition and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (p. 43)

RHM's Monthly Book Recommendation

RHM's Annual Reading Course book for May 2016 is:

The Kingdom of God is Within You by Leo Tolstoy

This is the book that significantly influenced Mahatma Gandhi's decision to consider the ethical teaching of Jesus. It is our hope that as you read, your heart will be renewed, inspired, and empowered to continue following the teachings of Jesus more deeply.



RHM's Weekly Podcasts

As many of you know, this year we have been traversing the sayings of Jesus believed to have been held dear by the early Jewish Jesus community, what some scholars call *Sayings Gospel Q*. It is believed by many to have been one of the sources used by Matthew and Luke in both the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain.

These are the sayings that have historically inspired significant positive world change. From Francis of Assisi and the anarchistic Anabaptists to Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and others, whenever those who desire to follow Jesus' teachings have sought to rediscover what those teachings actually were, and then to put them into practice, the result has been positive change in each of their societies. We believe these teachings have an intrinsic value in informing the work of nonviolently confronting, liberating and transforming our world into safe, more just, more compassionate home for us all.

You can *subscribe* to our free weekly podcast at:

<http://apple.co/1rYmBQ9>

or by simply going to:

renewedheartministries.com/Podcasts





Schedule

MAY 20 - 22, 2016

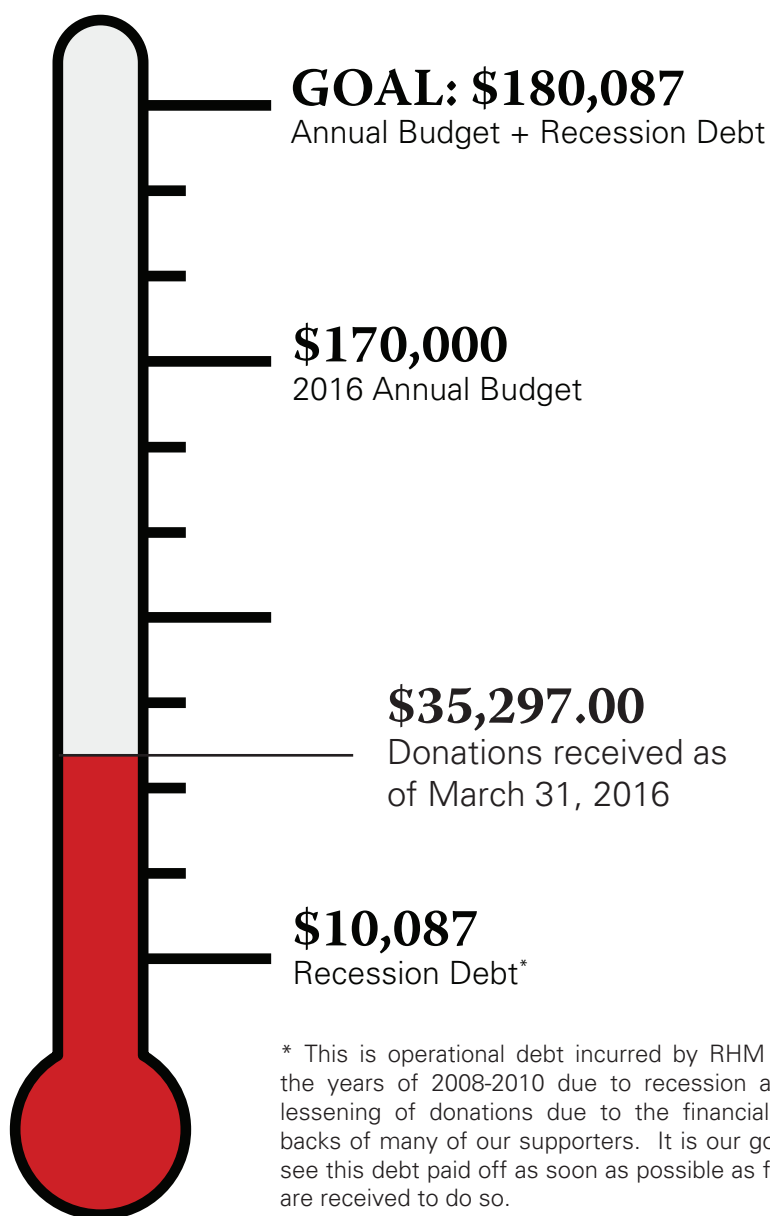
Spokane Valley Adventist Church
Spokane Valley, WA, USA
509.926.5866

JUNE 10 - 12, 2016

White Rock SDA Church
Surry, BC Canada
604.538.3303

JUNE 24 - 26, 2016

AWC
Phoenix, AZ, USA
480.878.8565



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We are happy to announce that we have received our first contribution through Benevity! Remember to find out if your employer participates in gift matching to enlarge your impact. And to all who are supporting Renewed Heart Ministries in other ways, thank you! We could not exist without you. Together we are making a difference.

**Remember
RHM when you
shop online!**

Renewed Heart Ministries is a not-for-profit group that is passionate about rediscovering, following and helping others rediscover the teachings and sayings of the historical Jesus of Nazareth. We believe these teachings have an intrinsic value in informing the work of nonviolently confronting, liberating and transforming our world into safe, more just, more compassionate home for us all.

Everything we do here at Renewed Heart Ministries is for free. Even the many educational events that we do in various venues. If you'd like to support our work you can make a one-time gift or become one of our monthly contributors by going to RenewedHeartMinistries.com and clicking the donate tab at the top right.

Or you can mail contributions to:
Renewed Heart Ministries
P.O. Box 1211
Lewisburg, WV 24901

Also, please sign up for our free resources and remember, every little bit helps.

Anything we receive over and above our annual budget we happily give away to other not-for-profits who are making both systemic and personal differences, significant differences, in lives of those not presently benefited but the status quo.

And to those already supporting the work of Renewed Heart Ministries, your generous support makes it possible for us to exist and to continue being a presence for positive change in our world. So with all of our hearts, "Thank You."

Together we are making a difference, till the only world that remains is a world where only Love reigns.



RENEWED HEART MINISTRIES

Featured Presentation

There are three reasons Jesus' teachings remain relevant. One is their *intrinsic value* in shaping our work of nonviolently confronting, liberating, and transforming our world into a safer, more just, compassionate home for us all. Secondly, Jesus' *solidarity* with the subjugated and marginalized. And lastly, Jesus' *courage*. Jesus understood that what he was teaching and who he was standing in solidarity with would cost and he had the courage to do it anyway. It is our hope that your heart will be renewed and inspired to continue following the teachings of Jesus more deeply as you listen to this month's featured presentation – ***Three Reasons Jesus Remains Relevant*** by Herb Montgomery.



Quotable Quotes

"But on being asked when the kingdom of God is coming, he answered them and said: The kingdom of God is not coming visibly. Nor will one say: Look, here! or: There! For look, the kingdom of God is within you!"

- Q 17:20-21, *International Q Project*