



# Awakenings

"Only by love is love awakened."

::::: The Official Newsletter of Renewed Heart Ministries :::::: Volume 7 :::::: Issue 4 ::::::



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Herb Montgomery



## Jesus' Definition of Salvation

by Herb Montgomery

### Quotable Quotes

*“Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality.”*

—Paul, 2 Corinthians 8.13, 14

Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house . . .” (Luke 19.9).

This month, I want to take a look at the story of Zacchaeus. Specifically, I want to take a look at a detail within the narrative that I believe gets passed over far too often today. I want to also encourage you to actually go back and reread the entire story in Luke 19.1-9. The part that I’d like to focus on is the moment of decision for Zacchaeus and Jesus’ response.

We’ve already looked at Jesus’ radical inclusivity. Remember, the label “sinner” in first-century Judaism meant someone living outside the Torah and someone who had been “excommunicated” or “disfellowshipped” from the covenant community.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner” (Luke 19.7).

And in the very next passage, Luke reveals to us Zacchaeus’ converting moment:

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount” (Luke 19.8).

I have been told countless times by sincere people that they felt their ministry was not to reach the poor, but to reach the more affluent in our society. And while I do hear what they are saying, I think it is ironic that the conversion moment for this affluent man was a decision to help the poor. It could be that we don’t help the poor for what it does for them, but for what it does for us. It could be that we don’t help the poor in order to reach them; instead, we “reach” and bring salvation to the affluent by teaching them to partner with us in helping the poor.

Which leads me to my point:

Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has

come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham” (Luke 19.9).

Jesus, at least here, does not define salvation as some legal transaction. He does not here define Zacchaeus’ salvation as simply being pardoned or let off the hook. In this story, Jesus defines salvation rather as a healing which had come to Zacchaeus’ soul. Let me explain. When we view salvation as merely being forgiven, as if salvation was accomplished by convincing God to let us off the hook, we actually are defining salvation differently than Jesus did in the story. For Jesus, salvation was not getting a person from a state of being unforgiving to forgiven. No, Jesus’ forgiveness was an already done deal. And it was not the end goal. It, rather, was the means to reach his goal. Forgiveness, radically inclusive forgiveness, was actually the medicine Jesus used to bring about the healing and restoration of those he was endeavoring to reach. Again, salvation for Jesus was healing and restoration. Forgiveness was what he used to accomplish it. Remember, as we’ve said many times before, a person can be forgiven and still be lost. This is why it is important to realize how unconditional Jesus’ forgiveness really was, because only this type of forgiveness is powerful enough to heal. When salvation is defined as simply legal pardon, if it is only about getting free of some heavenly legal charges rather than healing and restoration, then even salvation that is labeled as “by grace” is just another form of LEGALISM. I’m quite sure that, if Zacchaeus was like any of us, he did not get it right every time after that. But what we see in his story is a person whom the religious of his day had written off as hopeless, one who made a radical change of direction in his life and become a follower of Jesus. It’s not the failures or successes,

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# Testimonies

Hey brother Herb just wanted to say you really are a blessing. I'm almost done with your series *Life Unlimited* and my view of God has changed drastically. Keep me and my family in your prayers brother. - JF

Your message and witness has changed my thinking and opened my mind. Thank you. - TJ

Thank you for the strong focus on the great and benevolent love of our God and His call to follow Christ's example even to death. THAT is continually enlarging in it's significance. May the gospel of Jesus, the truth of his Kingdom, be always foremost in your life. - CC

Thank you for coming to our area. This has been a powerful message [Follow the Lamb] which has given me real peace and hope for the lost. It has challenged me and I have had a real change in some of my understanding. We have been very blessed. May the LAMB richly reward you. - PC

## *Jesus' Definition... cont'd from page 2*

victories or mistakes, that make us a follower of Jesus, it's the direction of our life. And what we see in Zacchaeus was a definite change of life direction.

There are two more things I want to mention, then we need to wrap up.

First, Jesus, through inclusive forgiveness of Zacchaeus, brought about his restoration. Then Jesus says to those who, just two verses earlier were standing in judgment against Zacchaeus, "this man, too, is a son of Abraham." Zacchaeus may have been living outside of the requirements of the Torah, but when he responded to the ethics of Jesus, Jesus called him a "son of Abraham too." (Remember, Moses only required 120% restitution. Zacchaeus, in following Jesus, pledged far above Moses' requirement with a whopping 400%, plus giving half of all his possessions to the poor! Following Jesus, in this case, far exceeded Moses' requirements.)

Secondly, Zacchaeus, although affluent, embraced what the religiously affluent had made fun of Jesus for two chapters previous (see Luke 16.14). Helping the poor is NOT an optional requirement for those who desire to become followers of Jesus. Helping the poor is at the core of the beauty of God's love we are to display to the world around us. And Zacchaeus got this.

In the early church, they understood this too. They had no buildings to fund, they had no staff to support. They took up offerings, but they did not even spend the funds on evangelism. The early documents we have today prove that 100% of their offerings, with very few exceptions, were simply given to the poor.

Tertullian provides us with details of the church services in North Africa. He spoke of every person bringing money, "whenever he wishes and only if he is willing and able. It is a free will offering. You might call them the trust funds of piety. They are spent on the support and burial of the poor" (F. F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame, The Paternoster Church History*, vol. 1, Exeter, Devon: Paternoster,

1958, 197).

Justin Martyr provides us with similar insight from the second century practice of the Roman church. Speaking of their services he says, "the money thus collected is deposited with the president who takes care of the orphans and widows and those who are in straits because of sickness or any other cause and those in prison, and visitors from other parts. In short, he looks after all who are in need" (Bruce, 196).

Justin explains that regular gifts were brought to the communion service to be used for the common fund. The church in the port city of Ostia, Italy, devoted as much space to storing goods to be redistributed to the needy as they did space for their worship services (Axel Boethius and J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Etruscan and Roman Architecture, Pelican History of Art*, Harmondsworth: Middx, 1970, 152-4).

The general rule, for both individuals and churches, was, according to Augustine, that "not to give to the needy what is superfluous is akin to fraud" and "when you possess the superfluous you possess what is not your own."

The early church had only two great apologetics:

1. Their lives of nonviolence where they would rather die than inflict harm on another.
2. They not only took care of their own poor, but they took care of the poor who belonged to Rome as well.

In short, we need to take more seriously Jesus' commands to help the poor if our authenticity about following Jesus is to

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### *Jesus' Definition... cont'd from page 3*

be taken seriously in today's cultural climate. We must be more than simply believers in Jesus. Jesus is inviting us to be FOLLOWERS of him as well.

Remember, the picture we get of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, is of an itinerant teacher, going around gathering those who will join him in a revolutionary way of doing life that he calls "the kingdom of God." The "kingdom of God" is not some place in the heavens, nor is it a place some go to when they die. This "kingdom of God" is a radical rearrangement of how we see God, ourselves and everyone else. It leads to a radical rearrangement of how we do life in the here and now. It's a radical rearrangement of how human beings arrange their society that is "of God" or "from God"... to us... through this person Jesus. To enter THIS way of doing life is entirely revolutionary. It

is a radical break with life as we have known it, as it has been given to us, as we have been told, as we have been instructed is the natural way of life. It is a call to go against how we have been indoctrinated, to go against the scripts we have been handed, the rules we have been given on how to play the game. To "follow Jesus" is to break with all of that and say, "I want to live by an entirely different evaluation of what is important." It's radical. It's revolutionary.

Today, Jesus is still extending the invitation to join his revolution. He is looking for those who are weak but daring, afraid but believing, unsure but willing to take a risk—people who are simply crazy enough to go for it with him.

To follow Jesus and live the Jesus way is the most revolutionary thing a human being can do. It's not about getting a ticket to heaven. (How boring, tame, and domesticated.) It's not about saying a simple prayer,

going to a service once a week and then simply going back to the way things have always been done. To follow Jesus is to adopt a completely counter-intuitive way of doing life called The Way, of which Jesus is the template and upon which an entirely new way of looking at God is based. The "kingdom of God," rightly understood, is an alternate society formed around Jesus, his teachings and his picture of God. It's about learning to follow the Jesus practice of love, unconditional forgiveness toward others, restorative justice, mercy, nonviolence and fidelity to self-sacrificial other-centeredness. Jesus is still looking for followers today...

... and you just never know when someone might leap.

Keep living in love and loving like Christ. Go enlarge the Kingdom! I love you guys. See you next month. ■

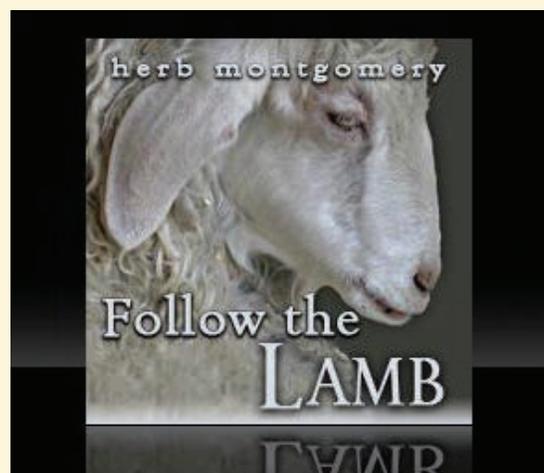
## ***Follow the Lamb: a new approach to Revelation through the lens of Jesus' teachings on nonviolence.***

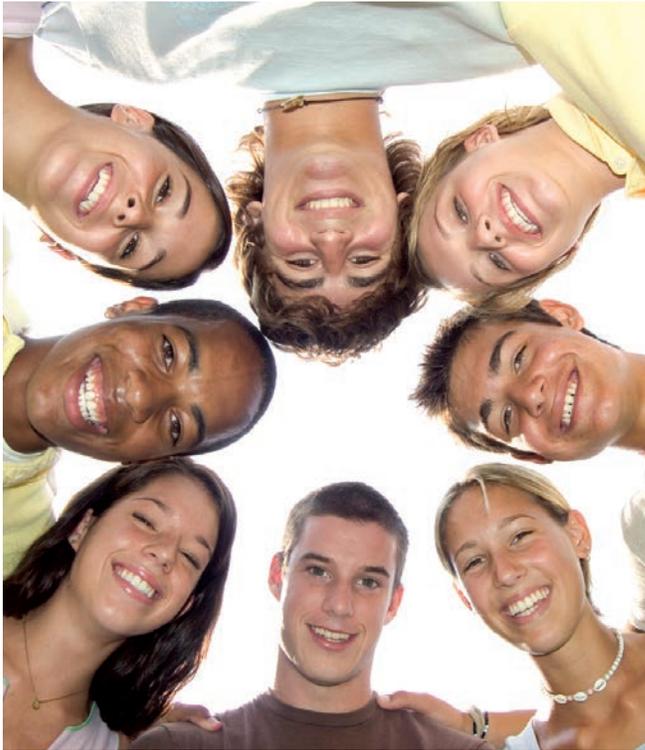
After almost a whole month of being on the road, I'm happy to be sitting in a hotel this morning writing this Newsletter for you. For those of you who missed getting a newsletter in March and April, I have something to make up for it. We have a brand new series on the book of Revelation that I'm guessing will be a different approach to that book than what you may be used to. Out of all the major documents we possess today from the early Jesus community, John's Revelation has received the least attention from scholars. The picture we get from the early Jesus story of the first century is that of a traveling teacher, traversing the countryside pioneering a new moral ethic based on a radically different way of seeing God, ourselves, and others. Take away the lens of alarmist prediction, use instead the lens of the ethical teachings of Jesus, and Revelation becomes a whole new book! It ceases to be so much about predicting the future and becomes a message of hope, coming down to the followers of Jesus in the first century from a not-too-distant possible future. It promises new possibilities for people tomorrow if they will but listen today. Jesus gave us a way to heal our world. The question

we must ask is whether the ethical teachings of Jesus and his unique picture of God, ourselves and others remains relevant to us in the 21st century. In the fourth century, Christianity, in significant ways, laid aside the ethics of Jesus, its founder. Much good, but also much abuse, has since been done in Jesus' name. The ethical teaching of Jesus are still calling to us today. The question that still haunts us is whether anyone, Christian or non-Christian, will pick those teachings back up and follow the Lamb.

You can find this new series at:

[www.renewedheartministries.com/AudioPresentationSeries.aspx?series=35](http://www.renewedheartministries.com/AudioPresentationSeries.aspx?series=35)





# MINISTRY UPDATE

**New Market, VA  
April 8-12, 2013**

Five days, nine presentations, and an overwhelming response to following the ethical teachings of Jesus.

This past April, I had the distinct privilege of speaking at a high school that I actually attended as a teenager for one year—Shenandoah Valley Academy in New Market, VA. Actually, the invitation to speak came from a Bible teacher I had while I was there some twenty plus years ago. (And meeting him today made me wish I'd paid more attention to him back then.)

We began Monday night with my story, found in the first chapter of *Finding the Father*. We discussed not only why having the correct picture of God is important, but also how Jesus is our definitive clue to what kind of a being God really is. On Tuesday, we spent two sessions looking at how the Jesus story gives us a radically different answer as to how there could be a God out there that looks like Jesus and yet this world can be so messed up. On Wednesday, we spent the day looking at the differences between what I call the juvenile imposed paradigm and the much more mature intrinsic paradigm of relating to God and how Jesus calls us out of one and into the other. On Thursday, we addressed some of the ethical concerns expressed by so many with the God of the Old Testament and why, at times, there seems to be such a contradiction between that God and the God we see in Jesus, with a call to actually begin living by the ethics we find in the Sermon on the Mount. Then on Friday, two presentations were devoted to the death and resurrection of Jesus through the lens of the Jesus story and how, through these, God established a radically reoriented way of living here and now, based on a radically reoriented way of seeing God, ourselves, and everyone around us.

I'm so humbled to say that, at the end of Friday night's session, I gave the students the opportunity, not just to be "believers in" Jesus, but to actually become FOLLOWERS of Jesus and his radical teachings. By my best estimation, the entire student body, with the exception of a very small handful, stood up and came forward in response to the gospel of the Kingdom.

It was an amazing week. And if any of you students are actually reading this (I know many of you have been downloading presentations from our library over the past few weeks), I just want to say that you are beautiful. You are my heroes. You give me hope. Thank YOU for all that you taught ME while I was with you. Stay centered in Jesus and keep following him. Remember, it's about a person, not a religion.

## Missing Dad

I want to also communicate to you what's happening with the sharing book for 2013, which was supposed to be released this fall. Due to a very small, but extremely vocal minority, *Missing Dad* has been taken off the list for printing this fall. The manuscript has been sent to the Biblical Research Institute in Silver Spring, MD (BRI) for further critical review "given the current climate of the church." The Review is in full support of the book, but given the efforts of a few, it is policy when complaints arise for manuscripts to be reviewed by the BRI before publishing. So, what this means is, though the manuscript may be published at a later date, it won't be published this fall as the sharing book for next year. Our humblest apologies to all who were eagerly looking forward to this volume.



## Schedule

### **JUNE 7-15, 2013**

Arizona Campmeeting  
Prescott, AZ  
480.991.6777

### **JUNE 30 - JULY 6, 2013**

Leoni Meadows Family Camp  
Grizzly Flats, CA  
530.626.3610

### **JULY 12-13, 2013**

Kapolei Heart Group  
Kapolei, HI

### **JULY 18-28, 2013**

Redwood Campmeeting  
Redcrest, CA  
707.946.2452

### **AUGUST 4-10, 2013**

Mt. Pisgah Academy Adventist  
Church  
Ashville, NC  
828.667.3640

## MINISTRY UPDATE

### **Modesto, CA March 29-31, 2013**

My weekend in Modesto, two months ago, was, in my estimation, a banner weekend for the Kingdom. It was Easter weekend, so it was spent taking a look at evidence for the Resurrection, the death of Jesus through the lens of the Jesus story, the revolution of the Kingdom that the Resurrection launched on this world, and finally a special Easter morning presentation on the significance of the Resurrection itself. Too many today are looking for the return of Jesus, putting off following his ethical teachings to some time in the future, waiting on Him in such a way that denies his accomplishments through his first coming. These presentations can be found online on our website at: [www.renewedheartministries.com/AudioPresentationSeries.aspx?series=33](http://www.renewedheartministries.com/AudioPresentationSeries.aspx?series=33)

What I want most to share with you about my visit to Modesto though, is the story of a young man named Trevor. I was preparing for my talk Friday night, when I looked out of the back entrance to the church's building facility and saw him sitting there, slightly around the corner. I thought about turning and walking away, but Jesus whispered, "No Herb. If you ignore him, this weekend you are nothing more than a hustler." So, to make a long story short, I found myself a few moments later, sitting with Trevor, a thirty-something homeless man, originally from the Caribbean. He had spent his early years in orphanages before being brought to the United States to live in a "Christian" foster home whose primary concern was simply getting government subsidy for having a foster child. When Trevor turned 18, the funds stopped, as did his welcome in this family's home. He had been on the streets for most of the last 20 years. When Trevor first saw me coming around the corner, I could see the fear in his eyes.

I quickly told him, "My name is Herb. I'm not a member here, I'm a visitor.

I'm not going to chase you off." The fear in his eyes at that point turned to distrustful curiosity. "I just want to sit here and talk for a minute. What's your name?"

"Trevor," he said.

As I sat down beside him, I asked, "Can I sit here for a minute with you? Would that be okay?" Trevor nodded, still watching me very carefully.

"I know you don't know me Trevor, and I'm not from here, but I'd like to get to know you. If you don't mind sharing it, and if it's not too personal, I'd like to hear your story. How did you get here?" As I said this, his eyes locked onto mine. Then I said, "I would like to be your friend

At that, Trevor relaxed. He told me his story. Space doesn't permit me here to share all the details; but I spent about 45 minutes with Trevor, laughing, crying, and just getting to know him. Before I left him, I offered some sort of help."

"I don't want your money, if that's what you mean," he blurted out.

"What do you need Trevor? I'm not

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## The Politics of Jesus

“Politics” is defined today as the arraignment of society deciding who get’s what, when and how. The Politics of Jesus are found in his sermon on the mount and his sermon on the plain.

Give the poor the entire kingdom.

Give comfort to those who mourn.

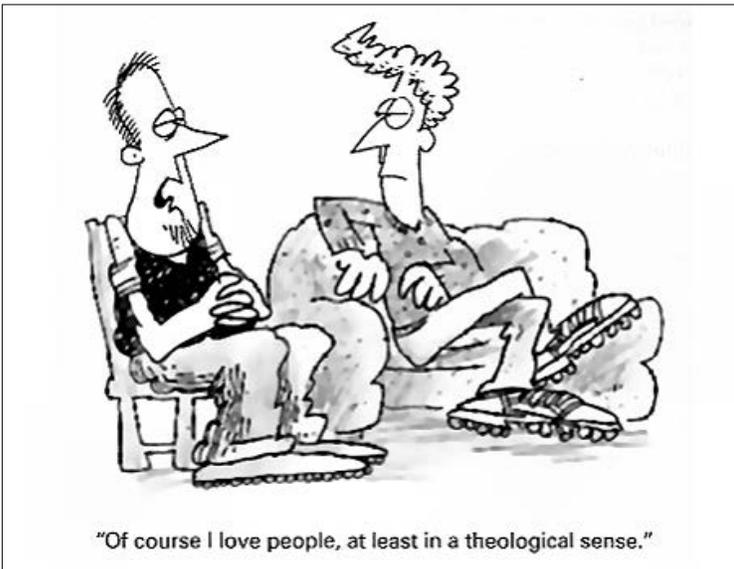
Give the earth to the meek.

Give equity to those who hunger for things to be put right.

To the merciful, the peacemakers, and the persecuted a place with the Lamb on the throne.

The Kingdom of God is without coercion. It is not advanced by force of any kind, legislative or otherwise. The Kingdom of God persuades by love, witness, spirit, reason, rhetoric, and if need be martyrdom. But NEVER by force.

The Kingdom is now. Love subversively.



## Quotable Quotes

“I pledge allegiance to the LAMB and to HIM who sits on the throne. And to HIS kingdom for all it stands, ALL nations, under God, indestructible, with equity and justice for all.”

—Herb & Emarya Montgomery

(based on: Revelation 5.13; 7.10; Luke 4.43; Daniel 7.13,14; Isaiah 2.2; Revelation 21.24; Daniel 7.14b; Psalms 96.10; Psalms 98.9; Revelation 14.6,7)

### Ministry Update cont’d from page 6

from here, but I want to do something. If I lived here I’d at least take you home and get you some food and some rest.”

Then Trevor looked at me in a moment of clarity. “I’m tired,” he said. “What I want more than anything is just to have a mom or a dad who believes in me.”

“Oh Trevor,” I said, “You do. Why don’t you let me tell you about him?”

It seems the homeless and the poor are on God’s favorites list. It is a lie to say that if anyone simply works hard enough, he or she can be rich. The game is callously cruel to those who aren’t talented enough (or sometimes ruthless enough) to play by its rules. The game of supply and demand has not solved the problems of hunger, homelessness, and poverty. In many cases, it has made those problems worse. The great hope of the poor is not the economic systems of our world, designed to benefit the rich or pacify the poor; rather, the hope of the poor is Jesus and his Kingdom.

Looking at his disciples, he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” (Luke 6.20).

Trevor and I continued to talk with each other for a bit, and then I got him some food. I made him take it. I told him I wasn’t doing it for him, I was doing it for myself and I needed him to accept it for me. As I left, Trevor and I embraced. He was not quick to let go. “Remember Trevor,” I whispered with my arms around him, “God loves me, but YOU are his favorite. And when you’re hungry, it’s not because God doesn’t care about you—he desperately does. It’s simply that he can’t get scared people, like me, to be his hands.”

I don’t know if I actually did anything for Trevor that evening in Modesto. But I can tell you this: Trevor definitely did something for me. The poor are not a category or a label. They have names. They have stories. Jesus was born into abject poverty Himself; the poor are the very ones He named as His tribe. And we are with Jesus when we are with them.

RHM is looking at significant ways to do more than just “teach”—ways by which we may be able to impact the poor among us. Please give us some feedback if you feel you are in support of this effort. (Maybe a few ideas and suggestions as well.) Let’s do something beautiful together for the Kingdom.

# Testimonies

Thank you, Herb. Your teaching has opened my eyes in so many ways and helped me see what Jesus was really all about like I never did before. For me understanding the radical way that Jesus wanted to revolutionize our whole way of thinking and relating to others has given the Gospel a sense of mission and purpose it was missing. It's not just about converting people and getting them to accept Christ so they can go to Heaven someday, it's about changing this world and bringing the Kingdom of Heaven into the here and now.

[We] have long had a sense that by fulfilling our mission we can bring the Second Coming closer (based on Matt 24:14), but we may have too limited a sense of what

that mission really is—keeping it within the comfortable confines of traditional Christianity that goes along with society for the most part and domesticates Jesus into someone who just wants to make us better people rather than turn the world upside down.

Can anyone think of any instance where it would be appropriate to use violence in heaven. I'm thinking no, so then we, as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, shouldn't be using it either? Some say, well we aren't in heaven yet, we have to deal with the violent world here on earth. But if we just do as the Romans while we're in Rome how can we ever expect to transform Rome into the Kingdom of God? If we answer violence with violence we are only perpetuating the cycle (live by the sword, die by the sword). On the other hand we may die, but we can change the world if we will surrender ourselves to Jesus and take up his cross instead. - *MCH*



## Featured Presentation



Out of all the major documents we possess today from the early Jesus community, John's Revelation has received the least attention from scholars. Jesus offered us a new moral ethic based on a radically different way of seeing God, ourselves, and others. Take away the lens of alarmist prediction, use instead the lens of the

ethical teachings of Jesus, and Revelation becomes a whole new book! The ethical teaching of Jesus are still calling to us today. The question that still haunts us is whether anyone, Christian or non-Christian alike, will pick those teachings back up and follow the Lamb. This month we want to feature the very first presentation in this new series, *Why Revelation*.

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)

\*All donations receive a tax-deductible receipt.

Be sure to check out RHM's *free* resources at: [www.renewedheartministries.com](http://www.renewedheartministries.com)