



# Awakenings

*"Only by love is love awakened."*

::::: The Official Newsletter of Renewed Heart Ministries :::::: Volume 8 :::::: Issue 8 ::::::



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Renewed Heart Ministries  
P.O. Box 1211, Lewisburg, WV 24901  
Phone: 304.520.0030  
Email: [info@renewedheartministries.com](mailto:info@renewedheartministries.com)

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#### Follow Herb!



@HerbMontgomery



Herb Montgomery



## Jesus and the Living Water

### Part 3 of 3

by Herb Montgomery

## Quotable Quotes

“Only through an inner spiritual transformation do we gain the strength to fight vigorously the evils of the world in a humble and loving spirit.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.;  
*Transformed Nonconformist*

***Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” (John 4:16)***

Stop, and consider.

A woman comes for water every day in the middle of the day, instead of the early morning when she would be with the rest of the women in her town.

Why?

In a society where women found their place beneath men, some women found themselves lower still. This woman was held in lower esteem than even her female peers. Why? This woman had a story.

She had been married five times. Try to consider this not from the perspective of our gender-egalitarian culture today but from the patriarchal social constructs of her time. Remember that marriage then was in some regards similar to marriage today, but within first-century Judaism, the social construction of marriage was significantly different. Women belonged to their husbands as little more than property. This was most apparent in divorce. Women could not divorce a man, but men, in this male-dominated hierarchical construction of marriage, could divorce a woman, under the Torah for any reason they so choose. Granted, a woman could not be passed back and forth between husbands, but her present husband could pass her to another if for any reason he deemed her no longer desirable (for faults as simple as burning the food or being less desirable than younger options).

This woman whom we find this day at the well had been sent away by five men. She had been told five times, “You are not desirable. You are not wanted.” We are not told what her present arrangement was, but suffice it to say, she was with a man now simply so that she could have some type of existence in that culture that required her to be connected to a man.

Jesus does not hold her responsible for any of this. There is no “go and sin no more” talk between them. There is no “love the sinner hate the sin” mantra that Christians today are so famous for touting. There is simply the understanding that this woman has been the victim of a marriage

institution gone completely wrong. Yes, it was monogamous, but it was no more than serial monogamy. The kind of marriage this woman had experienced only served to objectify, dehumanize, and degrade women to a status lower than men.

Next, we encounter Jesus’ offer to her of “living water.”

What Jesus offers this woman would answer her heart’s desperate cry to love and be loved: a water that would so satisfy her basic, inmost needs that it would not only fill the deep void inside her but overflow into a beautiful force toward others, flowing from her as a source of healing for others.

However, there was a catch. When she responds favorably and asks Jesus for this water, He cannot simply give it to her. No, the water Jesus offers this woman can be only experienced within the context of complete honesty and authenticity. She must come to a place where she is herself, regardless of what the other Torah-observing women might say. If she is going to truly experience what Jesus extends to her, she must be given a safe space with Him to be who and what she is, no longer hiding, even if that means facing her past of being told, time after time, there was something wrong with her.

Jesus draws her into this safe space.

*“Go get your husband.”*

The woman scrambles. *‘My husband?’* she thinks. *‘There’s something different about this man in front of me, yes, but the last thing I want this strange Jewish man to know is how many times I have been rejected, labeled as unwanted, sent away by one man after another. I know what I’ll say.’*

*“I have no husband,”* she says.

Jesus, with a look that subtly tells her that she can trust Him, says, *“I know. I know you’ve been married five times, and the man you’re with now is just keeping you around.”*

There is something different that she sees in this man’s eyes.

She changes the subject, though. Jesus will bring it back around.

cont'd on page 3

## ...Living Water cont'd from page 2

What is Jesus saying to this woman?

The same thing He is saying right now to you, too.

*"My love is not blind. I know everything about you there is to know. My love is not diminished by this knowledge. I love you AND I already know everything there is to know about you. Honestly, I knew you before you even did—even the things you are still in denial about. I know everything there is to know about you, and My offer to you is still on the table."*

Who are you reading this right now? What are you hiding? What are you not being honest about, not with others but with yourself and possibly with God? Would you like this living water, too? Then it is time to enter the dangerous honesty of this radically inclusive Kingdom Jesus came to bring. Whatever you are hiding, He won't turn away from it, and He won't turn you away, either. You might feel like you have to come to the well at midday to protect yourself from others' opinions, but you don't have to with Jesus. As a matter of fact, He is already at the well right now, waiting for you to arrive.

In the past two decades, I have met many people who have come to a place where they can be honest with God about who they are. Some I find to be still hiding. Others are very much on this journey of deep introspection. All these stages are okay. What Jesus would have us all know, first and foremost is that, regardless of who we are, we don't have to hide from Him. His love is unconditional. He already knows, even before you do, and His offer is still on the table. His hand still extends to you a cup. Are you thirsty for this water? Come. Drink. You will never be the same again.

The lady at the well did not fit in well with the religiously valued, normative social constructs of her day, either. Look at how Jesus relates to her. If you hear nothing else, hear Jesus' words to you right now:

*"My dear daughter, my dear son, I already know everything about you there is to know. And I'm still here. I won't abandon you. I love you. I've come to extend to you, too, the invitation to a world where worship on 'this mountain' or 'that mountain' is irrelevant. I'm offering you a way into a radically different world, with a river of living, wet, soul-thirst-satisfying, radically inclusive*

*love, not just for you but also, through you, to all those around you who were made for this kind of water, too."*

Do you have the courage to be honest with Jesus?

The first step is to believe that Jesus really does give us space to be honest without the fear of losing Him. The next step is to believe what Jesus said to Philip: *"If you have seen Me, you've also seen God"* (cf. John 14:7-10).

### HeartGroup Application

1. This week, I want you to spend some time in contemplation with Jesus. What might you be hiding? Consider if there remains in you a door to that most private room of your heart that you have kept locked.
2. Invite Jesus into this, whatever it is. Watch what He does next. Journal what He shows you.
3. In the context of Jesus' encounter with the woman at Jacob's well, share what Jesus shows you with your HeartGroup this upcoming week.

Keep living in this love. Allow it to also flow out to others around you until the only world that remains is a world where Christ's love reigns. ■

## Testimony

"Your three part series renewedheartministries.com/Esights/07-07-2014] touched my heart. There are not many out there who are saying what you are, and I just wanted to say that I appreciate your ministry. I'm teary eyed at the moment, and it's making it hard to write this.

I will be sharing this with our fellowship group over the next several weeks. Our group consists of homeless men and women living out on the streets. I know the women are going to appreciate hearing this just as I have. God Bless!" - K



# MINISTRY UPDATE

## Garden City Fellowship Christchurch, New Zealand June 21-28, 2014

I had no idea that there were so many in New Zealand who were being inspired by the ministry of Renewed Heart Ministries (RHM). Let me tell you the whole story..

The trip began with me arriving at Dulles airport in Washington, D.C., only to discover that Air New Zealand had lost my reservation. My trip had only just begun, I'd just completed the first leg that took me from Lewisburg to D.C., and I found myself standing at the ticket counter with the rest of my itinerary having simply disappeared. I had arranged all the travel details a month beforehand, and now I had to scramble to find a ticket to New Zealand, for that very day! After having my original airfare refunded, and saying a prayer asking for wisdom, I found another plane that was leaving in just four hours that would take me to Christchurch. It was on a different airline, and the ticket would be twice the cost of the original one I had purchased the month before. I sat there in the airport wrestling with whether to just cancel the whole series or to embrace the extra cost and trust God to make up the difference. I felt Jesus whisper, "Trust me Herb, you'll understand on the other side." So I took the chance, knowing that Renewed Heart Ministries would now be sharing half the cost of this series as well. I'm very conscientious with the resources God blesses Renewed Heart Ministries with. Not knowing where the rest of the ticket cost would come from, Jesus pressed in close and said, "I've got this part, you just get to this church."

I was off to an unnerving start. I would now be arriving late Friday night in Christchurch rather than the originally planned time, which as Friday morning. My first talk was not until Saturday

morning, so either way I still had enough time to make it. After flying for twenty-plus hours, and a flight delay, I arrived at 1:30 a.m. I quickly grabbed about five hours of sleep; when I woke up I was ready to give my first presentation.

On the first day, the presentations were exceptionally well received. I was honestly blown away to discover that so many people had been listening to Renewed Heart Ministries' resources. I had no idea there were this many dear people in the southern hemisphere tracking with me through our online presentations and weekly podcasts. I was pleasantly shocked! After a full day of presentations and meeting, talking,[1] and listening to so many people, I got to bed that night at about 11:00 p.m. for some much needed sleep.

The rest of the series was not scheduled to continue until Monday evening, so I had a day to adjust, recoup, and get my thoughts together. I travelled to the west side of the island for some sightseeing and I recorded the following week's podcast. The next day we would embark on a series of presentations for the community of Christchurch entitled *Jesus For Skeptics*, and from the little I had seen already, I was looking forward with anticipation to what God was going to do.

The topic line-up for *Jesus For Skeptics* was simple. New Zealand, much like Europe and Canada, is a very secular country. I was not going to spend the week speaking on topics of ontological apologetics. Our time was limited and I wanted to get into the subject matter that Jesus was passionate about as well. I didn't have time to spend on the evidence that we do have for the historical reliability of the Jesus story. So, I simply went for it. Each night, I asked the audience not to focus so much on proving the "historicity" of the Jesus story, but, instead, to discover what the "Story Truth" of the Jesus story was, historically reliable or not, and to ask themselves if they saw that the "Story Truth" of the Jesus story held any relevance for the twenty-first century. (For those not familiar with this approach, "Story Truth" is different from

"Historical Truth." Take fairytales for example. No one tries to prove whether or not Cinderella actually took place in history. We listen to the story and we gain the "Story Truth" of the stories in that genre and we apply the story truth to our lives today. I'm not saying the Jesus story is nothing more than a fairytale. In a very secular society, what I was asking the people in the audience to do each night was to ask themselves if the ethical teachings of this Jesus in this story resonated with them, regardless of whether they thought the Jesus story was historically true or only fiction; I asked them to consider if a world that looked like the world Jesus was seeking to create resonated with them, and if they thought that Jesus' ethical teachings had any relevance for us in our world today in the twenty-first century.)

The topic line-up for the week was the radical inclusivity of Jesus for the marginalized, Jesus' teachings on nonviolent, direct action for addressing and rectifying injustice and oppression, Jesus' teachings on the narratives of greed and helping the poor, and the cross and resurrection as God's victory over this world's politics that are so dependent upon violence, economics that are driven by greed, and religion that is rooted in fear. By this time, the "Story Truth" of the Jesus story was standing before us in brilliant, pristine clarity. The relevance of this story to our lives in our world today where oppression, injustice, and violence are rife was astounding. We took one night looking at whether someone had to embrace the traditionally retributive, and violent, Christian doctrine of "Hell" to become a Jesus follower in our world today, and then we finished up the last weekend by addressing what it would mean for those in attendance to become a Jesus follower.

The response was overwhelmingly positive. This series of presentations was more abbreviated than the many presentations I typically give in a series of this nature; nonetheless, it turned out to be just as significant a blessing for those who attended.

You can find the MP3s and the videos for each presentation on our website soon.

Over the course of that week, I meet a dear new friend whose life was dramatically changed when a friend gave him a copy of *The Jesus Dialogue* series, even though he had not been raised in “church”. I also met a new friend from London, who is now living in Christchurch, who had been significantly blessed by the resources of Renewed Heart Ministries. I also met a dear lady who, on the opening night of the series, came to terms with what it means to be an ambassador of forgiveness toward her enemies rather than desiring retributive vengeance. She looked at me and said, “I’ve been looking forward to a day when God would wreak vengeance on all my enemies, and that day I see now isn’t coming, is it Herb?” This dear lady was finally set free by learning to forgive. I met another dear friend—and if I were to tell you all that he and his family have been through it would fill no less than ten newsletters—who shared how encountering the teachings of Jesus through Renewed Heart Ministries had radically changed their life and put them on the path of healing. I met another young lady who had been shunned by her church, which was focused primarily on outward, performance-based conformity, who saw herself in the Jesus story specifically. I witnessed how Jesus responded to a lady such as herself, and I felt Jesus’ love restoring her to be a Jesus follower once again. The week ended for me by meeting a new friend who shared how his life had been turned “upside-down” by the teachings of Jesus. This friend also wanted to be baptized as a



disciple of Jesus, a Jesus-follower. Mind you, it is winter in New Zealand. Suffice it to say, on record, that is the coldest, and I mean *coldest* baptism I have ever done to date. Welcome to the Kingdom, my new friend. Some are saved by fire (1 Corinthians 3.15), others are saved by water (1 Peter 3.21); you, my friend, were saved by ICE!

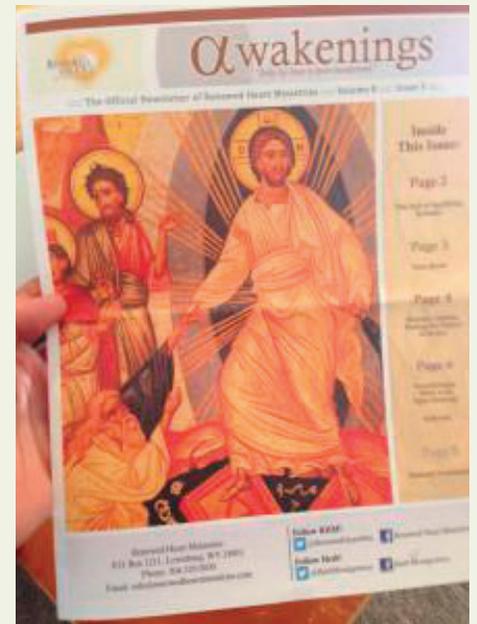
Right now, I’m on a plane back to the states, in awe of all that God did over this trip. I’m thinking about my last weekend in New Zealand, where I walked into the home of a family who had been coming to the meetings and saw a copy of Renewed Heart Ministries’ monthly newsletter on their dining room table amid a bunch of other mail.

I honestly had no idea how many people in New Zealand were following the ministry of Renewed Heart Ministries (RHM). I am honestly overwhelmed. I want you too, dear reader, to catch the significance of this. There are so many people around the globe right now that are either coming to Jesus for the very first time through this ministry or are returning to Jesus after some time away (for whatever reason, but most of the people I meet originally left over some type of religious abuse). These are precious souls to our Father, and they are being reconnected with this life, as well as this world, transforming love. Only time will tell how far-reaching RHM’s efforts in sharing the Jesus story will be. I met so many beautiful people, heard so many heart-touching stories of lives that were either being changed, or had begun to now be changed, through the Jesus, you and I, together have shared

with them. That’s right. “You and I.” Together. Renewed Heart Ministries could not do what we do for Christ’s Kingdom without your partnership through your prayers and support. Together, all around this globe, through us, Jesus is changing hearts, minds, and lives both for today and for all eternity.

As I think back on my time in New Zealand and all the beautiful people I met, I’m reminded of the prayer our Lord taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven, may who you really are be made manifest to those in this world. May your Kingdom come, may your will be done, once again on Earth as it is in heaven. May we receive what we need for today and share the extra that we gather with those who only gathered a little. Teach us how to forgive, as well as to be forgiven. And, may we cease uniting around common enemies, may we be delivered from the way of the accuser, and may we learn a life of love instead.



Until the only world that remains is a world in which Christ’s love reigns.

To each of you who support Renewed Heart Ministries in any way, thank you.

I love you guys. ■



# MINISTRY UPDATE

**West Lenexa, Kansas**  
June 11-12, 2014

For all of you who were praying for this event, let me first say thank you. The presentations I shared will be on our website shortly. Yet what meant the most to me this weekend was not the responses to my presentations, as positive as those were.

I met quite a few people over the weekend who were visitors to the church (as well as those who call this church their weekly home), and what left me most moved is the realization that there really is something special taking place within Western Christianity right now.

There is a rediscovering taking place in all traditions regarding what “the Kingdom”

actually is. How it challenges our present way of seeing God, our present way of defining ourselves, and our present way of relating to and arranging the world around us. I see a resurgence in people’s hearts to rediscover what the Jesus story is really all about. Remember, the hope of the Hebrew people was not to become a disembodied soul at death on some far distant cloud. Their hope was of a time when the Messiah would come and all injustice, oppression, and violence (IOV) would be put right. Through Jesus’s death and resurrection, he has been made the forerunner in this new world, the “healer” that will usher us from the old age into the age to come (Acts 5.31).

In fact, the “Kingdom” is here, yet not all IOV has been made subject to New Creation. Today we still encounter IOV in matters of race, class, money, gender, and sexuality. And where Christianity has been the pawn of such IOV for the past 1,700 years, today I am witnessing Christians waking up to this reality, rediscovering what their Jesus story is all about, and choosing to walk away from Christendom to follow Jesus into this radical new world once again.

God did not send Jesus into this world to condemn this world, but that the world, through him, might be healed (see John 3.17).

Today, I see those who have been blindly used to perpetuate IOV in the name of Jesus waking up all around me to what Jesus called “the Kingdom”—a whole new way of arranging life here and now.

It’s an exciting time to be alive, for sure. We are living in one of those special times when those who come after us will look back and wish they could have been us. Things are changing. The future is bright! (Depending on which place on the hierarchical pyramid of privilege you find yourself in.) The radically inclusive Kingdom is swelling. And if we have eyes to see it, if we allow ourselves, through letting go of our old places of privilege, to be “born again,” through the death of our old worlds and through a resurrection into the new, if you have eyes to see it (John 3.3), what is happening all around us right now is breathtakingly beautiful!

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

## Quotable Quotes

At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love. The nonviolent resister would contend that in the struggle for human dignity, the oppressed people of the world must not succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter or indulging in hate campaigns. To retaliate in kind would do nothing but intensify the existence of hate in the universe. Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can only be done by projecting the ethic of love to the center of our lives.

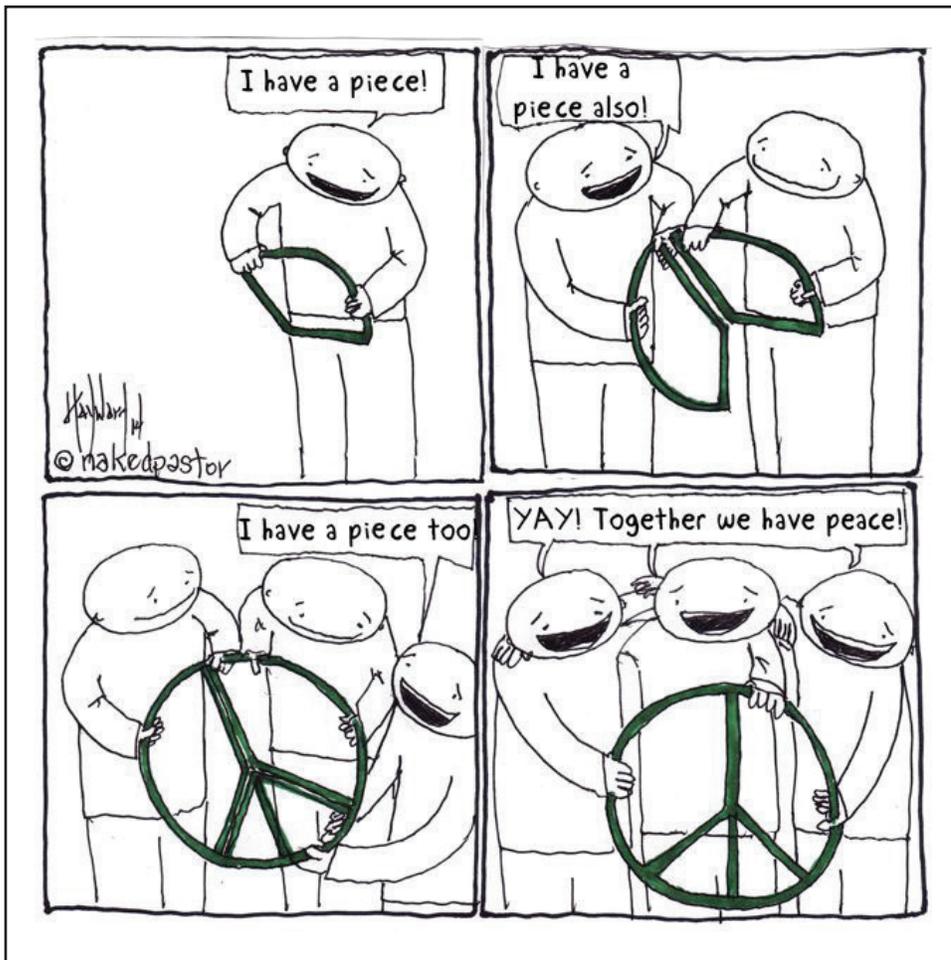
—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.;  
*A Gift of Love: Sermons from  
Strength to Love and  
Other Preachings*



When normativity is wedded to exclusivity it produces hierarchical privilege and, by definition, an oppressed minority. When the preservation of social constructs is the Moral concern, rather than the deeper non objectification, non dehumanization, and anti-degradation of those within the social constructs of every culture being the Ethical concern, in the name of “standing up for what is right,” the non normative minority will always be objectified, dehumanized and degraded, becoming themselves the recipients of attempts at being purged from said society by the said normative majority. — Herb Montgomery

*“If you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent.” - Jesus*

#mostholyp laceis empty  
#godisonthecross



# Schedule

**SEPTEMBER 7, 2014**

Rhema Christian Center  
Lewisburg, WV  
304.645.6999

**OCTOBER 3-5, 2014**

Loma Linda Filipino  
Adventist Church  
Redlands, CA  
909.798.3822

**OCTOBER 24-26, 2014**

Cornerstone Adventist  
Community Church  
Coquitlam, BC Canada  
604.723.3433

**NOVEMBER 7-9, 2014**

Port Charlotte  
Adventist Church  
Port Charlotte, FL  
941.629.1333

**NOVEMBER 14-16, 2014**

Columbia Adventist Church  
Columbia, MO  
573.445.2712

## Testimony

"I can't believe how hard it was to summarize how valuable RHM has been to me over the years! We have traveled quite a road together in that time. But, I think I'm satisfied that the following statements capture much of the essence of RHM's worth to me:

RHM has taught me it is more than okay to question everything I "knew" about God and that truth can not only hold up under scrutiny but even be more richly revealed by the process.

RHM has introduced me to many great theologians and fellow Jesus followers and made me realize that although I've been shedding my old religious skin, I'm not alone in who I am becoming by following the Lamb.

RHM simultaneously distills such

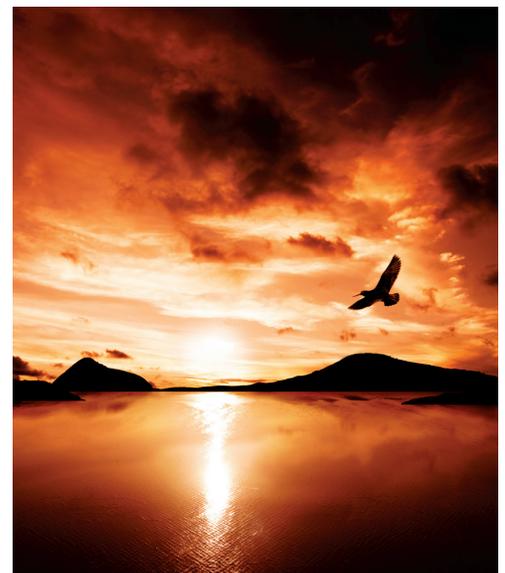
depth and breadth of information from contemporary and first-century Christians and challenges me to dig deep into that material to come to my own conclusions that I feel as if I've been enrolled in Seminary!

RHM showed me God's love for ALL as I had never understood it, which allowed me to finally forgive a family member for a 30-year hurt, bringing peace, healing, reconciliation and a witness to the true power of love to my entire extended family.

RHM in general, and Herb Montgomery specifically, has been a sounding board, confidante, mentor, cheerleader, role model, ally, and friend to me for six years. I'm so thankful that Jesus led me to such a Christ-focused ministry!

Or, to boil it down; What has RHM meant to me? EVERYTHING."

*-Christine Wolfe*



# Featured Presentation

Would you like to learn more about the early church and how they experienced fellowship, worship, and living out the embodiment of Christ and His Kingdom here on earth? This month we want to offer you a presentation from last summer that Herb gave in Kansas on HeartGroups. This is a brief overview on how we can, together, put into practice what we believe



about the character of God and experience the one-anothers of the New Testament through Open

Meetings which practice Mutual Participation contrasted to Passive Spectatorship. The Kingdom Jesus came to establish was meant to be experienced together! This month's featured presentation ***A World Changed By Jesus (HeartGroups)*** by Herb Montgomery.

embrace God's new world, where society was no longer united by a common alter, but a shared table—a table where God's presence is seen in the broken and spilled out emblems of He who was sacrificed. God is with them, and we are with God when we are with them.

### ***A Mission of Hope***

Last, I gave a presentation on the radically inclusive nature of Christ's Kingdom and what the way of mercy (rather than sacrifice) actually looks like when we apply it to our "mission" as followers of this Jesus. Jesus walked the earth as a radical, inclusive favor of God. He practiced a line-crossing, Pharisee-infuriating, Torah-challenging, "dangerous-labeled" table practice. And as a follower of this Jesus, we have to ask ourselves: Are we?

For all of you who were praying for this event, I want to say thank you. I cannot recount here how many of you came up to me at the end of the weekend to thank me for this new way of seeing God, ourselves, and those around us who we encountered for the first time this weekend. It was truly beautiful. I can say without a doubt—not just by faith, but by what I witnessed—that Jesus' Kingdom expanded.

Thank you for your continued support of Renewed Heart Ministries. Together, we are displaying what a world changed by Jesus looks like and extending to all the invitation to "follow Him."

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 difficult 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**

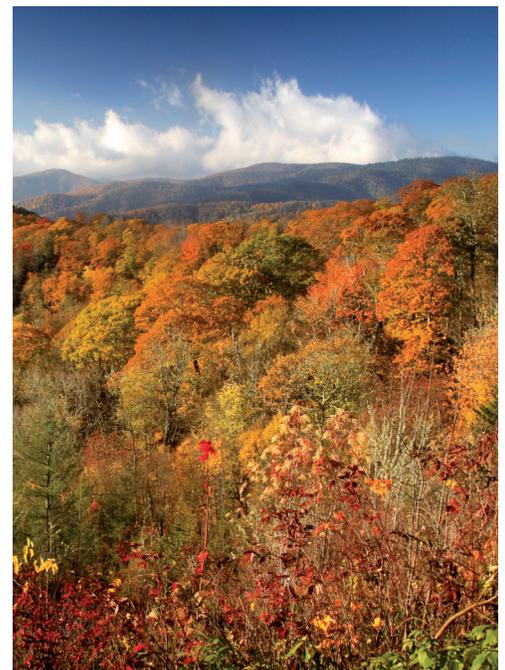
Contributions can also be made online at:

[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)



# MINISTRY UPDATE

## **Illinois Camp Meeting Akita Camp Ground July 25–26, 2014**

I'm just returning from a fantastic weekend of seeing old friends, meeting new friends, and basking with both in the radical beauty of what Jesus called the "good news of the Kingdom."

I was privileged enough to be the final weekend speaker of the Illinois Camp Meeting. I gave three presentations:

### ***Whom Do You See? The Search for a God Who Looks Like Jesus***

In this presentation, we focused on what it really means to actually believe Jesus' words, and that if we have seen Him, we have "seen the Father."

### ***The Moment That Changed the World***

This was a narrative contemplation of the actual Jesus story and how the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus calls us to abandon the way of sacrifice for the way of mercy. It was about no longer seeing God's presence in the most holy, exclusive core of our sacrificial system, but seeing God as suspended upon the cross of those being sacrificed by such systems. It was a call to see God's solidarity with the sacrificed in every generation. It was also a call to