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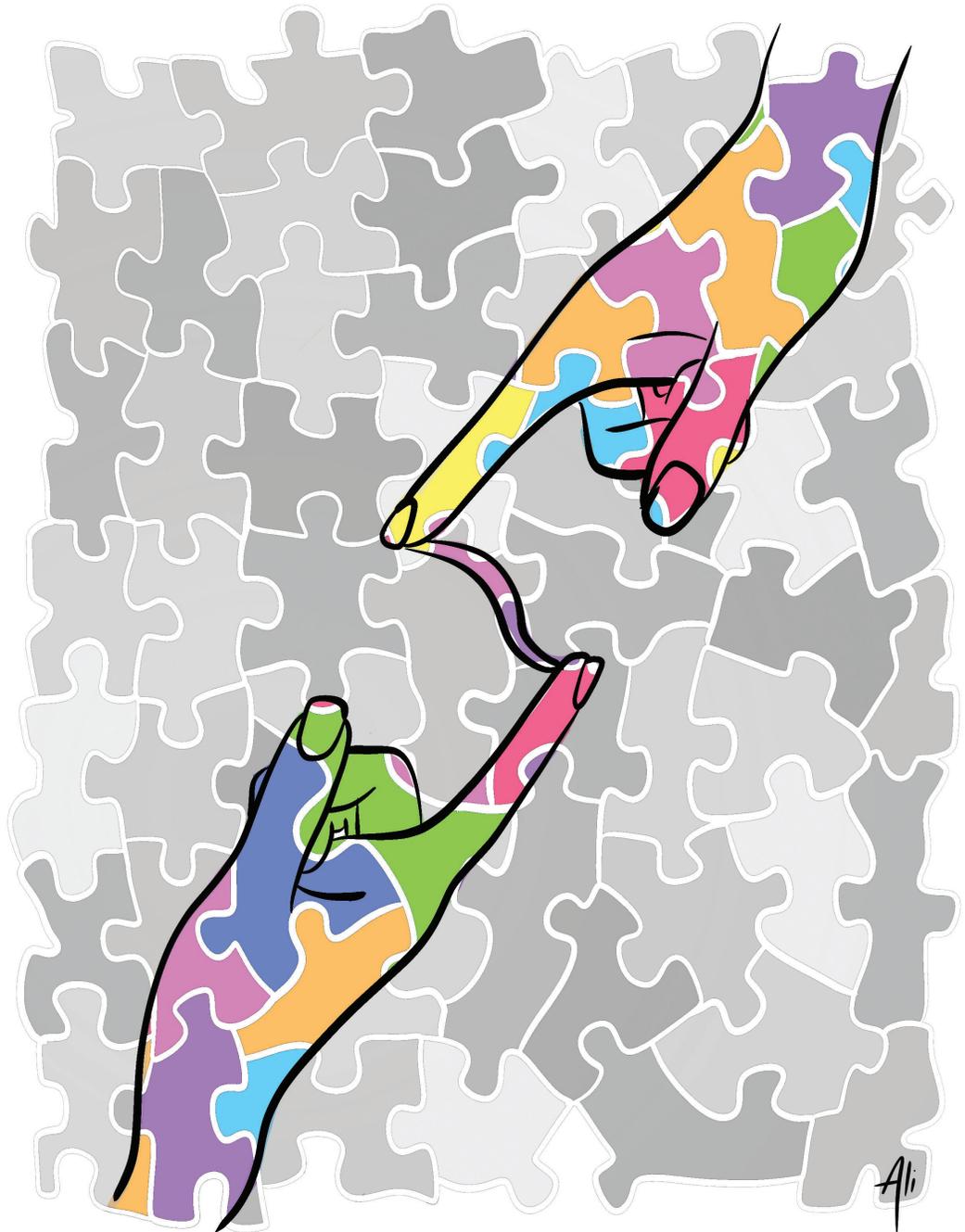
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Finding Jesus: A Fundamentalist Preacher Discovers the Socio-Political & Economic Teachings of the Gospels

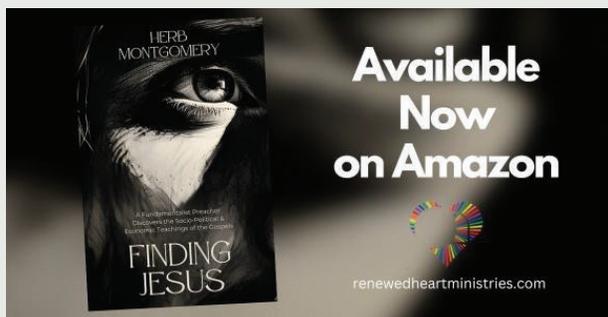
by Herb Montgomery

Available now on Amazon!

In *Finding Jesus*, author Herb Montgomery delves into the profound and often overlooked political dimensions of the gospels. Through meticulous analysis of biblical texts,

historical context, and social discourse, this thought-provoking book unveils the gospels' socio-political, economic teachings as rooted in a profound concern for justice, compassion, and the well-being of the marginalized. The book navigates the intersections between faith and societal justice, presenting a compelling argument for a more socially engaged and transformative Christianity.

Finding Jesus is not just a scholarly exploration; it is a call to action. It challenges readers to reevaluate their understanding of Christianity's role in public life and to consider how the radical teachings of the gospels can inspire a renewed commitment to justice, equality, and compassion. This book is a must-read for those seeking a deeper understanding of the social implications of Christian faith and a blueprint for building a more just and inclusive society.



Thank You!

We want to take a moment to share our deep and heartfelt thanks to each of you who supports the work of Renewed Heart Ministries. Your generosity means the world to us. In a time when ministries like ours are being asked to do more with less, your support is a lifeline—it keeps this work of love, justice, and compassion moving forward.

Thanks to you, we're able to continue standing for change, both in our wider society and within our local faith communities. Your partnership helps us work toward a world that is more inclusive, more just, and safer for all—and to be a consistent voice for love in the process.

From all of us here at Renewed Heart Ministries, thank you. **We are truly grateful for you.**

If you'd like to join our community of supporters, visit: **renewedheartministries.com** and click **"Donate"** or you can **mail your support to:**

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Lewisburg, WV 24901

From all of us here at Renewed Heart Ministry,

THANK YOU.



The Social Jesus Podcast

A podcast where we talk about the intersection of faith and social justice, and what a first-century, Jewish, prophet of the poor from Galilee offers us today in our work of love, compassion and justice.

Find The Social Jesus Podcast at: <https://the-social-jesus-podcast.simplecast.com/>



Listen & Subscribe

Front cover artwork by Ali Montgomery.



Dependency and the Community of Justice

by Herb Montgomery

Our reading is from the gospel of Luke:

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

“When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.’...

“Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”

He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:1-11, 16-20)

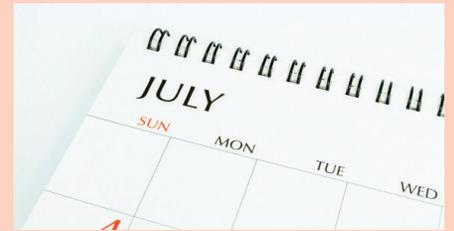
Loving one another was a central value in the Johannine community. We see evidence of this in all their writings in our sacred canon. One example is in 1 John 4:8:

“The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

In our reading this week, we encounter a version of Jesus’ instructions to the disciples he sent ahead of him to various rural communities. Though the versions of these instructions differ slightly, each of them reveal a plan of dependence. Stephen Patterson describes it this way:

“What does it actually mean for the empire of God to come? It begins with a knock at the door. On the stoop stand two itinerant beggars, with no purse, no knapsack, no shoes, no staff. They are so ill-equipped that they must cast their fate before the feet of a would-be host. This is a point often made by historical Jesus scholar John Dominic Crossan. These Q folk are sort of like ancient Cynics, but their goal is not the Cynic goal of self-sufficiency;

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Upcoming Events

JULY 19, 2025

Good News Fellowship

Toronto, Ontario Canada

For info or Zoom link, email us at:

info@renewedheartministries.com

or call: 304.520.0030

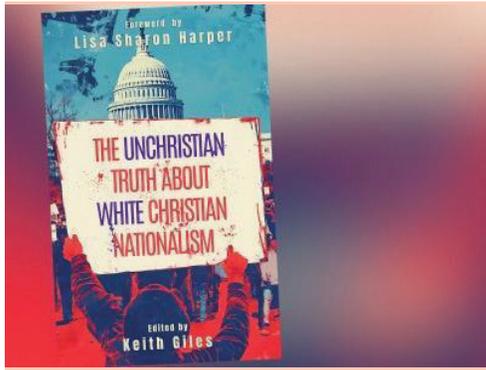


Weekly HeartGroup on Zoom Every Wednesday Night!

Each Wednesday evening, Glendale City Church hosts a Zoom HeartGroup led by Herb Montgomery. Our discussion each week will focus on the content in Renewed Heart Ministries weekly eSight articles and the *Jesus For Everyone* podcast published each Friday. The time of each Zoom session will be on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. Pacific/10:00 p.m. Eastern.

To receive the link for the Zoom meeting, email us at:

info@renewedheartministries.com



Recommended Reading for July

The UnChristian Truth About White Christian Nationalism

by Jamie Arpin-Ricci,
Aidan Bujanda-Moore,
Dillon Naber Cruz,
Matthew J. Distefano,
Lisa Sharon Harper,
Daniel Henderson,
Herb Montgomery,
Maki Ashe Pendergast,
Brandan Robertson,
Seth Showalter, and
Desimber Rose Wattleton-Njie

In this book, we've gathered a variety of authors, mystics, theologians, and activists to share how White Christian Nationalism denies the humanity of people of color and threatens the existence of gay, queer, trans, and bisexual individuals. Many of the contributors to this book are among those marginalized groups of people being targeted by this powerful movement that has grown to dominate the political landscape in America. Featuring a Foreword by Lisa Sharon Harper, this book amplifies the voices of those most at risk from the White Christian Nationalist agenda as well as those who stand as firm allies to the marginalized communities under attack. Resistance begins by listening to the voices of the oppressed. It gains strength when we take action. This is an initial step. But it's not the last.

Dependency... continued from page 3

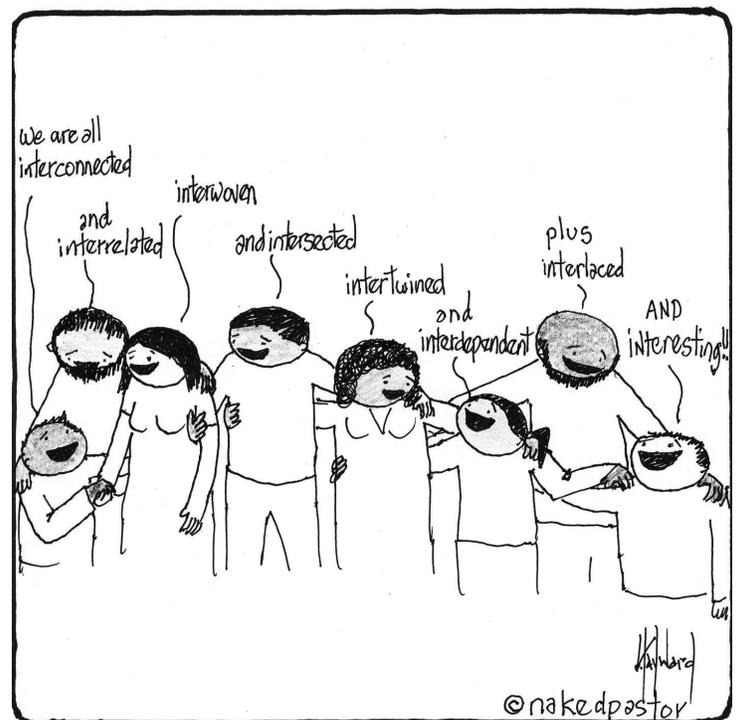
these itinerants are sent only for dependency. To survive they must reach out to other human beings. They offer them peace—this is how the empire arrives. And if their peace is accepted, they eat and drink—this is how the empire of God is consummated, in table fellowship. Then another tradition is tacked on, beginning with the words 'Whenever you enter a town.' This is perhaps the older part of the tradition, for this, and only this, also has a parallel in the Gospel of Thomas (14). There is also an echo of it in Paul's letter known as 1 Corinthians (10: 27). Here, as in the first tradition, the itinerants are instructed, 'Eat what is set before you.' Again, the first move is to ask. The empire comes when someone receives food from another. But then something is offered in return: care for the sick. The empire of God here involves an exchange: food for care." (Stephen Patterson, *The Lost Way: How Two Forgotten Gospels Are Rewriting the Story of Christian Origins*, p. 74-75)

It may be difficult for those of us who are Westerners today to get our heads around Jesus' plan for the disciples. From the very first moments of our lives, Western cultures acculturate us into an individualist way of relating to those around us. We place a high value on being self-reliant: being able to take care of ourselves without being dependent on others. As part of nature, though, we are dependent on much that is around us including others in our communities. It is this dependence on community and our communities' interdependence with others that Jesus' instruction to the twelve calls us to lean into.

The very first way people would be introduced to Jesus' teachings was by encountering two itinerant beggars on their doorstep. Some would send them away. Others would welcome them in based on their need. For those who showed compassionate hospitality or a disposition to share, preparation for Jesus' upcoming visit would begin. They were already showing they were open to the values of the kingdom. And it was with these people that Jesus' life-giving kingdom teachings would take first root. When he arrived, he would find them.

As human beings, we depend on one another for survival, growth, and well-being. From birth, we rely on others for our care, nourishment, and protection, and that need for connection, support, and community remains essential as we grow. No one builds a life all by themselves. In our present culture, too, we depend on rural, Midwestern farmers for food. We depend on trade workers and builders for shelter. We depend on teachers for knowledge. Emotionally, we ever seek to know and be known. We seek companionship, love, and empathy, which shape our identity and our mental health. What I believe Jesus sought to foster in these stories is that even the smallest acts of kindness—cooperation with a beggar on a person's doorstep—could ripple through their communities, reinforcing the truth that we are interwoven. Our interconnectedness isn't a weakness; it's a profound strength that reminds us of our shared humanity. Recognizing our dependence on each other encourages compassion, cooperation, and a more just and caring world.

The last part of our reading portrays the disciples after they return from their assignments. They are excited and amazed because even demons submit to them. But Jesus redirects their joy and understanding, and emphasizes a deeper and more enduring



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SOCIAL JESUS

A Blog Exploring the Intersection of Faith and Societal Justice



Recent Social Jesus Blog Posts on Patheos:



Our Dependency on Each Another

(Part 1 of *Dependency and the Community of Justice*)

These folk are sort of like ancient Cynics, but their goal is not self-sufficiency; these itinerants are sent only for dependency.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2025/07/our-dependency-each-another/



We are Connected

(Part 2 of *Dependency and the Community of Justice*)

As human beings, we are connected and depend on one another for survival, growth, and well-being. No one builds a life all by themselves.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2025/07/connected/



Dependency and the Community of Justice

(Part 3 of *Dependency and the Community of Justice*)

When we work to make our world a more just, safe, compassionate home for all, we are part of this community—now and forever..

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2025/07/dependency-community-justice/



Fire from Heaven

(Part 1 of *Caring for Those Outside the Tribe*)

Most Christians at this time were universalists, and our reading about fire from heaven was a part of their scriptural basis.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2025/06/fire-from-heaven/



Our Dependence on One Another

(Part 2 of *Caring for Those Outside the Tribe*)

Whereas Cynics were seeking independence from the system, our reading draws attention to our dependence on one another.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2025/06/dependence-one-another/



Caring for Those Outside the Tribe

(Part 3 of *Caring for Those Outside the Tribe*)

In this vision for society, mutuality would not end at family tribal lines, but rather envelope even those outside of the tribe.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2025/06/caring-outside-tribe/



Gospel Parallels with the Present Migrant Crisis

(Part 1 of *The Gerasenes and the Current Migrant Crisis*)

Romero has described some striking parallels between the South American migrant community here in the U.S. and Galileans in their time.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2025/06/gospel-parallels-present-migrant-crisis/



Imperialism, Colonialism and Our Migrant Community Today

(Part 2 of *The Gerasenes and the Current Migrant Crisis*)

Colonialism led to various forms of mental illness and psychological distress interpreted or pathologized in biased ways.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2025/06/imperialism-colonialism-migrant-community-today/



The Gerasenes and the Current Immigration Crisis

(Part 2 of *The Gerasenes and the Current Migrant Crisis*)

Do not mistreat the migrant. Treat them as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were migrants once, too..

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2025/06/gerasenes-current-immigration-crisis/



Weekly YouTube Show!

Just Talking with Herb and Todd

Each week, we'll be talking about the gospel lectionary reading for the upcoming weekend. We'll be talking about each reading in the context of love, inclusion, and social justice. Our hope is that our talking will be just talking (as in justice) and that during our brief conversations each week you'll be inspired to also do more than just talking.

If you teach from the lectionary each week, or if you're just looking for some thoughts on the Jesus story from a more progressive perspective within the context of social justice, check it out, you might like it.

You can find the latest show on YouTube
[@herbandtoddjusttalking](https://www.youtube.com/@herbandtoddjusttalking).

Please Like, Subscribe, hit the Notification button, and leave us a comment. All of this will help us get this new YouTube channel off the ground.

Thanks in advance for watching!

Dependency... continued from page 4

focus than the supernatural realm. I appreciate this.

In Luke, Jesus tells the disciples, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." This statement has multiple layers but it is deeply connected to the worldview of Luke's audience. Believing there was an unseen world, with unseen powers at work, they believed these powers were connected to both oppressors and the subjugated in the seen world. At one level, Jesus' statement uses Satan's defeat in the unseen world to signal approaching liberation for subjugated people in the seen world. Jesus is declaring that the disciples' success is evidence that Satan's kingdom is being overthrown in the unseen dimension of their reality. The coming of God's reign ("the kingdom") signals a turning point: the power of the oppressors is being broken.

Jesus continues, "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you." This is rich symbolic language. "Snakes and scorpions" likely represent the forces of evil behind the people's political and economic oppression by Rome. Jesus isn't promoting recklessness or invulnerability to physical harm, but rather assures His disciples that they are harbingers of a new day where the "oppressed are set free" (see Luke 4:18). Injustice, in all its forms, cannot ultimately defeat those who are sent with the authority of the "reign of God" now breaking through.

However, the heart of this passage lies in Jesus' next words: "Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Here, Jesus redirects the disciples' excitement from what they can do in the unseen world to their citizenship in the kingdom here in the seen world. Names written in the kingdom of heaven echo Rome's population censuses in subjugated territories for taxation purposes. Jesus is admonishing his disciples not to get excited about what is happening in the unseen world but to focus on the justice being established in the seen one. The power to cast out demons in the unseen world is not the disciples' most important gift. Certainly these are signs of the arrival of God's kingdom in opposition to Rome, but Jesus urges His disciples to place their joy not in supernatural success or power, but in the arrival of a new reign, the reign of the kingdom of heaven, where "on earth as it is in heaven" all injustice, oppression and violence are put right.

This passage reminds us today to focus on justice work here and now. Not to focus on supernatural realms, but on our own present reality. Luke's Jesus anchors his disciples' joy in something much deeper than what's unseen: their belonging to the beloved community of love, compassion, and justice rather than having their names written in the books of Rome. It's a call to keep our focus on what the reign of God means for our concrete material lives in matters of justice and compassion and in making our world a safer home for everyone. Justice creates a much larger community than ancient Rome or any nation or religion today. And when we work to make our world a more just home, we are part of this community—now and forever.

Discussion Group Questions

1. Share something that spoke to you from this week's podcast episode with your discussion group.
2. What does leaning into our dependency on one another look like for you? Which do you find more difficult, leaning on others, or being there for others to lean on you? Share and discuss with your group.
3. What can you do this week, big or small, to continue setting in motion the work of shaping our world into a safe, compassionate, just home for everyone?

Thanks for checking in with us, today.

Right where you are, keep living in love, choosing compassion, taking action, and working toward justice. ■

The work of helping people find life-giving ways to live out their faith through love, compassion, and justice are needed now more than ever. At Renewed Heart Ministries, we provide resources of faith and healing with the aim of renewing hope and inspiring action as we allow the Jesus story to inform each of us as we work together to shape our world into a compassionate, just and safe home for everyone.

RENEWED
HEART
MINISTRIES



Renewed Heart Ministries is a 501(c)3, grassroots ministry on the margins that prioritizes the needs of marginalized communities, especially those who have been the recipients of misinformed, faith-based harm. Your support enables us to be a life-giving, healing light in our faith communities and continue to be a voice for desperately needed change.

You get to decide what shape our faith communities take and what voices get to be heard.

You can support Renewed Heart Ministries with a one-time gift or by becoming one of our monthly contributors. Your donation can be made online at: renewedheartministries.com or by mail at:

Renewed Heart Ministries
PO Box 1211, Lewisburg, WV 24901

**Whether you give \$5 or \$5,000,
every amount helps us to continue our work.**

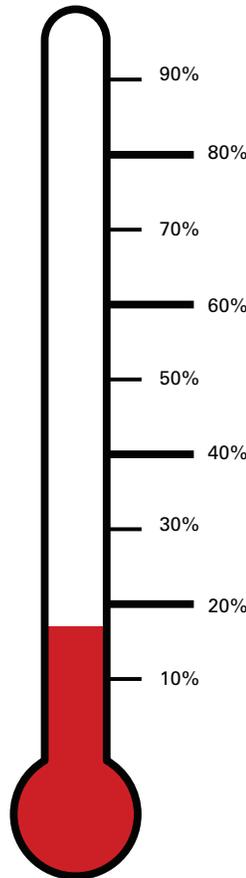
Please make sure you are receiving all of RHM's free resources by going to our website and clicking "sign up."

And **THANK YOU** for reading, listening to, sharing and supporting RHM's work. Thank you for the decisions you make every day to make our world a safer, compassionate, just home for everyone. Thank you for your dedication to engaging our world and the care you demonstrate, and for being such an important part of our community.

**2025 Projected Budget Goal:
\$150,000.00**

**YTD Budget \$87,000
YTD Donations Received:
\$25,827.34**

Thank You!



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 teachers 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 teachings of Jesus.

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!

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

- CW



Are you receiving all of RHM's free resources each week?

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"On earth as it is in heaven" inspires the imagination to picture our world with all injustice, oppression and violence put to right.

