

RANSOMED *Heart* MINISTRIES

- December 2002 Newsletter -

Your saints will extol you. They will tell of the glory of your kingdom, and speak of your might, so that all men may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom (Psalm 145:10-12).

Dear Allies...Compatriots...*Friends*:

What an amazing year it's been. (Has it only been a *year*? Could all this have taken place in just a year? It feels like ten.). Glorious redemption. Fierce battle. I must confess, I never really understood the language of the Bible for most of my Christian life. It seemed...overdone. All that talk of God's "mighty hand," and his "glorious kingdom," tales of battle and joy, of "danger on every side" and "reigning in life" through Christ. Most of my life that sounded a little weird, overblown, beyond me. That is, until now.

Now I think I am beginning to understand. Having been swept into this Story of love and betrayal, of high stakes and dark enemies...I am beginning to understand. The language of the Scriptures are overblown to us because it is we who have lived so long in a much smaller story. It took films like *Braveheart* and *The Matrix*, and more recently *The Lord of the Rings* and the second of the trilogy, *The Two Towers*, to give me an accurate picture of the Christian life. You must see them, if you haven't, for *that* is reality. That is the story in which we live, and now the language of Scripture makes perfect sense.

A number of you were with us for our Wild at Heart retreats, or you had your men return from one. Can anything compare to what is happening in the lives of men? Listen to them describe it for themselves: "Against all hope that it could even be done, He has set me free." "I am ruined for Christ. I have been pushed over the edge to a full-time life for Christ." "This has been the greatest weekend of my life. Because of y'all I know a relationship with a validating heavenly Father that is deeper than I have ever known. I go now to the front line. You have taught me how to fight in the biggest battle ever." "My heart is so healed and is held in the hands of Jesus." "I have never felt closer to God." "This has been the most powerful Christian experience of my life." "Words don't do it justice. This is now my way of life." "It was very hard for me to come to the conference- I had been taken out by the enemy. I have been separated from my wife for six months. Now I am crying freedom and am fighting for my family, wife and my Lord."

And that's just the beginning. We can't get the thousands of men who want to come into our retreats, so in September we stopped to create the Wild at Heart video series, subtitled Band of Brothers. God showed up. We shot eight segments in eight days, finished on the ninth day at 12:00 noon, and at 12:30 it began to rain and rained for the next four days. I've just seen the rough cut of parts 1-3 and it's *amazing*. This is going to be an earthquake in the realm of men. (It comes out in January)!

We also launched our women's ministry this fall, and...O my. Wow. To see freedom and life come to the hearts of women, through the hearts of women, is one of the most beautiful things I've ever beheld. Listen to them describe it: "Thank you for the most wonderful news I've ever heard." "He has ransomed the real me for real!" "I thought I had a good understanding of the spiritual journey until I came here and became unraveled. You showed me how extravagant

God's love is for me. I thought I knew, but God took me to a whole new realm of His Glory.” “My whole life I felt so unfeminine...I am leaving here leaning upon the breast of my Beloved, for I know the face of the enemy.” “My heart has been released.” “I have not words to express the beauty of Christ come to me this weekend. You have fought for our hearts and I am so grateful.” In Stasi’s words (she and our women’s team led the retreat), “So many tears. So much healing. Women heard from God for the first time in their lives...and heard from Him all weekend long. Restoration. Release. It was beautiful. And we did it together.”

The “We” Stasi means is you, our allies, and us, the Ransomed Heart team. And she is right. All that is happening through this tiny ministry – and there is so much more to tell, but time does not permit – take all this and multiply it in your imagination times about two hundred, this is what God is doing through “we few, we happy few, we band of brothers” and sisters.

In the year 563, thirteen men left Ireland in a tiny boat, with a tiny sail unfurled, willing to let God lead them wherever he might, for the sake of the Gospel. They landed on a small island off the coast of Scotland (at the time a vicious and pagan country) and there they established what they called a “little heavenly community.” The place was Iona, and it became the launching point of a new and vibrant Christianity into Scotland, England and Europe. We went to Iona last year, on a sort of pilgrimage, and we can tell you it is a remarkable place. God spoke to us there, and he said, “I am doing this again.” Maybe my favorite comment of the year came from a man at our last Wild at Heart retreat. Knowing nothing of our story he said he had just been to Iona and experienced its drama, its beauty, its true Christianity. He paused, and then he said, “This all feels like Iona.” I simply smiled and nodded.

This is the work of God, a wonderful and stunning move of his heart and his might. I’m beginning to see why Jesus calls his Father “the Mighty One.” That phrase is used all throughout Scripture, but I’ve never really understood why. It only makes sense if we are truly in a great war, with many fierce battles behind us and before us, and we need a great God to come through for us. Only if there is a serious and worthy foe can it be meaningful for God to be exalted as the Mighty One. And indeed he is.

Please...join with us. Spread the word. Form little redemptive fellowships that guard your heart, and offer life to others. Pray often and passionately for our protection, for guidance, for all we need to achieve this great work. Offer what financial help you feel God would have you offer to help us, when and how you can. Together, we will ransom God’s beloved.

With His heart towards yours,

John

PS. Please visit our website for our new products and up-coming events.