



- May 2003 Newsletter -

Dear Friends,

May 2003

All the believers were one in heart.
—Luke the Physician (Acts 4:32)

I love that description of the early church. They were one in heart. A camaraderie is being expressed there, a bond, an “esprit de corps.” They all loved the same thing, they all wanted the same thing, and they were bonded together to find it, come hell or high water. They were intimate allies. You see this at the center of every great story.

When Neo is freed from the Matrix (in the first movie), he joins the crew of the *Nebuchadnezzar*—the little hovercraft that is headquarters for the small fellowship called to set the captives free. There are nine of them in all, each a character in his own way, but nonetheless a company of the heart, bound together in a single fate. Together, they train for battle. Together, they plan their path. When they go back into the Matrix to set others free, each one has a unique role, a gifting, a glory. They function as a team. Neo is fast, really fast, but he still would have been taken out if it hadn’t been for Trinity. Morpheus is more gifted than them all, but it took the others to rescue him.

Though he is a very brave and true hobbit, Frodo hasn’t a chance without his “fellowship” – the hobbits, an elf, a dwarf, and of course, Gandalf and Aragorn. Frodo has no real idea what dangers and trials lie ahead. The dark mines of Moria; the Balrog that awaits him there; the evil orcs called the Urak-hai that will hunt him; the wastes of the Eryn Muil. He will need his friends. This is what the Bible means when it talks about “church.” It means those little outposts of the kingdom, little fellowships of the heart. Think again about *your* situation – lend a “mythic” eye to what has happened since you began to recover your heart...

You awake to find yourself in the midst of a great and terrible war. It is, in fact, our most desperate hour. Your King and dearest Friend calls you forth. You have a glory that is needed. You are given a quest, a mission that will take you deep into the heart of the kingdom of darkness, so that your people might be set free from their bleak prisons. He asks that you heal them. Of course, you will face many dangers; you will be hunted.

Would you try to do this *alone*?

Jesus modeled for us what it means to live in a little fellowship of the heart. Though he was the Son of God, he still needed his friends. They were knuckleheads, most of them, but they loved him and he loved them. They pulled together...and changed the world. That’s how we’re to think about “fellowship,” something like what Frodo and Neo found. Or what you see throughout *The Chronicles of Narnia*. A small, rag-tag band with burning hearts, who overthrow the kingdom of darkness and set the captives free.

This is ours – the team of Ransomed Heart. I wanted you to meet the gang here so you can put a name with a face.



Starting left to right, that's Cherie and Morgan Snyder. Cherie is my assistant, and Morgan runs all our conferences. They are awesome. Then comes Jenny Ladra, who has done just about everything here and is now lovingly handling our correspondence. Gary Barkalow is behind her on the right; he runs our operations and is on the speaking team (and is writing a book on calling – more on that later!). Karen Sergey is our newest member of the team; she assists Morgan with conferences. (No, she *rescues* him). Behind her is Bart Hansen, on the speaking team as well as helping us with the building of the Center and development. There's me, then Craig McConnell, also on the speaking team, and developing our work with pastors and fellowships of the heart. Next is Sue Rowland, Gary's assistant (between you and me, the one who *really* keeps this whole thing running), and Dave Price, budding philosopher in charge of our website and all our shipping and receiving (a gun runner in kingdom terms).

One of our core values at Ransomed Heart is "Stay small." It's hard, with all the demand that's coming our way. So many great opportunities, so many invitations from all over the world. But we believe that to become another big ministry is to lose the very thing that makes us so effective. I tell you this for three reasons. First, you must have a fellowship of the heart for *your* own desperate journey. Please don't try and do this alone. Second, many of you have experienced some frustration trying to reach us. Please be patient – Ransomed Heart is a tiny boat in a big storm.

And finally, because this little fellowship *needs* you – you are our allies. Our mission cannot be done without you. Like Frodo, we desperately need your prayers, your friendship, your financial support. We're somewhere between Helm's Deep and the Return of the King. Till then, keep us in your heart. You are in ours.

John

PS There's more on how to live in little fellowships of the heart in my new book *Waking the Dead*. It should be available the last week in June on our web site www.Ransomedheart.com. And all our fall events are posted there, too!