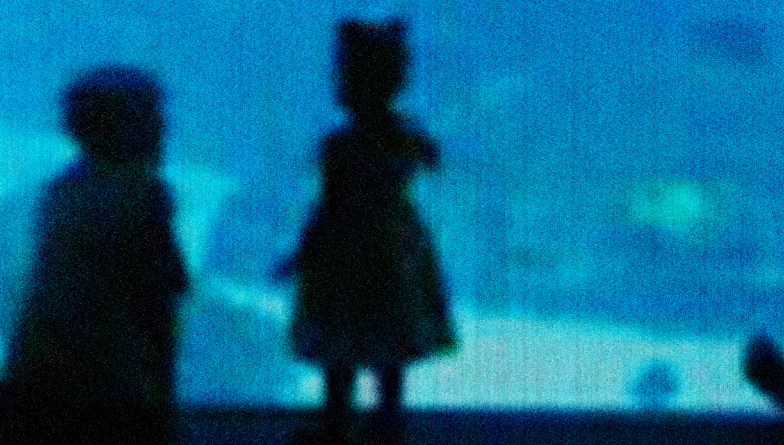


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# PERSPECTIVE

THE MONTHLY JOURNAL OF MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH

*Easter*  
*Lessons*





850 Mt. Vernon Hwy. NW • Sandy Springs, GA 30327  
 Phone: 404-255-3133 • Fax: 404-255-3166  
 info@mvbchurch.org • www.mvbchurch.org

## CHURCH STAFF



**Aaron Menikoff**  
 Senior Pastor  
 aaronmenikoff@mvbchurch.org



**Bryan Pillsbury**  
 Associate Pastor/Missions  
 bryanpillsbury@mvbchurch.org



**David Carnes**  
 Associate Pastor/Corporate Worship  
 davidcarnes@mvbchurch.org



**Brad Thayer**  
 Associate Pastor/Administration  
 bradthayer@mvbchurch.org



**Doug Young**  
 Family Ministry Coordinator  
 dougyoung@mvbchurch.org



**Jacob Hall**  
 Pastoral Assistant/Youth  
 jacobhall@mvbchurch.org



**Bert Neal**  
 Administrative Assistant  
 bertneal@mvbchurch.org



**Priscilla Barry**  
 Administrative Assistant  
 priscillabarry@mvbchurch.org



**Anne Russo**  
 Financial Assistant  
 annerusso@mvbchurch.org

## SERMON SCHEDULE

May 5  
**A Nation in Need**  
*1 Samuel 1:1–3:21*

May 12  
**A Man for the Times**  
*1 Samuel 4:1–7:17*

May 19  
**A King Who Leads**  
*1 Samuel 8:1–12:25*

May 26  
**A King Who Loses**  
*1 Samuel 13:1–15:35*

## FIGHTER VERSE

- <sup>28</sup> Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.
- <sup>29</sup> He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.

Isaiah 40:28–29

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the  
**KINGMAKER**

12 STUDIES THROUGH 1 & 2 SAMUEL

Pastor Aaron will lead us through a twelve-part sermon series through the books of 1 & 2 Samuel.

Each sermon will be available the Monday after it is delivered through the Mount Vernon Podcast on iTunes and on the church's website at [www.mvbchurch.org](http://www.mvbchurch.org).

Sermons are also available on CD for \$5 a copy.



**SATURDAY, MAY 18**

10:00-11:30 AM | FELLOWSHIP HALL

Coffee & Light Refreshments Served

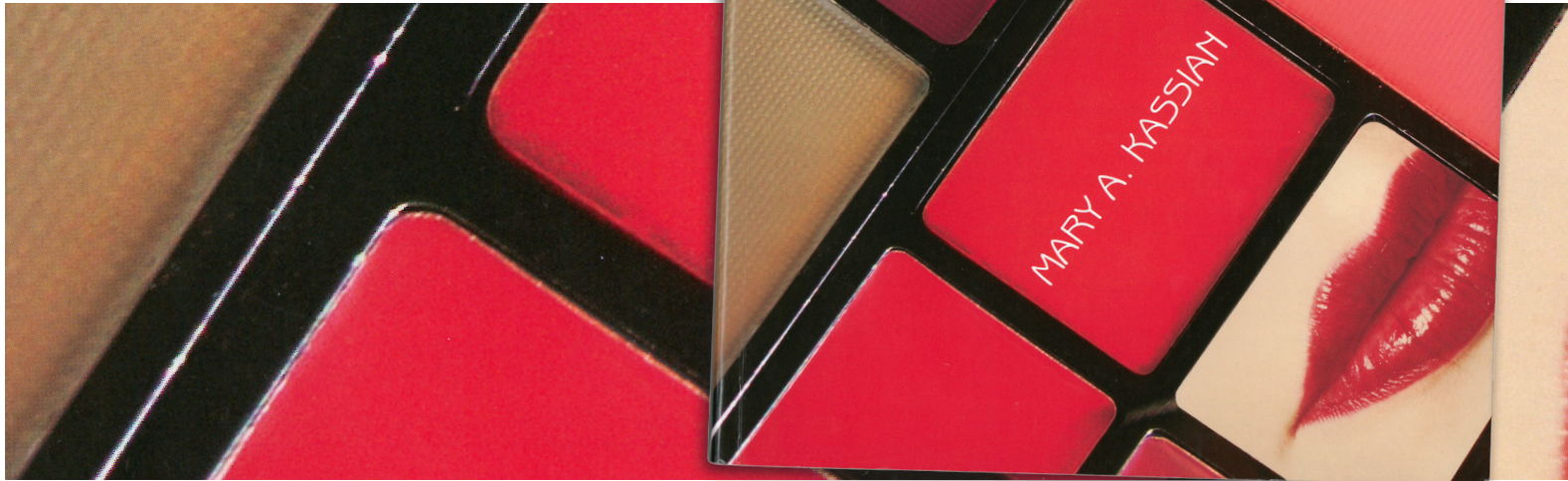
Book review & testimonies about the blessing of reading the Bible with others

MVBC WOMEN'S MINISTRY  
**COFFEE FELLOWSHIP**  
• TOGETHER IN THE WORD •

## Girls Gone Wise in a World Gone Wild

by Mary Kassian

Reviewed by Shirley Chandler



*Girls Gone Wise in a World Gone Wild.* That's the very descriptive title of a book on biblical womanhood by Mary Kassian, professor of Women's Studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I read this book several years ago with the intention of teaching a group of teenaged girls how to live godly lives in today's over-sexualized, high pressured, and feminist culture. While this book's cover and content is certainly appropriate for teens, its substance is challenging to women of all ages. As I read it a second time, I realized there is still a good bit of "wild" in me that I must confront.

We live in a culture that constantly bombards us with lewd images and risqué ideas that are unhealthy and unbiblical. Kassian points out that what used to be almost universally considered "shameful" behavior for women is now touted and accepted as "empowering and liberating" (9). We only need to walk through the mall to see women indulging in what feels good in the moment. Images of domineering women being disrespectful to God-given authority litter popular television shows. The "girl gone wild," to use Kassian's term, is present, visible, and elevated in the media and culture to the point that I find her difficult to avoid. In the

pursuit of godly womanhood, in the midst of raising godly children, or in the stage of being a godly grandmother, how are Christians to respond? We must look to the Word of God for answers. Mary Kassian has done this. *Girls Gone Wise in a World Gone Wild* is a useful tool with a two-fold purpose: to encourage the reader to "grow in spiritual discernment" and to "help [the reader] say yes to God's ideas about womanhood and no to the tremendous pressure to conform to the world's patterns and to [our own] sinful tendencies" (11).

To this end, Kassian looks to the ancient book of Proverbs where Solomon strongly warns his son to stay away from "wild" women. Solomon speaks of this destructive, dangerous type of character in 65 verses—that gets my attention! Proverbs 7 describes a "wild girl" in vivid detail. Kassian uses these descriptions to develop 20 comparisons between a "wild girl"—the one who "disregards God and relies instead on the world's advice or on what seems right in her own eyes" and a "wise girl"—the "one who has committed herself to a relationship with Jesus Christ and who relies on Scripture to understand how she ought to conduct herself in her relationships with men" (16-17).

Each chapter of the book is a point of contrast based on a phrase in Proverbs 7 and a corresponding passage elsewhere in Scripture. We get to know the “wild girl” as Kassian unpacks this proverb. She is married, very religious, and by all appearances is doing many things right, but her heart is not wholly God’s. We also get to know the “wise girl,” after whom we want to model our lives. This is “Contrast #1: The Heart—What Holds First Place in Her Affections.” For the “wild girl,” Christ is peripheral, while for the “wise girl,” Christ is central. Contrast number one is foundational because it deals with the very core of a woman’s being, the “well from which all other behaviors spring” (33).

The subsequent points of contrast deal with behaviors and the outworking of a heart’s commitment to God. “Contrast #2” is especially noteworthy because it is so practical and a real challenge. It deals with “counsel.” Does her counsel come from the world or from the Word? I was reminded that I must deliberately expose my heart to God’s counsel and sound, biblical teaching while guarding it from exposure to worldly influence. Care must be taken: Kassian quotes Tozer saying, “The neglected heart will soon be a heart overrun with worldly thoughts; the neglected life will soon become a moral chaos” (39).

“Contrast #3: Approach—Who Directs Her Love Story?” Here, the reader is reminded that a woman is not to manipulate but trust God to work out His perfect will in regard to her relationships.

“Contrast #4” deals with “attitude.” One of the repercussions of the women’s movement is that true femininity is largely discounted, and today’s ideal woman is portrayed as aggressive and self-sufficient. The “wild girl” is clamorous and defiant, while her counterpart is gentle and amenable. Kassian does an excellent job explaining how and why this shift has occurred and how easy it is for us to adopt the culturally held norm. She challenges readers to consider that God has designed females to “receive, respond, and relate” (64).

“Contrast #5” is “habits.” Is she “settled and self-disciplined” or “restless and self-indulgent?” Our priorities are revealed when we examine our habits. Most encouraging in this chapter is the acknowledgment that in our own strength, we are unable to surrender our desires to God. But because of the gospel, we can rely on the Holy Spirit to help prioritize and live in step with God’s design.

“Contrast #6: Focus—What Commands Her Attention?” Kassian warns us not to be greedy, focused on what we can get; but to be about the business of glorifying Christ in the work He has given us to do.

Of particular interest is “Contrast #7: Appearance—How She Adorns Herself.” The “wild girl” is indecent and excessive. The “wise girl” is decent and modest. The woman described in Proverbs 7, though not a prostitute per se, adorns herself like one. She sets out to look “hot,” something even the youngest of our daughters are tempted to aspire to when shopping or watching movies. Kassian describes the purpose of clothing and how it “bears witness to the fact that we have lost the glory and beauty of our original sin-free selves. It confesses that we need a covering—His covering—to atone for our sin and alleviate our shame” (99). She makes a beautiful connection between clothing and the gospel and proceeds to give guidelines for choosing attire that is befitting Christian women, “dignified and God-exalting” (107). Logically following the chapter on clothing is “body language, contrast #8.” Kassian defines sensuality and then contrasts it with the “imperishable beauty of the inner self” (118). “A woman who fears the Lord is to be praised” (Prov. 31:30).

“Roles” is “contrast #9.” Contrary to pop culture’s definition, Kassian describes God’s design for man and woman as a “harmonized” relationship where woman comes alongside man to help him “achieve the purpose of exalting and displaying the jaw-dropping magnificence of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the glory of God” (130). She encourages us as she clearly explains from Scripture that God intends women to be

“amenable, relational and receptive,” while men are to “initiate, provide and protect.”

“Sexual conduct” is “contrast #10.” Beyond the obvious, we see some of the implications of sexual union within the context of marriage. The oneness of man and woman “bears witness to the fact that Father and Son are indivisibly one and that Christ is...one with His church” (140). Two truths are evident in God’s creation of males, females, sex and marriage: “His divine nature—the glory of who He is and His eternal power—the glory of what He does” (141). To my surprise, this chapter in particular caused me to pause and consider the beauty of the marriage union—truly an amazing picture of the gospel! More than ever, I am convinced that Christian women must not only embrace this important truth, but also pass it on to the next generation!

In “contrast #11, boundaries,” Kassian emphasizes the necessity of taking steps to protect oneself from unwanted sexual risk. She lays out some very practical, often easy to take, precautions that will help women of all ages to develop godly discretion.

“Authenticity—her public vs. private persona” is “contrast #12.” In this chapter, the reader is warned against the danger of hypocrisy. The need to keep the inner life as pure as the outward appearance is the author’s main concern.

Contrasts #13 and #14 are similar in nature: “neediness and possessions.” Do I delight in God or in relationships; in God or in my material wealth? The Martin Luther quote, “Whatever your heart clings to and confides in, that is really your god” sums up these two chapters well.

“Entitlement,” a prevailing issue in our society, is “contrast #15.” While a “wild girl” will feel that she has the right to pursue and indulge her own desires, a “wise girl” is willing to pay a dear price for being obedient and denying herself. However, Kassian assures readers that the sweetest joy is that of Christ.

“Reliability” is “contrast #16” and is largely focused on the “pure, faithful, unbreakable” covenant relationship of marriage (208). We look back at the “wild girl” of Proverbs 7 and see that she was unfaithful to her husband. The challenge to “wise girls” is to remember that God is witness to our commitments.

Every reader can glean from “contrast #17, speech,” as we all need to grow in the area of controlling our tongues. Kassian examines different types of speech, but concludes that the “wise girl” must cultivate godly speech by “restraining words” and “speaking with sincerity, clarity and honesty” (220). “Contrast #18” deals with the “power of influence.” The “wise girl” must be humbly dependent on God to avoid negative influence and be proactive to surround herself with positive influence.

From “contrast #19,” the reader learns that sustainability, the ability to sustain and nurture a relationship, is grounded in the principle of respect. Many Scriptures in this chapter point to commands to respect and build each other up, regardless of the behavior of the other individual.

The last contrast, #20, is “teachability.” Kassian looks at three types of people who refuse God’s invitation to get wisdom. Then she writes a poignant description of the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom. “The fear of God is a heart-pounding, knee-trembling, shuddering recognition that God is infinitely more good, powerful, and important than I” (249). In fearing God, the “wise girl” will be humble, eager for correction, and ready to learn of God’s unfathomable ways.

Mary Kassian faithfully takes us through Scripture, keeping the gospel central, in her treatment of the subject of womanhood. *Girls Gone Wise in a World Gone Wild* is worthwhile reading, which may reinforce what you already believe, enable you to teach it to others, or convict you of areas where you need to grow in wisdom. Living in a world hostile to our faith, I am greatly helped by thinking through these twenty points of contrast from Proverbs 7. ■

# Foster Lales

**O**n Good Friday my family and I said goodbye to a foster child who had been in our home for sixteen months. She came to us the first of December, 2011, when she was not quite a year and a half old. Teresa (not her real name) had already been in foster care more than once. Her parents were young, unmarried, and at the time neither was able to give her the home she needed. From the day she arrived, we prayed that her mom or dad would be able to care for her well so that she could be reunited with one of them. In the meantime, we wanted this to be her last foster home.



Teresa has more energy than any toddler I've ever met. Imagine Tigger—all bounce and no off switch! From morning 'til night she jumped through the kitchen and the den, church hallways and Sunday school classrooms and, as corny as it might sound, right into our hearts.

We never knew for certain how long Teresa would be in our home. We were told that both of her parents wanted to raise her, but she had been in foster care her whole life. Just a few months after Teresa came into our care, the case worker asked us if we'd be willing to adopt her. We said it would be a privilege, but we kept praying for her parents. Over a year later, a Fulton County judge awarded custody to her dad.

That Good Friday morning, we said goodbye to Teresa with grateful yet heavy hearts. On one hand, we were very thankful for all the progress that her father had made. He took important steps to be able to care for his daughter. He had a home, a job, and a desire to raise her. He admitted to the court that he'd made mistakes in the past, but committed himself to providing Teresa the family she needed. On the other hand, we were very sad because we had become her family. For sixteen months we had shared our lives with this precious little girl. Life with her seemed very natural, even though we always knew she could leave. There was no shortage of tears that Maundy Thursday as we packed up her belongings, laid her down for her last night of sleep in our house, and prayed the Lord's protection over her.

As painful as it was (and is) to have said goodbye, this is what it means to be a foster family. We agreed to give her the affection and the love and the care she needed while she depended upon us. We committed to advocating for whatever was in her best interest. We agreed to raise her, for as long as we had her, in a home where we recognize Christ as king. We read her the Bible, prayed with her and for her, and folded her into our church. In every way we sought to bless her. In the end, she's the one who blessed us.

Teresa has been gone for over a month now, and it seems right to share how and why my family got involved in foster care and what God taught us in the process. I pray our story is an encouragement to you in your effort to live life for the glory of God.

## OUR STORY

Our journey into foster care began over seven years ago with the birth of our third child. My wife (Deana) had difficult pregnancies, and we thought it could be unwise for her to deliver again. And yet we weren't convinced we were done having kids. This is when we began to talk about adoption. Of course I was still in seminary, and we had three kids under five years old. We talked about adoption in theory, but we knew it would have to wait. Life was just too full.

Over the course of the next few years, things began to settle down as God planted us in Atlanta. It took time to acclimate to a new city, a new church, and my new responsibilities as a senior pastor. But eventually we did, and a couple of years ago we restarted the adoption conversation with renewed vigor. We decided that now was the time. But we were not sure how to pursue adoption. Should we go the international route? Should we try to find a domestic adoption? Should we enter the foster care system?

By this time, the conversation had shifted from simply trying to add a child to our home to trying to serve our community. That's what led us into foster care. As we began to research the number of foster kids in Fulton County alone, we became overwhelmed by the need for parents right here in our own city. With foster care there is, of course, no certainty that a child will remain in your home. But the need for parents to welcome these kids, even if that means saying goodbye, is great. Friends told us about a local non-profit that can help families navigate the foster care system, Giving Children a Chance (GCAC). We went through a long process to be approved as foster parents and then in November of 2011, GCAC asked us if we'd be willing to give Teresa a home. We said yes.

## OUR MOTIVATION

Kathryn Joyce of *Mother Jones* magazine recently criticized Christians for being overly interested in adoption. In "Orphan Fever: the Evangelical Movement's Adoption Obsession," Joyce paints a picture of fundamentalist Christian homes pursuing shady overseas adoptions in order to fulfill the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations. Adoption in the evangelical world, she argues, is less about genuine compassion and more about misguided evangelistic zeal. Joyce uses a few bad examples to shamelessly attack a healthy adoption movement that is good for children and for society as a whole. In light of her criticism, I want to explain why we decided to get involved in foster care.

First, it was a matter of stewardship. I understand from the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14–30 that we are called to be good stewards of everything God has given us—including our material resources. As Deana and I assessed our situation, we realized that God gave us good health, a large home, and plenty of food. We have everything we need, and then some. And so we asked ourselves, why not open up our home to a child in need? Wise stewardship led us to the conclusion that it was time for us to move ahead into foster care.

Second, it was a matter of being a good neighbor. We find in Scripture several admonitions to be generous. Consider Galatians 6:10, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." God does not want us to be concerned merely about ourselves, but about others. First and foremost, we need to care for those in the "household of faith," the church. But secondarily, we should take an interest in everyone. As we reflected upon that passage, we concluded that God had given us the opportunity (the means and desire) to foster. This was a way that we could "do good" in line with Paul's admonition. Of course, the fact that foster kids are in desperate need struck us as well. In Luke 10:25–37, we read of a Samaritan who came upon a man who had been robbed and left for dead. He was in need, and the Samaritan took care of him. The Samaritan had the opportunity to help, and he responded. Deana and I saw the opportunity to help a child—a neighbor—and we took it.

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**Foster parents may only be temporary,  
but that doesn't change the fact  
that they really are parents.**

Third, it was a practical implication of the gospel in our lives. According to Jesus, each of us is to repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15). We are to die to ourselves and live for Christ (1 Peter 2:24). This means bowing the knee to Christ, submitting to his authority, and following his lead. The believer is one who has been saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Because of what Jesus has done we are now "more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37). We have been justified, declared righteous by God because of the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf. The good news is that the work has been fully done by Christ. We are declared righteous on the basis of Christ's righteousness, not our own. But of course this does not mean that there is no work for us to do. Each and every day we are to live out the salvation we have received. Each and every day we are to die to the sin that is still waging war in our hearts. Each and every day we are to pick up our cross and follow Christ. I take this to mean that believers should be marked by selflessness. We should be willing to do hard things because Jesus has done the hardest thing. In

short, Deana and I want our lives to be flavored by the gospel. Opening up our home to a foster child was simply one, small way to do this.

Perhaps I should say a word about James 1:27, and the role it has played in leading us into foster care. James wrote to the church in Jerusalem, “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” I read this verse through the lens of Galatians 6:10. Christians have a clear and specific command to look after the orphans and widows in their own congregations. For example, in Acts 6:1–7 the apostles made sure that the widows in the church were cared for. In 1 Timothy 5:9–16, Paul gives specific instructions for caring for the widows who are part of the body of Christ. Therefore, I think that when James is telling the church in Jerusalem to “visit orphans and widows,” the primary focus is on those orphans and widows who are already part of that local church. After all, what good is it to call yourself a Christian if the world can see you won’t even take care of the needy in your own family of faith? Just as a father must find a way to feed his children (1 Timothy 5:8), the church must find a way to care for its helpless members. Nonetheless, as the opportunity presents itself, believers should widen the net, and “do good to everyone” including orphans and widows outside the church. This is a simple but profound implication of the gospel.

In short, we were motivated by the call to wise stewardship, the command to be a good neighbor, and by the gospel itself to open up our home to Teresa. We did it with the daily prayer that Teresa would experience the love of Christian parents, understand as much of the gospel that her young mind would allow, and one day experience the saving grace of God that only he can give.

## OUR LESSONS

Having Teresa in our home for so long and having to say goodbye, was the most difficult and wonderful thing we have experienced as a family. Here are some lessons learned, in no particular order, which may help explain what God taught us through it all.

### 1. Love is a choice.

I was raised in a world which taught me that love is a feeling, that it is something you can’t control. If the chemistry is right, a man and a woman somehow fall in love and get married. And if something goes wrong and the love dies, the husband and wife part ways. But love isn’t like that at all. Love is a choice. This is a simple reflection on how God loves us. When we are pointed to the love of God the Son, we look not toward his feelings for us but his actions toward us: “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers” (1 John 3:16).

When Teresa entered our home for the first time, she was already an adorable bundle of energy. We didn’t know if we would have her for one month or one year. But we were called to love her. She needed to be loved. She needed to experience the affection of a mother and a father—even temporary ones like us! I certainly didn’t feel the love for her, at least at first. Thoughts swirled through my mind like, “How can I love her when I may have to give her up so soon?” I grappled with the reality that love is a choice. I wasn’t to love her because she was mine, or because she was easy to raise, or because she could give me love in return. I loved her because she needed to be loved.

### 2. God’s love is beautiful.

We went into foster care expecting to provide mercy for Teresa. We wanted to rescue her—even if only for a season—from a tumultuous life and provide her with a safe and loving home, for as long as she needed it. We quickly learned that our patience would be tested. Teresa

was always jumping—but not always in the direction we wanted. Travel between our home and visits with her parents left her confused and, at times, angry. She was not always easy to parent, and she was not always easy to love.

As Deana and I reflected on the challenge of caring for her, we were reminded of just how loving and merciful God has been to us. God loved us when there was nothing lovable about us, “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). And “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). By folding Teresa into our lives, we learned something of the tender mercy of God who adopted us as his children simply because he chose to. His love is beautiful. It is so beautiful, in fact, that it makes the cost of being a foster care family seem so very small. I love the way pastor John Piper put it when he expressed his delight in seeing families at Bethlehem Baptist embrace ministries of adoption:

Few things bring me more satisfaction than seeing a culture of adoption flourish at our church, Bethlehem Baptist. It means our people are looking to their heavenly Father for their joy rather than rejecting the stress and cost of children in order to maximize their freedom and comforts. When people embrace the pain and joy of children rather than using abortion or birth control simply to keep children away, the worth of Christ shines more visibly. Adoption is as far as possible from the mindset that rejects children as an intrusion.

### 3. Foster parents are parents.

Parenthood is about more than biology. Our prayer and our goal was always that Teresa be reunited with her biological mother or father, assuming that they would provide her with a safe and loving home. However, that doesn’t change the fact that for sixteen months, Deana really was a mother to her.

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**God does not want us to be concerned merely about ourselves, but about others.**

Consider 1 Kings 3. Two women who lived in the same house approached Solomon the king with a dilemma. Each had a baby and no husband when one of the babies died. Now both women were claiming to be the mother of the child who remained alive. There was no DNA testing, so what was Solomon to do? He instructed the child to be cut in half and shared equally among them! The true mother cried out against this horrific decision and urged the king to let the other woman have the baby. Solomon, however, handed her the child. The king, of course, had no way of knowing who the biological mother really was. But this he knew—the true mother would do what was best for the child. Foster moms (and, for that matter, foster dads) may only be temporary, but that doesn’t change the fact that they really are parents. Their willingness to put that child’s interests above their own is the only qualification they need.

### 4. The church is a family.

When Teresa joined the Menikoffs, she became a part of our church.



The entire congregation loved her, prayed for her, and welcomed her with open arms each and every week. There are so many ways to serve a foster family. Her teachers greeted her with enthusiastic smiles. Several members went through a background check so that they would be cleared by the county to babysit. One family even went through the process of having a home study done so that Teresa could be left at their house. Many more people regularly asked how we were doing, and let us know of their support. We speak a lot about the church as a family, but having Teresa gave us a front row seat.

One of the greatest lessons we learned about the church as a family is how much we needed it. We simply could not have cared for Teresa on our own. Both Deana and I are independent. It is hard for us to ask for help. The demands of navigating the foster care system with its restrictions on babysitting and travel left us in great need. We were reminded of what we already know: the church is a family, and we need the family. The members of the body weren't just serving Teresa; they were serving us.

### 5. All parents are called to give up their children.

After raising Teresa for sixteen months, it really felt like she was ours. We knew with our head that this wasn't the case, but apparently our head had stopped communicating with our heart. In the beginning loving her felt like a choice, and it was. But joy followed that choice. She was a member of our family. We knew she would leave us eventually, and that is what we were preparing for. We wanted to bless her biological parents by giving her the best home possible while she was with us. However, it seemed like "eventually" would never come.

Then, one night, we received a call. She would be moving in with her father in one week. Those last few days we realized that, in a sense, all parents are called to give up their children. We raise them to let them go. We prepare them to make wise decisions in the waters of a world that are difficult to navigate. With foster care, you just have to be prepared to say goodbye sooner. It helps to remember that, ultimately, Teresa didn't belong to us, and our biological children don't really even belong to us. They were not made in our image, but they were made in the image of God. They belong to him. We try to take good care of them for as long as we have them, and that's all we can do.

### 6. Saying goodbye to a foster child is traumatic.

We planned as best as we could for her departure, but there was no way to be ready for the silence that flooded our home the morning she left. A few weeks before, I was taking a walk with a friend who told me that losing a foster child was a little bit like experiencing a death. I looked at him incredulously. How could he really equate sending a foster child to go back to her biological family with death? But he was right. Obviously, if she had been removed after a shorter period of time, it would not have been so hard. But sixteen months was long enough for us feel the sting of her absence.

### 7. The gospel really is enough.

I have mentioned already that the gospel motivated us to become part of the foster care system. That's not to say that I believe everyone should be a foster parent or pursue adoption. It is simply to say that God's saving work in our lives is what gives us a desire to serve him, to serve our church, and where the opportunities arise, to serve those outside the church. But the gospel did more than motivate us toward foster care; it sustained us through foster care, even to the point of saying goodbye to Teresa.

Because of the gospel we are convinced that all of our needs have been taken care of by God. We never have to worry because our biggest enemy

(sin) has been put to death (Galatians 5:24). And we never have to fear because our future is secure (Hebrews 12:22–24). The trials in this life are minor in comparison to what we faced (the wrath of God for our sins) and trivial in comparison to what we can expect to face (the perfect presence of a holy God who loves us). So whether it was the difficulty of learning how to manage life with a child who wasn't truly our own, the uncertainty of not knowing how long she'd be with us, the reality that she was leaving, or facing the fact that she had left, God did not leave us alone. He prepared us to face these trials by reminding us that the most important work had been taken care of. Jesus bore the punishment that we deserved so that we could be free to live a life that pleases him. Now we are simply called to be faithful with the days before us, entrusting all the results to God.

That's why I say that the gospel really is enough. I'm thankful for the grace God gives his people to endure difficult things. And though I know that saying goodbye to a foster child is a small trial when set against the tragedies so many face, it was, nonetheless, our trial, and one we needed the Lord's help to bear.

## OUR FUTURE

As best we can tell, Teresa is adjusting well. She is with her dad, she is near some extended biological family, and she is adjusting to life in a new home. For that we are very thankful. Though the story is not over, not every foster tale has such a promising ending.

Even as I write these words, our family is praying about whether or not to see Teresa again. We want to do what is best for her. At two and a half she doesn't understand deeply, and were we never to see her again, she would eventually forget us. But it would please us to be part of her life in some form or fashion and perhaps even to be an encouragement to her family as well. We want her dad to understand why we became foster parents, our love for Teresa, and our genuine desire to see him flourish as a parent.

What will we do next? Time will tell. Our motivations have not changed. Stewardship, love of neighbor, and the gospel demands that we pour out our lives for Christ. We are not sure if that means becoming foster parents again, pursuing an adoption, or simply investing more of our time in our own extended family or as disciple-makers here at Mount Vernon and in our neighborhood. There is much good that can be done, and there are many ways to serve. We know service will look different from person to person, and we are using this break to figure out what it should look like, going forward, in our family.

Meanwhile, we wouldn't give up the past sixteen months for anything. A few nights after Teresa left, I asked my family a question: knowing what you know now, would you still have wanted Teresa stay with us? Everyone said yes. We don't know Teresa's future, but we are grateful that she was with us for so long. Not only were we able to be family in her time of need, but we were able to share with her the gospel. Our heart was not only for her physical well-being, but her soul as well. As Dan Cruver so clearly stated:

*The ultimate purpose of human adoption by Christians, therefore, is not to give orphans parents, as important as that is. It is to place them in a Christian home that they might be positioned to receive the gospel, so that within that family, the world might witness a representation of God taking in and genuinely loving the helpless, the hopeless, and the despised.*

May God give you a heart for the orphans—inside and outside the church. ■

~ Aaron Menikoff

# May 2013

<p>1 6:30 pm New Equipping Matters Classes Begin</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 8:00 am MVBC Work Day</p>
<p>5 9:15 am Library Book Fair 9:15 am New SS Classes Begin 6:00 pm Lord's Supper</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>
<p>12 <i>Mother's Day</i></p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>19 10:30 am New Parent Recognition Church in Conference 6:00 pm Graduate Recognition</p>	<p>20 12:00 pm RW&amp;A Fish Fry</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>26</p>	<p>27 <i>Memorial Day</i> Church Office Closed</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>
<p>16 7:30 pm Send-Off Party for Ingrams (Brannen)</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18 10:00 am Women's Coffee Fellowship</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>10 7:30 pm Send-Off Party for Ingrams (Hutchins)</p>	<p>11 8:00 am VBS Work Day</p>	<p>12</p>
<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>30 Youth End of School Trip</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>32</p>	<p>33</p>

## EVENTS

### CHURCHWIDE

May 4 8:00 am *MVBC Work Day*

We need to do a little Spring cleaning and work around our campus. After we're done, anyone interested can gather for lunch at Slopes BBQ in Sandy Springs.

May 5 9:15 am *Library Book Fair*

The MVBC library will host a book fair where there will be tables to browse some of the resources available for individual and corporate discipleship.

May 5 6:00 pm *Lord's Supper*

We encourage members to examine their hearts and relationship with one another in preparation for this celebration of Christ's death and resurrection.

May 10, 16 7:30 pm *Send-Off Party for Ingrams*

In a few months, Darrell and Terri Ingram will be leaving for England to work among Central Asians. There are two more going away parties for them: at the home of Rick and Pam Hutchins on May 10 and at the home of Jesse and Delaine Brannen on May 16. See *The Courier* for more details.

May 19 4:30 pm *Church in Conference*

All members are encouraged to attend our quarterly Church in Conference as we consider many matters related to the life of Mount Vernon.

### ADULT

May 1 6:30 pm *New Equipping Matters Classes Begin*

*Equipping Matters* is a series of studies offered Wednesday nights to change the way we think and live. From May–June, there will be two classes: Spiritual Disciplines and Fear of Man.

May 5 12:00 pm *New Sunday School Classes Begin*

The new rotating classes being offered during Sunday School are Church History, Psalms & Proverbs, and Romans II. Our ongoing classes will continue as normal.

May 20 12:00 pm *RW&A Fish Fry*

Everyone 50 and older is invited to the annual RW&A fish fry. Bring a covered dish. This will be the last meeting until the Fall.

### CHILDREN

May 11 8:00 am *VBS Work Day*

This is the first of several work days where workers will prepare for this year's VBS in June.

May 19 10:30 am *New Parent Recognition*

We will have a time during the morning worship service where we recognize and pray for parents of new children born into the MVBC family.

### WOMEN

May 18 10:00 am *Women's Coffee Fellowship*

(See ad on page 1.)

### STUDENTS

May 19 6:00 pm *Graduate Recognition*

The class of 2013 will be recognized during the evening service.

May 30 *End of School Trip*

To celebrate the end of the school year, the students (7–12<sup>th</sup> grade) are spending a day in Helen, GA riding go-karts & tubing down the Chattahoochee.

## BIRTHDAYS

2	Chris Yancey	18	Michael Montemayor
3	George Camp	19	Jo Johnson
4	Kathryn Searle		Bill Warren
5	Michael Dawkins	20	Bill Mayes
	Jim Reimann	21	George Hynds
7	Pam Groslimond		Roy Payne
	Jonathan Ludwikowski		Don Roden
9	Fred Boynton	22	Matt Reid
10	Kevin Bemiss	23	Sue Houser
	Ben DeSantis	25	Lana Ball
	Berkley Gryder		Hubert McLellan
	Ron Wareham		Eileen Pacetti
11	Jan Chastain		Emily Yancey
12	Greg Ford	26	Kristine Harris
	Doug Harmon	27	Dave Salzman
	Brooke Henze	28	Chuck Stone
	Peg Wharton	30	Alice Wareham
13	Jessi Lowman	31	Charlotte Boynton
14	Marshall Dawkins		Susan Boynton
15	Linda Sexton		Lindsey Kesler
17	Douglass Padgett		Jean McLellan
	Hank Sturgess		



## Vacation Bible School

June 3–6

9:30 am–12:30 pm

### INVITE YOUR FRIENDS!!!

This year at VBS, we will follow Paul as he helps us understand how great a salvation God has provided in Christ!

#### Who can come?

Ages 5–11 years

Register online at

[www.mvbchurch.org/vbs-2013](http://www.mvbchurch.org/vbs-2013)

#### Props Needed:

We are on the lookout for props that will fit our Roman theme, such as columns (of any size), statues, urns, Roman helmets, and shields. If you would be willing to lend any of these items, please contact Doug Young at [dougyoung@mvbchurch.org](mailto:dougyoung@mvbchurch.org).



*Mount Vernon*

BAPTIST CHURCH

850 Mount Vernon Highway NW  
Sandy Springs, GA 30327