

PERSPECTIVE

AUGUST 2019

ADOPTION

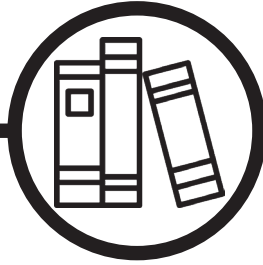
THE SWEETEST DOCTRINE



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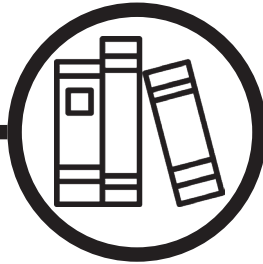
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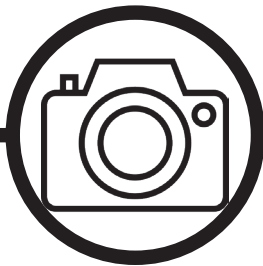
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Adoption: the Sweetest Doctrine

*This article was originally published at
Tabletalkmagazine.com in January 2019.*

It happens every day in courts across America. A judge utters a few words, pounds his gavel on the desk, and a child receives a new family. This moment is always bittersweet. Adoptions take place because biological parents are either unable, unfit, or unwilling to care for the child they brought into the world. But these events are wonderful, because when the hammer strikes, that child belongs fully to parents committed to love and care for him.

During the past couple decades, I've witnessed a growing interest in adoption. It's often hitched to James 1:27, where we're told that undefiled religion includes visiting "orphans and widows in their affliction." It's good when Christians open up their homes to those in need. But the practice of adoption is grounded in more than one verse; it is rooted in the incomparably sweet doctrine of adoption.

WHAT IS ADOPTION?

Adoption is the gracious act of God wherein He makes justified sinners His beloved children. The Westminster Confession says to be adopted is to receive God's name and to have access to God's throne, His pity, His protection, His provision, His discipline, and His promise to never abandon us.

Most adopted children, after the gavel has been struck, are tempted to question if their new home will last. They wonder if they *really* belong to their family and if this new home really belongs to them. But when it comes to God's adoption of His people, there can be no doubt or uncertainty. He is forever their Father. It is, after all, the will of God that makes justified sinners His children (John 1:12). God's will is perfect, and it cannot be broken.

Adoption is rooted in God's eternal plan and inexhaustible love. Before mountains rose, rivers ran, or birds flew, God "predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1:5). His desire to place sinners in His family through the work of His Son precedes even the work of creation. We can only marvel at the kindness of God who would not call us *merely* His friends (James 2:23; see Isa. 41:8) but also His own sons and daughters. "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are" (1 John 3:1).

THE SWEETEST DOCTRINE

Perhaps it is presumptuous to call adoption the "sweetest" doctrine. But theologians throughout the ages have recognized its preeminence. John Dagg called it a "blessing of grace [that] rises higher than justification."¹ A judge, he said, can acquit you; it takes a father to adopt you. Robert Dabney argued that adoption is "the strongest proof" of our justification.² Robert Webb may have put it best:

When we approach Him in the intensity of worship, we gather up all the sweetness involved in Fatherhood and all the tenderness wrapped up in sonship; when calamities overcome us and troubles come in like a flood, we lift up our cry and stretch out our arms to God as a compassionate Father; when the angel of death climbs in at the window of our homes and bears away the objects of our love, we find our dearest solace in reflecting upon the fatherly heart of God; when we look across the swelling flood, it is our Father's House on the light-covered hills beyond the stars which cheers us amid the crumbling of the earthly tabernacle.³

And it wasn't just professional theologians who appreciated this doctrine. The precious reality of adoption sustained Christian slaves in America as they endured the brutality of bondage, and even helped some to risk their lives in search of freedom. They saw God not merely as their sovereign Lord, but as their tender Father. Slaves William and Ellen Craft clung to the doctrine of adoption when they ran away from their masters: "When the time had arrived for us to start, we blew out the lights, knelt down, and prayed to our Heavenly Father mercifully to assist us, as he did his people of old, to escape from cruel bondage; and we shall ever feel that God heard and answered our prayer."⁴

THE BIBLE'S STORY LINE

The Crafts knew what every Christian should know: adoption is at the heart of the story line of the Bible. Adam and Eve embraced God as their holy and heavenly Father. They enjoyed His care and provision. He even walked in their midst (Gen. 3:8). But Adam severed that relationship when he sinned, leading God to cast them out of the garden, away from His presence (Gen. 3:24; Rom. 5:12).

When Adam's descendants through Abraham wound up slaves in Egypt, something tremendous happened. God didn't just save them from Pharaoh; He called Israel His own son (Ex. 4:23). God was at work, bringing a fallen people near Him. He brought them into the land He had promised to Abraham and pledged, if

they would serve Him, that He would once again walk among them—just as He did in Eden (Lev. 26:12).

Sadly, Israel failed. They repeatedly rejected God's law and His love. David knew God was a compassionate Father to those who feared Him, but no one feared Him as they should (Ps. 103:13).

What God did next still sends a thrill up the Christian's spine. The perfect, sovereign, just Creator—the eternal Father—sent His only begotten Son, Christ Jesus, into the world. Jesus gave up His life, bearing His Father's wrath as He suffered and died on the cross. Yet by this tragedy, God accomplished the unthinkable—He accomplished atonement for His people. In the application of that atonement, He justifies sinners (Rom. 3:24) and gives them new birth (2 Cor. 5:17). Not only that, but the Father welcomes them into His family (Gal. 3:26; 4:4–7). Is there better news?

We live in a world full of people longing for a home, a place to belong, and a seat at the table. God the Father, through God the Son and by the power of God the Spirit, does so much more. He gives repentant sinners His very *name* and makes them His heirs (Rom. 8:17).

IS THIS DOCTRINE SWEET TO YOU?

This doctrine should be sweet to you for many reasons.

First, *the doctrine of adoption is closely related to the doctrine of assurance*. All who have “received the Spirit of adoption” have God's Spirit testifying within them that they are “children of God” (Rom. 8:15–16). The doctrine of assurance is as wonderful and mysterious as a father's undying love for his prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32). If you struggle with the assurance of your salvation, run to God who adopted you. The blood of Christ did more than justify you—it also made God your Father.

Second, *the doctrine of adoption helps us understand and appreciate the church*. If you've ever traveled abroad and spent time with believers in other countries, you likely rejoiced about all you have in common. Regardless of language and cultural differences, you share the same love of God, view of the world, and hope of a new heaven and earth. Why? Because they are your brothers and sisters. You have a global family.

Not only has God given you a global church, but He calls you into a local church. When Jesus told His disciples that following Him would mean losing everything, He encouraged them with promise of a new family:

Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life (Mark 10:29–30).

The Christian life is hard, but it comes with a home—a local church. This is a family of justified sinners who are now your family. If you struggle with feelings of loneliness, not only can you remember God is your Father, you can also remember that you are part of a local church filled with your spiritual siblings and parents.

Third, *the doctrine of adoption is a motivation to act*. A few years ago, when my wife and I became foster parents, it wasn't out of guilt. We did not think James 1:27 implied that every Christian had to open up his home to an orphan. God simply captivated us with the biblical theology of adoption. He warmed our hearts with the truth that when we were weak and ungodly, Christ died for us, providing us with adoption into the family of God (Rom. 5:6–11). Our own adoption of a little girl in 2015 is nothing but the dimmest reflection of the love God has lavished on us.

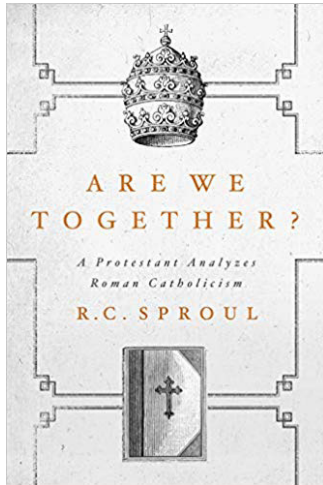
Meditate on the doctrine of adoption. The Spirit will make it sweet to you. More than that, He will lead you to act. You may not adopt an orphan, but you will most certainly give of yourself to others, expecting nothing in return. This is the doctrine of adoption at work.

– Aaron Menikoff

1. J.L. Dagg, *Manual of Theology* (1857; repr., Harrisonburg, Va.: Gano, 1990), 275.
2. R.L. Dabney, *Systematic Theology* (1871; repr., Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 1985), 627.
3. Cited by J. Theodore Mueller, “Adoption,” in *Basic Christian Doctrines*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 220–21.
4. Cited by Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The ‘Invisible Institution’ in the Antebellum South* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2004), 305.

Are We Together? A Protestant Analyzes Roman Catholicism

Written by R.C. Sproul



Many Christians understand the impact of the Protestant Reformation; however, R. C. Sproul contends that there is some confusion on this topic by both Protestants and Roman Catholics. The goal of Sproul's short book is to compare and contrast Protestant and Catholic teaching. So *Are We Together?* Sproul argues that we are not united because:

The clarity of the gospel is at stake. All Christians should have a clear understanding of the gospel. There is a significant gap between how Protestants

and Catholics view the authority of Scripture and the biblical doctrine of justification. Sproul walks through how each understands Scripture. These differences result primarily from Roman Catholic's high view of traditions and church history. We must know the gospel and be faithful to the authority of Scripture and the doctrine of justification.

The confusion of theology is revealed. Protestant reformers stood firm on the high view of God, the inerrancy of Scripture, and the great emphasis of preaching the Word of God for salvation. The Roman Catholic doctrines of the church, sacraments, papacy, and Mary are in contradiction to biblical truths regarding salvation. You cannot have it both ways. Sproul brings light to the truth that Jesus Christ's sacrifice alone is sufficient to achieve our redemption.

The conclusive answer. While it is true Protestants and Catholics share many concerns on social issues, they are not united on the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must know the biblical gospel and the facts to expose falsehood. Modern-day Protestants continue to stand with the reformers of the sixteenth century protesting the Roman Catholic Church's teachings and traditions. As Sproul concludes: "The Reformation is not over."

This is a remarkable book of great value. *Are We Together?* is a treasure in six chapters. The Scripture and historical facts equip us to understand the importance of sharing the truth, love, and hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ with our Roman Catholic friends and family members.

– RECOMMENDED BY MARY ANNE KNOWLES

Excerpts From the Book

1

"There is no question that the Roman Catholic church has changed since the sixteenth century. But the changes have not closed the gap between Rome and Protestantism. Indeed, the differences are greater now."

– At Stake: The Gospel, p.6

2

"We do well to remember that only one Man has ever spoken infallibly – our Lord Jesus, who alone is Head of His church. Let us receive His Word – the Scriptures – as the only infallible communication from God."

– The Papacy, p.99

3

"In truth, this is the issue with Roman Catholic theology from beginning to end. It is the issue with Rome's doctrine of Scripture, its doctrine of justification and even here, with its doctrine of Mary. Is Christ alone our perfect sacrifice? Does He offer Himself for the sins of His people or is He offered by His mother? Does He alone achieve our redemption or does He have to depend upon the cooperation of His mother?"

– Mary, p.115

4

"As churches, we must stand for the biblical gospel – and nothing more. It is our calling to hold high the truth and expose falsehood. To this end, it is essential that we know and understand what Rome is teaching, so distinctions can be made."

– How Then Should We Proceed?, p.121

Lessons from a Foster Family

In 2019, MVBC is thinking carefully about family ministry. We are driving home the idea that **we are one family partnering with parents to show the next generation the way of Christ.** Who is that “next generation”? In our church family, it’s all our kids, and this includes adopted children, including one of our daughters, Tori.

Back in May of 2013, Aaron told our story in the *Perspective*. Just a few weeks earlier, Tori had gone to live with her biological family. To protect her privacy, he used the name Teresa. When Aaron wrote “Foster Tales,” we weren’t sure we’d ever see Tori again, but we wanted the church to know something of our journey into foster care, and we hoped the congregation would continue to pray for Tori. Moreover, we hoped the Lord would lead others into the ministry of foster care.

A few weeks after moving out, Tori re-entered foster care. Her father was unable to care for her. She re-entered our home, and after another two years of foster care, Tori became a Menikoff on July 16, 2015. We are saddened her biological family was broken, but we couldn’t be more thankful God made Tori a part of our lives.

Tori’s been in our home for nearly nine years, and she’s been a full-fledged member of our family for four years. Throughout all this, we’ve learned a few lessons about foster care and adoption we want to share with you. Who knows, maybe God will use these words to open up your heart and home to this important ministry. There is a way for everyone to serve.

FIRST, THE NEED IS GREAT

After three high-risk pregnancies, Aaron and I decided against more biological children but remained open to growing our family. We knew the need of many orphans domestically and internationally, and God had provided abundantly for us. So we decided to pursue adoption. However, the time wasn’t right. Aaron had seminary to finish, and we didn’t even know where we would be in a few months. We put adoption on the back burner.

Upon moving to Georgia, we spent most of our time adjusting to our new church and our new roles. Eventually we settled and became convinced the time had come to move forward. As we began to research Georgia, we quickly discovered just how great the need is for families to be devoted to orphan care.

According to the Division of Family and Children Services, as of May 2019, there are approximately 14,000 children in foster care. Nearly 3,000 need adoption. About 350 kids are ready right now. These numbers are staggering, and with thousands of churches in Georgia, we know believers are able to meet this demand.

However, though the need is great, we don’t think every Christian family needs to (or even should) foster or adopt. However, love of neighbor and our church’s vision of family ministry drives us to *support* families burdened to engage in this ministry. We think even if you don’t foster or adopt yourself, there is a role for you to encourage those that do. Remember, the need is great.

SECOND, LETTING DOWN YOUR GUARD IS KEY

Knowing our foster child might not be with us very long tempted us to put up guards to protect ourselves from the heartbreak of seeing her go. Thankfully, wise counselors warned us against this. Children in foster care need love—lots of love. It’s quite possible that their most formative years will be spent in foster care. While they are in care, they need to learn how to love. This happens as foster parents lavish love into the lives of little ones, little ones they may one day need to let go.

Of course, as Christians, we are best equipped to do this. After all, we worship a Savior who poured out his very life for ours. Jesus loved us when we were loveless. When he died for us, he got nothing but our sin. With that in mind, Christians should be the best foster parents, modeling the love of Christ who gave himself for us.

For those of you entering foster care, it is important to give your heart and soul to those kids. This means lots of hugs and lots of laughs and lots of time together. You are doing more than providing a roof over their heads, you are giving them a taste of family. Even if you aren’t their “forever family,” the care they receive from you will prepare them to receive (and give) love to others.

THIRD, THE GOAL OF FOSTER CARE IS REUNIFICATION

When we started foster care, I (Aaron) wrongly viewed it as an onramp to adoption. I quickly learned this is not the case. Foster care is a unique ministry to provide temporary homes for children in need. Sometimes a foster child requires adoption, but most are reunited with a parent or extended family member. As believers,

this is what we should want. As much as possible, biological families should stay together, and Christians engaged in foster care need to know this to be true.

Unfortunately, there are critics of Christians engaged in foster care. Their objection is that believers quietly want families to break up so that their children can be adopted and raised in Christian homes. In short, they think Christian foster parents care more about seeing kids adopted than seeing families reunited. In addition, foster parents have been criticized—sometimes rightly—for overlooking the needs of struggling moms and dads.

It is crucial we see the children in foster care *and* their parents as our neighbors whom we are to love and care for. When you become a foster care parent, your goal is to be a refuge for the child and, wherever possible, a source of encouragement and support for the parents as well.

We have seen foster parents in our own church do this so very well. They have not only poured out their lives into the kids in their care, but they have sought to bless and encourage the parents as well. This is a pattern we need to continue. If you become involved in foster care ministry, remember it's a ministry to a whole family, not just to a child. Sometimes there are open doors for this kind of work, sometimes there are not. But we should hope and pray moms and dads who can't care for their children *today* would grow to be excellent parents *tomorrow*.

FOURTH, LOSING YOUR FAMILY IS HARD

The day we adopted Tori, we certainly rejoiced. A handful of MVBC members went to court with us, and the judge was all smiles. It's important to celebrate adoption, and we do every year. At our last Church in Conference, a young woman at MVBC who was adopted herself shared her story. Her face beamed as she spoke about her adoptive parents. She trusts God's providence, and we do too.

But adoption, especially out of foster care, is marked by trauma and loss. Going into our adoption, we knew Tori had suffered. Even now, as Tori grows older, we discover ways years of foster care, family visits, court hearings, and adoption itself hurt her. The hurt doesn't end after adoption. Yes, children are resilient, and we praise God for that. But kids have great memories. They may not be able to communicate well, but they know the pain of losing family. They remember broken relationships. It's easy to focus on what Tori gained: us. But we learned to appreciate how she lost her parents, and

that loss will affect her in the months and years ahead.

What does this mean practically? Parenting is hard, and parenting adopted children brings added trials. Though we want to be firm and biblical in our discipline, there are times when we have sought to be especially gracious, recognizing she's had to process struggles most other kids haven't. For other adoptive parents, their kids' struggles are far more serious. These children may never "attach" to their new family. A combination of personal trauma and inward sin conspires to wreck a healthy adjustment.

Perhaps this is our way of saying it's time to discard the rose-colored glasses. Adoption is hard work. It's hard on the child and hard on the parents. Kids won't always feel rescued. Please don't misunderstand us—it's worth it! But it's not easy, because even when you gain an adoptive family, losing your biological family is hard.

FIFTH, THEOLOGY MATTERS

I'll never forget the first time Deana went to an adoption conference. She came back remarking that most of the speakers didn't even touch on the nuts and bolts of adoption. Nobody tried to make the audience feel guilty for not engaging in adoption care. Instead, they simply painted a biblical picture of the doctrine of adoption. Those rich, theological talks planted a powerful seed in Deana's heart for adoption. Good theology is needed to foster and adopt well.

Admittedly, the importance of good theology in foster care and adoption is not the first thing you think when walking down the adoption road. But please understand your theology will make or break you through this process. The theology of adoption made us excited about becoming foster parents and the theology of God's sovereignty sustained us as foster parents.

Orphan care brings situations and trials that are foreign to most of us. If you don't funnel these through biblical theology, the burdens may be paralyzing. I (Deana) came to have a high view of God's goodness and God's sovereignty as a fairly young Christian. But it was only after becoming a foster mom that I realized what a lifeline this theology had become to me.

It's hard to entrust any child to the Lord. But it's even harder when you know children are wards of the state, often in a broken system, and your power as a foster parent is extremely limited.

I had to cling to the attributes of God when Tori went week after week to visits where we were not spoken of well, when the Department of Family and Children's Services scrunched a transition that should have taken weeks into a few days, and when we learned why Tori was removed from her family's home a second time. Our other children were quite young, and we weren't sure what to tell them.

If Aaron and I didn't believe God is good and in control and somehow able to use all these situations for her good and his glory, we would have crumbled. The Lord used fostering to make his word come alive to us as we wrestled with how his promises fit each unique trial that came along

SIXTH, IT TAKES A CHURCH

Quickly after becoming foster parents, we realized we needed lots of help. The State regulates who can watch kids in its custody. We couldn't simply hire a babysitter. Thankfully, several MVBC members went through the process of being certified to watch Tori when we needed a hand. Without their help, we would have been in over our heads.

Foster parents don't just need practical support. Tori was loved by our church even at her worst moments, like the time she cut a friend's hair or bit someone's ear. Tori saw the love of Christ on display in an entire church. Most importantly, the church prayed. Mount Vernon prayed not just for our family, but for Tori and for her biological family.

A couple of years ago, we had an open meeting about foster care and adoption. One mom mentioned how discouraging it was when so many people simply told her, "Let me know if you need any help." She needed people to do more than be *available*, she longed for friends and church members to *insert* themselves into her family's life, roll up their sleeves, and simply meet a need. When you see someone who is fostering or who has adopted, we can almost guarantee they need a hand!

Orphan ministry is an opportunity for more than the foster or adoptive parents to serve; there is room for every member of the church to be involved.

CONCLUSION

As Mount Vernon spends a year thinking especially hard about family ministry, remember the next generation includes kids who have been in foster care and adopted. Who knows, maybe some of our neighbors from the nations or our own city streets will one day be part of Mount Vernon and need your love and care. But more

than that, maybe you should consider opening up your home to a child in need.

Please know Deana and I would love to talk with you about this important ministry. There are several other families at our church bursting with wisdom on this topic. We'd love to connect you. Keep your eyes open for meetings on the church calendar as we try to bring together groups of people who want to learn more.

Meanwhile, here are a few resources to help you think carefully about foster care and adoption:

- Joel R. Beeke, *Heirs with Christ: The Puritans on Adoption* (Reformation Heritage, 2008). This little book is a nice primer on the theology of adoption.
- *Reclaiming Adoption: Missional Living Through the Rediscovery of Abba Father* (Cruciform Press, 2011). This short book with essays by John Piper, Dan Cruver, and others is another, excellent theological introduction to the topic.
- Daniel J. Bennett, *A Passion for the Fatherless: Developing a God-Centered Ministry to Orphans* (Kregel, 2011). As the title suggests, this book combines a theology of adoption with practical tips on how local churches can work to love their neighbor through orphan care.
- *A Guide to Adoption & Orphan Care* (SBTS Press, 2012). This little booklet is a series of short articles introducing readers to common questions.
- Russell Moore, *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches* (Crossway, 2015). Moore introduce readers to the importance of adoption with a healthy dose of theology and nuts and bolts counsel.

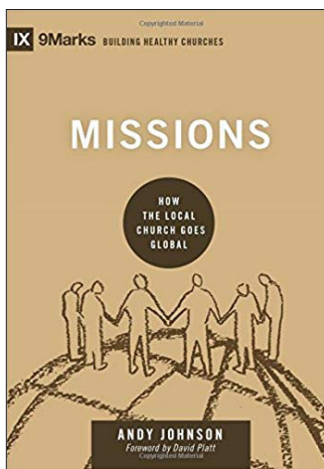
– Aaron and Deana Menikoff

Missions: How the Local Church Goes Global

Written by Andy Johnson

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”

Matthew 28:18-20



Who is the “them” in this passage? Who is supposed to go and make disciples? Certainly, this is a command that applies to each and every Christian. In his book, *Missions*, Andy Johnson states that this responsibility is not left to individual Christians, but to the church. Each local church has been tasked with stewarding the gospel, both near and far. Johnson uses this thread of the local church to provide his readers, both church leaders, and members alike, with some helpful guidelines to engage in missions.

In a day of endless mission strategies and methods, this book is refreshingly straightforward and simple. Johnson spends the beginning section of the book unpacking the biblical basis of what missions is and isn't. He encourages local churches to fully understand the gospel before taking it to the nations. From these building blocks, he turns his focus to exhorting churches to take a hard look at who they are partnering with, how they are supporting them, and how they evaluate allocating resources to various good works around the globe.

His most helpful corrective, is found in the chapter, “Reforming Short-term Missions.” In it, he discusses both the pros and cons of short-term missions. Two examples of concerns are 1) Short-term missions often become about creating an experience for the trip participants. The focus turns inward. 2) Short-term missions look more like drive-by missions. The gospel is shared, but there is no one to stay and follow up. Both of these examples can end up causing more harm than good. Johnson drives the point home that short-term mission trips should always be in the context of supporting a long-term mission effort. In this same chapter, he provides ten ways that someone participating in a short or long-term mission trip should prepare.

If you want to understand how MVBC thinks about missions or if you want to think about how you might prepare to go on one of our many trips, I highly recommend picking up a copy of this book!

– RECOMMENDED BY RICKY HUTCHINS

Excerpts From the Book

1

“For this book, I intend to stick to the traditional and historic use of ‘missions,’ meaning the unique, deliberate gospel mission of the church to make disciples of all nations. I mean evangelism that takes the gospel across ethnic, linguistic, and geographic boundaries, that gathers churches, and teaches them to obey everything Jesus commended.”

– First Things First, p. 35

2

“We want to consider carefully whom to send. We want to prepare them well through fruitful and faithful work. And we want to send, support, and love them once they are far away. It’s a joy and privilege to partner in work like this. It’s what a healthy church does.”

– Sending and Supporting Well, p.57

3

“Our natural affinity for speed, volume, and ease can also lead us to bypass existing churches. Especially if their numerical impact has been slight, we may be tempted to ignore indigenous churches as defective or, even more tellingly, irrelevant. Still, what might the impact be if, instead of ignoring them, we engaged them, both to learn from them and help them?”

– Getting the House in Order, p.69

4

“We should have confidence because we know the mission will not fail. We may fail in our faithfulness, but God will not fail in his mission. Christ will have the nations for his inheritance....Christ will not lose any of those whom the Father has given him, and God has chosen to use us—in countless local churches—as the agents of his gospel triumph.”

– Conclusion, p.120

AUGUST

These Scripture readings have been selected to help you prepare for the Sunday morning message. Take Up & Read!

August 1	Psalm 7	August 14	Psalm 75
August 2	Hebrews 2:5–13	August 15	Psalm 76
August 3	Psalm 8	August 16	1 Corinthians 10:1–14
August 4	Psalm 8	August 17	Psalm 77
August 5	Luke 13:1–9	August 18	Psalm 77
August 6	Luke 13:10–21	August 19	Psalm 93
August 7	Luke 13:22–30	August 20	Psalm 94
August 8	Luke 13:31–35	August 21	Psalm 95
August 9	2 Samuel 9:1–13	August 22	Psalm 96
August 10	Luke 14:1–24	August 23	Philippians 1:12–26
August 11	Luke 14:1–24	August 24	Psalm 97
August 12	Psalm 73	August 25	Psalm 97
August 13	Psalm 74		

*Sermons in bold

TAKE UP & READ

NEW MEMBERS



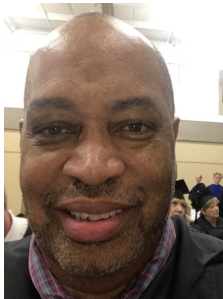
Ross Andrews



Amy Dehnel



Bill & Rebecca
Barnes
Liam (5),
Clay (2)



Terrence
Gardner



Nathan
Hermance



Luis & Ana Salas
Anabel (21),
Isabella (13),
Luis (10)



PJ & Rebecca
Waldrop



Mount Vernon
BAPTIST CHURCH