

Volume IV, Issue 3 || March 2011

# PERSPECTIVE

THE MONTHLY JOURNAL OF MOUNT VERNON BAPTIST CHURCH



*Proverbs*

*Words on Words*



850 Mt. Vernon Hwy. NW \\ Sandy Springs, GA 30327  
 Phone: 404.255.3133 \\ Fax: 404.255.3166  
 info@mvbchurch.org \\ www.mvbchurch.org



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



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



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



**Chip Cofer**  
 Recreation Minister  
 chipcofer@mvbchurch.org



**Kathryn Searle**  
 Children's Ministry Assistant  
 kathrynsearle@mvbchurch.org



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

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



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



**Terry Earl**  
 Children's Ministry Coordinator  
 terryearl@mvbchurch.org



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



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



**STAFF** ▶ **SERMON SCHEDULE**

- March 6**     **Yes, He Is the Promise**  
*John 5:31-40*
- March 13**    **In Praise of Folly**  
*1 Corinthians 1:17-25*  
 Guest Preacher: Dr. Gregory Wills
- March 20**    **Creation**
- March 27**    **Fall**

▶ **FIGHTER VERSE**

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

James 3:17-18

◀ **INSIDE THIS EDITION**

**Knowing the Body: Elder Candidates**  
 A look at the candidates for the office of elder.  
 page 1

**The Bookshelf:**  
**Mack & Leeann's Guide to Short-Term Missions**  
 by J. Mack & Leeann Stiles  
 A book review on short-term missions.  
 by Bryan Pillsbury  
 page 2

**Proverbs: Words on Words**  
 An article discussing the importance of words.  
 by Aaron Menikoff  
 page 4

▶ **Knowing the Body**  
 A look at the elder candidates

The Elder Nominating Committee has selected candidates for the office of elder at Mount Vernon Baptist Church. We invite you to pray over this list, contact us, and let us know if you see any reason why any of these men should not serve Mount Vernon as Elders. We will have a specially-called Church in Conference to vote on these men on **Sunday morning, March 27**. Each man will be voted on individually, and he must be approved by 75% of those voting in order to be elected an Elder. Again, please join us in praying that we would know "what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

The Elder Nominating Committee (consisting of Wayne Elliot, Troy Kubes, Aaron Menikoff, Vic Moore, Dennis Mosby, Diane Neal, and Von Sheffield) recommends the following eight men to the office of Elder:



**Gerry Chatham**

Gerry was fourteen when he became involved in a basketball program at a Baptist church. He came to know Christ through the ministry of the youth director. It was in his 30s that Gerry really began to grow as a Christian. Gerry and Carolyn have two grown children. They came to Mount Vernon in 1992. No surprise, Gerry is pouring himself into the life of young boys coaching basketball here at MVBC.



**John Hall**

John's parents were very active in the church when he was growing up, and John professed faith in Christ at a very young age. He struggled as a young man to follow Christ, but at the age of 22, he was greatly helped by a teacher at church who exhorted him to root out worldliness and follow Christ with heart, soul, and mind. By the grace of God, John did. John and Jane have been at Mount Vernon for eight years. They have two adult children. John is a deacon and teacher.



**Jim Heiskell**

In June of 1966, at a Campus Crusade for Christ conference in California, Jim became a Christian. His priorities changed overnight. Jim spends his days teaching, counseling, and mentoring junior high school students at the Heiskell School. At Mount Vernon, as the Director of Adult Sunday School Ministries, he regularly encourages our teachers. Jim is married to Connie and they have five grown children.



**Ken Henson**

While flying for the Air Force in World War II, the Lord saved Ken both physically and spiritually. He came back to the States a changed man. He and his wife Stella joined Mount Vernon in 1965. Stella served actively until her death in 2008. Ken teaches a senior men's Sunday School class, sings in the choir, and generally encourages the flock with his faithful presence and kind words.



**Bryan Pillsbury**

Bryan has been on staff at Mount Vernon for nearly a quarter of a century. His life began in Greenville, South Carolina where he grew up in an unchurched home. In high school, friends invited Bryan to a Young Life retreat. There, for the first time, he understood his need Christ and the Lord saved him. God has used Bryan at Mount Vernon to teach, disciple, and to help us spread the Gospel in Sandy Springs and beyond. Bryan and his wife Paige have five children.



**Hank Sturgess**

As a young man, Hank's faith was in his head, but not his heart. He knew a great deal about God, but had never known what it meant to be part of God's family. In his late twenties, the Gospel truly made sense to him, and he was baptized as a believer. Hank and his wife, Charlotte, joined Mount Vernon in 1995. Charlotte went to be with the Lord a few years ago. Hank has continued to faithfully serve the church he loves, teaching and serving wherever there is a need.



**Brad Thayer**

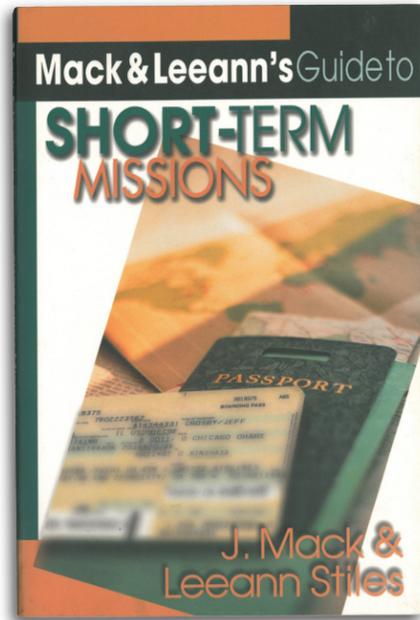
Brad grew up in a Christian home and came to know Christ as a teenager. He began to grow in earnest having heard a sermon on Isaiah 6 about the holiness of God and the depth of our sin. Brad is on staff at Mount Vernon as an assistant pastor. He received a degree from Boyce Bible College and previously served as an elder at Third Avenue Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. He is married to Candace and they have four children.



**Mike Wilkinson**

Mike grew up in Stamps, Arkansas. There, through the ministry of a local Methodist church, he heard the Gospel, repented of his sins, and put his faith in Christ. Mike and Nancy have been members of Mount Vernon since 1981. They have two grown children. Mike has taught theology, served as a deacon, and been very involved in missions in his time at the church.

# The Bookshelf



## Mack & Leeann's Guide to Short-Term Missions

by J. Mack & Leeann Stiles

Reviewed by Bryan Pillsbury

During my last trip to Cuba, I heard a story about a short-term mission team that arrived at their designated site in Mexico, eager to serve a local pastor by immediately starting on their demolition project. The pastor put a request in for the team to dismantle a building. Much to the horror of the team leader, the demolition project was a beautiful brand new building that stood unused. The mission team leader quizzed the pastor that it seemed like a terrible waste of resources and time to destroy a brand new building. The local pastor explained that the year before, a mission team from the United States said that God told them to come and build a building. The whole project was paid for by the church in the States. The local pastor said, "We didn't need a building, we didn't ask for a building and we don't have the money to support the ongoing use and maintenance of such a building. The community is laughing at us at the waste of money. It has caused us problems because we look so foolish as Christians. If you want to serve me, this community and the Lord, you will help me take this building down."

If you have ever been involved with missions, it is likely you have heard of stories of well-intentioned Americans (some not so well-intentioned) on short-term mission trips making incredibly stupid mistakes on the mission field. I must confess that after decades of mission involvement, I have made my share of mistakes. But it is stories like this team that built a building that no one asked for that are indicative of poor missional leadership and training. Mack and Leeann Stiles' *Guide to Short-Term Missions* is a small book with a wealth of information that helps combat missional and cultural ignorance. Whether you are an experienced short-term-mission veteran or someone who is thinking about getting involved, this little book is a must-read.

This book is made up of eighteen short chapters that weave theology, experience, and universal mission issues into one story. One of the fascinating and unique perspectives of this book is

that it was co-authored by a husband and wife. Chapter-by-chapter, Mac and Leeann constantly remind readers that whether you are a married couple or part of a team of people going through the same particular experience together, the individual interpretation of that experience may be vastly different from person to person. You cannot assume that everyone is thinking the same thing about what you are experiencing. This point has many ramifications for a mission trip, from preparation to execution to debriefing.

Prior to moving to the Middle East to serve the Lord full-time in a Muslim context, Mack Stiles served in the United States as the southeast regional director for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Many years ago, Mack and Leann began to use their summers to organize and mobilize students to go on short-term mission opportunities as together they led teams in Kenya, the Middle East, and Central America. This book was written as a result of years of service and experience on the field as leaders of short-term mission teams.

The book begins by providing a biblical answer to the question, "Why be involved in missions?" Romans 10:12-15 provides the context that God's heart is for all people and we are the instruments He has ordained to take His message to nonbelievers,

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'"

So the authors build on this verse the "missions mindset" that we take part in missions because our God is a missionary God

and we must take the message of the Gospel to all people groups on the planet.

One might immediately respond to the challenge that we must go and take the Gospel to all nations by saying, "That is well and good. Missionaries need to go. But I am definitely not called to be a missionary so I am absolved of that responsibility and will pray for the people that are called." There is a difference between missions as a full-time calling and vocation and the rest of us whom God desires to be "missional," meaning living the Gospel wherever God takes us in such a way that the people around us are impacted by our Christian faith. The authors' greatest accomplishment is balancing the biblical mandate that every Christian be on mission with practical principles and advice for being effective while we fulfill the biblical mandate in our everyday lives.

So does short-term missions really make a difference in the Kingdom? When we hear stories like the group who built a building that wasn't needed, it makes you wonder what kind of difference short-term missions efforts make. Stiles answers, "The short-term missions trip is an instrument that God uses to help Christians learn to trust Him in deeper and profound ways. Short-term missions takes us to places where risks for the Gospel are rewarded with opportunities to build the Kingdom—a world where those small risky steps of faith in God's hands become giant leaps of learning, growth, and glory to God."

In chapter eight, there is a story that has profound implications. It is about a young lady named Joanne who was called to serve on a short-term trip in Kenya. She had experience in campus ministry and a great track record of leading people to Christ. She was particularly excited about this mission opportunity, as she had been told that revival was breaking out among Kenyan students. She wanted to be a part of the action. God had other plans for her. Joanne ended up spending her whole summer serving a Kenyan family by taking care of the kids, helping cook with a mother who had a newborn, doing laundry, and a sundry of menial, thankless tasks. She went through a range of emotions from feeling like she was worthless and that she totally wasted the money raised to support her trip to eventually learning the spiritual lessons of servanthood that Jesus really wanted her to learn. Joanne did not return to the States with wonderful stories of how God used her to evangelize and disciple new believers. Rather, she returned with the satisfaction of serving God well exactly how He wanted her to. That is not the end of the story for Joanne or the Kenyan community she so desired to impact. God used her servanthood to be a catalyst for something far greater. To find out what that is, you will have to read the book.

Chapter by chapter the Stiles share experiences that God has taken them through that shaped their "mission mindset" and

provided them with a cadre of practical advice for short-term missions. They are honest about successes and failures, and the reader is able to capture their growth in overcoming cultural barriers as they gained more experience through their years of service in several different culture groups. The Gospel is the same, but cultural contexts can vary which makes being a good witness a challenge.

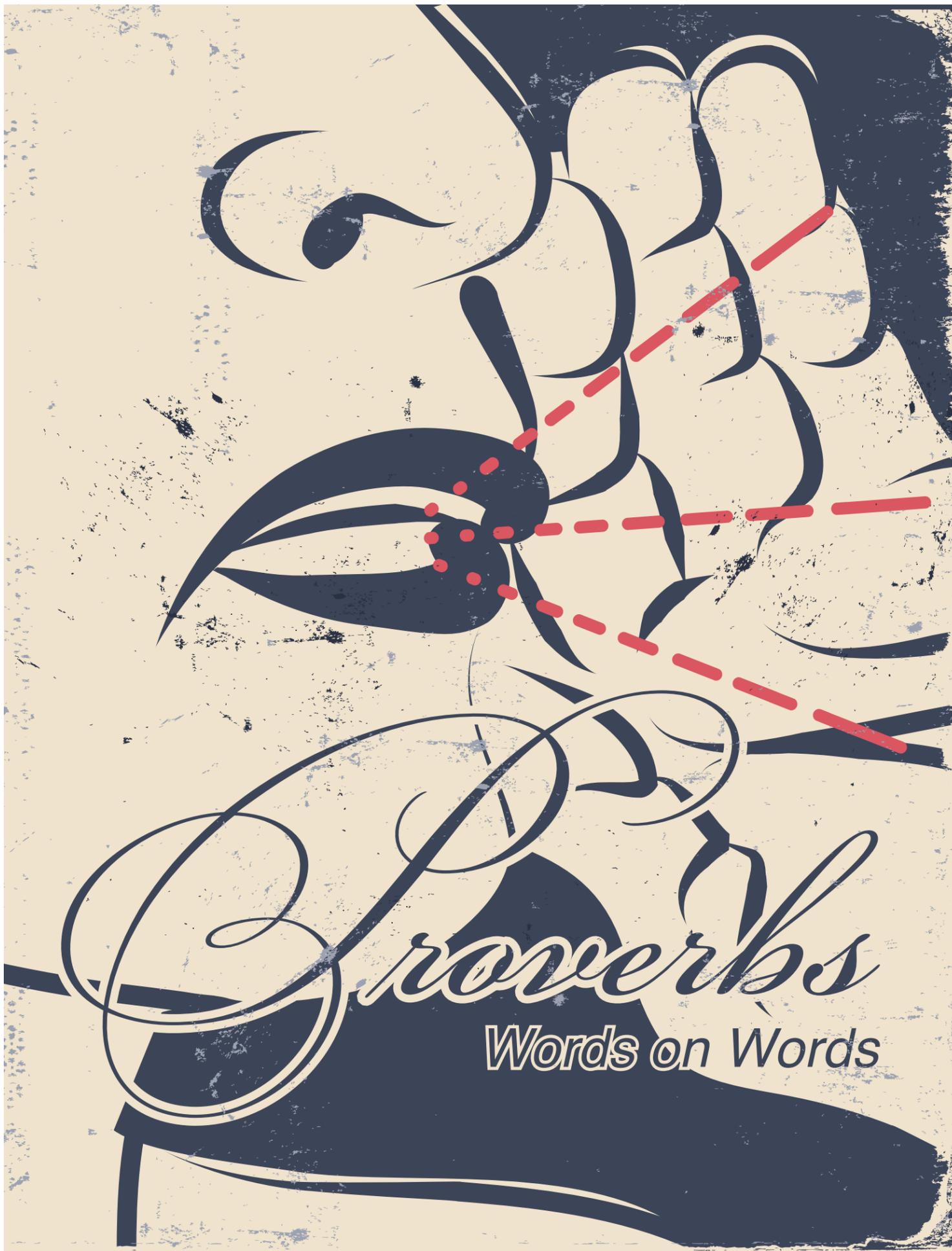
Chapter sixteen was a sobering message on risk. Mission trips are inherently dangerous. Even if you have never had an international short-term mission experience, you might naturally assume that there is risk involved. However, if you have had a variety of mission experiences and yet you have been blessed to the point where you have never been robbed, brutalized, experienced severe illness, or witnessed death in your midst, it is very possible that you may be somewhat callous to risk. So on either account, this chapter is one to pay close attention to. The Stiles recall an experience where a father was very concerned about his daughter traveling overseas and said that the only way he would permit her to go was for Mack to guarantee her safety. Mack's reply was, "Dr. Branham, this is a mission trip, not a sightseeing tour. The only promise that I can make is that it is dangerous." This chapter does provide some reflection on risk assessment, which we should always be mindful of, but a guarantee of safety is an illusion. Mack says, "We wish Jesus called us to live in personal peace and security. We wish we could proclaim His message over the Internet or the TV. But that's not how He came; it's not what He did. He lived with people who risked their lives in an unsafe world."

Until Jesus returns, we as Christians have been commanded to share the Gospel and disciple and baptize new believers where we are and everywhere we go. Our going could be random or it could be strategically intentional. A short-term mission experience often has more spiritual effect on the participant than it does in the places we attempt to serve. Mission participants are usually impacted for a lifetime with the rich experience of cross-cultural missions. Our engagement in missions often leads us to a greater commitment to the Gospel, a stronger commitment to prayer, and a more substantial urgency to financially fund God's work. Again, for anyone who has a desire to go on a mission trip but has never been, this is a must-read. The practical lessons that are shared will be invaluable preparation. For people with missions' experience, this is a great book filled with godly reminders of our constant need for humility and servanthood. I am grateful for Mack and Leanne Stiles sharing a portion of the wealth of their experience and knowledge from serving in short-term missions. This book will continue to be a useful and practical tool to shape God's people to be on mission with His work for His glory. ■

*Beginning March 20, Pastor Aaron will be leading us through a four-part overview of the Bible.*

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

*Sermons will also be available on CD for \$5 per copy.*



BERNIE MADOFF IS the twenty-first century poster-child for foolishness. He is serving a 150-year sentence for defrauding his clients of nearly twenty billion dollars. He took their money and promised great returns through savvy investing when, in reality, Madoff paid for the returns by raising more money. When the recession hit, there was less money to be raised, and his scheme fell apart. He was arrested, convicted, and disgraced before the entire world. Madoff is evidence of the wisdom of the book of Proverbs: "A man of perverse heart does not prosper; he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble" (Prov. 17:20).

The message of Proverbs is clear and straightforward: the wise prosper and live; the foolish suffer and die. Proverbs is a book of the Bible designed to help us navigate life successfully. It is divided into two parts. Chapters 1-9 read like a series of lectures all pointing to the value of wisdom. The second part is chapters 10-31. Here we find hundreds of short, pithy, memorable statements about wisdom and folly. These statements cover a number of topics. There are plenty of places in the Bible that address the question of unjust suffering. Proverbs is not one of them. Proverbs tells us how life *normally* works out. Thus, we should not be surprised when the Madoffs of the world are captured.

One of the ways we successfully navigate life is with our words. They matter. They can bring encouragement to a friend and be like a knife in the back of our enemies. Some of us are prone to speak too quickly. Many of us fail to speak enough. God has given us the book of Proverbs, in part, to help us gain control of our tongues. He also gave us Proverbs to be aware of the danger of the tongue. "When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise" (Prov. 10:19). What can we learn about our words and how they are to be used on a daily basis? That's what this essay is about.

**First, our words should be honest.**

In chapter 6, verse 16, we see that there are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him. He hates haughty eyes and a lying tongue. God hates it when we deceive others. And we see in verse 19 that God also hates "a false witness who pours out lies."

And it's not just God who hates lies. Godly men hate deceit! Proverbs 13:5, "The righteous hate what is false, but the wicked bring shame and disgrace." We see the two ways to live: The godly hate what is false, which means they love the truth. The wicked hate the truth, which means they love what is false. Here's the result: shame and disgrace.

In the first century a man named Ananias sold a piece of property to give money to the church. We read of this in Acts 5. Here's what happened: he *said* he sold the land for \$5,000 (actually we don't know exactly how much he received for the land). He gave \$5,000 to Peter. In reality, he sold the land for \$8,000 and kept \$3,000 for himself. He lied. Ananias brought the \$5,000 and set it before the feet of the apostles. *For a moment he looked very, very good.* All eyes were on him. The news had probably spread about this great deed he had done. But he was a liar. Notice what Peter asked him, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have

kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?" And then God struck Ananias down dead. Here is Proverbs at work: "A man of perverse heart does not prosper; he whose tongue is deceitful falls into trouble" (Prov. 17:20).

Let me ask you a straightforward question, "Do you lie?" Take the past week as an example. Have you lied at work? Did you say you arrived at 8:15 when you actually showed up at 8:30? Did you promise a client you would call them tomorrow when, the truth is, you had no intention of calling them back? Have you lied at home?

All lies matter. Lies that don't seem big are lies nonetheless. Any twisting of the truth is a lie. Proverbs 26:28, "A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin." Flattery is a form of lying. You are not speaking truth—you are embellishing the truth to win someone's favor.

*Most of us are very good liars.* We even convince ourselves we aren't lying! My wife calls me sometimes to see when I'm going to be home for dinner. I want my wife to think highly of me, so I have been known to say, when I'm sitting in my office, "I'm on my way home." That is, of course, ridiculous, but I am a sinner and so I rationalize: "I am on my way home *in the sense that* I am mentally preparing to leave." This is lying. Our words should be honest.

If you want an example of pure honesty, look at Jesus Christ. In Mark 15:2 he is standing before Pilate. He has already been beaten. His friends have abandoned him. And Pilate asks him the question, "Are you the king of the Jews?" If he denies it, he will be set free. But Jesus answers honestly, though it would soon cost him his life, "Yes, it is as you say." You and I should follow Christ. Our words should be honest.

**Second, our words should be excellent.**

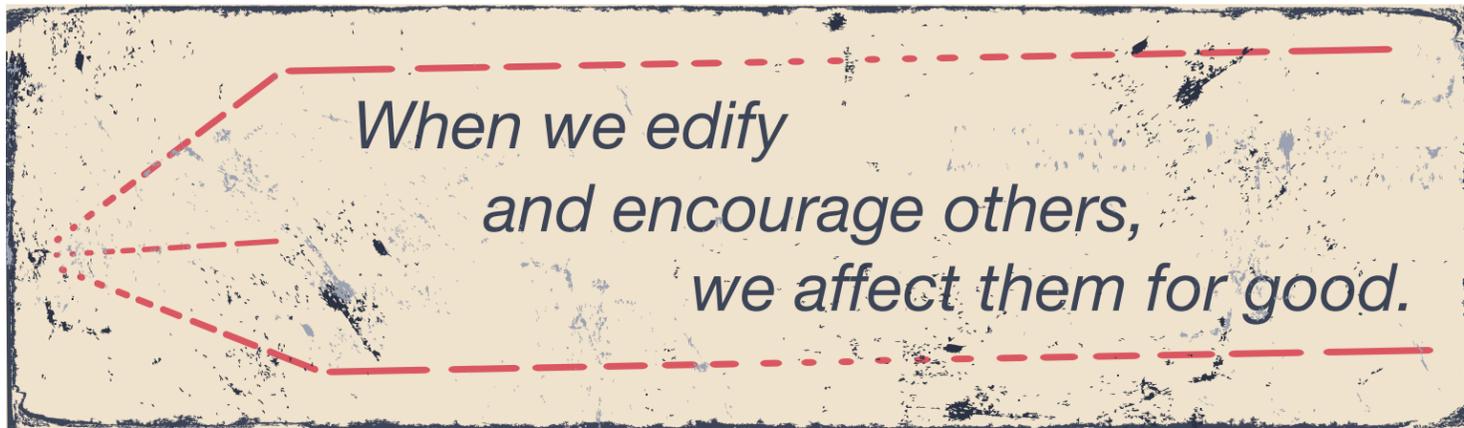
Paul wrote in Philippians 4:8 that what we *think* about should be excellent or praiseworthy. The same is true about our speech. We have a tremendous opportunity to encourage and to edify, to express love and affection and support. Our words, in short, should be excellent.

Proverbs warns us that corrupt words do damage. Proverbs 16:27, "A scoundrel plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire." It sounds just like James 3:6, "The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire." Proverbs 22:10, "Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended." Mockery is a form of corrupt speech. The mocker uses words to hurt people and he causes strife and quarrels. This is the fruit, the work of a corrupt tongue.

But excellent words give life. Proverbs 15:4, "The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit." Proverbs 11:11, "Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed." Blessings are excellent words. Imagine, the city of Sandy Springs, *exalted* through the blessings of the upright. Words have a real affect. Words change things. Proverbs 16:24 is right, "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."

When we edify and encourage others we affect them for good. Look back at your life. Who are the people that changed you? They are the people who encouraged you, who spoke excellent words to you. A few years ago I wrote for an online journal. The editing process was brutal. Each piece was read aloud around a conference table while the editors often cut it to pieces. One of the editors knew the power of words. He saw words as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Even in the midst of tearing my work apart, he found ways to encourage me and build me up. Are you like that?

Jesus Christ spoke excellent words. He knew how to encourage. When a Roman commander asked Jesus to heal a soldier, the man exhibited such faith that Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith." And when Peter uttered the words, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus was pleased and said, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my father in heaven."



Both men were blessed by Jesus. Don't underestimate the amount of good you can do with your mouth. Our words should be honest, and they should be excellent.

### Third, our words should be timely.

I love Proverbs 27:14, "If a man loudly blesses his neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse." We learn here that wisdom is not just about speaking honest and excellent words, but speaking those words *at the right time*. Proverbs teaches us how to do this.

*Avoid talking too much.* Proverbs 10:8, "The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin." The wise man keeps his mouth shut long enough to listen. But the chatterer hears only himself. And here's the danger, if you keep talking, you are more likely to sin. Remember Proverbs 10:19, "When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise." And this is a pride issue. Proverbs 18:2, "A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions." There is wisdom in being quiet. Proverbs, 17:28, "Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue." I'm sure this is where we get that familiar quotation, "Better to be silent and thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt." Avoid talking too much.

*Avoid talking too little.* There is a time to speak. Proverbs 15:23, "A man finds joy in giving an apt reply—and how good is

a timely word." We often think of the sin of speaking, but there is a sin that comes from *not* speaking. For whatever reason, we may withhold excellent words. This too is sin. We should be ready to speak the right word at the right time. We should avoid withholding a good word when the moment is ripe. In Proverbs we learn the value of words. Proverbs 25:11, "A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver." Avoid talking too little.

*Avoid talking too quickly.* We often respond to others out of anger. This is not wise. Proverbs 12:18, "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing." Proverbs 14:29, "A patient man has great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays folly." The quick-tempered man, is a man too easily angered and he is the one most tempted to speak reckless words. So what do we do? Proverbs 13:3, "He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin." And Proverbs 15:28, "The heart of the righteous weighs its

answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil." Guard your lips. Weigh your answers. Be slow to speak.

*Avoid talking too softly.* Sometimes we must say the hard thing, we must rebuke. Proverbs 28:23, "He who rebukes a man will in the end gain more favor than he who has a flattering tongue." Here's what I find very interesting. As best I can tell, Proverbs 28:23 is the only proverb that commends *giving* a rebuke. The other proverbs commend *taking* a rebuke: Proverbs 25:12, "Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear." Here and elsewhere it is the listening ear that is commended. Therefore, we should spend more time thinking about how to receive correction than strategizing how to give correction. But both are important.

Paul is a great example of this. In 2 Corinthians 7 he encouraged the Christians in Corinth. Look at verse 4, "I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds." These are excellent words—but Paul goes on to remind them that he also spoke hard things to them. He rebuked them. Look at verse 8, "Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance." Paul wonderfully exemplifies rebuking. The church is a

great example of receiving the rebuke. Proverbs 15:31, "He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise."

Jesus knew better than anyone the power of a well-timed word. He always knew what to say and when to say it. To a man who could only think about his money, Jesus said, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." To the crowd who mistook Jesus as merely a miracle worker, the Messiah said, "Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." Proverbs (and Jesus) teach us that our words should be honest, excellent, and timely.

What is your reaction to this teaching on words? Many of us have spent a lifetime being hurt and even hurting others with our words. As you hear this biblical teaching on the importance of words, you may be experiencing one of two different reactions.

### Some grieve because you see how you have used your words as weapons.

If the Spirit is working in your heart and you are hearing how the LORD is calling us to speak honest, excellent, timely words then you are going to quickly become aware of all the ways you have fallen short. You are going to see with crystal clarity the ways you have used words to hurt others. Proverbs is like HD TV—every blemish comes out in the open.

We all have our stories. One day, a teenager was in a high school physics class when the teacher left the room. His target quickly came into view: a quiet, smart kid that others liked to make fun of. So he began to pester him until the quiet, smart kid talked back. A war of words ensued with the quiet, smart kid being dressed down before everyone. Sadly, I'm in this story. And I wish I could say that I was the quiet, smart kid. But I wasn't. I was the fool who decided to beat up that boy with my words. And those words reflected a heart that was proud and insecure.

What's your story? Perhaps you are burdened by the things you have said in anger to a wife or to a child. Perhaps you are burdened by the things you should have said that you didn't say—something as simple as saying, "I love you." Again, if the Holy Spirit is so working in your life such that you are aware of how your words are a weapon, then you will know that you will be held accountable for what you say. Remember Matthew 12:36. "But I tell you that men will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken." There will come a day when you will stand before Jesus Christ—the One who always spoke honest, excellent, timely words—and you will give an account for every word you have spoken. Here's the verdict. Guilty!

But let me encourage you. This is why Christ died. You sin because you are a sinner. Your mouth is corrupt because of your corrupt heart. Christ died for your mouth, and rose for your salvation. Trust him, and he will not only save you he will change you. He will disarm your mouth. Those who

are grieving because of the way you have spoken should run to the Cross, where you will find forgiveness for your foul mouth.

### Some grieve because you have used your words as a tent.

Some people use words as weapons to fight. Others use words as tent in which to hide. If this is you, you are very careful with your words. You almost always say the right thing at the right time. You have learned how to speak in such a way that everyone thinks everything is fine. In reality, your words are merely a tent you hide in—a mask you wear.

This shows how sinister sin is. You can say all the right things but you are hiding so that no one can see who you really are. Proverbs 26:24, "A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but in his heart he harbors deceit." That's what we often do. We hide behind our words. We disguise ourselves with our lips. We want to seem wise and so we learn how to say the right thing. When, inside the tent, we are hurting and running away from God and running away from others.

If the Holy Spirit is so working in your life that you are aware of how your words are a tent, here's what you have to remember. If you are a Christian, you don't have to hide. The Gospel is for you. You are a sinner saved by grace. There is no shame in letting that be known. In fact, we are called by God to know one another. If you aren't a member of a church, this is one reason why I encourage you to join. At least at Mount Vernon, the mere process of joining a church will provide opportunities to get out from behind your words. If you are already a member, find someone you can talk to and be real with. Don't hide behind your words, hide behind the Cross.

Some of us hide behind our words because we think we have no choice. We want others to think everything is fine, when it isn't. Remember that regardless of how smooth your words may be, you can never hide from God—nor should you want to. He knows your heart. He knows what you need. Only he can forgive you for the damage you have done with your words and only he can free you from the need to hide behind your words. Turn to him and trust him.

In a letter to a friend, C. S. Lewis once wrote, "Isn't it funny the way some combinations of words can give you—almost apart from their meaning—a thrill like music?" Yes, it is funny. Words are powerful. God knows that. Much of Scripture is about the power of words. Those combinations have such power; the power to heal and the power to destroy. Let none of us be accused of taking our words for granted. ■

~ Aaron Menikoff

This article was adapted from a sermon delivered by Pastor Aaron on September 19, 2010.

# March 2011

6	9:15 am <b>Knowing MVBC: Session 1</b> 12:00 pm <b>Knowing MVBC: Sessions 2-4</b> 6:00 pm <b>Lord's Supper</b>	7		8		9	6:30 pm <b>New Equipping Matters Starts</b>	10		11	7:30 pm <b>Mount Vernon Dialogue</b>	12	
13	Daylight Savings Begins 9:15 am <b>Joint Shepherding Group</b> 10:30 am <b>Guest Preacher: Dr. Greg Wills</b>	14		15		16		17		18		19	
20		21	12:00 pm <b>RW&amp;A Luncheon</b>	22		23		24		25		26	
27	12:00 pm <b>Special Church in Conference</b>	28		29		30		31					

## EVENTS ◀ ▶ BIRTHDAYS

### Churchwide ▼

**March 6 6:00 pm Lord's Supper**  
We encourage members to examine their hearts and relationships with one another in preparation for this celebration of Christ's death and resurrection.

**March 11 7:30 am Mount Vernon Dialogue**  
(See ad below.)

**March 13 Daylight Savings Begins**  
Be sure to set your clocks ahead one hour on Saturday night.

**March 13 9:30 am Joint Shepherding Group**  
There will be a joint Shepherding Group session in the Fellowship Hall where we will hear from our guest speaker Dr. Gregory Wills.

**March 27 12:00 pm Special Church in Conference**  
There will be a specially called church in conference immediately following the morning service for the purpose of voting on Elder candidates. (See page 1 for more information.)

### Adults ▼

**March 21 12:00 pm Monthly RW&A**

### New Members ▼

**March 6 9:15 am Knowing MVBC: Session 1**  
**12:00 pm Knowing MVBC: Sessions 2-4**  
*Knowing MVBC: The Membership Class* is a 4-part course introducing you to life at Mount Vernon. It covers our commitments, beliefs, spiritual disciplines encouraged among members, and some nuts and bolts about our structure and ministry. It is a requirement for membership.

- |                   |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Taylor King     | 16 Anne Goodgame    |
| 2 Diane Hughs     | 17 Becky Luttrell   |
| Brad Thayer       | Wanda McCleskey     |
| Brandon Laney     | Ash Anderson        |
| 3 Bethany Houser  | 21 Lisa Timmons     |
| Samantha Long     | 22 Keith Cooper     |
| 4 Carol Thurman   | Charlotte Haigler   |
| Joy Sullivan      | Tony Watson         |
| Daniel Spratlin   | Michael Clary       |
| 5 Terry Earl      | 23 Mary Robinson    |
| Sid Miller        | Dianne Hoover       |
| 6 Mary Turner     | John Pattillo       |
| Johnny Hall       | 25 Bob Linker       |
| Jaime Fulcher     | 26 Everett Hodge    |
| 8 Ferrell Ryan    | Ann Nable           |
| Frank Louthan     | Hal Barnes          |
| Kimberly Ferguson | Anita Shipley       |
| 9 Scott Sullivan  | 27 Margaret Dolive  |
| 10 Erin Nable     | 28 Lois Shank       |
| 12 Von Sheffield  | Dona Reid           |
| Anna Matheny      | 30 Georgiana Branam |
| 13 Alice Nelson   | 31 Renee Moultrie   |
| 14 Clay Speas     |                     |
| Katherine Scheidt |                     |
| Julie Metry       |                     |

**“Why I Am a Christian.”**  
with **Dr. Gregory Wills**

Dr. Wills has a Ph.D. from Emory University, is the author of *Democratic Religion* published by Oxford University Press, and is Associate Dean of Theology and Tradition at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Friday, March 11**  
**7:30 pm**  
**in the Fellowship Hall**

Mount Vernon  
*Dialogues:*  
A Series of Theological and Cultural Discussions



*Mount Vernon*

BAPTIST CHURCH

850 Mount Vernon Highway NW

Sandy Springs, GA 30327