

# MCA Connection

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## Earlobes, China and Worship by Jeremy Miller

**“The big hand is almost at the 9!...I wonder what Shane (a brother) would do if I slashed a line through the goat he just drew?....”**

Stifled laughter and short jabs thrown by younger brothers indicated things were getting squirrely on the hard wooden benches of our little church. As a seven or eight-year-old boy, the message coming from the pulpit was entirely uninteresting to me. I was bored and couldn't wait to spend the afternoon with my friends. Suddenly I sensed the arrival of an authoritative and

large thumbnail squeezing the back of my earlobe into an equally large index finger. All thoughts of afternoon activities vanished as I suddenly found myself staring straight ahead and hoping my left earlobe still wanted to remain a part of my body. We didn't have children's church when I was a kid and it wasn't because we were more inclined to enjoy “big people church.” I found sermons about as interesting as math class....which is to say that they didn't interest me very much. (And this, by the way, is no reflection on our preachers.) For reasons I didn't understand at the time, Mom and Dad wanted to engage what was being said.

Mom took notes, both had their Bibles open, and neither was in the mood to have me mess up whatever it was they had going.

I suddenly found myself staring straight ahead and hoping my left earlobe still wanted to remain a part of my body.

I observed similar patterns of odd behavior from other adults in church. My grandparents, whom I loved and believed were intelligent, seemed to think what

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The Vision of MCA is to become a vibrant community of transformed people committed to sharing the life giving power of Jesus with the World.

# An Inside Look at Area51

by Jeff Polen and Grace Mullet



**For the past several years I have used the MCA Connection newsletter as an opportunity to talk about the Youth Group, and to highlight some of the things that we are doing and thinking.**

Hopefully that has been helpful.

This year, however, I want to allow the youth to speak for themselves. I want to give some of these amazing teenagers an opportunity to give a first-hand perspective of what is going on in the Area 51 Youth Group.

This first perspective will be coming from Grace Mullet (daughter of Joe & Sherri Mullet). Grace is a wonderful young lady who takes her faith seriously. I have personally been challenged by her commitment to the Youth Group, her positive attitude, and her obvious love for Jesus.

This is what she has to say about the Area 51 Youth Group:

This year the Youth Group has narrowed down our focus into three main categories:

**Prayer**  
**Bible Study**  
**Availability**

For prayer, we have been getting into pairs or small groups and praying for ourselves, our world, and our unsaved friends / family.

We have lately been studying the Gospel of Mark as a youth group, and in my small group we've also been working through Colossians. Jeff always provides us with his commentary or thoughts, helping us to look deeper than the surface of the text. We even have the opportunity to write our own commentary, which is really neat.

For availability, we just practice being available for God wherever and whenever he may call. This means being available for church related things outside of the normal Sunday and Wednesday meetings.

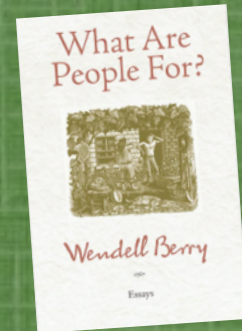
book.

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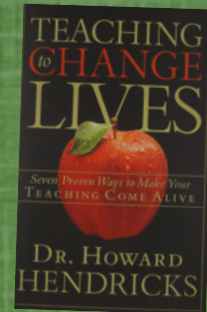
## PASTOR'S PICKS....

Looking for something to read?  
Check out Jeremy and Jeff's top pick.

What Are People For?  
by Wendell Berry



Teaching To Change Lives  
by Dr. Howard Hendricks



Copies of both books will be available for checkout in the MCA Library



### Grace Mullet

Grace is a sophomore at Highland High School and is the daughter of Joe and Sherri Mullet.



## Earlobes, China and Worship continued...

was happening was important. In addition to them, there were uncles and aunts and parents of my friends. It was rare for any of them to miss a Sunday morning. They valued the church. They valued the activities of the church. They valued the music and sermons; it was evident in their engagement. O, sometimes after a long week, I'd catch one of them drifting into another... less engaged dimension of consciousness. None-the-less, the weekly rhythm of worshipping together was ingrained in my being from the time I was born... and for that I am grateful. I am also grateful my opinion of church as a 7-year-old wasn't overly important to the adults in my life. They knew better than I did what was important to my development as a person and son of the Father.

Several weeks ago I was struggling to maintain order in my own burgeoning flock of restless, squirrely children. One of the children was causing a disruption. I addressed the issue and turned my thoughts and attention back to singing. Finally, my mind could engage and we could get back to worship. Suddenly I felt a soft tapping on my elbow. "O boy, what now?" I thought. The child I had just corrected was looking up at me with bright eyes and motioning me down so that he could whisper something very important in my ear. "Dad, China is on the other side of the world, right?" "...Yes son, it is" I replied. "Its time to sing now." Trust me, I have the most spiritual children in our church.

I have been tempted on more than one occasion to suggest that our church have children's church every Sunday for the entire morning. I fantasize about worship uninterrupted by little people who need things or cause disturbances. The inclination is perhaps a little stronger for me. Trying to pray or preach a sermon after settling a dispute in the pews is not high on my list of "Things I love about being a pastor/dad." There are, however, critical lessons my children are learning by not always being shoveled away to a special children's service. They learn by observation that mom, dad, friends, relatives and other adults they respect, believe our worship time to be an important part of their lives. More is caught than taught as they witness the authority figures in their lives regularly gather

From it's inception, the MCA Children's Church Program has kept children involved in the Worship service on a regular basis. What year did MCA start offering children's church. Be the first to send the correct response to [newsletter@mcachurch.org](mailto:newsletter@mcachurch.org)

together around a shared faith in worship. And even though the sermon might not always connect with them, they learn practical spiritual principles like respect and reverence, which are about as enticing to 7-year-olds as a steaming dish of broccoli. They are, however, just as necessary as that steaming dish. They learn that their faith is somehow much...much...much bigger and all encompassing than the brightly colored cartoon

**Freeman Mullet** was the first to correctly respond to the January Newsletter trivia question. The correct answer was Lamar, CO

themed Sunday school lessons they love to participate in. This is no knock on Children's ministry curriculum, but our kids need the grown up stuff they can't completely understand yet. They have to know there is more and worshipping with adults helps them come to terms with this truth.

The list of benefits doesn't just end with the kids. Knowing the children are going to be sitting with us my wife through a worship service has inspired Sarah and me to communicate ahead of time with our children about our expectations for them in the service. The ironies of using phrases like "worshipping God," "amputated buttocks," and "no more movies for the rest of your life" in the same sentence are not lost on me. Intergenerational worship forces conversations that have ultimately made us better parents...I hope.

I want my kids to feel like the church is a place for them. I also want them to be a part of a community of faith that isn't primarily geared around their wants. They need to see adults they know and love worshipping together, bearing witness to our King. One body at one time, declaring God's faithfulness from generation to generation. If this is happening, I'm ok getting asked about China from time to time.

**If you would like to publish an article in the MCA Connection please let us know.**  
[newsletter@mcachurch.org](mailto:newsletter@mcachurch.org)

## An Inside Look at Area51 *continued...*

Lately we have also really been evaluating our lives using the "Four Chair Discipleship" model and book.

This strategy lays out different stages of our personal walk with Christ as four different chairs. As a youth group, it's obvious that everyone is in a different place in our walk with Christ, so, we place ourselves in the chair we believe we belong in and work to move up to the next chair.

Personally, I was in Chair Two for most of my life until this year. Chair Two is living out your faith inside of your comfort zone, being satisfied with the basics and not craving more. I didn't put my faith into action or share my faith with others. The first time I shared my faith with an unbeliever was last year on our missions trip: "Lead THE Cause" based in Chicago, Illinois. In Chicago my heart was broken for unbelievers. I now understand that we hold the key to eternal life, and a worldly life spent in God's love. How sad is it that there are strangers out there who haven't heard about how much Jesus loves them?

I'm so excited to say that we're going back to "Lead THE Cause" for our missions trip this year, this time based in Denver, Colorado! Please keep our group in your thoughts and prayers in the time leading up to this summer; that our hearts will be changed, and as a result, we'll change the lives of others.

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As a Youth Pastor, I can confidently say that Grace has actually been walking out what it means to be a "Chair Three" Christian this year. I am so excited



### Kyle, Marissa, Harper and Emery Hofstetter

Kyle works at Schantz Organ Company in Orrville where he is a supervisor in the cabinet department. Check out the Schantz promo video at [www.schantzorgan.com](http://www.schantzorgan.com) and you just might see Kyle at work. Pay special attention and you might find others from MCA in the video as well. Marissa is a small animal veterinarian at the Orrville Veterinary Clinic. Her interests include internal medicine and dentistry.

In their spare time they enjoy spending time together, making special trips for dinner out and going on family vacations. Kyle also enjoys working on furniture projects in his home wood shop to fill out his spare time. The Hofstetter's love to cook on the grill and have a special marinade recipe. You'll have to ask Marissa for this secret family favorite recipe.

They had a tough year last year as they experienced the death of a close childhood friend, who lost her battle with cancer. It was a hard time for the family. They relied on God to carry them through and are very thankful for the hope that we have in heaven.

to see how she has been growing in her relationship with Christ. It is a beautiful thing. For anyone who is confused about this "Four Chair Discipleship" strategy and terminology, a quick explanation is that it is a discipleship multiplication strategy that simply helps understand where people are at in their walk with Christ, and how to move them further towards the life that Jesus has for each of us.

Chair One is an "unbeliever" who doesn't know Jesus. Chair Two is a believer (and they really have put their faith in Christ), but they are content to simply believe. Chair

## The Hofstetter Family Profile

Kyle and Marissa live in Kidron with their two children Harper (4) and Emery (2). Harper attends preschool at Trinity Christian Preschool in Orrville. They have attended MCA for the past 7 years and became members of MCA in 2010.

Kyle grew up in Kidron and has never left. Marissa is from Orrville and lived in Columbus while she attended college. The two met at the wedding of Kevin (Kyle's brother) and Janelle Hofstetter. Both Kyle and Marissa were in the wedding party and the wedding bells did not stop ringing until they tied the knot nearly 12 years ago.

Three is a "worker" and they become passionate about truly walking out their faith. They are willing to get outside of their comfort zone and actually do the good works that God has prepared in advance for us to do. Chair Four is a "disciple-maker", and it is the good and natural end result of spending years as a worker instead of simply being a believer.

One of our main goals for this year is to move students from Chair Two to Chair Three, but our ultimate goal is to see students move all the way from Chair One to Chair Four... like Christ did.