



An adoption journey

PART II: WEAVING A NEW COMMUNITY

By *Jim Henry*

At Irving Bible Church just outside Dallas, Texas, an adoption ministry called Tapestry is weaving together a unique community of adoptive and foster families.

Led by Michael and Amy Monroe, Tapestry (Tapestry.IrvingBible.org) is

reaching beyond the walls of the church, welcoming people from all over the Dallas metropolitan area.

The Monroes are well-suited to the task, themselves proud parents of four adopted children. For Michael and Amy, adoption has become a way of life. Why not share their story and encourage others along the adoption journey?

Through a private independent adoption, the Monroes brought their first child, Miles, a newborn, home in 2000. An agency-arranged adoption brought second son, Grant, also an infant, home to Michael and Amy in 2002. Three years later the Monroes

adopted again, this time nine-month-old twins Kate and Carter from Guatemala. Along the way, the Monroes acquired a wealth of experience they felt burdened to pass along to others.

Longing for a sense of community after adopting their first child, Michael and Amy had joined a tiny ministry in their church for families who adopted older children from Russia. In the summer of 2005, the founder asked the Monroes to take over the ministry and grow it however they felt the Lord leading them.

Michael and Amy accepted the challenge, and one of their first moves was to change the



The Monroe children are Grant (upper left), twins Carter and Kate (upper right), and Miles (left).

name to Tapestry. “Tapestry came about because we believe that God has woven our family together by His grace into something that’s beautiful,” Amy says. “And I think that’s a perfect illustration of what Tapestry is all about.”

Tapestry became a ministry for all adoptive and foster families. The Monroes are quick to point out that most adoption agencies provide important services, such as training, for adopting couples. Still, they saw a great spiritual need among families on the adoption journey.

About 20 people showed up for the first Tapestry event, but in less than three years, the ministry has helped hundreds of families navigate the adoption and foster care journey.

“We’ve been able to help so many families along the way,” Amy says. “So many families come from infertility. They’re emotionally and financially bankrupt by the time they get to adoption and they realize, ‘We have to start this whole thing over with something we don’t understand at all.’”

Tapestry provides pre-adoption education and counseling, in addition to many events and meetings designed to knit adoptive and foster care families together into a community.

The events vary from annual conferences with nearly 300 attendees, to a dozen topic-related small group meetings and special affairs such as Moms Night, Guys Night, and play activities for the kids. “I think that’s a large part of why



The Monroes’ children came to them through three separate adoptions.

so many people have come to a local church ministry, because there’s a great need for it and we’re providing that point of connection for them,” Michael says.

“It is a place where we not only educate families but encourage them and connect them with other families that are walking that journey,” Amy says.

Michael believes the local church is the perfect place for an adoption ministry, although Tapestry is drawing from well beyond Irving Bible Church.

“We touched about 500 adults last year,” Michael says. “And at any given event, whether it’s a large group of 70 or 80 or a small group of a dozen, well over half the people don’t attend our local church.”

With so many couples coming into Tapestry from outside the church, it follows that not

all of them are believers—yet. “I think that’s one of the exciting parts of the ministry,” Michael says. “We have an opportunity to talk about adoption on many different levels. Our heart is to talk about adoption in a spiritual sense. It’s no accident that the Apostle Paul, in three different letters, used the adoption metaphor as a way to beautifully illustrate our relationship to Christ through faith.”

In the last six months, a dozen Tapestry families have welcomed home children through adoption. Although the ministry does not dispense legal or administrative assistance, it has a huge impact in the community simply by providing information, counseling, and support to adopting families—sometimes financial support.

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Tapestry works with LifeSong for Orphans, an organization that helps local churches establish adoption assistance funds. So far, the Tapestry fund has helped six families, mostly through matching grants.



Tapestry, the organization launched by the Monroes, touched 500 people last year.

According to Michael, those grants have a catalytic effect: “Families say, ‘We now see how this is going to happen. We’re going to share this need with our friends and family.’”

“We just had a family who shared it with their church and received a love offering of almost \$2500 that we were able to match. It’s been a wonderful experience to see how God has provided as folks stepped forward in faith and made their needs known to the body of Christ.”

Amy and Michael share their time generously with others across the country establishing adoption ministries, but they are careful not to downplay the difficulties. “It’s hard,” Michael says. “But when we see these families after a long adoption wait come home with a baby in their arms and we see how God is putting together all these different broken pieces, there’s not a whole lot better we could be doing with our time.”

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