

the

SEPTEMBER 2011 EDITION

# FOCAL Point

CENTERED ON ACTIVITIES OF TOLEDO FIRST SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH FAMILY

## ✠ You Voted....and Hebrews It Is! ✠



*The ultimate aim of the human mind, in all its efforts, is to become acquainted with Truth.*

—Eliza Farnham



In the first century AD, Christians suffered insults and persecution but stood side by side with those imprisoned for their faith (Hebrews 10:32,34). But as time went by, they grew weary and drifted away (Hebrews 2:1) and began to neglect their faith (Hebrews 2:2). Sin's deceitfulness began to harden their hearts (Hebrews 3:13-16) and they failed to grow spiritually (Hebrews 5:11-14). They gradually quit gathering for church (Hebrews 10:25) and some may have even publicly renounced Jesus (cf. Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 12:15-17). Does anyone else recognize the similarities between those Christians back then and those today? No wonder the author of the book of Hebrews called the sermon he wrote a "work of exhortation" (Hebrews 13:22)!!!



Toledo First Church voted on what book of the Bible they wanted me to sermonize from next so our back-to-school sermon series, based on the New Testament book of Hebrews, is called *The Born Supremacy*. To many Christians, this book remains a mystery because its language of priests and sacrifices confuses them. But if we begin at the beginning and let the Word speak to us in its terms, not ours, we can grasp its meaning. If the tired Christians in the first century who caught a glimpse of the supremacy of Jesus were renewed, revived, and invigorated after reading this letter about who Jesus is, what He accomplished on the cross, and what He is doing as our heavenly high priest, you can be too! Plan to bring a friend and join us Saturdays starting September 3 @ 11am!!! —Pastor Mike ##

*Education is an investment, not a cost.*

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# Summer Sabbaths in Toledo

Carol Cole and Cathy Rumsey returned to Toledo in July and we enjoyed hearing them play for worship (photo #1). Then Toledo 1st Kids' Choir un-

der the direction of Sharon Van Wyk sang for us. Pastor Mike continued his summer sermon series on Wonder Women of the Bible. The last two photos were taken

at Wildwood Metropark on a very hot July Sabbath when we were there to serve lemonade to the people God loves like crazy (everyone of course!). With

Pastor Mike & Jackie are the UT international students they befriended. Thanks, Jeff Batchelder, for sharing your photos! ##

*Remember: You can see this newsletter in beautiful color by visiting [toledofirstadventist.org](http://toledofirstadventist.org)*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPT 10 Fellowship Potluck

SEPT 10 & 24 AY Meeting @ 5:30pm

SEPT 7, 14, 21, 28 Soup for You every Wednesday @ 6pm

OCTOBER 1 Education Day/ Go Fishin' & Picnic with Purpose

### Reading Revelation

August 31 is the date *Reading Revelation* resumes on



Wednesday nights. Come and join the group for soup at 6pm. At 6:30pm discussion of the last book of the Bible begins. Pathfinders also meets from 6:30 - 8pm. ##

### Celebrate Kids!

October 1st will be a very special day. Not only is it Education Day when we celebrate back-to-school for the kids of our

church, but it's also "Go Fishin'"—a world-wide children's ministry Sabbath! So get all excited and invite kids and their parents from your neighborhood to come and learn about the great things happening for kids at Toledo First. ##

### Picnic with Purpose

October 1st is also the day we go to Wildwood to share our potluck food and serve lemonade to Toledo! Mark your calendar and plan to bring your family for this ordinary outreach. ##

*"May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's*

*marvelous love: and may you be able to feel and understand...how long, how wide, how deep, and how high his love really is; and to experience this love for yourselves, though it is so great that you will never see the end of it."* —Ephesians 3:17-19 TLB ##

### Talk/Pray—Feel Better!

Know someone who would like a visit? The visitation team headed by Dave Case visits in homes, hospitals, and nursing homes most Tuesdays. Call church for a visit, 419.882.6200. ##

The Focal Point is published bi-monthly by Toledo First Seventh-day Adventist



Congratulations to Kendra Bills and Amanda LaFontaine on the reopening of *In Bloom Flowers and Gifts*, at their new location—203 Conant St., Maumee, OH 43537. *WTG, Ladies!* ##

# Youth & Kid Connect Update!

In KidConnect we have been through a series on Baby MO and have just begun the series "What's In Your Hand?" (What is your talent that you can offer to God?)

Youth: We've been going through a study on being wise at a young age like Solomon and participating in an interactive girls vs boys Bible Tic Tac Toe (BIG prize will be awarded for whatever team wins at the end)

- Kids enjoyed a Bible Scavenger Hunt organized by Cindy Leibengood & myself
- Began chapel with TJA and have continued with James Meade
- Events:
  - Had a fun & engaging Ice Cream Social & Game Night (kids have fun with games, and everyone loved having ice cream slapped on top of waffles! – that was good stuff!) Kudos to Mrs. Marsa, Mrs. Marsh, Lanetta Cross and Jackie Fortune for making them
  - Had our first AY evening program at church ( an intergenerational vespers event that is fun for everyone on Sabbath). We invite you to come on out to the next one!
  - Upcoming events: Capture the Flag in September, and parent potluck, then Bible movie/ cartoon before AY on September 24; field trip to Amish Country on October 10 (more to come on that), and Acts '11 Youth Rally October 22 at Wilmington, Ohio



Know any youth & kids who you think would enjoy being involved in youth Sabbath school, KidConnect, and all the fun activities planned for them? The youth ministry team and I would be happy if you would invite them or bring them.

Feel open to call me about anything you would like to discuss or have questions about. I would be glad to talk with you. —Pastor Daniel ##

## Even Crazy Next Year?

For the last few years, the Toledo First Church has hosted an annual car show. Regardless of weather, this ordinary outreach with really cool cars, fresh squeezed lemonade, and live 50's and 60's tunes has consistently delivered smiles galore and resulted in priceless friendships being developed in our community. Money from its proceeds were raised to comfort kids with cancer and even more was added to a fund to build a gymnasium for Toledo Junior Academy (a K-8 Christian elementary school) and James Meade Learning Center (an infant to preschool Christian daycare).

Though we will not be hosting a 2011 Car Show due to scheduling challenges, we hope it returns in 2012 bigger and better than ever. —Pastor Mike ##



## THE QUESTION THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Lover or Prostitute? By David Ryser

A number of years ago, I had the privilege of teaching at a school of ministry. My students were hungry for God, and I was constantly searching for ways to challenge them to fall more in love with Jesus and to become voices for revival in the Church. I came across a quote attributed most often to Rev. Sam Pascoe. It is a short version of the history of Christianity, and it goes like this:

“Christianity started in Palestine as a fellowship; it moved to Greece and became a philosophy; it moved to Italy and became an institution; it moved to Europe and became a culture; it came to America and became an enterprise.”

Some of the students were only 18 or 19 years old, barely out of diapers, and I wanted them to understand and appreciate the import of the last line, so I clarified it by adding, “An enterprise. That’s a business.” After a few moments Martha, the youngest student in the class, raised her hand. I could not imagine what her question might be. I thought the little vignette was self-explanatory, and that I had performed it brilliantly. Nevertheless, I acknowledged Martha’s raised hand, “Yes, Martha.” She asked such a simple question, “A business? But isn’t it supposed to be a body?” I could not envision where this line of questioning was going, and the only response I could think of was, “Yes.” She continued, “But when a body becomes a business, isn’t that a prostitute?”

The room went dead silent. For several seconds no one moved or spoke. We were stunned, afraid to make a sound because the presence of God had flooded into the room, and we knew we were on holy ground. All I could think in those sacred moments was, “Wow, I wish I’d thought of that.” I didn’t dare express that thought aloud. God had taken over the class.

Martha’s question changed my life. For six months, I thought about her question at least once every day. “When a body becomes a business, isn’t that a prostitute?” There is only one answer to her question. The answer is “Yes.” The American Church, tragically, is heavily populated by people who do not love God. How can we love Him? We don’t even know Him; and I mean really know Him.

I stand by my statement that most American Christians do not know God ~ much less love Him. The root of this condition originates in how we came to God.

Most of us came to Him because of what we were told He would do for us. We were promised that He would bless us in life and take us to heaven after death. We married Him for His money, and we don’t care if He lives or dies as long as we can get His stuff. We have made the Kingdom of God into a business, merchandising His anointing. This should not be. We are commanded to love God, and are called to be the Bride of Christ ~ that’s pretty intimate stuff. We are supposed to be His lovers. How can we love someone we don’t even know? And even if we do know someone, is that a guarantee that we truly love them? Are we lovers or prostitutes?

I was pondering Martha’s question again one day, and considered the question, “What’s the difference between a lover and a prostitute?” I realized that both do many of the same things, but a lover does what she does because she loves. A prostitute pretends to love, but only as long as you pay. Then I asked the question, “What would happen if God stopped paying me?”

For the next several months, I allowed God to search me to uncover my motives for loving and serving Him. Was I really a true lover of God? What would happen if He stopped blessing me? What if He never did another thing for me? Would I still love Him? Please understand, I believe in the promises and blessings of God. The issue here is not whether God blesses His children; the issue is the condition of my heart.

Why do I serve Him? Are His blessings in my life the gifts of a loving Father, or are they a wage that I have earned or a bribe/payment to love Him? Do I love God without any conditions?

It took several months to work through these questions. Even now I wonder if my desire to love God is always matched by my attitude and behavior. I still catch myself being disappointed with God and angry that He has not met some perceived need in my life. I suspect this is something, which is never fully resolved, but I want more than anything else to be a true lover of God.

So what is it going to be? Which are we, lover or prostitute? ##

*Pastor Mike came across this thought-provoking article and suggested it for the newsletter. —Ed.*

# Calendar Events

# September 2011

## Birthdays

Sept 1 Mike Horvath  
Sept 2 Shirley Smith;  
Dr Burgess Bills  
Sept 3 Hal Rumsey  
Sept 6 Pastor Mike Fortune  
Claire Jakubowski  
Joyce Jenkins  
Sept 10 Vickie Wintersmith  
Sept 14 Glendon Cross  
Kim Stanley  
Sept 15 Jeff Batchelder  
Sept 16 Troy Leibengood  
Sept 18 Camile Sluder  
Sept 19 Pam Frey  
Sept 21 Karen Conkle  
Sept 22 Andrea Orr  
Sept 23 Gloria Clark  
Sept 27 Emily Bills  
Luann Ostrander  
Sept 29 Alvin Landeros



## What's Happenin'

### Sabbath

Sabbath School @ 9:30 & Worship @ 11am each week  
Kid Connect @ 11am each week

**Sept 3** Pastor Mike begins a new sermon series. This week, "The Born Identity" based on Hebrews

**Sept 10** Blow It Up Reveal (Youth); Allan Wolfson is our speaker; Everyone is welcome at Fellowship Potluck

**Sept 17** Pastor Mike continues the series, "The Born Identity"; Capture the Flag in evening

**Sept 24** Youth Day—Pastor Daniel speaks; Eat 'n Greet 'n Art; Movie/Cartoon preceding AY @ 5:30pm

### Sundays

Christ the Word Church rents our church morning & evening on the 1st & 3rd Sundays each month; Morning only other weeks

### Mondays

**Sept 5** Labor Day

**Tuesdays** - Church office is open 9am - 4pm

**Wednesdays** - 6pm Soup for You

**Thursdays** - Church office is open 9am - 4pm

**Fridays** - *Worship Practice @ 5:30pm*



*Serving Lemonade*



**Picnic with Purpose group @ Wildwood July 16, 2011**  
**Join us there on October 1, 2011!!**