

Thoughts From A Registered Ohio Voter

Swing state, political battleground, campaign focal point, election ground zero... call it what you will. As a Christian middle-class American, I call it Ohio, and Ohio is my home. With regards to the 2012 Presidential election, like countless fellow Ohioans, I've grown weary of the seemingly endless parade of dinnertime (wake up and bedtime) political phone calls. I'm tired of receiving campaign postcards in the mail (between Thursday and Saturday last week, we got EIGHT political post cards in the mail – I don't want to be wasteful; I'm thinking of incorporating them into a quilt). And what if all that postcard mailing money were being spent on feeding and housing the homeless? Or providing quality health care to the uninsured? But I digress...).

I do care about the governmental consequences at stake; I note opinions and where the candidates stand on such controversial issues as abortion, the definition of legal marriage, and the state of the economy. However, the Holy Bible is the law by which I try to live my life. And there are no less than 17 Bible passages referring to false prophets. While educating myself about the Presidential candidates, I did a bit of research into the Mormon religion where I determined that Mormonism does not follow the same Bible I believe to be God's word. Although my political and societal views are usually Republican-esque, in this election, I have felt unrepresented by a candidate, which is why I've begun telling the Romney people who call me that they cannot count on my support for their candidate.

We can faithfully pray about the election and how our lives will be affected afterward, and we can also have peace knowing that our wonderful God is sovereign. I like the definition of God's sovereignty I found on theopedia.com: The Sovereignty

of God is the biblical teaching that all things are under God's rule and control, and that nothing happens without His direction or permission.

Have peace. Your vote counts, it matters to people, but also know that God is in the cockpit – no one is going to pilot this plane we call the United States unless our Lord lets him into the cockpit. Whether Americans will call Barrack Obama a 2-term President or if they get to know Mitt Romney as Commander-in-Chief, it happened because God allowed it to happen.

"The Lord has established his throne in heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all." Psalm 103:19

As a popular saying goes: may the best man win. As far as I'm concerned, that man is Jesus.

End Of August 2012

How's that for a creative title? I don't have much time to exercise my creativity these days; well, that's not true... In my daily adventures of running a household of 7 and caring for 5+ kids every day, I exercise creativity all the time. I need to "fly by the seat of my pants" all day and find creative ways to combat boredom, disagreements and to provide a fun, stimulating and educational environment. But as far as written creativity... well, maybe someday I'll have time to once again work on enhancing my writing skills.

Luke had his 9 month checkup today. He is actually $10\frac{3}{4}$ months old, but we had to reschedule his appointment twice because of an injury (he's ok now but had to get stitches in his pinkie) and work. He measured out perfectly for his age on all of their growth curve charts, and he was able to pass all of the physical tests with flying colors (picking up small objects,

standing, clapping, etc). He weighs 19 lbs, 11 oz and is 29" long. He likes all kinds of table food, especially fruits and pasta. Nothing else really of note about the visit, except that he got his blood drawn and ate the band-aid after. I was wondering about the effects of wearing a band-aid on a finger that spends 90% of its time in the baby's mouth, but they're the professionals – or so I thought. I meant to take the band-aid off but alas, I didn't get to it in time...

I was actually going to write more; I wanted to share the homeschool curriculum I wrote for the kids, but I was reminded why I don't blog anymore. In just the short time it took me to type this, I had to stop more than 5 times to get kids out of the bath, change diapers, and break up fights... now I've been informed the baby is poopie and there is still a kid left in the bath, sounds like another one going back in... more later ?

I'm Thinking You Might Like This

[Kids of 1995 Predict the Future of the Internet – correctly!!](#)

A Post About Nothing

This post is about nothing because I should be in bed. I'm

writing as a way to vent because I can't sleep. We've let our daughter have sleepovers pretty much constantly for the past 2 weeks. We've run into some of her friends and figured what a better way to end summer in a fun way than with some sleepovers, especially with these friends we don't see often.

Problem is, all these girls seem to lose track of the rest of the world when they're together. They run up and down the stairs like a herd of elephants (I am SO not going to mention this out loud – what could scar a sensitive pre-teen girl more than comparisons to the largest land mammal??), they giggle incessantly, and they BURST into our bedroom at midnight complaining of a scary noise. And that's what led me here. Having a group of kids burst into my room as I'm trying to relax with some quiet reading time at midnight apparently set off my adrenal glands – big time. It's now almost 1 am, and I can't even think of laying down again for fear of my quiet bubble being burst yet again. My adrenaline is pumping so hard; I feel like I've just ridden a roller coaster or like I'm about to deliver a speech. The kicker is, with little or no sleep, how I am going to be able to supervise 6 kids tomorrow – with one of them being a VERY exploratory 10-month-old?? I don't know how it's going to work. All because of a scary noise. Well, unfortunately for this group of self-absorbed 'tweens, they're about to find out that a long day with a very tired and grumpy Mom is **infinitely** more scary than any kind of noise or bump in the night.

Good luck, girls.

WHY Can't Babies Go To The Movies?

Gonna climb upon a soapbox for a moment...

The families in Colorado who were involved in the shooting need prayer. Probably one of the very last things they need right now is a network of UNSupport – people using mass media to put down the people involved and some of their decisions. Mainly, I'm bugged by those who say things like, "What was a 3-month-old doing at a movie theater anyway? Especially a MIDNIGHT showing of a PG13 movie??"

What's wrong with taking a baby to a movie? As long as the parent(s) willingly leave before the baby causes a disruption, then I don't understand what all the fuss is about. I have 5 kids, none of whom have slept thru the night until they were over a year old (probably – my youngest is only 9 months old, but he's the worst sleeper yet, so I'm guessing he won't sleep thru the night until he's a year). So if I'm up at midnight anyway with the baby, I think it should be up to me if I want to spend my own money on a movie, knowing there is a chance that I won't get to see the entire movie if I have to leave if the baby fusses. Babies are not going to watch the movie; they're not going to pick up any bad things from the screen at that age, and taking the baby to the movies late at night can actually be the ONLY time new parents can find to connect to each other while trying to balance the demands of parenthood and careers.

Or, take the situation of a big brother who REALLY wants to see the midnight showing of Batman. Again, the parents feel they are going to be up anyway with the baby, so why not schedule in some family time at a most unusual, however more convenient, time. Again, if kids (or babies) cause a disruption in the theater, they should be taken out

immediately as a courtesy to others who have also paid to see a movie.

Well, that's all I have time for now, just had to get that out – I just don't see anything wrong with taking a baby to the movies, and it bugs me a tiny bit that people are so busy worrying about how others raise their children instead of getting out there themselves to improve our society's crumbling family unit. Please don't attack the parents who are actually seeking to spend time with their children.

Dear Lord, Thank you so much for the gift of children. We pray to you to continue to guide us to love them, to nurture them, and to lead them to you. We pray for the comfort and healing of those involved in the Colorado shooting. May they grow ever closer to you, Lord. Amen.

My Food Chain Gang – Restored!

I have a wonderful tale to tell – a God story, and I love those.

A few weeks ago now, I met a friend for lunch at McD's. Later that evening, as my hubby inquired about my day and asked how my lunch was, I talked about how much I enjoyed hearing my friend's updates on her beloved cat, Mya. I even lamented, "I wish I could have a kitten." I seem to be an animal person you say (I AM) – so why don't I just get a kitten? Well, I'm allergic to cats, otherwise I would probably have a cat (or two or three or...). I actually had one for 10 years and loved her very much, but I was very allergic to her and that was tough for both of us. But anyway – back to this Friday night

a few weeks ago – I'm wanting a cat. Saturday morning, the early risers in our family were alerted by an "alarming" sound in our backyard. They found 2 cats fighting on the fence, and across the yard, 3 baby bunnies crying out in alarm. Sammie was dispatched to alert me (still in bed, allowed to sleep-in, THANK YOU Hubby!), and in the now-calm backyard I found 3 exhausted baby bunnies resting while my kids were comforting one of the stray cats. The stray was a friendly fellow; he had black and white fur, green eyes, and a few extra toes. I couldn't believe the obliging attitude – pleasure even – that this cat was deriving from the attention my kids were doting upon it.

I couldn't resist petting this friendly kitty, and when I did, something strange happened. Well, actually, it was nothing at all that happened. No sniffles, no itches, no hives – no allergy symptoms. How could it be that I wasn't allergic to this cat? For the record, Hubby is also allergic to cats but didn't react to this one either. So anyway, we let the super friendly tuxedo cat in the house. He walked right in and looked around, and it really did seem as if he had lived here for years – and he's been here ever since! Just fit right in with our entire family, and it's not an easy feat to forge a seamless transition from outdoor feral cat to indoor family cat, especially when the new family = 5 kids (3 girls ages 12, 8, 5 and 2 boys ages 3 and 8 mos.), a dog, a parrot, a rabbit, and 2 rats. But saying we've had a smooth transition would be an understatement!

What a gift he has been. A gift from God for our family... to bring us together as we welcome a new member for however long we're allowed to take care of him. A gift for us to cherish together while we play with him. A gift for me to help ease the mounting stress I've felt lately. Have you seen the medical research on how a purring cat relieves stress? It exists, trust me!

So to acknowledge this gift for us and to honor our God,

“Mittens” became “Moses” – and it is cute when the kids rhyme about “Moses with the extra toe-ses”. Moses seems very adept at using his paws, and he acts very cat-like around the house, which I love – just why I wanted to have a cat around. For now, we are enjoying Moses and his company. He gets along with all of our other pets and is wonderfully tolerant of the kids – he fits in our family like the missing piece of a puzzle; not that any of us realized there was a piece missing before Moses came. So could it be that “my food chain gang” has been restored?

Both an article I read and a devotional I heard recently happened to be about the same subject: knowing and having the faith and satisfaction that God sees you, even if you feel invisible to the world. God uses many aspects of His creation to bring people closer to having meaningful relationships with Him and to help us receive His messages, even animals. My family was getting burnt out from a busy schedule, and it really rejuvenated the kids’ spirits to get to have this cat. And they aren’t the only ones ☐

“...You are the God who sees me...” from Genesis 16:13



This is a picture of our oldest daughter holding the cat. No, my 12-year-old does not normally wear make-up; this was “spa night” ☐

God is so good!!

Checkin' In

Here it is mid-April already! It's funny that a few days ago I thought I had made the decision to not blog anymore, but here I am (part of this doing-less-for-me-more-for-others mentality I'm attempting). I have a kid who wants to train to be a babysitter by watching her siblings, and I have a baby who decided he needed a nap – so I find myself with idle time. Wait, idle time?!? What's that? I'm not used to this; I don't know what to do! Usually I try to cram in some housework or laundry or food prep in my “down” time, but right now I just want to sit... so writing I will do!

Nothing much to say, just a generic update on my family. The kids are doing great! There hasn't been any sickness in our house lately, so we are thankful to God for that. So a quick update on each of us if I can get it in before Luke's nap is over...

Taylor is 12 and a half now, and she is a great kid. She shows so much responsibility and genuinely cares for others. She is challenged at times with patience with her siblings, but she does well. I can't imagine it would be easy to be the oldest in a house where there is always so much chaos and needy little kids! Taylor leads the worship music for the kids at church, and she also enjoys using her artistic gifts to make posters for church events.

Sammie is almost 8 and is a pretty good babysitter. She LOVES her baby brother, and if it's the right day, she's great with her 5 year old sister and 3 year old brother. But Sammie has her off-days too, and if it's one of those days, WATCH OUT! ☹️ She will push buttons of all of her siblings, and she is quite good at getting them going. She is watching the littles

as I write though, so it feels wrong to say bad things about her behavior. She is getting ready for her 8th bday party coming up in May!

Disney has been causing 90% of the trouble in our house lately. Our sweet little Disney is going through a phase right now that is making all of us (her included!) crazy! She had a good day today, but in the past few weeks, she's been upset about EVERYTHING and also intentionally pushing the buttons that drive siblings over the edge. She loves school, and she is excited to start Kindergarten in the fall (we do homeschool, but we don't start homeschooling our kids until 2nd grade for a number of reasons; one is because we like the social skills that kids learn at school in the early ages).

Christopher has been acting like such a big boy lately! He's been potty-trained since New Year's day, and he does well with that. He's stopped throwing so many tantrums and is really acting more like a kid these days instead of like a crabby tantrum-throwing toddler. He does get into his fair share of messes, and he gets especially upset when he goes thru candy withdrawal.

Luke is 6 mos. already, and a handful as always – it's only getting worse as he gets older. Then again, he is getting even cuter as he grows, so that's the plus side ☺ But what a strong personality and eye for mischief he has for such a young age! I try not to think about it, but I find myself tempted to worry about how I'm going to stay sane when he is actually moving! Right now he's just scooting and rolling around, but he puts EVERYTHING in his mouth and is quite demanding; wanting 100% of the available parent's attention 100% of the time! You can see why this is challenging when there are 4 other kids – it's just one reason why I gave up my social life ☹

Hubby and I are doing well also. His working 2 jobs keeps us busy, but in some ways, it's actually not as stressful as I

thought it would be. It's amazing how much easier things are when you truly trust the Lord to get you through. By no means is life easy these days, but I am so much better equipped to handle the twists, turns and busyness now than I was a few years ago thanks to Him. As I mentioned, we have given up our social lives. I miss my friends, but luckily we live in a world where I can still keep up with their lives and know how to pray for them when they need it. I've tried hanging out with adults a few times in the past few months, but unfortunately with all these kids running around and being so demanding, it seems better for everyone if I just focus on the kids and live a kid-oriented life. So, with Hubby now working on the weekends, we've been having our family Saturdays on Fridays when we can. And we've been doing less of the expensive entertainment stuff and have been trying dedicating our hearts to serving more. My husband has thought of some very creative ways to do this, and we've had many an opportunity to get out into the local communities and give and share God with others. It's been wonderful!

I was going to write more, but the baby has woken up, and he's demanding my attention, of course. I just can't think straight when he cries and he knows it! More next month... haha!

Throes Of Teething

I have a baby in the throes of teething. And that's pretty much all I have time to say – time to pick him up again to stop the endless screaming and biting. Poor thing ☹

Blessings

We always knew that we were blessed with our 5 healthy babies, but the reality of how blessed we really were is beginning to sink in. Our first 4 children were very easy, content, healthy babies, so our 5th child, Luke, has rocked our world a little bit. He has always been an intense baby; very energetic, playful, sleepless, alert and specific about his wants and needs. But during the past few months, he's been sick as well, so the poor little guy is having trouble being comforted. We've taken him to the doctor a few times, and he's been diagnosed with bronchitis and an ear infection. As if these illnesses were not enough, his chest x-rays show he has an enlarged heart. We are currently praying that this is not a symptom of something seriously wrong with little Luke's health. My husband made me promise not to google it since we've made a few medical scares in our family worse by scaring ourselves with random internet information. We are currently waiting for our appointment with the pediatric cardiologist. Scary stuff.

I will continue to update when I can. In the meantime, prayers for Luke would be wonderful ☺

January 2012

My blogging style has changed – maybe temporarily, maybe permanently. It's evolved, if you will, to meet the growing needs of my family. I no longer have time to sit down 5 times a week and write about my thoughts, my plans, my stories, my

ideas, nor do I have the time to detail my agenda. With 5 kids now and all of the new things we're doing (new baby, homeschooling, new career for both Hubby and I, new ministries...), I rarely do find myself sitting down and when I am, it's rare that a computer is in front of me. So for awhile, I will just post updates on the members of my family and our lives. This will still serve as a way to keep in touch with those who read my blog (those especially that I cannot find as much time as I'd like to talk on the phone with because of all the noise in my house – phone conversations are nearly impossible at certain times of the day!), and my blog will also continue to serve as a family diary for us to look back on someday and enjoy together. Updates:

Family – we began homeschooling last fall, and we still like it. We've had to make some adjustments to our planned curriculum since new little bro Luke (born Oct 7 2011) is quite a happy though demanding handful. We began co-op on January 9, which is a local program they have here at a church for homeschoolers. We go every Monday, and each grade level participates in 3 different classes taught by the moms of the group. Since it's our first year, I don't have a class to teach yet – I pulled nursery duty. Yep – 3 hours every week working in the nursery with my little Luke and about 5 other babies – Luke is the only boy. My husband asked me how I managed that one (because I LOVE babies!), and I don't know – lucky I guess!! Apparently there are some ladies who don't want to deal with diapers and fussy babies and all that, but for me, there couldn't be a better job for me to serve at co-op. My other kids really like co-op. Beeber (age 3) is in Preschool, and he came home the first week with a “carrot project” – the top of a carrot in a cup of water. It was supposed to grow some green out the top, but ours didn't. He didn't seem to mind though. It's funny because when he handed me his carrot as I was picking him up, I thought it was the remainder of what he had done with his snack until the teacher explained it to me – haha! Disney is in Kindergarten at co-

op, and she really likes it. Since we've decided to homeschool our kids beginning at 2nd grade, Disney is also in public school preschool, and she loves both of them! The older girls enjoy co-op too; it gives some of the structure of school without all the unnecessary rules and drama, and the classes are taught from a Christian perspective. I like that the kids are held accountable to other adults besides their parents for their assignments and quizzes. The Sunday-Monday rush is taxing for our family since we have seven bags to pack Sunday night for co-op AFTER a big weekend spent getting ready for church service, but it's worth it and we are settling into a routine. Wednesday sees us leading groups at youth group, and we had a friend offer to take the 3 middle kids to AWANA and they really like that. Thursday we have Bible study, and as I said, much of our weekends now consist of planning Sunday church service and TRYING to find time to rest and relax. Overall, we're busier than ever, but I feel happier than ever – God is so great! I felt so run-down and was having a really hard time for a few months, but I had some checkups with the doctor and think I got the problem solved. I feel better than I have in years and I can't thank God enough!! Now we just have to get Hubby some more sleep since he is waking with Luke all night, every night AND working 2 jobs, not to mention all of the help he gives me around the house.

The past few months, I've learned better to accept the circumstances of life as seasons that are constantly changing. I've also learned to better accept that the way things are now are most definitely going to change in a few months. I've learned to look forward to seeing what God has in store for my family rather than to let the ever-changing dynamics of our lives fill me with fear, dread or worry. As far as things at the new church, we've set up a wonderful childrens ministry, and we have about 20 kids that come every weekend. This is an AMAZING thing when you realize that the church had 0 kids attending only 4 months ago. We have been contemplating ideas for a youth ministry (tweens and teens) as

well as some other things, and only God knows where we will be with that in a month or two. As I tried to say, things change so fast that it's difficult to update it all on my blog, especially when this post alone has taken me a few weeks of having to put it aside and come back to add more later in order to finish it!

Before I stop writing for the day, I do want to share an amazing God story we got to witness this past Sunday. My husband had been up late most of last week writing his sermon, and there was a pancake supper at church on Saturday night. I ended up staying home with my boys because I was feeling run down and Luke was crabby and oozing things from places (you don't really want more details, trust me... baby stuff). So late Saturday night, Hubby decided to start telling God in prayer that he needed rest, and I was doing the same. Sunday morning, I was making my runs for church – I am the designated driver for the childrens ministry. Many of the kids that come to our church need rides because their home situations are... let's say complicated. Our church is located in the middle of the country about 6 miles from town, so I make 2-3 trips there in the morning to pick up the kids and to drive my own family. Sunday we saw a man riding a bike on US Route 6; his bike was pulling a trailer that normally is used for pulling children, but his was loaded with supplies. I wondered if he was homeless or someone who was making a long trek because it isn't all that unusual to see someone journeying down US 6 – our little corner of the world seems to be on the way to everywhere! So we see people journeying down 6 from time to time, but not usually in the winter. On my last run, as I pulled into church, I noticed the man on the bike was also pulling into church. I got the kids settled, then went out to welcome him. Turns out, his name is Michealangelo, and he had been on his journey on his bike for FOUR MONTHS! He's from Los Angeles, and he began by biking north in California, and then coming out this way headed to New York – because God sent him on this journey. He saw the sign for our little church on

US 6 and decided to stop. Michael has amazing faith, and he had amazing stories to tell! My husband asked him if he would share some of these with our congregation, and Michael obliged, even after sharing his concerns about the way he was dressed. I don't have the time to go into all of the amazing details of the personal touches that God put on this story – I've already burnt the eggs that I was cooking and the house smells disgusting. But I will sum it up briefly: Michael's unexpected visit meant that my husband's sermon that he had carefully prepared was not used last week because we were treated to the testimony of Michael instead. So my husband can rest a little easier this week knowing that his sermon is already prepared. Also, we've been talking in our own family and at church about really living a Godly life and what that looks like; we've been trying to make opportunities to GO OUT and serve God rather than just sitting around, doing the same old things for US. Michael's testimony reaffirmed these concepts – here is a man who has devoted his entire life to doing what God wants him to do. He left the life that he knew and WENT OUT THERE and is sharing the Word... And here I am frustrated because my words are failing to convey the story... And I wish I could find the links to the info about this guy on the internet. Hubby found them so maybe when he gets home from work I can ask him and add them to my blog.

But anyway, it was a magical Sunday, and I am thankful that I got to be a part of it! I will leave you now with a little update about my little Luke – he tried his tot wheels for the first time in January. He likes it, but only for short periods of time. He is a grown up little guy in a baby's body with a baby's attention span. He loves to stand, and practice walking ALREADY even though he is not yet 4 months old. He also loves to watch other kids in action – his sisters and brother and also the kids at co-op and at youth group. WOW – I really have to blog more often! Once I got going, I had so much to say but not enough time to say it... sorry that I was kind of all over the place, but that's the price I pay for

sitting down and trying to do this with all these kids running around and my many tasks to accomplish! Until next time...

lukes first time in tot wheels.mov