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the Steel Valley Baptist Association COMMUNICATOR

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Experiencing God ... Again 2019

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Can You Hear Me Now?



Associational Missionary
Gary L. Frost

Some time ago I was driving along the highway speaking to my wife by way of my mobile telephone. Gradually I noticed that I was having a hard time hearing her. As her voice continued to fade I began asking the obvious question, "Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now?" She was answering "Yes, I can hear you" as her voice finally drifted away into silence. In my frustration I just hung up and continued down the road a ways till I was able to pick up the signal and try again. When I did call back she let me know that while her voice was fading out and eventually went silent she was hearing me loud and clear throughout the whole frustrating ordeal.

As I pondered this experience it came to mind that prayer is a lot like this. There are times in prayer when we can pray with confidence and assurance as we can sense God's presence and hear His still small voice responding in our hearts. The phone lines are clear with no distortion or static. We know that we're talking to God and we know that He's talking back.

But then there are other times when it's not like that. Times when we struggle in prayer. It feels like we're just talking to ourselves. We feel abandoned and "shut out." We begin asking in our heart "God, can you hear me now? Is Anybody out there?" It's like

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Leadership Training Opportunities

The Great Commission says to Make Disciples. Since leaders are not able to train others to a maturity level beyond themselves, all leaders need to grow and mature so that their disciples can have more opportunities for growth. Consider some of the following events to benefit God's kingdom in your areas of ministry.



Breaking Barriers to Leading Church Transformation

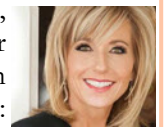
Every church leader longs to see transformation in the lives of leaders & members. Yet most are confronted with some personal obstacles that undermine fruitful influence. This session will address 8 barriers to transformation that every leader encounters, with practical tools for a fresh breakthrough in spiritual impact. Sponsored by 6:4 Fellowship

and the State Convention.

Friday, Feb 22, 9 am - 12 noon at Cuyahoga Valley Church, 5055 E. Wallings Road, Broadview Heights, OH 44147. No cost but RSVP to 440-746-0404 or kklasa@cvconline.org.

"You Lead" with Beth Moore

"Growing Every Woman's Leadership Potential" at Living Proof Live with Beth Moore in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 23. Register by Feb 25 to save \$10 on registration. Regular price: \$79 / person.



Sunday School Leadership

Possibly coming in May or June.

SCBO Newsletter

Go to www.scbo.org, click on NEWS, and then click Ohio Baptist Messenger. https://www.scbo.org/sites/default/files/Feb_Messenger_2019_FINAL.pdf
Many opportunities for training appear.

Missions & Ministry

Genesis 6:5-6 says, *The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled.*

In the last two weeks we have experienced such immorality in our nation that I believe the Church must have a sense of urgency in sharing the gospel. Some of the key events in the last two weeks are:

- New York's law allows abortions to be done up to the delivery.

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Missionaries Here

How would you like to have SBC appointed missionaries come to your church? Contact Rafael or the Missions and Ministry Team by the semiannual meeting in April. Dates for the OnMission Celebration will be announced in the next Communicator.

Annual Picnic

Mark your calendars for the Park - July 14. Call Mark Parks for more information about this event at Perkins Park in Warren.



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talking on a dead line; no voice, no response, no static, nothing.

I think that these are the times when God is teaching us what it means to pray in faith. He is expanding our prayer capacity as we are urged to keep on praying in the midst of heaven's silence. We pray in faith, knowing that nothing can separate us from His Heart or His Ear. Even when we can't hear His voice we must remember that He can still hear ours.

As we travel on this tedious, unpredictable and often treacherous journey of life we sometimes lose our connection. Our faith is interrupted by fear or hurt or guilt or anger or discouragement. Circumstances overwhelm us and God's voice fades away. Our emotional turmoil cancels our spiritual sensitivity. But we must remember that during these dismal days God is still listening. He's still receiving the transmission.

As we cry out "Can you hear me now?" He's responding "Yes my child I can hear you, just keep talking to Me. In a little while, when you get further down the road you will hear My voice again. But until then, don't hang up. Don't doubt My love and My concern. Down the road I will answer these questions that you are asking Me right now."

Regardless of your circumstances never stop talking to your heavenly Father. As the Psalmist said, "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and he will strengthen your heart. Wait I say on the Lord."

**New Pastor / Staff
Orientation**



The State Convention provides an orientation to all new pastors and staff to get to know how the state convention can serve you. The next orientation is March 12 at the SCBO Resource Center in Columbus. For more information call Linnett at 877.SCBO.ORG or you can email her at lsnodgrass@scbo.org.



New SVBA churches?

It looks like a couple more churches will be joining our association soon. We will keep you posted.

2019 Annual Mtg

Our guest speaker for the 2019 annual meeting at Steel Valley October 19 will be Dr. Richard Blackaby, one of the sons of Henry Blackaby. Richard Blackaby received his MDiv and PhD from Southwestern Seminary and has served as a pastor in Winnipeg, Manitoba and as the president of the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary. He now serves as the president of Blackaby Ministries.



SVBA in the News

Did you see the December 2018 issue of the SCBO Messenger? It contains a full page article about our SVBA annual meeting.



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- A restaurant was fined \$7000 for not allowing a man who identifies as a woman to use the ladies' room
- Virginia's governor pushed a law where women could give birth and then choose to kill the baby
- I went prayer walking at a store at the Southern Park Mall and there were many t-shirts supporting witchcraft and satanism. Among them were five t-shirts promoting satanism to children. One depicted the human sacrifice of a boy by other children, and another one where children were lined up to sell their souls to Satan at a booth manned by other children.
- About a month ago a pastor friend and I prayer walked a shop in Struthers where they teach witchcraft and promote satanism. We saw children's books designed to teach them about witchcraft.

We are seeing satanic covens being more public, even trying to force their way into our communities and even schools. There was a time when they would deny their own existence. But this generation is more accepting of their evil philosophies so they are bold.

As the opening passage was in Noah's time, and judgment was imminent, so we are surely in the last days, and judgment is coming. With this in mind,

it is time for the Church to rise up and be even more bold than those promoting immoral behaviors and lifestyles. God's truth is what is lacking today, and we are to be the voice of truth in a very lost world.

Will you be the light in the midst of this great darkness? Will you lovingly, yet boldly, share Jesus and His truth with those who desperately need Him in their lives? Will your congregation make plans to start prayer walking in your church's neighborhood? Will your church make plans to knock on doors and offer a prayer to the residents of your neighborhood, as well as in the neighborhoods where your members live? Will your congregation make plans to do evangelistic outreaches this year?

We must wake up and rise up as the Church, or we will be held accountable for the lost souls we chose not to reach out to in Jesus' name. Do you sense the urgency? If not, please pray for the Holy Spirit's work on your heart. God bless you.

Next meeting – April 1st 11 am at SVBA office.

Rafael Cruz Jr.
Missions and Ministry Team Leader