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# the Steel Valley Baptist Association COMMUNICATOR

December, 2022

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## Theme for 2022: Advancing The Kingdom ... One Soul at a Time

### Don't Panic



Gary Frost

It has been reported by survivors of cataclysmic earthquakes that the most terrifying aspect of a “great quake experience” is that there is nothing stable to hold on to. There is no footing because the ground is swaying, pulsating and dropping; you cannot steady yourself by holding onto a wall or post because they are unsupported and crashing. Equilibrium is non-existent because the points of balance are eerily distorted and confused. Fear captures the soul!

When the earth quakes, foundations become unstable, undependable and unsafe. Panic is the natural response in such a threatening environment. This seems to be what the psalmist is describing in Psalm 46 as he writes:

*God is our refuge and strength,  
always ready to help in times of  
trouble.*

*So we will not fear when earth-  
quakes come  
and the mountains crumble  
into the sea.*

*Let the oceans roar and foam.  
Let the mountains tremble as  
the waters surge!*

[see Panic, next page](#)

### Exec Board Meeting

Our next Executive Board Meeting will be held at Cornersburg Baptist Church, Monday, January 9, with dinner beginning at 6 PM and the meeting beginning at 7 PM.

A key topic for the meeting will regard the future of the Tod Avenue property. A potential buyer for the property and the building is showing strong interest. Additional matters will be voted on for our association to move forward and advance God’s kingdom.

Between 6:45 and 7:00 PM a different kind of a treat will be provided. The women at Cornersburg would like to share some of the ministries they are doing and hope it will incite even more energy in other churches to use the gifts and talents God has given us.

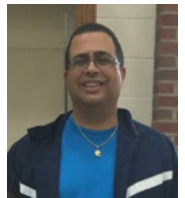


### Association Music

We hope to see all of you at the next quarterly MusicFest. It is always the 5th Sunday of the month, and the next one is January 29. The location is be the new gathering place for Unity Baptist Church, 531 Neoka Drive, Campbell OH 44405, where Rafael Cruz is pastor.

### Missions & Ministry

2 Corinthians 1:3-4  
*Praise be to the God  
and Father of our  
Lord Jesus Christ, the  
Father of compassion  
and the God of all  
comfort, who comforts us in all our  
troubles, so that we can comfort those in  
any trouble with the comfort we our-  
selves receive from God.*



Rafael Cruz Jr

We are officially in the midst of the most festive season of the year. The Christmas decorations are seen everywhere you go, Christmas songs are playing on the radio and in stores and Christmas movies with happy and sweet stories are all a part of the Christmas season. Some people are even nicer than usual this time of year. In most churches there are more upbeat worship times and the sermons are sweeter. Some people even wear their Christmas themed clothes to brighten everyone’s day. It all seems as close to the perfect time of year as we can get.

But there is more to Christmas for believers than all of the aesthetics. Christmas season is a time when unbelievers are more open to going to church for special services. Invite them. The lost are willing to hear of the hope we have in Christ because He was our greatest gift of all time. Tell them. This Christmas season is an opportunity for believers to faith-

[see M&M, next page](#)

***Panic, from previous page***

In spite of this description of chaos and calamity the writer exudes a definite sense of confidence that is obviously not justified by the troubling circumstances he describes. In essence he says DON'T PANIC!. The writer's confidence is derived from an "unearthly" source. His foundations are "otherworldly", they are not attached to the quaking earth ... his foundations are in the unshakeable and unquakeable God who created the earth.

He says, "God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in time of trouble." The writer's stability in the midst of the confusion of the earthquake is founded in his God who cannot quake, shake or break. He is saying that when the earth is quaking you better grab hold of a Hand that is not supported by the earth.

I don't know about you, but I can feel the tremors of a coming earthquake. We may be on the brink of cataclysmic upheavals that will rock our world like never before in our lifetime. These tremors are social, cultural, political, spiritual/demonic and even scientific. The structures, institutions, values and systems that we once trusted as solid and unshakeable are now experiencing significant tremors that could be predecessors to total collapses that would defy the Richter scale.

In light of the fragile conditions of these times our foundation must be anchored to something or better yet SOMEONE who is not subject to vacillation, change or collapse. I believe hymnist, Edward Mote captured it perfectly in a song we sing so frequently but seldom actually hear. Please hear it again for the first time:

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.  
His oath, His covenant, His blood  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay.  
When He shall come with trumpet  
sound,  
Oh, may I then in Him be found;  
Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.  
Don't Panic, Trust Jesus!

***M&M, from previous page***

fully share the Christ of Christmas to those who have yet to come to know Him as their Lord and Savior. This is the Church's time to rise up and be faithful.

Sadly, there are also some who become more depressed this time of year. Some have lost loved ones recently or lost a loved one this time of year in the past. Others have been hurt, even abused, and feel they are not worthy of anyone's love, not even God's. When a depressed person sees everyone around him/her so happy, that person believes they're the only broken ones. Others who are addicted to alcohol and drugs sadly increase their addictive behaviors at this time of year. There are hurting people all around us who need someone to show them love and compassion. They need someone to prove to them that God does love them. They need to know God's love and healing touch by experience.

We, the Church, are called to be

the agents of God's love, compassion and hope to those who desperately need it. I've already began seeing posts on Facebook that allude to suicidal thoughts. Mostly young people who don't feel loved and are lonely. I always respond to their posts as best as I can. They are all around us, and if we will just pray that the Lord will open our eyes to see them, and to use us to minister to them, God will work mightily through us this Christmas season. Make a commitment to bring comfort to those who need comforting today.

When you give the gift of Jesus to a lost and desperate soul, you will experience a joy that will make your Christmas even more special because you will have given them the best gift of all time. Start praying right now and offer yourself to the Lord to be His vessel of love, hope and truth to those who have no chance without your Christian act of compassion.

God bless you,  
Rafael Cruz Jr., (330) 507-0117

**O.N.E. School  
Graduation**

Congratulations to Sandra Parks for being the first alumnus from the O.N.E. School of Theology. She will receive a Certificate from Gateway Seminary located in Ontario, California. In addition to the 12 hours of courses required for the Certificate of Christian Ministry, she has completed an additional 3-hour class on the Basics of Counseling. Again, congratulations to Sandra Parks.

**Finances**

As of November 30, Steel Valley Baptist Association has the following financial totals regarding the calendar year 2022:

Year-to-date Budget: \$61,357.08  
Year-to-date Spent: \$52,606.92  
Year-to-date Income: \$46,648.44