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the Steel Valley Baptist Association COMMUNICATOR

August, 2019

Experiencing God ... Again 2019

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Picnic Pics



We had a good time at the picnic and getting to meet our brothers and sisters around Steel Valley. As you can guess this newsletter does not have enough room for many pictures.



New Address Date

Effective September 1, 2019, send all correspondence to 545 Commerce Ave NW, Warren, Ohio 44485. Thanks for your assistance.

Grace Place Update

Grace Place Ministries is sponsoring Block Party, Saturday, September 7, 2019 from 12-3 at 545 Commerce Ave. NW, Warren, Ohio 44485. You are welcome to come out and join the fun as we engage our community.

Grace Place Ministries is in need of volunteers for Thursday nights from 6-7:30 PM in the areas of children and youth teachers, crafts, music and food servers/prep. For additional information, please contact Mark or Sandra Parks at 678-332-6045 or 330-442-9797 respectively.

Pastor Prayer B'fast

Calling all pastors to join in the pastor's prayer breakfast, Saturday, Sept 21, 8:30 at First Baptist Church of Newton Falls.

SVBA Prayer Matters

Be in prayer as church leaders in our association go to Seneca Lake for the Prayer and Planning Retreat. God is at work in our midst. Let's make sure we know His will and hop on board!

Study at Central BC

"The majority of churches in North America today have either plateaued or are in decline. Christian values are under siege. But what would happen if Christ came and knocked on the door of your church? Would there be renewed hope?" Join us at Central Baptist Church, Niles, as we dig into *Flickering Lamps: Christ and His Church*. This book, by Henry and Richard Blackby, tells the inspiring story of a small church that found hope again when they allowed Christ to take control. As an added bonus, Richard Blackaby will be a guest at our SVBA Annual Meeting!

This six-week study will take place on Sundays beginning Sept 8, at 6:00 PM. Coffee and light refreshments will be served. If you plan to attend and would like a FREE book, or for more info, contact the church at 330-652-4665 or on Facebook at Central BC.

We Can't ... God Can

Associational Missionary
Gary L. Frost



Whitney Houston was without a doubt one of the most gifted pop artists of our time; her distinctive voice set her apart from her peers with its mellow and silvery tone. One of Whitney's most memorable songs was entitled "Greatest Love Of All". As you listen to her enchanting voice and the general "positiveness" of this song's message it's very easy to become so caught up with its rich melody and optimistic lyrics that you miss the fact that it communicates a very destructive message.

Here's what she sings "I believe the children are our future; teach them well and let them lead the way. Show them all the beauty they possess inside. Give them a sense of pride to make it easier ... Let the children's laughter remind us how we used to be. Everybody searching for a hero; People need someone to look up to. I never found anyone who fulfilled my needs. A lonely place to be ... AND SO I LEARNED TO DEPEND ON ME .

When Jesus gathered His disciples in the upper room the night before His crucifixion for a meal and for a message, He made sure to inform them that their success in living out the purpose for His calling them would not be found in their depending upon themselves. Their mission fulfillment would only be accomplished through depending on Him. In John 15:5 He said to them, "I am the Vine, you are the branches, he that abides in Me and I in

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Revitalize, Redevelop, or Recycle?

In my last three posts I have tried to show a different approach for overcoming spiritually unhealthy settings. Southern Baptists prefer to use the term "revitalization" to signify turning a declining, spiritually unhealthy church into a growing, spiritually healthy church. For personal and academic reasons I prefer the term "redevelopment." Regardless of the term we use I think we all agree many of our churches need help.

Albert Einstein said, "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." So whether we want to re-

vitalize or redevelop a declining church our thinking about and approach to problems must change. If we cannot think differently the pastor will recycle to another church, the church will recycle its problems, and these changes do not usually turn out good.

So where do we start? Pastor to pastor, I think the key is helping pastors learn more about culture, contextualization, intercultural communication and how they affect the change process. Pastors who are learning about themselves, their

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him the same brings forth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing."

In essence Jesus was saying to His disciples then and to us today that when it comes to fulfilling God's purpose for our life ... we can't pull it off ... but He can. Self-reliance is one of the more subtle sins that most of us contend with. Perhaps the primary reason for this is because "independence" is frequently touted as one of the most revered virtues. We frequently celebrate that individual who is a free thinker and was able to pull themselves up by their own boot straps. Self-reliance is seen as the sign of strength and maturity. The motto of the self-reliant person is this, "I can do all things." However, the motto of the Christ-reliant believer is this, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Jesus never instructed His disciples to depend on themselves, He taught something very different. His message to His disciples resonated with the words of Solomon as he wrote in Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding." Jesus made sure to equip His leaders with the knowledge and assurance that He would do great things through them as they lived in Him as a branch lives in a vine. Disconnection would only bring fruitlessness and futility.

When you look at the larger teaching of this John 15 discourse you learn that the primary way in which we become

conduits of Christ's missional success is through allowing Him to abide in us through His word and our abiding in Him through prayer. He said in John 15: 7-8 " If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

As we serve Christ here in Northeast Ohio, committed to obey His commission to advance His Kingdom, we must always remember that we can't build churches, but He can. We can't save lost souls, but He can ... we can't make disciples, but He can. We can't heal dysfunctional families ... but He can. We can't overcome the current drug epidemic ... but He can. We can't renew plateaued and dying churches ... but He can. We can't transform communities ... but He can.

If we rely on our own savvy and charisma and intellect and resource and strategy we will miserably fail. But if we voraciously consume His word and tenaciously pursue Him in prayer He will do "exceedingly abundantly above all that we could ever ask or imagine." I am making it my top priority to stop relying on me and surrender daily in reliance upon God. In closing, let me submit a final Bible principle that contradicts self reliance ... remember that "The Battle is not yours, the battle is the LORD's ... and He will win the battle because He's already won the war."

October Workshops

You have spoken! We have heard! (and if anyone would like to submit additional requests you can)

The day before our annual meeting will contain breakout sessions on a variety of topics requested by you to help our own churches. Bring many people from your church to attend so you can return to your church with a wealth of advice and material to use.

Topics include the following:

- How to Lead a Dynamic Prayer Meeting, led by Gary Frost
- Encouragement and Ministries for Pastors' Wives, led by Lynette Frost
- Parent Mentoring, led by Bella Women's Center
- Principles for Revitalizing the Church, led by Mark Parks
- Financial Planning for Retirement, led by Ron Brown
- How to Utilize Social Media, led by Brent Beck
- Resolving Conflict, led by Rick Blair
- Ministry to the Addicted & Mentally Hurting, led by Randy Langham

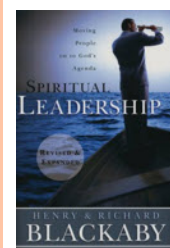
Workshops will begin at 9:00 AM on Friday, October 18 and continue until 2:30 PM. Lunch will be provided.

2019 Annual Mtg

Our guest speaker for the October 19, 2019 annual meeting will be Dr. Richard Blackaby, the oldest son of Henry Blackaby. Richard received his MDiv and PhD from Southwestern Seminary.



He will also speak Friday evening on Spiritual Leadership. His book, by the same name, is a very excellent resource. Be sure to invite your friends even those from other denominations



to join us around 10:30 AM. The Steel Valley annual business meeting will start around 9:00 AM and will be followed by a break to transition into our time with our guest.

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churches, the context they find themselves in and how to communicate the Gospel in an understandable way is a process for leading change. For effective, healthy spiritual change this process cannot be ignored.

So let me give you a term used by missionaries but rarely discussed by pastors and church leaders. Syncretism can be defined as “a blending of one idea, practice, or attitude with another. Traditionally among Christians it has been to indicate the replacement or dilution of the essential truths of the Gospel through the incorporation of non-Christian elements ... There has been syncretism of some form everywhere the church has existed.” (W. Jay Moon, *Intercultural Discipleship*, 33)

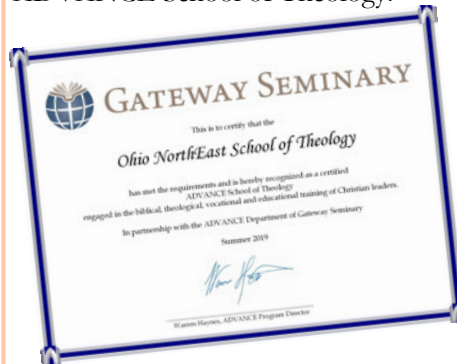
Do local churches and pastors face syncretism in their context? I would say we do. We just may not be aware of it. So how do we overcome a problem if we are not aware of it? We learn to think differently to gain a different perspective and new approach to problem solving. God does have a solution for declining churches, it may come packaged in a way we are not accustomed to looking for.

If you would like to learn with me a new understanding and application of culture, contextualization, intercultural communication and how they affect the change process, I invite you to attend the workshop that will be held at Grace Baptist Church on Saturday September 28 from 9 AM – 1:30 PM. Lunch will be provided. You can bring two key leaders with you. Contact the church to register: 330-847-7577 or gracebaptistchampion@gmail.com.

Bill Mazey

Ohio NorthEast School of Theology

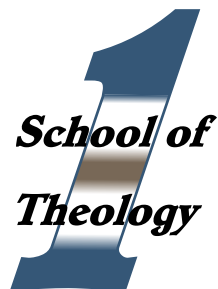
Gateway Seminary has approved our school as a certified center for their ADVANCE School of Theology.



In addition, the Advisory Board (a type of “Board of Trustees”) for the ONE School of Theology has been appointed so now the numerous details for the upcoming semester are in the making. Most all the details for the upcoming Spring semester should be available by the middle of September.

These courses will be taught by local instructors for anyone who wants the quality of a Bible-college type degree without the long distance travel or the high expenses. The major benefit of the non-accredited format is that the classes will have academic excellence as well as practical application.

At least one class will be held at the new office building, starting about Feb. 4, and will last fifteen weeks, with three hours of class time per week.



New Movie

A new Kendrick Brothers movie comes out in theaters August 23. If you enjoyed their previous films like “Courageous” and “WarRoom” then you will like this one. The theme centers around how you view yourself versus how God sees you.

Additions to Library

Two excellent resources have been added to the SVBA library. One is the scholarly commentary on the entire Old Testament in ten volumes. This set was authored and edited by Keil and Delitzsch.



Another excellent resource is the six-volume *Word Pictures* by A. T. Robertson, the brilliant Greek scholar who taught at Southern Seminary. This rich resource draws out deeper and fuller meanings to many of the words used in the New Testament.



Upcoming Calendar

- Aug 5, 4:30 PM - M&M Team Meeting
- Aug 5, 6 PM - Admin Team Meeting
- Aug 16-17, 3 PM to 3 PM - Kingdom Cohort Prayer and Planning Retreat
- Sept 3, 6 PM - Admin Team Meeting
- Sept 15-18 - OnMission Celebration
- Sept 21, 8:30 AM - Pastor Prayer Breakfast at First Baptist, Newton Falls
- Sept 28, 9 AM – 1:30 PM- Church Redevelopment workshop at Grace Baptist Church in Champion.
- Oct 18, 9 AM to 2:30 PM - A day of workshops at Rising Star Baptist.
- Oct 19, 9 AM - Annual Meeting

