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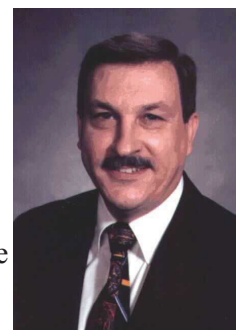
Official Paper of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches

Keystone BAPTIST

Safeguarding the Local Church

by Dr. Charles L. Dear

Crescentville Baptist Church, Philadelphia, PA



There is much made of leadership in the local church, but leadership can only succeed where there is a congregation willing to follow its chosen leaders. Much of what we read in the Scriptures about the local church rests upon the spiritual state of its members, and much of what we see today in the compromise and decline of churches marks serious spiritual changes that threaten the future testimony of the Church at large. As Baptists, we cherish the Biblical roles of the membership, not only because they are clearly taught in the Scriptures but also because we recognize they are designed to help safeguard the testimony and credibility of the local church. There are two fundamental principles we need to briefly review and affirm: regenerate church membership and congregational government.

By regenerate church membership, we mean that each person requesting membership in the local church must provide satisfactory testimony of receiving Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, including a Scriptural basis upon which he bases his salvation, and be received by the vote of the church. There must also be evidence of obedience to the Lord in baptism by immersion as a believer in Jesus Christ. Some churches provide or require participation of prospective members in new believer classes or membership classes, while others rely upon preliminary interviews conducted by the Pastor and/or Deacons who recommend candidates to the church. The burden of acceptance, however, ultimately rests upon the membership to add them to the church. In Acts 2:41 we are given the model to be followed: First, to be those who “gladly receive his word” and are saved; Second, on that condition of Salvation, to submit to believer’s baptism; and finally church membership, as they were “added unto them” of the church.

A regenerate church membership should also reflect other elements of local church membership demonstrated in the Book of Acts. Being saved is a necessary first step with the testimony of Believer’s baptism a vital step forward, but there is much more to be considered when we speak of becoming a member of the local assembly of believers, especially in these changing times. There are four specific elements that should be evident among the members in any local Baptist church: 1) evidence of the reality of our Salvation, 2) voluntary submission to the authority of the Word of God, 3) a desire to be a witness for Christ and 4) a willingness to serve Him through the ministries of their local church.

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EDITOR

Rev. Paul J. Connor

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Anita L. Fordyce

State Representative's Comments
Rev. Paul J. Connor



Just Because It's New... Is It Better?

Our society is infatuated with things that are new. New coffee makers, new smart phones,

new powerful & fancy computers/software and new shiny cars (unless it was a 1958 Ford Edsel or a 1971 Ford Pinto – there are always exceptions). New things seem to be on a priority list of wants and desires. Now going ahead and actually purchasing one of these new things has its own consequences – a large out-lay of cash or serious financing of a loan. You see, newness has a cost.

This attraction to the new carries over into new ideas, new movements and new theology. There doesn't seem to be a time in history where there has been more of a magnetic draw or attraction to the "new" as there is now in today's churches. New music is replacing old hymns. New methods are replacing the older ways. New standards are doing away with the old benchmarks of standards and convictions that were based on the Word of God.

Not all "new" is bad, but not all "new" is good, and surely not all old needs change. There is a lack of discernment in Christians today. If we become impatient, dissatisfied or bored/discontent we open ourselves to being influenced by new ideas and philosophies of the day. These new philosophies begin to erode the old teachings of Faith & Practice. Even though there is a recognizing of conflict between "new" and "old", there becomes such an attraction to the new that a determination is made to embrace the new and then a gradual and sometimes rapid rejection of the old takes place.

Sadly there have been witnesses upon witnesses that have testified to this very practice

From the Parsonage Window



OUR EAGLE'S NEST

*"As the eagle stirreth up her nest,
fluttereth over her young, spreadeth
abroad her wings..." Deut. 32:11.*

Our local newspaper says that Central PA's newest reality show is unfolding 100 feet up a tree overlooking Lake Marburg, near our church. Hundreds of thousands across the United States are watching it unfold and progress every day. What we are watching is a pair of nesting eagles. A high-definition webcam has been placed above the nest and now we're all glued to it 24/7 via the internet.

It's been a long, cold and snowy winter. Watching these eagles build their nest in these conditions, lay their eggs and stay on that nest no matter how brutal or cold (even sub-zero with high winds) the weather has been, is incredible. Even when covered in snow, the eagle mother has been unmovable. It's been amazing to watch as they've placed every stick in the nest and then laid two eggs, one week apart. But, as we watch, the Game Commission has warned us that this is nature at its purest and sometimes isn't pretty. Otherwise, the babies might not make it.

Watching the webcam has given us some "real" lessons about God, our Creator. Exactly like the above verse says, He stirs up our nest and that nest may not always be the most comfortable. And, we are never alone. Figuratively, He is fluttering over us, spreading his wings to protect us and comfort us. He never leaves us.

One of the things we've learned about nesting eagles, when we worried about the eggs freezing is that God created them with special brooding pouches that are built-in incubators. We've also learned that one of the things that keeps the eagles on the nest is that their eaglets chirp at their parents from inside the eggs as they develop. Otherwise, they literally hear their unborn. What an incredible spiritual lesson, especially when we consider our unborn. As the Scripture says, God has known us since we were in the womb. (Jer. 1:5; Psalm 139:15-16).

And like the eagles hearing their eaglets before they hatch when no one else can, God hears the prayers of His own. And, just like the eagle parents, He has promised never to leave us or forsake us. On page 4, you will see a couple of photos of our eagles and the website address so you can also watch them. It is estimated that the eggs will hatch around March 21st. Watching them can't help but show how God cares for His own.

In the light of II Corinthians 5:17, salvation brings about changes in the one who trusts in Christ as Savior. While we recognize that we are all works in progress, in sanctification, we must also agree that a life unchanged by the grace of God in salvation merits closer scrutiny. It also begs the question whether God's Word has really become authoritative in such a life. Likewise, when there is no ambition to be used of the Lord, the concept of stewardship of life resources (Romans 12:1,2) seems to have been lost. We see today a generation that, while professing faith in Christ, nevertheless demonstrates little understanding of what it means to give our all unto the Lord. The question before us here is whether or not a local church can be spiritually healthy and fulfill its scriptural purposes if we fail to recognize the dangers of such trends among us.

The reliability of congregational government rests upon the reality of a regenerate church membership, a people submissive to the authority of Scripture, who are active in the ministries of the church, devoted to serving the Lord and are a personal witness for Him. It is their vote that, through obedience to the Scriptures, will benefit the spiritual welfare of the church. While some churches have handed over the rights of members in congregational government into the hands of a few, whether by elder rule or by their own failure to participate, the pattern in Acts 6:5 underscores the participation of "the whole multitude" in the election of the first deacons. Congregational government is a vital element in maintaining the credibility and trustworthiness of church leadership, as part of the "open books/open meetings" accountability required of all stewards. Secrecy has always fostered suspicion and, in too many cases, justifiably so because leadership abused its authority for its own benefit and at the expense of the people.

Back in 1656, the Puritans in New England were facing a serious declension in their ranks, as the first generation of their settlers was dying off. The first generation members of their state churches had to give clear testimony of their "conversion experience" in order to enjoy the full privileges of the church, including the baptism of their infants and voting rights. The next two generations, however, were either not able or not willing to give such testimony, jeopardizing the future existence of their churches; and so a "Half-Way Covenant" was devised by Reverend Solomon Stoddard, whereby succeeding generations could be counted as members of the church, so long as they led pious lives without any testimony of conversion. Their privileges, however, were limited to the baptism of their children, and they could not vote. Almost every one of their churches adopted the Half-Way Covenant. After all, it lent an appearance of survival, if not success, to the churches; but it came at a high price, as the spiritual character of the congregations continued to decline through succeeding generations until the 18th century when Jonathan Edwards would restore the requirement of evidence of conversion for membership in their churches.

Lest that seem long ago and far away, let us consider whether we face similar risks to the testimonies of our churches, when we fail to prune membership rolls or when only a portion of members choose to participate in business meetings and leave the decision making to others. We have already seen in Acts 6:5 that the responsibility of voting is not optional. Part of our burden for having spiritually qualified members of our churches is so that they vote prayerfully, in the light of God's Word, as those who know the Lord; are participating in the ministries and services of the church; and are personally and financially invested in the Lord's work. Otherwise, laziness and pragmatism set in, and decision making ends up in the hands of a few who may not feel obligated to follow either principle or example from Scripture.

Our role as pastors is to teach our people all the counsel of God's Word, including the proper function of church membership, as well as the healthy operation of a local church. In the days ahead, governments will make increasing demands upon us, making us more accountable to them than to one another. We need to be sure our people understand that accountability begins first before the Lord, then to our brethren in the local church, before we answer anyone else. If we loosen the principles of church membership, we will fare no better than all the others who put survival above obedience. For example, the leadership of the United Methodist Church has recently estimated that it will no longer exist 50 years from now. Their problem, however, actually began over 50 years ago, when they conceded Biblical principles to conform to this world, and the result has been the unholy gathering of the unregenerate and disobedient into their churches. We are not immune from such dangers. If we do not carefully guard our church membership "the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jeremiah 5:31)

of bringing “new” ideas, practices, philosophies and theologies into a church and then there is a flip or a turning. A turning where old songs, old translations, old ways no longer have any value. And old believers are made very uncomfortable seeing the conflict and compromise and worldliness. They are forced out of the church they had long served in as believers worshipping their Savior.

Our forefathers, in fact a generation or two ago, believers in Christ would never have allowed these “new” elements into the church. They would have been looked upon as a threat or danger to the biblical practices and precepts. Satan has been successful in numbing the discernment and judgments of many Christians today.

Scripture has some instruction for us that begins in Genesis where our God instructs and gives boundaries for living in the Garden of Eden. In chapter two we read:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Both Adam and Eve were aware of God’s words and then something “new” is introduced to them by Satan. It was words twisted. We read in chapter three:

1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat,

and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

This “new” approach seemed all right and acceptable, **but the consequences were extremely - eternally costly!**

Then in 2 Thessalonians Chapter 3 there is a command to disassociate with those who do not follow the “traditions” – that is the established teachings – one could possibly say, the “old” teaching of the Apostle Paul:

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

And again in 2 Peter 2 there is a very strong statement that we will have to be careful of those who will sow error and false teachings:

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

There are many other references on this issue, but suffice to say, as your state representative, it is alarming to see the subtle rate and extent of infiltration of the “new” into churches today. Just because something is new does not mean it is needed, useful, beneficial or affordable. So, just because something is new does not make it better!



Bald Eagle Live Stream, Hanover
<http://www.portal.state.pa.us>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



PARBC Spring Conference
April 13-14, 2015
Grace Baptist Church, Hazleton
Hosts: Pastor Ryan Day & Congregation
Speakers: Nine pastors from our Fellowship

Youth Retreat & Talents for Christ
April 17-18, 2015
Calvary Baptist Church Bloomsburg

PARBC Fall Conference
September 14-16, 2015
Dexter Baptist Church, Wellsboro
Hosts: Pastor Jim Truax & Congregation
Speaker: Evangelist Randy Merrill

Teen Harvest Rally
September 26, 2015
Speaker: Dr. Rand Hummel
Director of Wilds of New England

Pastor & Wife Retreat
February 1-2, 2016
Speakers: Dr. Rand Hummel
Director of Wilds of New England
and
Mrs. Anita Fordyce, Hope Baptist Church, Hanover



PRAY FOR CHURCHES SEARCHING FOR A NEW PASTOR

Calvary Baptist Church, Athens
 Faith Baptist Church, Bradford
 First Baptist Church, Corry
 Andrews Settlement Baptist Church, Genesee
 First Baptist Church, Grove City
 First Baptist Church, Hallstead
 Sharon Baptist Church, Hermitage
 Jersey Mills Baptist Church, Jersey Mills
 Acre Lake Independent Baptist Church, Kingsley
 Calvary Baptist Church, Union City

PARBC Spring Conference Schedule

April 13-14, 2015 • Grace Baptist Church, Hazleton

The Life of Faith Hebrews 11

Monday, April 13th

- 3pm Abel, The Sacrifice of Faith – (Heb. 11:4; Gen. 4:1-5)
Pastor Ryan Day – Grace Baptist Church, Hazleton
- 4pm Enoch, The Walk of Faith – (Heb. 11:5-6; Genesis 5:21-24)
Pastor Donald Thomas – Bible Baptist Church, Shickshinny
- 5pm Dinner Break & Fellowship
- 7pm Noah; The Work of Faith – (Heb. 11:7; Gen. 6-7)
Pastor Chick Dear – Crescentville Baptist Church, Philadelphia

Tuesday, April 14th

- 9am Abraham; The Obedience of Faith – (Heb. 11:8-10; Gen. 12-18)
Pastor Dan Brabson – Bible Baptist Church, West Chester
- 10am Prayer Time
Pastor Jonathan Hill – Union Baptist Church, Kittanning
- 10:35am Break & Fellowship
- 11am Isaac; The Vision of Faith – (Heb. 11:20; Gen 26-27)
Pastor Rob Ingmire – First Baptist Church, Limestone
- 12 Noon Lunch Break & Fellowship
- 1:30pm Business Meeting
- 2:30pm Work Shop – Update on Child Protection Laws by KCEA
- 3:30pm Break & Fellowship
- 4pm Jacob: The Discernment of Faith – (Heb. 11:21; Gen. 27 – 35)
Pastor Tom Harris – Bible Baptist Church, Quakertown
- 5pm Dinner Break & Fellowship
- 7pm Joseph: The Assurance of Faith – (Heb. 11:22; Gen. 37-50)
Pastor Dan Hicks – First Baptist Church of Ogden, Boowthyn



Roofner's Bangladesh Blessings 2015

by Pastor Paul & Mrs. Grace Roofner, Faith Baptist Church, Waynesburg, PA

God gave Paul and me an amazing opportunity to visit Bangladesh. We left home Jan. 28th and returned Feb. 9th. It all began a year ago when Vernon, my brother, asked me to travel to Bangladesh with him and his wife Ute. He would pay for my ticket! My first thought was, "I can't go! I'm 64 years old, and I physically do not feel up to a trip to a third world country half way around the globe! The 20 hour total flight in 5 different planes is just too much, and what about the germs???" But I asked Paul if he would come too, and after considering, he surprisingly said "yes!" So began an extraordinary journey!



The trip was long, but we tolerated it well, and finally arrived in Cox's Bazar, a town by the ocean in Bangladesh. Both Vern and I agreed that almost nothing had changed in the 55 years since we had been missionary kids living in that country! There were the same bicycle rickshaws all over the road, although many are battery-powered now, and the same tiny shops lining the sides. Most of the roads are paved now instead of brick, and instead of ox carts, there were men and boys hauling heavily loaded carts by hand. Buses and jeeps were as crowded as we remembered, with people and baggage perched precariously even on the roofs. No one paid much attention to lines on the road or to the few traffic signals. And there were people, people everywhere—more than I ever remembered. Bangladesh holds a population equal to half that of the United States, all crowded into an area the size of Pennsylvania!

We were driven to Malumghat, the mission compound where the hospital stands. It was like a peaceful, tropical oasis in the midst of crowded, dusty chaos. About 35 ABWE missionaries work on the compound and at Memorial Christian Hospital (named in memory of my Dad, Mary Barnard, and Harry Goehring). Many Bengali Christians are employed there as well, and the Baptist Tribal Association has their headquarters and a Bible school there. The hospital provides a strong witness, as well as the only medical help for an area of 10 million people. Later we saw the wonderful ministries now in Chittagong, where my parents had worked for two years before moving to the Tribal area.

My Dad, Paul Miller, had died at age 42, and had never seen his dream of reaching the Tribal people for Christ, and putting their language into writing, and translating the Word of God into their language. So, I had often wondered if his work was mostly in vain, but I knew that couldn't be so. We obtained special permission to visit the Hill Tracts where the Tribal people live. The "hartals" (government shutdown of all business, schools, and traffic with threat of fire bombing if violated) made it difficult to travel. So, we could only go for two trips into the Hills. And what amazing trips they were!

Tribal leaders, and Missionary Shawne Ebersole, and Vern, Ute, Paul and I piled into a mission van, and the driver took off. Paul sat next to the head of the Tribal Association of Baptist Churches, whose name is Ashai. He learned that Ashai had attended Faith Baptist Bible College in Ankeny, Iowa! Paul really liked him. After registering with the army at a check point we entered the Hill tracts. Along the way, we saw some large brown monkeys and a black jungle chicken. Finally, we reached Hebron, the station that my parents established to reach the Tribal people, and where I lived as a nine-year-old jungle girl. It is now called Lama. Three hundred school children were lined up to shake our hands and greet us with flowers and shy smiles. So we shook 300 hands, and then were led into the chapel for food. Oh, no! We weren't prepared with sanitizer or soap or water! Oh, well, God blessed the germs, and we didn't get sick. The children sang for us, clapping to keep time to the rhythm of a bongo drum. Then little girls, all dressed up in beautiful tribal skirts, put on tribal folk dances. They danced to a song

about Jesus bringing victory. Some older girls danced to a song about Jesus as our Pilot, and with Him we will never be lost. It was so touching! I cried and could hardly speak when I was asked to address the crowd. Vern spoke too, and did better than I. He told about how he was there as a little boy 55 years ago, with no schools, no church, and almost no Christians---and look at what God has done since! Now there are over 150 churches! I knew as I saw the bright faces of the little children sitting on a cloth on the concrete floor that my Dad's labor was not in vain. To top it off, the tribal church at Hebron is right behind the little bamboo house where we once lived by the river bank.

The next day we traveled five hours to a new school and hostel far into the Hill Tracts. With us was ABWE missionary, Harold Ebersole, who---like us---had also lost his father, Harry Goehring, in Bangladesh. The one-lane road snaked around mountain sides that looked down on narrow valleys. With every turn, the driver had to honk in case another vehicle was approaching blindly. We passed little Bengali villages that represented land taken away from the Tribal people. Some government soldiers stopped us and asked what we were doing there. They had never seen a foreign person up that road. Harold calmly explained that we were visiting a new school that was opening. The soldiers decided that a policeman should accompany us for "protection." The policeman climbed into the second of two vans carrying our company of Tribal leaders, missionary, and us four visitors.

The road turned into dirt, and we came to a standstill where the road was completely out. So, all the men piled out and repaired the road with bricks that were piled on the side. Our first van made it through, but the second van carrying the policeman could not. The policeman commandeered his 4-wheel-drive vehicle and gave everyone in the second van a ride. Meanwhile, our first van reached the bottom of a very steep hill and parked. Harold and the Tribal leaders warned us not to say anything about teaching the Bible or salvation at the school in the presence of the policeman. We climbed up a narrow path and could see children peeking at us from the hilltop. When we made it to the summit, there were about 50 children all lined up. They threw flower petals at us while we shook their hands and greeted them. Harold was able to offer prayer before the policeman and second vehicle arrived. The children presented a program and everyone gave speeches, including the policeman.

Altogether, in those two days in the Hill Tracts, we saw five new hostels for school children open, and had the privilege of cutting the ribbons! We saw first hand the tremendous needs of these schools, as the children do not even have pencils, paper, desks, or chairs. Their parents struggle to pay for their schooling, but cannot keep up. As inflation and land grabbing cuts further and further into their income, the Tribal people realize that education is their only hope. Their whole society is in danger of crumbling, and they have very little sustained outside help. My brother Vern has established a non-profit organization at childrenofthehills.org to try to raise support for Tribal schools, and Harold Ebersole is on site in Bangladesh to help oversee the funds spent. So we come full circle, with our Dad's dream being picked up by his kids in reaching out to help these same Tribal people.

The highlight of the trip for me was getting to meet my childhood playmate, Ruputee. Her father was Ancheri, our beloved Tribal evangelist, and the one who spread the Word of God tirelessly among his people. When Ruputee realized who I was, she put her head on my shoulder and hugged me and wept. "I never thought I would see you again!" she cried. And she gave us sugar cane and some coconuts from her own palm tree.

We stood around my Dad's grave and held a memorial service at the Christian cemetery in Chittagong just before we left. I was comforted by the words from 1 Cor 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Daddy would be so happy!

We thank each of you for your prayers and gifts to make this trip possible and to enable us to encourage our dear Tribal brothers and sisters!

The Top 12 Ways the 23 New Child Abuse Laws Affect Our Schools and Churches:

A Keystone Christian Education Association Analysis and Summary



SCHOOLS

- 1) Background clearances now expire after three (3) years. Employees with clearances more than 3 years old must obtain 3 new clearances by December 31, 2015, no exceptions. Subsequently, new clearances must be completed before old clearances expire.
- 2) Adult volunteers who routinely interact with or have responsibility for the supervision of children must have all three clearances. Unpaid volunteers who have continuously lived within Pennsylvania for at least 10 years AND swear/affirm in writing they are not disqualified based upon a qualifying conviction are eligible for exclusion from the FBI Clearance. In practical terms, unpaid volunteers who help with school trips, Field Day, teacher aides, etc. must now have clearances.
- 3) Before offering employment to a new staff member who has direct contact with children, the applicant must provide: (a) all relevant contact information for their current employer, all former school employers, and other employers where the applicant had direct contact with children; (b) authorized consent of the applicant for disclosure of information, release of related records, and release of liability; (c) a written statement addressing if the applicant was investigated, charged, or disciplined for allegations of abuse of sexual misconduct. The employing school **must** contact each entity listed and request specific information stated in Act 168 of 2014.
- 4) Schools contacted about current or past employees in #3 who are applying for employment at another school must provide the required information within 20 days.
- 5) The person who has reasonable cause to suspect abuse must first report it to ChildLine, then to their supervisor/administrator/principal. The reporter must file a written report to the state within 48 hours after the ChildLine report.
- 6) Schools are now required to have a policy of how they will address a situation where one of their employees or volunteers is accused of abuse or sexual misconduct.
- 7) Act 126 training on abuse recognition and reporting still requires a minimum of 3 hours of training on specific content every 5 years; and clearance, training, and employment recordkeeping requirements have dramatically increased.

CHURCHES

- 1) Pastors must have all 3 clearances, along with church staff who have routine contact with children. All adult church volunteers who routinely interact with or have responsibility for the supervision of children must have all three clearances. Unpaid volunteers who have continuously lived within Pennsylvania for at least 10 years AND swear/affirm in writing they are not disqualified based upon a qualifying conviction are eligible for exclusion from the FBI Clearance. Unpaid volunteer Sunday School teachers and assistants, nursery and youth workers, summer/winter camp helpers, and VBS helpers who have responsibility for children must have clearances. Detailed, timely recordkeeping will be a necessity.
- 2) The person who has reasonable cause to suspect abuse must first report it to ChildLine, then to the supervisor. The reporter must file a written report to the state within 48 hours after the ChildLine report.
- 3) Abuse recognition and reporting training for church staff and volunteers is not mandated, but prudence and liability say it is strongly recommended.

GENERAL TERMINOLOGY

- 1) The legal definition of “abuse” has been broadened, thus the threshold is lower. Striking a child under the age of one year old is now called abuse. Exceptions to abuse are now included for children injured as a result of someone attempting to protect them from serious harm (e.g., grabbing them to keep from falling down the stairs, but causing a dislocated shoulder).
- 2) The legal definition of who is a “mandatory reporter” has been widely expanded to include virtually all school and church employees and volunteers, but still allows confidentiality exceptions for pastors (e.g., in counseling) and attorneys (e.g., attorney-client privilege).

Pennsylvania Baptists for Life & Families, Inc.

Action Line for Life & Families 570-376-2584

www.pabflf.org

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PENNSYLVANIA BAPTISTS FOR LIFE & FAMILIES



What you know as Pennsylvania Baptists for Life & Families (PBFL&F) or Action Line for Life (ALFL) began several years ago in the heart of a pastor in State College, Pennsylvania. An abortion clinic was preparing to open in State College (home of Penn State University). This pastor organized and promoted a campaign which kept the clinic from opening its doors. From that beginning, that pastor (Randall Gilmore) began to ask why fundamental Christians weren't more involved in the battle against abortion and how they could become involved.

At Pastor Gilmore's invitation, several men from across the state including Pastor Daniel Kaminski from Kittanning, Pastor Bob Southworth from Spartansburg, and Pastor Roy Allison from Springville met on several different occasions. It was soon evident that, though there were some excellent pro-life groups, the heavy Catholic flavor in orientation, leadership, and goals of those groups did not allow us to fit in comfortably. So we needed to find an alternate vehicle to allow fundamental Christians to join in the battle against abortion and provide alternatives.

Since most of the men who were meeting were associated with the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches (PARBC), the approval of the PARBC was sought. This approval was first expressed with the appointment of a committee to recommend a pro-life program. This committee, in making contacts, was made aware of Baptists for Life, Inc. in Grand Rapids, MI. This was a relatively new organization also. Within four months of the committee's appointment (August, 1986), we met with Mark Blocher, Executive Director of Baptists for Life, Inc. and realized the committee was not going to need to reinvent the wheel. At this point in our history, PBFL&F operates independently in the state of PA supported by local churches around the state. **Action Line For Life** (the "front line" **1-800-345-5009** phone ministry of PBFL&F) trains its own volunteers called Hotliners. Hotliners are those who take the calls. PBFL&F also trains and has Field Representatives. A Field Rep. is someone whom we refer a caller back to in their own hometown.

In April, 1987, the Council of Ten and the PARBC approved the PA Baptists for Life Constitution. In September, 1987, the first Executive Board was appointed and the board met for its first official meeting in November, 1987.

The words "**& Families**" were added in the mid-nineties as ALFL began to receive calls from people in crisis in general. ALFL also moved from its original home in Tunkhannock to West Chester in the early nineties. The phone apparatus is situated in the church office where the secretaries transfer the calls into the homes of volunteers called Hotliners. ALFL continued to increase in the number of calls it received and a larger pool of volunteers was needed. The Lord worked in hearts and an initial training gave us over twenty volunteers! Today, twelve volunteers take turns on various shifts fielding calls. We are in operation Monday – Friday; 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. At times, the answering machine is on but all calls are returned promptly. Our ministry also has a web site at www.pabflf.org with our phone ministry's web site at www.actionlineforlife.org. As a non-profit, charitable organization, our ministry office is located at 28 Left Branch Road, Westfield, PA 16950.