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Keystone BAPTIST

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Keeping Our Churches Safe

by

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Keeping one's church safe and secure isn't the first thing that comes to the mind of a pastor when he is thinking about ministering to his flock, but it is an important aspect for us to consider. Moses found the same problem when he brought Israel out of Egypt, and the Amalekites desired to rob and kill them. Moses had to adjust to the situation and God brought a great victory.

Recent attacks in churches all across the land has made it necessary for us to reconsider the safety measures we need in order to allow our people and visitors to hear the Word of God with some expectation of safety. There is no guarantee of safety in this world, but we have a responsibility to do what is reasonable to allow people to hear the Word of God in safety.

There are some steps we can and should consider in each of our ministries. Consider the following possible steps.

1. Have a security team to meet and discuss the lawful steps to take to secure the safety of those in your services.

2. Attend a safety seminar that deals with active shooters. (Brotherhood Mutual and KCEA have had several such seminars)

Don't miss the details about the Spring Conference on Page 5

Continued page 3

Inside this Issue:

Snowball Snyderone	Page 2
Suppositions.....	Page 2
Why Talents for Christ.....	Page 3
Churches Seeking a Pastor.....	Page 4
Upcoming Activities.....	Page 4
New Years' Dilemma	Page 7
Trends and Troubes	Page 9

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The Snowball Syndrome



I am always amazed at this cold season and the events that come along with it. For example, my grandchildren loved to roll snowballs down the hill in our back yard. The more they rolled the snowballs the bigger they got. It is fascinating to watch and then at a certain point the snowball builds momentum and takes off rolling by itself, much to the astonishment of my grandchildren.

As fun as it was, and it was fun, watching that snowy event, I am reminded of how we Christians can get caught up in a "snowball syndrome" in our individual spiritual lives and collectively in our churches, and that is absolutely not fun.

Individually, we get caught up in a thought or action that is sinful and that sin leads to another sin and so on until we are backslidden. It happened with David and his lust for Bathsheba – one sin led to another sin and then another (II Samuel 11). The sin of one person begins to affect the lives of other people.

Collectively, like Jerusalem and Israel became backslidden (Jeremiah 3:22 & 8:5), a church can begin to make internal decisions that cause it to become very vulnerable to compromise. A congregation can be lured or led to start making changes. Each change can/may bring a degree of vulnerability. The more changes the more possibility of becoming exposed to compromise and the end result of weakening the church. Changes in philosophy

Continued page 6

From the Parsonage Window



Suppositions

The bride and groom were gazing intently into each other's eyes as the minister was saying, "If anyone knows of any reason why this couple may not be joined in holy wedlock, speak now or forever hold your peace."

The pastor paused, looked up and saw a young woman walking up the aisle toward the bridal party carrying an infant. The bride and groom and bridal party saw her at the same time.

The bride looked at the groom, slapped his face and fainted. The father of the bride yelled out, "I knew he was hiding something."

Gathering his composure, the pastor asked, "Why have you come forward?"

The young woman said, "I only wanted to move closer so I could hear the service better."

This funny little story reminded me about how often this kind of scenario is played out in our churches. I also wondered how the pastor straightened this out.

My mind flooded with memories of several times when we experienced the effects of suspicions and misunderstandings in our churches because someone reacted to what wasn't the truth--maybe not so dramatically, of course. I remembered dozens of situations where the result of these misunderstandings caused us to have to become counselors or mediators and get involved in order to try to undo the damage.

Let's face it, we also are sometimes suspicious of what we think "might" really be going on; worse yet suspicions are often fueled by listening to or believing the latest gossip. Why does gossip validate our suspicions? Why do we believe the worst first before we respond. The bottom line is that we choose what to believe before knowing the facts. When it comes to our response, my favorite counselor, my pastor husband reminded me: "*He that answereth a matter before it, it is folly and shame unto him*" (Proverb 18:13). Otherwise, keep quiet until you know the truth.

Doesn't God's Word always get to the bottomline? That's where all of the answers are.

I wonder if they recovered the wedding. Once they heard the truth, I'm sure it turned out well. Or did it?

3. Know the laws of allowing people to carry firearms on the premises. It is illegal for anyone to carry a firearm/weapon on the premises of a school any day of the week. You must also know that if any security detail is permitted to carry a firearm, then whatever might happen, the church is fully responsible for the results. There is also a state mandated course that must be taken by any who are one a security detail and are carrying a weapon. As law abiding citizens we must know and obey the law.

4. Consider a welcoming committee that greets all visitors and welcomes them to the services. At least one of these people needs to be one of the security committee that is also looking for unusual things that might indicate a problem.

5. Lock the doors of the building after the services start.

6. Have a person watching for late comers or for suspicious people during the services.

7. Have a plan that you and your security committee have planned in case of an emergency. Talk through that plan with your local police.

8. Plan a drill to help your people know what to do in case of an emergency. They should know the precautions you are taking and generally what to do in an emergency.

9. Consider getting some cameras for the exterior entrances so that there can be warning ahead of time if possible.

10. Don't allow fear to be the motivation for action. Our motive is the spread of the gospel, the love for the lost, and the care for God's people. People can only consider the claims of Christ on their lives when they can be moved by the Spirit of God and respond to His work.

Why Talents for Christ?

by Aaron Armstrong

Hope Baptist Church, Hanover, PA, TFC Committee Member



It is the dead of winter. Temperatures are cold, snow is falling, and the birds are safe in their southern habitat. I remember, as a teenager, using the winter months to prepare and practice for Talents for Christ. I had the privilege of participating in TFC all five years that I was in high school. As I reflect on those memories of TFC's gone by, there are several things that stick out to me about those Talents for Christ.

First, the opportunity to sharpen and hone the gifts and skills that God gave me. I remember entering baking, string instrument solo, puppetry, small and large group singing, and other areas during my times of competition. The times of nervousness, apprehension, and vulnerability helped me overcome my fear of being in front of people. The feedback from the judges was a tremendous opportunity for me to grow and get input from people who were skilled and cared about me.

Second, the fellowship with my youth group and other teens while I was at TFC made an impact on my life. The van rides were memorable, whether it was getting lost, getting stuck in traffic, or just having fun conversations going and coming from TFC. The games and activities were always fun and something I looked forward to and have fond memories of. Additionally, being with other teens who wanted to hone their talents was encouraging. Whether it was someone complimenting me on a piece, or one of the judges remembering me from year to year, the fellowship at TFC was something I will always remember and be thankful for.

Finally, the time of spiritual encouragement and challenges from God's Word were impactful in my life. Even to this day, as a sponsor, I return from TFC challenged to love God and His Word more and to serve Him more. The preaching and singing are encouraging and leave you with things to think about on your way home. There is nothing more important that a teenager needs to hear than the sound of God's Word!

So, why should YOU come to TFC? Well, if I had to put it in one sentence I would say this: You should come to TFC to learn more about God, to hone skills He has given you, to receive feedback and encouragement from judges and peers, and to have a great time with other teenagers from all over the Commonwealth.

Upcoming PARBC Events

-4



Spring Conference
Union Baptist Church, Kittanning
Pastor Jonathan Hill

***Dr. Marty Von, Church Care Ministries,**
Keynote Speaker
April 9 & 10, 2018

Youth Retreat and Talents for Christ
Calvary Baptist Church, Bloomsburg
April 20-21, 2018

Fall Conference
Marsh Creek Fellowship Baptist Church, Wellsboro
Pastor Keith Williams
September 17-19, 2018

Future Dates for Conferences on our website
www.parbc.org

Churches Searching for a Pastor



First Baptist Church – Corry

Springside Baptist Church – Distant

Bethel Baptist Church -- Erie

Garden Heights Baptist Church – Erie

Roseville Independent Baptist Church – Mansfield

Tidioute Baptist Church – Tidioute

Calvary Baptist Church – Union City

PARBC

Please Join Us!

Spring Conference April 9 & 10, 2018

Union Baptist Church, Kittanning

Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Marty Von, Church Care Ministries

“The Pastor Helping Their People Biblically

With the Complex Challenges of Today’s Life.”



Dr. Marty Von has spent 35 years counseling and discipling others. He served for 29 years in different ministry positions at Northland Baptist Bible College including Vice President, Director of the Department of Counseling, professor, as well as the campus counseling pastor for faculty, staff and students. He has since launched ChurchCare Ministries taking his passion for teaching, discipling and counseling to local churches. The emphasis of ChurchCare is uniquely relational. ChurchCare seeks to enable people to minister rather than providing them with an event to attend or a program to launch. ChurchCare is focused on relationships; to care for people in the church, and disciple them to care for others. ChurchCare envisions an ongoing relationship with the church, the Pastor and his staff over an extended period of time. Every church has its own story shaped by its history, its leaders, its community, and most importantly by its belief in Scripture. ChurchCare aims to connect with individual churches in order to help them address specific spiritual needs and help them grow in grace. church in the following ways; By teaching Bible truths; By training, to develop skilled disciples By encouraging personal growth. [www.churchcareministries.org.]

Snowballs, Continued

of worship and/or music can lead to a softening in position and yes, even doctrine can change, thus in a sense, backslidden. This gets to a point where it seems like one change demands additional changes— like that snowball rolling down the hill by itself.

When a church makes serious moves in changes from traditional practices to what is called progressive practices there will be evidences of compromise. It is inevitable. The church will develop a weakness in spiritual discernment that will move it closer and closer to a liberal position theologically and practically. It is the proverbial “snowball” rolling down the hill of compromise.

How do we protect ourselves and our churches from sliding down the hill like a snowball? It is well to note the on going cautions that Paul gave the churches:

1Cor. 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

Gal. 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Phil. 1:27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Phil. 4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

1Th. 3:8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

2Th. 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

1Cor. 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.

Heb. 3:14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

Please don't misunderstand me, if the church wishes to paint the auditorium white instead of blue or visa versa – fine. If someone insists that we have got to replace those old pews with padded pews or chairs – fine. If your church decides to remodel or add on to the building – fine. If the congregation realizes it needs to take some safety measures – fine – please do. But if it is suggested that the church reconsider its direction – WATCH OUT! If a decision is made to make music and services more entertaining with not so much preaching and “doctrine stuff” - THE SNOWBALL HAS BEGUN ROLLING DOWN THE HILL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Thank You!

We would like to express our deepest appreciation for the Christmas Gift we received from the churches of the PARBC.

It was a tremendous gift that overwhelmed our hearts.

Thank you so much for such an expression of love and support.

We are humbled and blessed by your action. In Christ's grace and love.

Paul & Judy Connor

The New Year's Eve Dilemma

by Grace Roofner, Faith Baptist Church, Waynesburg, PA



Sometimes we Christians need a bit of humor to lighten the strain of the everyday load we carry. So I invite you to sit back and enjoy this true story from forty years ago in rural Maine. As the Word says in Prov. 17:22, “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.”

The brutal cold of the Maine winter was battling it out with the oil furnace in our little brown church. The furnace was losing. It was New Year's Eve, 1978, and we were hosting the New Year's Eve service. Each year we would take turns with the Augusta Baptist Church, and this year it was our turn to invite them to our church. The temperature outside was around zero degrees F, and was dropping, and inside the church, it grew colder and colder. The high plastered ceiling and the uninsulated walls leaked the heat. Even the fact that we used the original box-like, beige, wooden pews, which came all the way to the floor to prevent drafts, did not help. The numbered doors that used to be on the ends of the pews to keep out breezes were now stashed away in the church attic. The old siding creaked with the wind, and the cold continued to seep in. In spite of the chill, however, we were having a merry time. Our visitors seemed to be really enjoying the fellowship—that is, until...

But let me back up. Our little country church, South Auburn Baptist Church, in Auburn, Maine, was almost considered a historical building. It had been abandoned at one time, and the farmer who owned the land was going to turn the church into a hay barn. However, the neighbors got together and formed “The South Auburn Free Church Meeting House Society,” and saved the building. They stipulated that Pastor Walter Poole, the church's first pastor, could use the building for a Baptist church as long as the members did not change anything on the outside. It was brown, and would remain brown, and it had a stately bell tower that swayed as the huge bronze bell was rung. A beautiful red, gold, and green glass window, shaped like a half-moon, graced the front of the church. To increase the capacity, the men of the church hand dug a basement under the antique building.

Well, the farmer was none too pleased that his “hay barn” was no longer available. Right behind the church across the fence on his land was a nice wet spot, indicating a spring. However, he would not allow us to access it, so we had no running water in our church. Drinking water was no problem. We could always carry in jugs of water. The real difficulty lay in the need for restrooms. Even if we had dug a well, there really wasn't room for a septic tank and leech bed on the tiny church property. So the need was solved by the men of the church constructing two sturdy wooden outhouses in back of the church. I say, “sturdy” because they were a great improvement over an outhouse that I visited at another church in Maine. That one had spaces above and below the door, and wide cracks where boards were broken. I can't imagine how that facility fared in the winter!

Anyway, our outhouses were pleasant enough to visit in the summer time, but summers are short in Maine. Come winter, the snow could really add up! If a person had to visit the outhouse, he did not linger very long! Paul faithfully shoveled paths to the outhouses every week that it snowed. He had to keep piling the snow up on either side of the paths, until it reminded a person of pictures in children's Bibles of the narrow path through the Red Sea.

This all brings me back to our New Year's Eve. The snow banks were piled particularly high that winter, and the paths to the outhouses were truly an adventure as one had to wend one's way through snow piled higher than one's head. Each of our own members knew to take care of needs at home before coming to church. But our guests had to travel an hour just to reach our church, and they were truly innocent concerning our situation. We had food, singing, testimonies, and preaching that evening. In the midst of the festivities, one unfortunate lady guest asked our dear Florence, a member of our church in her 60's, where the ladies' room was. Later, Florence lamented, "When I told her, 'Umm...it's out back...,' she just looked at me!" Florence was so embarrassed that she felt like crawling under a pew. She looked around at all of us as she related the sad tale. "We just have to do something about an indoor restroom!" she insisted.

That did it. Paul began looking through catalogs and checking with other pastors for ideas. Today one could just Google it, and find a hundred options, complete with reviews. Back in those days, it took a lot of slow research. He found that one back-to-nature enthusiast had built some sort of natural compost facility in his basement. He was a famous artist who lived in Maine, but flew to Boston's university to teach each week; thus, he was a rich man who could have afforded a normal arrangement, had he wanted it. Paul found out that in the end, the man had to fill it in because it bred flies. Paul also researched chemical fixtures, but they were too messy.

Finally, Paul found the perfect solution: a gas-fired contraption with the original name, "Destroilet." He installed it in the church's basement. The Destroilet came with a cast iron belly, a flapper, and a seat with a lid that controlled the on/off switch. When the user shut the lid, the gas ignited with a "whoosh," and the mini furnace burned everything to a crispy, gray ash. To clean it, all Paul had to do was to vacuum out a handful of ashes once a month.

There were distinct advantages to our new fixture. First, it was clean. No germs could survive that heat, and certainly it could not breed bugs! Secondly, it sure beat the outhouses! Thirdly, one never had to endure a cold seat.

However, that last advantage could be a disadvantage. More than once, someone used the Destroilet right after someone else had. Steam issued upward from the protective flapper, and gave new meaning to the word "hot seat"! Another disadvantage was the odor. A fan was supposed to blow it all up the chimney and away from the church. This worked well unless the air pressure happened to be low, in which case, a strong burnt odor settled down around the church. This could tend to discourage people from hanging around outside after the services. Even worse, sometimes the wind would blow the odor back down the chimney, and our church would be filled with a certain unpleasant air. Our members just took it all as a matter of course, feeling that an indoor facility was worth a little inconvenience.

We did find that our new Destroilet provided a lot of amusement. Even adults enjoyed putting the lid down, listening for the "whoosh," and then slightly lifting the lid. One could see a very impressive holocaust incinerating everything within that cast iron belly. Children played with the lid—up, down, up, down. But perhaps one child expressed it best when she lifted the lid to peek in, saw the flames, and exclaimed, "That's hell down there!" For years, wherever we have told the story, it has produced a look of astonishment, buckets of laughter, and the incredulous exclamation, "**You had a what??**" But you know, we never had to be afraid to invite the Augusta Baptist Church down to fellowship with us again on New Year's Eve!

Trends & Troubles

-9

By Dr. E. Allen Griffith, Biblical Family Ministries
(Taken from the **Friend of the Family** with permission)

Let us take some time to talk about the diagnoses of children and their problems. Of course, I hope your children and grandchildren do not have any. Seriously, this is a delicate area to address, but Christian parents need to be careful about labeling.

Labeling a child is a particular problem, when it comes to behavioral issues which are identified through observation and testimony. It is called a clinical diagnosis. Probably the most common of these issues today is Attention Deficit Disorder, more commonly called A.D.D.

How does a medical professional identify A.D.D.? The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (yep, that is the name) lists nine symptoms. The symptoms should have lasted for at least 6 months, started prior to age 7, are worse than might be found in most children, must cause problems with the child functioning properly and finally, and must show up in more than one setting (not just at home). So, what are the symptoms? Here is the list:

1. Fails to pay close attention to details or makes careless mistakes.
2. Has difficulty sustaining attention in work or play.
3. Does not listen, when spoken to directly.
4. Fails to finish chores, schoolwork, or work duties.
5. Has difficulty organizing activities.
6. Avoids tasks requiring sustained mental effort.
7. Loses things.
8. Is easily distracted.
9. Is forgetful.

You know, if I had a little guy or girl who struggles in these areas, I would be very careful about considering the designation of mental disorder to describe his/her problem. Yet thousands upon thousands of children are being labeled with A.D.D. or A.D.H.D., which brings symptoms of hyperactivity into the mix.

Children can have behavioral problems for many reasons, but in our country where the family and family values are cast aside, we have found a catch-all that too often relieves parents of the responsibilities. Of course, we have to be careful about painting with a wide brush, but child rearing takes a lot of time and work that many moms and dads are unwilling, or maybe unable, to invest.

The first time I know of, that the formal designation A.D.D. was ever used was 1980, in the third edition of the manual on mental disorders mentioned above. Amazingly 95% of all cases are found in the USA and the UK. Only 5% have been discovered in the rest of the world. Is the rest of the world behind or has something gone wrong in our culture?

Think of what has happened in America. There are more single parent homes than ever before. That means children are on their own or under non-parental care for hours per week. Family turmoil is also getting worse. Children sit and watch fighting and arguing among their parents and siblings. Families spend less time eating and enjoying leisure activities together. Diet can have great influence on behavior.

A number of years ago we were having meetings in a small church in Georgia. Among with preaching the special services, I was asked to speak to the youth group. There were about 12 teens at the meetings. I was cautioned that among the 12 young people, 7 had been diagnosed with A.D.D. and were taking prescriptions of Ritalin.

Ritalin is one of a number of brand names for Methylphenidate, which is often prescribed as a mild stimulant to the central nervous system (brain and nerves). The LESS serious side effects include insomnia, nervousness, drowsiness, dizziness, headache, blurred vision, tics, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, decreased appetite, weight loss, and slowed growth.

I confess these young people were not the most attentive I had ever spoken to, but their struggles may have been due to the treatment, not the disease. As noted before, A.D.D. (Attention Deficit Disorder) may yield to A.D.H.D. (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). About one third of young people diagnosed with A.D.H.D. also have Anxiety or O.D.D. (Oppositional Deficit Disorder). The symptoms of O.D.D. include: being hostile toward parents or other authority figures, arguing about or breaking rules, loss of temper, annoying others on purpose, blaming others for mistakes or misbehavior, being overly sensitive, being angry, being resentful, and being vengeful. The symptoms for anxiety include: being on edge or keyed up, excessive worry, constant sadness, reduced ability to concentrate and increased irritability or agitation. I read all these things and I say, **STOP, STOP, STOP!**

Let's consider a few matters. The first thing that needs to settle into our minds is the fact that all these designations refer to a child's behavior. The titles given to a particular list of problems are somewhat artificial. There is no physical, neurological, or psychological test that can prove the existence of A.D.D. or any of the other problem areas. So, one must ask the question: If a child fails to pay close attention to details or makes careless mistakes; has difficulty sustaining attention in work or play; does not listen when spoken to directly; fails to finish chores, homework, or work duties; has difficulty organizing activities; avoids tasks requiring sustained mental effort; loses things; is easily distracted and is forgetful, does he or she have a mental disorder? Should we give the child some kind of drug?

In his book, **All About Attention Deficit Disorder**, Thomas W. Phelan, Ph.D. acknowledges, *there is a higher incidence of marital dissatisfaction, separation, and divorce in families where there is an A.D.D. child.* My question to Dr. Phelan would be: Does the A.D.D. child cause the marital problems, or do the marital problems produce the A.D.D. child? Think about it!

On page 73 of his book, Dr. Phelan writes . . . there is a higher incidence of marital dissatisfaction, separation and divorce in families where there is an A.D.D. child. I posed the question, **Does the A.S.S. child cause the marital problem, or does the marital problem produce the A.D.D. child?** Actually, Dr. Phelan mentions this issue earlier in his text, but quickly announces he does not want to create any level of unnecessary guilt on parents. In fact, the greatest influence on children, whether positive or negative, is parents.

The ideal home will have a father and mother, who provide a wholesome atmosphere of spiritual, emotional and physical stability and security. The parents will have a strong loving relationship and a close walk with the Lord. The father will provide the physical and financial needs of the family, as well as giving God honoring leadership to all, including guidance and biblical discipline to the children. The mother will be able to be at home to provide care and giving attention to the needs of the children.

Essential to achieving stability and security for children are such things as standards of behavior, appropriate manners, respect for others, and obedience to instruction. A wholesome diet should be high on the list, along with a time to get up and a time to go to bed. Add to these things the need to give personal attention to the unique needs of each individual child, so no one gets lost in the shuffle. There is much more, but you get the idea.

It would be extremely rare in the family just described to have any child diagnosed with A.D.D., A.D.H.D., O.D.D. or any other of today's typical childhood *mental disorders*. It is significant, that while medications are often suggested for treatment of these problems, most recognize the need for proper training and discipline as the pathway to success. Remember, all these problems are behavioral.

God's Word teaches us how to rear godly disciplined, responsible children. Today's problems are primarily due to parental failure. Parents seldom invest the necessary time and effort to learn what the Bible teaches regarding child rearing. In the Scriptures we find direct instruction; but we also find illustrations of parental success and parental failure from biblical characters.

Once we have a good understanding of what we as parents should do, we then must invest the time and energy necessary to fulfill our parental obligations. We typically have a child under our care and guidance for the first 18-20 years of his eternal existence. Those years will produce a young person, who will forever reflect what happened in our home.

Scary, isn't it?

Biblical Family Ministries is a non-profit Christian ministry established in 1993. It was founded to present the Bible's teaching on marriage, family, child rearing, and other Biblical topics. Dr. E. Allen Griffith and his wife, Patricia, work together in this ministry located in Myerstown, PA.

