with the individual who has committed the tort, then seek to fashion a theory to reach the organization of which the individual is a part, and, finally, seek to fashion a theory to reach the pockets of the individuals who have formed the organization. If these three areas do not satisfy the lawyer's desire, then an examination will be made of the relationship of the organization to other organizations. If this sounds farfetched, consider the following scenario:

The pastor of a local congregation fires a staff member who confesses to being a practicing homosexual. Suit is brought against the pastor, the church, the individuals constituting the leadership body of the church and the denominational organization to which the local church is accountable. This latter organization has insisted that the churches related to it must not permit any individual to be on staff of a local church who is a practicing homosexual.

The legal foundation for such a suit is found in **Barr v. United Methodist Church, et al.** In **Barr,** a suit was brought against Pacific Homes Corporation, a California not-for-profit corporation which operated 14 retirement homes in Southern California, and the United Methodist Church, which was related to it. The relationship of the corporation and the United Methodist Church was comparable to the relationship that a local United Methodist congregation would have to the United Methodist Church. The Court of Appeals in California treated the United Methodist Church as an unincorporated association under California law and ruled that any form of agency, sponsorship or control sufficed to subject it to liability for the activity of one of its affiliated agencies. This ruling has awesome ramifications for the major denominations and other Christian organizations in the United States.

Church discipline

While the seminar did not specifically address the church discipline situation, this is obviously another area of tort liability exposure. Those churches who do follow Biblical discipline are definitely targets for future litigation. Those suits will come as either invasion of privacy or intentional infliction of emotional distress or both.

Deserved and undeserved attacks

The days ahead will unquestionably bring many attacks upon God's people. Some of those will be well deserved and others will be the consequence of serving God in an antagonistic, ungodly society. When Christians violate God's Word, they can expect judgment in many forms. The ungodly world is increasingly treating Christians with greater severity for not practicing what they preach. Thus, it is imperative that believers see the wisdom of living in obedience to God, not only because it pleases Him, but because it provides the best defense when litigation comes.

Jesus commanded His disciples in Matthew 5 to be "salt" and "light" to the world in which we live or be "trampled under foot by men." The failure of prior generations, as well as our own generation, to obey this command has brought upon God's people this consequence. This is another illustration of how one part of the body affects the whole, be it for good or for bad.

The double standard: How Hollywood accommodates everyone except Christians

By Ted Baehr, CEO
Good News Communications

A movie producer told me recently that several of his well known, influential, Hollywood media friends are concerned about increasing Christian activism with respect to movies and television. They feel that Christians have no right to influence the media and should not try to clean up the entertainment industry through boycotts, lobbying and other public pressure. They were alarmed by the protest of **The Last Temptation of Christ** and feel such activity is a prudish censorship of their right to free speech.

Patron sovereignty

This illogical attitude demonstrates not only how the public's perception of the Constitutional right of "free speech" has deviated perversely from the intent of the Founding Fathers to protect political speech, but also how far the church has drifted from being salt and light in the world. From 1933 to 1966, the church was actively involved in Hollywood, reading every script to ensure that there was no exploitation of sex, violence, or profanity, and that no minister and no religion was mocked in any movie or television program.

This involvement resulted from the church's boycott of a morally objectionable movie in 1932. Concerned about the loss of the large Christian audience, the boycotted studio asked for that denomination's input, and, under the authority of that church, a Christian layman[1] formulated the Motion Picture Code which in essence adapted the Ten Commandments to movies.

The studios adopted the Code, and for 33 years representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Southern Baptist Church and the Protestant Film Office read every script and supervised all movie production so that movies could receive the Motion Picture Code Seal. During that period, there was no exploitation of sex, violence, or profanity in Hollywood movies. Many of the Hollywood media elite applauded church involvement as an act of patron sovereignty.

Motion picture and then television executives welcomed this church activity because it precluded censorship, which is prior legal restraint by government. They were afraid that government would step in to censor movies and television if the church weren't involved in helping movies and programs avoid matters offensive to most viewers.

Furthermore, they felt that the church involvement helped them reach a broad audience which they thought they would lose if the churches did not keep them in touch with the ethical standards of the vast majority of the American people. They appreciated the fact that they could keep immoral, but influential producers and directors in line by saying they would love to accommodate their artistic desire to produce prurient material, but the churches would not allow such material to be included in major motion pictures. The church was the fall guy to help Hollywood executives keep immoral producers and directors in line. Studio heads worried that if the churches stopped reading scripts, producers and directors would have their way and Christian audiences would stop going to movies.

For more information

If you are one of the many Christians who go to movies and would like biblical guidance with regard to which movies are good and which are bad, contact *Movieguide: A Biblical Guide to Movies and Entertainment.* Like television, movies are merely a tool of communication. Some, like **Chariots of Fire** and **The Jesus Film**, communicate the good, the true and the beautiful. Some, like **The Last Temptation of Christ,** communicate lies and perversion. If you vote at the box office for good movies and stay away from bad movies, then Hollywood will have to start making better entertainment. Hollywood needs your money to survive, and you have every right to influence Hollywood by choosing the good and rejecting the bad. *Movieguide* will help you to make the right choice.

If you would like more information, call or write: Movieguide, P.O. Box 9952, Atlanta, GA 30319; 404/237-0326.

Hiding our light under a bushel

For several reasons, which in hindsight seem insignificant, the three church groups decided to shut down their Motion Picture Code offices. One Hollywood executive complained with tears in his eyes, "If you take the salt from the meat, the meat is going to rot." Many movie executives worried that Christians would avoid movies since they no longer had the Motion Picture Code Seal of Approval, so they instituted the Motion Picture Association of America Ratings.

However, the media elite soon found they could include almost any material, no matter how violent or obscene, in movies and the same percentage of Christians would show up at the box office. Therefore, they decided that Christians didn't care.

Directors and producers quickly incorporated the sex, violence and profane language which the churches had excluded for 33 years. The meager amount of money the churches saved by closing the Motion Picture Code offices was quickly overshadowed by the tremendous cost to society in rapes, abortions, murders, and other abhorrent crimes stimulated by the immoral messages now being communicated by movies and television programs.

Other groups speak up

Those who bemoan the church's involvement in the mass media would be wise to remember that several other groups have done and continue to do exactly the same thing that churches used to do by reviewing scripts, demanding that the media be sensitive to their concerns and focusing public pressure on the media elite. It is interesting that these groups followed the pattern of involvement first established by the churches in 1933. These groups are still applauded by the Hollywood elite for their input.

Neal Gabler, himself a Jew, points out in his popular and critically acclaimed book, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* that Jews have been involved in lobbying Hollywood for at least 50 years. In discussing the rise of this involvement, Mr. Gabler reports that Mendel Silberberg wrote the American Jewish Committee (AJC) in 1942, "A group in the motion picture industry is seriously considering setting up some form of organization through which it could be far more articulate in both the general effort for democracy and the correlated effort against anti-Semitism." Silberberg went on to recommend that the group "militantly meet attacks on Jews or upon the motion picture industry..."[2]

Gabler also cited an AJC attempt in 1947 to stop a movie that used the murder of a Jew as a sermon on tolerance. An AJC memo stated, "[T]he basic idea of killing Jews just because they are Jews, was an extremely dangerous idea to project on the screen before 50 million or more people..."[3]

"Jewish organizations have a clear and rightful interest in making sure that Hollywood films do not present Jews in such a way as to arouse prejudice," declared a memo from an umbrella group of Jewish organizations early in 1947. "In some cases, such pictures should be taken out of production entirely. In other cases, scripts should be edited carefully to eliminate questionable passages. Everything should be done to eliminate unfortunate stereotypes of the Jews...."[4]

Hollywood bows to pressure groups

Jews were not the only group concerned with their media image. Blacks, Hispanics, Italians, German Americans, women, homosexuals, lesbians, and others impacted the mass media. Sometimes these groups were peaceful, and sometimes they staged sit-ins, screamed and brought violent pressure to bear on the media elite.

As Kathryn C. Montgomery reports in her new book *Target: Prime Time,* several groups, such as pro-abortion forces, were very effective:

"Maude was in trouble. The colorful, outspoken lead character of the popular CBS television series was pregnant and she didn't want to be. At forty-seven, she was too old to start raising another child. The distressed Maude was about to accept her fate—until her daughter, Carol, sophisticated, liberated and divorced, proposed a solution to Maude's dilemma: abortion. 'We're free,' she assured her mother. 'We finally have the right to decide what we can do with our own bodies...and it's as simple as going to the dentist...You don't have to have the baby...There's no reason to feel guilty....'"[5]

Maude's abortion decision took two episodes of MAUDE in November, 1972. The heart-wrenching debate occurred on screens in the homes of more than 50 million Americans. Ms. Montgomery then traces the history of this advocacy story, showing how one group brought it about:

"Set up in 1969, the [Washington-based Population] Institute's mission was to influence public opinion about the perils of unchecked population growth. The group planned to achieve its goal 'by increasing the population content of the news, entertainment and advertising media.' ...Prime time programming seemed to be the ideal vehicle for public education. Not only would it reach large numbers of the American public in an instant, but it could also package political and social issues in an entertaining context."[6]

According to Montgomery, the Population Institute held a 1971 luncheon to persuade TV executives to focus on population issues in their programs. Notable attendees included: John D. Rockefeller III (then Chairman of the President's Commission on Population Growth and American Future), Sen. Robert Packwood (R.-Oregon), and George Bush (then Chair of the Republican National Committee), CBS Vice Chairman Frank Stanton, top executives from all three networks and Norman Lear. It was clear that the Population Institute played a major role in the genesis of the pro-abortion episodes.[7]

Montgomery went on to say that abortion forces, fearful that some stations might not air the two MAUDE episodes, took steps to assure their broadcast. However, she wrote, "Few people involved with the show anticipated the extent of the outcry over Maude's abortion. Hundreds of letters continued to pour in to the network and production company in the weeks following the broadcasts, most of them highly critical."[8]

The most vehement protest came from within the Catholic Church. Not being forewarned, Catholic groups greeted the episodes with shock and outrage.[9]

Montgomery cited Richard Blake, writing in *AMERICA:* "In 'Maude's Dilemma', abortion is not a matter of life and death, it is a joke with a deadly message: the divorced daughter tells Maude to outgrow her childhood hang-ups, since repugnance from abortion is a silly old-fashioned idea."[10]

Blake pointed out that the **Roe v. Wade** decision on January 22, 1973, making abortion legal in every state, gave powerful ammunition to abortion groups and made it easier for CBS to consider re-running the episodes.[11]

When re-runs were scheduled for August 14 and 21, a coalition of pro-choice groups—including the National Organization for Woman and the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL)—began a letter-writing campaign to CBS affiliates, urging them to carry the two episodes. The American Civil Liberties Union joined in this effort, sending telegrams to its chapters around the country calling for members to put pressure on their local stations.

"While the pro-choice groups were armed and ready to battle," wrote Blake, "anti-abortion organizations were again caught off guard by the announcement of summer re-runs."[12]

Caught off-guard

In arguing that these groups should have more involvement in the mass media, Montgomery does Christian groups a service by pointing out that we were continually caught off guard by television programs and movies which resulted from the active involvement of these other groups.

Some of these groups were quite pointed in their demands, e.g.:

- "The Gay Media Task Force was really a one-man operation, run by the psychologist Dr. Newton Deiter."[13]
- "Rather than appearing to be a demanding pressure group, the