

Media Watchdog Leads Protest of 'Christophobic' Cartoon About Jesus

✖ A Christian media watchdog is protesting a proposed animated TV show about Christ wanting to escape the shadow of His "powerful but apathetic father" and live a regular life in New York City.

Movieguide founder Ted Baehr is seeking 500,000 signatures on an online petition to stop Comedy Central from pursuing the half-hour program *JC*. According to the network, the show portrays God as more interested in playing video games than listening to His son talk about adjusting to life in the big city. The show is being produced by Reveille, the company behind *The Office*, *Ugly Betty* and *The Biggest Loser*.

"The very concept of this show is blasphemous and Christophobic," Baehr said in an e-mail to supporters. "Comedy Central wouldn't develop such a show about Mohammed, the founder of Islam. So, why do they want to develop a show mocking Jesus Christ and Christ's relationship to the Father, first person of the Holy and undivided Trinity?"

Just weeks before it announced *JC* in early May, Comedy Central opted not to air an image of the Muslim prophet Muhammad in a bear costume on its animated series *South Park* after the

network was threatened by an extremist Islamic website. Comedy Central obscured the character with a black box and bleeped out references to his name.

Baehr is part of a newly formed coalition that on Thursday condemned Comedy Central, which is owned by Viacom, for using a double standard regarding its treatment of Islam and Christianity. Citizens Against Religious Bigotry (CARB) is sending letters to network advertisers urging them to refrain from spending ad dollars on JC. On June 17 the coalition will identify which companies agreed not to sponsor the show.

In addition to Baehr, CARB includes Brent Bozell, president of the Media Research Center; James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family and now president of Family Talk; Wendy Wright, president of Concerned Women for America; Family Research Council President Tony Perkins; radio talk show host Michael Medved; and Rabbi Daniel Lapin of the American Alliance of Jews and Christians.

"Why does Comedy Central give such deference to Islam while mocking Christianity," Perkins asked during a conference call Thursday. "Is it because they confuse the civility of Christianity with weakness?"

CARB released a video showing a pattern of offensive portrayals of Christ and God on Comedy Central, most from *South Park*.

The video includes clips of Jesus defecating on President

George W. Bush and a statue of the Virgin Mary menstruating on the pope.

After announcing *JC* last month, Comedy Central's head of original programming, Kent Alterman, said "comedy in purist form always makes some people uncomfortable." But Baehr called that claim "self-aggrandizing," pointing to *I Love Lucy*, *Up* and *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* as examples of "great" comedies that don't blaspheme religion and are not designed to offend.

"Contrary to the opinion of many self-proclaimed pundits, mockery and personal ridicule is not good satire," Baehr said. "It's naked propaganda, designed to demonize and stereotype."

Movieguide

has launched similar protests of controversial films such as *Hounddog*, which depicted a scene of child rape, and *Antichrist*, which included explicit sexuality and disturbing scenes of mutilation and violence.

"Stopping this program that is so offensive to God is essential to preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and letting people know His infinite love and glory," Baehr said. "Every program or movie that mocks and ridicules Jesus Christ and the gospel breaks God's heart ... another spear piercing His side."

According to the AP, many development deals don't result in a series. The network must first like the scripts enough to produce a test episode, then

find that strong
enough to put it on the air.