

'Vile' Antichrist Film Spawns Petition for NC-17 Rating

✖ A Christian film critic has launched a campaign to keep what he calls "one of the most vile movies of all time" out of most local theaters.

Movieguide founder Ted Baehr says the currently unrated horror film *Antichrist*, which is set to release this Friday, should be rated NC-17 because of its explicit sexuality and disturbing scenes of mutilation and violence, including the death of a baby.

"We cannot stop this movie, but we have a strategy which we believe will be the next best thing," Baehr wrote in an e-mail urging Christians to sign an online petition calling for the NC-17 rating.

Baehr said local theaters often decline to show NC-17 films because the rating limits the audience. Unlike with R-rated movies, children under 17 are not permitted to see the film, even if accompanied by an adult.

Starring Willem Dafoe and Charlotte Gainsbourg, *Antichrist* is the story of a married couple's plunge into the occult as they grieve the loss of their son. Baehr said the movie, written and directed by controversial Danish filmmaker Lars von Trier, "wallows in evil" and contains significant occult content and extreme sadomasochistic violence.

"The main female character in the movie takes a 2 by 4 to her

husband's private part and then drills his leg to a milestone while doing other acts of mutilation," Baehr wrote. "This is not the kind of thing we want our children to observe."

Gainsbourg won best actress at the Cannes Film Festival in France for her role in the film, but the movie generated strong reaction from critics and audiences.

"I thought I had my head down a lavatory, frankly," said critic Baz Bamigboye of Britain's *Daily Mail*.

After the Cannes premiere, journalists demanded that von Trier explain and justify his movie during the press conference. At other screenings, viewers have reportedly passed out or vomited.

Von Trier said he doesn't believe he has to explain himself. "I work for myself, and I do this little film that I am now kind of fond of," he said at Cannes. "I haven't done it for you or for an audience, so I don't think I owe anybody an explanation."

On Wednesday, Baehr plans to send the petition to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), which oversees film ratings. Baehr said it is not too late to influence the MPAA.

"If the world had standards, this movie would be Triple X and banned," Baehr wrote in his review of *Antichrist*. "As it is, we are issuing our strongest warning not to see it, and to complain to the MPAA for allowing a movie like this to come to theaters near you."