

# MOVIE RATINGS FLAP ENDS; RELIGIOUS FILMS UNAFFECTED

A potential showdown between the Catholic League and the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) was avoided when a highly controversial issue that we addressed was quickly resolved. Our effort was clearly worthwhile given the happy ending.

The problem began on June 7, when Kris Fuhr, vice president for marketing at Provident Films (owned by Sony) , was quoted by Scripps Howard News Service. Fuhr said that someone at the MPAA told her that "Facing the Giants" was awarded a PG rating because the film "was heavily laden with messages from one religion and that this might offend people from other religions." The movie, which opens September 29, includes answered prayers, a miracle and references to Jesus.

We immediately confirmed Fuhr's account with her and then contacted the MPAA. Not satisfied with what we heard, we decided to press the issue. On June 13, Bill Donohue wrote Dan Glickman, chairman and CEO of the MPAA, requesting that he investigate why an "overtly" Christian film like "Facing the Giants" merited the PG red flag; in a news release on the subject, we asked our members to e-mail Glickman about their concerns.

On the evening of June 16, we received a call from Joan Graves, chairman of the MPAA ratings board. As it turns out, she was the MPAA official who spoke to Fuhr, but she had a different impression of their conversation. According to Graves, she told Fuhr that the PG rating was given because of mature issues, e.g., depression, matters relating to pregnancy and sports-related violence—not for being overtly religious.

Graves sent us a statement indicating their "long-standing

policy not to comment to the press about individual films other than to give the rating and the rating reasons," but owing to the "misunderstanding that this film received a PG rating for its 'religious viewpoint,'" she felt obliged to respond. She added, "This film has a mature discussion about pregnancy, for example, as well as other elements that parents might want to be aware of. There are many religious films that have been submitted for rating, and they have garnered ratings from G to R, depending on the graphics and intensity of various elements in the film."

We are satisfied with this response and are delighted to know that the MPAA has no policy of giving a PG rating to movies dubbed "too religious."