

NEWS

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What Are the Effects of Mass Media on Society?

Entertainment expert Ted Baehr and legendary entertainer Pat Boone provide vital guidance and biting research to heated culture wars in *The Culture-Wise Family*



Hollywood, CA, April 11, 2007—Families across the globe are consuming mass media at alarming rates—from television, movies, newspapers, magazines and music on iPods—to surfing wildly popular Internet sites like MySpace and YouTube.

Today’s consumers are bombarded with both blatant and subliminal messages—the average child spends only 21 minutes with parents each day, compared to up to 10.25 hours per day with the Internet and TV.¹

How are media messages and consumption affecting society, especially youth?

Entertainment expert and founder of Movieguide® Dr. Ted Baehr and legendary musician Pat Boone penned *The Culture-Wise Family* (Regal Books), urging Christians to critically examine media, become culturally literate and protect youth from damaging messages. Tackling pressing issues, Baehr and Boone dive into tough questions:

- What messages are the media sending to children? Teens? Adults?
- What effects and consequences do mass media messages have on society?
- How do I protect my children from dangerous media messages?
- Has the U.S. become numb to violence, sex and immorality in the media?
- How can Christians develop a culturally-wise worldview? Are there media alternatives?
- How does Hollywood operate? What is the future of faith-based movies in the U.S.?
- Why is “worldview” so important? What impact does it have on being culturally-wise?

The Church & Mass Media

“Whoever controls the media controls the culture,” write Baehr and Boone, both strong activists for Christians positively influencing Hollywood and culture. They examine the history of mass media, covering Christianity’s relationship with culture, including how the church disengaged its involvement from screening movie scripts in 1966—which sparked the disintegration of values in movies.

Discussing the impact of faith-based film today, following blockbuster successes like *The Passion of the Christ* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the authors uncover why Christian-based films make an average of 3.5 times more money than non-Christian counterparts—proving that conservative culture demands moral media.²

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National radio host Janet Parshall calls *The Culture-Wise Family*, “A clear, concise, comprehensive guide to becoming more than overcomers in the midst of an increasingly toxic culture.” With praise from leaders in entertainment and Christian thought, *The Culture-Wise Family* is a must-read for those who want to be in the world, but not of it.



Dr. Ted Baehr is the founder and publisher of Movieguide® and chairman of the Christian Film & Television Commission. He is a noted author, speaker and educator, and has been featured on *Oprah*, *Hannity & Colmes*, CNN, ABC, Fox News, MSNBC and *Entertainment Tonight*. Baehr and his wife Lili have four children: Peirce, Jim, Robby and Evy.

Pat Boone was second only to Elvis in the 1950s and early 1960s as the most popular singer at that time. He’s appeared in 15 movies and hosted his own television show.

About Movieguide®:

Movieguide® is a ministry dedicated to redeeming the values of the mass media according to biblical principles by influencing entertainment industry executives and helping families make wise media choices. Visit www.movieguide.org.

About *The Culture-Wise Family*:

The Culture-Wise Family: Upholding Christian Values in a Mass Media World by Dr. Ted Baehr and Pat Boone. Published by Regal Books. March 2007, 269 pages, hardcover. ISBN: 978-0830743056.

¹Source: “The average child in the United States only gets about 21 minutes per day of primary attention with their parents, but according to the Motion Picture Association, spends up to 10.25 hours per day with the Internet and TV.” (Baehr, p. 87-88)

²Source: “Five-Year Study Shows Christian Movies Earn 3.5 Times More Money than Non-Christian Movies” (www.movieguide.org)

For an interview with Ted Baehr or Pat Boone, contact Ben Laurro at Pure Publicity at Ben@purepublicity.com or 818.753.4056

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About Ted Baehr

Dr. Ted Baehr is the founder and publisher of Movieguide® (www.movieguide.org) and chairman of the Christian Film & Television Commission (CFTC).



A noted critic, educator, lecturer and media pundit, Baehr is also a popular speaker and the author of several books, including *Narnia Beckons*, *Frodo and Harry: Understanding Visual Media and Its Impact on Our Lives*, and *So You Want to Be in Pictures?*

He has been a featured guest on *Oprah*, *Hannity & Colmes*, CNN, ABC, Fox News, MSNBC and *Entertainment Tonight*. His work also has been featured in such publications as *Time magazine*, *USA Today*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, the *Hollywood Reporter*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, and *U.S. News & World Report*.

Baehr graduated summa cum laude in Comparative Literature from Dartmouth College, attended Cambridge University, the University of Bordeaux & Toulouse and the University of Munich. He graduated from New York University School of Law and finished his theological studies at the Institute of Theology at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Baehr and his wife Lili have four children: Peirce, Jim, Robby and Evy.

About Pat Boone

Pat Boone was second only to Elvis in the 1950s and early 1960s as the most popular singer at that time. In his trademark white buck shoes, Boone skyrocketed to fame with such hits as “Two Hearts,” “Ain’t That A Shame,” “I Almost Lost My Mind,” “Love Letters in the Sand” and “Sugar Moon.”

He appeared in 15 movies, including “Bernardine,” “April Love,” “State Fair” and “Journey to the Center of the Earth” and hosted his own television series, “The Pat Boone/Chevy Showroom” for three years.

In the 60s and 70s, the Boone family toured as gospel singers and recorded gospel albums, such as “The Pat Boone Family” and “The Family Who Prays.” Pat is a direct descendant of pioneer Daniel Boone. Boone and his wife, Shirley, have four daughters: Cherry, Lindy, Debby and Laury.

About Movieguide®:

Movieguide® is a ministry dedicated to redeeming the values of the mass media according to biblical principles by influencing entertainment industry executives and helping families make wise media choices.

A Publication of the Christian Film & Television Commission™ ministry and Good News Communications, Inc., it is a Not-For-Profit 501(C) 3 Donor Supported Publication dedicated to Redeeming the Values of the Mass Media of Entertainment.

Good News Communications equips moral people in America and around the world, especially parents, families and Christians, to make wise media choices based on the biblical worldview. Visit www.movieguide.org.

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Suggested Interview Questions

Ted Baehr and Pat Boone, authors of *The Culture-Wise Family*

1. How much mass media are people consuming today? Is it at an all-time high?
2. What are some of the core messages media is sending? Sex? Violence? Religious?
3. What key historical events led to the disintegration of values in mass media?
4. How is the U.S. different in relationship to other countries media habits? Are we better or worse? What is society craving?
5. How can Christians become culturally and media 'wise'?
6. Why is 'worldview' so important when dissecting media?
7. How can parents protect their children and teens from harmful media?
8. How should parents become educated and proactive in response to recent online media developments like MySpace and YouTube?
9. What should the role of Christians be in mass media? Avoidance? Interaction?
10. What are your thoughts on the recent development of faith-based film?
11. What impact have films like *The Passion of the Christ*, *Facing The Giants*, and *Amazing Grace* had on Hollywood? What does the future hold for Christian film?
12. A Movieguide® study revealed that Christian values-based movies make up to 3.5 times more money than non-Christian movies. Could you tell us more about these findings? Does it prove the demand for Christian values-driven media?
13. Mainstream critics often give Christian-based movies biting reviews, like the recent thriller *Thr33*. What should Christian's response be to criticism?
14. Is there a movement in Christendom to 'regain the arts'? How can Christians involved in Hollywood move forward with wisdom?
15. What are some misperceptions about *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings*?
16. Tell us about Movieguide®. What is its purpose?
17. What are some recent movies you would recommend?
18. What are some media alternatives to damaging mainstream media?

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Endorsements for *The Culture-Wise Family*

“*The Culture-Wise Family* is a clear, concise, comprehensive guide to becoming more than overcomers in the midst of an increasingly toxic culture. While most books focus on the almost apocalyptic problems facing believers in a neo-pagan society and the secular news theology and fear mantra ‘If it bleeds, it leads,’ *The Culture-Wise Family* helps concerned readers understand the problems and develop discernment and wisdom.”

—**Janet Parshall, National Radio Host**

“In our present day world, each family and individual is bombarded on all sides by media messages, designed to influence the unsuspecting. *The Culture-Wise Family* shows these messages in the pure light of the scripture and the glitter melts away. You and I will truly be blessed by *The Culture-Wise Family*; as it is a resource that will be treasured for years to come.”

—**James Wooters, president of Mizelle, Hodges & Associates, Inc.,**

“One of God’s special gifts to Christian families has been Dr. Ted Baehr who has shared wise and helpful counsel through MOVIEGUIDE®. Now he has teamed with Pat Boone to share a book that will help us understand the present media culture and how we can both survive and thrive as Christians who share the light of Christ into the darkness of our culture.”

—**Dr. Paul Cedar, Chairman of the Mission America Coalition**

“I have spoken out for years for faith and values in the entertainment industry. Dr. Ted Baehr’s and Pat Boone’s *The Culture-Wise Family* is an essential tool to help parents guide their families toward worthwhile entertainment and protect their families from the abhorrent entertainment coming out of today’s Hollywood. Pat and Ted are trying to encourage Hollywood to return to its Golden Age and make better movies that everyone can enjoy.”

—**Jane Russell, Silver screen legend (“Gentleman Prefer Blondes,” “Paleface” and “Johnny Reno”)**

“We have come to expect Dr. Baehr’s writing to be informed by the core issues of the culture war and directed to the pressure points where Christians willing to fight this war can have the most impact. Again in *The Culture-Wise Family* he has hit the most salient point, namely that our children must be equipped in their families to know the issues and strategies in media in order to win the culture war.”

—**Dr. David W. Clark, president of Palm Beach Atlantic University**

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“I’ve admired and respected Pat Boone for more than four decades, and have worked with Ted Baehr on various projects for nearly a decade now; he, too, is thoroughly a man of God. I know of no better mentors for the vast majority of us who need help in becoming more culture and media-wise, and, thus, more faithful Christians.”

—Joseph Coleson, Professor of Old Testament at the Nazarene Theological Seminary and a Translation Team member for the New Living Translation

“Ted Baehr and Pat Boone are uniquely qualified to write this wake up call for our families. The facts are here and now it is up to us.”

—Herman Bailey, Executive Producer/Host of “It’s Time For Herman & Sharron” on the Christian Television Network

“*The Culture-Wise Family* offers a rich, authoritative, and trenchant analysis of the many perilous trends in a time when parents face challenges that are unprecedented in their intensity and detrimental influences. *The Culture-Wise Family* is rich in practical counsel for parents in this challenging and dramatically changing time, and it provides creative insights on how we can leverage culture to make the greatest story ever told more gripping and influential in the lives of others.”

—Kenneth Boa, president of Reflections Ministries in Atlanta, Ga. and president of Trinity House Publishers

“Perhaps the greatest challenge for evangelical Christians in the 21st century is the culture war. As a nation our Christian values are under attack as never before. Dr. Ted Baehr’s book, *The Culture-Wise Family*, will be a great help to all who hold dear our Christian history and heritage. I heartily recommend it.”

—Larry Lewis, National Facilitator of the Mission America Coalition

“*The Culture-Wise Family* is a must read for any family, especially Christian families. If you know what is feeding your mind, then you can keep the trap door shut, if it is wrong. This book shows you how.”

—Terry D. Porter, member of the Writers Guild of America and agent with Agape Productions

“A corrupt and corrupting mass media daily violate the American people. Kudos to Dr. Baehr and Pat Boone for arming us with a coherent, unambiguous and forceful guide to being ‘Culture Wise.’”

—Judith A. Reisman, Ph.D., founder of the Institute for Media Education and the author of *Kinsey, Crimes & Consequences*

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Story Ideas and Fact Sheet

Based on *The Culture-Wise Family* by Ted Baehr and Pat Boone

The Rise of Mass Media Consumption: A feature story examining the history of mass media development from the 1930's to 2007.

- How has mass media progressed since the 1960's into what it is today?
- Why did the Christian church disintegrate from media in 1966?

Examining the Effects of Mass Media on Youth: Today's youth are bombarded with more mass media than ever before. This feature would focus on the effects that mass media has on children and teens.

- What effects does mass media have on children?
- How can parents protect children from dangerous mass media messages?

Mass Media in the United States: Studies show that U.S. consumers demand media that is more sexually explicit and violent than other countries. This story would seek to uncover why U.S. media consumption is different on a global scale.

- Why is the U.S. among the highest consumers of mass media?
- Has the U.S. become numb to violence, sex and immorality in its media?

The Emergence of Faith-Based Movies: Following the success of *The Passion of the Christ* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, many major studios have formed faith-based divisions to produce faith-based movies.

- A new five-year study shows that Christian values-driven movies earn more than 3.5 more money on average. (*Source:* www.movieguide.org)
- What is the future of faith-based movies in the U.S.? Globally?

The Trajectory of Mass Media: With drastic changes over the past decades, this story will examine the projection of mass media in the future.

- Will movies and mass media continue to escalate in sex and violence?
- What impact will new online media developments (MySpace, YouTube) have on the future of mass media?

The Christian Response to Mass Media: This story will examine the Christian response to mass media within and outside the church.

- What is the appropriate Christian response to mass media?
- How can Christians become media and culturally 'wise'?

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Quotable: *The Culture-Wise Family*

“Hollywood is not a geographic place anymore, but an entertainment industry that reaches the world. It is the United States of America’s voice to people everywhere, especially the youth.” (Baehr, p. 18)

Protecting Children from Damaging Media (p. 26-28)

1. Pillar 1: Understand the influence of the media on your children.
2. Pillar 2: Ascertain your children’s susceptibility at each stage of cognitive development.
3. Pillar 3: Teach your children how the media communicates its message.
4. Pillar 4: Help your children know the fundamentals of Christian faith.
5. Pillar 5: Help your children learn how to ask the right questions.

“The average child in the United States only gets about 21 minutes per day of primary attention with their parents, but according to the Motion Picture Association, spends up to 10.25 hours per day with the Internet and TV.” (Baehr, p. 87-88)

“No matter how much we condemn the mass media for influencing the behavior of our children, we must admit that there are several accomplices in this tragedy. These accomplices include churches that don’t instruct parents how to teach their children discernment and parents who allow their children to watch television, go to movies or surf the Internet without adequate supervision.” (Baehr, p. 87)

MySpace: Spring Break for Kids

“Unfortunately, many parents do not realize or they ignore what is really going on in MySpace.com, a virtual everything-goes spring break for kids ... According to the Center for Missing and Exploited Children, last year there were more than 2,600 cases of adults luring children via the Internet.” (DeBrecht, p. 115)

Faith at the Movies?

“Eight percent of the 10 most popular movies in 2005 had strong or very strong moral content and acceptability ratings. In addition, only 1 of the top 10 movies—and only 3 of the top 25—were rated R by the Motion Picture Association.” (Baehr, p. 25, citing Christian Film and Television Commission research)

“More and more movies are being aimed at the faith-based audience. Some of these filmmakers are at the top of their game. But even so, after watching some of the theological errors and confusion in these movies, perhaps they (and those in the Church who are taken in by them) would also benefit from studying theology and critical thinking.” (Baehr, p. 54)

“The type of entertainment being produced is gradually moving away from salacious, ultra-violent R-rated movies to family films with faith—movies such as *The Nativity Story*;

Charlotte's Web; *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *The Pursuit of Happyness*. Even Rocky Balboa has found faith in Jesus Christ.” (Baehr, p. 18-19)

“Studios have also started to explore the faith and values market, including Fox Faith (which released *End of the Spear*), Sony Provident-Integrity (which released *The Gospel* and *The Second Chance*) and Paramount (which released *World Trade Center...*). Like Disney, these studios are beginning to understand that movies containing explicit material earn much less money than family-friendly movies with morally uplifting, redemptive content reflecting Judeo-Christian values.” (Baehr, p. 135)

“The Motion Picture Association of America originally gave *Facing the Giants* (a fine family film) the R rating for excessive content. As *Jaws* had received this rating due to violent content, the rating was considered appropriate due to *Facing the Giants*' Christian content. A popular outcry resulted in a correction.” (Baehr, p. 38)

“We can be encouraged by the good news offered by the CFTC and buy tickets to family-friendly films that some of the brave and admirable souls in Hollywood are still daring to make. We can boycott, by our absence and lack of interest, all the shameful schlock that morally challenged producers and exhibitors still think they can foist on us.” (Boone, p. 26)

The History of the Church & Hollywood

“At its inception, the Church sought to appropriate the moving picture's potential for evangelism, education and social uplift. That potential has yet to be realized. Christians often forget that the Church exerted a great influence on the entertainment industry from 1933 to 1966. For 33 years, every script was read by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Southern Baptist Church and the Protestant Film Office. Then in 1966, the churches voluntarily withdrew from the entertainment industry. When the churches retreated, the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) instituted the MPAA rating system to take the place of the Code. These groups reward pictures and television programs that communicate their point of view and condemn movies and television programs that disagree with them.” (Baehr, adapted from p. 47-49)

The World's View of the United States

“The United States is considered by many to be the most immoral country in the world. Movies are often re-edited to include more sex and violence for release in the U.S. market. In January 2003, researchers at Boston University released a shocking study that showed how teenagers around the world held a negative view of Americans ... The study also found that negative depictions of Americans in movies and TV programs influenced the beliefs of many of the subjects.” (Baehr, adapted from p. 49-50)

Who runs Hollywood?

“The entertainment industry accounts for one-sixth of our GNP in the United States of America, experts contend there are less than 100 people who make the final decision to green light

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an entertainment project. These individuals work for one of eight major companies that control approximately 98 percent of the box office, television programs and major media in America.” (Baehr, adapted from p. 122)

“Typically, the majority of the Oscars’ attention and praise are reserved for a procession of depressing, controversial, objectionable and downright decadent flicks.” (Baehr, p. 25)

“Our children may see from 800,000 to 1.5 million acts of violence and witness 192,000 to 360,000 murders on television by the time they are 17.” (Baehr, p. 90)

“A study by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation revealed that the amount of sex on television has nearly doubled since 1998.” (Baehr, p. 113)

“There is one babysitter who is constantly abusing millions of our children: a television set. The same could be said about computers, iPods and other mass media of entertainment.” (Baehr, p. 86)

Worldview Crisis

“There has been a weakening of faith, an abandonment of values and an eroding of civility in our culture.” (Baehr, p. 20)

“The greatest issue facing our culture involves understanding the Christian worldview. It is a more important issue than poverty, racism, AIDS, immoral entertainment, low SAT scores, the budget deficit, divorce, illegitimate births, domestic violence and even abortion. While each of these is a serious problem, they are simply the fruit of bad worldview thinking.” (Baehr, p. 156)

“A significant majority of Americans—as evidenced by the vote count in the last election—feel that moral values are even more important than matters of security, terrorism, economy or education.” (Baehr, p. 66)

Soul Food: We Always Need It

“Good news is food for the soul. And while we’re being deluged and glutted with almost every kind of depressing and troubling and anxiety-producing story imaginable, there are wonderful, encouraging things happening in our midst that we hear too little about.” (Baehr, p. 79)

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