

Super Bowl promoters make offensive calls

by Robert Knight

What do the Fall Creek Baptist Church in Indianapolis and GoDaddy.com have in common?

They both drew a flag from promoters of the Super Bowl, but with markedly different penalties.

The National Football League slapped the church with a legal warning not to feature the Super Bowl on a large screen at a church-sponsored party. Reason? The pastor was asking for a small fee to cover refreshments, and was using the NFL's logo to promote the event.

Keep in mind that saloons all over Indianapolis, Chicago and elsewhere featured the Super Bowl on their big screens while charging for seats and drinks.

Here's more from The Indianapolis Star:

The league even took exception to the church's plan to influence nonmembers with a video highlighting the Christian testimonies of Colts coach Tony Dungy and Chicago Bears coach Lovie Smith.

“While this may be a noble message,” NFL assistant counsel Rachel L. Margolies wrote in a follow-up e-mail, “we are consistent in refusing the use of our game broadcasts in connection with events that promote a message, no matter the content.”

Really? How about GoDaddy’s message? The Internet domain provider has become famous for porn-flavored spots during the Super Bowl.

CBS, which broadcast the Super Bowl this year, played the role that Fox did last year, which was to reject some deliberately offensive GoDaddy ads, accept a milder version, and thereby drive traffic to the GoDaddy Website. Wink, wink. The ad that actually ran during the first quarter showed two women gyrating on a table. One of them gets a wet T-shirt courtesy of spray bottles wielded by “marketing” staff. The NFL is fine with this.

Earlier, GoDaddy had unveiled two offensive spots, one with pitchwoman Candice Michelle affecting porn poses reminiscent of the film *Basic Instinct* while seated in a chair. As GoDaddy founder and CEO Bob Parsons told a press conference regarding last year's offerings, "These spots have really made the company. We were lucky that [last year's spot] offended somebody so the ad was canceled. It created tremendous publicity."

Enough to try it again this year? "Never once were we trying to get ads rejected," Parsons said with a straight face.

Parsons also turned up smirking on Fox News Channel's *Hannity & Colmes*, along with the porn babe pitchwoman, whose wholesome activities in one of the rejected spots included playing with her breasts, sucking her finger and spreading her legs. You know, what cheerleaders do on the sidelines.

When asked by Kirsten Powers, who was filling in for Alan Colmes, whether they were concerned about children watching, both Parsons and Michelle answered with the classic scoundrel's dodge: Kids see worse stuff, so it's okay.

Parsons: "Come on now. Do you keep your children from going to the mall? You know, there are people who are offended by anything. I understand, some people are offended by a tulip." He went on to note that cheerleaders often wear less than Candice does in the ad.

Toeing the liberal line, which means pitching softballs to cads, Powers followed up with a big smile and a question to Candice, who was also smiling, and clad in a tight T-shirt.

Powers: "Candice, let me bring you in here. What do you think? Do you think the ads are being unfairly treated?"

Michelle: "Uh, well, you know, I think we're definitely being pinpointed, um, you know. But like Bob said, there's nothing more than, you know, what you see on the sideline on the cheerleaders. Matter of fact, I have a lot more clothes on than they have, or, you know, even going to the mall. You know, it's just, um, kind of like being overjudged a little bit."

Sean Hannity, who looked plainly embarrassed at Fox's pandering, rejected the nonsense and said the GoDaddy guests were far from innocent naifs and were actually marketing "geniuses" for creating banned ads and then calling attention to them.

"We're accused of that," Parsons said, barely containing his mirth, "But our intentions are pure."

The other rejected ad features office mates arguing over domain names that imply adultery and incest, the latter hinting at a man "doing" his own mother.

Parsons said he couldn't for the life of him figure out why some people might find these ads in poor taste: "I can't even imagine what's offensive on the ones that they rejected."

Last year, after Fox had to cancel a spot at the last minute, the negotiated settlement left Parsons with two Super Bowl game balls, one of which he twirled during the press conference. He was very happy.

The score following the Super Bowl: GoDaddy: Zillions. Fall Creek Baptist Church: Zilch.

Things might be a little different in Heaven's™ version of the post-game show.

Robert Knight is director of the Culture and Media Institute, a division of the Media Research Center. He may be reached by e-Mail. is director of the Culture and Media Institute, a division of the Media Research Center. He may be reached by e-Mail.