

Network TV serves strained ‘Veggies’

October 13, 2006

Posted: 10/13/06

Network TV serves strained ‘Veggies’

By Chansin Bird

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—NBC has given the religious [Veggie Tales](#) cartoon a prime slot in its Saturday morning lineup, but it is editing many references to God out of the show.

The [Parents Television Council](#) and longtime fans of the popular children’s home videos are not pleased.

“NBC is trying to take God and the Bible out of one of the most popular and successful children’s animated series ever,” said Brent Bozell, president of Parents Television Council, in a statement.

The 30-minute episodes that encourage moral behavior based on Christian principles began airing Sept. 9. Bob the Tomato, Larry the Cucumber and their pals got a Nielsen rating of .95 in their first week, which means about a million homes were tuned in.

Despite some viewers’ discontent, VeggieTales creator Phil Vischer takes a more positive outlook on his blog, www.philvischer.com.

“Let’s focus on one thing ... kids are meeting Bob and Larry on network television. And that’s really cool,” he wrote.

Vischer said he was not upset NBC wants their kids programming to be free from religious statements. However, he wishes he would have known the extent of the required cuts before agreeing to reformat the shows. He didn’t find out about the need for the cuts until two weeks prior to the first episode.

“I probably would have declined to participate simply because there aren’t enough veggie shows that could be made acceptable to NBC without significantly compromising their message,” he wrote.

All of this follows the recent controversy over NBC’s scheduled November airing of a Madonna special from her “Confessions” tour. In one scene of the tour, she sings while attached to a suspended, mirrored cross, wearing a crown of thorns. After many complaints, NBC reportedly has asked Madonna to cut that scene.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.