

REDUCING OTHER LIABILITY RISKS

More and more lawsuits are being filed relating to situations where physical injury is not involved. Such lawsuits include, but are not limited to:

Libel and Slander: Carefully consider statements made and action taken in opposition to another individual or organization. Libel and slander may be claimed alleging statements were made which were not true. Disciplinary action against a member of the congregation can lead to claims of libel and slander. Use care in any actions against such individuals. Develop and consistently follow procedural guidelines, which are outlined in your constitution or manual of faith and practice.

Invasion of Privacy: This involves unauthorized investigations into the private lives of employees or church members, searching personal items of youth, etc. Avoid any activity, which could be construed as an invasion of privacy.

False Arrest: Avoid allegations of malicious arrest without sufficient cause — creating emotional injury. Requests for arrest should be based on clear and sufficient cause.

Breach of Confidentiality: Accidental or deliberate release of confidential material can cause emotional harm or injury — and even economic damage — because of injury to an individual's character or reputation. Confidential material should only be entrusted to responsible people and kept in a safe and secure place. This should include employment information, certain financial records, etc.

False Advertising: Publications and/or advertising, including radio and television, must be accurate. Fully investigate the accuracy of all facts scheduled to be published. When in doubt, avoid publication. **Also** avoid making unrealistic promises that could result in lawsuits.

Public Demonstrations: Avoid improper or illegal demonstrations against individuals, groups, or organizations. (Insurance may not be available for such actions.)

Seek always to maintain the goodwill and good name of your church.

Be careful to avoid those activities, which may jeopardize your church's reputation.