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resource of the month

NCLL
NATIONAL CENTER FOR LIFE AND LIBERTY



PLAGIARISM & COPYRIGHT in MINISTRY

THE PROPER USE OF THE ORIGINAL WORKS OF OTHERS



INTRODUCTION

In recent years, major media outlets have brought attention to the seemingly widespread practice of pastoral plagiarism and copyright violations within churches. Copyright implications arise in most areas of ministry—online streaming of sermons and worship music; using images and photos on the ministry website; providing music for choirs, worship teams, and special music; showing DVDs to children and youth groups; use of Sunday school/small group curriculum; projecting song lyrics onto screens during the worship service—just to name a few. Furthermore, with the advent of entire websites devoted to providing sermon outlines and illustrations, the vast numbers of resources available online, and the addition of thousands of weekly sermons posted by pastors and churches all over the world, it is no longer unusual for search engine results about a particular preaching topic to yield a number of pastors' outlines and sermons that are virtually identical to one another. This raises issues of both copyright and plagiarism.

Plagiarism is defined as "the act of using another person's words or ideas without giving credit to that person." It is essentially the act of treating another's original work as your own by failing to provide the appropriate acknowledgment to that person. Copyright, on the other hand, involves the obligation to obtain permission to reproduce, create derivatives, distribute copies to, and publicly display or perform an original work. Copyright laws protect the original creators of a work by requiring others to obtain permission before using, usurping as their own, or reproducing their copyrighted ideas. In this respect then, much of what can be plagiarized is in fact protected by copyright law.

While no civil or criminal charges can be brought specifically alleging "plagiarism" (although it is grounds for severe academic penalties), copyright infringement is a legal construct that invokes both civil and criminal penalties—usually very harsh ones. Take for example one church that started selling a recording containing a song a member had written and sung in church. The church failed to obtain permission to use the song and the member sued. A jury held the church liable for more than one million dollars! Copyright violations such as this, or a legitimate accusation of a plagiarized sermon, have the potential to seriously diminish the pastor and the ministry's reputation, not to mention the potential to literally bankrupt the ministry. Understanding the purpose behind and the specific requirements of the laws controlling copyright protection, however, will help your ministry use a variety of media, art, music, and other copyrighted works in a safe, legal manner and in a way that will provide great depth, variety, and benefit to your ministry.

THE Basics:



COPYRIGHT PROTECTION

Subject to limitations, copyright protection grants the author or copyright owner the exclusive legal authority/right to each of the following as they pertain to the copyrighted work: (1) reproduce, (2) distribute, (3) perform, (4) display publicly, (5) prepare derivative works based upon the copyrighted work, and/or (6) delegate these privileges to others.

The United States Constitution gives Congress the authority to issue copyrights. (Article I, Section X). Congress enacted the Copyright Act of 1976 for the purpose of issuing and protecting copyrights (U.S.C. Title 17)

THE Basics:



COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

Copyright infringement occurs when a person or organization uses a copyrighted work in such a way that it infringes on one or more of the rights of the copyright owner. This may happen by reproducing, distributing, performing, or displaying the protected work or making derivative works of the protected work without obtaining the appropriate permission through licensing or other clearances prior to using the copyrighted material.

THE Basics: PENALTIES FOR COPYRIGHT VIOLATION



CIVIL

A person who violates copyright laws may be required to pay the rightful copyright owner either actual damages and profits lost as a result of the violation or statutory damages plus costs and attorneys fees. Statutory damages may range from $200 to $150,000.

CRIMINAL

A person willfully violating copyright law for personal advantage or financial gain may be fined up to $250,000 and/or may receive up to ten years in prison, depending on whether the offense is subsequent and whether it is a misdemeanor or felony [§506 and 18 USC §2319].





ORGANIZATIONAL

A person willfully violating copyright law for personal advantage or financial gain may be fined up to $250,000 and/or may receive up to ten years in prison, depending on whether the offense is subsequent and whether it is a misdemeanor or felony [§506 and 18 USC §2319].

THE Basics:

REGISTRATION OF COPYRIGHT



No official registration is required for copyright protection. However, registering with the copyright office establishes a public record of the copyright claim and offers additional protection should a dispute arise concerning the ownership of the copyright. If registration is made within three (3) months after publication of the work or prior to an infringement of the work, statutory damages and attorney's fees may be available to the copyright owner in court actions. Otherwise, only an award of actual damages and profits is available to the copyright owner (§412 of the Copyright Act).

A copyright may be registered at any time within the life of the copyright by completing an application provided by the Register of Copyrights. Application forms may be found online at the www.copyright.gov website. The author, the owner of exclusive rights, or an agent of the author or the owner of exclusive rights may submit an application form. It is not necessary that application forms be prepared or filed by an attorney.

THE Basics:

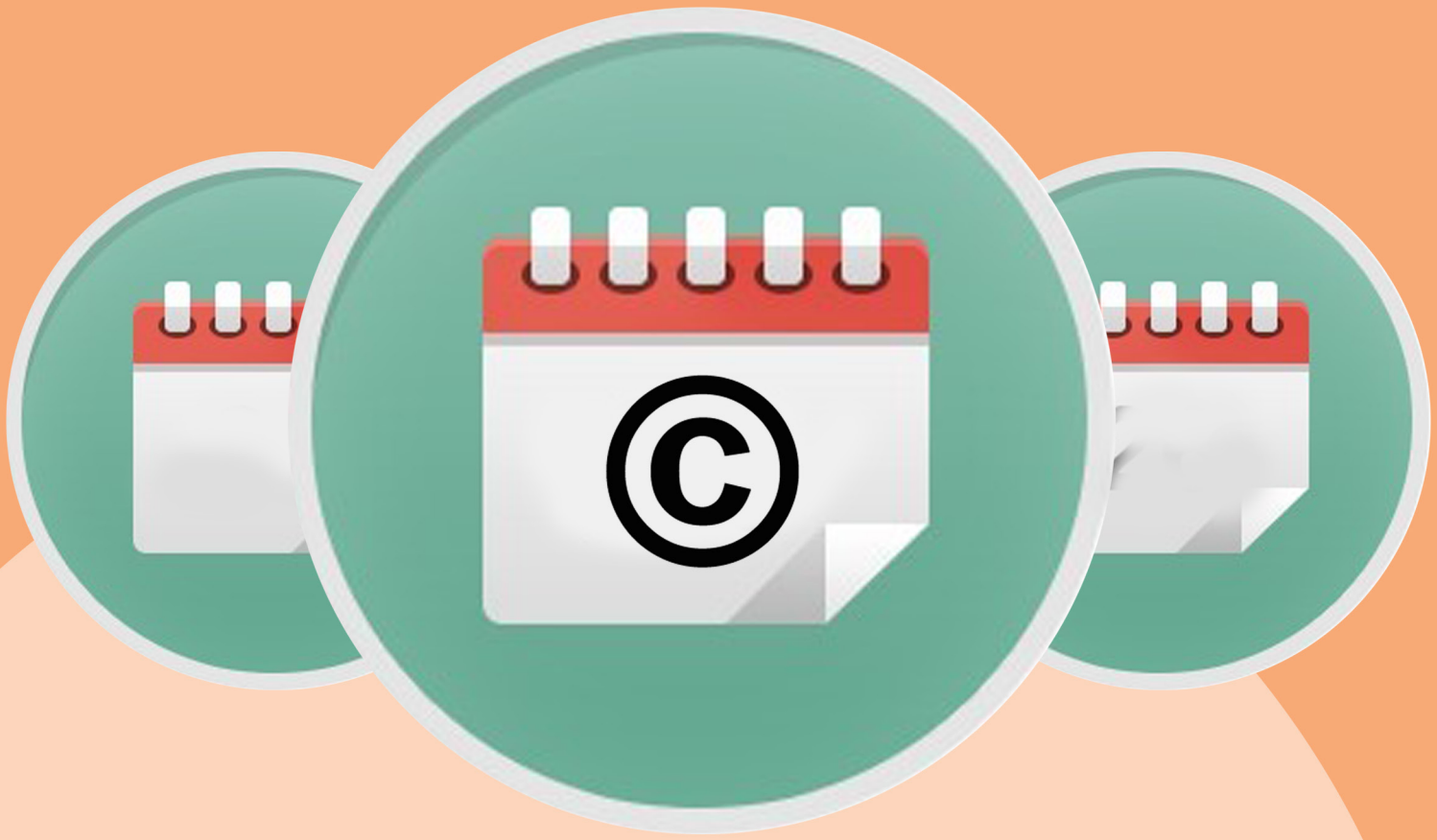
OWNERSHIP OF COPYRIGHTED WORKS



In most cases, the author or publisher of a work owns the copyright to the work. An exception would be a work made for hire, in which case the person for whom the work is prepared owns the copyright. An artist who is commissioned to paint a portrait is the classic "work-for-hire" situation. A pastor who prepares sermons for Sunday morning is in a "work-for-hire" relationship unless other specific arrangements have been made for the pastor to own the work. The NCLL has forms available to our ministry partners to help them create an agreement to this effect.

Mere ownership of a copyrighted work does not give the possessor the copyright. For example, a church music director who buys copyrighted sheet music does not receive the copyright or any of the privileges belonging to the copyright owner.

THE Basics:



DURATION OF COPYRIGHT

WORKS CREATED AFTER JANUARY 1, 1978

For works created after January 1, 1978, a copyright lasts for the life of the author plus seventy (70) years. This copyright can be extended for another twenty (20) years. The copyright of a work created by two (2) or more authors endures for fifty (50) years after the last surviving author's death. Copyrights for anonymous and pseudonymous works and for works made for hire last for one hundred twenty (120) years after the work's creation or ninety-five (95) years after its publication, whichever expires first.

WORKS CREATED BEFORE JANUARY 1, 1978

For works created before January 1, 1978, the copyright endures for twenty-eight (28) years after the copyright was acquired and may be renewed for an additional forty-seven (47) years, allowing the copyright to last up to a total of seventy-five (75) years. If a work was renewed prior to January 1, 1978, the copyright lasts for seventy-five (75) years from the date the copyright was originally secured.

THE Basics:



WORKS NOT SUBJECT TO COPYRIGHT PROTECTION

INTANGIBLE WORKS

Examples: choreographic works that have not been notated or recorded or improvisational speeches or performances that have not been written or recorded.

TITLES, NAMES, SHORT PHRASES, AND SLOGANS; FAMILIAR SYMBOLS OR DESIGNS; MERE VARIATIONS OR TYPOGRAPHIC ORNAMENTATION, LETTERING, OR COLORING; MERE LISTINGS OF INGREDIENTS OR CONTENTS. These are protected by trademark laws.

IDEAS, PROCEDURES, METHODS, SYSTEMS, PROCESSES, CONCEPTS, PRINCIPLES, DISCOVERIES, OR DEVICES (as distinguished from a description), EXPLANATIONS, OR ILLUSTRATIONS These are eligible for patent protection.

WORKS CONSISTING ENTIRELY OF INFORMATION THAT IS COMMON PROPERTY AND CONTAINING NO ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP. Examples: standard calendars, height and weight charts, tape measures and rulers, and lists or tables taken from public documents or other common sources.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES EXEMPTION



In general, as stated above, a copyright holder has the exclusive, absolute right to publicly perform or display his or her work. One of the exceptions to this right, however, is what is called the "religious services exemption." This limited exemption allows copyrighted religious music to be performed in a religious service without a license or permission. It does NOT permit copyrighted music to be performed etc., at other events and in other contexts such as at concerts, seminars, youth or children's events, on-hold music, conferences, or in the hallways or church offices without the appropriate licenses and permissions.

The religious services exemption also does not include the right to display or project lyrics onto a screen or to record or live stream music or works that would otherwise be permissible to use without a license within a worship service. In order to display lyrics, stream, or record copyrighted music or other works, permission needs to be obtained either from the copyright owner or by purchase of the appropriate license.



COPYRIGHT LICENSE(S) FOR CHURCHES AND OTHER MINISTRIES

Virtually every ministry uses copyrighted material within the course of its various activities—from music performances, the weekly bulletin, and small group/Sunday school curriculum to the church website, music in the hallways and church offices, and rehearsals for the annual Christmas program (to name just a few!). Yet, to obtain written permission from a copyright holder every time the ministry wishes to use a copyrighted work would be nearly impossible. In the last 20-30 years, several companies have grown up for the express purpose of assisting churches and ministries with copyright compliance and in doing so have filled a great need. These organizations offer ways for churches and ministries to comply with copyright laws at a reasonable price while also protecting copyright owners by compensating them for their services through licensing fees.

Each ministry should consider its own unique set-up, outreaches, and use of copyrighted materials in order to determine the right type(s) of licenses that it will need to purchase. Some of the factors that will go into this decision include the following:

- whether the church or ministry meets primarily in one location or in multiple locations
- whether the license is used for single events such as conferences, seminars, or special meetings
- whether licenses are needed for a traveling ministry or an individual who uses the license in multiple locations
- streaming or podcasting live-recorded worship music
- copying and sharing audio recordings for rehearsal purposes
- playing and performing copyrighted songs outside the worship service
- printing lyrics to copyrighted material (usually music) in bulletins/order of worship
- displaying lyrics to copyrighted music on large screens for congregational singing
- showing DVDs and other videos, including video clips, in any church facilities



FAIR USE DOCTRINE

According to the US Copyright website, "Fair use is a legal doctrine that promotes freedom of expression by permitting the unlicensed use of copyright-protected works in certain circumstances." Fair use allows persons to use (reproduce, distribute, perform, create derivatives, or distribute) copyrighted materials for the purpose of criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research without obtaining permission from copyright holders. To determine if use is fair, courts will look at the statutory-imposed factors:

- **purpose and character of the work, including whether the use is of a commercial nature or for nonprofit educational purposes**
- **the nature of the copyrighted work**
- **the amount used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole**
- **the economic effect of the use on the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work**

The fair use doctrine will be more applicable to a school than to a church because it primarily implicates works that are used in an academic, research, or news setting. However, it's important for pastors, teachers, and churches to understand and be familiar with what fair use might look like in the context of preaching, teaching, classroom, and multimedia use so as to avoid allegations of plagiarism and copyright violations. Because of the difficulty in determining whether a specific use is fair, Congress set up a list of guidelines for standards of fair use regarding teachers and music educators, much of which we have included below.



Guidelines for Churches/ Schools

Making single copies of a chapter from a book, article from a periodical or newspaper, short story, short essay, short poem, chart, graph, diagram, or a cartoon or picture from a book, periodical, or newspaper is permitted for a teacher's own scholarly research or for use in teaching a class. Multiple copies, not to exceed more than one copy per pupil in a course, may be made by or for the teacher for classroom use or discussion, provided that each of the following are true:

- THE COPYING MEETS THE TESTS OF SPONTANEITY AND BREVITY AS DEFINED BELOW.
- THE COPYING MEETS THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT TEST AS DEFINED BELOW.
- EACH COPY INCLUDES A NOTICE OF COPYRIGHT.

Spontaneity

means that the copying is at the instance and inspiration of the individual teacher, and the inspiration and decision to use the work and the moment of its use for maximum teaching effectiveness are so close in time that it would be unreasonable to expect a timely reply to a request for permission.

BREVITY

is defined in the following ways for the following types of works:



Poetry:

a complete poem, if less than 250 words and if printed on not more than two pages or, from a larger poem, an excerpt of not more than 250 words



Prose:

either a complete article, story, or essay of less than 2,500 words or an excerpt from any prose work of not more than 1,000 words or 10% of the work, whichever is less, but in any event a minimum of 500 words.

(Each of the numerical limits stated above may be expanded to permit the completion of an unfinished line of a poem or of an unfinished prose paragraph.)



Illustration:

one chart, graph, diagram, drawing, cartoon, or picture per book or per periodical issue.



"Special" works:

Certain works in poetry, prose, or in "poetic prose" that often combine language with illustrations and that are intended sometimes for children and at other times for a more general audience are considered "special works." Special works may not be copied in their entirety and no more than 10% or two pages of "special works" (whichever is less). Other guidelines include copying no more than one short poem, article, story, essay, or two excerpts from the same author nor more than three from the same collective work or periodical volume during one class term.

THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT PERMITTED:

- **making copies from one work or from a group of works to replace or substitute for anthologies, compilations, or collective works of the same item from term to term.**
- **copying consumable material, such as workbooks, exercises, standardized tests, test booklets, and answer sheets (unless the book has been written for classroom use and specific written permission is granted on the copyright page to make copies for classroom use)**
- **charging recipients beyond the cost of the copies, using copies to substitute for the purchase of materials, or repeatedly make copies of the same item from term to term.**
- **use of a work more than 2,500 words in its entirety**



MUSIC

Guidelines for Churches/Schools

Performing or singing music and other non-dramatic copyrighted materials (such as portions of books but not dramatic plays) in a worship service is permitted without obtaining prior permission from the copyright owner, pursuant to the religious services exemption. However, the music may not be recorded (even if it's your church choir singing it) and put on the church website, replayed outside of the worship service context, or streamed live online without a license.

Displaying copyrighted lyrics on projector screens is permitted as long as the church has first obtained a license to do so. Copyright and license information must be provided for each song that is displayed on a projector screen.

Making emergency photocopies to replace purchased copies that are not available for imminent performance is generally considered permissible but only if purchased copies replace the emergency copies as soon as possible.

Copying music to create or replace anthologies, compilations, or collective works is prohibited (i.e., printing music from the internet or photocopying music from song or hymn books and then compiling them into a song/hymn book for use by church attendees).

Any copies that are made must include the copyright notice that appears on the printed copy.

PREACHING GUIDELINES



Not all allegations of plagiarism result in copyright violations. However, plagiarism, which is essentially presenting someone else's work, words, or ideas as your own without giving proper credit to the original author or creator, can be a copyright violation if the plagiarism involves a copyrighted work (even if the copyright is not registered). In order to avoid plagiarism (and copyright violations), keep the following points in mind:

- **Give credit where credit is due—when using the outline of another preacher or writer for all or even a portion of your message, give credit to the author.**
- **When quoting another author or preacher, use the exact words and provide the source and author.**
- **Prior to posting sermons online, ensure that any copyrighted material used in the sermon is accurately attributed and that permission/licensing was obtained for use and/or recording and/or broadcasting.**
- **Maintain accuracy when paraphrasing, and provide the source and author.**
- **Obtain permission from anyone who preaches at the church (including teens and their parents/guardians) prior to posting their sermons on your website.**

MULTIMEDIA/ WEBSITE/SOFTWARE **GUIDELINES**



AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDINGS/LIVE STREAM OF WORSHIP SERVICES

Audio and video recordings of your church services may be made and sold but only with the appropriate licenses and subject to specific guidelines governing pricing and the numbers of copies that may be produced based on the size of the church.

Live streaming or archived broadcasts of sermons is permissible without any prior licensing/permission as long as copyrighted material is not used, quoted, or broadcasted during the sermon beyond fair use. Copyrighted music may not be streamed, recorded, or archived on the church website without appropriate licensing.

SHOWING FILMS

A teacher may show DVDs or stream internet programs, including those intended for home viewing, for limited purposes, such as for "face-to-face" teaching activities in a nonprofit educational institution if the copy of the movie (when using a DVD) was lawfully made under the Copyright Act and programs are shown in a classroom or a similar place devoted to instruction. Movies may not be shown for entertainment purposes without first obtaining a performance license. There is considerable debate as to whether showing part of a DVD during a church service would qualify as being in an "educational institution." As such, the NCLL recommends against showing DVD or online streamed version of movies without first obtaining a performance license to do so. The church may not charge a fee to show a film, even if the church has obtained a media license.

Churches, Sunday school teachers, youth groups leaders, etc., may not compile DVD clips, burn copies of movies or online videos, or download portions of entire movies to computers for the purpose of showing in classes.

MULTIMEDIA/ WEBSITE/SOFTWARE **GUIDELINES**



USE OF PHOTOS/COPYRIGHTED IMAGES

For any photos of individual church members/families/attendees, churches should ensure that permission has been granted to the church for the use of their image on the church website.

Be sure to maintain a list of copyrighted images used on the church website (or in printed materials), the date images were purchased or the database from which the images were taken, and the subscription credentials used to obtain images lawfully.

Prior to embedding music or videos on the ministry's website, be sure to obtain written permission from the copyright owner.

COMPUTER SOFTWARE USAGE

Computer software programs are sold with a license, usually for only one computer. Placing the program on additional computers without a license is a violation of the copyright and may subject the ministry to hefty penalties. As an example, in 2013, the US Army settled a copyright infringement claim in which it was alleged that the Army, which had paid for 500 licenses for a software program, actually installed the program for thousands of users. When the plaintiff company discovered that their software, which allowed the Army to follow movements of US soldiers in real time, had been installed on many more computers than what the Army had paid for, it sued the Army for $180 million. The parties settled with the Army paying $50 million.

Typically, a user may make one backup copy of a purchased program in case the original copy becomes damaged, but other than that, software licenses and downloaded products are subject to strict usage requirements that are set by the owner of the copyrighted material. The penalties for violating the copyright of computer software are the same as those for violating other copyrights.





SUGGESTED COMPUTER SOFTWARE POLICY

Every ministry should have a computer software policy for the computers used by the ministry and ensure that all ministry workers, paid and volunteer, understand these policies. The following are some suggestions for such a policy:

- **Inspect every computer located in your ministry, regardless of ownership, to ascertain what software is installed on it.**
- **Examine software found on all computers to determine whether it is an original purchase or a copy. (Each purchased software title should have one manual and disk, and there should be only one backup copy per purchased disk.)**
- **Examine all license agreements from the software copyright holders to understand the rights of the license holder.**
- **Remove any copies of software that are not covered under a broad licensing agreement or that do not have the original manuals and disks; purchase new software to replace copies that violate copyright.**
- **Carefully examine new purchases to ensure that they are not counterfeit.**



COMMON MINISTRY & CHURCH COPYRIGHT QUESTIONS

For any photos of individual church members/families/attendees, churches should ensure that permission has been granted to the church for the use of their image on the church website.

1. DURING OUR WORSHIP SERVICE, MAY WE READ A POEM, SING A COPYRIGHTED SONG AS A CONGREGATION, OR PLAY A PURCHASED CD FOR THE CONGREGATION WITHOUT GETTING PERMISSION FROM THE COPYRIGHT OWNER?

ANSWER: Yes. However, the service may not be recorded, projected onto a screen, streamed online, or archived and made available on the church website (or any other website) without a license or permission from the copyright owner.

2. MAY WE PRINT FAMOUS QUOTES IN OUR CHURCH BULLETIN/ORDER OF SERVICE?

ANSWER: Yes. In most cases, this would be considered fair use (depending on the fair use factors). However, some legal scholars suggest that reprinting whole or excerpts of poetry requires permission from the copyright holder.

3. OUR CHURCH HAS BEEN PRINTING SONG LYRICS IN THE BULLETIN/ORDER OF SERVICE WITHOUT OBTAINING PERMISSION. IS THIS LEGAL?

ANSWER: No. If the lyrics to the song are protected by copyright, you must obtain permission or have a license that authorizes the church to reprint lyrics.



COMMON MINISTRY & CHURCH COPYRIGHT QUESTIONS

4. THE PASTOR WROTE A BOOK WHILE AT OUR CHURCH. DOES THE BOOK BELONG TO HIM OR THE CHURCH?

ANSWER: It depends. In the absence of an agreement concerning the book, a court will examine a number of factors before concluding that a pastor's book is the property of the church:

- WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN ON CHURCH TIME?
- WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN USING CHURCH PROPERTY (I.E., COMPUTERS OR PAPER)?
- WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN AT THE CHURCH OFFICE?
- WAS THE PASTOR EXPECTED TO WRITE A BOOK?
- DID THE PASTOR WRITE THE BOOK FOR CHURCH USE?

The more of these questions that are answered in the affirmative, the more likely it will be that a court will decide that the book is the property of the church. A pastor should make sure that there is an agreement between himself and the church concerning any book the pastor writes while at the church.

5. WE WANT TO TEACH THE CONGREGATION A NEW SONG THIS WEEK. MAY WE PRINT THE LYRICS ALONG WITH THE MUSICAL SCORE ONTO SONG SHEETS AND THEN DISTRIBUTE THEM WITHOUT PERMISSION?

ANSWER: No. In this case, permission will need to be obtained from the copyright holder.

6. OUR CHURCH LIBRARY MAKES COPIES OF CDS AND ALLOWS MEMBERS TO CHECK OUT THE COPIES. IS THIS LEGAL?

ANSWER: No. A library may make a single copy of copyrighted materials for the limited purpose of backup or security but for no other purposes.

7. OUR CHOIR DIRECTOR HAS A GREAT PIECE OF SHEET MUSIC FOR THE CHOIR TO SING. MAY HE MAKE COPIES OF IT FOR THE CHOIR IF HE WILL DESTROY THE COPIES AFTER THE SONG IS PERFORMED?

ANSWER: No. Although the Copyright Act exempts performances of musical works in the course of religious services, it does not allow for the duplication of music for the purpose of practice. The use of emergency copies to replace purchased copies is probably "fair use" but should not become a regular practice. Purchased replacements should be made as soon as possible.



COMMON MINISTRY & CHURCH COPYRIGHT QUESTIONS

8. OUR CHURCH USES ITS OWN SONGBOOK CREATED WITH COPIES OF DIFFERENT SONGS COPIED OUT OF OTHER SONGBOOKS. IS THIS LEGAL?

ANSWER: No. Copying one or a compilation of copyrighted songs would infringe on the copyright owner's rights. Since a copyright for music includes both the lyrics and the music, a church may not make copies of only the lyrics

9. WHAT IF WE PROJECT WORDS FROM SONGS ONTO A LARGE SCREEN? IS THAT OK TO DO WITHOUT A LICENSE?

ANSWER: No. A church may not project lyrics to display for the congregation without obtaining an appropriate license and the license number is displayed with the lyrics or unless the copyrighted work is intended for projection and the audience is present where the copy is located.

10. MAY THE ORCHESTRA DIRECTOR PHOTOCOPY SONGS AND PROVIDE THEM TO INSTRUMENTALISTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PRACTICING AT HOME IF THE COPY IS MADE FROM A LEGAL COPY OWNED BY THE CHURCH?

ANSWER: No. In this case, each instrumentalist would need to have his/her own piece of purchased music. Copies are not permitted without the permission of the copyright holder.

11. MUST A MINISTRY SEEK PERMISSION FOR ARRANGING COPYRIGHTED SONGS FOR SPECIFIC INSTRUMENTS?

ANSWER: Yes. A ministry must obtain special permission from the copyright owner to use copyrighted music in unusual manners such as arranging songs for specific instruments.

12. WHAT IF WE CANNOT LOCATE THE PERSON HOLDING THE COPYRIGHT?

ANSWER: The materials should not be reproduced, as copying without permission would violate the Copyright Act.

13. I AM GOING TO SING A SPECIAL FOR CHURCH. THE ACCOMPANIST HAS THE ORIGINAL, AND I WILL SING FROM A SHEET WITH THE LYRICS I TYPED OUT ON MY COMPUTER. CAN THIS ARRANGEMENT GET ME IN TROUBLE?

ANSWER: Yes. One must have permission from the copyright owner to duplicate copyrighted music for use with an accompanist.



COMMON MINISTRY & CHURCH COPYRIGHT QUESTIONS

14. WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A YOUTH GROUP MEETING WITH A MOVIE SHOWN ON A BIG SCREEN. IS THIS OK?

ANSWER: No. Permission must be obtained from the copyright owner to show a DVD or to stream a movie for any purpose other than home viewing by a family and its social acquaintances. Licenses are available for ministries who wish to use movies to minister to their youth.

15. OUR PASTOR IS LEAVING THE CHURCH. DOES HE HAVE THE RIGHT TO PREVENT US FROM POSTING HIS SERMONS ON OUR WEBSITE OR DISTRIBUTING RECORDINGS OF HIS SERMONS?

ANSWER: It depends. Unless the pastor's employment agreement specifies otherwise, a court will assume that a pastor's creative material is a "work-for-hire." The product would then belong to the church. It would be similar to an artist painting a portrait for an individual. After the money changes hands, the work becomes the buyer's. Here the church is considered the buyer and the pastor the artist. Pastors should require a written agreement with the church that outlines who owns what product. Not only can the church end up owning the sermon recordings but also the pastor's sermons and sermon notes

16. HOW LONG DOES A COPYRIGHT LAST?

ANSWER: It depends. While there is a difference between materials copyrighted before and after January 1, 1978, the general rule is that a copyright lasts seventy-five years after the death of the copyright holder.

17. MAY OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL/SMALL GROUP TEACHERS COPY THE SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIAL FOR THEIR CLASSES?

ANSWER: It depends. Some Sunday school curriculum allows the teacher to reproduce the material for the class. Teachers should be diligent to make sure that they have adequate permission before copying any material.



FOOTNOTES

1. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarism, retrieved 1/23/2016

2. Information taken from http://us.ccli.com/licenses-and-services/church-copyright-license/ and www.christiancopyrightsolutions.com, retrieved 1/26/16

3. http://copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html, retrieved 1/26/16