

Film Critic Says Christians Must Be Savvy About Media and the Culture

Holly McClure says movie theaters are this generation's pulpits, so the church must shine the light of Christ in the darkness

Though she has spent the last decade writing movie reviews to warn parents of the objectionable content that may be in the latest hit film, Holly McClure doesn't want Christians to swear off Hollywood entirely.

"It is important that Christians get involved in Hollywood and the entertainment medium," said McClure, who teaches film and journalism at Biola University and mentors potential film students as part of the Biola Film Task Force. "I feel strongly about the church becoming media- and culturally savvy. For years we've lost ground. ... We're just getting it back."

McClure is helping the church reclaim that ground through her radio show and by serving as a guest on TV programs such as Politically Incorrect, The Sharon Osbourne Show and The Montel Williams Show. She also is a popular recurring pundit for such outlets as FOX News, Hannity & Colmes, MSNBC, Scarborough Country and CNN.

It's been almost 20 years since she found her passion. After doing some acting and voice-work, McClure began doing movie reviews in the late 1980s when she realized parents like herself needed someone to review films from a conservative point of view. It was before the Internet was being widely

used, and she couldn't find what she was looking for. "So I started my own reviews," she said.

After moving to California, she began writing movie reviews for The Orange County Register and within six months the column was run in other papers and was eventually syndicated nationally. McClure became known as a family film critic.

She was sought-after for interviews, which led to a radio talk show, Holly on Hollywood, giving her experience and enabling her to expand. In the mid-1990s, she began Saturday Night With Holly McClure on KKLA, one of the leading Christian radio stations in the country. Because she tackled tough topics on the show, such as Christians and drug abuse, homosexuality and abortion, McClure gained notoriety as a conservative talk-show host.

McClure's popularity led to a phone call from Mel Gibson in 2002 asking her to produce a behind-the-scenes special for Icon Productions' film The Passion of the Christ. She was the first member of the media to be allowed on set and the first journalist to write an exclusive article about the film, which appeared in the New York Daily News.

"I knew every day I walked on that set I was watching history being made," McClure said. She wrote about her experience in the forward of the book The Passion, published by Allegiance Press.

McClure has since produced filmographies and behind-the-scenes specials for feature films such as One Night With the King (Gener8xion Entertainment) and Hangman's Curse (Namesake Entertainment). "Movie theaters are the pulpits to our

generation in the world," she told Charisma. "People who would never go to church will go to a movie."

That is why she believes it is so important for Christians to get involved in Hollywood and be salt and light. "For a long time, Christians avoided Hollywood and movies, but the more we take an active role, break down our preconceptions as a church and let God work outside the box, the more we'll be that light in the darkness," she said.

Still, she says Christians must be discerning about what they view, a topic she explores in her book, *Death by Entertainment: Exposing Hollywood's Seductive Power Over You and Your Family*, which offers an informative look at the impact of the entertainment industry on families.

Because children are learning their values and morals from television, "as a church we have to get youth leaders teaching teens and youth what it is to be discerning," she said. "Be careful. Now that Hollywood knows we are a market—just because it has that name labeled on it—we have to be discerning."

McClure's reviews can be seen on *Lifestyle Magazine*, which is broadcast on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, and she can be heard on Salem Radio Network. A member of Life Church, a charismatic ministry founded by Phil Munsey, she also is co-hosting the show *Bible Prophecy Unraveled* with Hilton Sutton, which is syndicated around the world on LeSEA Broadcast Network and she serves on the board of the Parents Television Council.

McClure believes God has called her "for such a time as this," to be used for His purpose in an industry that is influencing

the world.

Lesa Henderson in Los Angeles