

Finding God in Hollywood

Here's what you can do to make a difference in Hollywood.

Hollywood. Tinsel Town. The movie business. For most people, those words evoke images of romance, thrills, heroism, suspense and celebrity. On the other hand, for many Christians they generate images of illicit sex, unchecked violence and moral depravity.

I understand this more than most because I'm a preacher's kid with a Ph.D. in theology who has grown up in the church. And I've spent nearly 30 years working with Christian leaders such as pastor Joel Osteen of Lakewood Church in Houston, the largest congregation in the U.S., creating successful and effective Christian programming. But I'm also a working producer and director in Hollywood, so I have a ringside seat from both perspectives.

The movie industry is a remarkable business and has had a profound impact on the world since its birth at the turn of the century. That's one of the reasons there are thousands of Christians working quietly (and not so quietly) in the mainstream entertainment industry, trying to make a difference in the quality, moral values, and direction of movies and television.

Are they making a true impact in Hollywood? Yes! And you can support their efforts.

Although the major stories of Christian boycotts, controversy and condemnation of Hollywood sometimes make the headlines, few stories of hope ever do. And yet every day in Hollywood, Christians experience situations that are a great

encouragement to the body of Christ.

A director on a network series said, “I don’t make a big deal to my fellow workers about being a Christian, but it’s amazing how people who are experiencing a divorce or are having family or drug problems always seem to seek me out.”

One film-crew member took the bold step of asking if she could pray with everyone before a big day at the studio. To her surprise, the series star stepped up and said, “I’ve always hoped someone would say that,” and the entire crew held hands and prayed.

God certainly can work through the movie and television industry—but we need your help. Here’s what you can do to make a difference.

Consider Hollywood a mission field. We don’t boycott or humiliate a village in Africa because they don’t understand Christian values, so why do it to Hollywood? Let’s begin approaching Hollywood as a mission field of people made in the image of God who need to know about His loving plan for their lives.

Support films that have Christian values. One is The Chronicles of Narnia, opening in December. It’s absolutely critical that Hollywood studios realize there is an audience for films with a Christian worldview. I urge you to see these movies on their opening weekends because that’s when studios make the decision about how long a film stays in the theaters.

Pray for Christians in the industry. Every day Christians are working in an often hostile environment in a heroic effort to

write, act, direct and produce stories that celebrate faith in God. But we can't do it alone. We need the help of every Christian to provide the kind of prayer support that will open doors, soften hearts and sometimes make a way where there is no way.

Learn to use the media for evangelism. Encourage Christian young people to pursue careers in the media, businesspeople to fund Christian media projects, and churches to use the media in their outreaches. Movies, television and the Internet are the communication tools of this culture. If the church doesn't take them seriously, we'll lose this generation.

Entertainment professionals are increasingly exploring themes of spirituality, redemption and faith. The question is, Are Christians ready to point the way to the answers?