

3 Faith-Based Movies You Absolutely Must See

In the last few years we have seen a proliferation of faith-themed movies, all a result of Mel Gibson's box office hit, *The Passion of the Christ* that opened the door in 2004 that shattered Hollywood's perspective on films about God. Since then there have been many notable success stories of faith-based films, too many to even cite.

In the next few months a number of movies will be coming out that have faith-based themes.

War Room—Aug. 28—a movie about prayer released by the Kendrick Brothers who have had previous success with *Facing the Giants*, *Fireproof* and *Courageous*. *War Room* tells the story of Tony and Elizabeth Jordan, a couple who seemingly have it all—great jobs, a beautiful daughter and their dream home. But appearances can be deceiving. In reality, the Jordan's marriage has become a war zone and their daughter is collateral damage. As Tony's heart drifts away from his wife, Elizabeth encounters an elderly widow who teaches her how to fight for her family by developing a secret prayer room in her home.

90 Minutes in Heaven—Sept. 11—After a car accident that left him declared dead, author Don Piper remembers going to heaven, and 90 minutes later, returning to earth. He spends years wondering why he was allowed to see the glory of heaven only to be returned to a different life after the accident. His book *90 Minutes in Heaven* is a best-seller, and is now a full-length motion picture.

Woodlawn—Oct. 16—The year was 1973. A spiritual awakening captured the hearts of nearly every player of the Woodlawn High School football team, including its coach Tandy Gerelds.

Woodlawn is a film based on a real-life story of love and unity in a school divided by racism and hate in the 1970s. Their extraordinary dedication to love and unity in a school filled with racism and hate leads to the largest high school football game ever played in the torn city of Birmingham, Alabama, and the rise of its first African-American superstar, Tony Nathan. Pure Flix Entertainment, the largest faith-based entertainment company, produces *Woodlawn*.

This month Pure Flix, a Christian movie film company, has launched its own version of Netflix for Christian movie audiences. Pure Flix is taking the lead in serving the faith-based and family friendly content niche, currently streaming more than 2,000 faith and family movies, inspirational titles, TV shows, documentaries and biblically based educational programs.

Pure Flix will exclusively offer many of the Pure Flix titles (75+) including *Do You Believe?*, *Old Fashioned*, *Jerusalem Countdown*, as well as theatrical features, and production of original episodic programming. The platform will also feature a channel focused on spiritual growth content including Bible-based teaching and sermons.

Karen Covell, director of the Hollywood Prayer Network says, "The recent partnership of faith-based filmmakers with Hollywood distributors is an answer to prayer." She has been praying for those in arts and entertainment for over 25 years and sees the lines blurring between Christian films and Hollywood films as the fruit of their efforts.

In 2014 the National Day of Prayer Committee held a week-long event of prayer in Hollywood. It was the culminating city after a month-long bus tour where praying intercessors prayed at media centers in 13 states across America.

I was privileged to be one of their speakers that week. Kathy Branzell, an executive with the National Prayer Committee and

was one of the organizers said, "The bus tour was an instrumental part of our prayer focus for the arts and entertainment community throughout our nation. I, too, believe we are seeing the fruit of those prayers."

On Sept. 18 the movie *Captive* will be released in theaters. *Captive* is based on a miraculous true story that drew the attention of the entire nation and is a thrilling drama about the spiritual collision of two broken lives. When Brian Nichols—on the run as the subject of a city wide manhunt in Atlanta and desperate to make contact with his newborn son—takes recovering meth addict Ashley Smith hostage in her own apartment, she turns for guidance to Rick Warren's best-selling inspirational book, *The Purpose Driven Life*.

Captive is a commercial film that happens to have Christian themes organic to the story and is produced by a Terry Botwick, a Christian producer living in Hollywood. Many who are Christians and part of the Hollywood community would like to see more commercial films across all genres written, directed, produced and distributed by Christians for the global marketplace.

While reading aloud, Ashley and her would-be killer each face crossroads where despair and death intersect hope. David Oyelowo, Leading actor in *Selma*, and Kate Mara, starring in the upcoming *Fantastic Four* film this summer, bring their incredible talent as Brian and Ashley in this film. More information and the trailer will be posted up on . The film will be released nationwide Sept. 18. Paramount is distributing *Captive*—it is significant for a major studio to distribute a film that represents a faith message.

Oyelowo is an outspoken, powerful follower of Christ in entertainment. As a bold member of the growing Christian community in Hollywood, now known to be over 10,000 strong, Oyelowo says his Christian faith is the cornerstone of his life. What moves Oyelowo most in this world is "sacrificial

love” and the willingness to lay down one’s life for others. That’s his understanding of Jesus, and what it means to be “a Christian,” the actor says.

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