

Amid Criticism for Retelling Bible, Christian Leaders Endorse 'Noah'

The National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) and Paramount Pictures jointly announced Thursday the decision to add an explanatory message to future marketing materials for the upcoming film *Noah* from acclaimed filmmaker Darren Aronofsky.

The move follows an appeal by Jerry A. Johnson, president and CEO of NRB, to help audiences better understand that the feature film is a dramatization of the major scriptural themes and not a line-by-line retelling of the Bible story.

Johnson's request to Paramount Pictures to consider adding this clarification to *Noah*'s marketing materials ahead of release was an idea fully embraced by the studio and follows a precedent established by other films based on biblical stories.

NRB's reaching out to Paramount was prompted by a special public event earlier this week at the NRB 2014 International Christian Media Convention in Nashville, Tenn., where Johnson led an engaging and insightful panel discussion with John Snowden, a biblical consultant for *Noah*, along with filmmaker, media consultant and writer Phil Cooke, who is also a member of the NRB board of directors.

Together, the panelists—all three of whom had earlier seen the entire film—discussed the cinematic attributes of the film, including examples of adherence to and departures from the biblical text. Exclusive clips from the film were also shown to the crowd of several hundred.

"Because of the quality of the production and acting, viewers will enjoy watching main themes from the *Noah* story depicted

in a powerful way on the big screen,” stated Johnson when sharing his overall reaction to the film. “However, my intent in reaching out to Paramount with this request was to make sure everyone who sees this impactful film knows this is an imaginative interpretation of Scripture, and not literal.”

Future marketing materials, including a soon-to-be released online trailer, the film’s official website and 100 percent of print and radio, as well as a percentage of the film’s online and broadcast versions, will contain the following explanatory message:

“The film is inspired by the story of Noah.

“While artistic license has been taken, we believe that this film is true to the essence, values, and integrity of a story that is a cornerstone of faith for millions of people worldwide.

“The biblical story of Noah can be found in the book of Genesis.”

“We are deeply appreciative of Dr. Johnson’s efforts to bring this idea to us,” says Paramount Picture’s Vice Chairman Rob Moore. “Our goal has been to take every measure we can to ensure moviegoers have the information they need before deciding to buy a ticket to see the film. We are very proud of Darren Aronofsky’s *Noah*. We think audiences all over the world will enjoy this epic film.”

Adding to that, Dr. Johnson said, “It is a significant and welcome development when a leading Hollywood studio like Paramount makes a major film about a story from the Bible.”

“Many people will go to this film and enjoy it,” expressed Dr. Johnson, who holds a Ph.D. in Christian ethics from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and has taught a cinematic theology course at the undergraduate level in college, as well as a course on the theology of movies and visual media at the

graduate level in seminary. "Christians should be ready to engage with them about the main biblical themes that are portrayed in the film, namely sin, judgment and salvation."

While Johnson noted that there are more than a few creative liberties taken in the film that may be of concern to those who know their Bible well, he said he feels that the explanatory message will help make it clear to people of faith that the film is not being presented as a literal presentation of Scripture.

"We are grateful that Paramount is striving, with this disclaimer, to strike a proper balance between artistic creativity, character development and honoring the sacred Scripture," Johnson stated.

To learn more about *Noah*, which opens in theaters March 28, visit [. For more about the National Religious Broadcasters, visit \[.\]\(#\)](#)