

# Europe Media Frowns Upon Marriage

The mass media in Europe has virtually destroyed the concept of holy matrimony, or marriage, in society. Attacks on marriage are not only prevalent in movies, music and television—they also show up in the theater, including the opera house.

While visiting the Cannes Film Festival, Spain and Scandinavian countries, **Movieguide** had the opportunity to watch an opera at the Norwegian Opera House called *The Fourth Watch of the Night*. Based on a novel by Johan Falkberget, the story is about a new pastor, Sigismund, coming into the small Norwegian town of Roros and having an affair with a married woman.

One of the first things the pastor does is marry a man and a woman named Gunhild, though the uncle of Gunhild goes to the Pastor Sigismund to beg him to reject the marriage, because he knows Gunhild doesn't want to marry. Believing in marriage, the pastor ordains Gunhild's marriage. On seeing Gunhild's unhappiness, Pastor Sigismund feels guilty he ordained the marriage. The pastor starts to have feelings for Gunhild, even though he's already married. Soon, an affair develops. However, the pastor doesn't seem to have any moral guilt from this affair and there are no repercussions. In the end, the two other spouses die off and Gunhild and Pastor Sigismund end up together. How convenient!

The concept of marriage in this opera is seen as a horrible bind that hinders people's happiness. When speaking with Norwegians, we found this view of marriage is common in Europe. Europeans feel marriage is too confining and destroys people's independence. In fact, their whole society seems to be based on individual lusts and desires, with no consequences

for one's actions. The whole **mass media** promotes this idea.

Also, *The Fourth Watch of the Night* depicts a view of **Christianity** and how people look down upon faith. Once a Christian society, Europe has turned away from God so much that Europeans go out of their way to attack Christianity and traditional family values in the most blatant ways.

For example, the pastor in this opera states Christian principles and Bible passages in such harsh tones that the rest of the community in the opera inevitably rejected them. Thus, the love of God, who gave His only begotten Son to suffer the ultimate penalty to deliver us from evil, was completely absent. Also, the opera implied that there is no meaning to Christian morality and that, even though the pastor knows the Bible, they are just meaningless, outdated words, not things to act upon. This is made clear by the fact that he has an affair.

This too is a prevalent theme in European culture, that the church seems to be dated and without relevance in today's world. Of course, this is a terribly depressing outcome that creates a great sense of lonely lives without purpose.

Movieguide is working hard to make this kind of anti-Christian bigotry disappear from the mass media. We strive to have more moral movies and television programs that display the gospel, family, marriage and commitment in a positive light, because these are things that give our lives purpose. We urge people to read our reviews and support the good movies and programs, the ones that uphold Christian faith and biblical values.