

Evangelistic Silent Film to 'Show, Not Tell' the Bible's Message

Production is set to begin this summer on what producers call the first evangelistic silent feature film since sound was added to movies. *The Good Book* tells the story of seven strangers whose lives are impacted by the gift of a single copy of the New Testament.

The movie is being produced by husband/wife filmmakers Fred and Sharon Wilharm. *The Good Book* is their fifth faith-based film, and the couple's most recent movie, *Flowers for Fannie*, will be distributed by VCI Entertainment on Oct. 15.

"I'd been toying with the story concept for a while, but I knew something was missing," Sharon Wilharm said. "Fred and I were talking about how important it would be to 'show, not tell,' and then it hit us. Why not take it to the extreme and make a completely silent film?"

Fred Wilharm added: "We immediately realized how much more powerful the message could be if words didn't get in the way. From there, it all started falling into place."

The Good Book will begin filming in late summer, with a release date in April next year. Jenn Gotzon (*Doonby, God's Country*) has signed on to play the lead role of Ruth—a church parishioner who befriends Sarah, a bag lady.

"I had the opportunity to take a class with Jenn at the Roanoke Arts and Entertainment Conference and was impressed with her not just as an actress, but as a caring individual with a heart for God," Sharon Wilharm said. "As seen in her film roles (*I Am Gabriel, Nixon/Frost*), she is an amazingly talented actress, and I can't wait to see what she brings to

this film.”

The Wilharms are not the first husband-and-wife team to make an evangelistic silent film. In the 1920s and '30s, evangelists James and Eloyce Gist produced short films, including *Hellbound Train*, which was recently revived.

Another silent Christian film was *Parable*, a 20-minute movie produced by the Protestant Council of New York for the 1964 New York World's Fair. In 2012, it was selected for inclusion in the National Film Registry of the U.S. Library of Congress.