

'Exodus: Gods and Kings'—Biblical Blockbuster or Epic Bust?

As 2014's "Year of the Bible Movie" enters its final phase—and the run up to the December release of Ridley Scott's highly anticipated film *Exodus: Gods and Kings*—Faith Driven Consumer continues to measure the success of Hollywood films courting faith-driven audiences.

Faith Driven Consumer has released the first wave of results from an extensive new national survey—conducted by partner research firm American Insights—detailing what *Exodus* needs to do to be successful with both its core Faith Driven Consumer (17 percent of U.S. adult population) and broader Christian (77 percent of U.S. adult population) audiences.

"We regularly meet with Hollywood industry leaders, encouraging them to create more and better content that resonates with Faith Driven Consumers specifically and the overall Christian market in general—the core audiences behind the success of recent hit films such as *Heaven Is for Real*, *God's Not Dead* and *Son of God*. When Hollywood's content resonates, faith-driven consumers go out of their way to spend their hard-earned dollars and time to show support. When products don't resonate—as we saw earlier this year with the storm over *Noah*—they stay home," said Chris Stone, certified brand strategist and founder of Faith Driven Consumer.

"Our community eagerly hopes Ridley Scott's *Exodus* will resonate, and this new data offers a clear road map to success. First, the research is overwhelmingly clear that *Exodus*—and any biblically based movie—needs to accurately portray the biblical story and message," Stone continued.

"Second, data shows that the filmmakers need to welcome and

engage the faith community at both the pastor and the pew levels by seeking their input and earning their trust. If done correctly, *Exodus* could earn true blockbuster status and beat the box-office record [for faith-driven films] set by *The Passion of the Christ* 10 years ago. If done poorly, it will be another massive missed opportunity.”

Please note two distinct sets of data below. The first set measures the opinions of Christians in the United States, approximately 77 percent of the adult population, as well as the entire U.S. population. The second data set measures the opinions of Faith Driven Consumers, a distinct subset of the overall Christian market, which comprises 17 percent of the adult population. This data also includes the views of the overall Christian market, but lead with the Faith Driven Consumer data.

The data on *Exodus*, never fully released until now, comes from a previous American Insights survey for Christian News Service/NICAEA, which was conducted May 1-8 on a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adults in the United States. The survey was administered by landline phone (50 percent), cellphone (20 percent) and online (30 percent). The margin of error is ± 2.8 percent.

U.S. Adult and U.S. Christian Market on *Exodus*:

- 74 percent of all adults would be likely (36 percent very likely) to see EXODUS if it accurately portrays the biblical account of Moses leading the Jewish people out of captivity. However, 68 percent of all adults would be unlikely (46 percent very unlikely) to see *Exodus* if it does not accurately portray the Bible.
- 80 percent of Christians would be likely (41 percent very likely) to see *Exodus* if it accurately portrays the biblical account. However, 69 percent of Christians overall would be unlikely (47 percent very unlikely) to see *Exodus* if it does not accurately portray the Bible.

- 84 percent of Protestants overall would be likely to see an accurate *Exodus*, while 70 percent would be unlikely to see an inaccurate depiction.
- 75 percent of Catholics overall would be likely to see an accurate *Exodus*, while 67 percent would be unlikely to see an inaccurate version of the story.
- 84 percent of people for whom religion is extremely important would be likely to see an accurate *Exodus*, while 74 percent would be unlikely to see the film if it does not accurately portray the biblical story.

The Faith Driven Consumer Survey by American Insights was conducted on a national sample of 2,400 self-identified Christians using one of the largest and most diverse online panels in the country, a methodology similar to that used in recent *New York Times* polling. The survey was conducted Sept. 3-7 on a representative sample matching U.S. Census demographics. The poll has a margin of error of ± 2 percent for Christians and ± 4 percent for Faith Driven Consumers, who were identified based on multivariate modeling of responses by the larger Christian sample and constitute a quarter of practicing Christians in America, or 17 percent of the U.S. adult population—41 million people. Faith Driven Consumers are a rapidly emerging and economically powerful market segment. They are a qualifiable, quantifiable and distinct sub-segment of the overall Christian population.

Faith Driven Consumers and Christians overall: What they want in entertainment

- 96 percent of Faith Driven Consumers (FDCs) say that their faith has a *major influence* on their entertainment choices, compared to 47 percent of Christians overall. 61 percent of FDCs rate faith's influence as a 10, compared to 18 percent of Christians overall.
- 87 percent of Faith Driven Consumers are much more likely—58 percent very much more likely—to choose entertainment options that promote Christian-compatible

values, compared to 54 percent of Christians overall, while 73 percent of Faith Driven Consumers avoid watching television and films that conflict with their Christian worldview, compared to 41 percent of Christians at large.

- 81 percent of Faith Driven Consumers are likely to recommend a movie to others, compared to 79 percent of Christians overall. 49 percent of FDCs are *very likely* to recommend a movie, compared to 39 percent of Christians overall, while 61 percent of Faith Driven Consumers are likely to discourage others from seeing a movie, compared to 49 percent of Christians overall. 31 percent of FDCs are *very likely* to discourage a movie, compared to 17 percent of Christians overall.
- 78 percent of Faith Driven Consumers say it would have a significant influence on their decision to see a film if their church encouraged it, compared to 55 percent of Christians overall, and 57 percent of Faith Driven Consumers' churches encourage members to see specific faith-based films, compared to 36 percent of Christians overall.

Faith Driven Consumers and Christians overall: Importance of specific attributes

On a scale of one to five, Faith Driven Consumers rate biblical accuracy as the No. 1 factor in considering a film. Below is how all factors were rated.

- 60 percent gave "how accurately the movie reflects the Bible" a 5 (4-5: 84 percent), compared to 28 percent of Christians overall.
- 59 percent gave "compatibility with Christian values" a 5 (4-5: 89 percent), compared to 23 percent of Christians overall.
- 56 percent gave "how appropriate the film is for children" a 5 (4-5: 78 percent), compared to 30 percent of Christians overall.

- 51 percent gave “faith-compatible characters and relationships” a 5 (4-5: 83 percent), compared to 21 percent of Christians overall.
- 51 percent gave “faith-compatible situations” a 5 (4-5: 83 percent), compared to 20 percent of Christians overall.
- 50 percent gave “entertainment value” a 5 (4-5: 83 percent), compared to 36 percent of Christians overall.

For further details on the poll, please go to: .