

Faith-Based Movies Making an Impact in the Culture Wars

With stories continually hitting the news about students murdering parents or teachers and students bullying fellow classmates until they commit suicide, it's hard to remain optimistic about today's culture and the next generation. Clearly, the war-torn, fragmented world of our children and grandchildren needs guidance.

Ted Baehr, founder and publisher of Movieguide: The Family Guide to Movies and Entertainment, concludes from decades of research that "real lasting beauty delights in truth, justice and goodness."

For example, a new movie produced by Franklin Martin's Dutchmen Films, *Long Shot: The Story of Kevin Laue*, tells the story of a young man who overcome impossibilities—he has only one arm but dreamed of playing Division I basketball.

According to Fox News, just two days ago, Zach Hodskins, another young man also born without a left arm, committed to play Division I basketball at the University of Florida.

These are the types of messages that must reach young people, Baehr believes.

"They give people hope they can overcome their past and that they aren't powerless to change their circumstances," he says.

This is also where worldview deeply affects mass media. A movie's worldview is the true undercurrent of its message, Baehr asserts. For example, if a movie's message is "follow your heart," passions, lusts and desires in pursuit of pleasure can lead people astray, especially susceptible children and teenagers.

According to world-renowned Christian apologist Ravi Zacharias, "Pleasure without God, without the sacred boundaries, will actually leave you emptier than before. And this is biblical truth; this is experiential truth. The loneliest people in the world are amongst the wealthiest and most famous who found no boundaries within which to live. That is a fact I've seen again and again."

Lack of direction and internal desperation will lead young adults to drastic and unhealthy behavior, Baehr notes, as we've seen exhibited by those in the entertainment limelight, such as Miley Cyrus, Amanda Bynes, Lindsay Lohan, Heath Ledger and many others.

According to the research findings of the Barna Group, "The mass media has more influence over today's culture than any other social institution."

In his book *How Should We Then Live?* Christian philosopher Francis Schaeffer asserts, "Whoever controls the media controls the culture."

"The battle for culture is here," Baehr says, "but with movies like *Long Shot*, *The Blind Side*, *Fireproof*, and *Grace Unplugged*, it's progressively become more balanced and representative of traditional America than in recent years. Morally uplifting, empowering and heroic epics and faith-based movies keep on coming, but this only shows that the real battlefield for the minds and hearts of children, teenagers and young adults is happening in film production and the mass media and the worldviews behind their movies, videos and programs.

"We have only seen the beginning of a movement to redeem the mass media and transform the culture through Judeo-Christian and family values that have not been forgotten and truly bring hope of transformation and the power to overcome the obstacles in life."

“While the news bleeds negative information,” Baehr concludes, “the movie industry has the power to reach and empower families to again become the backbone of society. Most Hollywood leaders would rather sell four tickets to the whole family than just one to a misguided young person. Therefore, the movie industry needs to produce the true, the good, and the beautiful.”