

# Intercession for Hollywood Pushing Back Darkness as Faith-Based Movies Hit Big

Hollywood's "year of the Bible movie" continues to drive sales at the box office in 2014.

Four faith-based films have already earned more than \$50 million each in ticket sales, according to . Those films—*Noah*, *Heaven Is for Real*, *Son of God* and *God's Not Dead*—are among the top 20 highest-grossing films of 2014.

And movie audiences may want more, according to a survey of 1,054 Americans from Nashville-based LifeWay Research. Researchers found that half of Americans (56 percent) say they wish there were more movies with Christian values.

"Faith-based movies are no longer a niche," said Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research. "It's smart economics—if you make a film that appeals to that audience, they will show up."

Movies with an explicitly Christian message—like *God's Not Dead*—have done especially well. The independent film was made for \$2 million and has earned more than \$59 million at the box office. That's more than high-budget projects like *Muppets Most Wanted* or the critically acclaimed *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.

Kris Fuhr, founder of Moviegal Marketing, said Christian movie fans want films with a clear presentation of faith. That's been true in the past for films like *Fireproof* and *Courageous*, as well as more recent movies like *Son of God*.

"When you have a movie where the title is almost a doctrinal statement—the audience will come out," she said. "People want

their faith to be affirmed.” Films with a more subtle faith message may not do as well, she added.

In the survey, LifeWay Research asked Americans to respond to the statement: “I wish there were more movies that reflected Christian values.” Those who go to church weekly are most likely to agree (91 percent). Those who never go to church (18 percent) are least likely to agree.

Self identified born-again, evangelical, or fundamentalist Christians are more likely to agree (84 percent) than other Americans (45 percent.) Americans who live in the Midwest (62 percent) and South (63 percent) are also more interested in more Christian films than those in the Northeast (48 percent) or the West (44 percent).

Two-thirds of middle-aged and older Americans agree, including those 45 to 54 (63 percent), 55 to 64 (66 percent), and 65 and older (65 percent). Americans under 30 (43 percent) are least interested in more films with Christian values.

Two other major films with Christian themes, *Left Behind* and *Exodus: Gods and Kings* are due out later this year.