

'Muppets' Movie's Kermit the Frog Accused of Communism

This Christmas, there are some great family options at the box office. And, one of the most entertaining and most wholesome is *The Muppets* movie. So, why is Eric Bolling of *Follow the Money* going on Fox News accusing poor little Kermit of going red? Clearly, it's not easy being green.

Fox's main point is that the Muppets malign capitalism by featuring an oil tycoon villain, Tex, who wants to drill beneath Muppet Studio in order to increase his own fortune. Fox's critics take this plot point completely out of context. In fact, it leaves us wondering if they watched the movie at all.

Featuring Tex as the villain does not amount to communism. In the book of Kings, Naboth refuses to sell his vineyard to King Ahab. The king's wife, Jezebel, writes a letter in the king's name instructing his followers to proclaim a fast, seat Naboth at a banqueting table, and then take him outside and stone him. Shortly after his death, Ahab appropriates the vineyard. Both Ahab and Jezebel are rebuked by God for their actions.

Does this mean that being a king is evil? Absolutely not. God rebukes Ahab and Jezebel for their treachery and for the choices they make—something that David is at pains to explore in the psalms, especially the Beatus Vir in Psalm 1. The message is reaffirmed once again when Christ casts the unethical businessmen of his day out of His temple.

A lack of ethics and goodwill is precisely the problem with Tex Richman. He wants to steal Muppet Studio away from the rightful owners and stoops to sabotage in order to get what he wants. The problem is not that Tex is rich; the problem is that he's deceitful, arrogant and evil. There is a difference

between being a successful businessman in a free market and being morally bankrupt.

The contrast is all the more blatant when we consider that the Muppets are also capitalist entrepreneurs. For example, they own a studio, Kermie lives in a Bel Air mansion and Miss Piggy is an editor at *Vogue Paris*, who loves to wear Chanel and other fancy and expensive clothing brands. (This doesn't smell like communism to us.)

In *The Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx spoke out against individualism, the state, religion and property. In the 2011 movie, the Muppets work within the Hollywood system to organize a telethon on their own initiative. They don't force anyone to join in the effort. In fact, at first, Miss Piggy refuses. She then comes back on her own terms to help raise the \$10 million the Muppets need to reclaim their rightful property.

Religion also makes a brief, but overt, appearance in the movie when a church choir bus full of singers pulls behind Kermit's mansion when he comes face-to-face with Walter for the first time. And, most importantly—and most contrary to Marx—Walter must dig deep inside to figure out his special, individual and unique talent to save Muppet Studios. (His brother, played by Jason Segal, must likewise go through a similar process to figure out his own identity, save his relationship and marry the woman he loves. The whole debate is played out in the wonderful song, “Am I a Muppet or a Man?”)

Need more? The examples abound.

By the end of the movie, even Tex's assistants question his ethical practices. At one point, the big bear wonders if they're perhaps working for “the bad guy.” And of course, the whole movie is full of delightful commentary, much of it capitalist in underpinning. At one point, Fozzie exclaims “Wow, that was such an expensive looking explosion. I can't

believe we had that in the budget.” Did we mention that Gonzo has made his fortune as a CEO in the executive toilet industry?

The Muppets is full of great family values. Friendship, love, hard work, family, individuality—these are just some of the moral principles celebrated by the movie. In an age in which the media exerts more influence on our children than family, church and school combined, these are great messages to be promoted by mainstream Hollywood. It is important that families speak out at the box office and support great storytelling full of great traditional values. There is a little light action violence (especially with Miss Piggy around), but as in an animated cartoon, nobody gets hurt. That said, be sure to explain to your kids that pushing adults from the top of buildings will not achieve the same results at home.

Don’t forget the final message of Kermit the Frog. When it seems their efforts have failed, he encourages his fellow Muppets to do something that would be impossible in a communist society. He says, “Let’s just start at the bottom and work our way back up to the top.”

For our little green friend, success is not about making lots of money; it’s about being the best you can be and responding to your calling. Human beings sometimes just need a shift of paradigms to get things right. That’s precisely what happens to Tex. The symbolic wake-up call comes in the form of a large bowling ball that hits him in the head. (Do not try this at home!) When he wakes up, he’s a changed and happy man who gives back to the Muppets what is rightfully theirs. And yet, he’s still rich and he’s still an oil tycoon. He just cares for the first time about his fellow man ... or in this case, Muppet.

We’re with Fozzie on this one. At the end of the day, any suggestion that this year’s Muppets movie pushes a liberal or

communist agenda is just plain "Waka Waka Waka." Thanks, Eric,
for the laugh.