

New Christian Film Leaves Pro-Choice Audience in Awe

With little to no filmmaking experience, the last thing Stuart Migdon wanted to do was make a movie about the controversial subject of abortion. It's not the "feel-good" flick many people want to see on a Friday or Saturday night.

Yet Migdon and his partners knew they wanted to do something to impact American culture for Jesus. They tossed around a few other ideas and prayed diligently for direction. Ultimately, they all hearkened back to the same revelation: the abortion issue must not be dismissed.

But Migdon and his partners also realized that a film about abortion had to be made with the utmost vigilance to prevent even more division between the already volatile relationship of the pro-life and pro-choice camps. They knew the task ahead of them would be gargantuan, but critical.

Five years later—through much discouragement, consternation and some doubt—the film *Voiceless* emerged. The movie opens in select theaters on October 7 and, from all preliminary indications, it is making the desired impact on those who have previewed it.

"When we decided we were going to do this movie, we knew that it would be uncomfortable for us," said Migdon, the film's executive producer. "We knew it was a huge risk for us, but God opened all the doors for us to do it.

"We wanted to make a movie that would motivate Christians to engage in the culture against the sin of abortion. Many Christians, instead of being salt and light, meld themselves into the culture in which they live. They don't engage the culture; they let the culture engage them. And that's a big problem, especially with this issue."

National Right to Life estimates that, since the Supreme Court's decision of Roe v. Wade in 1973, more than 58 million unborn children were aborted through 2015. estimates that more than 794,000 babies have been aborted in 2016.

A Gallup poll revealed that 52 percent of women having an abortion identified themselves as a Christian. In 2015, Lifeway Research found that number to be closer to 70 percent.

“Most churches will simply avoid this subject matter,” said Migdon, a Christian author and ministry leader who is the founder of Jesus Take the Wheel Ministries. “In fact, Student for Life of America did a survey and found about 94 percent of evangelical churches don’t have a pro-life ministry, and members of those churches are not hearing anything about abortion from the pulpit.”

"The advantage we had in making this movie is that very statistic. Evangelicals, for the most part, are pro-life. We're hoping that our film will help kick-start this ministry in every church across the nation."

Surprising Reception

A recent screening at the Philadelphia Independent Film Festival produced what Migdon says were surprising reactions, considering many of those in attendance were “very liberal, artsy people.”

"My partner and I were very nervous about the screening. But when the movie was over, they gave us a standing ovation," Migdon said. "We were told that people were very impressed by the way we didn't vilify the pro-choice movement, the fact that it doesn't pit pro-choice vs. pro-life. Many pro-choice people have said they don't agree with us, but that it's an

inspiring movie. And, many pro-life people say they are now motivated to do something about it.”

The Movie

Voiceless centers around Jesse Dean, a recently discharged soldier who came from a rough upbringing. Upon marrying, his wife brought him to faith in Christ and the Holy Spirit took firm hold of him. He and his wife moved to Philadelphia to take a job as an outreach leader at an older church with a declining membership. Little did he know the church stood directly across the street from an abortion clinic.

Determined to make a difference, Dean, played by Rusty Joiner (*Last Ounce of Courage*; *CSI Miami*), begins to engage with the abortion clinic, but receives resistance from his church, the community and even his wife. He’s forced to make the difficult choice of backing off or putting everything in his life on the line.

The film encourages people to stand up for what they know is right—particularly as it pertains to taking God’s truths into society—and to address social issues. It addresses the spirit of retreat as it pertains to engaging the culture of apathy that has developed within the church.

“When it comes to the issue of life, silence is not an option,” said Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, President of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. “We are called to be a voice for the voiceless, from the womb to the tomb, elevating and respecting the Imago Dei inside every human being. *Voiceless* shares a prophetic message from a time such as this.”

In 2015, the Northeast Film Festival (a secular film festival), rewarded Migdon and his partners with the award for the best feature. The movie garnered several other awards,

including best director (Pat Necerato), best actor (Joiner), best supporting actress (Victoria Gates), best screenplay and audience choice.

The message and the quality of the movie awed Lloyd Pulley, senior pastor of Calvary Chapel Old Bridge Church in New Jersey. Pulley says Calvary Chapel Old Bridge has about 20 members active with its pro-life ministry.

"I was speechless at *Voiceless*," Pulley said. "I've seen a lot of Christian movies that are very raw, but this one rings true. It's very real. Pastors don't want to get into a political thing, so they stay away from the abortion issue. But it's not just a side issue. What are we doing if we're not involved in people's lives, the young girls who are making these decisions.

"I saw myself in that pastor in the movie. I stepped away from the pro-life movement for a while myself because of the baggage that was involved with it. I soon realized that was a mistake. To me, this is an issue that's affected the conscience of a nation. Abortion brings initial relief, but then gives way to years of psychological pain, shame and regret. We as the church have a tremendous opportunity to help the men and women involved in this, and to help a generation not to go down that road. If we don't, it's going to continue to be a problem of cataclysmic proportions."

Pulley says his church's pro-life ministry has encouraged many women to deal openly with their past and the abortions they had been hiding. That includes his wife, who, after many years, told others what she had done.

"When she confessed that to loving people, I saw a change in her countenance," Pulley said. "It was like a huge burden had been lifted off of her. It's like Joseph, who God used to rescue his brothers. After hiding a dirty little secret for 20 years, they openly acknowledged it, and they became leaders of

the nation.

“Our nation will be under judgment for the blood that has been spilled. But this could be an opportunity for a huge turn of repentance. The church needs to wake up and see what it can do. If it does, you can be sure God will move.”

Personal Connection

Migdon himself can relate to the message of the movie. At 18, his girlfriend became pregnant, and many of his friends and members of his family openly encouraged them to seek an abortion.

It was never an option for him or his girlfriend.

“Even though I had no idea of how we were going to make it, I never thought about an abortion,” Migdon said. “We didn’t hesitate—we got married. We were poor, and I was determined to finish school. I came from a Jewish family and didn’t even become a believer until years later, but God knew what he was doing. He convicted both of us. We struggled for a while but pressed on. God is so good.”

Migdon hopes his story, and the message of *Voiceless*, will sear the conscience of the nation.

“I want people to see this movie and get inspired to stand up and do something against the sin of abortion,” Migdon said. “We want every church in America to start a pro-life ministry. We’ve aligned ourselves with several large pro-life ministries to assist in this effort. Our motivation is to motivate Christians to see that they can make a difference. It takes only one person to get uncomfortable and engage in the culture. God takes care of the rest.”

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