

Sundance Film Festival Panel to Analyze Faith and Film Craze

As world news locks onto faith, as *Noah*, *Exodus*, *Heaven Is for Real* and other faith films crowd theaters, Gray Media presents the Sundance festival's "Faith in Film" panel—an informed look at perceptions, prejudices and wide-open possibilities—Jan. 29, in Park City, Utah.

"Hollywood reflects society, society reflects Hollywood, and each needs the other," Tim Gray, founder and president of Gray Media said of unprecedented panel discussion. "Years in the making, this conversation will challenge storytellers' notions of faith in films and inspire filmmakers to next levels."

And the market for the faith category?

"Films with faith at their core were so numerous in 2014 that cultural commentators dubbed it Hollywood's 'Year of the Bible,'" Jonathan Merritt wrote in *The Week*. The phenomenon, propelled by stories, includes the History Channel's wildly popular *The Bible*. "In fact," Merritt wrote, "more biblical blockbusters were released in the last 12 months than the previous 12 years combined."

Gray's panel opens in a one-on-one with Devon Franklin, now president/CEO of Franklin Entertainment. At MGM and as SVP of Columbia Pictures, Franklin produced *Pursuit of Happyness*, *The Karate Kid 2*, *Heaven Is for Real* and *Annie*—and wrote the best-selling *Produced by Faith*.

The afternoon's Part 2 is the Gray-moderated panel of Franklin; Adam Hastings, Pure Flix Entertainment director of marketing and operations, whose 2014 *God's Not Dead* staggered industry watchers with more than \$60 million domestic box

office; Bill Reeves, founder of Working Title Agency, behind faith-market groundbreakers *Fireproof*, *Courageous*, *Soul Surfer*, *Heaven Is for Real* and more; and Julie Fairchild of Lovell-Fairchild Communications, whose film work ranges from *Fireproof* to *Get Low*, *20 Feet from Stardom* and *Heaven is for Real*.

“Every film festival needs the faith-film conversation but whether it’s for indies or in Hollywood, Sundance steps up early where others shy away,” Gray said. “Given the top-growing 2014 faith films and the world focus on faith, given global unrest and instability, this is as timely as looking at a watch.”

After studying film & television at a Christian university, Tim Gray worked media both in church and agency sides. Twelve years ago he formed Gray Media to help outreaches “tell their stories through media”; and when the faith stories boom hit filmmaking, Gray Media was on go.

“Most agencies specialize in film or online or outreach; we do all three,” Gray says. “Besides work with secular networks, we place media in 200-plus countries for many of the world’s largest churches and faith organizations.”