

‘The Good Lie’ Tells Story of Sudanese Christians who Became ‘Lost Boys’

A group of rag-tag Sudanese refugees who immigrated to the United States may have started out as “The Lost Boys.” But in Hollywood’s latest treatment of this real-life tragedy, they find love, support and the power of faith to believe in miracles.

Based on true events, a new film called *The Good Lie*, which is being released Friday, stars Reese Witherspoon as a strong-willed but emotionally detached Midwestern woman named Carrie Davis. As an employment agency counselor, Davis helps three young persecuted Christian refugees from war-torn Africa look for jobs after their relocation to the United States.

“I really hope the Christian audience can get behind this film,” producer Molly Smith said in a telephone interview with *Charisma News* on Monday. “The story of the Lost Boys is an incredible story. They had to have faith to get through this journey. It’s the ultimate triumph of the human spirit.”

Christian themes promoted in the film include the idea that sacrifice is the ultimate act of love; loving the stranger; because believers have a Savior, we are not alone in this world; leaving the past behind to address the needs in front of us; and ‘good lies’ and honesty; according to the film’s production notes.

The film’s title comes from a lie that one of the Sudanese characters tells soldiers – that he is alone in tall grass – to protect his brothers who are hiding. Many boys captured during the Sudanese civil war were forced to fight as child soldiers. More than 2 million of them died.

Prominent Christian leaders such as Rick Warren have endorsed the film.

“There’s two great stories in *The Good Lie*. One of them is the story that brings awareness to how millions of people are living in refugee camps around the world,” said Warren, senior pastor of Saddleback Church in California. “The other story tells us you don’t have to be perfect to make a difference. I’m going to tell my 5 million followers on Facebook to spread the word about this important film. I just love this story. *The Good Lie* is a beautiful movie ... well acted, brilliant cinematography. I think it’s an Academy Award-quality movie.”

The “Lost Boys of Sudan” is the name given to the more than 20,000 boys (and girls) of the Nuer and Dinka ethnic groups who were displaced and/or orphaned during the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005); about 2.5 million were killed and millions more were displaced. The term was revived, as children fled the post-independence violence of South Sudan with Sudan during 2011-13.

Producer Smith, 33, was part of a team that was nominated for the Best Picture Oscar in 2010 for *The Blind Side*, which starred Sandra Bullock, who won for Best Actress that year. Smith sees similarities between Bullock’s mother-figure character and the more detached professional played by Witherspoon.

“I would say they’re both brash American women who have incredible experiences that changed their lives,” Smith said.

Witherspoon’s character, Davis, starts out trying to find jobs for the four young men who have arrived in Kansas City after spending 15 years in refugee camps. But they keep turning up on her doorstep as they keep getting tripped up trying to adapt to American culture.

“Reese’s character is a flawed woman,” Smith said. “She’s emotionally closed off, a little bit lonely. These guys showed

up on their doorstep, keep showing up to thank her, and they her open her eyes” to the possibility that she should be more open to human contact.

“This movie will appeal to Christian audiences,” Smith said, “because it’s a story about family and love and sacrifice. We really hope the audience will connect with these values.”