

Vote at the Box Office

We need to show Hollywood at the box office what types of movies we want to see.

In January 1956, five young missionaries dared to make contact with a savage South American tribe, and their story changed lives around the world. Fifty years later, the account-told from the tribe's perspective-will reach another generation in movie theaters this month.

During the early 1950s, missionaries Nate Saint, Jim Elliot, Roger Youderian, Ed McCully and Peter Fleming were working with their families in the foothills of the Andes mountains in Ecuador, at the edge of the Amazon jungle. Their goal was to reach the legendary Waodani Indians and to share the gospel with them.

But the five were betrayed by one of the first Waodanis they met. He lied to his fellow tribesmen to convince them the young men were a threat. Instead of welcoming the missionaries, the Indians' greeting came at the end of a spear when they gored the men and left them to die.

In a moment that was born of the grace of God, the wives of the five young men decided they would attempt to reach the Waodanis for Christ. In a remarkable story of forgiveness, several of them led to Jesus the very tribe that had murdered their husbands.

The story was first told in Elisabeth Elliot's book *Through Gates of Splendor* (1957), which has become a Christian classic. In 2004, filmmakers Jim Hanon and Bill Ewing captured the incredible story in a documentary titled *Beyond the Gates*

of Splendor.

The filmmakers interviewed all the surviving family members of the five missionaries as well as a tribal member who took part in the attack-Mincayani, now an old man. It's one of the most compelling documentaries I've ever seen.

But the story doesn't end there.

For the last three years, Hanon, Ewing and their team have worked deep in the jungle to create a dramatic motion-picture version of the story. Working with professional actors as well as Waodani Indians, in oppressive heat and struggling with film and lighting equipment, they have emerged from the jungle with an amazing film, *The End of the Spear* ().

The major movie is scheduled to open in 1,200 theaters across the U.S. on January 20. It has recreated the entire story down to the last detail.

I recently viewed the film at a private screening in Hollywood, and I was overwhelmed by its power and the quality of its execution. I believe we as Christians should take a few specific steps to support the film.

First, I encourage Christians across America to see this remarkable movie. If we're going to change the entertainment industry, we as believers need to show Hollywood at the box office what types of movies we want to see-and this is an excellent choice.

And as I've said before in this column, the opening weekend's

box-office results dictate how long a movie will stay in theaters. So please see this one during its opening weekend of January 20 if possible.

Second, if you're a pastor or ministry leader, you can order study guides, newsletter inserts, postcards and other promotional materials related to the film on a ministry-oriented site, [. You'll find the resources needed to lead a study group or class on the subject of the film.](#)

Finally, this movie provides a perfect opportunity to share the gospel with a friend or co-worker whom you've been uncomfortable talking with about Jesus. Buy a couple of tickets and invite that person to go with you. It's a film Christians and non-Christians alike can enjoy and is an excellent conversation-starter about sacrifice, forgiveness, redemption and the hope in Jesus Christ.

On January 20, vote for better-quality movies and purchase a ticket at your local theater.

Phil Cooke, Ph.D., is a media consultant to ministries and churches worldwide. He publishes a free monthly e-mail newsletter, Ideas for Real Change. Find out more at [.](#)