

What 'Star Wars' Obsession Reveals About Our Culture

Star Wars: The Force Awakens has been a monumental hit. On the opening weekend, it made movie history, bringing in \$238 million in the United States alone. After 12 days, it had brought in \$1 billion. What a phenomenal success. Many find it a "must-see" movie. *The Economist* (Dec. 19, 2015) had a leading article, "Star Wars, Disney and Myth-making." Here are a few excerpts:

"In uncertain times, when governments and military might seem unable to keep people safe or stay honest, audiences take comfort in the idea of superheroes who ride to the rescue. Modern myths also have the power to unify people across generations, social groups and cultures, creating frameworks of shared references even as other forms of media consumption become ever more fragmented. Ultimately, however, these modern myths are so compelling because they tap primordial human urges—for refuge, redemption and harmony."

The writer of the article is trying to explain why the movie is so compelling. What draws people to see a movie that is all myth? Clearly some deep human desires are being met. *The Economist* article mentions the "primordial human urges of refuge, redemption and harmony."

Reading the article, I couldn't help but think of how the gospel of Jesus Christ answers these universal desires of "refuge, redemption and harmony." At the beginning of 2016, none of us would be so foolish as to predict how things will be at the end of this year. We live in a very unsafe and uncertain world. Factors over which we have little or no control impact us profoundly. Where do you go for "refuge"? What do you do when your world seems to be collapsing around you? The psalmist said he would not fear "though the world

gives way” as “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46). In the difficult situations of life, we are encouraged to be still and know that the Lord is God.

Similarly, we all need “redemption.” We mess up and don’t even keep our own resolutions, far less live a life according to God’s standards. This, again, brings us to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In great love, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, so that we would be “redeemed” and forgiven through trusting in Jesus Christ who died for our sins and rose again. Here is true freedom and “redemption.”

All of us also long for “harmony”—a world where there are no wars; cities where there is no violence; homes where everyone lives at peace. Is such “harmony” possible?

I believe this “harmony” begins through knowing Jesus Christ, who is the Prince of Peace. One future day “they shall beat their swords into plowshares” and “neither shall they learn war anymore.” Jesus Christ shall reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. So enjoy the movie, but also take time to reflect on where you go for “refuge, redemption and harmony.”

John Munro *is the pastor of Calvary Church in Charlotte.*