

Why We Should Support Christian Projects From Hollywood

Despite the raging success of *The Bible* miniseries on the History Channel, Christian critics still sound off about recent efforts by Hollywood to produce Christian-themed movies and TV programming. I was in a meeting recently where we discussed the record-breaking audience for *The Bible* series, and one well-meaning Christian in the group said, “But it’s so inaccurate!”

Every time a project like *The Blind Side*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Bible*, *The Book of Eli* and others come out, a group of Christians take issue with the theology, doctrine or portrayals in them. In most cases, the complainers are well-meaning, but despite the inaccuracies or doctrinal issues in these projects, here’s why I think we need to support them.

- 1. Hollywood is finally getting the message that 91+ million evangelical Christians in the United States take their faith seriously, and it’s interested in reaching that audience.** This is a major breakthrough. For the last 30 years, in movies or prime-time TV, most Christians were portrayed as pedophiles, serial killers or child abusers. Now the entertainment industry has realized this is a vast audience that should be treated seriously, and we’re seeing a sea change in the way Christians are portrayed.
- 2. Hollywood now spends hundreds of millions of dollars marketing these projects to the world.** When the History Channel is spending tens of millions of dollars advertising *The Bible* to the world, we need to get behind it. Add all the other major studio projects, and the exposure to biblically themed projects is amazing.

As a result of the *Bible* series alone, millions of people are now watching Bible stories, buying the DVD and reading the book. How can this be a bad thing?

3. **The Bible is now water-cooler conversation.** Christians who were once afraid to discuss their faith at the office are now finding that talking about the Bible is actually cool! Because these movies and TV programs bring up the issue, Christians not only are more comfortable talking about it, but also are there to answer questions their co-workers and friends have about the Bible.
4. **The impact is nothing short of extraordinary.** As Hollywood talent agent Kim Dorr said about the Bible series recently, "Granted they are telescoping the entire Bible into 10 hours of television. Granted there are places where they've had to jump through hundreds of years of world history. But the fact that Mark Burnett and Roma Downey pitched a miniseries about the Bible, sold it, shot it and have it on a cable network where millions of people are watching it and discussing it—is extraordinary. In watching the episodes, there have been moments of such theological insight that my husband and I have stopped many times to discuss how the scene broadened or deepened something in our faith. To get that from something airing on TV is extraordinary."
5. **If the Christian community could act as one, we could make a powerful difference in the culture.** We wonder why we're not impacting the world, and yet these films and TV programs are a great example of how we criticize each other rather than support each other. Check out the website for As One to find out just how important it is for us to work together.
6. **Unity matters.** If we're going to impact the world, we need to stand together. We can nitpick each other's projects until Jesus comes, but when He arrives, He won't be happy with the result. The portrayal of King David might not have been what you expected. The

dialogue on the road to Damascus might not have been rendered exactly as it's given in the biblical text. Did Jesus carry the whole cross or just a beam? Does everything about this have to be perfect?

The point is, these big-budget projects are telling the story of the Bible to the world, and it's our job to follow up with our friends, family and co-workers and fill in the details. We have a role to play in this, and it's not just to be critics.

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