

View

A Publication of the Folsom Point church of Christ, 900 E. Natoma, Folsom, CA

December 16, 2007

Not So Golden Film

Remember that movie, “The Golden Compass”? It’s the one that is based on a book by an atheist named Philip Pullman, who wrote a theology entitled “Dark Materials.” The movie had some star power, including Nicole Kidman and lots of positive and negative press, which often translates into big box office. But, alas, when it comes to box office results, “The Golden Compass” “points south,” as one report put it.

Speaking of news reports, it’s fascinating to see how different news agencies headlined these figures. While nearly all of the news agencies reporting on the results mentioned the disappointing performance in their headlines, CNN, true to form, wrote “‘Golden Compass’ Points to First Place at Box Office.” Even Reuters was more honest: “‘Golden Compass’ loses its way at box office” and USA Today had, “‘Compass’ box office is far from Golden.”

The truth is, the turnout for film was dismal. Family films have traditionally done extremely well, especially at this time of year, and high budget family films have been particularly successful. But “The Golden Compass,” which cost \$180 million to make, took in a mere \$26.1 million in its opening weekend. To put that in perspective, the three “Lord of the Rings” films had opening weekends, from 2001-2003, ranging from \$47.2 to \$72.6 million and “The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” opened with \$65.6 million in 2005. Ironi-

cally, Pullman has been quoted as saying that he “hates” C. S. Lewis and “The Chronicles of Narnia” series.

One big question is whether protests from family groups had an effect on the film. New Line Cinema’s

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marketing director, Rolf Mittweg, doesn’t think so. “It’s very hard to say. Historically, protests of these sorts tend to be ineffective on box-office re-

sults,” he said. We’ll never know for sure, but it seems that the protests at least put people on notice that Pullman was anti-God — and whether the media types want to admit it or not, most people are not anti-God. Surveys have consistently shown that over 90% of Americans believe in God. Common sense should tell you that it’s a losing proposition to make a blockbuster movie that, however subtly, sends a message that God is not real, especially this time of year. I mean, after all, most people believe Jesus — God in the flesh — was born during this season (a mistake on their part, but at least it demonstrates a belief in God, however shallow).

This is another example of how out of touch the entertainment business is with mainstream America. They have plenty of evidence that shows where the collective brains and hearts of American families are — look at the monumental success of true family

fare, not only “Narnia” and “Lord of the Rings,” but all of the Pixar offerings as well. People turn out in droves to see these films, whether they have religious themes or not. “Bella,” a film shot by near-amateurs in 28 days with a budget under \$3 million, and opening in only about 200 theaters, grossed nearly \$2.5 million in a couple of weeks. People heard it was a God-honoring, uplifting story, and they went to see it. “Amazing Grace” got into the top ten, and it appeared on about half the number of screens that other, big studio movies appeared on.

Yes, there is plenty of garbage in Hollywood and there’s plenty of profit in that garbage. Movie moguls still go for the sex and blood and gore, and fill their films with filthy language. They seem to think the “R” rating gives them a ride to the top of the box office. I’m not sure that’s necessarily true. Americans love to go to the movies and they’ll go see whatever is being shown and these R-rated films are often the only choice. Holy people, true Christians, don’t think that way, of course, and so they stay away from that kind of fare. But when a good, family-oriented film appears, they turn out in large numbers. Even those of us who don’t frequent theaters are drawn to some of these films.

So, since Hollywood is so interested in the bottom line, why don’t they produce more movies like “Narnia” and “Amazing Grace”? I think there’s a deceptively simple answer — Hollywood is not only interested in the profits; they are also “evangelists” for a kind of culture they would like to see in America. Good business practice is trumped by the “artists” who write and produce these films, and most of these “artists” are social engineers. They cringe when they hear “America under God” and their goal is to change us to a dyed-in-the-wool secular culture. They would like America to become another France, where God has been driven almost completely out of the fabric of society. They would padlock the church buildings or turn them into museums, relics of another, “backward” era.

They have been somewhat successful, to be sure; we are becoming a more secular culture — anyone with eyes and a brain in his head can see that. But there is still some reason for optimism and hope. When a movie that is produced and designed, specifically, to influence the religious thinking of masses of people fails to garner the results it hopes for, there is reason for hope. It’s a small victory, to be sure, but a victory just the same and we ought to rejoice in it. I think it’s great that the studio is unlikely to even break even on “The Golden Compass.” Perhaps that will discourage them from trying to pawn off any more of Pullman’s junk on the public. The bottom line, ultimately, does matter.

In the meantime, we need to be wise in our evaluation of entertainment vehicles. Not every book or movie is as obviously secular and atheistic as Pullman’s trilogy. Sometimes, the message in a book, movie or piece of music is subtle. But its aim is just as nefarious as Pullman’s stuff — to move the mind away from God and onto worldly things.

So, let’s remember what James tells us: “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (4:4).

The church of Christ

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Services

Sunday Morning Assembly
9:30 AM

Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Study
7:30 PM

Classes for all ages.

Private classes arranged
at your convenience.

For more information,
visit our web site at:

www.folsomchurch.com

Agenda

The Lord's Day, December 16, 2007

9:30 AM: Worship: Singing, Lord's Supper, Preaching
Sermon: The Story

☉ Preaching: David Posey

5:00 PM: Lord's Supper, Singing, Preaching

☉ Sermon: David Posey

5:30 PM: Bible Classes, All Ages

Adult Class Offerings

☉ Room 11-12, SeedSowers

☉ Auditorium, Deuteronomy (Brady Rembleski)

Wednesday, December 19, 2007

7:30 PM, Bible classes for ages 18 mos. and up,
Auditorium: Deuteronomy (David Posey)

Notes

Most sermons are available in MP3 format on our website (www.folsomchurch.com) or on CD (see a deacon).

Three Answers to One Question

by Robert F. Turner

Could one question be given three differing answers, and all answers be correct? Seems unlikely doesn't it? Yet this is the case in the N.T. book of Acts when the question, "What must I do?" (to be saved) is asked.

The expressed answer given to the Philippian jailer was "Believe!" (See Acts 16:25-34 for full account.) Some insist that this expressed reply is complete, and hence salvation is by faith only. However, a consideration of the expressed replies given this question on other occasions will show the fallacy of such reasoning.

When some of the Pentecost multitude asked, "What shall we do?" they were told, "Repent, and be baptized." (See Acts 2:6-38-f. for details.) And when Saul asked what to do he was directed to Ananias, who told him to "Arise, and be, baptized." (See Acts 9:1-18 22:6-16 for the record.)

If only the expressed reply is to be considered we would have to conclude that the jailer was saved by faith alone, and that those on Pentecost were saved by repentance and baptism (i.e., without any faith) and that Saul was saved by baptism alone, without either faith or repentance. Of course none of these conclusions are valid.

A fair study of the context shows that the same elements, and all three of these elements, were present in each of the cases examined. One must have faith in Christ to be saved, but faith that is not strong enough to cause one to obey the Lord's commands is a "dead" faith. (Jas. 2:24-26)

“THOSE ON PENTECOST HEARD THE PREACHING OF CHRIST BEFORE THEY ASKED THEIR QUESTION. THE PREACHING "PRICKED" THEIR HEARTS; I.E., THEY BELIEVED. THEN THEY WERE TOLD "REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED.”

Why Did The Answers Differ?

Because the questions were asked by people in different circumstances. A man in Burnet may ask how far is it to San Antonio?" and be told, "100 miles." In Marble Falls this question would get a different answer. And in Blanco, the same question would get a third, and different answer. Yet all would be part of one great truth.

There is no indication that the Philippian jailer had either knowledge or faith in the Christian system; so he was told to believe, and then "they spake unto him the word of the Lord." He repented, as indicated by washing their stripes, and he was baptized, as stated in Acts 16:38. Thus he truly believed. (vs. 34)

But those on Pentecost heard the preaching of Christ before they asked their question. The preaching "pricked" their hearts; i.e., they believed. Then they were told "repent and be baptized."

And Saul (later called Paul) had already believed, and had spent three days penitently praying, when he was told, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Where Are You??

Your status or condition before God must be considered in answering your question, "What must I do?" The Lord will save "all who will obey;" (Heb. 5:9) and has given one gospel to all. (Gal. 1:8 Rom. 2:11) Have you proven your faith by full and complete obedience to His will?