



Kevin Sorbo with Tenley Kellogg

KEVIN SORBO FILMS IN FLINT

"He was a unicorn, like Mr. Dean [Cain]."
- Young, upcoming actress, Tenley Kellogg

CREATIVE MOTION

FALL
2018
ISSUE

MICHIGAN'S CHURCH & ENTERTAINMENT ARTS MAGAZINE



David D. Miller

Award-winning actress Amy Sutherland talks about filmmaking and faith



Joe Guerra takes his music and ministry to the stage and into the studio

HOLY HEROES!
Christian Comics Creator
David D. Miller

plus

Script advisor Dr. Stan Williams, Sci-Fi series Space Debris, José Carlos, Rev. Gaven Mize, Tricia Harmon, Film finance research and marketing

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MICHIGAN'S CHRISTIAN ENTERTAINMENT ARTS MAGAZINE

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“Everybody asks me, ‘How can I raise money for my movie?’”

- Joel Paul Reisig, producer

Producers, here's how:

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Our articles will help you double profits (you're currently missing more than half of your biggest market), and eliminate the “cheesy” designation (it's the top issue for the untapped demographic we write about). We're talking tweaks. Inexpensive. And 1 Million Moms helping.

We also have a special thank you for Dick Rolfe (he introduced us to Dr. Williams and consulted on our article about Corbin Bernsen's movie).

- Kristen Collier

Creative Motion Editor

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.” - II Cor. 10:4



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MI Christian Talent Network.
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inside



Award-Winning Michigan Actress, Amy Sutherland: “Fun” With Her Creator

Page 9

Diagnosis Faith: “That’s a Wrap!” for Kevin Sorbo’s Flint, Michigan Shoot

Page 13



Will Smith’s Script Dr. Stanley Williams, Ph.D. Has Your Cure

Page 18

David D. Miller Debuts Cross Section Comics First Christian Comic Book

Page 32



Art Scholar Rev. Gaven Mize on Corbin Bernsen’s Christian Mingle Movie

Page 52

SPECIAL INDUSTRY INSIDER EXTRA

Dispelling \$\$\$ and Quality Myth Page 47

Tapping An Unreached Market Page 48

Insincerity and the Creepy Factor Page 50

Rev. Dr. Alfonso Espinosa:

Christology in Movie Production

Page 50

Michigan News Briefs Page 4
 Wild Faith Burbank Win Page 8
 Tricia Harmon Takes On Halloween Page 27
 Singer Joe Guerra’s ‘Reason to Breathe’ Page 36
 Joshua Courtade’s Space Debris Page 39
 José Carlos’ Worldwide Comics Mission Page 44
 Diana Angelson’s Miracle Cat. Page 54
 Special Dick Rolfe Tribute Page 56

state of the art

MICHIGAN ENTERTAINMENT NEWS BRIEFS

A Glimpse at Who, What, When and Where



Left: From the cast of *Break a Leg*, Lauren LaStrada, Kyle Patrick, Kathy Mooney, and Maria Wasikowski. Right: Jolie Ledford.

Break a Leg World Debut in LA

The Ann Arbor produced short film, *Break a Leg*, written and directed by Carver Diserens, made its world debut September 29th, at Regal L.A. LIVE: A Barco Innovation Center, in the Awareness Festival, which deals with world issues.

Break A Leg, “A passion project in the truest sense of the word,” was made possible by the Maxwell Gray Fellowship at The University of Michigan Depression Center, to raise awareness about mental health issues. It “combines love of running with mental health advocacy, comedic filmmaking and love for the Maize and Blue.”

Maria Wasikowski, who plays Jess, posted, “I couldn’t be happier that our film, which focuses on mental health by flipping the script on mental illness, and offering a new perspective on the present stigma toward mental health, will have its’ first public showing there.”

Along with Wasikowski, *Break a Leg* features ac-

tors Lauren LaStrada, Barton Bund, Kyle Patrick, Lottie Mae Prenevost, Carly Angott and Claire Prenevost. Release date is October 10, 2018.

‘Best Young Actress’ Trading Cards

Michigan actress, Jolie Ledford, who recently received her SAG card, just got another important card—her very own trading cards.

Ledford is on trading cards for her new movie, *Snaggletooth*, which premieres at the Santa Cruz Film Festival, October 5th, as part of the Friday Night Laughs program at the Courtyard Theater at the Tannery Arts Center in LA. *Snaggletooth*, “a short film about an unusual girl who needs to get her teeth fixed at midnight,” is written and directed by Colin Bishopp. It stars Jolie Ledford, Sierra Marcks, Susan Louise O’Connor, and Thomas Cokenias.

Ledford recently received two Best Young Actress Awards: Best Actress in a Digital Feature Film at the 39th Annual Young Artist Academy Awards, July 14, and on April 16, Best Young Actress 12 and Under in

a Web Performance, by the Young Entertainer Awards, for CollegeHumor, which she starred in with Sinbad.

Helping Raise Money to Help Children with Cancer

Director of Photography, Daniel Knudsen and Assistant Producer, Aaron Noble, right, take a stress-reliever break to do a Fault in Our Stars shot.

“I was the emotional cheerleader,” Aaron Noble said, regarding his role as a waiter and AP of a short for the New Day Foundation for Families, which helps children suffering from cancer.

“New Day is a foundation that raises money for families with children that are battling cancer,” said producer, Courtney Matthews. “The film that we did is a short film/promo film for the foundation for a gala. I’m the lead actress and my twin daughters play one character. One twin, Madison Mathews, plays my healthy twin daughter, and Mackenzie Mathews plays the dying cancer patient version of my daughter.”

Matthews added, “I had the pleasure of working alongside the talented [Director of Photography] Daniel Knudsen during our time of filming, and felt he did a fantastic job bringing the story and vision to life with his creative genius skill. Look forward to working on more projects with him.”



Aaron Noble, top, and Daniel Knudsen, bottom.

Aretha Franklin Tribute

Lauren LaStrada sang with a house band at an Aretha Franklin Tribute at Bert’s Warehouse in The Eastern Market, in Detroit, August 31, 2018. Mike Bonner hosted and actor, Antonio Dandridge, also sang. Lady Champagne Page, from BLUES Legend Of Detroit, booked some of the evening’s talent.

Aretha Franklin, who began her career as a child



Top, left: Madison Mathews and Mackenzie Mathews. Top, right, starting from the left: Grover McCants, Mackenzie Mathews, and Courtney Matthews.



Top, left: young actors Ian Van Houten and Makenzie Moss. Top, right: pictured, starting from the left: Andrew Walker, Gary Grubbs, Ian Van Houten, Madeline Carroll, Andy Fraser, Makenzie Moss, Lindsay Pulsipher, Liam Matthews, Harold Cronk, and Shelly Newman.

singing Gospel at New Bethel Baptist Church in Detroit, died on August 16. Franklin saw over three dozen albums released during her career. Her signature song, “Respect,” was released in 1967.

MI Teen in ‘Broken Road’

Michigan teen, Ian Van Houten, is in 10 West Studios new movie, God Bless the Broken Road.

“Ian auditioned for the part of David, in Grand Rapids, in 2016,” said mother, Caroline Van Houten. “It was on a whim and not planned at all. He had been a theater actor since the age of six (he was 12 when he auditioned for the film) and thought, ‘Why not audition for a film, as well?’”

When finally called again he was asked by 10 West Studios founding partner, Harold Cronk, if he’d like to be in his new film. “Of course, he said, ‘Yes!’” Caroline Van Houten relayed.

She added, “I think, in the entire process, what he learned the most about is humility. Of course, he loved the attention, and how well he was treated on set, versus in a theater setting, where you have to fend for yourself. He also liked that you didn’t have to learn all your lines for one shoot, but rather you could take it day-by-day.”

Ian was blessed to work with Andrew Walker, who



Lady sings the blues: Lauren LaStrada at the Aretha Franklin tribute.

won the Phillip Borsos Award for Best Actor in 2006, for *Steel Toes*, at the Whistler Film Festival in Canada. Van Houten said her son “loved working with Andrew Walker,” that Walker “gave him some great advice and always treated him like family.”

She added that Walker, a Hallmark Movie favorite, “is one of a kind in the entertainment industry. A true gentleman.”

Head Artist Teaches Next Generation

Michigan’s Kendra Brooks got her start as an Extra Casting Assistant for *God Bless the Broken Road*. She is now Head Make-Up Artist for the Grand Rapids based Imagicon Entertainment project, *Waking Life*, which is in production.

“It was a dream come true to be able to work with one of my favorite female Directors/Producer/Writer,” Brooks said, “and that wish was granted when I was asked to be on the art team for a series Valerie Finkel was directing.”

When asked what it was like teaching an aspiring young make-up artist how to do movie make-up, Brooks said, “I was able to work with so many amazing, talented people and being able to mentor an up-and-coming makeup artist was the icing on the cake! She was a natural and I have no doubts that she will excel!”

Catallo Opens for Gin Blossoms

Sixteen-year-old Michigan singer and song-writer, Lia K Catallo, opened for the Gin Blossoms at the Arts, Beats and Eats festival this past summer.

“It was an incredible experience,” Catallo said, “and I am just so grateful for the opportunity to play on a National Stage, opening for an iconic band, at one of the best festivals in the country.”

She added, “It was a huge honor. I’ll never forget it!”

The young singer regularly performs on TV, and just released her first EP of original recordings.

Her mother, vocal coach and actress Jennifer Kincer said, “It was a thrill to watch her perform for thousands of people recently, opening up for the Gin Blossoms. She has a busy performance season this fall, coupled with the worldwide release of her new, five song EP, as well as the release of her new music video, the EP title track, ‘I Am Home.’ She will be performing all over the Metro Detroit area in the next few months.”

Kincer commented about what it was like teaching her gifted young daughter. “Having Lia as part of my studio is a pleasure, as a vocal coach and as a mom,” she said. “We work together on song repertoire, vocal technique, and performance techniques.”



Left: Head Makeup Artist, Kendra Brooks, oversees Dana Koops’ makeup by a young artist on the set of *Waking Life*. Above: Lia K Catallo opening at the Arts, Beats and Eats festival.

Wild Faith ‘Best Picture’ Burbank Win

The Michigan produced movie, Wild Faith, was runner-up at the International Christian Film Festival in May, but won Best Faith-Based Feature Film at the Burbank International Film Festival September 8, 2018. We asked Lauren LaStrada, who won Best Actress at the ICFF, about waiting for God.

What can you say to those who feel forgotten?

To everything God does, there is a SET TIME. Also, you just have to trust God in the process. What you think is the best time for something to happen, may not be according to God’s plan. The time of waiting could very well be the time of your growth and coming closer to the actual breakthrough.

When you look back, nothing missed, nothing lost, nothing broken. James 1:4 reminds us to, “Let Patience have its perfect work that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.” What good is the blessing if you aren’t ready for it? You’ll just lose it as soon as you get it, and trust me, people will remember. When it’s your time, nothing that wasn’t yours in the first place can pass you by. No such thing as “pass you by.” That opportunity, or door, was not yours. No matter what it looked like, or what you felt it should’ve been. Be happy for who it was for. Ask God to continue to prepare you.

This festival was for shorts, but the organizer made a category just for your movie. Why?

God’s Favor. Jeff Rector is also a Christian, but his festival is not an International CHRISTIAN Film Festival. However, I can tell you that so many of the award recipients were genuinely thanking God and had a beautiful story to tell about their submission and participation that was an encouragement for all. He also made sure that the very first awards, honorees, and recipients were men and women of the Armed Services who fight for this country everyday, but are seldom acknowledged. He’s a wonderful person. As a result of his heart, other Christian features submitted, as well. Because he has sown a portion of



Left: Jesse Low, Lauren LaStrada, and Jesse Aragon.

this festival to the Lord, I expect it to be even bigger and better, every year, than this year...and this year was pretty spectacular!

Were you connected to the CA churches you invited, or cold-call them?

I wasn’t. I cold-emailed.

Would you encourage actors and producers to reach out to churches in this way?

Sure, but don’t just use them for your own acceleration. Give back. Make a donation and sow a seed.

Was it nice having church members there?

There were church members, family, festival attendees, regular moviegoers...everyone.

What’s your take-away?

God’s timing is not always our timing. How long between Abraham and Sarah being told they would have a child, and then actually having him? Selah.

Any last words for those who feel too much time’s passed for their dream to come true?

Read #1 lol. Continue to sow into your gift, preparation, projects, training, etc. The more seeds in the ground, the larger the harvest...when in season.

Lights, camera...

MICHIGAN ENTERTAINERS IN ACTION

The SPECTACULAR Amy Sutherland

Amy Sutherland

There's something about the number three for award-winning actress, Amy Sutherland, a Michigan native. Not only does her IMDb bio say she is known for three really big projects, *Lethal Weapon* (2016), *Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* (2013), and the Eddie Murphy movie, *Mr. Church* (2016), but in one calendar year (2017-18) she won three awards as Best Supporting Actress.

Most recently, Sutherland won Best Supporting Actress for the short, *Wireless*, which also won Best Alumni Film at the 168 International Film Festival, August 25, 2018. *Wireless* is produced by Susan Shearer and Christopher Shawn Shaw, friends of the Michigan Christian Talent Network.

"Amy Sutherland is indeed a stellar and versatile actress, as she's won awards for both drama and



Behind the scenes from ATL Homicide on TV One, July 30, 2018. From left: Christopher Diaz, Amy Sutherland, and Angelo Diaz.



comedy performances,” Shaw said. “I had the privilege of collaborating with her on the mobster comedy short, *Wireless*, for which she won a Best Supporting Actress award, and we’re hoping to fundraise for a sequel soon!”

But this award-winning actress is, and does, so much more, as all good believers do, and are. Because she was also in *The Great and Powerful Oz*, and currently stars in TV One’s *ATL Homicide*, a reality-based crime series in Atlanta.

And it is clear from the get-go that Amy Sutherland is as beautiful on the inside as she is on the outside.

But don’t take our word for it. Read for yourself how God shapes her work.

“Working on the short film, *Wireless*,” which was written by Army war veteran, Jerry Della Salla, “was a great learning experience as a producer,” Sutherland said, “and on the acting side, another great example of inviting the Holy Spirit’s direction on character discovery. It was only a short day, or two, be-



fore filming, when I discovered who FBI Agent Van Tessle was.”

Sutherland most assuredly had a hoot, as the Wireless screenplay was written by noted Christian comedian and pastor, Thor Ramsey, below, from *Thou Shalt Laugh 3*.

Sutherland said, “We are hired as actors because of our choices, however I hadn’t auditioned for this role, and though I knew my lines, I was waiting on the fullness of the character.”

She added, “For me, I ask the Lord to help me discover. Up until this point I hadn’t quite figured it out, and finally I believe the Holy Spirit helped me see who this niche, and quirky character, was. Our director, Christopher Shawn Shaw, said he loved her, so I continued on in what I had visualized.”

Award-winning filmmaker Christopher Shawn Shaw has many Michigan connections, including



Top: Amy Sutherland IMDb photo. Above, back row, from left: Executive Producer/Actor Josh Murray, Producer Josh B. Jacobs, Actor David Boller, Actor David "Shark" Fralick, Screenwriter Thor Ramsey. Front row: Actress Amy Sutherland, Actor Tyler A. Johnson, Actor Jerry Della Salla, and Sound Mixer Robbie Pugliese.

collaborating on several movie projects with Michigan author and travel show producer, Jamie Hope.

The volunteers of Creative Motion are stunned by what God is doing here in Michigan, and with Michiganders who have had to move for work.

“I migrated from living four years in LA,” Sutherland said. “You know us creatives, working and living a bit of everywhere.”

But the Lord is using our brothers and sisters in Christ (Mk. 3:35) wherever they wander.

Sutherland said, “Often I have booked roles, and now third Best Supporting Actress award within a year—not by praying alone, but by asking God to bring life, and show me who this person is.”

WOW.

“It is so fun partnering with the greatest Creator of all!” she said.

Describing her difficult work as “fun” is a shock to us non-acting Christians, so we are NOT surprised

Amy Sutherland

AWARDS IN ONE CALENDAR YEAR

- Best Supporting Actress, Under Water, 168 International Film Festival, Aug 2017
- Best Supporting Actress, Thy Neighbor, International Christian Film Festival, May 2018
- Best Supporting Actress, Wireless, 168 International Film Festival, Aug 2018
- Nominated for Best Actress, Under Water, Content17 Film Festival, October 2017

she is winning all these awards. “So far I’m three for three with Best Supporting Actress. Which is crazy town. Totally God.”

We are amazed by this wonderful member of the Body of Christ, in creative motion to serve her Lord. All of us at Creative Motion magazine give thanks for Amy Sutherland, and ask our readers to keep her in their prayers.



Above: Amy Sutherland, who won Best Supporting Actress at the 168 International Film Festival, 2018, flanked on either side by Wes and Amanda Llewellyn, with whom she won awards a year ago for Under Water. Right: Amy Sutherland, Best Supporting Actress at the International Christian Film and Music Festival, 2018.

Michigan Cinema

MAKING MOVIES IN THE GREAT LAKES STATE



Pictured: Kevin Sorbo with assistant, Teri Lee.

That's
a
Wrap!

Kevin Sorbo was in Flint, Michigan, September 15, 2018, to put the wraps on *Faith Under Fire*, the first time in which he will appear again on camera in the same movie with Dean Cain since *God's Not Dead*.

"Kevin is playing Doctor Robinson," said producer, Joel Paul Reisig. "It is an extremely difficult role, as his character has the unenviable job of breaking the truth to our lead, whose daughter is dying of cancer."

Appearing on camera with Sorbo were two leads, Nick Vlassopoulos, who

said, “This film impacted me quite a bit,” and nine-year-old, Tenley Kellogg. “It was a lot for a nine-year-old to grasp,” said mother, Sue Kellogg, “but I think you’ll see the understanding and sensitivity shine through her character, Tiffany.”

Regarding the shoot location, Producer Reisig said, “We have a great location that doubles as a hospital. It would be very difficult to get this sort of location, at our budget, in LA. One of the many great things about shooting in Michigan is both the abundance of possible locations and the mid-west, can-do attitudes of our residents.”

Sorbo, who has worked with Reisig on several movies, also commented on his appreciation for the Michigan native producer’s professionalism. “Joel knows what he wants, and comes in prepared, with no Hollywood pretense. Straight-shooter, and my mid-west roots appreciates that.”

Nine-year-old actress, Tenley Kellogg, also commented on the lack of Hollywood pretense displayed by actors Kevin Sorbo and Dean Cain. Regarding Sorbo, she said, “He was a unicorn just like Mr. Dean,” and that, “He was funny and awesome and made me laugh.” Sue Kellogg explained that “‘Unicorn’ in her terms means they didn’t come with



Emily Buckner and Kevin Sorbo.

a ‘Hollywood’ demeanor.”

Lead actor, Nick Vlassopoulos, concurred. “Dean and Kevin were absolutely fantastic to work with! I couldn’t have asked for a better experience.”

Not only did Vlassopoulos have an extremely dif-



Left: Kevin Sorbo, Tenley Kellogg, Nick Vlassopoulos, and Daniel Knudsen.



Left: Kevin Sorbo, Tenley Kellogg, and Nick Vlassopoulos.

difficult job in playing a recently widowed man who finds his daughter has cancer, but the Michigan native also lost his father early this year. “There’s a line where Dean asks me, ‘Can you feel it? Even with all this garbage heaped upon you?’ What he was

talking about was God’s love. And I did feel that through all the support from friends and family, when my father passed, and through the film, as well. My faith grew stronger because of that.”

God blessed the young actress’ faith, as well, due to this. Tenley’s mother, Sue Kellogg, said, “I’d say this was a scary reality that allowed us to have some amazing conversations. During the days of filming the hospital scenes, she realized how many children spend days/nights/months laying in those beds.”

But the Lord has blessed Tenley’s sacrifice. “Since then, she’s been cast in two different commercials, one is a statewide commercial for the United Way,” mother Sue Kellogg said, adding, “We can’t wait to see what God gifts her next!”

Since all net proceeds for this movie go to cancer research, this is a win-win for all involved, including Generation Courage founder, Melissa Kerley, who expects a January release for her company’s first movie. “To wrap on such an amazing project, it almost feels surreal,” she said. “It was such a blessing, how God put all the right people together, to make such a successful movie. I couldn’t have asked for a better cast or crew.”



Kevin Sorbo and Daniel Knudsen.

One of those people, extra Emily Buckner, said, “I was able to have one scene with Nick and Kevin as a nurse. It was a great experience for me (as I am new to this industry), because I was able to see his focus and great interaction with Nick as they rehearsed and shot the scene. Definitely a sight to see and I am thankful to be a part of this film. Glory to God.”

When asked what Kevin Sorbo is like in real life,

Kerley said, “Kevin was a great guy. I really enjoyed working with him. He is really down-to-earth and a very funny guy. We are so blessed to have him cast for the role of Dr. Robinson.”

Producer Reisig concurred. “Kevin’s the same guy in real life as you see on camera. He’s easy to work with and glad to be on set. Very professional, never any problems.”



Behind the scenes at the Faith Under Fire shoot.



Above, left: Tenley Kellogg and Nick Vlassopoulos. Right: Kevin Sorbo and Nick Vlassopoulos.

When asked how this Michigan film professional first connected with Sorbo, Reisig replied, “Our first movie together was Rodeo Girl. I had four actors in mind for the role that Kevin ultimately played: Dean Cain, Luke Perry, Jason London, and Kevin. I had either worked with, or known, people who had

worked with all four of them, and who have had nothing but positive experiences. A friend gave me Kevin’s cell number, I called him, and a few months later he was on set!”

VISIT:
www.generationcourage.net

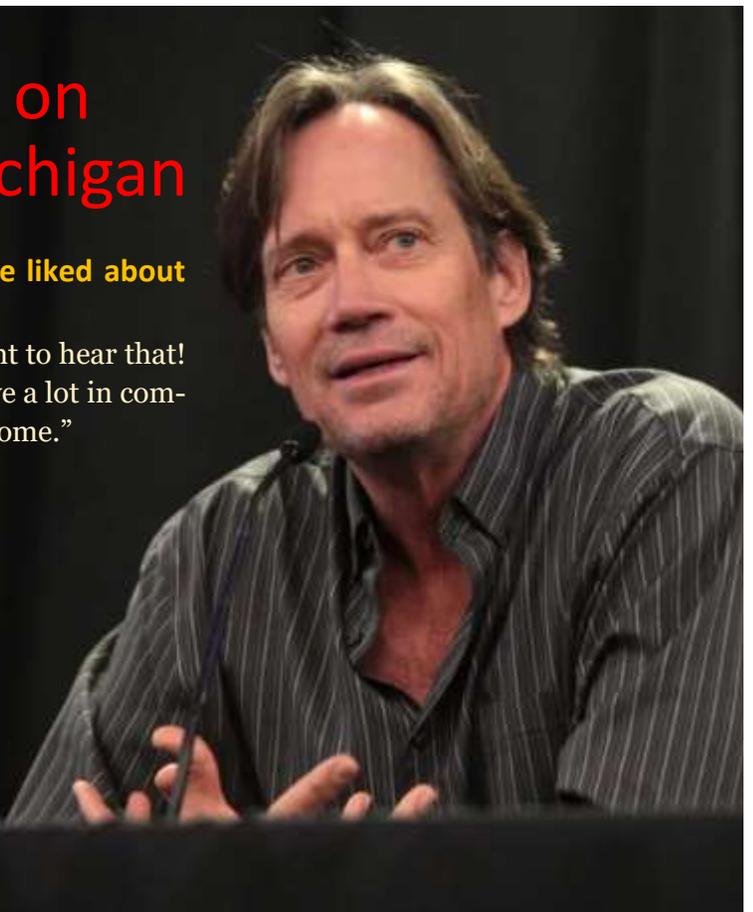
Actor Kevin Sorbo on Making Movies in Michigan

Creative Motion asked Kevin Sorbo what he liked about Michigan and shooting movies here.

“Reminds me of Minnesota...bet you didn’t want to hear that! Ha. Geographically, Michigan and Minnesota have a lot in common and filming movies there makes me feel at home.”

How did you first become connected to the MI Christian film community?

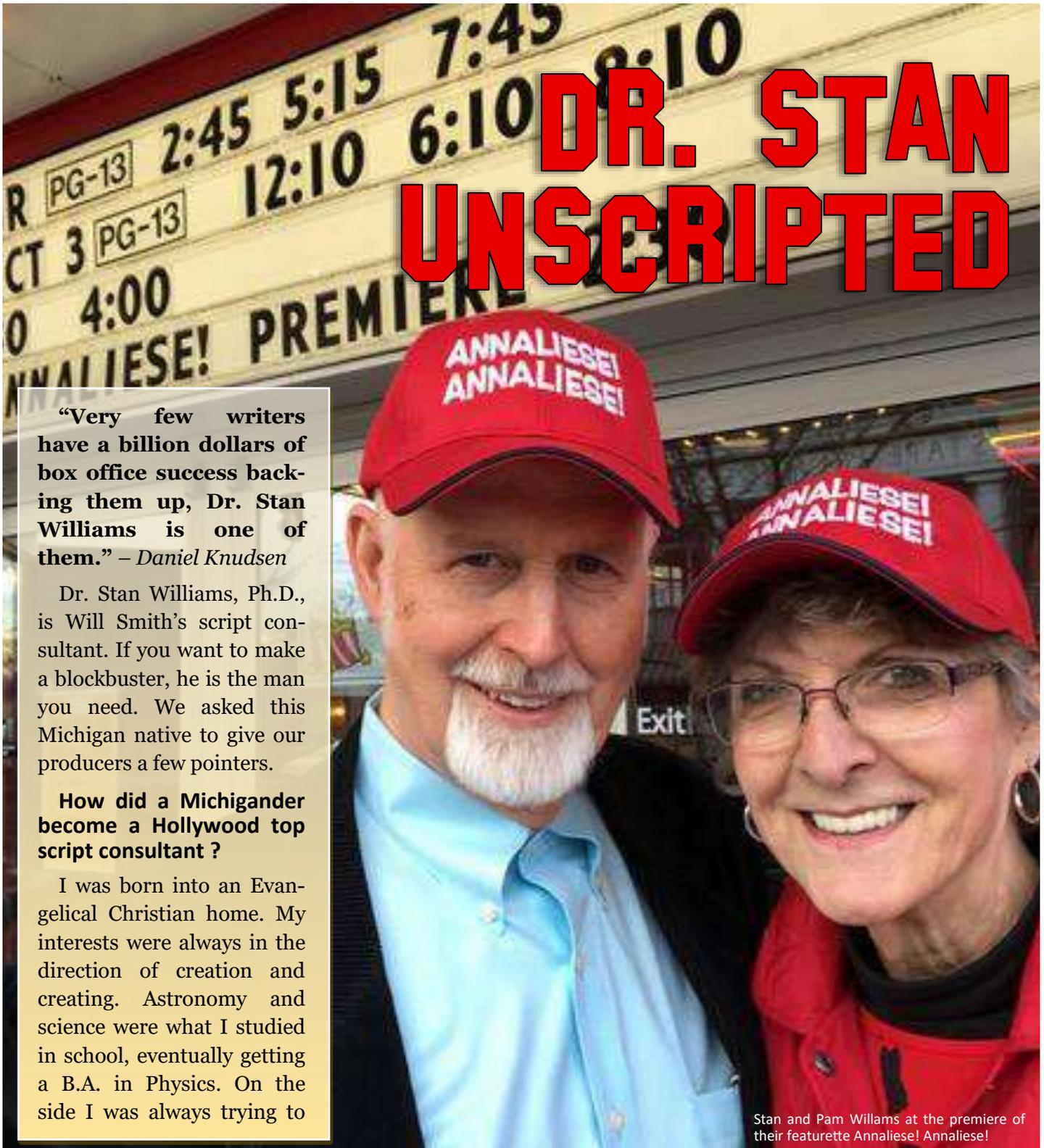
“My first faith-based movie, What If, was shot eight years ago in Manistee, Traverse City, and Grand Rapids. Had a wonderful experience on that movie and it remains one of my favorite movies I have ever been part of. The success of the movie led me to Soul Surfer, God’s Not Dead, Abel’s Field, and my latest movie, Let There Be Light.



christian cinema

MICHIGAN FILMMAKERS TODAY

Top Script Consultant Dr. Stan Williams, Ph.D.



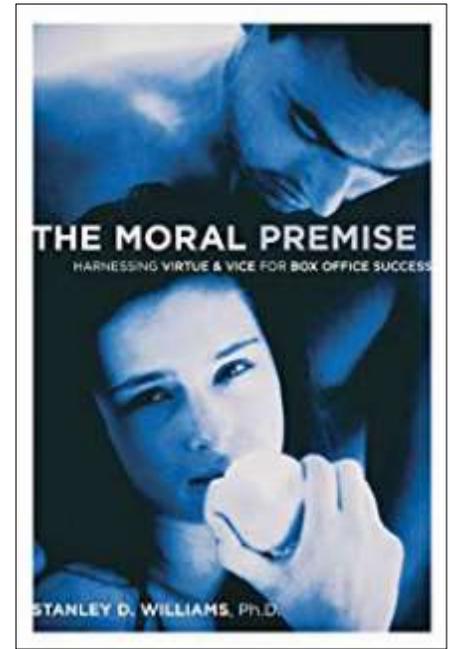
“Very few writers have a billion dollars of box office success backing them up, Dr. Stan Williams is one of them.” – Daniel Knudsen

Dr. Stan Williams, Ph.D., is Will Smith’s script consultant. If you want to make a blockbuster, he is the man you need. We asked this Michigan native to give our producers a few pointers.

How did a Michigander become a Hollywood top script consultant ?

I was born into an Evangelical Christian home. My interests were always in the direction of creation and creating. Astronomy and science were what I studied in school, eventually getting a B.A. in Physics. On the side I was always trying to

Stan and Pam Williams at the premiere of their featurette *Annaliese! Annaliese!*

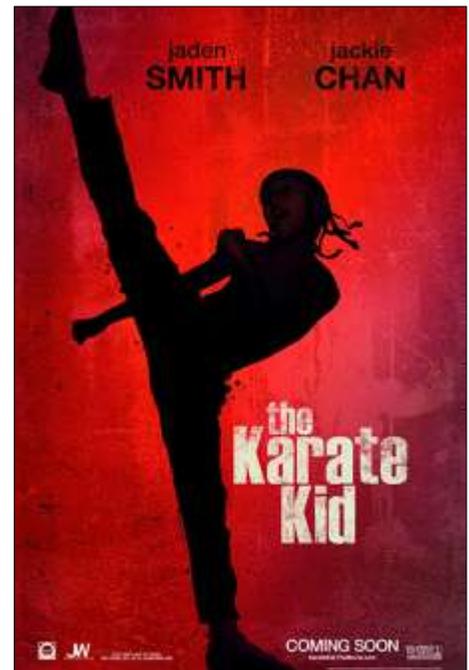


Above, from left: Crystal Creek Media producer, Daniel Knudsen, Dr. Stan Williams, Ph.D., and Ann Arbor SAG actor, Phil Powers.

create, invent and experiment. In 3rd grade I wrote a science fiction story about aliens that came from the planet Christian. My mother typed it and I created the cover out of 1/4-inch plywood that I stained and decoupaged. I started experimenting with trick photography in 5th grade with my dad's box camera. I started writing lyrics to songs and poems in junior high and started performing in dramas and folk singing my own songs in high school (Suffice to say I was a terrible English and writing student until years after college when I made a living at it.).

Such antics attracted little attention, except from the girl that later became my wife of 49 years. In col-

lege I spent more time in the radio station producing original programming than in the physics lab that was on the floor just below. After college I trained astronauts at NASA but started a photography business on the side. I was recruited by a Christian organization to be one of their photographers, but I disagreed with their theology so I left NASA and became a photographer and then a film producer at Ford Motor headquarters in Detroit. Went back to school to earn a Masters in Communication. Left Ford voluntarily on my birthday in 1981 and started a film production company. Over the years won numerous festival awards but got bored



doing corporate documentaries.

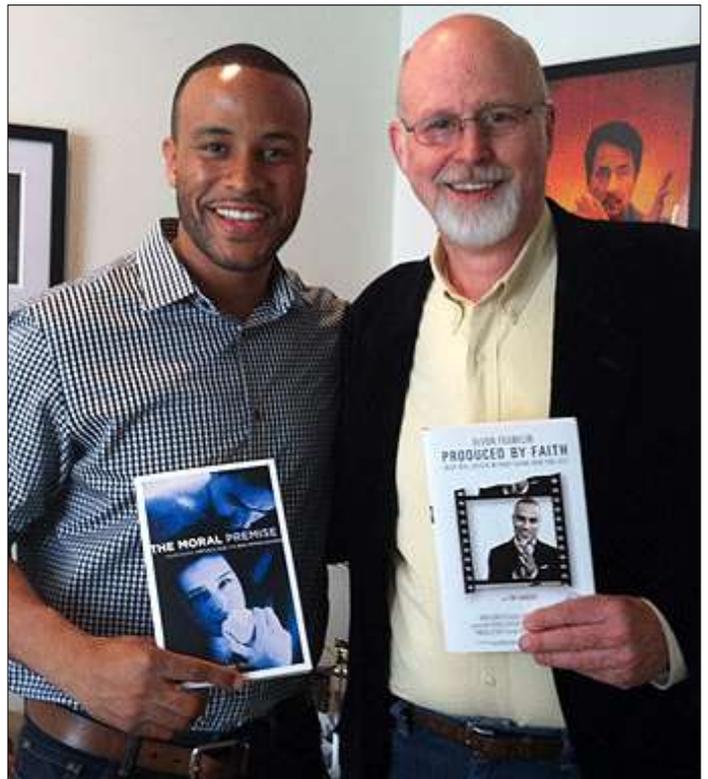
So, I went back to school and earned a Ph.D. in Film Criticism and Narrative Theory. Wrote a book, *The Moral Premise: Harnessing Virtue and Vice for Box Office Success*, that was picked up in Hollywood, recognized by some folks like Will Smith, and I started consulting on screenplays and movies, to date which have earned over a billion dollars at the worldwide box office (mostly Will's films).

With the publishing of the book and the consulting gigs I began to give workshops on story structure in various venues across the country. Finding it difficult to deliver the workshop everywhere people wanted it, I created a webisode of my two day event and put it online as the Storycraft Training series. I continue to write and produce as I have time and money, and consult on screenplays and novels.

What was Hollywood like when you first went there? Was it a shock for you, a Midwesterner?

There is nothing shocking in Hollywood any more than any large city like Detroit. I found Hollywood to be well populated by many Christians who are both wannabes and players.

My first professional trip to Los Angeles was to direct a film for General Motors. We shot the movie over several days at a dealership and environs in Long Beach.



Above: Devon Franklin and Stan Williams holding each other's books in Franklin's LA office, Sony Entertainment. Franklin was Sony VP Production for Will Smith's Karate Kid. Williams was key story consultant hired by Smith.

One night my producer, who was a Christian, suggested we go to a quarterly meeting of Christians up in Hollywood and hear a speech and have dinner. I expected to meet 30 or so folks in a church hall. I walked into a large room with a stage, one of three



Above: Stan with Kelly Garver Nieto (former Miss Michigan and Miss America Runner up) for a green screen shoot for Stan & Pam's ANNALIESE! ANNALIESE!



Above: Dr. Stan Williams adjusts a small camera rig.

professional equity theaters at the Hollywood Presbyterian Church. There were 500 people in attendance, and I learned there were thousands of Christians active in the industry.

I also discovered that night there were over a dozen Christian organizations in Hollywood that existed to support Christians in their ministry to the industry. There are no shortage of Christians at every level, in every company in the industry. Unfortunately, there are too many Christians that hang out with other Christians and do not take the time to be really good at their craft.

Thus, the Christians that get things made are not hanging out with other Christians, but are hanging out with the best filmmakers in the business and making a mark for themselves as craftsmen.

When I say there are Christians at every level I mean it...many have headed up studios like Disney for years.

What are some interesting stories you can share about movies you've worked on, or people you've worked with?

For the most part I've signed non-disclosure

agreements not to talk about the projects or the people I've worked with. The most famous is Will Smith, who I've gotten to know well over a period of years as I worked on 13 of his projects. Generally, the people I've worked with are all professional and great to work with.

For five years I co-produced a segment of the Biola Media Conference, which is a spring gathering of 700 or so Christians on the CBS Television lot in Studio City, CA, near Hollywood. There, I've had the opportunity to interview directors and writers on stage and give my Moral Premise workshops.

What Christians that you know there are making a difference?

The Christians that are making a difference are at the top levels of the industry. People like Mark Burnett and Roma Downey, Christopher Pratt, Mel Gibson, Hugh Jackman, Ralph Winter, Tom Shadyac, Martha Williamson, Brian Bird, Tyler Perry, Patricia Heaton, Denzel Washington, Martin Sheen, Angela Bassett, Kristin Chenoweth, Philip Anschutz, Randall Wallace, Clint Eastwood, Howard Kazanjian, Scott Derrickson, Mark Wahlberg, and many others.

Many are writers not well known, but working on regular shows and making a difference. One is Dean Batali, who was at the table for *That '70's Show*, a television comedy. When someone challenged him about working on a show that often dealt with risqué topics, he commented that his presence at the writing table made the show redemptive and significantly less risqué than had he not been present.

I once interviewed Monica Macer (<http://moralpremise.blogspot.com/search/label/Monica%20Macer>) a writer on MTV's *Teen Wolf* and co-producer for a short lived NBC program, *The Playboy Club*, about women who were playboy bunnies. She talked about that in the interview.

Your book teaches writers how to connect with audiences, but as a Ph.D. in Narrative Theory, am I correct to say your research proves there are universal precepts by which writers can accomplish this? Is there a universal truth in literature?

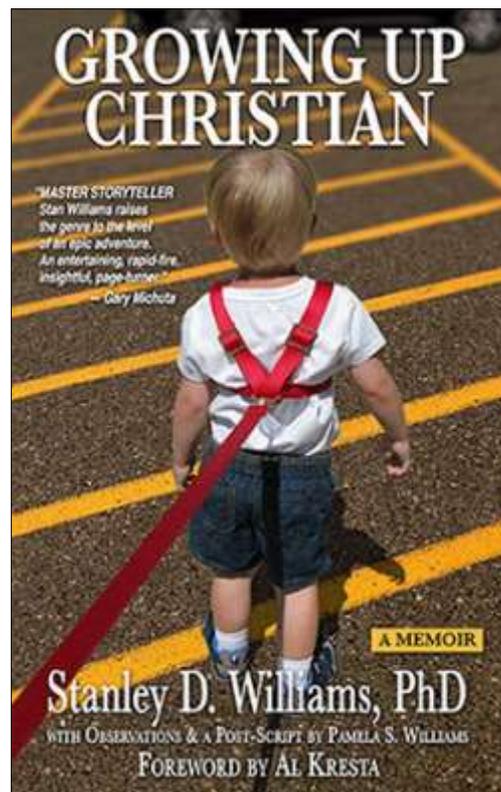
You can't prove anything, but you can bring evidence to bear on an argument. You can't prove that Jesus ever existed, but there's a lot of evidence that he did, and that he was who he claimed to be. So, in that sense, my research surrounding the Moral Premise, like the work of many other writing gurus, is that there are universal precepts that help writers



From left: Marianne and Cormac Wibberley (National Treasure screenwriters), Dr. Stan Williams, and Drew Yanow (author of *The Third Act*) during a story consulting trip in Utah where they worked with Will Smith on several scripts.

tell the truth and connect with audiences. If you violate these principles I guarantee you that your work will not connect with audiences, regardless of the budget and stars attached. I've written about this: <http://moralpremise.blogspot.com/search/label/Failed%20BO%20Movies>

The Moral Premise only works because there is such a thing as Natural Law. Most people think of



Top, left: Stan & Pam Williams in Michigan, as they appear to a client in Germany, during a Skype session. Top, right: Dr. Williams' book, *Growing Up Christian*.

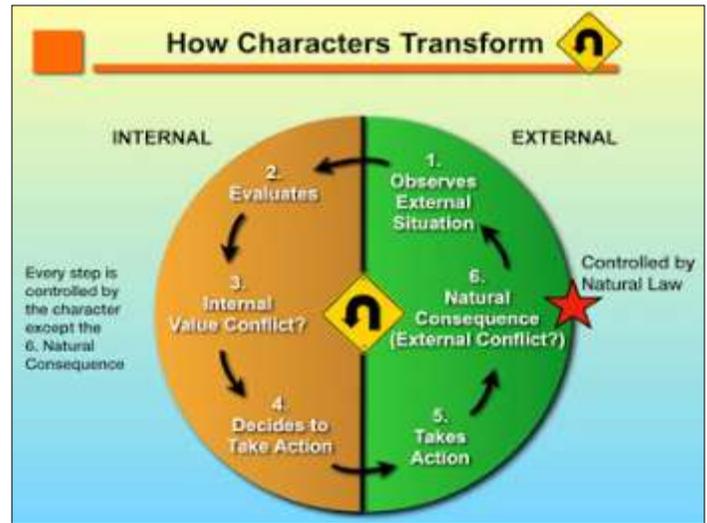
Natural Law as dealing with physical phenomena like gravity. But there is the Natural Law of the human condition, or rather the natural law that dictates the consequences to human moral decision making.

When story characters violate these laws and the consequences are redemptive in nature the movie will bomb (See Seven Pounds in the second post linked above...which I worked on...but the producers ignored my advice.). But where the consequences of a character's moral decisions coincide with natural law, audiences respond with connection and appreciation. This is true of tragedies, like In the Bedroom, as much as redemptive movies like The Greatest Showman (my current favorite movie).

But if art is subjective how can there be universal truths connected to it? Does that mean there is a right and wrong, like with math?

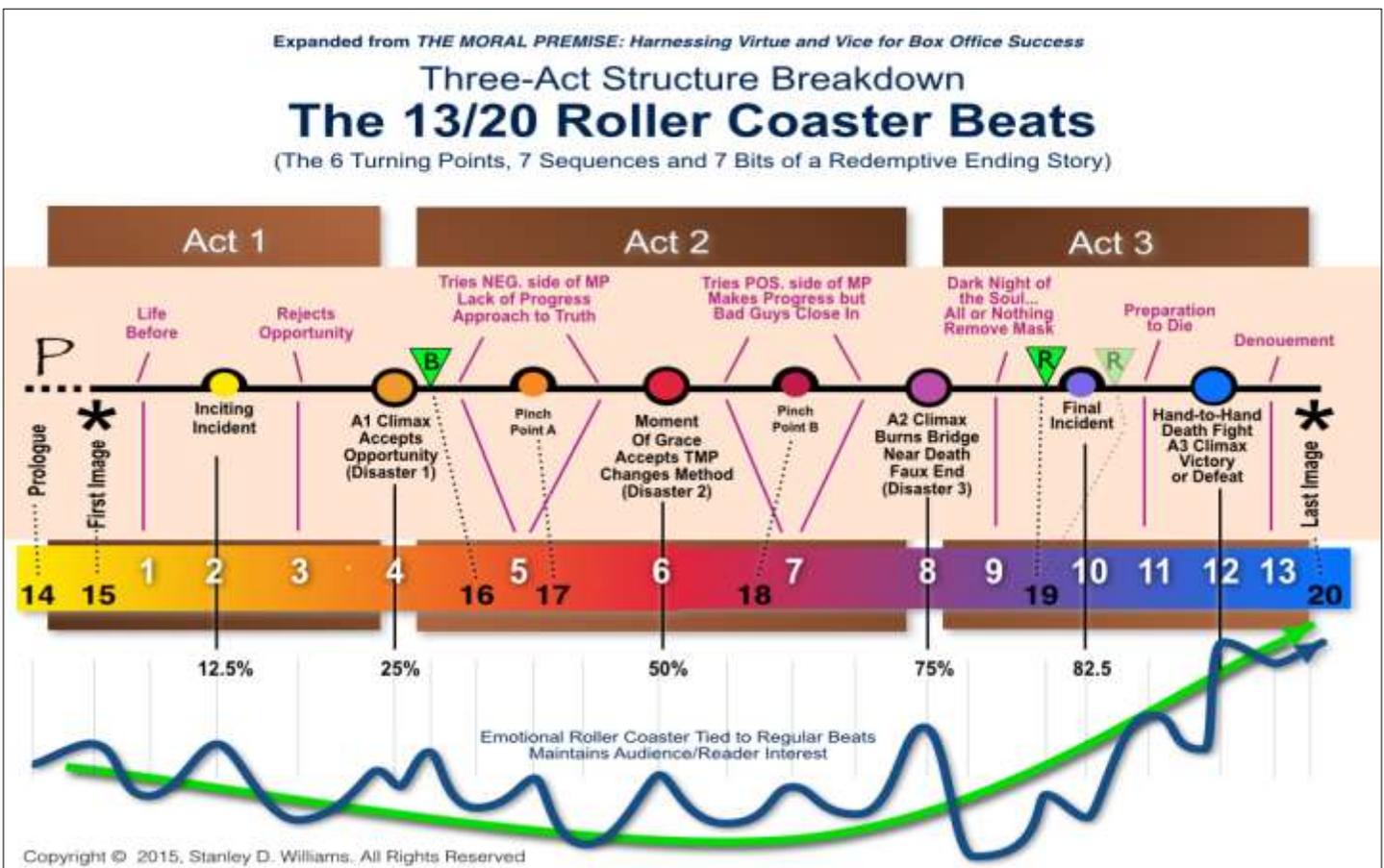
There is true art that uplifts the human soul toward what is good, true, and beautiful, and there is "art" that does the opposite. Behavior is subjective if you're a moral relativist...and in today's societies there is plenty of "subjective" behavior.

But a well produced motion picture with a true



moral premise like The Greatest Showman is the epitome of art as practiced in every discipline known to the history of mankind. Watching the movie is one thing that elevates my spirit, but watching the Blu-ray behind-the-scenes documentaries is a real treat of how the best art in the world is brought together into this extraordinary creation that is not unlike God's creation. But TGS is only the latest. There are many such things, like J.R.R. Tolkien, and Peter Jackson's The Lord of the Rings.

Beauty is Truth, and truth beauty. Perhaps you've



heard the quote from Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot...*, "Beauty Will Save the World." There are Christians who do not think deeply about philosophical topics, nor do they read the classics, who think that quote is heretical. But it is very much a Christian truth. For in Christ we have the perfect combination of truth and beauty.

The creation of the world is such a work of beauty that only a benevolent God could have made it. Books are written about this.

Here's a quote from the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

"2501 Created 'in the image of God,'²⁹⁴ man also expresses the truth of his relationship with God the Creator by the beauty of his artistic works. Indeed, art is a distinctively human form of expression; beyond the search for the necessities of life which is common to all living creatures, art is a freely given superabundance of the human being's inner riches. Arising from talent given by the Creator and from man's own effort, art is a form of practical wisdom, uniting knowledge and skill,²⁹⁵ to give form to the truth of reality in a language accessible to sight or hearing. To the extent that it is inspired by truth and love of beings, art bears a certain likeness to God's activity in what he has created. Like any other human activity, art is not an absolute end in itself, but is ordered to and ennobled by the ultimate end of man."

In short, true art tells the truth and lifts the human soul in ineffable ways to the heights of heaven. See this post:

<http://moralpremise.blogspot.com/search/label/ineffable>

Speaking of aesthetics, Wikipedia says there's a mathematical equation for aesthetics, and innate, physical responses, like disgust. This implies universality. If there IS a right and wrong for art, when people call Christian movies "cheesy," is that due to tastes, which are cultural, or valid critiques based on objective, God-given standards?

I've only glanced at the Wikipedia article on aesthetics (BTW: I contribute monthly to Wikipedia, I think it is an invaluable resource.).

By mathematical equation do you mean $M = O/C$ where M is the measure of aesthetic value, O = order and C = complexity? That formulate is one way to describe the human response to art, or how a hu-

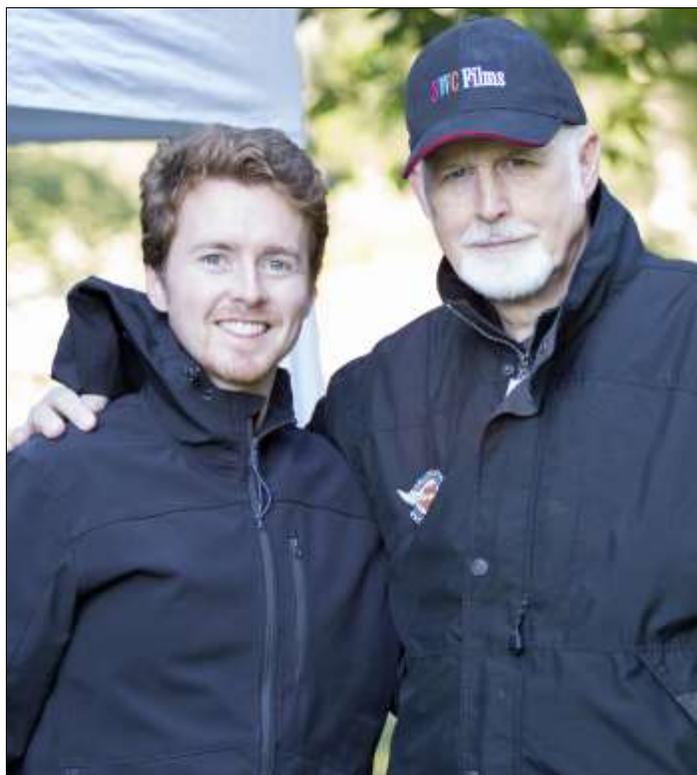
man being may regard whether or not something is artistic and pleasing. Aesthetics is the philosophical discipline of how art is appreciated and evaluated. It is not a way to ascertain quantitatively whether an artistic work is right or wrong, good or bad...but we do use aesthetic concepts to discuss art in these qualitative ways.

My theories surrounding *The Moral Premise* stipulate that the "audience" determines the moral rightness or wrongness of the premise around which a movie is created. Now, I also say that if you want to attract and connect with "general" audiences then you have to follow recognized moral natural laws. I further narrow this explanation by talking about "universal" moral laws, like respect vs. disrespect, greed vs. generosity, selfishness vs. selflessness.

You can produce a movie that is pro-homosexual in theme, but it's only going to succeed with the very narrow audience of homosexuals. There was a study a while back that I may have filed away somewhere,

"The storytelling community is fortunate to have Dr. Stan Williams. His articulation of the Moral Premise gives us the tools to look under the hood and see how to engineer an effective narrative."

**- Daniel Knudsen,
Crystal Creek Media**



Above: Dr. Williams helped Daniel Knudsen, left, with *Courageous Love*, which won Audience Choice for Best Independent Feature, Winnipeg Film Festival.

which revealed such a film was NOT popular with heterosexuals who claimed to support homosexual rights. I thought that was an insightful piece of research. So, you have to consider who your target audience is before you can talk about the acceptance of a story as being thematically right or wrong.

But there are plenty of ways to keep something universal and morally right and Christian in nature that will appeal to a broad audience. You do that by avoiding didactic, on the nose scenes that TELL the audience what to believe. The art is in leading the audience to figure it out by themselves.

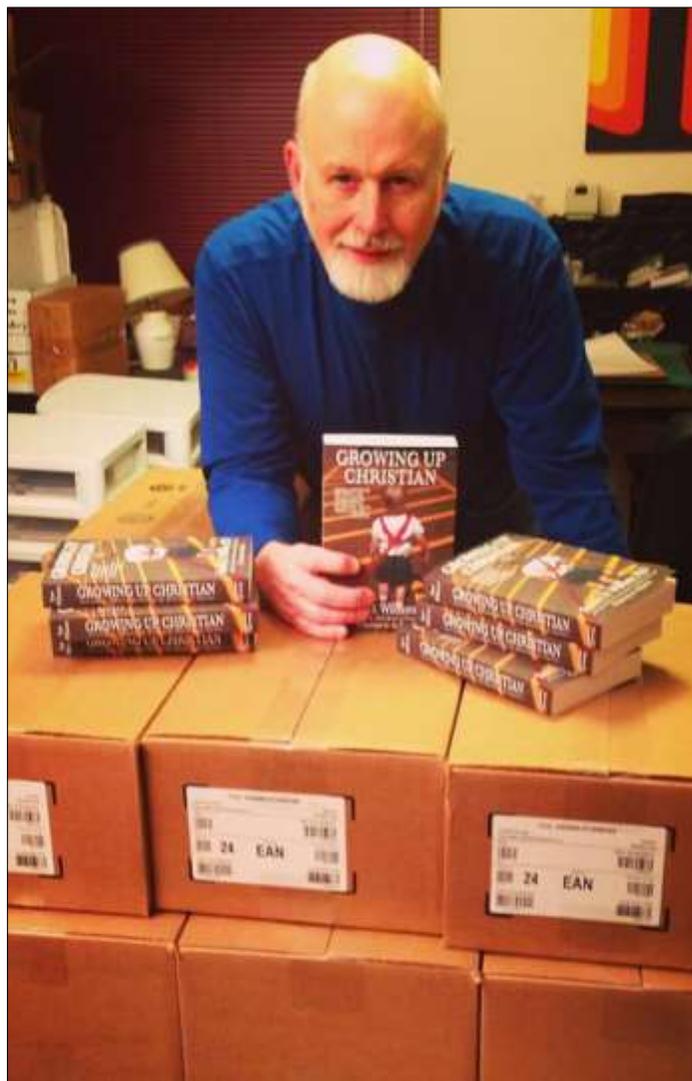
One of my favorite movies in this sense is *Hail Caesar!* (starring George Cooney, written and directed by the Coen brothers, who, until I saw this film I thought were Jewish. Now I think they are Christian, or close to it). But the film does not preach, and yet the protagonist, played by Josh Brolin, is very clearly a man that embraces Christian ideals in his job. He's not a "Christ" figure, per se, like Clint Eastwood's lead character in *Gran Torino*, however.

I think the "cheesy" label comes when Christians start to preach and fail to persuade. It smacks of junior high and beating people over the head with the Bible. The producers get lazy and stop thinking, believing that scenes of pastors reading Scripture to characters is persuasive, when it's not (See my post on Narrative vs. Didactic: <http://moralpremise.blogspot.com/2018/07/how-to-change-world-at-bedtime-art-of.html>).

Dr. Williams, after *The Passion of The Christ* people thought Christian movie production was going to improve, but it's been almost two decades. Is it time to stop throwing money at the stinkers?

After *The Passion* I started to get requests to take story ideas to Mel Gibson, because "he will get it." I got some of the worse scripts I have ever read. I was pitched some of the most stupid ideas...all by Christians...well intended, but total idiots about story and film and audiences and distribution and getting a movie to open and make money. It's a very complex industry. But Christians are some of the laziest thinkers I know. The criticism leveled at Christians about clinging to their guns and their God, is very logical and (in places) justified.

But here's something to think about: Christian films, like those just mentioned, are targeted to



Above: Dr. Stan Williams with his book, *Growing Up Christian*.

CHRISTIANS, not to the general public. Here's a good example I love to talk about:

In 2006, Alejandro Monteverde, Leo Severio, and others made the movie *Bella*, starring Eduardo Verastegui and Tammy Blanchard. Before its' release, they toured the country and showed it to dozens of Christian audiences, claiming it was going to be this great PRO-LIFE, anti-abortion film that would take the country by storm.

They packed a screening at the Toronto Film Festival with Christians and earned an audience award...which was like lying. These are the same Christians that produced *Little Boy*, which I write about as a failed film (link above).

At a couple of venues I got to talk with Leo and heard him tell preview audiences that they were making sure that they would NOT OFFEND CHRISTIANS. So they were taking out anything that did that...like the sound effect of Nina urinating on a pregnancy test strip. We didn't see it, we heard it...

the tinkling of pee falling into a toilet. That offended some people and so they took it out.

I saw the movie three times, and I NEVER understood that the scenes in an abortion clinic were in an abortion clinic. THERE IS NOTHING in the movie that explicitly tells you this. Anything that might offend Christians was removed, evidently.

There was a great deal of publicity. It did just over \$8 million at the box office, off a budget of \$3.3 million. That is not a hit. But, it is enough that the producers probably made their money back. Yet it fell far below expectations.

But the truth I want to point to is that in 2007, Juno was released, and it did \$143 million in the US, and \$231 million worldwide. Also, in 2007 Knocked Up came out, which did \$148 million in the US, and \$219 million worldwide.

What's the significance of those two films?

They both contained EXPLICITLY pro-life, anti-abortion scenes and themes. But then, the Christian audiences would have been offended at many things in both. BUT clearly, Juno and Knocked Up connected with audiences, where Bella failed. The reason has to do with verisimilitude...or telling the truth about the situation the characters were facing.

Bella lied, and hid behind so-called Christian sensitivity. Juno and Knocked Up, produced by non-Christians (as far as I know) did not care if they offended Christians...they were more interested in telling the truth, and they became mega-hits.

So, there are two different audiences you're targeting: Christians (who demand sanitized truth) and



Left: Francine Rivers and Tamera Alexander holding Dr. Williams' book at a private writing retreat.

the General Public (who demand the truth).

Ironic, isn't it. This is why Christians justly deserve much of the criticism they receive in the arts.

People think Christian movies have gotten the "cheesy" denigration due to lack of funds. But why do Christians continue throwing good money after bad? Because shrewd marketers know if they label something a "ministry," Christians are okay with throwing money down the drain?

Yes, I think your conclusion is right. Many Christians are only interested in saving people. They're not interested in art. Thus the comment you got about aesthetics, "What has this to do with anything?" It has nothing to do with money.

You have to remember it's called the film BUSINESS. You have to make money or you won't make many films, if even a second one.

Heaven Is For Real made \$91 million in the US and \$101 million worldwide. It was, at best, a mediocre movie, it's theology was heretical, the story reported by some to be a hoax, but it was produced and directed by a devout Christian, Randall Wallace, who wrote the original script to Braveheart (about his ancestor), William Wallace (Mel Gibson), and who is working with Mel Gibson on the resurrection sequel to The Passion, currently in pre-production.

But the story here is NOT the movie. It's the book. *Heaven Is For Real*, the book, sold north of 10 million copies. So, it didn't matter if the movie was good or bad, readers were going to flock to the theaters. And that is why Hollywood relies on "antecedents" which have built-in audiences.

It is really hard to get a fresh audience to an original movie. So, buy the rights to a good selling book, and you can probably make a good movie deal. It's a BUSINESS.... And Christians want to make it a ministry.

Is it a ministry if it's shoddy workmanship? Or makes Jesus look like a Charles Manson weirdo'?

You're possibly right. Luckily, I think Jesus has a better reputation than the movies that are named after him.

The Moral Premise is available on Amazon.

Visit Dr. Williams' website:
<http://www.moralpremise.com/>

Read *The Moral Premise* blog to learn more
about Dr. Williams' findings:
<http://moralpremise.blogspot.com/>

the write stuff

A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF HALLOWEEN AND HORROR

Be Awareliever. A Simple Test

“Having spent 3 years in inner-city ministry, I have seen my share of evil, satanic behavior, and wickedness. This all was for the cause, and in the name, and power, of Jesus Christ. The jaw-dropping stories of people experiencing freedom from the bondage of addictive substances, evil lifestyles, being a witch or warlock, uncontrollable, irrational fears, panic attacks, and mental illness, is amazing.”

By Tricia Harmon

Creative Motion TV Host/Staff Writer

Although I was cast as Grandma, and the werewolf, in the 2018 International New York Film Festival winner for Best Feature Film under \$25K, the movie, *Grandma Werewolf*, I gave little thought as to it being a horror film. In fact, I would be the last person you would find engrossed in any “real” horror movie, as a character or audience member.

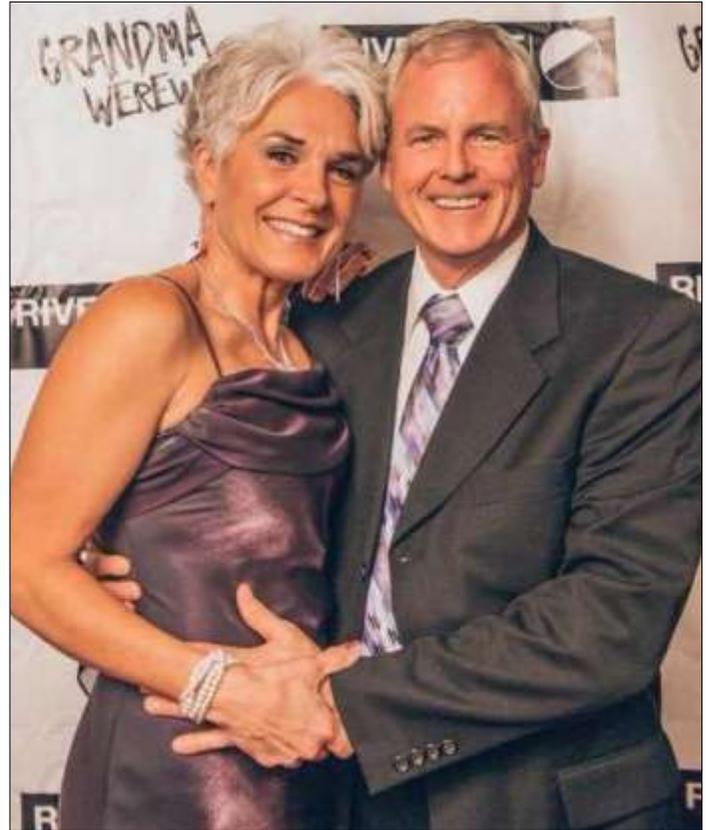
Grandma Werewolf is more like a great scary campfire story that I, as a real grandma, would tell my own grandkids, just so they’d huddle as close to me as possible. I know, sneaky, isn’t it?

As we approach Halloween, so is the ramping-up, a heightened scare factor at box offices, haunted houses, and TV programs. Even a well-known talk show host goes out of her way to scare her guests and producer as they make their way through a haunted house filled with vampires, zombies, and monsters who portray mass murderers.

Every member in my family, and close friends, know better than to scare me, especially when it’s a deliberate scare. It will just about ruin my whole day.

Why?

Because my immediate reaction to fear is to gasp violently, with absolutely no benefit of notifying others that I need help. I don’t scream. I don’t shout. Not even one word like, “HEY!,” or “NO!!!,” or



Tricia and Scott Harmon , *Grandma Werewolf* Premiere, November, 2017.

“HELP ME, JESUS!” I just suck in copious amounts of air and then start crying. How empowering is that going to be if I’m ever attacked?

Not one person would hear my gasp for help. I hate the thought of that vulnerable, powerless, instinctive behavior. Yet, I have certain family members who relish in horror films and being scared out of their wits. WHY??

Seriously!

Don’t we already live in an oversaturated, fear-based society? Who dares walk alone at night, even on a college campus anymore? Who can go to a theater, mall, church, school, concert, parade, marathon, virtual arcade room, and not be a little concerned as to whether there is a crazed, mad person amongst us, about to execute horrific acts of evil against us? Why in God’s name do we pull up close to a horror flick, or pay to walk through a maze of

monsters jumping out at us any time, with axes and knives? Where does this love/hate relationship come from, in the area of intentionally entertaining and engrossing ourselves into a frenzy of paralyzing fear and panic, by watching gruesome, gory, shock and awe, even extremely evil entertainment?

I have a theory. It's a controversial theory, so I understand there are those of you who may be already moving on to the next article, or just shaking your head as you've read this far. I know that even within my own family, and the Body of Christ, there are those who will conclude that I'm just soft, woosy, and out of touch.

Nonetheless, here's my theory, the dilemma it produces, and what I believe everyone who claims it is an innocent and harmless activity (and who also call themselves a true branch, or an engrafted branch, in the vine of Jesus Christ), when it comes to engaging and gorging on horror flicks, violent games, and demonic-like activities: God is Love.

Love is the essence, attitude, action, and eternal purpose of God. It epitomizes who He is, what He is, and how He is. Even God's justness is rooted in love.

If God is love and love only comes from Him, who is the Antithesis? It is Satan, who unlike Jesus Christ, thought it was robbery to not be at least equal in all things with God. Is that attitude motivated by hate or fear? I honestly don't know.

It's now widely said fear is the opposite of love. I also believe indifference is, as well, but believe it's a byproduct of fear and hate. That's a bunny trail for another time. What I am sure of, however, is the person who is the antithesis of love is Satan.

Which brings us to this alarming dilemma. From the moment Satan and his followers were cast out of heaven, he became the epitome of evil, pride, and hate. His ultimate objective is to kill, steal, and destroy all that is God's, the witness of God's love that is shed abroad in our hearts, and the fruit of righteousness that comes from that love. How does he do this? He does it with stealth-like, scheming subtlety.

Scripture's very clear that God has not given anyone in Christ a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind (II Timothy 1:7).

So, why is it that in a world of unprecedented suicide rates, depression, and emotional disorders, an



Tricia Harmon: producer, actress, Grandma Werewolf.

"I believe the frequency of intentional, and passive, evil and violent activities, we as believers are subjecting ourselves to sears our conscience, hardens our hearts of flesh, grieves, and quenches the power of the Spirit of God within us. The results have left our overstimulated adrenal glands craving more dopamine dumping into our systems."

opioid crisis of mass proportion, PTSD, shootings, and senseless violence, would we intentionally induce and infect our minds, wills, and emotions with horror, gore, and violence, especially during the month of October?

I believe the frequency of intentional, and passive, evil and violent activities, we as believers are subjecting ourselves to sears our conscience, hardens our hearts of flesh, grieves, and quenches the power of the Spirit of God within us. The results have left our overstimulated adrenal glands craving more dopamine dumping into our systems.

Why? Because the enemy of our soul is relentless, ruthless, and without retreat. It is a spiritually systematic cycle that you will see clearly, and without excuse, in just a minute.

Having spent three years in inner-city ministry, I have seen and experienced my share of evil, satanic behavior, and wickedness. This all was for the cause, and in the name, and power, of Jesus Christ. The jaw-dropping stories of people experiencing freedom from the bondage of addictive substances, evil lifestyles, being a witch or warlock, uncontrollable, irrational fears, panic attacks, and mental illness, is amazing.

On one occasion, we received a call from a frantic 15-year-old girl, who knew she was going to die that very night, at the hands of Satan worshippers sacrificing her as a virgin. I was personally much more involved and invested with a woman who we thought was a believer, yet for the past three years had been attending satanic rituals in the middle of the night, while her unsuspecting husband worked third shift. The accounts of this women's sexual violations, live sacrifice on her pregnant belly dedicating her unborn child to Satan, and the horrific consequences she and her family suffered when she named that newborn son David rather than Dameon tops any best-selling thriller. I was a personal eyewitness to the power of Jesus Christ coming in and literally cleaning house and living vessels from every



VIP and People's Choice Award, February, 2018.

death grip demons had on this mother and her two boys.

Are horror movies, Ouija boards, Magic 8 balls, seances, tarot cards, palm reading, D&D, and virtual violent gaming groups just innocent, harmless activities that we, as believers, are to be entertained, or engaged, in? They, and so many more like them, are demonic and give jurisdictional areas of our heart, soul, and mind over to the one who seeks to steal, kill, and destroy. There is nothing wholesome, innocent, or harmless about any of it. It is all on the playground of Satan and his demonic henchmen, rulers, and powers of darkness systematically inducing a spiritual coma, confusion, and compromise within the heart and mind of the believer.

How can we know if what we are watching, reading, listening to, engaging in is evil and giving Satan authority in our heart, soul, mind, or body? Here is a 5-fold fools test:

Scripture refers to five kinds of fools. Where you are on the scale should be self-revealing as to who has more authority in your life: the God of Love, or Satan the father of all lies.

1. A Simple fool:

(Hebrew: *pethûy*, pronounced *peth-ê'*, means simple, foolish, open-minded, silly, i.e. seducible.)

- One who is open for any and all thoughts; vulnerable, gullible, immature, dangerously curious, without discernment: *"For at the window of my house I looked through my lattice, And saw among*



At a shoot for Crystal Creek Media's series, *The King's Messengers*, in Ann Arbor. From left: Tricia Harmon, Tamika Willis, Anne Lampert, Terri Partyka, Daniel Kastner, Daniel Knudsen, Connie Sonnenberg, and Ron Carlone.

the simple, I perceived among the youths, A young man devoid of understanding..." (Proverbs 7: 6-7).

- He will receive instruction from those wiser than himself: "... give subtlety to the simple [pethûy], to the young man knowledge and discretion..." (Proverbs 1:4).

- He is easily led astray by a scorning fool, yet correction from authorities will be profitable: "Smite a scorner, and the simple [pethûy] will beware..." (Proverbs 19:25).

2. A Silly fool:

(Hebrew: 'eviyl, pronounced ev-EEL, means perverse, silly.)

- The words of a silly fool are perversely silly: "Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish [eviyl] is near destruction" (Proverbs 10:14; see also Proverbs 20:3).

- He is quickly angered when things don't go his way: "A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a

fool's [eviyl] wrath is heavier than them both" (Proverbs 27:3).

- He argues, defends, and reacts with resistance when instructed by an "equal": "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools [eviyl] despise wisdom and instruction" (Proverbs 1:7; see also Proverbs 10:21).

- Proper instruction from authorities and public humiliation is more effective in correcting silly fools.

- When properly instructed by authorities. See Proverbs 29:9 and Proverbs 7:22.

3. A Sensual fool:

(Hebrew: kecîyl kess-EEL, means "fat," i.e. stupid or silly.)

- One who is bent on making wrong choices.
- He's not ignorant or mentally inept. He lacks godly wisdom (the ability to apply knowledge from God's point of view).

- He focuses on immediate gratification. He enjoys that which should be shameful: *“It is as sport to a fool [keçîyl] to do mischief...”* (Proverbs 10:23).

- His once silly words now taunt and tempt reaction: *“A fool’s [keçîyl] lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes [blows]. A fool’s [keçîyl] mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul”* (Proverbs 18:6–7).

- He is subtle. He should be avoided because he will lead silly fools astray: *“... A companion of fools [keçîyl] shall be destroyed”* (Proverbs 13:20).

- Severe punishment is the best way to reach the heart of a sensual fool: *“A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool’s [keçîyl] back”* (Proverbs 26:3).

4. A Scorning Fool:

(Hebrew: *lûwts*, pronounced LOOTS, means “to make mouths at,” i.e. to scoff.)

This fool is talked about more in Scripture than any other kind of fool.

- His dirty looks, disdain, and contempt for all authority is the visible evidence of a scorning fool.

- He embraces that which is abominable to God. He walks *“in the counsel of the ungodly,”* then stands *“in the way of sinners,”* and finally, sits *“in the seat of the scornful [lûwts]”* (Psalm 1:1).

- He utterly detests people and ideas that contradict his false thinking, and he expresses his scorn through derisive attitudes, behavior, and speech.

- He will not listen to rebuke of any kind: *“A wise son heareth his father’s instruction: but a scorner [lûwts] heareth not rebuke”* (Proverbs 13:1).

- He will avenge and seek revenge on anyone who tries to correct him: *“A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise”* (Proverbs 15:12).

- He must be punished for his own sake, and for the sake of the silly and sensual fools that follow him: *“Smite a scorner [lûwts], and the simple [pethîy] will beware...”* (Proverbs 19:25). *“When the scorner [lûwts] is punished, the simple [pethîy] is made wise...”* (Proverbs 21:11).

5. Steadfast:

(Hebrew: *nâbâl*, pronounced naw-BAWL, means

stupid, wicked, vile.)

- The most dangerous type of fool is a steadfast fool.

- He rejects God in all his ways: *“The fool [nâbâl] hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good”* (Psalm 14:1).

- Self-confident and closed-minded. He is his own god, freely gratifying his lower nature.

- His goal is to influence as many followers to his path as possible.

- Futile frustration befalls the one who tries to influence a steadfast fool. Only God can successfully reprove him.

So where does this leave you, as a consumer or creator of slasher, horror, occultic type entertainment and activities? How can we reach those who know Christ, but are simple and silly fools? How can we reach those who do *not have the spirit of Christ living within them?* How can you turn from your proneness towards a steadfast, scorning, sensual foolish mindset? There is hope. But the first thing one must do is hate the evil more than the power you think you have with it.

“How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you. I will make known my words unto you.... The turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil” (Proverbs 1:22-23, 32-33).

Let us heed this declaration and **“walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise”** (Ephesians 5:15). It’s not something you can do in your own strength. This is a spiritual stronghold that must be recognized and dealt with thoroughly. Speak to your pastor or spiritual mentor.

**All Scripture from the KJV.*

Tricia Harmon, a trained spiritual warfare counselor, has witnessed the power of Christ reach the darkest souls. She is available by appointment only. If you have questions about being set free from the bondage of spiritual darkness, depression, and despair, email: tricia@triciaharmon.com

artist impact

MICHIGAN CHRISTIAN ILLUSTRATORS AT LARGE

COMICS and the CROSS

Focus on
Cross Section
Comics Founder
David D. Miller

David D. Miller
at a recent
comics event.

Creative Motion magazine asked Michigan comics creator, David D. Miller, founder of Cross Section Comics, about the industry and his beginnings in it.

How long have you been making comics?

The thought of me doing Christian Comics began in 2010. Since becoming a Christian and reading the Bible has help with my mental issues of anxiety and depression, along with my medicine and exercise, I thought making comics that shared my beliefs about the word of God, having the power to help people with mental illnesses like mine, would be a good outlet for me. And, help some people along the way. My fiancé and I have been developing our brand of Christian Comics, under the name Cross Section Comics,

"The Bible, which we believe is the infallible word of God, is always the blueprint we use, for our story arcs and character types."

for several years now. But, we've just released our first comic book, titled, "CHRISTIAN FLAGG, ISSUE #1," in May of this year.

How well is that comic book doing?

It is doing well, the book sold close to 200 copies in the first month; 100 of those copies were sold in its' first week.

What defines a "Christian Comic"?

We can't speak for other Christian Comic Publishers, but we believe that at the core of any comic book we produce is our faith in Christ and our lives as Christians. This is what we build our characters and comics on. The Bible, which we believe is the infallible word of God, is always the blueprint we use, for our story arcs and character types. Factor that in, with our policy to keep our books free from nudity and profanity, and you have what we believe is the definition of a Christian Comic Book.

What was the first Christian Comic you ever read? What comic books influenced you?

The first Christian Comic books I read were, "The Crusaders," by J.T.C., of Chick Publications. However, my biggest influence in my decision to become a Christian Comic Publisher was the Arch Angels comic book series, from Eternal Studios.

Does today's technology make the step from comic books to animation a possibility?

Yes, today's technology makes the step from comic books to animation possible. But the real question is: who's going to step up with the resources and

technology to fund a Christian Comic into being an animated series? And, not some low-budget animated film, based on some corny Christian Comic character. I'm talking about a decent budget animation series, about faith-based superheroes that are strong, and stylish, and could rival any Marvel or DC animated series. Speaking of technology, we're also missing the mark when it comes to gaming, especially gaming on mobile devices.

What's the Christian superheroes market like?

Christian Superheroes are still a niche market and have been so for far too long. I attribute this to the fact that, for many decades, the people who have produced Christian Superheroes have made them super-corny, low-quality, and miss-fires with their core audiences, which are: young Christian teens and young-adult Christians. These demographics of Christians are being flooded by Marvel and DC superheroes, in every market imaginable: from toys to toothbrushes, collectibles to clothes, and from books to the big screen. So, unless we start giving them strong and stylish Christian Superheroes with their images on toys, toothbrushes, collectibles, clothes, books, and the big screen like Marvel and DC does, we will never gain any real traction, or take any real percentage of the market share in Comics.

Why do you think the big comic book publishers haven't entertained the idea of developing a line of Christian Superheroes?

In the past, when it was popular to be a Christian in America and to profess your Christian faith in American society, big comic book publishers had

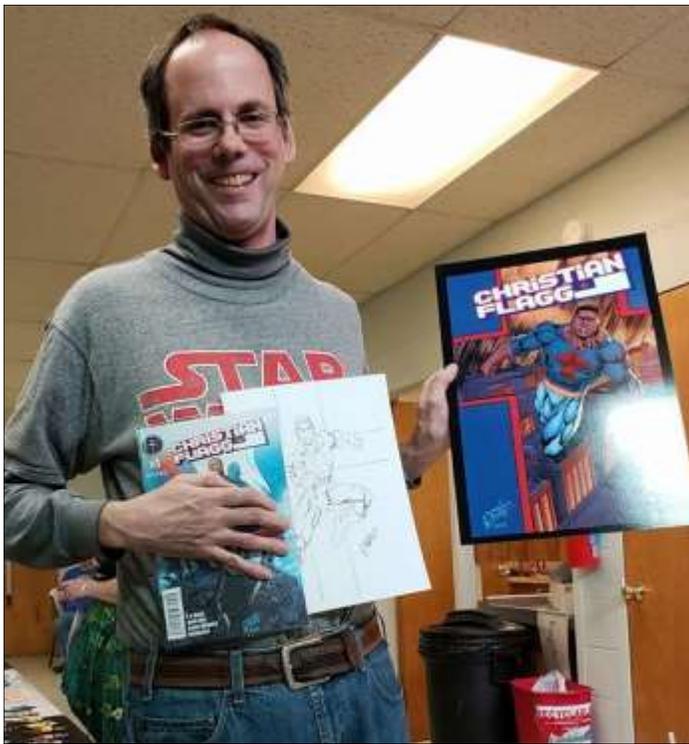


Cross Section Comics gave Christian Flagg Comic Books to Boy Scouts Troop 157, in thanks for their service at the Great Lakes Comic Expo, July 14, 2018.



Cross Section Comics by David D. Miller.

"You know you've arrived when a fellow vendor buys your book; humbled."



their characters cater to that audience; so, there was no need to create a separate line of Christian Superheroes. Today, I assume, that the reason for them not entertaining the thought of a Christian Superhero line is because their core audience has shifted, from American Christians to other demographics, like LGBT, SJW, and other non-fundamental Christians who would, most likely, frown upon, and protest, a Christian Hero-based comic book line, from a mainstream publisher like Marvel, or DC, or even Image, or IDW, for that matter.

What mainstream comic characters best represent standards valued by Christians?

Absolutely none, as far as I'm concerned; the standards Christians value is being removed completely from mainstream comics and their characters. I also think it's imperative that Christians everywhere start to buy Christian Comic Books, and help us get our comic book characters popularized and in the hands of young Christians, so that we can gain a share of the comic book market. That will allow us staying power and to be impactful for the kingdom of God.

A fellow Comic Con vendor purchased your comic, and you also gave some copies to Boy

Scouts. What can you tell us about this?

It's amazing that even other vendors/comic book publishers are into our brand of Christian Comics; it gives us a way to gauge our products' viability in the comic book market overall. As for the comics we gave away to the Boy Scouts, we did that because we are, first and foremost, a ministry of helps and healthy reading, and are always willing to give away our comics to young readers, in hopes of shaping their minds with something healthy and harmless.

Where is your next public event?

We will be attending the Christian Comic Con 2018, on November 10th, at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 1000 Beach Daly, Redford, Michigan 48239. It is Saturday, from 10 am to 4 pm. So mark your calendars!

What can you tell us about your fall release?

Shields of Faith is our third comic book title scheduled to be released in November. It will be five members on a team together, all bearing shields, fighting against evil in a Post Anti-Christ Era.

Buy David's comics at Cross Section Comics:
<https://www.crossectioncomics.com/>



David D. Miller with COMIX35/Christian Comics International founder, Nate Butler, at a Lansing ministry meeting in March.

sound judgement

MAKING MUSIC IN MICHIGAN

Musician Joe Guerra's 'Reason to Breathe'

"I've been able to hear from listeners that were close to giving up on life itself, that found hope and encouragement in my songs to keep pushing forward."

Talking with songwriter, performer, and worship leader, Joe Guerra, inspires one to live the life God created them for. He's a living, breathing model of what it means to answer God's calling. It's an existence of talent, faith, and passion.

Did you come from a religious background growing up?

Sort of, my family started going to church when I was about five years old. My parents, my older sister, and I, all accepted Christ and started following Jesus within the same couple of months, so we were a "Newly Christian" family when I was a kid. I remember it being really cool to see God transforming our family and the difference it made in our lives even at that young of an age.

Joe Guerra

When did you first want to be a musician?

When I was in high school I went to a youth conference where the speaker was talking about Nehemiah and how he took a stand in his generation to rebuild Jerusalem. It was then that I really felt called to do something ministry related with my life, but I had no idea what yet. I started learning to play guitar that same summer and fell in love with Music and writing songs. That's when it really became a more solidified desire for me.

What was it like recording your debut EP in 2007?

Lol, I was super excited, and still had a lot to learn!!! That was during my first year of college and I was in school for Music and audio engineering, so I fumbled through recording myself, with the help of some friends, but it was so exciting to be able to see something I'd written come to life, humble of beginnings as they may have been.

Anything in the works for a new CD?

I'm always writing, but my most recent project "Reason to Breathe," is still fairly new, so I'll be continuing to promote/share those songs for a bit. I think I'll be transitioning to releasing a series of singles, rather than full CD's in the near future, but it will enable me to release music more frequently. If you follow my Spotify page you'll be the first to know as new songs are released!

Being a Christian artist, and a GOOD one (I've played your tunes), the devil must be after you all the time. What are some examples of hardships that have come against you on this musical pathway for Christ?

I think the biggest area for this is a feeling as though I may not be good enough, the reality is there are a lot of people trying to make music ministry their full time thing and it's a very up-and-down career path to take. Between regular life circumstances, constantly traveling, and the bills that can pile up during slower months, it can be overwhelming at times if you aren't careful to stay centered and on Mission. Trusting in God's provision and calling on your life becomes a huge necessity to stay at it during difficult times. He's proven Himself more than faithful through it all!!!

What are some of the best memories of meeting people at venues you've performed in?

The greatest memories for me are the times when I get to hear people's stories of how my songs have impacted their life. There's been many times that I've been able to hear from listeners that were close to giving up on life itself, that found hope and encouragement in my songs to keep pushing forward. Depression has been a struggle for me, at times, and a lot of my songs come straight out of my own life experiences; so to hear how the hope God has given me is coming full circle and impacting others is amazing for me.

What do you think is the biggest misconception of Christian musicians?

I think sometimes people assume that we are, or should be, perfect. I strive to live as God's called me to, but I make mistakes at times, and I don't have all the answers, just like anybody else. The thing is, we are all in this together, as we seek to be who God made us to be and further His kingdom in this world. I think it's keeping that kind of a mindset that allows songwriters to create music that connects and encourages listeners in the realities of everyday life, as a believer.

What are your goals on your musical mission for Christ? How can you achieve them?

Simply put, my goal is to use music to share truth and inspire others to be who God made them to be. If that means greater success, a larger platform, and bigger audiences, great! At the end of the day, God calls us to be faithful and go all out with what He's put in front of us right now. So that's what I'm doing, trusting that He's got the rest figured out for me.

Do you see Christian music today being more accepted in the mainstream, and if so, why?

In some ways yes, I think a lot of Christian music's segregation from mainstream is self-inflicted. Rather than treating it as honest art, made by real, imperfect people who happen to love Jesus, we can easily try and fit a certain mold to make sure we aren't being too "worldly," or not having musical styling that will "sell" to a church audience—and in the process, lose some of the genuine honesty that makes a song good and relatable. I'm not saying we should have poor theology, or bad morals, in our music, but

I think if we focused more on making good music, while putting God first in our lives, instead of chasing a particular “Christian Music sound,” the message will still shine through and be more attainable, impacting a broader scope of people.

In Christian music, explain the balance between ministry and creativity needed to create a great song.

It all comes down to your goals for a song. You need to know your message, know who your audience is that the message is intended for, and craft everything else around that. If I’m writing a song that I know is intended for congregational worship, it’s going to be crafted much differently from a song I’m hoping inspires a non-believer to think about looking toward God for hope.

Megachurches often highlight Christian musicians. Does the fanfare get in the way of God's message? How do you balance that?

It can, but it doesn’t have to. As someone who leads worship often, I’ve found that part of my role IS to capture people’s attention, to some extent; there isn’t much getting around that. However, the game-changer is what you do with that attention once you have it. God is vibrant, He’s a creator, and we’re made in His image! So yes, I hope that I can

create a sound and experience that grabs people’s attention, BUT with the express intent of using that platform to direct their attention towards our Heavenly Father. I also think in any church setting it comes down to what you go there looking for. A church can provide a thoroughly solid, completely humble, right-hearted service, and if someone comes looking for just an emotional experience that’s what they are going to get out of it, and vice-versa. Congregational Worship is communal, it requires participation on all sides of the platform. If we attend a church service just wanting to get our emotional needs met, then, yes, that very well may be all that will happen, regardless of what is happening on stage.

What’s the best advice for Christian musicians?

Focus on your relationship with God, go hard on improving your skills, and above all, find ways to serve others with your talents. Give back to the community around you with the skills God’s given you.

Any final comments?

I’d love for you to join me on my musical journey as I pursue my “Reason to Breathe.” Hopefully I can inspire you to do the same. You can find me on Facebook or Instagram: @JoeGuerraMusic



JOE GUERRA
RECORDED COLLECTIONS

THE DEBUT EP
Released 2007
Track list: Run / Chosen Generation

FREE TO FLY
Released 2009
Track list: Free to Fly / Show Me / Disappear / Not Gonna Break / A Shadow of Who We Are / Wish Upon a Star

HOLD ON FOR LIFE
Released 2013
Track list: Good Today / Reach Out to Heaven / Hold On for Life / Show Us How to Be / You Delight Me

REASON TO BREATHE
Released 2017
Track list: Shorelines / Reason to Breathe / Come Home / Rise Up / Future Starts

Follow Joe Guerra on Spotify



“I think I’ll be transitioning to releasing a series of singles, rather than full CD’s in the near future, but it will enable me to release music more frequently. If you follow me on my Spotify page you’ll be the first to know as new songs are released!”

streaming series

FOCUS ON MICHIGAN EPISODIC VIDEO PRODUCTIONS



"I decided it would be more fun to do the show as a parody of not just low-budget science fiction, but of cheesy sitcoms, as well."

Mission of Madness Trapped in Cyberspace

By Creative Motion Staff

According to the authorities that keep track of such things, there were over 170 million estimated pieces of debris smaller than 1 cm (0.39 in) orbiting the Earth as of July, 2013.

Another piece was added a few years ago, not in the heavens above, but in cyberspace. It is the whacko sci-fi series *Space Debris*, the creation of Michigan filmmaker, Joshua Courtade. The mini-adventures, two seasons' worth, are available for streaming on Amazon video.

While it's been a while since its' production, Earthlings are discovering the sci-fi spoof in record numbers. There are no plans to reassemble the cast, or toss together the disjointed interior of their spacecraft, the Typhon II, for another mission.

The first season introduced Courtade, in the role of



Joshua Courtade, producer and commander of the spaceship Typhon II. No new adventures are planned, but their *Space Debris* missions are trapped in cyberspace.



Left to right: Robert William Ford, Scott Merriman, Kristin Mellian, and Joshua Courtade.

Captain Christopher Hemingway, with his crew of friends, Scott Merriman as Milton Gresziak, and Robert William Ford as Bob, a life-like robot. Kara Joy Reed, Amanda Kaley, and Jeff Priskorn also tagged along, for two adventures each. Six episodes were produced.

The second season, released in 2017, added actress Kristin Mellian to the crew, as Dr. Danielle Austen. A dozen other individuals popped into the series for one episode each, playing everything from Earth's president to space orphans. Eight episodes were produced.

The name of the original space craft shuttling the silly crew around the galaxy was Typhon, which was rebuilt for the second season as Typhon II.

"The name comes from a horrible monster in Greek mythology. I picked it partly because I wanted the name of a flying creature, and in some versions of the myth, Typhon has dragon-like wings," Courtade explained.

But the spaceship designed for use in exterior shots was hardly a technological marvel.

"I liked the irony of a dumpy little rocket ship named after one of the most terrifying, deadly creatures in mythology," he added.

The origin of his character's name, Captain Hemingway, also dipped into literature.

"I needed a name that smacked of outdated mas-

culinity. Who better than Hemingway?" he said. "I hadn't really planned on making it a recurring theme, but before I knew it, I had characters named after Austen, Melville, Lovecraft, Dickens, Burroughs, Cervantes, and Steinbeck."

Courtade, born April 30, 1981, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, explained NASA didn't contact him about the mission or launch, but rather it was an unfolding creative process originating from his own filmmaking pathway.

"Space Debris came about through a series of paths converging," Courtade said. "In 2013, I shot a feature film called *Twenty Years Later* with two of my best friends, Scott Merriman and Bob Ford. I'd made countless films with both of them before, but this was the first time that all three of us really shared significant screen time. The film was so much fun to make that I really wanted to do another project starring the three of us."

Courtade began tinkering with the idea of creating a short film that would essentially be like the *Seinfeld* of outer space. The crew aboard the spaceship would share mundane conversations while encountering aliens and interstellar challenges. But a more complete concept didn't transpire right away.

"A while later, I was watching a few retrospectives about the early TV work of Mel Brooks (I'm a

huge Get Smart fan), and I got to thinking about the glory days of early television comedy,” Courtade said. “That changed the direction of Space Debris. I decided it would be more fun to do the show as a parody of not just low-budget science fiction, but of cheesy sitcoms, as well.”

Courtade wrote all six episodes of the first season fairly quickly. Once he figured out who the characters would be, Courtade moved ahead.

“We started rehearsing, and I cast the supporting guest roles, and before long I was dreaming up ideas for a second season,” he recalled.

Courtade wrote most of season two before he even shot season one. The first half dozen episodes were originally released on Vimeo. But, it didn’t generate many viewers, and was nearly impossible to monetize, being on a platform most people were unfamiliar with.

“I originally released the first season on Vimeo, but it didn’t get very many views,” Courtade said, “and it was difficult to monetize the show on a platform that most viewers didn’t recognize.”

After a year or so, Courtade moved the show to Amazon Prime, just before production began of the second season. Earthlings initially were unimpressed with the blastoff. “Honestly, after some of the terrible user reviews we got on Amazon, I started having doubts about releasing new episodes,”

Courtade said. “People just didn’t seem to be on board with what we were doing. But we were getting a significant number of views for a show this small, so I knew somebody out there had to be watching.”

Season two added a new crew member onboard the Typhon II. Not another silly, guy, either.

“For season two, we added a fourth principal character, Kristin Mellian. There were lots of great female guest stars in season one, but for the second season, I felt like we really needed a regular female presence,” he conveyed. “Kristin is a very experienced performer who started teaching acting at Compass College of Cinematic Arts (where I teach writing, directing, and a few other things), shortly before we made the second season. She was a wonderful addition to the show, and I enjoyed working with her so much that I wrote the lead role in my latest feature, Melody on Earth, specifically for her.”

But what was the mission? It wasn’t a five-year mission, like The Enterprise was on, grappling with social issues in an age of intolerance. It wasn’t a 40-year-plus “may the force be with you” theatrical series pitting good against evil. It wasn’t even a Stargate SG-1 presenting a glimpse of the future to influence the course of humanity.

“In a lot of ways, Space Debris was an excuse to play with a bunch of my awesome film friends,” Courtade confessed.



Left to right: Scott Merriman, Robert William Ford, and Joshua Courtade.

Making movies with his friends can be traced back to age 11, when his first videos revolved around characters he loved as a child, like the Muppets, Superman, Batman, and Mario & Luigi.

“They were basically silly fan films. Eventually I started making up my own characters,” he said. “In those days, I attempted a lot of weird comedies and action movies, often involving spies. I’m a huge James Bond fan. Of course, when you’re in high school and have no money, it’s challenging to stage any kind of convincing action sequences.”

Editing a production produced a challenge, too.

“Back in the ‘90s, nonlinear editing software was a lot less accessible than it is now, so we learned how to shoot in sequence and edit in camera,” Courtade said. “I would never want to do that now, but all things considered, we got pretty good at it.”

When he earned a degree in writing at Grand Valley State University in 2003, he stated he didn’t know where to go with it. In 2005, he got wind of Compass College of Cinematic Arts, in Grand Rapids, and enrolled, taking a couple of classes.

“It was a very, very different program than it is now,” Courtade reflected. “The good folks at Compass guided me to apply for the Act One screenwriting program in Los Angeles. I got in and spent much of the summer of ‘06 in Los Angeles.”

Courtade returned to Grand Rapids, gathered up his belongings and moved to L.A., where he found work at a studio that was producing documentaries and reality TV shows.

“I was on the low end of the hierarchy, so it was not glamorous at all, but I got to work in television, and that was edifying,” he said.

By the fall of 2007, he realized L.A. was not who he was, and moved back to Grand Rapids.

“I was talking with my mentor, Cort Langeland, who had been my screenwriting teacher at Compass, and he suggested that I work as his teaching assistant,” Courtade said. “I didn’t want to go back to some crummy day job that had nothing to do with movies, so that sounded good to me. Within a year, I had my own directing class, and I had moved into more of a co-teacher role for Cort’s screenwriting classes.”

Courtade recognizes Langeland for training him to be a teacher at the college, educating him extensively on topics such as screenwriting and producing.

“I’ve been at Compass for almost eleven years now, and I teach many classes, including several fo-



SOME ANTAGONISTS IN THE SPACE DEBRIS SERIES

ASHLEY ANDROMEDA (Kara Joy Reed)

Season 1, Episode 1: “Pilot Error” and
Season 1, Episode 6: “The Best Medicine”

Once upon a time, Ashley Andromeda was engaged to marry Captain Hemingway, but he was called away at the last minute, and she was left alone at the altar. At the time, she was running a spa on Venus, but now she’s the captain of a band of deadly space pirates. She doesn’t take any nonsense from anyone, and she’s out for vengeance.

THE SPACE SIRENS (Mariae Luisa Macavei)

Season 1, Episode 4: “Sound in Space”

The Space Sirens are three attractive women whose seductive song is only audible to human males. They lure the men into black holes and feed on their energy as they’re sucked in.

CINDY LOVECRAFT (Jacquie Floyd)

Season 1, Episode 5: “Casual Friday”

The great Cindy Lovecraft is one of the most beloved intergalactic movie stars of all time. She’s also a serious drama queen. Everything about her personality is larger than life. She’s very theatrical and hot-tempered. Naturally, she and the captain had a fling once many years ago, but it was fraught with emotional conflict. It ended when the captain left Cindy for her sister. Her career never wavered, but no one holds a grudge like a histrionic thespian.

TIM BEAN (Jeff Priskorn)

Season 1, Episode 6: “The Best Medicine”

Tim Bean is the rather high-strung viceroy of the earth colony on Mars. He is vain and insecure, and easily offended.

OLAF BURROUGHS (Richard Raphael)

Season 2, Episode 2: “The Slip”

Olaf Burroughs is an intimidating space warlord who once conquered the stars in Orion’s belt. He deals in all sorts of illegal underground businesses and has a mercenary army at his command. He’s belligerent and indulgent. He also hates bananas.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE EARTH (Shelby Bradley)

Season 2, Episode 4: “Cult Classic”

The president of the Earth (aka Ginger) is an authoritative figure who rules the earth and its colonies. She once dated Chris Hemingway (of course) and has regretted it ever since. But she’s been able to take advantage of that backstory from time to time to convince Hemingway to take various jobs for her. She’s manipulative and cold. She wants to start a civil war with the colonies on Pluto so that she can strike down their autonomous attitude.

HIGH PRIESTESS GREEN (Anne K. Miranda)

Season 2, Episode 4: “Cult Classic”

Green is the high priestess of Friggeon, an ice deity on Pluto. She uses archaic dialogue (“thee” and “thou” kind of stuff), and puts her religion and the people of Pluto above all else. She’s a bit melodramatic, but she can be reasonable in times of crisis.

HIGH PRIEST GREY (Byron Clute)

Season 2, Episode 4: “Cult Classic”

Grey is Green’s replacement in the cult of Friggeon. Grey is much less reasonable than his predecessor.

DR. CERVANTES (voiced by Scott Merriman)

Season 2, Episode 7: “Milton’s Brain”

Dr. Cervantes is a space scientist who lost his body in a laboratory accident years ago. His brain was salvaged and placed into a mechanical body of his own design. He’s brilliant, but mad, and he wants nothing more than to harvest new organs to rebuild his body.

Follow on Facebook. Watch on Amazon Prime Video.

cusing on screenwriting,” he said.

While Courtade has been involved in Christian filmmaking, he remains diverse in his ventures. He doesn't feel compelled to only work on Christian projects. Christians are a part of the whole entertainment world, and just their inclusion in mainstream productions has a beneficial result.

“If a performer only feels comfortable acting in explicitly Christian films, then by all means, go where God leads you,” Courtade explained. “There's this expectation that Christian artists will only create Christian art.”

When members at Courtade's church first discovered he was a filmmaker, they would approach him, asking if he was going to produce the next *Facing the Giants*. He politely responded, “No.” His reasoning is quite simple, and concerns outreach on multiple levels.

“If I only work on faith-based films, I'm only going to be reaching a very particular demographic. It's a demographic that already believes the ideas that the film is likely affirming,” Courtade explained, essentially like preaching to the choir.

There's also the negative view most non-Christians, and probably most Christians, have concerning faith-based films, because most of those films emphasize the message over quality production standards and the art of cinematic storytelling.

Courtade has a point about when the message overshadows the craft.

“This is why so many Christian films feel cheesy, or philosophically hollow,” he said. “They're not being honest about the complexities of faith, and as such, the people who would benefit from an honest discussion of the subject are most likely going to turn away from those films.”

Not to be misunderstood, Courtade conveyed many films that deal with faith in an honest, nuanced way, and pointed to Martin Scorsese's *Silence*.

“It's a brilliant, complex, challenging story that, unfortunately, hardly anyone watched,” Courtade said. “Some friends of mine recently released a Christian comedy called *Camp Manna* that is delightful.”

Being a Christian in the mainstream entertainment industry is how the majority operates, anyway.

“After all, Jesus didn't instruct his disciples to only preach to each other,” Courtade said.

While the *Space Debris* spacecraft has silently returned from its mission, the adventures continue to be boldly discovered where no man has gone before



Space Debris second season crew.

in cyberspace. The intergalactic battles in the heavens are behind Courtade; the man in charge sitting on the throne up there continues to influence his life here on Earth.

“At the end of the day,” he explains, “I just try to live my life in a way that reflects Jesus' love, and if that impacts someone in a positive way, then I've done my job.”

Currently, Joshua Courtade is taking a break from acting and getting back into production.

“After playing lead roles in two features, two different web series, and several shorts, I needed to step back and stay behind the camera for a while,” he said. “I just completed post-production on my fourth feature, *Melody on Earth*, which I wrote, produced, and directed.”

Melody on Earth opened at Grand Rapids' Celebration! Cinema Woodland, September 28, and will run for at least a week. Afterward, Courtade plans to work the festival circuit and develop new projects. When it comes to advice for others, he keeps it simple. Technology cannot replace content.

“High-quality cameras and editing software are more accessible than they've ever been, but that's not enough to make a good movie. Don't skimp on the scriptwriting process,” Courtade conveyed. “Get feedback, and actually listen to it. Revise, revise, revise. Find the right actors for the roles, not just your friends. And then just shoot as many films as you can.”

Experience counts.

“The more experience you have, the more you'll learn, and the better prepared you'll be for bigger projects down the road.”

the bigger picture

A CREATIVE MOTION SPECIAL

Comic Book Artist José Carlos

José Carlos is an international Christian comic artist from Mexico, on a mission from God. We asked José about his work and ministry.

You and your wife disciple teens at your church, and also create VBS comics for missions. What can you tell us about the projects you and your church in Mexico are involved with?

Our Church supports missionaries in rural areas of the country, many in villages where people struggle with poverty, lack of basic health services, and so on. Some outside Mexico, in Haiti, Honduras, and Asia. What I've seen so far in 16 years as a Born again Christian, is that most of the Churches here are involved in missionary work, raising funds, training and sending people to spread the Gospel all over the country, and even to Central America and Islamic countries in Africa and Asia. I've seen many youths involved in missionary work, they save money washing cars, selling goods after Church service, to fund their summer stay in missions country-wide.

The affluent western Church is in decay. How does the Christian Church in the west differ from that in Mexico, or other parts of the world, that you've seen? What improvements would you suggest for the American Church?

I've heard about the decay of the western Church in the media, but I've lived the contrary in Mexico. Church is growing, many more people are coming to Christ, even though Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion.

My experience in Japan was great, Christianity there is not prohibited as in other Asian countries, people are respectful of others' beliefs. I attended an English speaking Church in Tokyo, people were very friendly. I went also to a Christian bookstore with plenty of resources for growing in faith, music, books, handmade gifts and so on. In Nairobi, Kenya, I was amazed at how many Churches there are, Christian Universities, and even a praying room at the airport. I have some friends and family in Christ there who are making a difference in Church using

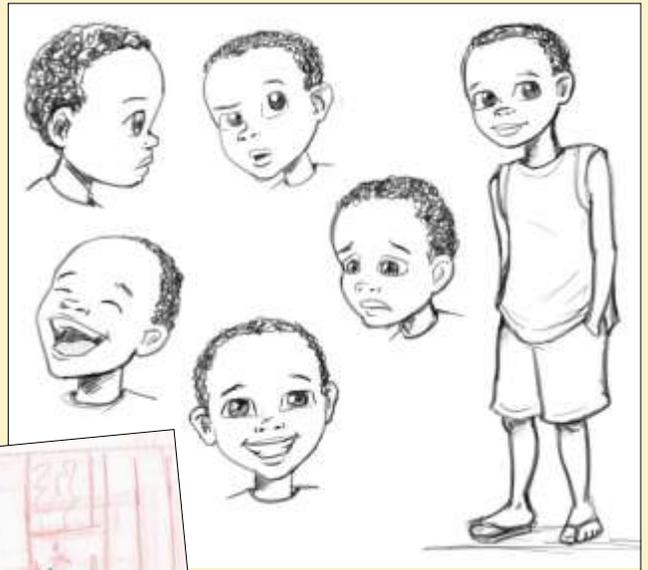


Left: Artists and Christian comics creators, Nate Butler and José Carlos.

tons of resources to share the gospel, and especially targeting youth. James and Maggy Gathuku publish Timazi magazine, that is given free in Christian high schools, and Ernest and Waturi Wamboye, who focus on marriage, healthy relations among youth, and sexuality according to God's will.

You traveled the world as Director of Public Relations for the Spanish-language projects of COMIX35, a nonprofit comics-training ministry and consulting company founded by former Marvel/DC artist, Nate Butler. Where did you go, and what did this entail?

I had the honor of being part of the Comix 35 staff for one year, in 2010, and trained in comics and ministry activities. I went with Nate to the Festival of French comics in Quebec City, Canada, in order to get a glance at comics influenced by European style, and was amazed to find the variety of topics there, from romance, adventure, sci-fi, historical adaptations, humor, horror, daily life stories, and so



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José Carlos

Comic illustrations by José Carlos.



on...usually on a bigger format and hardcover. We went to Tokyo, Japan, mainly to work in the supervision of the fifth book of the Manga Messiah series, which is a five book adaptation of the Bible: the story of Jesus (Manga Messiah), the books of Acts (Manga Metamorphosis), the Pentateuch (Manga Mutiny), then Prophets (Manga Messengers), and finally, stories of Kings (Manga Melech).

Second, we went to the world's greatest manga fair, the Comic Market, known as Comiket, wherein four days gets approximately 400,000 visitors, and you literally see people with suitcases of purchased comics. By the way, "manga" is the term to refer to Japanese style comics. As Christian comics producers and consultants, we need to get acquainted with the trends, formats, topics, and reader's interests. We've held training seminars in Mexico City, twice, in 2010 and 2016, and are about to teach together again this year, Lord willing in October, in Singapore, at the Littworld event held by MAI, where Nate Butler will lead a plenary session, as well.

You just did a comic for Christian high schools in Kenya, written by a sister in Christ from Cameroon, and colored by a talented Kenyan artist. How did technology assist in the execution? What are some ways artists can utilize technology to facilitate Christian content to the world?

The technology was crucial for this to achieve. I met Ivanova (the author), and John and Maggie Gathuku (the publishers), at Littworld 2012, the largest Christian publishing conference in the world, held by Media Associates International every three years. The idea to publish the comic came afterwards, Ivanova had just been a student at a Comix35 training seminar in Cameroon and met Nate Butler there (what a coincidence, right?). I told her about a comic series I created with Mexican Author Keila Ochoa Harris called "Today's Parables," where we adapt in comic format, and into actual context, some of Jesus' Parables. She sent me a script a couple of weeks after we met about "The Ten Virgins Parable." I reached John and Maggy, and told them that I wanted to publish the comic in Timazi, but at that time my computer crashed, so the color was added by James Njoroge, also from Kenya, with whom I now have a friendship, even though we haven't met in person. I sent him the finished pages, outlined and with dialogue, and he did a wonderful color job.

I recently taught an online course about producing

comics with Christian purposes for Biblica Virtual, a teaching ministry based in Argentina. I had students from Mexico, USA, Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Argentina. We had live classes once a week, also recorded, and had a weekly discussion forum. I sent links and documents in advance for each lesson, all this was possible using technology wisely.

Your comic "Special Guest," which won the International Christian Comics Competition in 2005, is in English. Most of your work is in Spanish. And now you've reached Africa. What are some practical ways Christian artists can bridge the language barrier?

For me, it has been very important to speak a second language, mainly, to be fluid in English and speak basic French. For "The Big Day," Ivanova wrote the script in French, even though she is fluid speaking English, the writing she does it in her native language, which is French, then I wrote the dialogue in English, to be published in Kenya. But Language, it's not only spoken, there is also graphic language, or visual, so to speak. Each culture has its' own values, symbols, history, and in order to connect with our specific readers, it's crucial to get acquainted with all this.

You said, "God has given us all unique skills and technology must be only a tool, not the main focus on what we do for the Lord." Can you elaborate upon this from an artist's perspective?

The talent we may have for art is God-given, as said in Exodus 35:35, "He has filled them (Bezalel and Oholiab) with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them skilled workers and designers."

These skills help us perform, produce a piece, but what matters the most is the message we want to communicate is either about evangelism, reaching non-believers, or teaching for the Body of Christ. We can use Technology to reach them faster, get to those in distant places, make it massive, enhance quality, but in the end, a great story told with limited resources can be very effective, but a poor message even with great looks won't be effective—or even worse—get the audience (readers, in the case of comics) distracted by the looks, not the content.

Visit Jose Carlos Christian Comics:
www.issuu.com/josecarloscomics

industry insider

MARKETING 101

Dispelling the \$\$\$ and Quality Myth

The biggest myth is that producers think they need more money to make Christian movies better. It's actually the opposite.

By Kristen Collier
Creative Motion Content Editor

Everyone who's watched a cat video on Youtube knows that if you make something people like, they spread it around. The same goes with Christian movies. If you make one people like, they will buy it.

So, the biggest myth in Christian movies is:

Producers need more money to make better movies. It's actually the opposite. When you make better movies you'll get more money. Because people will buy them.

Here are some more things we learned in researching movie finance the past few months:

-When you see people perennially asking for donations to make their next movie, or say they're in the fundraising stage, it's because their previous movie

or TV show didn't sell (e.g.: Mel Gibson didn't have to fundraise after *The Passion*).

-If producers made a profit on their current movie, they could use those earnings for future movies.

-So, if they make more than one movie, and are still looking for donors, their first movie didn't sell.

-That means in some aspect they failed (market research, writing, production) to reach their market.

-Because movies are consumer products. That means they are goods sold in a marketplace (Amazon, DVD sales), so must compete with other goods sold in a marketplace.

-And people don't buy what they don't like. So either their market research failed or they are disregarding it (making movies for themselves).

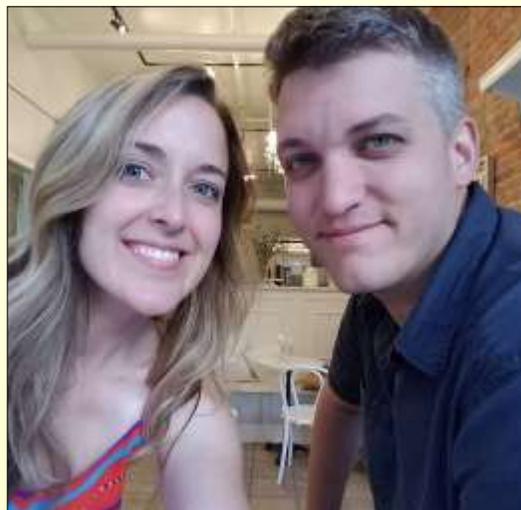
Meaning that in the Christian market, where audiences get behind the next big thing just to support a Christian movie, if you hear of producers continually asking for donations, this is precisely why—the market doesn't bear out their current movie, or else they wouldn't NEED donations—they'd be making their next movie from profits of the current one.

Meet Rachel Hinz: One of Michigan's 38%

Honestly, my initial passion when it comes to creativity in the arts—and ESPECIALLY in the realm of Christian movies—is quality. I love to see the best, most talented people in front of the camera and behind the camera. Nothing is better than leaving the theater feeling like you just encouraged your soul AND you were thoroughly impressed and entertained.

Now, I'm biased when it comes to seeing moms on the screen.... I love films where motherhood is depicted in all of its' glorious messiness. Perhaps it's only anecdotal and even unfair, but I'm guessing I'd then lean toward casting women who are mothers themselves into such roles.

Actors and actresses can research roles, and do. But the "profession of a parent" touches on such a deep level. Plus, how great is it to have actual role models in these roles?



Rachel and Seth Hinz.

Basically, if a producer doesn't turn a profit after his first movie, and is seeking donations to make more, this means either his market research failed, or he is making movies for himself (not taking into account what the market will bear). A vanity piece.

No judgment. Just explaining.

This is not always related to quality. Hence, the need for market research. To find out what the market will bear, meaning, what consumers will buy.

We've spent months researching this to help producers make movies that WILL sell, and found the biggest untapped market doesn't want Bible epics, movies about death, Amish romance, or period pieces. A minority (Evangelical women, which make up 27% of U.S. Christians), will support those movies, but the biggest group of untapped consumers (mainline Protestant and Catholic women, who comprise 38% of U.S. Christians), won't.

Meaning that people making these movies are ig-

norning the market or making movies for themselves. Which is why they continually fundraise.

The men in the untapped denominations will support a Bible/history movie. As will retired women. But the largest group, working age mainline women, won't. Since women in general purchase 85% of consumer goods, they are a producer's top market.

If you could add an additional 38% to your 27% market-share currently accessed, it's a no-brainer for producers that want to turn a profit.^[1] Make the kind of movie the 38% will buy. It won't cost more. They don't require big-names or highly-produced pieces. This nullifies the "I need more money to make a better movie" argument.

Quality is their top issue. Producers that listen to them and implement their feedback will have a better movie. They will earn twice as much, if not more, since their suggestions will also help producers reach mainstream audiences.

^[1] <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/gender-composition/women/>

Tapping the Unreached 38% Market

By Kristen Collier
Creative Motion Content Editor

What They Want

The 38% of mainline women essentially want the equivalent of The New Andy Griffith Show.

"I only watch the Hallmark Channel because it's the only thing that's non-offensive," a lady in this demographic recently told me. This market is not obsessed with romance. They want "non-offensive." Hence, the new Andy Griffith Show.

Our research indicates they don't watch Christian entertainment largely due to the "creepy" factor, and they cite #MeToo issues. This is one of their most important criteria regarding Christian movie consumption. They say this pertains to "the light of the eye," not physical features.

"Highly Likable"

In a nutshell, they want "highly likeable characters," like Barney Fife, and actors like Dennis Quaid, whose favorite show is Andy Griffith.

This demographic says they specifically turn off Christian movies due to the "creepy factor," and say this is the predominance of Christian movies they've seen, so, to reiterate, this is another important criteria the untapped 38% is looking for. Because these women work in mainstream, professional settings,

Producers, we can help you double your revenue by reaching an untapped demographic that is the majority of your biggest market: women. You're currently reaching 27% (Evangelicals), but you could easily reach an additional 38% (Mainline Protestant and Catholic).^[1] We want to help you get off the fundraising bandwagon so you can make future movie from profits, not donations.

Because not only do women comprise your largest market (they make 85% of household purchases),^[2] but women over 50 SPEND TWO AND A HALF TIMES MORE THAN EVERYONE ELSE.

AdWeek, on August 23, 2018, said their spending power "has reached critical mass."

Some stats:

- Women over 50 spend 2.5 times more than everyone else, and
- Have 3% more spending power than men. ^[3]
- American women make 64% of charitable donations, and ^[4]
- Control 30% of the world's wealth. ^[5]

and high-powered environments, they want movies set in contemporary, professional settings, with normal, everyday situations. They do not like history, Amish romance, movies about death and suffering, or kids getting hurt. The over 50 market will watch Amish or period pieces. However, those of working age want contemporary movies and TV shows.

Hence, the New Andy Griffith Show. They cite this can be easily produced, and faith shown naturally.

So, to help producers, we asked Rev. Gaven Mize, a mainline pastor, author, and art scholar from the “All-American City” (Reader’s Digest) of Hickory, North Carolina, to write an article about a movie well-received by this demographic: Corbin Bernsen’s Christian Mingle.

Hickory, voted best city in the nation for holiday lovers, December, 2017 (realtor.com), is about a half hour from the real-life city Mayberry was purportedly modeled after, so residents here are great examples of Mainstream USA.

Rev. Mize also wrote a children’s books with wife, Ashlee, an educated young professional, and they have a child, so are a good representative of this demographic producers should get to know.



Rev. Gaven Mize, with wife Ashlee and son Oliver.

Who Are The Missing 38%?

They’re biblically literate, knowledgeable about art and literature, will give a pass if they think a producer tried his best, but not if they sense a sellout.

It’s not about production values or acting quality for them, but friendly-looking, non-threatening actors. They understand marketing tactics, so no longer fall for marketing campaigns telling them to get behind the next big thing. They’re now telling producers which movies they’ll support. Hence, the \$1 = 1 Million Moms movement we’ve launched.

What They Support

They want churches that look like churches, not warehouses, and normal, real-life situations. They don’t want one more Christian movie about death, dying, or someone being hurt. They don’t want to see abuse, because they come from stable homes.

They don’t want one more Amish love story or pe-

riod piece, or anything historical, including biblical history (They only watch The History Channel to be with their husbands.).

And they don’t want one more Bible epic, unless it’s The Passion sequel. Professional women in mainstream working environments are the norm for the missing 38% who really want to buy your next movie. Again, this is why we launched the \$1 = 1 Million Moms movement, to help producers connect with these women in financial, and meaningful, ways.

A Few Tweaks

“Lose the creepers” is really it for them. They’ll watch, and purchase, your movies if you just do that. Again, they will give a pass to a lot of things, if you simply have likeable actors, in normal-looking locales and situations, portraying faith in real life.

That pretty much takes care of the quality issue. It won’t cost you any more to make, because Andy featured Barney Fife, who this demographic loves, so they don’t need big-names. Just tap John Crist and you’re sitting on a goldmine.

“But I really want to make a Bible epic! Or movie about someone suffering!”

You won’t get their money.

“But why do they hate historical movies?” you ask. “What about all those Amish love stories so popular amongst Christian writers?”

These aren’t those kinds of women.

Applying Humor

They are especially looking for humor. Light-hearted entertainment. They attend church regularly, so want faith shown in a natural way, with real families interacting with their children, teaching them faith as they go about their everyday lives. They also say this is the best way to reach the lost, so fulfills the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20).

They especially don’t want to see ugly things, people, or places on screen, because they believe ugly art is a lie (since everything God made was good, and that art, as a symbol, is supposed to be a *faithful* rendition of that which it represents. Hence, a lie if it’s ugly.).

1. <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/gender-composition/women/>
2. <https://www.m2moms.com/fast-facts/>
3. <https://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/women-over-50-are-often-disregarded-by-marketers-here-why-that-needs-to-end-now/>
4. <https://nonprofitsource.com/online-giving-statistics/>
5. <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2018/modern-day-women-the-powerhouse-that-invests-engages-and-influences.html>

Spiritual Insincerity and the Creepiness Factor

By Kevin Scott Collier
Creative Motion Publisher

A sad thing I learned from the years I was involved with indie Christian children's projects, one being a series for a major Christian network, is these people are driven to steal your ideas. I instinctively felt it from the start and it turned out to be exactly what I suspected, if not worse.

One Christian indie children's entity I connected with 10 years ago turned out to be more like a secretive commune. We traveled to their operational location, where I was introduced to an actress, a minor, who was living with the family that owned the production company.

One of the family members, a married male around 30, seemed particularly close to this girl. I became privy to information provided by other parents that this minor was the man's "girlfriend," and they were witnessed engaging in inappropriate activity. Likely, criminal. Other minors there were sexting each other. The young girl and married man, and all of his extended family, were living in a converted church with no interior doors. That means no bedroom doors.

"What are these people doing?" I asked a respected professional at the shoot, confused as to the lack of organization and supervision.

"Some people make movies to fail," was the reply.

In another case, a producer I worked with on an original kid's cable TV series, based the show on characters I had created for a published book. He ended up putting his name on my creations. The insincerity and underlying creepiness was so prevalent it reached demonic proportions. From our first conversation on the phone, and his buddy-buddy attitude, accompanied by friendly laughter, I knew I couldn't trust this guy at all. He was a dirt-bag.

How this translates into indie Christian films is quite simple. Devoted Christians possess spiritual instinct. It doesn't always mean it's a hundred percent accurate. But I can tell you, personally, when I see someone in a Christian film that makes me feel uncomfortable, or appears to be wildly out of place, the genuine creepiness factor is soon confirmed.

I know, just from being involved with the MI Chris-

tian Talent Network and Creative Motion magazine, a lot of the backstories concerning individuals who my instincts would likely flag, when fully engaging my gossip filter, and shaking out a number of examples and accusations, claims soon become disturbing patterns, based in fact.

I'm not going to name names, but you likely know who you are. You're the "Christians" that keep the #MeToo Movement alive and well. A bunch of posers whose only ideas are ones they steal.

Perhaps the greatest move elevating Christian entertainment into the mainstream is sincerity. Consumers can spot fakes from the get-go.

To combat the creepy factor, the poser, and producers begging for bucks to make movies for themselves, a new #MeToo Movement emerges. This #MeToo Movement puts your money where your mouth is. In today's world, people listen when it's backed by money. More so than ever, in history. This is why the new 1\$ = 1 Million Moms program is an opportunity for moms to express what they want to see. If Christian filmmakers want your money, they're going to have to listen to you.

It's not a major overhaul, but minor tweaks needed, as a few are already doing this, but they're not promoted in Christian circles, and the general public is unaware of these movies.

Poorly produced Christian entertainment gives the enemy more fuel to mock Jesus. A Christian film can be campy and well-intentioned. Some of the actors perhaps aren't the most convincing, but if the production is likeable, the audience will give you a pass. Sincere, non-threatening, likeable.

I think the creepy factor in Christian films is more often a reflection of insincerity, than something overtly demonic. Some people have spiritual discernment and can detect this. Others have to travel a disappointing pathway to discover it. I'll let Jesus deal with it, because it's His court of law.

My grandfather told me as a boy, "Don't listen to what people say, Kevin, watch what they do."

The devil wants to control the spoken word. But fortunately he has no control over concealing actions.

Christology Essential in Christian Cinema

We asked Rev. Dr. Alfonso Espinosa, author of *Faith That Sees Through the Culture*, to help producers understand the centrality of Christ in Scripture, as applied to media production.

By Rev. Alfonso Espinosa
Guest Columnist

What is Christology?

The word literally means to speak about Christ, though typically translated, “the study of Christ.” We consider two major points: 1) the person of Christ: WHO Jesus Christ is; and 2) the work of Christ (what Jesus did, is doing, and will do, especially to save us from sin, death, and the devil).

Interview questions must test: A) will Christ’s person be correctly presented...the popular idea is to reduce Jesus to a really nice guy, a guru, a teacher...if Christ is reduced this way, there is a HUGE problem. B) We must avoid the idea His sacrifice was some cosmic example of how we ought to live, and return to the problem of works-righteousness: emulate Jesus, save yourself. NO!

Interview questions need to reveal whether or not the production “gets it”...Christology needs to show the personal union of fully human and fully divine; and questions need to see that His life was lived in our place, fulfilling the law we have transgressed, His death paying the price not just for our sins, but for the sins of the world, and that His resurrection is the basis for our justification, as in it, He has secured, guaranteed, and won the victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil.

What About Old Testament Movies?

The fact that Jesus wasn’t born yet doesn’t matter. Why not? Because Jesus has always been, He is the eternal God, the 2nd person of the Holy Trinity. That is, one of His attributes is eternality. He is the Alpha and Omega. John 8: “You are not yet 50 years old and you have seen Abraham?” Verse 58: “Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’” That is, it is a popular notion that Jesus “wasn’t yet.” Not true.



Dr. Alfonso Espinosa, senior pastor at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Irvine, CA.

Use Jesus’ Proper Name

What we witness on popular media is political correction that wants to dignify the so-called “problem of plurality.” This is inherent in the consideration of the plurality of religions. That is, to the worldly mind, it is offensive to say that there is only one way for salvation. The world rejects John 14:6.

Unfortunately, “God” has become a catch-all, fill-in-the-blank notion. This doesn’t mean we cannot use the title or word. In fact, we should not give up on the word, but we must use the word “God” in a context that identifies exactly to WHOM we are referring! Romans 9:5 is a great example of who is being referred to! Jesus Christ is God!

Questions for producers: 1. It’s easy to talk about God, but popular notions of God have God far away beyond the clouds or in the imaginations of people, are you putting forth Jesus as to WHO He really is: the INCARNATE God, or God in the flesh, who came into the world and entered into our lives? 2. Are you guys boldly proclaiming where people can find God? That is, are you pointing them to Jesus and to His Word? 3. When St. Thomas realized that Jesus was truly risen in John 20, he knelt and said to Him, “My LORD and my GOD.” Are you being that clear that’s who Jesus really is?

Full interview: <https://michristiantalent.weebly.com/articles/christology-its-all-about-jesus>

picture perfect

SCRIPTURAL TRUTH IN ENTERTAINMENT

Focus on Corbin Bernsen's Christian Mingle

A PASTOR'S VIEW

We asked a pastor whose doctoral studies are in art, and whose family fits the 38% of mainline believers producers haven't reached, to analyze a movie women in our group approved: Corbin Bernsen's *Christian Mingle*. Pictured right, Rev. Gaven Mize, and his wife, Ashlee.



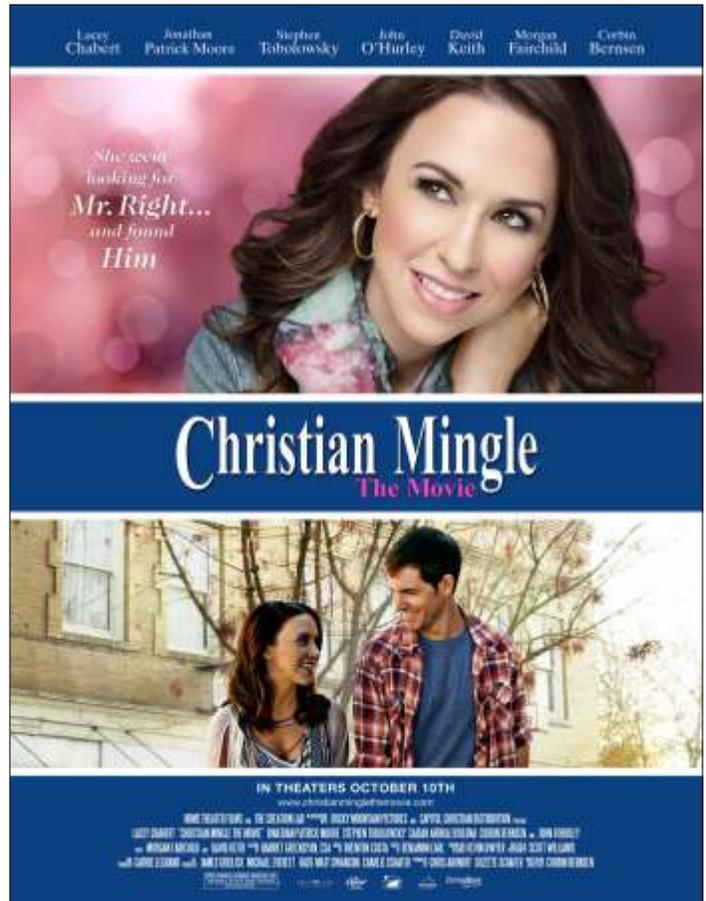
By Rev. Gaven Mize
Creative Motion Columnist

“My future was presented to me in a 3” by 3” thumbnail picture of a man in robes, a green stole around his neck, as he was preaching away at a pulpit.” These are the words once written by my wonderful wife, Ashlee.

You see...we met on an Internet dating website. In the past 25 years, we have seen an upswing in Internet dating. In fact, it has almost become cliché to meet your spouse on a dating site. While I don't press the hounding question of how people meet, I admit that I like a good, successful, dating website story. I may be biased, but the gift from God that is my wife, and now our two-year-old son, Oliver Augustine, jolted me into thinking there might be something to this Internet dating thing. It might even catch on and be around for a while.

I may be a young pastor, but I was raised without the luxury of the World Wide Web. We had the Encyclopedia Britannica, and enjoyed the freedom of playing outdoors without the fear of getting nabbed. But the crown jewel in our household was the VCR. My brother and I loved watching TV, and when we learned we could record shows and watch them over again, we were in heaven. Then we started visiting the now reliquary ancient tombs of Blockbuster.

That's where I found it! Corbin Bernsen and Major League.



“It was out of my reach, what did you want me to do, dive for it?” This quote from Corbin's character still makes me laugh.

Having a family member who played for the Yankees in the late 40's and early 50's, I've always been an avid baseball fan. Angels in the Outfield, The Sandlot, and Corbin's Major League were staples for my brother and I. We constantly quoted these movies verbatim and still can, for the most part.

Now, my two-year-old son screams, “Ba-ball!” every time I turn on a Yankees game. Soon we will be able to enjoy the movies that I grew up with together. But, what about my wife, Ashlee?

She likes baseball, but would never turn on a game unless Oliver and I wanted to watch it. Solid marriages are like that...give and take. So, what quality time and quality television can we enjoy to-

gether? Enter Corbin Bernsen and Christian Mingle. My wife absolutely adores this type of movie. My mother and mother-in-law also love this type of movie. If it were up to them, Hallmark and Christmas movies would be all that was on television.

Clearly, women are the key market for movies like this. And yet, women (especially those over 50), are ignored by marketers, even though they make 64% of total donations, and a shocking 85% of all household purchases. It would behoove Hollywood marketers to tap into this demographic more, and that's just what Corbin Bernsen does in *Christian Mingle*.

The first time my wife and I sat down to watch this movie about online dating there was clearly a stark difference in our viewing styles. As a pastor, theologian, and constant student of the arts, I watched it with a critical eye, whereas my darling wife is able to simply watch and enjoy the movie for what it is: entertainment. After all, the textbook definition of ENTERTAINMENT is "to amuse."

I bring this up because these are the two central dynamics in *Christian Mingle*. The theological side, or "faith elements," and the "watch the movie and enjoy the clean fun of a family-centered-movie" aspect. This brought to mind the realization that there is Corbin, the writer/producer/director, and Corbin, the Christian. Corbin Bernsen is a storyteller. Around his stories you can find a rock solid understanding of human interaction and family dynamics, highlighted within the context of Christian values. This is his wheelhouse and that is where he shines.

I recognized that he wasn't trying to portray doctrinal or dogmatic points of Christianity in this. He was simply telling the story of Gwyneth and Paul:

- Girl wants companionship, so gets on a Christian dating site. Girl has a basic grasp of morality, while lacking knowledge of core Christian beliefs.
- Girl meets boy. Dances around her stereotypes of Christianity to impress the boy.
- Girl goes to Mexico. Boy breaks up with her. Girl quits job, ends up in a jumping, storefront Church.
- Faith-growing montage. Girl asks for forgiveness. Girl is forgiven.

The last two sentences are the most important. *Forgiveness is the true absolution of "Christ our Lord [Who] offers forgiveness to all mankind,"* the perfect example for us as "one person forgives another." It's what healthy relationships are built on.

One of the 38%, Ashlee Mize:

Watching *Christian Mingle* brought back wonderful memories of how Gaven and I met. I'm grateful for this movie and the memories I recalled while watching it with my husband. Corbin made that possible for us.

As a Christian woman I find that I watch movies very differently from my husband. Most times he tries to talk through the whole movie and explain everything about it. I believe that a majority of women are able to simply enjoy the movie.

The difference in couples watching a movie together is the same as a couple doing anything else together: the man wants to solve the problem in the narrative, whereas a woman wants to experience a movie through their nurturing, caring, and loving tendencies. The Christian genre is perfect for this on a major motion picture scale. Executives and producers would do well to captivate on the often ignored demographic.

As Ashlee and I watched, I was finally able to relax and enjoy it as entertainment. I will admit that I would love to see a Corbin Bernsen written and directed story of St. Monica and her son, St. Augustine (Much in the same vein as Joseph Fiennes' Luther role, in 2003). However, *Christian Mingle* was a love story first and foremost, and the work of Corbin Bernsen should be applauded. As Christians, we should encourage him in his writing and storytelling, and trust that Christ will continue to build upon his faith, and that with each story we, the viewers, will grow with him, through his work.

As we watched this movie about a parallel universe to Ashlee's and my experience, I was overcome by the memory of the first time I laid eyes on her photo on that dating site. That same 3" x 3" picture framed the last face that I would ever love. In that thumbnail was the mother of my child. In that thumbnail was my future. While Ashlee and I didn't have quite the ride that Gwyneth and Paul did, we are certainly glad there is a feel-good movie that echoes the beginning of many modern relationships.

Ashlee and I will anxiously be waiting for the next Corbin Bernsen movie. Perhaps a story of a devout mother with a rebellious son who would grow to become one of the greatest bishops the world has ever seen? Maybe? I'm looking forward to any movie from such a talented storyteller.

Thank you, Corbin.

Rev. Gaven Mize is pastor of Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Hickory, NC. Connect with Rev. Mize at: <https://mizefamilybooks.com/>

Hollywood at home

MESSAGES FROM THE MI CHAPTER—HOLLYWOOD PRAYER NETWORK

Michigan & Hollywood Christians



By Kristen Collier

CM Editor / MI Chapter Dir. Hollywood Prayer Network



Me & Midnight.

"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds."
- II Corinthians 10:4

***Nine out of ten kitties prefer Creative Motion magazine over others.**

I have to share this from Diana Angelson, actress and producer of The Second Coming of Christ movie:

To be honest, the story is so incredible, that sometimes I avoid telling it, because I know it is hard to believe and I'm sure a lot of people think I am completely insane. But it is a true story, that was tragic

and absolutely devastating in June, 2012. Then, a Miracle came and Life was good again.

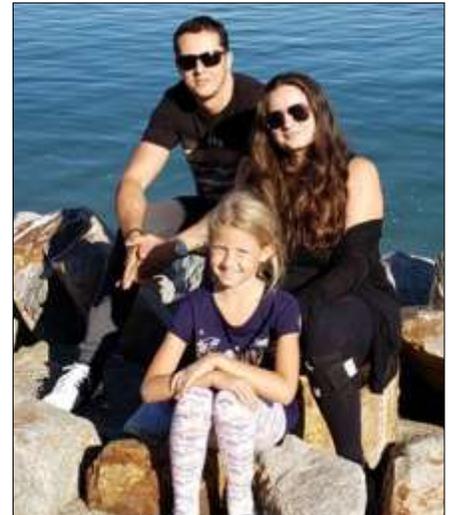
To put it simple, my cat, George, got very sick.

Acute, deadly, kidney failure. I had many pets that died and I understand and accept death, but this time, I just couldn't deal with it. My 88-year-old grandma and my 1-year-old daughter were crying, I was bawling, my husband was holding me and I went through so many doctors that told me to put him to sleep, because he had zero chance of surviving. But I just couldn't accept doing it. I just wanted him back.

Then he passed. It was almost midnight and I decided to bury him at dawn. I fell to my knees, in front of my Icon of Jesus Christ and I asked Him, to please, please, just this one time, make him alive again, I couldn't deal with the pain. And then something that never ever happened in my life, happened.

I can't say that - "I heard" - or that - "I saw" - but with all my being, I experienced Christ telling me George was alive. And that I had to write a script and make a movie titled "The Second Coming of Christ." I got up, crossed myself, and went to bed.

Before falling asleep, I told my husband, "George is alive. I had...a vision...I think...?!? I do have to make a movie about the Second Coming..." He said,



Above: Elizabeth, black and white cat, and George. Right: Diana with husband, Daniel, and daughter, Christa.

“Okay.” And we went to bed.

At 5:00 A.M., I hear meowing. My cat was walking around the house, hungry. The next day, our entire life changed. We opened a production company and started making movies. It took two years to write the script and four to produce it. In 2017, Sony bought it and distributed it. I am happy.

Read the rest of Diana’s interview:

<https://michristiantalent.weebly.com/articles>

Prayer Spotlight



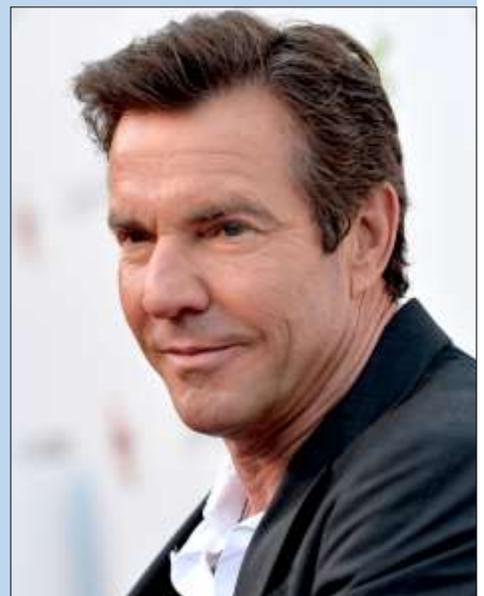
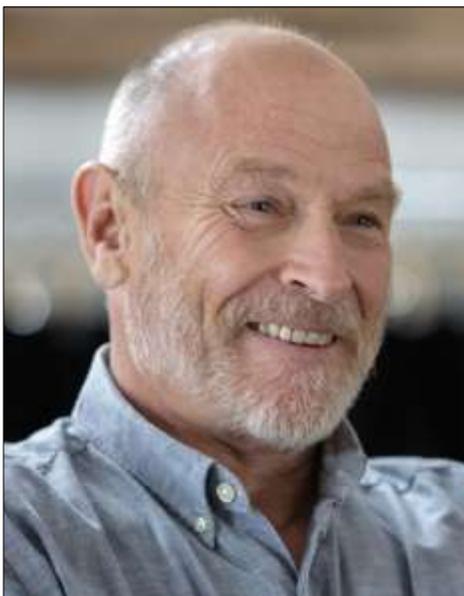
We are keeping the Prayer Spotlight On Nick Carter, upon the loss of his, and wife Lauren’s, unborn baby girl due to a recent miscarriage. We are also adding James Roday, Corbin Bernsen, and Dennis Quaid. Because we believe they’re going to do even bigger things for God than they already have. Please keep these men in prayer.

Below, a special prayer from Jenn Gotzon Chandler, co-star with Corbin Bernsen in, *My Daddy Is In Heaven*.

Hi Jesus,

We ask your covering of protection, anointing, creative excellence, and wisdom to pour upon the immaculate talents you gave Corbin. Fill him to overflowing with your Holiness, and bless him abundantly in all his work you have lead him to do as a director, producer, creative, and actor. We pray this in your name, Jesus.

Amen. Halleluiah.



Top left: Lauren, Nick, and Odin Carter. Above, left to right: Corbin Bersen, James Roday, and Dennis Quaid.

christian chatterbox

PRODUCERS, ACTORS, WRITERS

What People Are Saying About

Godly Beauty

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. As a society we, even as Christians, have gotten away from God’s standard of beauty, which consists of the inward man, the heart of the person and their character, and have conformed to the world’s standard of beauty which only focuses on the outside. How many times have we seen a person who was physically beautiful and we were amazed by the way they looked but the moment they opened their mouth and started talking, they became ‘ugly’ just based on their speech. We’ve thought, ‘How can a person be so beautiful (or handsome) sound so stupid?!’”

- Tamika Willis, actress

Filmmaker/Actor Corbin Bernsen

“I first met Corbin Bernsen more than ten years ago. He is a consummate, multi-talented, filmmaker, successfully wearing a variety of hats as actor, director, writer, and producer in Hollywood. I consider Corbin one of the pioneers in ‘faith and family’ films, and one who personally embraces Judeo-Christian values. Those values are also clearly etched in his films, including, Rust, 25 Hill, In-Lawfully Yours, Christian Mingle, and My Daddy Is In Heaven. *I consider it a privilege to call Corbin friend.*”

- Dick Rolfe, *The Dove Foundation founder*

“Corbin is a powerhouse actor with a range to kingdom come. His ability and professionalism increases the level of excellence around him. It was an honor to play Corbin’s daughter in My Daddy Is In Heaven.”

- Jenn Gotzon Chandler, actress

“Corbin has a huge heart for others. As a national board member for Salvation Army, I have seen first-hand Corbin’s selfless acts of kindness to those he comes in contact with, both on and off the screen. ‘Heavily’ is another of his many projects that he’s put not only his talent into, but his heart.”

- Kathleen Cooke, *Cooke Pictures*

Michigan Filmmaking

“I find that filmmakers have too often overlooked the beauty of Michigan. It seems as if every time a film is located in Michigan its’ central focus is on Detroit and the content of the movie is less than desirable. Artistically, Christian filmmakers need to tap into the parts of Michigan where the aesthetics match the people. The surroundings and the warm and loving people make Michigan the perfect setting for Christian films. I would recommend starting with Lost Lake. That area of Michigan basically writes the script itself.”

- Rev. Gaven Mize, *art scholar, author*

Opportunity and Spiritual Battles

“You better get real about who you are real fast. Either Satan will expose you or God will humble you. Either way, it is not a pleasant experience. If you have hidden issues you need worked out in your heart, those things will manifest and could bring you to ruin with any amount of success or publicity. But first and foremost, I would commit to fasting and praying regularly. As we are told, some things will only go through prayer AND fasting. If you are a Christian and don’t realize this is where the real war is, then you haven’t been reading or studying God’s Word. Everything starts in the spirit realm and just manifests in the flesh. The spirit realm is much more real than what we can see, because our flesh keeps us from seeing it. If we all suddenly had that wall taken down, I think many men’s hearts would fail them to see the ‘real world.’”

- Jamie Hope, *author, producer*

End Times

“I will say this: we live in a world that will crush anyone that goes against it. And there is, as I see it, a new type of tyranny arising, where it will become harder and harder to speak what one feels, or believes. So many people will choose ‘the comfort’ of having a job or keeping a sane social existence, rather than going against this new world. It is understandable.” - Diana Angelson, *actress, producer*

recognition

GOD'S SERVANTS THAT ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

For Dick Rolfe, Dove Foundation Founder

We, the people of Creative Motion, and the MI Christian Talent Network, give thanks to the Lord (Ps. 107:1), for our brother in Christ, Dick Rolfe, who has gone faithfully before us, preparing the way, as we seek to glorify our LORD Jesus Christ via media production. Since this is uncharted territory for some of us, we are especially grateful that the Good Lord has seen fit to place Dick, founder of The Dove Foundation, right here in Michigan, because his wealth of knowledge when it comes to media production is amazing.

When we asked art scholar, Rev. Gaven Mize, to analyze the Christian Mingle movie and told him Dick was friends with the producer, Corbin Bernsen, the pastor immediately connected with Dick for insights before writing the article. It was only upon asking Rev. Mize for this quote, below, that we learned the true extent of Dick's humility.

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

We "give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good!"

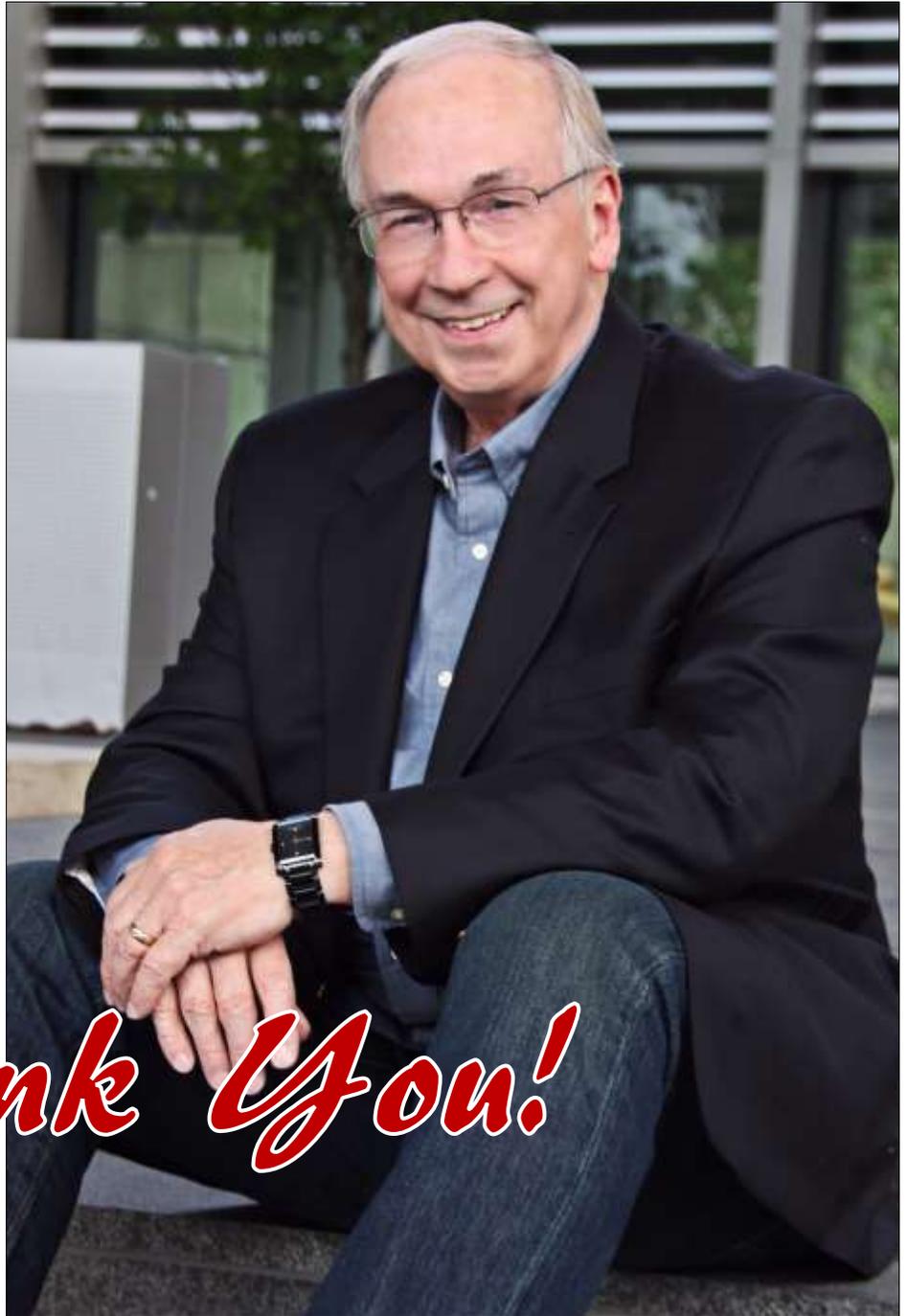
Thank You!

Below, just a few simple words from those who are grateful for Dick's lifetime of selfless, sacrificial and faithful service:

"In the short time I've known Dick his passion and love for Jesus Christ jumped right out at me. I've known of The Dove Foundation for years, yet didn't know Dick had started it. In fact, it was in the middle of a telephone conversation that I asked him

what he did for a living, and he told me he started The Dove Foundation. That's Dick as I know him: humble, hard-working, and faithful."

- Rev. Gaven Mize, author, art scholar, Creative Motion writer



“The Dove Foundation has done great work in advancing family-friendly movies and TV. Thank you Dick Rolfe!”

- *Daniel Knudsen, Crystal Creek Media*

“For decades, Dick Rolfe has been instrumental in giving families a guide to quality entertainment and media. His standards of excellence in production, storytelling, and values have had a lasting impact not only for the audience, but for the creators and producers of family films and programming.”

- *Phil Cooke Ph.D., filmmaker, media consultant, and author of “The Way Back: How Christians Blew Our Credibility and How We Get It Back”*

“Dick’s legacy is not about the ideals, products, and programs he’s created for the sake of his own personal profit. Rather, it’s about the countless lives that have been conveniently protected, and directed, because he realized, based on the principle of ‘love thy neighbor,’ noticing something, and doing nothing, is not love.”

- *Tricia Harmon, actress, producer, Creative Motion TV host*

“I am so happy to know the Dove Award founder is a Michigander like me. It has been one of my personal and business goals to have one of my films win, or even be nominated, for the category of Inspirational Film Dove Award. Last year, I had the chance to attend these awards, and be up-close-and-personal with the attendees in Nashville. It was amazing to be able to be with other Christians in the entertainment and music industry, and to acknowledge their amazing talent God has given them, to glorify Him. Dick has truly built something amazing for the Christian entertainment industry. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

- *Melissa Kerley, Generation Courage founder*

“Dick Rolfe is a man of integrity and I love his faithful commitment to supporting and celebrating the storytelling of Christians in Film and TV through his work at The Dove Foundation.”

- *Karen Covell, founder of The Hollywood Prayer Network*

“The joy of the Lord abounds within Dick Rolfe through God’s calling on him. He takes the decades



dove.org

of wisdom from learned experiences in media and provides direction, strategy, and action, to obtain the goal at hand. We within The Farmer and The Belle are affectionately appreciative to his heart, mind, and soul, and going above and beyond, to serve our cause as our media advisor.”

- *Jim and Jenn Gotzon Chandler, producers, actors*

“We’ve been blessed to have Dick consult on our feature films. Dick has a wealth of experience and a lifetime of knowledge. But more importantly, he has the heart of a servant, and conducts his business with integrity.”

- *Reuben Evans, Executive Producer, Faithlife TV/Faithlife Films*

“Dick Rolfe has made a lasting impact on the entertainment industry, in addition to positively affecting the lives of every person he meets. Dick is one of the kindest, most selfless, godly men I’ve ever had the privilege of knowing, which is why his legacy will endure well beyond his years at The Dove Foundation.”

- *Mary Elizabeth Medawar, actress, editor*

“What I love about Dick Rolfe and his company The Dove Foundation is that they are a classic example of our free market exchange constantly creating better mouse traps. On my family films I often skip the expensive MPAA rating, opting instead for the Dove stamp of approval. I find it carries more weight with my audience while costing a fraction of the money. I applaud anyone like Mr. Rolfe who proves the private sector will always continue to

grow and improve the way we do business.”

- Joel Paul Reisig, producer, *Be Your Own Hollywood*

“When I first started making family-friendly, faith-based films I quickly found out that Dick Rolfe and The Dove Foundation were the yardstick by which all quality entertainment was measured. It was, at first, nerve-racking as I waited on that first review. I had no reason to be so agitated as I’ve always found Dove easy to work with, very fair, and ethical in the way that they review films. They provide a service to creators and audiences that is unparalleled in the industry. While not having interacted with Dick on a personal level I’ve heard nothing but the best about him. Given the wonderful organization that he has created I know he must be a man of determination, vision, and great character. I thank him so much for his tireless efforts from which I, and so many others, have benefited.”

- Matthew Ulm, producer, director, editor

And I have to end this tribute on a personal note:

I’ve also never met Dick in person, but when I spoke with him on the phone, it was one of the most amazing conversations I’ve ever had. Dick told me that he was my age, 49, when he started The Dove Foundation, and with this being the year we launched the MI Christian Talent Network and Creative Motion magazine and TV, I was truly amazed to see what God did, and is still doing, in Michigan.

That conversation was mind-boggling, Dick’s breadth of information regarding the industry is immense. So, with Kevin and I launching this magazine, and the MCTN, this is no mere, “Thank You, Dick,” this is utterly sincere, because he goes before us as one well-approved by his Master (Mt. 25:21), committed to fulfilling his mission ‘til he looks up and sees his redemption draw nigh (Lk. 21:28). This endeavor is so new to Kevin and I, it is a comfort to know one so faithful goes before us.

- Kristen Collier,

Sister of the Most High God (Mk. 3:35)



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Crying Out For
Something
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