

HOLLYWOOD, HUMANISM AND HISTORY

Films have become a major culture-shaping force in society. To many people, history – and reality itself – is defined by what they see at the movies. This has become extremely dangerous, as many of the filmmakers are secular humanists with an axe to grind against Christianity. As Karl Marx declared: "*The first battlefield is the re-writing of history.*"

Robin Hood and Richard the Lion Heart

Director Ridley Scott's new film on *Robin Hood* dramatically distorts reality by trashing the character of one of history's most beloved Christian heroes, King Richard the Lion Heart. According to Ridley Scott's new blockbuster epic, King Richard was a repugnant individual with no moral standards. In Ridley Scott's version of *Robin Hood*, King Richard is guilty of looting, murder and even massacres.

Kingdom of Heaven

In this character assassination, Ridley Scott is being consistent with his previous blockbuster epic: "*Kingdom of Heaven*" which presented one of the worst distortions of history ever seen on any screen in recent years. Focusing on the fall of Jerusalem, in AD 1187, to Saladin's Muslim armies, this anti-Christian, politically correct revisionism gets everything wrong.

Scott's *Kingdom of Heaven* has its geography very wrong. Jerusalem is placed in the middle of the Sahara Desert without a tree, bush, or a blade of grass. The Mount of Olives, the Kidron Valley and the Valley of Hinnom are nowhere to be seen.

Inverting Reality

Kingdom of Heaven distorted history beyond all recognition. The Knights Templar who were actually formed to protect travelers from Muslim bandits were transformed in Scott's imaginative film to reprehensible religious fanatics, trying to shatter 'the truce' and provoke war with the peace-loving Muslims by attacking caravans. In Scott's *Kingdom of Heaven*, it is not the Muslims who teach, "it is no sin to kill an infidel" which is the pathway to Paradise, but the Christians! According to Scott, it is not the Muslims who require extra taxes (*Jizya*) of the Christians, but the Christians who required the Muslims to pay taxes in order to be allowed to pray!

Distorting History

Although Scott portrays the Muslim leader Saladin as a magnanimous, gracious, generous and merciful leader, in fact Saladin initiated the war, declaring *Jihad* against the Christians, attacking more than 50 crusader castles in two years. At the battle of Hattin on 4 July 1187, which actually took place on the shores of Lake Tiberius, but in Scott's film a waterless desert, Saladin actually had all the Christian prisoners beheaded in cold blood – not that that is shown in Scott's *Kingdom of Heaven*.

An Insult to Intelligence

Quite aside from factual errors in geography, the attributing of Islamic doctrine to Christians, and blatant distortion of history, *Kingdom of Heaven* is an insult to the intelligence of its viewers in terms of its preposterous script, such as armour that does not sink in a storm, and a blacksmith who knows more about cavalry tactics and siege warfare than the military professionals.

An Agnostic Agenda

Ridley Scott went on record as declaring that he was an agnostic. His hostility for Christianity and infatuation with Islamic *Jihadists* is somehow also squeezed into the plot of *Robin Hood*.

False Witness

It is completely false to accuse King Richard of having slaughtered Muslim women and children! King Richard was known as The Lion Hearted in his lifetime. He has been respected since the 12th Century, not only in Europe, but by his Muslim enemies as well. It is Richard the Lion Heart's crusader flag, the St. Georges Cross, which was adopted as the national flag of England. A statue of King Richard is one of only two statues within the grounds of the Palace of Westminster, outside the Houses of Commons and the House of Lords in London.

Slander

Yet, Ridley Scott would have us believe that this most exemplary and highly respected crusader, whose courage and chivalry was legendary in his lifetime, and has continued to be so to this present day, was in fact a deceitful, murderous low-life.

The triumphant return of Richard the Lion Heart to England does not happen in this film, because he dies before being able to return to England. In fact, Richard did not die on his way back from the Third Crusade, but after returning to England during a later battle in France.

Rewriting History

So why do some filmmakers, such as Ridley Scott, seek to rearrange reality and rewrite history?

The Power of the Media

There is tremendous power in art and entertainment to change lives and shape society. Through the mass communication media – newspapers, radio, films, videos and TV – ideas and values are promoted that transform culture. The media can be used to inspire great sacrifice and service. It can also influence people to commit terrible acts of cruelty and carnage.

As William Shakespeare wrote: *"The pen is mightier than the sword."*

John Locke observed: *"Whoever defines the word, defines the world."*

Dr. Ted Baehr has observed: *"Whoever controls the media, controls the culture".*

More Real than Reality!

To most young people films are more real than reality. Movies show you what to do, how to do it, when to do it, why to do it and how to feel about it! Children learn by teachers presenting information and behaviour, repeating that information and behaviour and rewarding the accurate feedback of the information and/or behaviour.

The Gramsci Strategy

Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci was a co-founder of the Italian Communist Party. Gramsci declared that to capture the Christian West one needed to *"Marxise the inner man to alter the Christian mind – to turn it into its opposite in all its details – so that it would become not merely a non-Christian mind, but an anti-Christian mind."*

This meant getting individuals to think about life's problems without reference to Christianity and the Laws of God. Gramsci advocated a quiet revolution: *"Everything must be done in the name of man's dignity and rights, and in the name of his autonomy and freedom from outside restraint – from the claims and restraints of Christianity above all."*

Capture the Culture

Gramsci's slogan was: "***Capture the culture!***"

Cultural Termites

Gramsci advocated working as a termite to erode the foundations and structures, eating out the Christian heart of Western institutions.

Political Agenda

Oliver Stone, who directed *Platoon*, *Salvador*, *JFK*, *Nixon* and *Alexander*, always inserts his political bias into his movies. Similarly, actress Jane Fonda (*Agnes of God*) and Director Costa Gravras (*Betrayed* and *The Music Box*) design their films to attack Christianity and promote Atheism, or even Communism.

The Hatred of Apostates

Martin Scorsese (Director of *The Last Temptation of Christ* and *Cape Fear*), and Paul Schrader (Scriptwriter of *The Last Temptation* and *Showgirls*), both used to be theological students. Scorsese is an apostate whose intense hatred for Christianity is vented in his vile films. But, of course, most films aren't that blatant. Most scriptwriters, directors and actors don't have such an obsessive anti-Christian axe to grind. Most are far more subtle, but they still have a message.

Pocahontas

In a blatant distortion of history, Disney twisted the story of *Pocahontas* to promote new age paganism. In fact, the main reason Pocahontas is famous, is because she was the first Indian convert to Christianity to be baptised in North America. Not that anyone seeing the Disney films on *Pocahontas* would realise that.

Avatar

One of the most expensive films in history, *Avatar*, blatantly promotes new age paganism and pantheism.

The Green Zone

The Green Zone manages to rewrite history to make the United States government and military the villain in the Gulf war with Iraq.

Invictus

Invictus whitewashes the African National Congress (ANC), ignoring their terrorist campaign that led to power, and the corruption that has followed it. It also idolizes Nelson Mandela as a most exemplary statesman, without referring to his role in violent revolution, or in pushing through the legalisation of abortion-on-demand in South Africa. It must also be the first time in history that a president has been accredited with a sports team's victory on the field.

Only the Facts Have Been Changed

Unfortunately, as most people read very little, and are generally ignorant of their history, films that claim to be a true story can deceive large sections of the population. When these films have a political agenda then the consequences can be even more serious.

The Media is Shaping the Culture

As Dr. Ted Baehr of Movieguide observed after the recent American presidential elections: The media shapes the culture and the culture chooses the president.

Targets for Revolution

Marxists have long taught that there are five culture-carrying, and culture-shaping, institutions that must be infiltrated for any revolution to succeed. These they identify as: 1. The educational institutions, 2. The news media, 3. The entertainment industry, 4. Religious institutions, 5. Political institutions.

Revolutionary Strategy

Of these, of course, the educational institutions are the most foundational, as the philosophy of the schools in this generation will become the philosophy of government in the next generation. And when people's knowledge of current affairs is also dominated by secular humanists in the news media, and their entertainment industry has distorted their understanding of history and contemporary issues, then inevitably the religious and political institutions fall into the hands of those who control the media.

When Entertainment Becomes Exploitation

As few people read history books and most depend entirely on Hollywood films for their understanding of the past, the potential for exploitation is enormous. *Gandhi*, *Malcolm X*, *Havana*, *The Power of One*, *Cry Freedom*, *Platoon*, *Born on the 4th of July*, *Shootdown*, and

many others, are examples of selective focus, distortion and discredited falsehood dressed up as "This is a true story". Yes, only the facts have been changed to protect the guilty, and to vilify their victims.

The Unmentionable Omissions

Why have major films never been made of the dramatic life stories of great Christian heroes such as Dr. David Livingstone, Henry Morton Stanley, Adoniram Judson, Ulrich Zwingli, on great events such as the Reformation, on the persecution of Christians behind the Iron Curtain and in the Soviet Gulag, or of the persecution of Christians in Red China and the Middle East?

Capturing Hearts and Minds

The media elite have constructed most prominent and entertaining pulpits of celluloid and electronics to capture the hearts and minds of the audience. And they have redefined the rules of the game from a Biblical to a humanistic basis.

The Danger of Distortion

The Bible has a great deal to say about our vulnerability to influence and the dangers of an incomplete portrayal of reality. Acts 19:29-34 describes a riot in Ephesus in which the rioters had no real idea of why they were rioting. They had been whipped up to hysteria by an inaccurate report. In Genesis 3 the serpent persuaded Eve to accept a version of reality that just wasn't true. But the persuasive manner in which the half-truth was presented, led Eve to make a disastrous decision. When Ananias and Sapphira lied before the Church, it resulted in death (Acts 5:1-11). In the same way Gehazi's deception of Naaman brought a terrible judgment upon himself (2 Kings 5). Half-truths and incomplete truths are enemies of the truth.

So what is the solution?

1. It is important that we know our history from a balanced and Biblical perspective. The Reformation Society has produced many audio lectures and PowerPoints on major historical events and characters. History books such as: *Slavery, Terrorism and Islam – The Historical Roots and Contemporary Threat*; *The Greatest Century of Reformation*; and *The Greatest Century of Missions* help provide an important Christian understanding of vital events in history. Visit www.reformationSA.org. **"Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them."** Ephesians 5:11

2. Read up on the Biblical and contemporary issues so that you can recognise deception in the media. Visit www.movieguide.org for reviews of current films from a Christian perspective. Subscribe to Movieguide 2510-G, Las Posas Road 502, Camarillo, California 93010 USA. You can also access some of our own film reviews, most from a historical point-of-view, on www.frontline.org.za and www.christianaction.org.za **"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world."** Colossians 2:8

3. Obtain video documentaries that will help you alert your family, friends and congregation to the deceptions and dangers in many films. e.g.: *Death by Entertainment*, *Learn to Discern*, *Hollywood vs. Religion*, *Hollywood be Thy Name*, etc. **"They are to teach My people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean."** Ezekiel 44:23

4. Refuse to waste your time and money on immoral, anti-Christian films, but rather choose to support good quality family films that honour God such as: *Ben Hur*, *The Ten Commandments*, *The Robe*, *Chariots of Fire*, *The Prince of Egypt*, *Fireproof*, etc.

"Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things." Philippians 4:8

5. Be selective in your viewing choices. Take control over what is filling and forming your mind. Rediscover the joy of reading great books. Set proper priorities. Relegate films and videos to a subordinate position – below exercise, hiking, worship, fellowship, evangelism and service. **"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will."** Romans 12:2

6. Pray for wisdom (James 1:5) and discernment (Proverbs 3:21). Learn to think critically. Discuss the film, its characters and message in the light of the Bible.

Ask: Who is the hero? Who is the villain? What is the basic message of this film? How is the family portrayed? How is the church portrayed? How is love portrayed? How true is this film to history? How is the conflict resolved in this film? What is the worldview of the film? Would you

be embarrassed to sit through the film with your parents/your children/with the Lord Jesus?

What would you have done differently if you were the main character in the story? **"So give your servant a discerning heart to distinguish between right and wrong ..."** 1 Kings 3:8

7. Speak up for moral, God-honouring entertainment and speak out against blasphemous, degrading and exploitative productions. Write to, or phone, producers of TV programmes and scriptwriters, directors and producers of films (Movieguide regularly publishes these details with their film reviews). Be sure to praise the good as well as to protest against the bad. **"Who will rise up for Me against the wicked? Who will take a stand for Me against evildoers?"** Psalm 94:16

Get informed. Be discerning. Every time you purchase a cinema ticket, rent or buy a DVD, you are casting a vote. Be sure that you only invest in family-friendly and God-honouring films.

"Be very careful then how you live – not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16

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