

**General Topics :: Can the truth of God's Word be communicated through visual medium?****Can the truth of God's Word be communicated through visual medium?, on: 2013/3/6 8:42**

In looking at the thread regarding the Bible series I was prompted to pose this question. Can the truth of God Word, the Scriptures if you will, be communicated through venues such as movies?

Your thoughts, please.

Bearmaster.

**Re: Can the truth of God's Word be communicated through visual medium? - posted by DEADn (), on: 2013/3/6 8:52**

Why not? Some people learn through reading while others learning through visual and still others learn through both.

Look at the Jesus movie shown across the world.

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2013/3/6 9:07**

I agree with DEADn there are many wonderful movies that have spoken truth and not watered it down at all that can help us grow in CHRIST. This recent adaptation of the Bible series itself just did not really work for me but as I said in another thread if someone should watch it and dig deeper into the WORD then it is good. I think we have to be careful in using broad strokes and applying them to such a topic. Just because one production falls short does not mean all series/movies are not done well. One such movie that I recommend is: The Visual Bible: The Gospel of John. This movie I believe was done very well and really spoke to me.

There are several movies that GOD has used in my life to speak to me and to open my eyes to areas of my life that are not of HIM.

These are just my thought and what GOD has used in my life :)

God bless  
maryjane

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2013/3/6 9:54**

Visual art has been used to convey biblical truth and concepts since the earliest days of the church.

Nevertheless, from the beginning right up to the present day, many Christian leaders have denounced theater (and modern film).

<http://immoderate.wordpress.com/2006/01/23/what-the-early-church-thought-about-movies/>

<http://www.biblebb.com/files/tozermovie.htm>

Personally, I think vibrant debate over the edifying value of any particular Christian artistic expression is a good practice. We shouldn't be passive receivers, but engage head on what ever we are presented.

Having said that, overall I enjoyed watching the program with my college age son. In the very least, the History Channel didn't assail me the obligatory parade of liberal pinheads explaining away the bible. I saw the brief and uneven story treatment as being akin to the tradition of bible murals, wherein large expanses of biblical time are depicted through a series of vignettted scenes placed sequentially right next to each other on a long wall. Like any art, it took license with it's subject matter. In 2000 years, we've probably yet to see that one painting or movie that shows us who the historical Jesus or Christian really looked like or behaved... unless the Shroud of Turin is an authentic ancient polaroid. (Wouldn't that be remarkable!?)

Blessings,

MC

**Re: Can the truth of God's Word be communicated through visual medium?, on: 2013/3/6 9:56**

Some people are naturally very observant and see much more than most people see. Probably even within those who are "visually" oriented there are sometimes profound differences. It is not without good reason that western societies have degenerated almost parallel with visual entertainment. In fact the power of observation is so real that there is a whole occult school devoted to just that subject, of being able to gain knowledge through the eyes. We know that the eyes and the mouth are the two physical instruments which we are either told to guard against or else if necessary, in the case of the eyes to rip out in preference to them becoming a cause of stumbling ones self and others even unto the point of hell. The word carousing carries with it both sides of what the eyes can mean if they are not guarded and do not come under the control of a renewed conscience. To carouse is to go about "looking" as well as to be seen. It is a snare on the one hand (being seen) and a trap on the other, (seeing). I don't doubt this will be easily dismissed but I thought I would just say it.

I have always and will continue to reject completely out of hand all efforts to communicate the Gospel by visual means. That's not to say that I deny God's sovereignty to use whatever means He chooses to use to communicate the Gospel unto being born again. For spiritual growth however, I even deny that God would use such a means to teach, given that the one who has the Holy Spirit already has the only true teacher. Of course to the innocent all things are innocent. But then the innocent do not need a teacher.

**Re: - posted by SkepticGuy, on: 2013/3/6 10:10**

Quote:

-----In the very least, the History Channel didn't assail me the obligatory parade of liberal pinheads explaining away the bible.  
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yes! this was indeed a breath of fresh air! those shows on history will be coming soon though, as they always do at east er time. dont be surprised if the history channel adds sum more 'bible expose' shows to the roster after the bible series ends; all in the name of 'equal time' and 'fairness' of course.

**Re: :0) - posted by dohzman (), on: 2013/3/6 10:35**

Hi Mike how's it going?

I like christian expression in all its forms, including media or in movies etc..."Facing Your Giants" (I think that was the name of it?) and "Fire Proof", were movies that were relevant to our present culture and had a strong christian witness and also presented the gospel, they did as Proverbs instructs by making knowledge acceptable to the hearer. My real only point with the "Bible" is that I believe they did not strive for excellence in the making of it. I do not even mind them taking liberties, they just did it poorly. Maybe it was done well and destroyed in editing, who knows? They obscured the entire reason Sodom had to be destroyed and covered it with a cloak of vagueness, no doubt the current social condition and pressures played a part in that. What I saw was kinda like cheap tricks to entertain through a difficult subject matter without offending anyone. Can't comment beyond this because I fell asleep:/. The rest of it may have been better.

**Re: Can the truth of God's Word be communicated through visual medium? - posted by Lkid, on: 2013/3/6 14:45**

Unfortunately i think the best it produces is something along the lines of "The Message". There is too much interpretation done at the production level so that what you get isn't truth but an interpretation of the truth. I agree that some are better than others, I liked the Gospel of John and The Nativity Story, and they can be used in evangelism and edification, but when it comes down to it, God gave people, filled with the Holy Spirit, as the medium by which to convey truth. For those who can't read, let someone speak it to them, for those who can but don't 'learn best that way', well the Holy Spirit is the Helper we need.

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**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2013/3/6 14:54**

Compton mentioned the shroud of turin... i must say the history channel program on the shroud called "The face of Jesus" was absolutely fascinating. I was always a strong shroud doubter but after seeing that now i am not so sure.

It was first on a couple of years ago but they will probably replay it running up to Easter. I highly recommend it.

**Re: Can the truth of God's Word be communicated through visual medium? - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2013/3/6 14:56**

Well i will share a personal testimony, when i just became a christian, a friend of mine, the only christian influence i grew up with through his parents, watched a christian movie. Now he had grown up with christian parents and in time of need God used them to convert me to some measure.

But he was yet unconverted, but we watched this movie and as we where watching and there was a scene where one of the cast where converted and the Lord did something inside the movie. And he was so touched, i guess by my conversion and change and the movie he sais "everything" my parents told me for 20+ years just hit me like truck in that one scene.

Not long after he repented and placed his trust in the Lord. and it was a "mainstream" christian movie i today do not hold maybe all the "theological" views of , but it was the instrument the Lord used as a final instrument or the last drop that made the cup overflow....

So i am convinced god may use any means to bring a sinner to repentance, even the visual media.

**Re: Can the truth of God's Word be communicated through visual medium? - posted by Sree (), on: 2013/3/6 15:16**

There is nothing wrong in visuals. Visualizing things has a very powerful influence in human mind. That is why Jesus himself compared Kingdom of God to familiar things like vineyard and farmland. He also told stories and parables to bring a picture of God's kingdom into our mind. I personally admire all the illustrations used by Jesus and use illustrations whenever I get a chance to share God's word. Even in reading Bible, I try to visualize what the scripture actually says.

Regarding movies we have to be very careful when bringing a picture about a biblical incident into the minds of people. There is a high probability of portraying a wrong picture. Even in our teachings when we use illustrations we can easily mislead people. God can still use these movies to reach people. I believe movies like Fireproof has a very good message in US where Divorce is very common even among Christians. God can use even imperfect things for his purpose. The Church in which I accepted Christ is a mega Church with some wrong teachings and beliefs. But God still used it for my conversion.

Hence I would caution those interested in using Visual media to serve God to be extra cautious as the pictures that you portray has a powerful impact. Also I would advice born again believers to avoid them if possible. Because a born again believer no longer requires an emotional stirrup but a spiritual one. I thoroughly believe that the entire entertainment industry is ruled by Satan.

**Re: - posted by DEADn (), on: 2013/3/6 16:10**

Although it isn't in your face Gospel the movie 'Les Miserables' provides a bit of Gospel edge. Very good storyline when it is broken down.

Agree?

John

**Re: My Experience, on: 2013/3/6 17:27**

I have seen the Jesus video put out by Campus Crusade. This video is based on the Gospel of Luke. As far as I am aware it has probably done more to bring people into a saving knowledge of Christ outside the medium of Scripture itself.

I have watched the Book of Acts video series set to the NIV. The script is straight from the NIV83 translation. The scenes are well done and filmed on location. Characters are dressed in the attire of that time period. Very well done. The Gospel of Matthew is done the same way. I have yet to see it. (I realize many in the forum object to the NIV. But the video series in Acts is excellent)

Though taking some dramatic liberties my favorite Biblical movie of all times is The Ten Commandments with Charlton Heston. Great movie to watch for redemptive entertainment.

Interestingly enough some of the best Old Testament movies I have seen have come off of Ted Turner's network. For someone opposed to biblical truth the movies conveyed the biblical stories pretty accurately.

Simply my thoughts on some movies and videos I have seen.

Bearmaster.

**Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2013/3/6 20:30**

I was blessed by the Visual Bible, Matthew. Thought it was very well done and word for word NIV version. I thought it was a great way to couple visual art with scripture. I often recall passages because the visual representation caused me to more easily memorize them.

**Re: Visual Artists in the Church - posted by Compton (), on: 2013/3/7 0:05**

It would be quite difficult to exclude the visual from our understanding of scripture. As Sree pointed out, the bible is rich in imagery, if only mental imagery.

We acknowledge that our heart desires an intimate inward connection to God wherein 'deep calls unto deep.' Perhaps it is this longing that causes to feel that our senses, such as eyesight, must be bypassed if we are to truly understand spiritual realities. At least, this is my own reflections on this topic over the years; to find evidence of an inward life in Christ that bypasses the visual, audible and tactile.

My conclusion to this issue is that there is indeed evidence of such a life, but even such first hand evidence cannot in turn be expressed or shared with the world without still resorting to sensory communication, or more specifically, pictures and film and print.

This is why for many of us as infants and toddlers, some of our first understanding of the scriptures was given to us in the form of children's picture books. It is also why art for centuries has been used to not only teach the illiterate, but also the literate who might not grasp the meaning of a written text otherwise. This observation of the role of the visual is not meant as a defense of "bad art", or to defend the current History Channel program per se, but only to point out that visual expressions of scripture in general can be important tools for Christian edification and education.

On a related topic, I think part of our difficulty with the arts is due to the 20th century's modernist separation from meaning and morality. After World War 2, art was taken over by modernist movements whose aim was to overturn every convention of western society, including capitalism and Christianity. Of course by the late 1970's this overturning of convention itself became a convention, (and its own capitalist market), at which time modern art became mostly pretentious and ridiculous.

I believe that the current pseudo-intellectualism of modern fine "art", combined with its banal anti-christian imperative, is the main reason why so many Christians, including myself, see absolutely no redeeming value in it. Indeed, "art" itself sounds suspiciously close to "artifice," which implies yet another clever fleshly imitation of genuine spiritual reality in the Church.

However, it is all too tempting to overgeneralize with contempt, rather than study a matter more closely in order to parse

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with understanding. In particular, I feel that the allergic reaction to fine art among us conservative evangelicals, is not only due to our cultural ties to the church, but also to our cultural ties to middle class consumerism, wherein things are measured by their commercial profitability.

As for spiritual profitability, we need only look to the past centuries to see examples when art was used with powerful effect to help in the formation of Christian conscience and world view. And there are many, many contemporary Christian artists whose work is first rate and edifying, although they will never be a part of the fashionable and lucrative high-brow gallery world that is still playing at "modern art." In fact, the modern art world itself has become a kind of filter to catch vanity and pretense, so that sincere artists with integrity can work in relative obscurity and privacy. This is especially true for artists who are Christians.

I mention this, because in all honesty, I don't think many of us realize how alienating conservative evangelical culture can be towards brothers and sisters who are fine artists. It is one thing to denounce pagan fine art, but quite unnecessary to dispose of fine art altogether, or devalue Christian artists as impractical or not useful to the kingdom of God.

These are just some of my thoughts in response to Bearmester's original question. I realize I've expanded the scope of this thread considerably.

Blessings,

MC