Like

Crossing*Currents*
Crosswinds Foundation Newsletter

Vol. 6:1 February 28, 2013

Invest In Our Work

Donate

In This Issue

Prime Time Bible
Believe Around the Bible

Quick Links

Contact Us
Archive (Past Issues)
More About Us
Meet Our Staff

Visit Us Online

Crosswinds Foundation
FaithFriend Council
CrossWorth Research
Crossing Arts
CrossCounsels

Social Media

Like us on Facebook

Visit our blog

View our videos on YouTube

Bob Waldrep
Find me on Facebook
Follow me on twitter

Linwood Bragan
Like me on Facebook

Dwight Martin
Find me on Facebook
Follow me on twitter

Don Malin
Find me on Facebook
Follow me on twitter

Ron Carter
Find me on Facebook

Nelu Filip
Follow me on twitter

On March 3, the History Channel will air the first of a ten part miniseries based on the Bible. Generally, when the History Channel or National Geo Channel, and the like air such "documentaries" they are based on some new finding, revelation, or manuscript that actually is meant to bring the biblical account into question. But, not so with this series; or, so say the producers.

Should Christians then have any concerns? Of course, that remains to be seen. However, there are some issues that we do need to be aware of, even before watching the series, that may impact the end product. In this month's issue we try to look at some of these concerns, as well as, some of the positives that the producers are presenting.

When the series is over, we'll take a look back at it and see how it all panned out. Until then we'll grab a bag of popcorn and settle in and hope for the best from what could be a wonderful new resource. Let's hope that proves to be the case, despite any of the concerns we might have going into it.

On another note, this month we celebrate our 5th Anniversary as an organization. Thanks to all of you who have supported us over the years and helped us to get this far. As we celebrate this year, watch for some exciting new growth areas that we'll be sharing with you as the year unfolds.

I'll leave you with a hint regarding one such area. This issue we are talking about video production. In a few weeks we'll be talking about a new video being produced by.... I'll let you know the answer very soon, but the initials are CFFC.

See You at the Movies,

Bob Waldrep

If you would like to help us in our mission, we pledge to
1.
use your gifts wisely and effectively in helping others.

To give by credit card using our secure online giving, just click the "Donate" button at the top of the column to your left.

To give by check, make your donation payable to Crosswinds and mail to:

Crosswinds Foundation
P.O Box 12143
Birmingham, AL 35202

The Bible Comes to Prime Time By Bob Waldrep

On Sunday, 3-3-13, the Bible will be featured on the History Channel as a "prime time" 10-part mini-series simply titled, "*The Bible*". Though not the first time the History Channel has aired programming related to the Bible, the producers promise this one will be different. For, unlike past programs, they have said *The Bible* is not intended to approach the Bible as an "investigation" or "mystery" as the network has done in past documentaries; but, rather to be a more straightforward interpretation. Hopefully, by straightforward they mean accurate.

I have high hopes that it will be an accurate representation, and after watching the previews, I am actually looking forward to watching this series. However, the viewer should keep in mind it is a docudrama, which means that "artistic" liberties will surely be taken in the telling of the story. In fairness, that is not unusual in historical documentaries and should not be a reason for Christians to become overly alarmed. Unfortunately, how far they go with these liberties cannot be determined until after we have had a chance to view the broadcast.

So, should we be wary? Perhaps, but there are some, seemingly, positive assurances being given that it is not only done well, but is also fairly accurate - at least by Hollywood standards. Producer, Mark Burnett - a very successful television producer of such shows as *Survivor*, *The Voice*, *Celebrity Apprentice*, and *Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader*, to name a few - is saying all the right things on the front end.

He points out their primary reference is the New International Version of the Bible, which he goes on to say is the version preferred by Evangelical leaders. In addition, they established a Board of Advisors made up of Biblical Scholars who provided their insight and helped to assure accuracy. A point Burnett also includes is that they took on this project to provide updated versions of classic older films which dealt with Bible stories, such as the Ten Commandments, but can no longer match the special effects generated in film today. [HuffPosted Post]

In interviews, he and his wife and co-producer, Roma Downey (who starred in *Touched By An Angel* and plays Mary in the series) have been consistent in mentioning these details, driving home the point that they want to get it right, while insisting it must also have dramatic appeal and the special effects available today through CGI and other film advances. Both say they grew up with the Scriptures and the Bible is an important to them and they want to pass that along. Recognizing current data indicates fewer people are reading the Bible, they maintain it is their goal to make it more appealing and meaningful to a new generation of readers.

[To help with this goal a website was developed to help Pastors and Churches utilize *The Bible* series in their ministry. [The Bible Outreach] If you click on the embedded link: "Watch a video from Mark and Roma" you can see a brief clip of them talking about their motivation and hopes for the film.]

Burnett and Downey also claim that they have become deeply religious and this has, in part, led to their interest in this series on the Bible. They have also expressed that they attend Church regularly. *Parade Magazine* has a weekly feature titled "Sunday With..." which asks celebrities to share information about their personal lives, including what they do on Sundays. In the February 24, 2013 issue, Burnett and Downey stated that going to Church is part of their family's Sunday activities.

Everything sounds good thus far. The producers claim to be committed to the Scriptures, deeply religious and active Church attenders, and to be motivated by a desire to share Jesus through this series. Many faith claims, and they produced from a translation of the Bible that is widely accepted in the Church and they have enlisted the assistance of a panel of Biblical scholars to serve as Advisors to ensure accuracy.

Catholic, Presbyterian, New Age, or Word Faith?

Even with all these assurances, there are a few things I believe we need to keep in mind as we view *The Bible*. Let's begin with the producers being deeply religious and committed to the Scriptures. Burnett grew up in England, the son of a Roman Catholic father and Presbyterian mother. Downey is from Ireland and was raised, and claims to still be, a devout Roman Catholic. Regarding Church attendance, she attends Mass at Our Lady of Malibu.

However, while discussing her Catholic faith in a video interview with the Washington Post, she makes some interesting comments about her view of God, stating, "I see God in everyone and in everything. [I have heard there are] two points of view - there is no God, or there is only God; and for me there is only God." [Watch the Interview] Such a view is much more in line with New Age theology than with a biblical view of God.

Perhaps she gained this new view of God from her association with her *Touched By an Angel* costar, Della Reese, who pastors a New Age Church. [Read Crosswinds Took Why Della on Reese] When Burnett and Downey were married, Reese was the Minister which they chose to officiate the wedding.

I think, without question, Reese has had an influence over Downey's view of God, and possibly that of Burnett, as well. However, even if she hasn't, Downey definitely has been exposed to the New Age having earned a degree in spiritual psychology from the University of Santa Monica (USM). [Charisma]

Last one think this is a fully accredited four-year university with degrees in several schools; it is not. USM only offers an advance degree in "Spiritual Psycology". If there is any question as to whether this is tied into New Age thought one only has to look to the founder of USM, Roger Delano Hinkins, who goes by the name, John-Roger. Hinkins, or John-Roger, is a prominent New Age author and teacher.

Compounding this problem, Downey and Burnett also have become close friends with televangelist Joel Osteen who is a popular Word-Faith television preacher. [Read our article on Osteen] Perhaps, Osteen's influence on Burnett, has led to some of his more recent claims regarding the Holy Spirit and Jesus literally hugging him. Such views line up more with a Word-Faith theology such as Osteen's than that of his Catholic father and Presbyterian mother. [Outreach Magazine]

Burnett's and Downey's friendship with Osteen is such that they have attended his Church and have been guests in his home. Burnett even signed on to do a reality television show with Osteen in 2012. [Wall Street Journal]

This friendship also led to Osteen being one of the Advisors on *The Bible* series. Which presents another problem; the closest representative this Board has to an evangelical and a Bible scholar is Southern Baptist, Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in California. [Click to see a full listing of Advisors]

Bottom line, I think it safe to say that even if Burnett and Downey are Christians, they have been influenced by the New Age Movement and, on some level, exposed to Word-Faith teaching. For this reason Christians should watch this series with discernment, but holding out hope that - whatever they really believe - they truly do seek to tell the Bible story without imposing any theological they do, this could be a wonderful tool for helping to raise a new interest in the Bible.

However, no matter which way it goes, rather than complaining about it, let's use it as an opportunity to start a conversation about the Bible and about Christ. If people watch it, they'll be open to talk about it. Let's be ready to seize the moment to connect in culture and share with those around us, our hope in Christ.

Watch The Bible Trailer

Culture Tracks

"Cultural Trends in America"

American's Beliefs About the Bible

37% say they read the Bible (or other Holy Books) at least once a week
45% seldom, or never, read Scripture outside religious services
44% of those polled believe the Bible, the Koran, and the Book of Mormon are different expressions of the same spiritual truth.
21% believe the Bible is comprised of fables;
32% believe it is the actual Word of God
83% of Christian adults believe the Bible is totally accurate in all its teachings
62% of Christian teens believe the Bible is totally accurate in all its teachings

Data compiled from various polling sources from 2000 to 2012

Back Issues

Back Issues of CrossingCurrents are archived on our website for your convenience.

CrossingCurrents Archives

Please let us know if you have any questions or if we might be of assistance to you. If you would like an information packet on a particular subject or issue just send us an email, identifying your request, to:

info@crosswindsfoundation.org

CROSSWINDS
A Foundation for Faith and Culture

Web2PDF
converted by Web2PDFConvert.com