

Spiritual Depth in Hollywood Films

A Published Letter to *Calendar Letters*, in the *Los Angeles Times*

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Thank you for Kristine McKenna's insightful article lamenting the lack of spiritual depth in all-too-many Hollywood films.

Case in point: The media are currently falling all over themselves promoting the film version of the sanitized life story of a "stern" man who has made a career out of being mean-spirited, foul-mouthed, and utterly self-absorbed.

But I can tell you from personal experience—not as some sort of religious zealot but simply as a God-fearing man—that you will find almost no interest in Hollywood for a screenplay adapting verbatim the miraculous life story of a lowly man, worshiped by a billion people as no less than the son of God, who befriended the wretched, condemned the corrupt, and ultimately gave his life so that we might live forever.

Of course, some would argue, "The former life story sold several million books in a single year." But I would have to reply, "The latter life story sold and continues to sell 100 million copies every single year."

It isn't that there isn't a sizable audience longing for a good production of a divine story (How many tens of millions are *Touched by an Angel* week in, week out?) or that Hollywood doesn't

have the technology, or the power, or even the finesse to tackle the big questions; but apparently we just lack the courage.

And we are all the poorer.

Note: Within a few years, there were several made-for-TV productions on the life of Christ, at least two of which did fairly well. I'm still waiting for a more dramatic, theatrical version (I indeed did write a screenplay, adapted directly from the Gospels), to join the dozens that have already been made, around the world, since the dawn of the cinema. However, any version that demonizes the Jews, instead of demonstrates that all human beings have good and evil within themselves, not only misses the point of the Gospels, that Christ died for all our sins, but also contradicts the commandment to "Love thy neighbor": "Holier than thou" is not a truly holy attitude.