

HOLLYWOOD'S HOLY HEAVYWEIGHTS: CHRISTIAN CULTURE-MAKERS SPEAK OUT

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – Nov. 29, 2005 – It's not Kabbalah or Scientology, but Christianity that's making a splash in Hollywood these days. Christians are behind some of the biggest movies and TV shows out there – productions like *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*, *Joan of Arcadia*, *Fantastic 4*, *X-Men* and *That '70s Show*.

Now, for the first time, these major Hollywood influencers are talking about what it's like having faith in Hollywood, in the new book *BEHIND THE SCREEN: HOLLYWOOD INSIDERS ON FAITH, FILM, & CULTURE*, (November 2005, \$14.99, Baker Books, 224 pgs). *BEHIND THE SCREEN* is a collection of essays by eighteen Hollywood insiders -- screenwriters, directors, and producers -- including:

- Ralph Winter: Executive producer of *Fantastic Four*, *X-Men* and *I, Robot*
- Scott Derrickson: Director and co-writer of *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*
- Dean Batali: Executive producer of *That '70s Show*. Writer for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*
- Barbara Hall: Executive producer of *Joan of Arcadia*, *Judging Amy*, *Chicago Hope*. Writer for *Northern Exposure* and *Moonlighting*
- Ron Austin: Writer for the original *Mission: Impossible*, *Charlie's Angels* and *Matlock*
- Thom Parham: Writer for *JAG* and *Touched by an Angel*.

BEHIND THE SCREEN is edited by Spencer Lewerenz, a Hollywood writer and editor, and Barbara Nicolosi, a former nun and founder of Act One, an organization whose mission is to train Christians to work in mainstream TV and film (www.actoneprogram.com). In their introduction, Lewerenz and Nicolosi write about how important it is that Christians embrace the media: "How ironic that Christians, who were called to be examples of love for the world, have come to represent all that is cold and hateful in the popular imagination. In pushing away secular Hollywood, we have turned our backs on the very people Christ called us to minister to."

PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY gives *BEHIND THE SCREEN* a "starred review," saying: "This thought-provoking collection of essays on Hollywood features contributions by Christian writers for both film and television. Refreshingly enough, the book's tone is almost completely non-defensive; these authors are culture-makers who want to seamlessly integrate their beliefs with their work and art."

Stephen Rees of *LIBRARY JOURNAL* says: "This book puts a refreshingly positive spin on a rarely covered topic."

Barbara Nicolosi, Spencer Lewerenz, and several of the contributors to *BEHIND THE SCREEN* are available for interview. Please contact Ben Laurro at Pure Publicity: (818) 753-4056 or Purepublicity@aol.com

Suggested questions for BEHIND THE SCREEN contributors:

1. Why have Christians historically avoided working in the entertainment industry?
2. Why are an increasing number of them now working in Hollywood?
3. Is it important for Christians to embrace Hollywood entertainment rather than distance themselves from it? If so, why?
4. Is it important for Christians to be in Hollywood? Why?
5. Are Christians trying to “take over” Hollywood?
6. Is Hollywood simply a “new pulpit” for Christians? Or is there some other reason Christians might work here?
7. You say Hollywood needs more “servants.” What do you mean by that?
8. What do you think of “Christian” movies like Left Behind and Omega Code? Do you want more entertainment with overt Christian subject matter?
9. What kind of television and film projects do you support/wish to see more of?
10. The book’s contributors have worked on That 70s Show and Urban Legends, TV shows and movies most Christians would find morally objectionable. How would these authors reconcile their beliefs with their jobs?
11. What do you mean by “Heathens Make the Best Christian Films”?
12. Name some film titles that every Christian should see?
13. Should religious audiences support a film like Chronicles of Narnia?
14. Has there been an increased interest in spiritual themes in film and television? If so, why?
15. What are some of the contributors and what are their topics in Behind the Screen?
16. Is this the first time Christians in Hollywood have written about how their faith relates to their jobs in the industry?
17. What is your message to aspiring screenwriters, producers or directors?
18. What is the Act One organization? Who are some of the members and what is its purpose?
19. How can the audience get in touch with you or Act One?

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