

Many of us are thrilled to find a movie that is not offensive. But a film being released this week is not only “not offensive” — its positively redemptive. I’ll explain, next on BreakPoint.

Taking It to the Streets:  
“Mercy Streets” & Christian Films

Most “critically acclaimed” films these days are on the cultural cutting-edge, promoting a secular worldview. By contrast, films with explicitly Christian themes often lack cinematic quality. It’s about time someone did something about that.

Well, someone has. Providence Entertainment, in concert with Signal Hill Pictures, is trying to escape the Christian filmmaking ghetto, and their new film, *Mercy Streets*, is a great illustration of bringing a Christian worldview to culture.

*Mercy Streets* begins with John, the main character, leaving prison. The guard escorting him snorts, “You’ll be back!” — and when John’s partner in crime, named Rome, drives up with a dead body in the trunk, there’s little doubt that he will.

But prison made an impression on John and he wants to “go legit.” But that takes money, and John agrees to join Rome for one last scheme.

The plot thickens when John tries to double-cross Rome. As he tries to escape, John has nowhere to turn. Until, that is, he finds his long lost twin brother, Jeremiah, who thought John was killed in an accident when they were kids.

Well, you can see where this is headed. Rome grabs Jeremiah by mistake. When he discovers that he has the wrong brother, he coerces Jeremiah into helping him by threatening to frame his brother for murder. John, meanwhile, impersonates Jeremiah, who is about to be ordained an Episcopal priest.

We discover that both brothers have a lot to learn about forgiveness and redemption, and *Mercy Streets* makes these lessons clear.

So is there a market for films like *Mercy Streets*? You bet there is. In 1999, I told you about another film produced by Providence, *The Joyriders*, that enjoyed great success in theaters. Another of their films, *The Omega Code*, was a nationwide hit.

But these films are exceptions to the rule. The gospel is the “Greatest Story Ever Told,” but Christian films usually do a poor job of telling it. And that’s why *Mercy Streets* is important. It isn’t just a movie with a Christian message. It has a talented cast, a good plot, and rich characterization. The soundtrack, featuring hip artists like Moby, is cool and current, reinforcing the redemptive storyline.

*Mercy Streets* follows in the footsteps of storytellers like C.S. Lewis, Dorothy Sayers, Flannery O’Connor, and John Grisham. Lewis once wrote that we need, not more Christian writers, but more good writers who are Christians. That’s because, no matter how good the ideas are, if they’re told poorly, nobody will want to hear them.

But we don't need just a handful of films like *Mercy Streets* – we need hundreds. And we don't just need films. We need people who can bring the richness of the Christian worldview to every sphere — every nook and cranny of the culture.

This is especially important when it comes to story-telling, because stories capture people's imaginations. And that's why we have to learn to tell our story so that all Americans can hear it.

Films like *Mercy Streets* take great strides in making this happen. If we want to bring God's mercy to America's streets, then what better place to begin than the local movie theaters?

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