



# NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

Volume 191 • April 2009

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| The Power of Story      | 1 |
| Movies in Dark Times    | 2 |
| Light in the Film World | 2 |
| An Opportunity to Share | 3 |
| Closing Thoughts        | 4 |

## Dear Friends,

*"What is needed are not good Christian writers, but good writers who are Christians." (paraphrased) C.S. Lewis*

*.... The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. Luke 16:8b*

*I am sending you as sheep among wolves. So be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Matthew 10:16*

*Occupy until I come. Luke 19:13*

In the face of rising evil, increasing need, and hunger for God's word, should we spend our efforts on what seems to be sheer frivolity? I have said no, we should not, yet I am pulled by forces within and without to return to the 'frivolity' over and over. Mary is often amused as I angrily turn off a TV show or stomp out of a theater (we go MUCH less now) declaring that I will never waste my time or money on ANY of them again! She knows that eventually, in some form or other I will return to the matter of film. And I think she knows it is not merely because I am double-minded. It has to do with the reality that humankind is unavoidably drawn to stories, because stories express either the meaning of existence or, if they are devilish, the attack on such meaning. We need to know our story, and to some degree to be aware of the attack on it.



Sadly this generation is mostly deprived of the ancient means of passing on reality via stories. Once it was a nightly family event as invisible treasure was passed on from parent to child around a campfire or family hearth. Even the most electronically seduced youth would gladly trade the vapidly insipid coldness of disembodied plastic-encased 'entertainment' for one moment of the truly electrifying energy which passes into the soul as the stories of THEIR own heritage are verbally communicated directly *to* and *into* them by a flesh and blood representative of that very family treasury. Imagine your grandfather telling the story: "*This is what we were; this is what we became; this is who we are. THIS IS WHO YOU ARE!!!*" Who cares about special effects! This is the real thing! Who cares about 3D! This is as up close and personal as your breath! Who cares about the actors! You are *in* this story. It is your story being told to you by a member of your own family! Maybe I romanticize a bit but I don't think so. Can you picture Joshua being bored as he sits and listens to Moses describe the events on the mountain? Would Frodo's mind drift away listlessly while Gandalf is explaining to him where the ring came from? No, Joshua knows Moses' story is his too. Frodo knows Gandalf is describing Frodo's destiny in the telling. We long for the story to be told to us so we will know who we are and what we are to be, so we can finish our own part of the great history. Yet sadly, we are seduced by the sheer power of the age to squeeze what little we can from a screen. It is so rare to find a movie that is a "true myth" - that is, one that re-presents some aspect of the Real Story. And though we may find ways now and then to return to the much more meaningful and life-giving ancient ways (like when the power goes out!), the mature person must discern the world he lives in and seek to adjust to it in hopes for as much good as he can possibly draw from it and inject into it.

Continued on page 2

So no matter how often I swear them off, movies always eke their way back into a Nightlight.



### **MOVIES IN DARK TIMES**

I mentioned the frivolity of movie reviews in times of trouble. But did you know that as long as film has been publicly available, it has endured and even prospered during trying times. Movies never stopped running during the Depression. They were crammed each weekend of WW I and II. In the runaway inflation of the Weimar Republic which gave rise to Nazism, lines five blocks long waited in every kind of weather to enter the dark theaters. (I wish I had the time here to give you a tour of the content of these pre-Nazi films. The dark occult, sexually perverse, totalitarian themes clearly foreshadowed the rise of the real horror to come, and could have been an alarm bell if anyone had ears to hear the prophetic warning. They were too busy at the theater or pub to care.)

While stocks plummet, NETFLIX is prospering. For the people of the 21st century, film not only *communicates* our heritage, but is a corporate mirror of the collective soul of a nation, reflecting what is at work in the dominant culture. In Weimar the warnings were loud and clear to any discerning soul. So what is the collective soul of America, the UK, and Europe saying about where we are headed? Know this! Once a collective populace gives place in the public square to images of the cruel, perverse, and demonic, they are corporately invoking the real presence behind the demonic dimensional images they welcomed. This is the essence of idolatry. Weimar made place for imagined evil and soon got the real thing. Thankfully in our unfolding story there is not a total takeover by evil. There are flashes of light, and they are increasing. Though our dark is as bad as Weimar, and sometimes far worse, there is also another power present. We have a Hope which Weimar rejected. Will we reject it too, not by willful choice, but simply by default?



### **LIGHT IN THE FILM WORLD**

There is a rising generation of storytellers, film-makers, actors and actresses, producers and directors. They seek to interject into the flood of morbidity, stupidity, and corruption, REAL STORIES. I cited above the well-known Lewis quote that we do not need Christian writers (or film makers) but we need writers who are Christian. With all the improvement there has been in films made by believers, there is vast territory to be taken still. Nearly every form of art produced by believers seems to lag behind the world, and sadly often seeks to mimic the world rather than inform it. Jesus said it: ***The children of this world are wiser than the children of light.*** But He then said he was sending us out to them as sheep among wolves, and that we were to be wise as serpents, yet harmless as doves. We are to OCCUPY till He comes. That means that in the realm of the most sought-after media tool in our age, we had better get on with the job, learn to do it well ( wise as serpents ) yet NEVER BY COMPROMISING WITH EVIL ( harmless as doves. ) Making good movies with a truly powerful and penetrating story line is not *evangelism*: it is what Francis Schaeffer rightly called "pre-evangelism." How to accomplish the daunting task of being both 'wise' and 'harmless' in film will have to be for another time. Allow me to suggest how you can actively participate in pouring real light into the mostly dark world of film-making.





## An Opportunity to Share

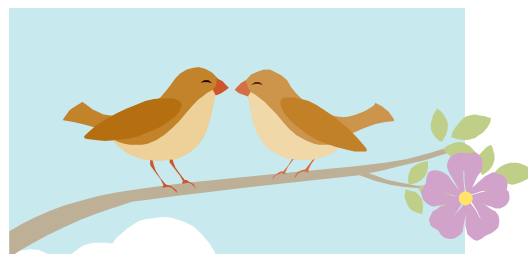
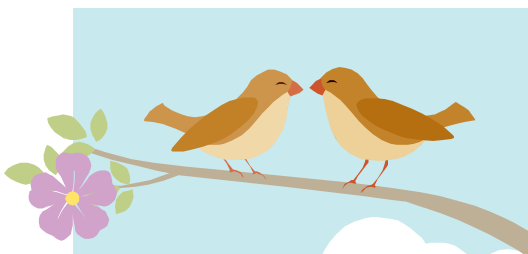


Many of you know Jim Shores and Carol Anderson as powerful skit presenters through their ministry *Acts of Renewal*. They have performed at our Black Mountain Retreat Conference for many years and have been friends of ours for longer than that. Jim recently completed his Ph.D in Communications. He now has an opportunity to attend a vitally important month-long event in L.A. which, among other things, could provide Jim and others of like vision a new and developing platform to invade our culture with the desperately needed kinds of stories which can offer hope, inspiration, confrontation with Truth, and the re-awakening of the human spirit towards the Good, which has been systematically attacked for four decades. Jim's vision is not to 'challenge, confront, rebuke, or chastise' Hollywood. He knows the church for far too long has hypocritically done that, while obviously attending, paying for, and therefore supporting the very films we claim to abhor. He also has witnessed Christians who, in the name of 'getting their foot in the door' so compromised their testimony and their product that whatever of the gospel they claimed to be bringing was non-existent by the time their foot was in the door. The only way to offer hope and change is to learn to produce NOT "Christian films" but true myth stories that effectively reach the mind, heart, and spirit, with godly Reality.

Jim needs the money to make this trip and do this work. It will take about \$6,000.00 to cover his trip and support him while he works there. Your gift to Jim is NOT tax deductible. You can't legally give it to him through Nightlight in order to get a deduction or we would gladly make that available.

The only way you can give to him to complete the initial penetration into the battlefield is to directly write him a check. He did not ask me to do this. I am doing this because *I truly believe Jim's calling is one of the most desperately needed mission fields there is, and this is a prime opportunity for us to help penetrate this field*. Please listen to the LORD to see if you are to share in helping Jim meet his expenses for this trip.

Think of this. A philosophy begins in a classroom. It pours from there into the various realms of expertise of the culture: business, education, arts, religion, etc. But how does it reach the masses and produce transformation on a large scale? How does it reach YOU? Via TV, film, books, and music. No one sits around the kitchen table discussing great ideas, conflicting ideologies, political histories or religious dogmas per se (unless you are at my house). We usually talk about real life things, and stories which bind them up for us in forms we can share. What happens when the only river to drink from is Hollywood's? Or a film so sanitized from reality that it is only watched by overly uptight church audiences who are afraid of too much drama? Who will tell the real stories in real ways that can reach the masses? Jim and Carol are trying. Thankfully there are many others out there too. This is a huge task and will require many David's and Deborah's willing to fight the giants and enemies that seek to protect this territory as exclusively theirs. You may never know them, but you know Jim and Carol. They are 2 people you can help get there. Do what you can. JIM SHORES, 217 Woodland Court, Black Mountain, N.C. 28711.



## Some Closing Thoughts...

How do you reach a people who have abandoned the good of reason? For that is largely where we are. In an introductory law class at Pepperdine University a professor there asks each new group of students to tell him what ethically should be done in the following case. Say that a rare albino tiger has been found. Then say that in some scenario the life of a human and the life of this tiger are in danger, with means to save only one or the other. Which should live? The professor (who is a believer) reports that every year around 90% of the students say the TIGER should live because it is a rare specie! These are your future jurists!

The good of reason is dead. Does that mean we are without means of evangelizing then? If we believe that reason is the only means of reaching the heart then our answer would be a despairing 'yes.' But there are many cultures that do not operate in sound reason. Yet they have been reached, converted, and saved. The worst thing we could do now is reason that we no longer have any reason to reach souls. Jesus didn't say the world would know because of our great intellect-as precious as truth and sound reason is. He said the world would know He is real when they see our love! (John 17).

Satan is called the 'prince of the power of the air.' (Ephesians 2:2) As such scripture describes his work in keeping humans bound by the spirit of rebellion. This is the spirit that has control of most of the 'air' waves-media. But Christ has destroyed the power of the satanic realm. We fail to take it because of unbelief, sloth, or a hidden affection for Satan's wares. We are well able to take territory which we have by default allowed evil to use. Pray for the power of the air to be shattered by the penetration of anointed creative art forms that the Holy Spirit can bless and use to penetrate the hearts of a generation that has almost completely lost its power to reason. Never underestimate the power of Story; Jesus told many (parables). Pray for our modern-day storytellers to paint pictures of the Real that go straight to the heart.

We often forget that it is the Holy Spirit who alone opens the hearts of those we seek to point to Christ. Reason is a great path, but not the only one. Our job is to love Jesus and point to Him. Our love for Him awakens all kinds of creative ways to point to Him. We cannot save anybody; we can love them to the One who can. If we would get hold of that truth we would lose much of our timidity in witnessing. We would then BE a witness instead. A wonderful song lyric says, "*only your Face can lead me to reason...*" Reason once led me to Love. But in this generation it is going to take Love to lead them to Reason.



### McLean Ministries

P.O. Box 5187 • Hickory, North Carolina 28603 • 828.322.5402  
website: (under renovation) • email: claymcleanministries@pobox.com