

January 14, 2008

When FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO first opened in theaters in the beginning of October, our distributor initially thought it was going to be a challenge to book the film in 15 markets. By December, we had passed the century mark (100 bookings) and the film is still going strong.

There is no doubt that the film has hit a chord. So many people who see it talk to me about how disturbed they've been over the years about their churches treatment of gay people. In response, they either sat silently in the pews or left the church all together. But FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO offers a different perspective and has given hundreds if not thousands of Christians new faith in their own religion.

From Portland, Maine to Portland, Oregon, the film has played to sold out audiences and has caused a great deal of controversy as well. When a staff reviewer at THE TENNESSEAN, the daily newspaper in Nashville, Tennessee, wrote a very positive article/review of the film for the paper (<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2007711180382>), the paper immediately ran three other columns that directly challenged that positive review even though none of three other writers appear to have actually seen the film.

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071125/OPINION03/711250373/1054>

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071125/OPINION03/711250364/1054>

<http://www.tennessean.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071125/OPINION03/711250372/1054>

That's how powerful the religious right is here in America.

Last weekend in Savannah, Georgia, a local theater hosted a screening of FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO, and, much to their surprise, so many people showed up to see the film that they had to open a second theater to accommodate the overflow. Then, when that second theater sold out, they scheduled a third screening of the film, which subsequently sold out. All of this happening deep inside the Bible belt!

In Winston-Salem, North Carolina over this past weekend, the film screened as part of their *Out at the Movies* series there. The incredible thing about that fact is that FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO already screened as part of that monthly series in December. But since the movie totally sold out in December, and because there was such an overwhelming demand to bring it back, organizers decided to play the same film two months in a row for the first time in their three and a half year history! Saturday's screening sold out once again and they are actually considering bringing it back again in February for a third showing.

Last night, protesters gathered out side of the Strand Capital Theater in York, Pennsylvania for the 7 pm screening of FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO to

scream at any folks who tried to enter the theater to see the movie. But attendees were shielded from their messages of hate and judgment by a local group called SILENT WITNESS, who used large rainbow-colored umbrellas to block them from view. It was an incredible show of grace in a very difficult situation. And though the protestors admitted that they hadn't seen the movie, they wanted the world to know that they condemn its message of acceptance and tolerance. (see the article about it and the AMAZING picture at http://yorkdispatch.inyork.com/yd/search/ci_7967552?IADID=Search-yorkdispatch.inyork.com-yorkdispatch.inyork.com)

Taken individually, these stories of the effect that FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO is having across the United States may seem anecdotal. But these kinds of things are happening every week across America. It cannot be denied that this film is having a major impact on communities all over the country.

And indeed across the world....

As we've all read in major press outlets over the last few months, the consecration of Bishop Gene Robinson, who is the central character in FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO, is splitting the 75 million member Anglican Communion apart. We've seen many Episcopal Churches and even one entire Diocese pull away from the Episcopal Church USA almost exclusively because New Hampshire elected the first openly gay man in the history of Christianity. And just today in the Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/13/AR2008011300568.html>), there is an announcement that those opposed to Robinson's consecration are convening their own break away rebel summit in Jerusalem. All of this because a man of deep faith, a man that is at the center of our film, has chosen to be honest about who he is. FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO couldn't be more topical.

-- Daniel Karlake