



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 11, 2023

## The Rising Christian Influence in Hollywood

Jim Caviezel, the actor who portrayed Jesus Christ in Mel Gibson's blockbuster film *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), said at the time "that accepting the titular role in [the film] all but assured the death of [my] Hollywood career."

Since then, however, Caviezel's career has enjoyed increasing success, starting with *The Final Cut* in 2004, and now his reprise as Jesus in Gibson's *Passion* sequel, *Resurrection*, which has just started production.

Among the 16 films Caviezel has starred in since then are *Bobby Jones: Stroke of Genius*; *Déjà Vu*; *Outlander*; *Paul, Apostle of Christ*; and *Sound of Freedom*.

Does this reflect a positive change in the Hollywood culture? Brent McCorkle, who directed the highly rated inspiring biographical drama *Unconditional*, [thinks so](#):

Most of the people in the flyover states believe in God, and they have faith in Jesus.

There's a lot of us [and] it's an underserved market.

He added:

I think Hollywood is slowly waking up to that there's kind of this sleeping giant out there, as far as this content could play for a lot of people.

And I really think we're also coming into a place where people are going to be more receptive to faith-genre films that are well done.

McCorkle served as editor of *Woodlawn* (2015) and *I Can Only Imagine* (2018), which opened at No. 3 nationwide and remains the top-grossing film in the history of the film's distributor, Roadside Attractions.

McCorkle is persuaded that the name of Christ is no longer a curse word in Hollywood, as A-list actors and directors are creating faith-based films to attract that "flyover" audience:

I think you're going to see some really, really strong talented people who actually came up in Hollywood making more faith films, so they're going to be excellent quality....

I think we're at a time where we're going to continue to see [faith-based films] get wider and bigger as a genre, and the stories get better, and the technicality of them continue to improve as more talent comes on board to the genre.



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An increasing number of Hollywood celebrities won't use the name of Jesus as a swear word but as an expression of their belief in Him as their Savior.

There's Reese Witherspoon, whose career spans more than three decades and is unashamed of naming Christ as her Savior. There's Justin Bieber, who posted last September, "I want to walk in the plans God has for me and not try to do it on my own ... I'm grateful that I can walk with Jesus as He leads the way."

And there's Matthew McConaughey, whose faith was on display when he received an award as best actor in *Dallas Buyers Club*: "[He] graced my life with opportunities that I know are not of my hand or any other human hand."

McCorkle is director of the upcoming film *Jesus Revolution*, due to open on February 24. It's based on pastor Greg Laurie's book of the same name recalling the Jesus movement in California during the 1970s.

Caviezel is reprising his role as Christ in Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ: Resurrection*, which is currently under production, and says that "It's going to be the biggest film in world history."

That's saying something, as Gibson's first *Passion* film grossed more than \$600 million worldwide, ranking it fifth in the world in the history of filmmaking.



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