

This presentation

- The story of a movie that Christian has created
- How Christian felt about TVs and movies
- God's directive and what Christian did about it
- Steve's part in it
- Where Steve came from
- What we've learnt
- The future
- Questions

A story

Imagine you're at the movies. You're flying over the top of a Northern European forest and swooping down to zoom in on Anton. He is in front of his house on the edge of the forest, making another bookcase for his huge collection of material on philosophy. As a flock of migrating birds fly overhead, he stops to make some notes, and then goes inside to catch the news on the TV. He smiles when he sees his estranged wife defending the actions of a hospital. She used to be a medical doctor but has now moved into hospital Public Relations.

That night a stranger challenges him to go to a neighbouring country that's been ripped apart by civil war. For the sake of his intellectual integrity, he decides to go there for a couple of days. While he's there drunken soldiers attack and torture him without provocation.

He goes home and for months afterwards, he gets surges of rage that he's never had before, and that he cannot control. He starts writing Letters to the Editor of a national newspaper about how deplorable war is. He thinks it will help him get over the rage, but it doesn't.

In a nearby city, someone is reading Anton's Letters to the Editor. He can see how angry and hurt Anton is; and he can also see how well Anton writes. He offers Anton the job of lifetime – a well-paid job that will help the innocent victims of the civil war while keeping Anton safe. Anton jumps at it. But it's not what it seems.

There's a lot more action in and out of the war zone and a massive betrayal. It all pushes Anton toward murder and suicide. Then, while raging against the idea of Jesus dying instead of other people, Anton runs into God. As a result, Anton finds a solution that makes him:

- an agent of peace between the two sides of the civil war,
- able to reconcile with his estranged wife, and
- see some sweet, peaceable revenge on those who would destroy him.

It ends happily and hopefully.

How Christian felt about TV

I have a love/obsession hate relationship with TVs. I'd grown up with TVs and radios almost always blaring away in the background. It felt like TV was biting at me all the time (when left running unchallenged in background). I despised the kinds of self-serving, others-hating, self-absorbed messages that came through the TV, and that people generally thought it was acceptable. My other problem with TV was that when in front of a TV, I'd focus on it alone, regardless of who else was trying to talk to me. And also, the ads really worked on me, as in "I need that hamburger NOW!"

However, I simply love stories, fiction and non-fiction. I love not only the stories themselves but also how stories can be used in healing ways, eg after apartheid in South Africa, and in prisoner reform in Australia.

I particularly like stories presented to me in whole so that I can analyse them and the messages they carry. I spent over 2½ years doing movie reviews for 1WayFM.

However, TV was an anathema to me, and ever since I started living alone in 1988 until I got married in 2008, I banned TVs from my living space.

Then God said

So it was a huge shock for me in about in 2003, when, after a great bible study and prayer time at home I almost audibly heard God tell me to create scripts for TV and film. I just managed to refrain from saying, "You've got the wrong person". Instead, I stammered, "About what?" And He suggested a documentary involving Christian motorcyclists.

Beginnings

I started working on the documentary only to find I had no idea how to go about it. So I did some research and bought a book about it.

The more I got into it I realised there was far more to find out about it. I began to realise that making a documentary is an effort bigger than Ben Hur. Apart from the story one has to take in the ethical issues, the legalities, the skilled people who need to be involved eg director, producer (think of all the credits at the end of a film), the technical side eg what kind of camera to get, and the financing, etc. So I put it all aside, and focused on Story.

Getting stories from God

I asked God for the stories and wrote down the images as they came to mind in that order. To my surprise, every detail mattered and came together in the end. For example, in the story with which I started the presentation, at first I didn't know why Anton's estranged wife had to have a medical background, but $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through the story, it became clear it was essential to the story.

In a similar manner, I have written down other stories:

- A young, well-educated Indian woman comes to Australia fleeing an offense committed in a Christian church. In the end, she triumphs over many offenses, and becomes an overcomer and giver rather than a victim.
- A modern Australian mother and father cannot cope with their miracle-performing little boy and what that means about God. God fixes it.
- Two co-dependent women in a slum in Chicago stretch the boundaries of independence and dependence.
- An adult woman mistakes her father's self-sacrifice (when he was a Prisoner of War) as betrayal but then realises how honourable he was.
- plus a few more.

When reconciliation of family members (as in Malachi 4:6) turns up, as it had done in a few of my stories, I find it profoundly moving.

Christian AND Steve

- Steve and I met through the Military Christian Fellowship (MCF) at Russell Offices while we were both working for Defence. I was resigned to never getting married.
- MCF started a program called “Prayer Force” whereby members from the same building/s got together to pray for those areas.
- Because of “Prayer Force”, we found out we worked in the same building and, in fact, had been working in the same building for seven years without meeting. (For years I had been involved in 1WayFM’s “Prayer on the Air”, renamed “Prayer Force” on the radio.)
- Then we couldn’t stop running into each other.
- I yelled rhetorically at God one day about it, “What is that man doing in my life” and His shocking response was, “Steve is your producer”.
 - Radio song producer: makes the music sound its best.
 - Film producer: gets everything together to get the film up and running. ‘Executive producers’ however tend to provide the finance.
 - Husband: Eph 5:25-28 (Message) ‘Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her ...’
 - Wife needs to let him: submitting to husband’s leadership – NOT ME. I preferred to do things BY MYSELF, eg
 - long distance motorbike riding,
 - living in Japan and finding work there to support myself,
 - contract work in lots of different government departments.
- I didn’t know God had already talked to Steve about looking after me.
- To our great surprise, not long afterwards, (wrapped around a bible study), things clicked into place in our hearts about each other. Now we love being together, and do everything together.
- The way my mind works: I take pleasure in handling lots of homogenous detail as in:
 - software testing and logical database design,
 - technical writing and training, and
 - indexing
- But my problem with films is in having to bring together many diverse things, ie personnel, legalities etc. is solved by Steve, The Arranger.

Steve's background

- My background was 35 years in the Air Force, 12 of the last 17 years was spent as a staff officer developing communication support plans for military operations and exercises. The final 5 years I was back at the Air Force rapid response unit for communications support to the Air Force, other military forces and government or charity agencies, as required, leading or sending in teams to domestic or overseas sites for military activity or support to regions/countries after natural disasters (earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, bushfires etc.) Little did I realise the time I spent fine tuning all the details for such activities was going to come in very handy after meeting Christian.
- I too was not looking for a relationship when we met but it seemed that God had other ideas. Everywhere I went, walking in the city, on buses, I ran into Christian. Eventually, we realised we were a team in more ways than one.
- On one of my overseas deployments before coming to Canberra, God intervened twice. Once for a couple of East Timorese priests and once for myself. The second incident made me wonder what he had in mind for me.
- After arriving in Canberra I also found out that when you pray for things, God does not necessarily answer the prayers the way you want.
- I was part of the MCF and preparing for a conference of Military Christians from around the world and prayed for someone to write an anthem to welcome the delegates (not me as I knew nothing about music). However, God had other ideas and my head filled with words one Sunday afternoon and I wrote them all down in about 5 minutes.
- It was several weeks before I mentioned this to anyone as I was not sure on how to raise this. In the end I talked to a Christian friend from Oklahoma and he said he would write the melody, he said it would be easy as I had written it in four-four time. Once written, it was decided it would need images to fully impact on the delegates. Here now is the completed product with Joe's music and sang by Steve another Christian that provided the right support to get this done. [\(Play DVD\)](#).

What we've learnt

We've attended many courses on scriptwriting and filmmaking. We've learnt about:

- structure of successful movies
- formatting
- financing
 - learnt about obtaining funding for short films and documentaries
 - cost of films
 - Documentary Foundation Australia
- 10 minute plays
 - 'Short and Sweet'
 - Demographics: 18-25 year olds
 - Experience from getting our first two short plays on at the Bogong Theatre in Canberra. Christian's play was an international romantic comedy with God's involvement and, just like in a script, the right actress for the lead part turned up just as the auditions were finishing.
- short films
 - don't make any money
 - made by people who have a message
 - written short films and submitted to various agencies
- film festivals
 - Ignite (Australia) is a Christian film festival
- documentaries
 - EnhanceTV: "is brought to you by Screenrights, the not-for-profit organisation that licenses educational institutions to copy from TV. Nearly all schools, TAFEs and universities in Australia have a Screenrights licence."
- roles, eg "Best boy": 2IC responsible for the day-to-day operation of the lighting or grip dept.
- Canberra and filmmakers
- ScreenACT
- learning about Steve and Christian being and working together

Plans for the future

- To continue developing stories and documentaries to honour God and also other uplifting stories and documentaries to get some credits out there and assist us in getting the required funding for our major projects!
- Hopefully, get the movies, plays and documentaries up and running with God's help

In conclusion, this presentation covered:

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