

Moviegoers want faith-based films; Hollywood delivers

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NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Hollywood movies with biblical themes continue to drive sales at the box office in 2014.



Scene from the movie

“Son of God.” Four faith-based films already have earned more than \$50 million each in ticket sales this year, according to Boxofficemojo.com. Those movies—*Noah*, *Heaven is for Real*, *Son of God* and *God’s Not Dead*—are among the top 20 grossing films of 2014.

And movie audiences may want more, a survey of 1,054 Americans from Nashville-based LifeWay Research shows. Researchers found more than half of Americans—56 percent—say they wish there were more movies with Christian values.

“Faith-based movies are no longer a niche,” said Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research. “It’s smart economics—if you make a film that

appeals to that audience, they will show up.”



More than half of Americans—56 percent—say they wish there were more movies with Christian values, according to a LifeWay survey. Movies with an explicitly Christian message—like *God's Not Dead*—have done especially well. The independent film was made for \$2 million and has earned more than \$59 million at the box office. That's more than high-budget projects like *Muppets Most Wanted* or the critically acclaimed *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.

Kris Fuhr, founder of Moviegal Marketing, said Christian movie fans want films with a clear presentation of faith. That's been true in the past for features like *Fireproof* and *Courageous*, as well as more recent movies like *Son of God*.

“When you have a movie where the title is almost a doctrinal statement—the audience will come out,” she said. “People want their faith to be affirmed.”



Noah, Heaven is for Real, Son of God and God's Not Dead are among the top 20 grossing films of 2014. Films with a more subtle faith message may not do as well, Fuhr added.

In [the survey](#), LifeWay Research asked Americans to respond to the statement: "I wish there were more movies that reflected Christian values." Respondents who go to church weekly are most likely to agree (91 percent). Those who never go to church (18 percent) are least likely to agree.

Self-identified born-again, evangelical or fundamentalist Christians are more likely to agree (84 percent) than other Americans (45 percent). Americans who live in the Midwest (62 percent) and South (63 percent) also are more interested in more Christian films than those in the Northeast (48 percent) or the West (44 percent).

Two-thirds of middle-aged and older Americans agree, including those 45 to 54 (63 percent), 55 to 64 (66 percent), and 65 and older (65 percent). Americans under 30 (43 percent) are least interested in more films with Christian values.

The online survey of adult Americans was conducted March 25. Researchers invited a sample of an online panel representing the adult population of the United States to participate. They weighted responses by region, age, ethnicity, gender and income to reflect the population more accurately.

The completed sample is 1,054 online surveys. The sample provides 95 percent confidence the sampling error from this panel does not exceed plus or minus 3.1 percent. Margins of error are higher in subgroups.