

A Christians in Culture Movie Review—



“Bella” Shines!

The motion picture industry seems to enjoy putting us Christians on a roller coaster ride. Just when we reach a point when we think we’ve had enough of their foul tripe, someone does something to redeem the industry in our hearts and minds.

In retrospect, 2007 might be remembered as the year that Hollywood decided it was ok to produce movies with pro-life/anti-abortion messages that promote the value of unborn life. The short list (though not exhaustive) includes *Knocked Up*, *Juno* (nominated for an Oscar), and the David amongst the film Goliaths: *Bella*.

Bella, directed by Alejandro Gomez Monteverde, features actors and actresses that you wouldn’t know from any other names listed in the phone book. Do the likes of Eduardo Verastegui, Tammy Blanchard, Manny Perez, Ali Landry, or Ramon Rodriguez ring a bell? I didn’t think so. Then again, the cast and crew aren’t exactly your typical Hollywood types: Director Monteverde and his actress wife (Ali Landry) met at a church Bible study!

Despite the film’s initial lack of buzz, it gained instant notoriety and credibility with critics and movie-goers alike when it won the people’s choice award at the Toronto Film Festival. This achievement puts it in the same company as such historical heavyweights as *Chariots of Fire*, *Life Is Beautiful*, *Hotel Rwanda*, and others. Even so, the film was released to theaters on a very limited basis in the fall of 2007. At its peak it was only being shown at **two** theaters in the Milwaukee area.

Yet, in spite of this hindrance, word of mouth and grass roots efforts to promote the film made it a success in virtually every market it was shown. I am a case in point: Keri and I found out about *Bella* from a family member. I searched the internet to get more information and the first option that came up on my computer screen was a movie review featured on the “Lutherans for Life” home page.

All these interesting sub-plots aside, *Bella* is simply a great movie! Good acting, good directing, and a heart-tugging story. I won’t say much more. There’s nothing worse than reading a review that gives away the story. Rather, I will gleefully recommend that you rent this movie. When you do, delight in the fact that you don’t have to go to the local Christian bookstore to find it. It’s right there, available through Netflix, Blockbuster, and Hollywood Video with such titles as *Brokeback Mountain*, *Saw—I, II, III, IV, & V* (Are you kidding me?!?!), and *The Forty Year Old Virgin*.

Bella is a main-stream film shining a light in the darkness; proclaiming the glorious value of God’s gift of life. Isn’t that what *Christians in culture* is all about?

Pastor Tim Sims

“*Bella*” Specifics:

Production Company: Metanoia Films

Rating: PG-13 some adult situations/conversations; traumatic scenes

Thematic Summary: “True love goes beyond romance.” & “One moment can change your life forever.”

Director: Alejandro Gomez Monteverde

Cast: Eduardo Verastequi, Tammy Blanchard, Manny Perez,
Ali Landry, Ramon Rodriguez