

# RECEPTION STUDY: *The Last Temptation Of Christ* (1988)

**Michael Baker**

*Few topics stir public debate as wildly as religion, and even fewer are sure to turn Hollywood on its ear. The Passion Of The Christ (2004) is an ultra-violent religious epic concerned with retelling the last twelve hours of Jesus Christ's life—written, directed and produced by Mel Gibson—and Jewish leaders claim the film incites hate by reviving the debate over whether or not Jews were to blame for Christ's death. Some are pointing to Gibson's own faith (as a member of a devout Catholic sect) as his motivation for producing the film, a charge he vehemently denies. The issues are complex, the opposing sides are prepared for a bloody ideological battle, and everyone has an opinion. So now seems to be the perfect time to revisit the occasion of Hollywood's last—and largest—religious flare up surrounding the issue of a filmed adaptation of the story of Christ.*

Peu de sujets agitent autant les débats publics que la religion, et encore moins peuvent se targuer de déstabiliser Hollywood. *La Passion Du Christ* (2004), écrit, réalisé et produit par Mel Gibson, est une épopée ultra-violente qui se donne pour mission de raconter à nouveau les douze dernières heures de la vie de Jésus Christ. Les dirigeants Juifs affirment que le film incite à la haine en ravivant le débat de la responsabilité juive de la mort du Christ. Certains évoquent les convictions personnelles de Gibson (il est membre d'une secte catholique fervente) comme motif principal de la production du film, accusation que celui-ci nie fermement. Les problèmes sont complexes, les clans opposés sont prêts à s'engager dans un combat idéologique sanglant, et chacun a son opinion. Voilà donc le moment idéal pour revoir le dernier – et plus grand – éclatement religieux entourant l'adaptation cinématographique de l'histoire du Christ.

In the summer of 1988, Universal Pictures announced its plans to release *The Last Temptation Of Christ*, a film suffering in development hell since its original home—Paramount Pictures—quashed production in 1983 amidst budget concerns and a negative letter-writing campaign.<sup>(1)</sup> The campaign, spear-headed by the religious-right of the southern United States and led by fundamentalist leaders, opposed the theme of Nikos Kazantzakis' original novel upon which the screenplay was based. The first from American auteur Martin Scorsese since his 1986 box-office hit *The Colour Of Money*, *The Last Temptation Of Christ* was intended to be an art film for the academic set and the director's small legion of dedicated cineastes; one of those pictures for which studios are prepared to take a loss in exchange for critical praise and the prospect of Oscar nominations.<sup>(2)</sup> In this account of Jesus' life, he is given the opportunity to refuse his role as saviour in exchange for the regular life of a man. Although the story involves the consummation of his marriage to Mary of Magdalene, it is not designed as a morality tale and instead acts as a character study of this fictional godhead. Despite this, by the first week of July, lines of protest had been drawn that stretched from one corner of the country to the other.

Vehemently opposed to the notion that Christ could be depicted enjoying pleasures of the flesh and accompanied by the misconception that the film portrayed Jesus as a homosexual, the Bible-belt of middle-America and the fundamentalists of the central southern states were preparing for battle to censor Scorsese's First Amendment right to free speech. Critics and newspaper writers, however, were positioning

themselves as the non-partisan voice of reason, prepared to defend the filmmaker either by engaging in the debate directly or choosing to ignore it in favour of cool-headed, academic critiques of the film. Over the course of the summer, a continent of Christians would be asked to disrupt the release of the motion picture, while only a vociferous few would follow through with creating what would become a spectacle for many. In the process, the meaning of the film would be distorted and its value as an art object temporarily tarnished.

The thirty-minute segment that initially sparked the protests was a dream sequence involving the marriage of Jesus to Mary of Magdalene. Appearing in the closing moments of the film, the segment shows Jesus being offered the opportunity to step down from the cross and resume the life of a normal carpenter without his obligations to God. Clearly marked as a dream-state and nullified by his decision to remain on the cross to open the gates of Heaven, Jesus is portrayed in such a manner that both dogma and the expectations of the Christian community are served.<sup>(3)</sup> As is obvious from the literature circulated by the fundamentalist groups (see Appendix A), protestors chose to remove the contextual frame within which this sequence occurs and charge the filmmakers with blasphemy and anti-Christian/ pro-Jewish intentions. An earlier sequence involving Jesus' visit to Mary's house of prostitution is not just misrepresented by the protestors, but entirely fabricated as they claim the conversation involves his solicitation of sexual favours. As for the ill-conceived notion that Jesus is depicted as a homosexual that surfaced during the protests of 1983, they were completely abandoned during the summer of 1988.

The trajectory of *The Last Temptation Of Christ* traced from its original conception in the early-80s to its eventual release at the end of the decade occurred against the backdrop of President Ronald Reagan's tenure in Washington and a time in Hollywood defined by Robert Sklar as the "Age of Reagan," characterized, first, by widespread conservatism built upon the narrative templates pioneered in the 1950s and, second, by a focus on the profitability of the product.<sup>(4)</sup> The Golden Age of American cinema of the 1970s—in which critical acclaim, awards, and huge box-office grosses went hand-in-hand—was a distant memory; the 1980s were an era dominated by the corporate conglomeration of film studios, rendering the artistic merits of a film and its financial success mutually exclusive. In keeping with this return of right-wing ideologies to the national landscape, the face of Hollywood likewise took a turn towards the right. As politics returned to the

conservatism of the 1950s, so too did filmmakers who moved away from controversial subjects and instead sought inspiration in the commercial popular culture of that era. Hollywood's return to the morals of the 50s during the Age of Reagan not only made the production of films like *The Last Temptation Of Christ* difficult, but served as a rallying point for fundamentalist opposition in a market largely free of such controversial material. In this climate of corporate concerns, the threat of thin boxoffice receipts in the wake of picket-lines and mass boycotts ultimately forced Universal to advance the release of the film from its original date in the fall to 12 August 1988 with the hopes it would circumvent the ability of protestors to properly mobilize. Ironically, it was precisely this anxious decision that secured the film's financial success, if not its acceptance by critics as an engaging and entertaining portrayal of one of history's most misunderstood, yet influential, icons.

## MOBILIZATION OF THE RIGHT

To explore the dynamics of the religious-right in the United States over the last two decades is a lofty endeavour, and it would not necessarily serve to illuminate the matter of their opposition to *The Last Temptation Of Christ*. However, if one accepts that this offensive position was firmly held on behalf of the protest groups, sparked by their belief that Scorsese's film was 'blasphemous' and funded by Christian-hating Jews (as Lew Wasserman—chairman of MCA/Universal—was so crudely labelled by right-wing leaders like Methodist Minister Donald Wildmon), it is important to recognize that the changing political climate of the United States during the 1980s provided the New Right with social power essential for mobilizing its followers so effectively when the debate began in 1983.<sup>(5)</sup> A shift in wealth to the southern United States following an economic boom in the early-80s — produced by Reagan's deficit spending which eventually resulted in a complete economic collapse, culminating with the stock market crash of 1987—reinforced long-standing ties between conservative religious groups such as the Christian Coalition of America and the Republican party. This power-position within the American political sphere provided them with the opportunity to propagate a platform that consisted in part of homophobic and anti-Semitic thought and the reunification of church and state:

By 1978, the New Right was becoming a powerful force in American culture and politics... The movement was given a unified philosophy through the combination of a rehabilitated classical free market economic theory

(Friedman and Laffer) with the new fundamentalist evangelism of the likes of the Moral Majority's Jerry Falwell... By 1980, the New Right had been united into a religious crusade to restore the free market and the social discipline it required through the destruction of its two greatest opponents, the New Deal federal government and the Soviet Union.<sup>(6)</sup>

Rallying around the claims of protest organizers such as Wildmon and Bill Bright (leader of the Campus Crusade For Christ and the man who offered Universal ten-million dollars to destroy all existing prints of the film before it could be exhibited to the public), right-wing Christians from the United States and Canada offered their time and money in the pursuit of ridding North American screens of Scorsese's controversial film.

Since the story of Christ is of great spiritual and economic value to the religious community, it is possible to read their reaction as an aggressive attempt, not only to protect, but to profit from Universal's decision to bring this controversial story to the screen. As an economic engine, the protest leaders presented the film as an attack on the church, which inevitably required an injection of cash into congregations in order to continue defending the good name of its saviour. Reports in publications as diverse as Time Magazine, The Christian Science Monitor, and The Canadian Jewish News acknowledge that the film was continually mentioned during televised appeals for money.

As the 1980s drew to a close, a distinct shift towards the left occurred on the American political scene which seriously hindered the possibility of the protest achieving the ban of the film. Although the White House would remain in Republican hands, the Congress was lost to the Democrats during the 1987 election of George Bush. Furthermore, the influence of religious-right groups was greatly undermined by the televangelist sex scandals of 1986 and 1988. As a tool to regain ground following these scandals, *The Last Temptation Of Christ* prompted the remobilization of many American conservative groups. With their numbers significantly reduced, however, the public no longer seemed willing to join them on the crusade. It is interesting and important to note that political theorists and cultural observers at the time point to 1988 as the beginning of a new political era that disavowed the conservatism of the Age of Reagan:

If 1971 signalled the onset of that edgy rightist tone that would characterize the conservative movements of the

late seventies and early eighties, 1986-87 signalled the end of conservative hegemony. Ronald Reagan finally began to lose power, Congress passed into the hands of the Democrats, rendering him even more harmless, and the Iran arms-for-hostages/ Contra-supply scandals ruined his credibility and his popularity as well. Within his own ranks, divisions had been evident throughout his reign between the hard-line New Rightists and the more traditional conservatives. It was already evident by the mid-eighties that the Right's united front would no longer hold.<sup>(7)</sup>

Ultimately, the question of whether or not the protestors could successfully stop the picture's release was rendered moot; they would not enjoy the same success they had in 1983. It could be said that a relatively small number of far-right fundamentalists drew a disproportionate amount of attention during the summer of 1988, but the fact remains that the political climate of the United States during the 1980s gave leaders of the right-wing religious groups a form of access to the media (and to their arguments an air of legitimacy) that was not in place ten years earlier. Furthermore, the state of American economics in Reagan's first term in the Oval Office contrast so greatly with that of his final year in office that it serves to elucidate the viability of Scorsese's project in 1988 as opposed to 1983. Reduced budget and short shooting schedule aside, the booming state of the film industry afforded Universal the opportunity to show its faith in an auteur such as Scorsese while simultaneously being prepared for a box-office failure.

## REACTION

Critics played an awkward role in the media frenzy that quickly engulfed *The Last Temptation Of Christ*. With the position of the Christian fundamentalist groups well-publicized and widely known, critics were forced to explain—using their reviews as a tool—why there was such a frenzy surrounding the movie and how it was related to the content of the film. On broad terms, there seemed to be three distinct voices found in the reviews from August 1998. Some writers took a historiographic approach to recounting the beleaguered production of the film and its opposition from fundamentalist groups. These reviews merely summarized the major plot-points of the story and did little to provide any insight. Other critics, specifically those from the realm of scholarly journals, dealt with the film on strictly textual terms and placed it within the discourse of biblical epics or discussions of Scorsese as auteur. Lastly, there were those reviewers who chose to confront the religious aspects of the text and situate it

within the larger realm of Christian and Jewish ethics and mores. The opinions of religious leaders who had screened the film and found value in Scorsese's fictional portrait were often cited in these reviews as if to lend legitimacy to its critical position.

A rather disproportionate amount of the reviews for *The Last Temptation Of Christ* employed an exclusively historiographic method and said nothing about the textual elements of the film<sup>(8)</sup>—these reviews were essentially regurgitations of the production notes forwarded to the press. Several writers, however, chose to frame their discussion of the troublesome path it took to the screen with an acknowledgement of the quality of the production and the artistry of Scorsese's direction:

We constantly lament the fact that film-makers refuse to take risks anymore. That art has taken a back seat to mindless escape at the movies. But no sooner does a director attempt to chart bold new frontiers than all hell breaks loose.... If audiences choose to risk the foray into sensitive terrain, the rewards are rich.<sup>(9)</sup>

The themes of these pieces accentuate the controversial nature of the film and the 'sensitive terrain' it explores, but they serve another important purpose: readers who were concerned with the possibility of the eruption of violence at the theatre-based protests, but genuinely interested in seeing the movie, were provided with further motivation to cross picket lines. However, it is unlikely readers already intent on boycotting the movie would have been persuaded to think differently by reviews such as these.

By 1988, scholarly journals and the academic community were already in the habit of immediately acknowledging all of Scorsese's work, and *The Last Temptation Of Christ* was no different. Although there were those who felt his desire to participate in the canon of Christ's story was becoming a case of Hollywood's habit of drawing too much water from the same well, there were others who felt Scorsese had finally realized his masterpiece:

Scorsese's film is plenty acute, and in its way reverent, as an exploration of the Jesus legend. You need look no further than the title to find the answers to two major points of debate of this severe, coherent, passionate, and beautifully made film.<sup>(10)</sup>

In keeping with the style of most academically-oriented film journals, discussions similar in tone to Corliss' thoroughly explored the textual side of *The Last*

*Temptation Of Christ* and examined its significance in relation to both Scorsese's filmography and the broader scope of more conventional accounts of biblical stories. Remarking specifically about the characterization of Jesus and the performance of Willem Dafoe, many academics felt this very 'human' portrayal of God was complimented by the strong supporting cast of American actors. Many critics took note of Scorsese's almost pedestrian portrayal of the Christ figure, given its controversial roots, and applauded the film for its overall merit but noted it was "excruciatingly balanced":

*The Last Temptation Of Christ* is certainly not the last word on Jesus, whose life is open to wide areas of interpretation. Scorsese's version, while hurtful to a handful of Christian zealots, is but the latest cinematic accounting of one of the great, most quixotic figures in the annals of human history.<sup>(11)</sup>

There were many non-Christian religious groups willing to offer an interpretation of the film, and their language is very similar with the tone found in Kirshner's account. Specifically, they focused neither upon the text nor the protest, but rather upon the inspirational figure that was at the centre of both. Many commentators indirectly echoed the thoughts of the public and private figures tied to the project: the stubborn approach taken by the fundamentalists to disseminate their opinion created two diametrically opposed groups whose widely publicized clash slowly expanded the audience interested in seeing what all the controversy was about. Universal's original distribution plans considered *The Last Temptation Of Christ* a small, arthouse picture that would have been limited to film festivals and key metropolitan centres.<sup>(12)</sup> As a result of the negative publicity, Universal advanced the release date to mid-August—the tail-end of the industry's blockbuster season—in an attempt to catch protestors off-guard with regards to the mobilization of picket-lines and prayer vigils. Many film festivals, however, including New York and Toronto, were hesitant to showcase a picture that would already be in circulation. Instead, it was given a platform release whereby prints were offered to non-major North American cities following its initial release in August in select cosmopolitan centres. It could be argued that a vast majority of the movie-going public would never have been in a position to see the film if this clash had not ultimately altered the release date of the film and expanded its distribution.

Lastly, there was reaction from religious leaders who chose to see the film for themselves before passing judgement on it. Although there were many



who disapproved of the film on moral grounds, a surprising number felt the film could be an important tool for Christians in reaffirming their faith. The New York Times collected responses from leaders of the Presbyterian Church who attended a special screening of *The Last Temptation Of Christ* before its official release. Rev. Charles Bergstrom, a Lutheran minister, said the film was “much more accurate than some Christian films I’ve seen.”<sup>(13)</sup> Others, such as Rev. Paul Moore, the Episcopal Bishop of New York, was outright flattering in his pronouncement that he would recommend the film to his parishioners:

The movie is artistically excellent and theologically sound. Miracles were depicted... and Christ was portrayed as He was defined at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.: ‘At once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man.’<sup>(14)</sup>

Ironically, fundamentalist leaders and members of the Moral Majority were the first group to be invited by Universal to screen the film;<sup>(15)</sup> it was hoped goodwill could be fostered between the two groups as the Christian leaders realized much of their censorship campaign was based on misinformation and harsh generalizations about the screenplay. This invitation was refused, however, and the protests continued despite the fact none of the leaders of the movement had actually seen the film and continued to base their protest on a version of the script written almost ten years earlier.<sup>(16)</sup>

### AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND

*The Last Temptation Of Christ*, originally targeted at a small audience of art-house followers, grossed \$8.3 million in the domestic United States and recouped its cost of \$7 million.<sup>(17)</sup> Although not a runaway critical hit, it re-confirmed Scorsese as a marquee filmmaker and fortified his relationship with Universal that continues to this day. Excellent opening weekend figures were the result of both anxious cinephiles and the presence of individuals who believed their ticket sales would be perceived as a gesture against the censorship campaign.<sup>(18)</sup>

Upon its initial release on home video in June of 1989, MCA opted to forego any promotion and allow it to enter rental outlets quietly. Blockbuster Video, however, the continent’s largest retail chain, refused to stock the movie and the debate over censorship resumed once again, but this episode was quickly forgotten and the film was essentially relegated to North America’s

repertory circuit.<sup>(19)</sup> In 1997, Criterion Collection—an independent licensee of a major foreign works and contemporary classics for home video distribution—invited Scorsese, screenwriters Paul Schrader and Jay Cocks, and lead actor Dafoe to participate in the recording of a commentary track for the laserdisc and DVD re-release of *The Last Temptation Of Christ*. Criterion offered the artists an opportunity to respond to the accusations and actions of the religious groups who had done so much to bias audiences in 1988. The filmmakers had refused to remark on the religious furor surrounding *The Last Temptation Of Christ* upon its original theatrical release, but the film’s ten-year anniversary and the proposed DVD commentary provided an appropriate atmosphere for sober second thought on behalf of its creators. Scorsese and Schrader are particularly pointed regarding Wildmon and Bright’s charges of blasphemy. Explaining that the factual element of their depiction of Christ is rooted in dogma, both director and screenwriter claim an intentional confusion of terms was perpetrated by the religious leaders in order to muddy the debate. By pronouncing the film as ‘blasphemous,’ fundamentalist Christians would have been labelled sinners for seeing the film; with this very simple tactic, leaders such as Wildmon and Bright could be sure their congregations would not see it for themselves and realize the falsehood of their harsh generalizations concerning its fictionalized account of the Passion of Christ. This would have cleared much of the misunderstanding and significantly reduced the number of protesters. In the end, however, their ability to mobilize beneath the banner of the New Right, supported by the Republican power-structure of the United States during the 1980s, assured groups such as the Christian Coalition of America and the Campus Crusade For Christ a partial, although fleeting, victory.

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### FOOTNOTES

1. Steve Jenkins, “From The Pit of Hell,” *Monthly Film Bulletin* 659 (December 1988): 353.
2. Aljean Harmetz, “How Studio Maneuvered ‘Temptation’ Into a Hit,” *New York Times*, 24 August

1988.

3. Harmetz, "New Scorsese Film Shown to Religious Leaders," *New York Times* 15 July 1988.

4. Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America* (New York: Vinatage Books, 1994) 342, 351.

5. Andrew Carroll, "ADL, evangelist at odds over Temptation film," *The Canadian Jewish News*, 01 September 1988. 13.

6. Michael Ryan & Douglas Kellner, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) 10-11.

7. Ryan & Kellner, 263.

8. File # 97114 at Mediatheque Quebecois includes over one hundred articles, clippings, and essays concerning *The Last Temptation Of Christ* including reviews from the time of its original release in August 1988; further articles and reviews were compiled from a number of databases accessed online, 13 November 2001.

9. Bill Brownstein, review of *The Last Temptation Of Christ*, *Montreal Gazette*, 12 August 1988.

10. Richard Corliss, "Body... And Blood," *Film Comment* 5 (Sept-Oct 1988): 34.

11. Sheldon Kirshner, "Last Temptation of Christ stirs deep feelings," *The Canadian Jewish News* 18 August 1988.

12. Aljean Harmetz, "How Studio Maneuvered 'Temptation' Into a Hit," *New York Times*, 24 August 1988.

13. Aljean Harmetz, "Film on Christ Brings Out Pickets And Archbishop Predicts Censure," *New York Times* 21 July 1998.

14. Harmetz, 15 July 1988.

15. Harmetz, 15 July 1988.

16. It should be pointed out that several dates pertaining to the draft version in possession of the fundamentalist groups and their reasons for refusing the invitation to screen the film outlined in the boycott information (Appendix A) are seemingly inaccurate and conflict with accounts later offered by advisors Tim Penland and Dr.

Larry Poland in articles printed in the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Toronto Star* available from Mediatheque Quebecois.

17. Figures obtained from crossreferenced box-office receipts available at All-Movie Guide, Hollywood Reporter, Internet Movie Database. Online. 11 November 2001.

18. Aljean Harmetz, "How Studio Maneuvered 'Temptation' Into a Hit," *New York Times*, 24 August 1988.

19. Chris Koseluk, "Christ Comes Home – Quietly," *American Film* 9 (July-Aug 1989): 12.

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## APPENDIX

Copy of the original information pamphlet issued for letter-writing campaigns and the organization of boycott obtained from The Associate.com resource directory, "Christian Ethics and Issues." -11 November 2001

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"*The Last Temptation Of Christ*"—FACTS

### Origin of the story:

. Nikos Kazanizakis wrote a fictional novel, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, for which he was reportedly excommunicated from the Greek Orthodox Church.

### The history of the film version:

. Paramount Studios dropped the project in 1983 due, in part, to pressure from Christians. Director Martin Scorsese sold the idea to Universal Studios and produced a 10 million dollar version, *The Passion*, which was finished in June 1988.

### Basis for evaluation the film's content:

. The original novel, two versions of the script by Paul Schrader (one of which was represented by Universal as the "shooting script"), and an eyewitness account of the film as shown to Universal "insiders" provide the basis for evaluation.

### Content of the film that is offensive to Christians:

1. Mary declares that her son, Jesus, is "crazy" and "not well in the head."
2. Jesus is depicted as having "brain fever," "struggling over his sins," lust driven (especially for Mary

Magdalene), confused, bedeviled by “nightmares and hallucinations,” not able to answer basic questions about His identity, and shocked by His own magical powers.

3. There are clear references to a youthful sexual encounter between Jesus and Mary Magdalene in which Jesus did not lose his virginity.
4. Jesus is shown waiting in line at Mary Magdalene’s brothel and entering the darkened room where she lies naked.
5. One scene shows copulating snakes, one of which speaks to Jesus in Mary Magdalene’s voice.
6. In a dream sequence Jesus marries Mary Magdalene and has sex with her, kissing her on or near her breasts, as an angel is invited by Jesus to watch.
7. Jesus convinces Judas to betray Him.
8. Jesus declares to Mary Magdalene, “...Woman is God’s greatest work. And I worship you. God sleeps between your legs.”

#### **Efforts to work with Universal to alter the film:**

. Before the contents of the film were really known, Universal hired a film producer and film marketing expert, Mr. Tim Penland, a believing Christian, to “build bridges to the Christian community.” Mr. Penland was joined by a “secret consultant,” Dr. Larry Poland, with expertise in the dynamics and structure of the evangelical Christian community. Universal promised to invite Christian leaders to a mid-June screening “far in advance of the release date” and sent invitation letters confirming this. Martin Scorsese assured questioners that he was making a “faith affirming” film and that Jesus would be depicted “as sinless, as deity, and as the saviour of the world.” Based on these assurances, Christian leaders agreed to “hold their fire” on the film until its contents could be more clearly determined.

#### **Breakdown of relations with Universal:**

. As the date of the screening for Christian leaders drew near, Universal “waffled” on its commitment. A “bootleg script” was spirited out of Universal by a studio employee and fell into the hands of Christian leaders. Universal execs then declared that “the Christians can’t stop us from releasing this film.” Mr. Penland, true to his original statement to Universal that he would terminate his relationship “the minute it was

determined that the film was blasphemous to Christ or it was viewed as destructive to the cause of Christ,” resigned effective June 12, 1988.

#### **Indications that Universal hopes to profit from the Christian controversy:**

. The executives at Universal decided to make prints of the film in 70 millimetre, instead of the usual 35 millimetre, so it could be shown in the biggest theatres in America. They screened the finished script in early June for their distribution people with indications that they expected a box office bonanza. They are adjusting the timing of the release apparently to capitalize on the height of the controversy.

#### **Present state of protest by Christians:**

. Christian leaders have refused to attend any screening by Universal based on the disclosures of the content. They are mounting a nationwide effort involving hundreds of Christian groups and costing millions of dollars to mobilize national pressure to stop the release of the film. They don’t want impressionable viewers to receive a twisted view of Christ that will keep them from faith in the historic Jesus.

#### **TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROTEST:**

##### **1. Pray!**

- For the key figures at MCA-Universal listed below, that God will show Himself to
- them in a powerful way, convincing them to kill the film.
- For Christians employed by various divisions of MCA-Universal that they will
- have the boldness to stand against this release at every level.
- For judgement on those perpetrating blasphemy against our Lord.
- For protection of those who might have their faith stolen by this film.
- Thanking God for turning this situation into a great victory for the faith.

##### **2. Create pressure on key figures to stop the release—lovingly but firmly. Call or write more than once:**

- MCA-Universal, 100 Universal City Plaza Blvd., Universal City, CA 91608
- MCA-Universal headquarters phone: 818-777-1000
- Lew Wasserman, MCA Chairman of the Board (at Universal City)
- Sidney Sheinberg, MCA President (at Universal City)
- Tom Pollack, Chairman of the Board, Universal Pictures (at Universal City)
- Eugene Giaquinto, head of the home video division
- Felix G. Rohatyn, Investment Banker, MCA Director
- Robert S. Strauss, Former Chairman, National Democratic Party, MCA Director
- Donald Trump, New York developer, major MCA shareholder and possible MCA buyer

3. Contact heads of local divisions of MCA owned businesses indicating that you will not patronize their businesses if Universal releases a film defaming your Lord. Ask the local managers to protest the release to the heads of MCA.

- Universal Studios Tour, restaurants, gifts shops, and hotels (at Universal City)
- Universal Studios, Orlando, Florida
- Cineplex Odeon theatres nationwide
- Universal distribution centers in major cities (consult white pages)
- WWOR-TV Secaucus, NJ
- LJN Toys
- Spencer Gifts - located in many shopping malls and retail centers nationwide
- Intrigue retail jewellery stores and kiosks
- A2Z-Best of Everything Shops

4. If the film is released, organize a prayer vigil at the theatre, witness to those attending and share materials that give the true picture of Christ.

5. If you are an employee of MCA-Universal, protest to your superiors about this film and, if led to do so, threaten resignation if the film is released.

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