

Religion and The Movies

Key Terms

Blasphemy: the act of insulting or not showing respect for deities, to religious or holy people or things, or to something considered to be sacred.

Censorship: the control of information or ideas within a society.

Freedom of Speech: the political right to communicate your ideas and opinions to anyone willing to hear them.

Questions

Does everyone have the right to Free Speech?

Do 'bad' movies damage humans?

Why do so many film makers choose to make films about religion or religious stories?

British Blasphemy Laws

The blasphemy law in Britain made it illegal to insult or show disrespect for Christianity. It was removed in 2008 but had not been successfully used in 30 years. It was replaced by the Racial and Religious Hatred Act which made it an offence to incite hatred against a person on the basis of their religion.

Some people didn't want to get rid of the blasphemy law but rather wanted to extend it to cover all religions, not just Christianity.

Religious Teachings that shape attitudes to Blasphemy, Offence, and the Divine.

Christianity: Mark 9: 42

"If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea."

Islam: From the Hadith

"The people who receive the severest punishment on the Day of Resurrection will be those who try to make the like of Allah's creations."

"Everyone knows what damage is done to the soul by bad motion pictures. They are occasions of sin; they seduce young people along the ways of evil by glorifying the passions..."

Pope Pius XI, 1936



The Legion of Decency Pledge (1933)

"I condemn all indecent and immoral motion pictures, and those which glorify crime or criminals. I promise to do all that I can to strengthen public opinion against the production of indecent and immoral films, and to unite with all who protest against them. I acknowledge my obligation to form a right conscience about pictures that are dangerous to my moral life. I pledge myself to remain away from them. I promise, further, to stay away altogether from places of amusement which show them as a matter of policy."

The Passion of the Christ was well received in many Muslim countries but Noah was banned in many Muslim countries. Why the difference in reaction? How was Exodus received?

