

The Blind Side – Christianity in Practice

By: Stacey Tuttle

“‘Christian’ – We either take that seriously, or we omit that altogether.”

True stories are a unique venue, especially for Christians, in that they can unapologetically speak God’s truth with boldness and clarity – so long as it is part of a true story. Critics and dissenters can and will argue with or be hostile towards a fictional movie that has a Christian bias, for it’s fiction; it is opinion and therefore open to argument. But a true story... who can argue with what happened? And in the case of a movie like *The Blind Side*, who wants to argue? It’s an inspiring story about people making a difference in the world. The movie doesn’t try to make a case for the existence of God, but rather, makes a pretty strong case for the existence of God in people. *The Blind Side* is a movie about putting “Christian” into practice.

The movie is basically about an upper class white family in Memphis, TN who takes in a black boy who is essentially homeless and all alone in the world. Not only do they take him in and provide for the basics, but they literally make him a son. But the examples of Christian charity, compassion, kindness, etc. go far beyond the parents who take him in. They have two children who also go out of their way to accept him and make him feel at home in their family. One teacher takes extra time to understand this new student who seems to be uninterested and unable to keep up. Her compassion affects the other teachers who are a little frustrated with the extra problems he poses for their classrooms. Eventually, because of her leading, his education is transformed and he is able to go to college. There are many more examples, but the point is that throughout the movie you see that any one person who shows a Christ-like example triggers a domino effect...from SJ on the playground to a teacher in the school to Leigh Ann in her social circles.

Along with the clear examples of Christian character, the movie also beautifully illustrates adoption. The Touhy’s make Michael a part of their family so thoroughly that there is no distinction between him and their other children. He is given his own room, a car, an education, new clothes... Leigh Ann clearly considers him her son, calls him her son. Not only do the parents accept him as their son, but their children accept him longingly and fully as their brother. The Bible says God sent Jesus “to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal 4:4-5). And again in Ephesians 1:5, “He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of his will.” The Touhy’s adopted Michael according to the kind intention of their will. Michael had done nothing to deserve adoption. He had nothing to really contribute. He required money to feed and clothe. He required special tutors to catch up in school. He shared little about his life or past with them and remained a mystery to them for some time. He wrecked the car they gave him and endangered their son in the process. And yet, they never once reminded him that he was adopted, he wasn’t really theirs, they didn’t have to do anything for him, or that he owed them anything. They treated him fully as if he was truly, actually their flesh and blood son. This is adoption as Christ offers to us.

This film is unique in that it is touted as true story, a sports story, an inspiring story...but it's not necessarily touted as a Christian story. Frankly, this is great because it means it will be seen by a broader audience than just the Christian audience. The movie is a little like the book of Esther. While God is all over the book of Esther, his name isn't actually mentioned. So too with this movie – the gospel isn't presented, Jesus isn't discussed, people aren't seen praying, repenting or beseeching God for help, and yet God is all over this storyline. This fact has two implications: 1. Non-Christians will be more likely to see it and absorb it without shutting down at the first mention of God. 2. Christians have the opportunity and I might even say responsibility to take advantage of this open door and have some intentional discussions about this movie with their non-believing friends.

Here are some discussion questions to help you get started.

On Christian Behavior

- What do you think motivated the central characters to act as they did?
- What examples of "Christian" behavior did you see in the movie – from what characters?
- Do you think you could have done what the Touhy's did?
- How far reaching were the effects of the Touhy's actions? They only adopted one boy, but did they affect more than that one boy? And do you ever feel that you cannot do enough to make a significant difference? How does the Touhy's example change your thinking on that?
- Do you think the world would be different if more people had the perspective of Christ-like living that the Touhy's did?

On Adoption

- How fully did the Touhy's make Michael their son?
- Beside the financial, physical benefits of being adopted into the Touhy family, what other differences did adoption make in Michael's life? (Emotional, mental, etc.)
- SJ and Collins also had to accept Michael's adoption. Do you think the Christian community does a good job of accepting those as brothers and sisters in Christ who God adopts into His family?
- Do you know that God is offering you adoption?
- What do you think it would be like to be adopted by the God of the universe, the God of the Bible? If you could believe it was true, how do you think it might change your life?
- Ephesians 1:3-14 talks about some of the benefits of being adopted as a child of God. Do you think your life would be different if you could believe this was true?
- Do you know how to become adopted into God's family? John 1:12 says, "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."