

“SAVED!” TRIES TO SMEAR CHRISTIANS

The MGM movie “Saved!” opened at select theaters on May 28. It was billed as a “sweetly subversive comedy” about an evangelical Christian high school. More accurately, it was an attempt to smear Christians.

The film features a Christian teenager who gets pregnant while attempting to reorient her homosexual friend; this follows a vision she has of Jesus, who appealed to her to “do everything you can to help him.” The girl’s mother has an affair with Pastor Skip, the school’s principal, and many experience a crisis of faith.

Louis Giovino, the league’s director of communications, saw the movie on May 21. Catholic League president William Donohue wrote the following news release based on Giovino’s report:

“Peter Adeo, president of worldwide marketing at MGM, has said, ‘I love the movie, but it is so hard to figure out who the audience is.’ He is correct. What he failed to say is this is why it will bomb.

“Not every movie with a religious theme has to be of the serious nature that ‘The Passion of the Christ’ is in order to succeed. ‘Sister Act,’ for example, succeeded as light comedy because it made people laugh without ever evincing an agenda. Not only is ‘Saved!’ not funny, the statement it makes about Christianity is strained and mildly offensive. To be specific, all the Christians are presented as good-natured but hopelessly narrow-minded persons who can’t negotiate life. On the other hand, the non-Christians are portrayed as tolerant and wise. And crude: the lone Jew remarks of Jesus on the cross, ‘Now that is what I call hung on a cross!’ She also comments that instead of seeking to be ‘born again,’ she has

decided 'not to serve Jesus after all, but to serve Satan.'

"MGM publicists have said the film was not made to offend Christians. But if this is true we would expect it to do very well in the Bible Belt. Not only will it not open there, if it bombs in places like New York and Los Angeles (not exactly religion-friendly environs), it'll never see the light of day elsewhere. Our guess is that the South will be 'Saved' from having to endure this flick."

On June 12, William Donohue debated the movie on the "Today Show" with the film's writer and director, Brian Dannelly. In the course of the debate, Donohue explained what was so offensive about the way the movie ended:

"What I'm a little bit tired of is the same kind of cruel caricature. And I love the way the movie ends. You know, here we have this idea that moral absolutes are bad. We need gray areas. Oh, really? Let me tell you something, Brian, you made this movie. Millions of people have lost their lives in the last century because of selling the idea that there are no moral absolutes. If there are no moral absolutes, we are back to different strokes for different people. We put pizzas into ovens in this country, they put Jews into ovens in Nazi Germany. Yet, that may not have been your intention, sir, but you're selling an idea which is toxic."

Dannelly did so poorly that he never showed up for a radio debate he had previously agreed to do latter that same day with Louis Giovino.