

CRIBB<S> NOTE – DECEMBER 6, 2009

Have you seen any good movies lately? Over the past couple of weeks my family has taken time to watch two incredible films. Michael Moore's, *Capitalism: A Love Story* is well worth the money. Its release in time for the Christmas rush is very appropriate as it reminds viewers just how much Americans love money.

We put dollars and cents ahead of almost every other valuable item or person. Moore demonstrates how seriously we take money and what we are willing to accept just to assure its currency floats freely without restriction or disruption. Perhaps a perverse beatitude is, "Blessed are those who have funds in abundance. They can ignore the poor."

Fortunately, the filmmaker is astute and gifted as both a storyteller and comedian. It is his comedic talents that make *Capitalism: A Love Story* digestible for an audience addicted to the constant flow of dollars filtering through our hands. Moore's ability to bring truth to the big screen is a mark of genius. To his credit, he allows audiences to enjoy the entertainment of movie watching as lessons on money manipulation stream into view. This is the perfect time of year to spend a couple of hours in the dark sanctuary of a cinema house to experience the handiwork of a movie-maker prophet.

Last week our family ventured into the citadel of motion pictures when we walked through the crowds outside the Chinese Theater on Hollywood Boulevard in the heart of Hollywood to see *This Is It*, the biopic about the final, life-filled night of the King of Pop. Hundreds of hours were filmed and recorded of Michael Jackson's rehearsals in preparation for what was dubbed his final curtain call; the 50 dates scheduled for his singing and dancing performances in Europe that would have begun last July.

This Is It exposes more than the "world's greatest entertainer's" energy and remarkable talent. It puts the soul, conscience, and commitment of Jackson on open display. His faith as a Jehovah's Witness is clearly and fully portrayed as he expresses his love for co-workers, performers, and his fans around the world.

Michael Jackson puts his imprint on every aspect of the astronomical, highly technical, and over-the-top special effects to achieve world-class theatrics. He demonstrates masterful knowledge of music, movie-making, and stage presence.

This Is It captures the crucial details of an artist who accepts nothing less than the upper limits of human potential to attain the highest quality of performance standards.

Both shows from the two Michaels offer moments to pause and consider essential life lessons. Michael Moore ends his movie with a call and a challenge to take action that will change the callous abuse of laborers and honest people who have lost their wages and savings because of corrupt politicians and money misers who love capital far more than they care for human beings.

Michael Jackson pours his soul into every step he flings on stage. He uses his voice to champion the causes of equality and ecology. He experimented with his body to erase racial and gender boundaries. He sought to define 'human nature' in new terms that exploded stereotypes and mental limitations. *This Is It* ends with a musical montage intended to encourage viewers to see themselves in larger-than-life possibilities.

Michael Jackson tells his listeners time is running out for us to end our greed and begin the necessary task of healing the world from environmental catastrophe.

Two contemporary pop cultural films are sirens with messages we might expect to hear from the pulpit. Truly, God works in mysterious ways. Are we willing to watch, listen, and act? Once we leave the darkness, we will be changed and charged to do more with our lives.

-Pastor Art Cribbs