

Daniel agitates, Joseph placates
Book of Daniel
By J B Leftwich

The minister of my church, Martin Thielen, began a new series of sermons during the same week that NBC began a new series of quasi religious programs.

Our minister's first sermon in this series was more profound and far more entertaining than the NBC's introduction to its series.

Joseph was and is the topic of our preacher's sermons. *The Book of Daniel* is the title of the NBC series.

In his first sermon, our minister, dressed in a white robe, marched down the center isle to the pulpit, assumed the identity of Joseph and narrated the story in first person. His story was so compelling that I awaited every word albeit I have known the adventures of Joseph since my childhood.

It's a fascinating narrative, perked with the story-telling skills of the early Israelites and dramatized with the story-telling skills of a minister who knows how to grab and maintain attention.

The Book of Daniel is Hollywood's version of a modern-day minister, complete with a dysfunctional family and the occasional appearance of a Jesus conceived by the holy producer and birthed by pseudo intellectuals of West Coast movie colony. Even so, this Jesus wasn't as much offensive as flippant.

Daniel the minister is besieged with personal problems. His oldest son is gay, his teen-age daughter and her boyfriend are engaging in misconduct in the backseat of an automobile, his bishop doesn't approve of the minister's sermons, and the minister is a pill-popper. He is more like the biblical Job than the biblical Daniel.

Even so, many of these maladies are not original. *Commander-in-Chief*, which details the story of the first female president and her family, features similar family problems but not to the extent of the the fictional Daniel's challenges.

Personally, I viewed about half of the two-hour *Daniel* premier before aborting the program and switching to an ancient rerun of *Star Trek*. I jumped ship, not because of the utter stupidity and heavy-handed theme offensive to many Christians, but because the show was boring. Who wants to watch a family haranguing and badgering each other?

I think most Christians are aware of the reoccurring politically correct agenda -- frequently insensitive to Christian values -- from Hollywood and simply turn off programs of this genre. But enough viewers fired at Nashville Channel 4, the NBC outlet, to prompt station management to cancel the *Daniel* series.

I question the value of pressuring a television station or a network to cancel programs. The best control of objectionable programming is the remote control. Simply press the "off" button or change channels.

Channel 4's cancellation of *Daniel* quickly brought reaction from the howlers who blame reaction from middle America on the undefined but vulnerable "far right." In my opinion, the adverse reaction to this

TV program came from average Christian Joes and Janes who have little knowledge of the legendary far right, and, if they are aware, choose to ignore or separate from it.

Another observation: The Hollywood community is indeed populated with highly intelligent and creative people. While I write about the agenda-pushing Hollywood, I also think of the great movies, Such as:

Ghandi, Grapes of Wrath, The Color Purple, Annie Get Your Gun, Field of Dreams, Gone with the Wind, Patton, Ben-Hur, The Graduate, ET, To Kill a Mockingbird, and, more recently, Secondhand Lions and Seabiscuit.

I am writing this while intermittingly thinking of the Joseph saga and my minister's next sermon when he resumes the fascinating story of a great biblical character. The Old Testament may have the greatest cast of heroic characters ever gathered in one book. Who could equal Moses, chronicled by Cecil B. DeMille in *The Ten Commandments*?

Then there are Jacob and Solomon, two Alpha males and biblical favorites.

Perhaps the greatest biblical character of all was David who rose from boy shepherd to king. David the poet and musician. David the athlete and boy warrior. David the murderer and womanizer.

Who needs TV, anyway? For greater entertainment, read the biblical books of *Genesis, Exodus, Kings, Chronicles, Samuel.*

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