An Evaluation of LDS and Non-LDS Reactions toward a BYU Produced (Non-Member Oriented) Film

James H. Wilson
Brigham Young University - Provo

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd

Part of the Communication Commons, Missions and World Christianity Commons, and the Mormon Studies Commons

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation
Wilson, James H., "An Evaluation of LDS and Non-LDS Reactions toward a BYU Produced (Non-Member Oriented) Film" (1968). Theses and Dissertations. 5217. https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/5217

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
AN EVALUATION OF LDS AND NON-LDS REACTIONS

TOWARD A BYU PRODUCED

(NON-MEMBER ORIENTED) FILM

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Communications

Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

James H. Wilson

May 1968
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My appreciation is expressed to Owen S. Rich who suggested the topic to me and willingly provided guidance throughout the study.

I am also appreciative of my parents who provided the means for me to obtain a graduate degree.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for the Study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study design</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test procedure</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The questionnaire</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sample</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF RELATED FILM RESEARCH</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Film Research in the United States</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude and Opinion Change</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motion Pictures--An Instrument For Reinforcement</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience Variables</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### III. VIEWER PROFILE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA</td>
<td>Opinion Measurement</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concept of God.</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>God's communication with earth</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concept of a pre-mortal existence</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Reactions to the Film</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reactions to the Technical Aspects of the film</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The life after death scene</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The resurrected Christ scene</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The pre-mortal existence scene</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Comments About the Film</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments from LDS students</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments from non-LDS students</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### V. SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Further Research</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. A Viewer Profile of the Test Sample</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Concept of God Question</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. God's Communication With Earth Question</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Concept of a Pre-Mortal Existence Question</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. General Reactions to the Film</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Evaluation of Life After Death Scene</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Evaluation of the Resurrected Christ Scene</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Evaluation of the Pre-Mortal Existence Scene</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) utilizes many forms of the mass media to communicate to its 2,500,000 members. In addition to ownership of a daily newspaper, television, AM, FM and shortwave stations, the Church (as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be referred to in this thesis) owns and operates its own motion picture studio.

This studio, The Brigham Young University Motion Picture Studio, was organized in 1953, by Dr. Ernest L. Wilkinson, president of the Brigham Young University.

The Brigham Young University Motion Picture Studio serves the Church and the Brigham Young University by producing films and film strips.

A majority of these films are instructional and designed to appeal to the members as well as promote various programs of the Church.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. In recent years, the Brigham Young University Motion Picture Studio has been
producing films with the specific purpose of appealing to the non-member or non-LDS (an abbreviation for Latter-day Saint or Mormon) person.

As a part of the Church's missionary program, these films are designed to persuade, convince and bring about conversion to the teachings of the Mormon Church. Consequently, in many phases of film production there is a bias factor. Members of the Church (employees of the Brigham Young University Motion Picture Studio) are endeavoring to determine the most effective themes and techniques to utilize in communicating to a non-LDS audience. The member, with his set attitudes and opinions, is attempting to understand and persuade the non-member.

Because of this bias or slant, the following questions can be raised for examination:

1. Does an LDS produced non-member or missionary oriented film effectively communicate to the non-LDS person?

2. Do LDS produced films, designed as a missionary tool, cause a shift of attitudes within the non-member?

3. How do non-LDS people respond to the technical aspects (acting, visual effects) of an LDS produced film?

To provide a basis for comparison, these same questions may be directed to the LDS person:
1. How do LDS people respond to a non-member oriented film produced by the Brigham Young University Motion Picture Studio?

2. Is there any correlation between LDS and non-LDS reactions to a non-member oriented film?

3. Is there any correlation between LDS and non-LDS reactions to the technical aspects (acting, visual effects) of an LDS missionary oriented film?

The final question which may be posed is: What is the predicted value of non-member oriented or missionary films?

The purpose of this study is to determine through a comparative analysis the reactions of LDS and non-LDS people as they respond to a Brigham Young University missionary oriented film production.

The operational hypotheses are stated in a negative form with the purpose of this research to test each hypothesis. The hypotheses are as follows:

1. There is no significant difference between pre-test results and post-test results when applied to a non-LDS audience as it reacts to a specific Brigham Young University produced (non-LDS oriented) film.

2. There is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test results when applied to an LDS audience
as it reacts to a specific Brigham Young University produced (non-LDS oriented) film.

3. There is little correlation or comparison between reactions of an LDS audience and a non-LDS audience as they view a specific Brigham Young University produced (non-LDS) oriented film.

II. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Since the organization of the Brigham Young University Motion Picture Studio in 1953, seventy-six films have been completed. Employees of the studio have assumed that these films have been effective in communicating their message to the intended audiences. However, formal research has never been conducted to measure specifically the degree of a religious film's effectiveness.

In summary, the Brigham Young University Motion Picture Studio, a communicator, is in need of feedback or research to determine the effectiveness of films produced specifically for the non-LDS audiences.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

---

1Brigham Young University Motion Picture Studio, official records of the Studio, 1968.
The following definitions are given to provide clarity and avoid lengthy repetitions in the text of the thesis.

**Attitude.** The most complete and authoritative definition of attitude, as accepted by modern social scientists, is offered by Gordon W. Allport:

A mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related.\(^2\)

A complete definition of attitude would include the following concepts:

1. An attitude is a predisposition or mental state of readiness—to respond to a given stimuli.
2. An attitude is the product of an individual's experience. It is organized through experience.
3. An attitude is dynamic; it exerts an influence upon an individual's response by seeking, selecting and rejecting stimuli.
4. An attitude is not directly observable. Only overt behavior is observable.

**BYU.** The abbreviation "BYU" is used in place of Brigham Young University.

---

LDS. The abbreviation "LDS" (Latter-day Saints) will hereafter refer to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Motion Picture Studio. Hereafter, the Brigham Young University Motion Picture Studio will be referred to as the "Motion Picture Studio."

Opinion. Hartley, Hartley and Hart, state that an opinion is of a different psychological order than attitude; opinions differ in their functional relation to behavior. Opinions are based on issues, uncertainty, doubt and conflict. When faced with an issue or conflict situation, an individual draws upon past experiences, bringing to bear attitudes that seem to be relevant. Therefore, opinions are composed of attitudes.

As the individual attempts to cope with the situation, an inner "attitude conversation" takes place within the person. In other words, the many accumulated attitudes which apply to the situation interact with one another. It is in this "attitude conversation" that opinion arises as a mediating factor.

---

3 Ibid., p. 222.
4 Ibid.
Because attitudes are not directly observable and because they are deeply imbedded within the unconscious mind, they are not easily measured. This research study has not dealt with complex attitude measuring devices; therefore, the results of the study will be presented as opinion and opinion change.

IV. DELIMITATIONS

This film evaluation study is the first research conducted to evaluate a non-member oriented religious film produced by the BYU Motion Picture Studio. The study is designed as an approach or a first step in testing the stated hypotheses.

No attempt is being made to provide final evidence or a solution as to whether or not a BYU produced non-member oriented film can or cannot change opinions of non-LDS people towards the doctrines of the Mormon Church.

The study deals with a specialized sample and endeavors to establish a method and show trends for further study.

V. LIMITATIONS

The film evaluation study was tested upon college students in the Long Beach-Los Angeles area of Southern
California. In order to administer accurately the test, it was necessary to eliminate as many variables as possible.

As the sample was designated with specific qualifications of age, sex, locality, and religion, it was difficult to locate such a sample within the Southern California area. University administrators were reluctant to permit film evaluation tests to be administered during class hours because of the religious message of the film. Consequently, the sample obtained was small.

The small sample does not permit statistical verification of the test results; therefore, the sample size is one limitation of the film evaluation study.

However, as stated in the delimitations, the study was not designed to provide specific results with which to generalize predicted behavior of other films and other test samples. The conclusions of this study are limited to the samples tested.

VI. METHODOLOGY

Study design. The film Man's Search For Happiness was selected as the test film for the evaluation study.

Man's Search For Happiness, completed in 1964, was the first major film to be produced by the BYU Motion
Picture Studio specifically for non-LDS people.

The thirteen minute film was utilized in the Mormon Pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1964.

*Man's Search For Happiness* was based on the theme of where men came from before this earth life, why they are here on earth, and where they go after death. As the film endeavors to answer these questions, it gives an explanation of the origin and beliefs of the Mormon Church.

In order to test reactions of the audience to the film, a questionnaire was designed with a pre-test and post-test. The questionnaire was printed in a booklet form with pages three, four and five stapled together.

**Test procedure**. Each respondent was given a test booklet and asked to answer the questions on pages one and two. The respondents were then asked to view the film and pay close attention to the following aspects of the film: (1) special visual effects, (2) sound effects and music, (3) performance of actors, (4) costumes, and (5) script.

When the film showing was finished, the respondents were asked to remove the staple from their test booklets and complete the questions on pages three, four and five.

The pages were stapled to prevent the respondents from reading the second half or post-test before the designated time. The staples, however, did not prevent
the students from referring to the first half or pre-test and making changes in their initial answers.

The students were not told at any time during the test who produced the film or for what reasons the film was produced. The film was shown without the title or introduction.

The introduction was not shown with the film because the test administrator felt that it would cause many non-LDS students to judge or evaluate the Mormon Church rather than evaluating the film and its content.

However, by not showing the introduction, the LDS students were placed in a different test environment than the non-LDS students were exposed to. Through their activities in the Church, the majority of the LDS students were aware that Man's Search For Happiness had been produced by the Church for the New York World's Fair. All but one non-LDS student were completely unfamiliar with the film production.

The questionnaire. The questionnaire, as previously stated, was designed with two sections—a pre-test and post-test in order to measure opinion change. These questions were:
1. **CONCEPT OF GOD.** I believe in the existence of God...

   ___a. agree strongly
   ___b. agree moderately
   ___c. disagree moderately
   ___d. disagree strongly
   ___e. no opinion

2. **GOD'S COMMUNICATION WITH EARTH.** Do you believe that God communicates with people on the earth today?

   ___a. yes
   ___b. no
   ___c. uncertain

3. **CONCEPT OF A PRE-MORTAL EXISTENCE.** I believe in a pre-existent (pre-mortal) existence of man before this earth life...

   ___a. agree strongly
   ___b. agree moderately
   ___c. disagree moderately
   ___d. disagree strongly
   ___e. no opinion

It was felt that if the film *Man's Search For Happiness* could influence the viewer, it would appear as a difference in response to any or all of the above questions in the pre-tests and post-tests.

The respondents were asked to give their general reaction to the film as well as express their reaction to the following scenes: (1) pre-mortal existence scene (portrays life in a pre-mortal or pre-existent state of being), (2) life after death scene (portrays existence
in life after the mortal existence), and (3) resurrected Christ scene (Christ appears to his disciples after the resurrection.

The respondents were asked to give their opinion as to the effectiveness of the following technical aspects of the film: (1) acting, (2) music and sound effects, (3) script, (4) visual effects, and (5) costumes.

The sample. The sample was divided into two religious groups: members of the Mormon Church (LDS) and non-LDS.

In selecting the sample it was necessary to select a homogeneous group to eliminate as many variables as possible.

College students were selected because of their similarities in age and because of the convenience of gathering data from a classroom situation.

Responses from the non-LDS groups were obtained from the California State College at Long Beach. This college was selected because of the co-operation of Dr. Hugh Moorehead, chairman of the Radio and Television Department. Dr. Moorehead permitted the film evaluation study to be conducted during class hours in several of the regularly scheduled classes in his department.

The classes from which the non-LDS students were
selected are: Speech 305 (Broadcast Programming and Audience) and Speech 335 (Persuasion).

Because of their educational background, the non-LDS students were more knowledgeable of techniques of persuasion than were the LDS students.

The test groups for the LDS students were obtained from the California State College at Long Beach Institute of Religion and the Long Beach City College Institute of Religion. The Institutes of Religion are a part of the Department of Institutes and Seminaries of Religion of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The institute groups referred to in this study met regularly at a designated place away from the campus.

A total of sixty-four students was tested in the study. Of the total, thirty-four responses came from the non-LDS groups and thirty from the LDS groups.

Reliability. As stated in the limitations, the sample size of sixty-four is too small to substantiate accurately the results with statistical analysis. The sample was selective for this particular study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED FILM RESEARCH

The purpose of this chapter is to bring previous film research to the attention of the reader and show its relationship to this study.

History of film research in the United States. Instructional film research in the United States began about the same time as World War I was beginning. An exact date of the beginning of this research has not been established. ¹

The first large scale film research study was conducted in 1919, by Karl S. Lashley and John B. Watson.

The Lashley and Watson study was sponsored by the United States Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board for the purpose of "investigating the informational and educative effect upon the public of certain motion pictures used in various campaigns for the control,

rcpression, and elimination of veneral diseases.\(^2\)

Lashley and Watson selected the film *Fit to Win*, a six-reel feature portraying the effects of veneral disease upon U.S. Army personnel. The film utilized appeals of fear, desire for social acceptance, and parental hope and affection.

*Fit to Win* was produced to reduce the spread of veneral disease among the test subjects.

The film was shown to five thousand persons. Test results were obtained from these persons by pre-test and post-test questionnaires. Also interviews were conducted with thirty-five men from six to eighteen months after the film showing.

Results of the questionnaires and interviews indicated that the film was successful in conveying information on veneral disease to the test subjects. However, the film had no lasting effect on the behavior of the test subjects. The film, *Fit to Win*, did not cause the test subjects to utilize preventive measures against veneral disease in their sexual behavior.

Since the Lashley and Watson film study, over two hundred film research studies have been conducted in the United States.\(^3\) Several of these studies will be

\(^2\)Ibid.
examined to demonstrate their relevance and value to this study of LDS and non-LDS reactions to a BYU produced film.

**Attitude and opinion change.** One of the specific questions to be researched in this paper is: Does a motion picture change the attitudes or opinions of the viewer? Several studies will be reviewed which have dealt with this question.

Charles F. Hoban, Jr. and Edward B. van Ormer have surveyed nearly all film research from 1918 to 1950, in a report which is titled *Instructional Film Research (Rapid Mass Learning) 1918-1950*. The report, which was sponsored jointly by the Department of the Army and the Department of the Navy, includes a twenty page review of research on motivation, attitudes and opinions. Within this chapter, numerous studies and tests are referred to which have been conducted by the Department of the Army and the Department of the Navy with the specific purpose to determine if attitudes and opinions can be changed by a motion picture. A variety of film types were utilized in these tests including documentary, entertainment and informational films. The tests were designed to measure the effect of films on social conduct, academic motivation, 

---

military motivation, social attitudes, specific attitudes, general attitudes and opinions.

In summarizing the results of the survey of film research, Hoban and van Ormer state:

In the light of the research data and psychological theory, it is becoming increasingly evident that the ability of any medium of communication, including motion pictures, to modify motivation, attitudes, and opinions lies not so much in the medium itself, but in the relationship of the content and bias of the medium to (1) the personality structure of the perceiving individuals, and (2) the social environment of the audience.

Any medium of communication is exactly that—a medium of communication. In the process of communication the role of a communicator is not to impress his interpretation of experience on an audience. Rather, it involves the reaction of the audience to the communicator's interpretation of experience which he transmits by means of symbols. Hence, the content of communication, the audience predisposition, and the social milieu must all be consistent and mutually reinforcing if the motion picture is to influence motivation, attitudes, and opinions.4

Hoban and van Ormer state in their summary that the audience predisposition (attitudes) and the social environment must be consistent with the content of the film if attitudes or opinions are to be influenced. The report also states that, "The actual influence of a given motion picture is frequently less than its anticipated influence."5

4 Hoban, Jr., and van Ormer, op. cit., p. 5-20.
5 Ibid., p. 9-9.
Hoban and Ormer conclude that a single motion picture is limited in its influence on attitudes and opinions. The researchers state:

There is little or no evidence that the experience of a motion picture, in and of itself, is a sole determinant of certain thoughts, feelings, or actions. Instead, the evidence indicates that prior knowledge, attitudes, dispositions, and values relating to the subject of the film enter into the individual's interpretation of the message of the film and its meaning.\(^6\)

The Encyclopedia of Educational Research edited by Chester W. Harris and published in 1960, gives a comprehensive review of all film research conducted with educational or instructional films. Mr. Harris utilized the writings of more than three hundred film researchers to write the chapter on film research for the encyclopedia.

In summarizing the effect of instructional films upon attitudes and opinions, The Encyclopedia of Educational Research states the following:

Considerable attention has been given to the study of motivation, interests, attitudes, and opinions as modified by films. In general it might be concluded that films can modify motivations, interests, attitudes, and opinions if they are designed to stimulate or reinforce existing beliefs of the audience. There is, however, little evidence that films can make

\(^{6}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 9-9.\)
changes if they are contrary to the existing belief, personality structure, or social environment of the individual in the audience.  

The Encyclopedia of Educational Research indicates that motion pictures, as tested, can modify opinions if they are designed to stimulate or reinforce existing beliefs.

Motion pictures—*an instrument for reinforcement.* Film research studies generally agree that motion pictures are most effective as an instrument for reinforcement.

Hoban and van Ormer explain:

Films have greatest influence when their content reinforces and extends previous knowledge, attitudes, and motivations of the audience. They have least influence when previous knowledge is inadequate, and when their content is antagonistic or contrary to the existing attitudes and motivation of the audience.

Dr. Joseph T. Klapper, Director of Social Research for the Columbia Broadcasting System, wrote in his article "The Social Effects of Mass Communication" the following:

Communications research has consistently revealed, for example, that people tend in the main to read, watch, or listen to communications which present points of view with which they are themselves in sympathy and

---


8 Hoban, Jr., and van Ormer, *op. cit.*, p. 9-3.
tend to avoid communications with a different hue.\textsuperscript{9} Dr. Klapper does not rule out the possibility that motion pictures or any form of mass communication could affect one's ideas or opinions. Klapper believes that the "factors which promote reinforcing effects do not function with 100 percent efficiency." He feels that if a person were predisposed towards change, the message of the mass media could influence that person to formulate a new opinion.\textsuperscript{10} If a person were neutral towards an issue, the mass media could influence an individual to accept a persuasive message from the mass media. Dr. Klapper explains:

For example, a person may, for one reason or another, find his previous beliefs, his previous attitudes, and his accustomed mode of behavior to be no longer psychologically satisfying. He might, for example, become disillusioned with his political party, or his church, . . . Such a person is likely to seek new faiths, or to experiment with new kinds of music. He has become, as it were, predisposed to change. . . . His new predispositions will make him susceptible to the influence of those same communications from which he was previously effectively guarded.\textsuperscript{11}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p. 70. \\
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 71.
\end{flushleft}
In an article titled "Mass Media and Persuasion," Dr. Klapper explains that evidence exists which supports the belief that the mass media can persuade and alter opinions; however, he also points out that research gives equal support to the belief that the mass media has little or no effect on opinion change. Dr. Klapper writes:

Put another and more general way, it appears that the mere fact of propaganda communications by any medium is not the sole criterion of propaganda effect. Other conditions apparently determine whether or not the persuasion will be successful.\textsuperscript{12}

**Audience variables.** Early film researchers believed that film audiences reacted the same to a given motion picture; however, continued investigation has proven this assumption incorrect. Hoban and van Ormer write:

Actually there is a wide range of differences in any audience; the more heterogeneous the audience, the greater the range. . . . These differences in individual characteristics cause people to respond differently to instructional films.\textsuperscript{13}

C. W. Allen, writing about audience variables in the *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, states:


\textsuperscript{13}Hoban, Jr., and van Ormer, *op. cit.*, p. 9-4.
The earlier concept of the audience as a kind of atomistic mass, subject to persuasion or instruction by powerful communication mediums, is being viewed with increased skepticism. We seem to be gradually approaching the position by Carpenter (41) when he expressed the opinion that the effects of film instruction, within certain limits, depend more upon the characteristics of the perceivers, individuals and audiences, than upon the elemental variables within the films themselves. 14

Hoban and van Ormer discuss six variables which film researchers have identified as affecting differences in individual responses to motion pictures. These variables are: (1) film literacy (the ability to learn from films), (2) intelligence, (3) level of formal education, (4) age, (5) sex, and (6) predisposition. Five of the variables are discussed in further detail by Hoban and van Ormer:

1. Film literacy. . . . The psychological nature of this ability is not clearly understood at this time, but, probably, as an individual becomes more familiar with the motion picture medium (as measured by the number of movies he has seen), his ability to learn from a film tends to increase also.

3. Level of formal education. . . . Students of below-average intelligence learn more from films than from verbal materials, but students of above-average intelligence often learn proportionately more in terms of possible learning, and perhaps different kinds of responses than do the below-average students, provided, of course, that the films do not impose a ceiling on the amount of learning possible.

4. Age. . . . As a variable, age is important to the extent that breadth of experience, interests, resistance to excitability, and the leveling and declining of mental alertness vary in different ways with age in an otherwise homogeneous group.

5. Sex. . . . Most likely, sex differences in responses to films are largely the result of the values, activities, occupations, and other social norms assigned in the American culture to males and females.

6. Predisposition. A person's predisposition, or prejudice, toward the subject of a film influences the degree to which he accepts the point of view and interpretation of the film, and direction of the effect of the intended influence of the film. . . . As a result of predisposition, individuals vary in the direction and degree of their responses to films, and any one individual may respond differently to single items in a film. Boomerang effects (reinforcement of the individual's prevailing mind-set) may occur when the bias of the film is contrary to the individual's predispositions.15

Summary. In summarizing the Review of Film Research, the following conclusions can be made about the motion picture and its effect upon the attitudes and opinions of an individual:

1. Motion pictures generally reinforce the existing attitudes and opinions of an individual.

2. There is little evidence to support the belief that motion pictures can change opinions when the film content is contrary to the existing opinions of the audience.

15 Hoban, Jr., and van Ormer, op. cit., p. 9-4 and 9-5.
3. Film content, which is contrary to the existing opinions of the audience, will cause a "Boomerang Effect." The individual's prevailing attitudes will be reinforced.

4. Individuals who are predisposed toward change can be persuaded to accept a new viewpoint or opinion by a motion picture or other form of the mass media.

5. Individuals differ in their reaction to a motion picture and its content.

6. The variation of audience reaction is dependent upon certain variables. Six variables identified by film researchers are: (1) film literacy, (2) intelligence, (3) level of formal education, (4) age, (5) sex, and (6) predispositions.
CHAPTER III

VIEWER PROFILE

This chapter gives a profile of those persons selected as a sample for the study of LDS and non-LDS reactions towards the film *Man's Search For Happiness*.

As stated previously, all of the individuals selected for the test sample were college students attending Long Beach City College and California State College at Long Beach. The two colleges are located in the city of Long Beach, California.

Table I gives a statistical profile of the test sample.

Class standing. The LDS students were primarily lower classmen (43% freshmen) while the non-LDS students were predominately upper classmen (41% seniors).

Age. The LDS students as a group were two or three years younger than the non-LDS students.

Sex. The Latter-day Saint students were fairly evenly represented as to sex (43.3% male, 53.3% female—one student did not respond). The non-LDS students were predominately male (61.8% male, 38.2% female).

Locality of residence. The LDS and non-LDS students
### TABLE I

**A VIEWER PROFILE OF THE TEST SAMPLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LDS Students</th>
<th>Non-LDS Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class standing</strong></td>
<td><strong>Freshman</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.3% Freshman</td>
<td>0.0% Freshman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.3% Sophomores</td>
<td>2.9% Sophomores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.3% Juniors</td>
<td>38.2% Juniors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7% Seniors</td>
<td>41.2% Seniors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.4% Graduates</td>
<td>17.7% Graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.3% 18 or under</td>
<td>0.0% 18 or under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.3% 19 or 20</td>
<td>26.5% 19 or 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.7% 21 or 22</td>
<td>32.4% 21 or 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0% 23 or 24</td>
<td>23.5% 23 or 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.7% 25 or over</td>
<td>17.6% 25 or over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.3% Male</td>
<td>61.8% Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53.3% Female</td>
<td>38.2% Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locality</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Los Angeles</td>
<td>12 Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Long Beach</td>
<td>11 Long Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Orange County</td>
<td>3 Orange County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Torrance</td>
<td>1 Torrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 San Bernadino</td>
<td>1 Seal Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Pico Rivera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 South Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Buena Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Downey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Gardena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Altadena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Santa Ana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
<td>(percent of the total group--LDS and non-LDS combined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.9% LDS</td>
<td>25.0% Protestant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.5% Catholic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.3% Unaffiliated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.7% Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.6% Jew</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE I (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LDS Students</th>
<th>Non-LDS Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.3% Extremely active</td>
<td>20.6% Extremely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0  Very active</td>
<td>11.8  Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7  Somewhat active</td>
<td>17.7  Somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0  Occasionally</td>
<td>38.1  Occasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0  Never attend</td>
<td>11.8  Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.3% Very frequently</td>
<td>14.7% Very freq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.7  Frequently</td>
<td>38.2  Frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56.7  Occasionally</td>
<td>44.2  Occasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.3  Sometimes</td>
<td>2.9  Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0  Never</td>
<td>0.0  Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

were all residents in the Long Beach-Los Angeles area with the exceptions noted on Table I.

**Religion.** Of the total group of LDS and non-LDS students, the LDS students represented 46.9% of the total. The non-LDS students were represented by Protestant (25%), Catholic (12.5%), Jewish (1.6%), and unaffiliated (9.3%) church memberships.

**Church activity.** The LDS students indicated that they were active in their church. More than 93% of the LDS students were either extremely or very active in their church.

The non-LDS students indicated that they were less active than the LDS students. Only 20% of the non-LDS
students indicated that they were extremely active in their respective churches.

Film attendance. The non-LDS students indicated that they attended more movies than the LDS students. The difference between the two groups, however, was not very great. See Table I.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Chapter IV gives a report on the tabulated data of the film evaluation study. The results will be examined and analyzed.

Opinion measurement. As stated in Part VI (Methodology) of Chapter I, three religious concept questions were designed in the questionnaire to measure or detect if opinion change occurred within the audience as a result of viewing the film Man's Search For Happiness. The religious concept questions (Concept of God, God's Communication With Earth and Concept of A Pre-mortal Existence) were asked in both the pre-tests and post-tests. The following results were obtained.

Concept of God. As may be noted in Table II, the LDS students responded with one hundred percent agreement that God does exist. The only difference in the pre-test and post-test results was that one student did not answer the post-test question.

In the pre-test, the non-LDS students generally agreed (61.8% agree strongly) that God does exist. The post-test results were nearly the same responses with a few
TABLE II

CONCEPT OF GOD QUESTION

**QUESTION:** I believe in the existence of God...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Non-LDS Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LDS Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0% Agree strongly</td>
<td>61.8% Agree strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.5 Agree moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.9 Disagree moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.9 Disagree strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.9 No opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96.9% Agree strongly (one student did not respond)</td>
<td>61.8% Agree strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29.4 Agree moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0 Disagree moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.9 Disagree strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.9 No opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

exceptions noted on the table.

**God's communication with earth.** Table III indicates that the LDS students were in one hundred percent agreement that God does communicate with people on the earth today. There was no change between pre-test and post-test responses to this question by the LDS students.

The non-LDS students responded in the pre-test question with 44.1% indicating that they believed God does
TABLE III

GOD'S COMMUNICATION WITH EARTH QUESTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LDS Students</strong></td>
<td>100.0% Yes</td>
<td>100.0% Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-LDS Students</strong></td>
<td>44.1% Yes</td>
<td>52.9% Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23.5  No</td>
<td>23.6  No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32.4  Uncertain</td>
<td>23.5  Uncertain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

communicate with people on the earth today. After viewing the film, the non-LDS students indicated by 52.9% that they believed God communicated with the earth. The change occurred among those who responded with an "Uncertain" in the pre-test. After viewing the film, these students took a "Yes" position.

Concept of a pre-mortal existence. The LDS students were in one hundred percent agreement in both pre-tests and post-tests that they believed in a pre-existent form of life. The one exception is noted in Table IV.
TABLE IV

CONCEPT OF A PRE-MORTAL EXISTENCE QUESTION

QUESTION: I believe in a pre-existent (pre-mortal) existence of man before this earth life...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>LDS Students</th>
<th>Non-LDS Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100.0% Agree strongly</td>
<td>8.8% Agree strongly</td>
<td>2.9 Agree moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.8 Disagree moderately</td>
<td>35.3 Disagree strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44.1 No opinion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>LDS Students</th>
<th>Non-LDS Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96.6% Agree strongly (one student did not respond)</td>
<td>5.9% Agree strongly</td>
<td>11.8 Agree moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.8 Disagree moderately</td>
<td>38.1 Disagree strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32.4 No opinion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-LDS students indicated in the pre-test by a majority that they either "Disagree strongly" (35.3%) or were of "No opinion" (44.2%) in response to the question regarding the pre-existence or pre-mortal state of man.

After viewing the film, non-LDS students indicated in the post-test some change in their response to this question. Those students with an "Agree moderately"
response were more numerous in the post-test (11.8%) than in the pre-test (2.9%). A nine percent change was noted among the "No opinion" responses. All other responses were similar to the pre-test results.

In reviewing pre-test and post-test responses to the three religious concept questions, it may be stated that generally there was little change in responses by either the LDS or the non-LDS students after viewing the film Man's Search For Happiness.

Some shift in responses was noted among those non-LDS students who were undecided or of no opinion before viewing the film. This change or shift of opinion may be attributed to the film, however, the test sample is not large enough to place any statistical significance upon this change.

The most notable difference in response to the religious concept questions was observed in the difference between the LDS and non-LDS responses. In every question, including pre-test and post-test, the LDS students were in complete agreement in giving affirmative responses to the questions. The non-LDS students, however, were divided in their responses and were particularly negative to the concept of the pre-mortal existence.

General reactions to the film. After viewing the
TABLE V

GENERAL REACTIONS TO THE FILM

QUESTION: My general or overall feeling about the film, Man's Search For Happiness is...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LDS Students</th>
<th>Non-LDS Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90.0% Very positive</td>
<td>20.6% Very positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0 Positive</td>
<td>26.5 Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23.5 Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.7 Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.8 Very negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.9 Undecided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

film, the students were asked to give their general or overall reaction to the film Man's Search For Happiness. This was the first question asked in the post-test section of the questionnaire. See Table V.

The LDS students were one hundred percent either "Positive" or "Very positive" in response to this question.

The non-LDS students responded by 47.1% either "Positive" or "Very positive". Of the non-LDS responses, 14.7% indicated they were "Negative" and 23.5% were "Neutral."

Reactions to the technical aspects of the film. In the post-test section of the questionnaire, the LDS and
non-LDS students were asked to evaluate the technical aspects of three specific scenes in the film *Man's Search For Happiness*. The students were asked to evaluate the acting, visual effects, and to give their personal reactions to the scenes. The three scenes selected for a technical evaluation were: (1) the life after death scene, (2) the resurrected Christ scene, and (3) the pre-mortal existence scene.

These scenes were selected because of their portrayal of religious concepts. The scene evaluations provided another means to determine if the film affected the students' opinion of the religious concepts.

The *life after death* scene. Table VI indicates that the LDS students were more positive in their response to the acting and visual effects than were the non-LDS students. The LDS students indicated by 76.7% that they felt the acting was "Excellent." Only 23.5% of the non-LDS students indicated that the acting was "Excellent."

In response to the visual effects, 86.7% of the LDS students indicated that the visual effects were "Excellent." Only 38.3% of the non-LDS students gave the visual effects an "Excellent" rating.

The *resurrected Christ* scene. As Table VII indicates on page 37, the LDS students were generally more positive
TABLE VI

EVALUATION OF LIFE AFTER DEATH SCENE

QUESTION: Regarding the scene when grandfather leaves the grave and is received in the "here after" by friends, I felt...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acting</th>
<th>LDS Students</th>
<th>Non-LDS Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76.7% Excellent 23.3 Good</td>
<td>23.5% Excellent 35.3 Good 32.4 Fair 8.8 Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual Effects</th>
<th>LDS Students</th>
<th>Non-LDS Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86.7% Excellent 13.3 Good</td>
<td>38.3% Excellent 23.5 Good 35.3 Fair 2.9 Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Reactions</th>
<th>LDS Students</th>
<th>Non-LDS Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>93.5% Very positive 3.3 Positive 3.4 No opinion</td>
<td>17.7% Very positive 23.5 Positive 38.2 Negative 11.8 Very negative 8.8 No opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

toward the acting and visual effects of the resurrected Christ scene than were the non-LDS students. However, in
### TABLE VII

**EVALUATION OF THE RESURRECTED CHRIST SCENE**

**QUESTION:** Regarding the scene when the resurrected Christ appeared to His disciples, I felt...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Acting</th>
<th>Visual Effects</th>
<th>Personal Reactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LDS Students</td>
<td>Non-LDS Students</td>
<td>LDS Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53.3% Excellent</td>
<td>35.3% Excellent</td>
<td>70.0% Very positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40.0% Good</td>
<td>47.0% Good</td>
<td>38.3% Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3% Fair</td>
<td>11.8% Fair</td>
<td>5.8% Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(One student did not respond)</td>
<td>5.9% Poor</td>
<td>5.8% Very negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17.7% No opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the evaluation of the visual effects, the non-LDS students were found to be more positive about this scene than were the LDS students. The non-LDS students indicated by 61.8%
that the visual effects were "Excellent" while 56.7% of the LDS students gave visual effects an "Excellent" rating. This was the only instance where the non-LDS students were more positive than the LDS students.

The pre-mortal existence scene. The student responses to this scene are indicated in Table VIII.

The responses of LDS students were again more affirmative towards the acting and visual effects of this scene than were the non-LDS students. The acting was rated "Excellent" by 36.7% of the LDS students. Only 11.8% of the non-LDS students gave the acting for this scene an "Excellent" rating.

In evaluating the visual effects, 56.7% of the LDS students gave the scene an "Excellent" rating while the non-LDS students responded similarly (55.9% rated "Excellent").

In giving their personal reactions to the pre-mortal existence scene, the LDS students were more positive (70.0% gave a "Very positive" rating) than the non-LDS reaction (5.9% responded "Very positive").

Reviewing the responses from the three scene evaluations, it may be concluded that the LDS students were more positive or affirmative towards the technical aspects of the scenes than were the non-LDS students.
TABLE VIII

EVALUATION OF THE PRE-MORTAL EXISTENCE SCENE

QUESTION: Regarding the scene which depicted a man leaving the pre-existent state to begin life on earth, I felt...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acting</th>
<th>LDS Students</th>
<th>Non-LDS Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36.7% Excellent</td>
<td>11.8% Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53.3 Good</td>
<td>58.8 Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3 Fair</td>
<td>29.4 Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(One student did not respond)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual Effects</th>
<th>LDS Students</th>
<th>Non-LDS Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.7% Excellent</td>
<td>55.9% Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.0 Good</td>
<td>29.4 Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.7 Fair</td>
<td>5.9 Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3 Poor</td>
<td>8.8 Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Reactions</th>
<th>LDS Students</th>
<th>Non-LDS Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70.0% Very positive</td>
<td>5.9% Very positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.0 Positive</td>
<td>23.5 Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.7 Negative</td>
<td>26.5 Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14.7 Very negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29.4 No opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both LDS and non-LDS students were more critical of the pre-mortal existence scene than of the other two scenes.
which were evaluated.

The personal reactions of the non-LDS students towards the pre-mortal existence scene were consistent with their reactions towards the pre-existence as a religious concept.

**Student comments about the film.** At the conclusion of the film test, the students were asked to express any opinion or reaction which they felt about the film on the blank last page of the questionnaire. These responses are reprinted as they appeared on the questionnaires.

**Comments from LDS students.**

1. I thought the disciples should have moved toward Jesus. I didn't like the coloring in the pre-mortal life scene.

2. I felt the visual effects on the last 30 seconds or so could have been improved.

3. Color--very good. Sometimes I thought the film lost continuity because of the large amount of ideas that were crammed into it. I thought that at times the music got too loud. I thought narrator did a beautiful job.

4. I thought the film was excellent, although being a member of the Church it is difficult to decide if the strong impression I felt was a further statement to my beliefs and would be felt the same by those who haven't had the Church background.

5. Script--very good--good clarity--concrete and good parallelism. Some of the visual effects such as the last one with the family could be more effective. Not really much acting to evaluate.

6. With my understanding of the Gospel, in life after death--everyone is the same age--we live with
our bodies in a perfect state. This was not shown in the film, but I understand why this is somewhat impossible. I overall—I believe this film was a revelation from God.

7. I felt that during the parts in the film that conveyed a real message, such as the part telling man what a good life is or during the summary at the end that there was too much moving about on the screen to get the words or ideas that were conveyed at this time. I think that these are very important parts and should have something less complicated happening during this time.

8. In my opinion this film is the best Church film yet. It shows a degree of artistry incomparable with former productions. It is good to see Church films move into more professional realms and graduating from the home movie level.

The script was well done. However, I should like to see more care taken with lines such that the regular speech was more on the poetic level of the scripture used so that there is a continuity of level.

9. I have taught these concepts before, but the film brought them together into one picture and it's much clearer now. The film was enjoyable and I feel very effective for our age group especially.

10. Hair styles limit film. Even in "Post-mortal" episode all were 1965+.

(life after death scene)—I was impressed with the subtle introduction of the Salt Lake Temple symbol in the background.

Comments from non-LDS students.

1. The uses of a collage effect (with colored tissue) was new and different—but the situations were obviously staged. The script presented nothing new. I felt the entire production to be trite. There was no intellectual appeal or challenge. The film was obviously produced (to me) for people who were already convinced of the beliefs in the film, and if not it could only really appeal in an emotional way. It's a
shame it could not be more abstract (and also, a very minor point I admit) not all races were represented in the march of people.

The film tied all of the human predicament into one little package and had no mystery as far as reality is concerned.

2. Do not consider it wise or successful to attempt to depict visually immortal existence. Too much doubt to overcome—not in general belief of such existence, but in technical aspects such as physical setting, costuming, presence or lack of emotion, mortal physical appearances, etc.

Secondly, I find it difficult to discern to what purpose such a film might be put, except as reinforcement of existing ideas.

3. I found the scenes were so interesting and the narration and music so relaxing that my mind tended to wander instead of being alert to the message.

4. Why just caucasians? If all people are God's children, as we learn through religion, there should be orientals and Negroes in the movie. Also if you were showing this to a very religious person, you would not have any problem, but if you were showing this movie to a questioning person, the whole theme and staging might be a little thick!! (especially the scene in heaven with the family greeting the dead!!)

5. I believe in the existence of God and in Jesus Christ. I believe in a life after death but not a pre-mortal. There is nothing which supports this scripturally. The film implied to me that anyone with a desire could enter the life after death in heaven. I believe those who enter heaven will be those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Master and have faith and belief in the Bible.

6. This film might move those who are very religious, but for any other person, especially, an atheist or doubter of God, it seemed very unrealistic, and improbable—a fairy tale.

7. Colors were too intense. The portrayal of one religion (Protestant) was apparent from prayers at the
meal, and that this one religion was then Mormon was positively made toward the end. This film, therefore is o.k. for those of Mormon faith, but in some ways offensive to those of other faiths.

8. The film didn't give any evidence to the concept of a pre-existent life. Must we take your word for it. How does your concept of "works" coincide with Ephesians 2:8,9? The quality of the concepts came off a bit fuzzy. I had the chance to view this film once before in a "Temple Square" presentation last February.

9. This is an excellent film for reinforcing certain ideas in the minds of your own believers or perhaps in undecided people who are ignorant to a great extent in religion as a whole.

Certain ideas mentioned in the movie I don't believe even your Church agrees with. For example, "we are all related to every man on earth and we are all God's children." The practices of your Church in that a Negro cannot become a minister and the fact that not one Negro was shown in your phony mock up of the world certainly shows some discrepancies.

10. Found film most offensive.

11. The 5 technical aspects of the film were excellent--the scenery, photography, effects, and script were superb. A very clear, poetic script and continuity. Quite moving and inspirational. Very believable without a "hard-sell" attack. Overall effect---Exceptional for a religious film.

12. Comment: This class is not the proper place nor time for the missionary efforts of the Mormon Church and I think its poor judgement on the part of the Church member who instigated it.

13. I answered Q. 26 (Part II) differently than Q. 14 (Part I) because now that I better understand the film's definition of "pre-existent life," I disagree with it. I missed any Negroes in the show. Who was Smith in the 1800's?

14. You had no Negroes in your mass scene, which coincides with the bigoted beliefs of the Mormon Church, not allowing a Negro to become a Mormon.
minister. This offended me and would others, and I'm not a Negro.

Effects were generally very impressive, especially dissolves and cuts in time. The clock sequence was very good. Continuity was smooth and I noticed nothing overly distracting. Color excellent. Choral music effective and well done.

But even with the general high level of techniques, the whole story was, to me, quite unbelievable.

I doubt if the film as a whole would be useful in the conversion of the intellectual or anyone with extended philosophical or theological training.

I would be interested to know its intended use. Your best bet, in my opinion, would be the bourgeois mass and the uneducated.

15. I felt this was very moving. It caused me to think very much about the pre-mortal existence of man. If this was done by amateurs--my compliments.

16. Too melodramatic. Seemed like a Hollywood production done by amateurs. Message could have been summarized. Costumes were a bit dressy.

17. I felt the film was a good movie technically, however, unless it were shown to LDS members it is of no value. I felt repelled by the film because I am opposed to any kind of indoctrination--either personal or through the use of the mass media. Again, this was a good technical film.

18. I had not thought too much about pre-existent life. Presented in such a way to make me interested in finding out more about it.

Not presented in a way that was "pushy" toward a particular religion although oriented toward me.

19. As a whole I felt that the message was clear but was given so strongly that I felt as if it was being forced.

The scene of grandfather entering heaven was very unrealistic.
The abstract visual effects, especially the patterns and colors used were very poor. The moderator's voice was good--there was hardly any "acting" in the film.

**Summary.** In reviewing and summarizing the data which has been obtained from the film evaluation questionnaire, the following observations may be made.

Responses to the three religious concept questions indicate that the students, both LDS and non-LDS, did not vary to any great degree in their pre-test and post-test answers. Generally the students expressed the same viewpoints after viewing the film as they did before exposure to *Man's Search For Happiness*.

A change of nine percent was noted in the non-LDS reactions towards two of the religious concept questions (God's communication with the earth, concept of a pre-mortal existence). As was stated previously, this change occurred chiefly among those students who were undecided before viewing the film.

The difference in responses between the LDS students and the non-LDS students in their reactions to the religious concept questions was notable. The LDS students were much more positive or affirmative in their reactions to the questions than were the non-LDS students. The LDS students were in one hundred percent agreement with the three concepts questioned. The non-LDS students varied
greatly in their responses to the same questions.

In giving their general reactions to the film, again the LDS students demonstrated a marked difference in their responses to the film as compared to the non-LDS students. The LDS students were one hundred percent positive in their overall evaluation of the film while only 47.1% of the non-LDS students gave the film a "Positive" rating.

Responses by the students to the technical evaluation of three selected scenes (life after death, resurrected Christ, and pre-mortal existence) followed the same pattern as in the other phases of the questionnaire. Again the LDS students were more positive toward the scenes than were the non-LDS students. Only in the "Resurrected Christ" scene did the non-LDS students give a higher rating than the LDS students.

Of the three scenes evaluated, both LDS and non-LDS students were most negative or critical of the "Pre-mortal existence" scene.

Reviewing the comments from the students, it may be concluded that generally the tone of responses from LDS students was more positive toward the film than were the non-LDS responses. The contrast between the two groups may be observed in comment #6 from the LDS student ("I believe this film was a revelation from God") as compared
to comment #6 from a non-LDS student ("...it seemed very unrealistic, and improbable--a fairy tale.").

In five comments, the non-LDS students expressed the thought that the film Man's Search For Happiness would only be effective when utilized as a reinforcive tool with the members of the Mormon Church.

Four non-LDS comments criticized the film because it did not portray any Negroes in the production.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

This thesis has endeavored to examine a specific religious non-member oriented (missionary-type) film produced by the Brigham Young University Motion Picture Studio and to compare results of the examination with previous film research conducted in the United States.

The thesis has attempted to answer the following questions about the film Man's Search For Happiness:

1. Do LDS produced films, designed as a missionary tool, cause a shift of attitudes within the non-member?

2. How do non-LDS people respond to the technical aspects (acting, visual effects) of an LDS produced film?

3. How do LDS people respond to a non-member oriented film produced by the Brigham Young University Motion Picture Studio?

4. Is there any correlation between LDS and non-LDS reactions to a non-member oriented film?

5. Can existing film research be applied to the development of LDS produced films?

6. What is the predicted value of non-member oriented or missionary films?
The film evaluation study was conducted in Long Beach, California, and tested upon college students. The sample was composed of thirty-four non-LDS students and thirty LDS students. A pre-test and post-test questionnaire was designed to test opinion change, general reactions and technical evaluations of the film.

*Man's Search For Happiness*, a thirteen minute film explaining the origin and destiny of man, was utilized as the test subject for the film evaluation study. The film, produced for the Mormon Pavilion at the New York World's Fair, was the first missionary type of film produced by the BYU Motion Picture Studio.

The study was limited in its general conclusions because of the sample. The sample size of sixty-four was too small to generalize accurately or predict the behavior of every audience who would view the film. In order to place statistical significance upon the trends which were indicated in the study, it would be necessary to obtain a sample ten times larger. However, the results of the study provide an indication of audience reactions as tested under similar conditions.

---

1 H. Gill Hilton, Associate Professor of Statistics, Brigham Young University, in an interview, December, 1967.
The film evaluation study was the first formal research conducted to evaluate a non-member oriented religious film produced by the BYU Motion Picture Studio. The study was designed as an approach or a first step towards a solution of the stated problem. One of the primary contributions of the study was to provide a basis for future research of LDS produced films.

A second limitation of the study also was related to the sample. All of the non-LDS students were selected from classes (Broadcast Programming and Persuasion) which would cause them to be more knowledgable to persuasive techniques of the mass media than the LDS students. The persuasion class, particularly, would affect the responses of the non-LDS students.

A third limitation of the film evaluation study was related to the method of film testing. The introduction was purposely not shown with the film during the student tests. The test administrator felt that showing the title would cause many non-LDS students to judge or evaluate the Mormon Church rather than evaluating the film and its content.

However, by deleting the title, the LDS students were placed in a different test environment than the non-LDS students. Through their activities in the Church, the
majority of the LDS students were aware that *Man's Search for Happiness* had been produced by the Church for the New York World's Fair. All but one of the non-LDS students were completely unfamiliar with the film production.

Because the film was shown without an introduction or title, it was tested under different circumstances than its intended and normal usage. *Man's Search for Happiness* has been utilized by the LDS missionaries in conjunction with displays such as the Mormon Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. However, the film was utilized in a classroom situation for this study. The conclusions of this study are limited only to similar classroom situations.

With the limitations of the film evaluation study restated, the conclusions can be stated.

I. CONCLUSIONS

The film evaluation of LDS and non-LDS reactions toward a EYU produced (non-member oriented) film provides the following conclusions:

1. Little evidence was obtained which would indicate that the film *Man's Search for Happiness* had changed or shifted the opinions of the non-LDS students towards the three religious concepts questioned (Concept of God, God's Communication
with the earth, Concept of a pre-mortal existence). However, a nine percent change was noted among those students who had marked "Undecided" in the pre-test. (Refer to pp. 31-33).

2. The non-LDS students were generally more critical of the technical aspects (acting, visual effects) of the film than were the LDS students. Evidence to support this conclusion was shown in the non-LDS general reactions and evaluations of the three selected scenes.

3. The LDS students were more affirmative or positive in their responses to the film than the non-LDS students. In each of the religious concept questions, the LDS students were in one hundred percent agreement with the concepts. In general reactions and in scene evaluations, a majority of the LDS students gave the film Man's Search For Happiness "Excellent" ratings.

4. There was little correlation or comparison between responses of the LDS students and responses of the non-LDS. The two groups responded very differently in nearly every test question. As stated previously, the LDS students
were positive in their reactions while the non-LDS students were diversified and generally negative towards the film and its content. The only exceptions to this conclusion, were non-LDS students who were in an "Undecided" position before viewing the film and who changed their positions after viewing the film showing.  

5. The fifth conclusion relates previous film research in the United States to this study of LDS and non-LDS reactions to the film Man's Search For Happiness. The Hoban and van Ormer study referred to in Chapter II, concludes that motion pictures are limited in their ability to influence the attitudes and opinions of an audience. Their report, Instructional Film Research (Rapid Mass Learning) 1918-1950, provides sufficient evidence to conclude that films are most effective in reinforcement of an individual's existing attitudes and opinions. Hoban and van Ormer state that individuals who are neutral or predisposed towards change may be influenced in the direction of a motion picture.
Dr. Joseph T. Klapper, Director of Social Research for the Columbia Broadcasting System, concurs with the research of Hoban and van Ormer. Dr. Klapper believes that a person who is predisposed toward change can be influenced by the mass media. Klapper also states that research gives equal support to the belief that the mass media has little or no affect on opinion change.

The film research which was reviewed indicates that there are many variables which affect an individual's response to a film. Hoban and van Ormer refer to six variables which would affect an individual's response to a film.

6. The sixth conclusion asks the question: "What is the predicted value of non-member oriented or missionary films?"

That question has been answered in part by each of the preceding conclusions. The answer may be simply stated as:

a. Generally, the non-LDS audience will not be affected by a non-member oriented or missionary film. The film will reinforce their own pre-set or pre-determined opinions.
b. The non-LDS person who is predisposed towards change will be affected by such a film. Persons who are neutral towards the issues presented in a missionary film, may be persuaded to accept a new concept.

c. The LDS person will generally be reinforced in his own religious concepts by a missionary or non-member oriented film.

II. FURTHER RESEARCH

This study of LDS and non-LDS reactions towards a BYU produced non-member oriented (missionary) film is a beginning. The researcher concludes that more can be done with this phase of communications research as it relates to BYU film productions.

As stated earlier in the thesis, the sample was a limitation to the conclusions of the study. It is recommended that a similar study be conducted on a broader scope. Samples need not be limited to college students in a classroom situation. It is recommended that in future studies the film be tested in its normal or intended environment.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS


B. ENCYCLOPEDIA ARTICLES


C. REPORTS AND OTHER SOURCES


Interview with H. Gill Hilton, Associate Professor of Statistics, Brigham Young University, December, 1967.

APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

FILM EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions

As part of a film evaluation study, you have been asked to fill out the "Film Evaluation Questionnaire."

There will be three sections to the "Film Evaluation."

1. Fill out the first half of the questionnaire.
2. View the film.
3. Remove the staple and complete the second half of the questionnaire.

PART I:

Please answer the questions to Part I only. Do not read past page 2. Answer the questions as thoroughly as possible.

We are interested in your honest appraisal of the film and your opinion of the ideas expressed in it.

Please do not discuss the items with anyone until after the class period. If you do have questions, please ask them now.
PART I:

(Please place an "X" for your response)

1. **CLASS STANDING.** My class standing is...
   ___a. freshman  ___d. senior
   ___b. sophomore  ___e. graduate
   ___c. junior

2. **AGE.** My age is...
   ___a. 18 or under  ___d. senior
   ___b. 19 or 20  ___e. 25 or over
   ___c. 21 or 22

3. **SEX.**
   ___a. male
   ___b. female

4. **LOCALITY.** I have lived in the greater_________area...
   ___a. less than six months  ___d. three to six years
   ___b. one year  ___e. over six years
   ___c. one to three years

5. **FILM EVALUATION ABILITY.** I consider myself qualified to evaluate the technical qualities (sound, visual, etc.) of a film...
   ___a. very qualified  ___d. very unqualified
   ___b. qualified  ___e. undecided
   ___c. unqualified

6. **FILM ATTENDANCE.** I attend films for entertainment...
   ___a. very frequently  ___d. sometimes
   ___b. frequently  ___e. never
   ___c. occasionally  ___f. other

7. **FILM PREFERENCES.** My favorite type of entertainment film is...
   ___a. war themes  ___e. light comedy themes
   ___b. western  ___f. musicals
   ___c. science fiction  ___g. theatrical themes
   ___d. mystery-spy  ___h. other

8. **FILM SELECTION.** I have attended the following films...
   ___a. Sound of Music  ___e. The Russians are Coming
   ___b. Doctor Zhivago  ___f. Grand Prix
<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>A Man and A Woman</td>
<td>g. A Man For All Seasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Follow Me Boys</td>
<td>h. other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. **MOTION PICTURES AND MORAL PRINCIPLES.** I believe motion pictures have a responsibility to teach moral principles...
   - a. yes
   - b. no
   - c. uncertain

10. **MOTION PICTURES AND RELIGIOUS THEMES.** Do you believe motion pictures are an effective means of presenting religious principles?
    - a. extremely effective
    - b. very effective
    - c. somewhat effective
    - d. occasionally effective
    - e. never effective

11. **RELIGIOUS FILM EVALUATION.** Do you feel qualified to evaluate a film with a religious theme?
    - a. very qualified
    - b. qualified
    - c. unqualified
    - d. very unqualified
    - e. undecided

12. **CONCEPT OF GOD.** I believe in the existence of God...
    - a. agree strongly
    - b. agree moderately
    - c. disagree moderately
    - d. disagree strongly
    - e. no opinion

13. **GOD'S COMMUNICATION WITH EARTH.** Do you believe that God communicates with people on the earth today?
    - a. yes
    - b. no
    - c. uncertain

14. **CONCEPT OF A PRE-MORTAL EXISTENCE.** I believe in a pre-existent (pre-mortal) existence of man before this earth life...
    - a. agree strongly
    - b. agree moderately
    - c. disagree moderately
    - d. disagree strongly
    - e. no opinion

15. **CHURCH ACTIVITY.** My attendance at Church is...
    - a. extremely active
    - b. very active
    - c. somewhat active
    - d. occasionally attend
    - e. never attend
16. **CHURCH AFFILIATION.** My church membership is...
   a. Catholic
d. LDS
   b. Protestant
e. other
c. Jewish
f. unaffiliated

---

**PART II**

**Instructions**

A short film will be shown to the class. Watch the film carefully. We want you to pay close attention to it so that you can give an evaluation of the content as well as the technical features of the film.

Please pay close attention to the following technical features of the film:

1. Special visual effects
2. Sound effects and music
3. Performance of actors
4. Costuming
5. Script

---

**PART III**

17. **GENERAL REACTION TOWARDS THE FILM.** My general or overall feeling about the film, *Man's Search For Happiness* is...
   a. very positive
d. negative
   b. positive
e. very negative
c. neutral
f. undecided
18. **EVALUATION OF ACTING.** Regarding the performance of the actors, in general, I felt...
   ___a. acting was excellent   ___d. poor
   ___b. good                   ___e. very bad
   ___c. fair                   ___f. undecided

19. **EVALUATION OF MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS.** Regarding the quality of the sound and effective use of music, I felt...
   ___a. sound was excellent   ___d. poor
   ___b. good                   ___e. very bad
   ___c. fair                   ___f. undecided

20. **EVALUATION OF SPECIAL VISUAL EFFECTS.** Regarding the quality of the special visual effects, I felt...
   ___a. visual effects excellent
   ___b. good                   ___d. poor
   ___c. fair                   ___e. very bad
                                 ___f. undecided

21. **EVALUATION OF THE SCRIPT.** Regarding the clarity of the script or the understandability of the message, I felt...
   ___a. message clear          ___d. very unclear
   ___b. somewhat clear         ___e. undecided
   ___c. somewhat unclear       ___f. undecided

22. **EVALUATION OF THE COSTUMES.** Regarding the costumes, I felt...
   ___a. costumes excellent     ___d. poor
   ___b. good                   ___e. very bad
   ___c. fair                   ___f. undecided

SCENE EVALUATION. In the following questions, please evaluate the specific scenes depicted, not the idea portrayed in the scene.

23. **PRE-MORTAL EXISTENCE SCENE.**

   (A) ACTING                  (B) VISUAL EFFECTS               (C) PERSONAL REACTION
   ___a. excellent             ___a. excellent                  ___a. very positive
   ___b. good                  ___b. good                      ___b. positive
   ___c. fair                  ___c. fair                      ___c. negative
   ___d. poor                  ___d. poor                      ___d. very negative
   ___e. very bad              ___e. very bad                  ___e. no opinion
   ___f. undecided             ___f. undecided                  ___f. undecided
24. LIFE AFTER DEATH SCENE. Regarding the scene when grandfather leaves the grave and is received in the "hereafter" by friends, I felt...

(A) ACTING (B) VISUAL EFFECTS (C) PERSONAL REACTION
___a. excellent ___a. excellent ___a. very positive
___b. good ___b. good ___b. positive
___c. fair ___c. fair ___c. negative
___d. poor ___d. poor ___d. very negative
___e. very bad ___e. very bad ___e. no opinion
___f. undecided ___f. undecided

25. RESURRECTED CHRIST SCENE. Regarding the scene when the resurrected Christ appeared to His disciples I felt...

(A) ACTING (B) VISUAL EFFECTS (C) PERSONAL REACTION
___a. excellent ___a. excellent ___a. very positive
___b. good ___b. good ___b. positive
___c. fair ___c. fair ___c. negative
___d. poor ___d. poor ___d. very negative
___e. very bad ___e. very bad ___e. no opinion
___f. undecided ___f. undecided

26. CONCEPT OF A PRE-EXISTENT LIFE. I believe in a pre-existent (pre-mortal) existence of man...

___a. agree strongly ___d. disagree strongly
___b. agree moderately ___e. no opinion
___c. disagree moderately

27. CONCEPT OF GOD. I believe in the existence of God...

___a. agree strongly ___d. disagree strongly
___b. agree moderately ___e. no opinion
___c. disagree moderately

28. GOD'S COMMUNICATION WITH EARTH. Do you believe that God communicates with people on the earth today?

___a. yes
___b. no
___c. uncertain
AN EVALUATION OF LDS AND NON-LDS REACTIONS
TOWARD A BYU PRODUCED
(NON-MEMBER ORIENTED) FILM

An Abstract of a Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Communications
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
James H. Wilson
May 1968
ABSTRACT

The BYU Motion Picture Studio produces films for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1964, the studio produced a film for the Mormon Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. The film, Man's Search For Happiness, was produced as a missionary tool to persuade non-LDS people to join the Mormon Church.

This study was conducted to evaluate that particular film and to determine its influence upon an LDS and non-LDS audience.

The operational hypotheses for the study were stated in a negative form with the purpose of research to test each hypothesis. The hypotheses were:

1. There is no significant difference between pre-test results and post-test results when applied to a non-LDS audience as it reacts to a specific BYU produced (non-LDS oriented) film.

2. There is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test results when applied to an LDS audience as it reacts to a specific BYU produced (non-LDS oriented) film.
3. There is little correlation or comparison between reactions of an LDS audience and a non-LDS audience as they view a specific BYU produced (non-LDS oriented) film.

The test sample was selected from LDS and non-LDS students residing in the Long Beach-Los Angeles area of Southern California. A total of sixty-four samples were obtained.

The conclusions of the study were limited because of the small sample size. The main contribution of the study was to provide a starting place for future film research of BYU produced religious films.

The conclusions of the study were:

1. Little evidence was obtained to indicate that the film changed or shifted the opinions of the non-LDS students towards specified religious concept questions.

2. The non-LDS students were generally more critical of the technical aspects of the film than were the LDS students.

3. There was little correlation or comparison between responses of the LDS students and responses of the non-LDS students.

4. In predicting the value of future BYU produced missionary or non-member oriented films, it
was concluded:

a. Generally, the non-LDS audience will not be persuaded to change their opinions because of the influence of a film.

b. The non-LDS person who is pre-disposed towards change will be affected by such a film.

c. The LDS person will be reinforced in his own religious concepts by a missionary oriented film.

APPROVED

[Signature]
Chairman, Advisory Committee

[Signature]
Member, Advisory Committee

[Signature]
Chairman, Major Department