

CINEMAGOGUE

Understanding our shared story,
connecting creativity with Creator,
and exploring the relationship
between images and imaging God.

“...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” - 1 Corinthians 10:31



cinema | cin-e-ma

1. a movie theatre, a building in which films are shown
2. film, motion pictures or movies
3. cinematography: the art of recording visual images

synagogue | syn-a-gogue

1. a house of assembly
2. a place of worship
3. a Jewish congregation

cinemagogue | cin-e-ma-gogue

1. an exploration of how our culture lives, eats, breathes, and effectively worships popular narrative, entertainment and media.
2. the recognition that the creative impulse for storytelling is a reflection of our Creator's passion, as well as a progressive wrestling with life's ultimate mega-narrative.
3. what Homer Simpson might call a Jewish place of worship (see: "sax-a-ma-phone")

Cinema is a modern day pulpit. People flock to their local theater and group together, moved by a worldview revealed in story form, emotionally played like an instrument by directors and screenwriters who influence how we think, feel, and even act. Moving us to tears, chilling us to the bone, or making us laugh infectiously, you can witness this influence in repeated phrases, shared platitudes, and lives reflecting the characters that resonate with us, inspire us or repel us.

With television, home theater systems, mail order media, and stories streaming online, the engagement of this medium has inundated every corner of our lives, from public gatherings to our living room to the office computer. Literature and comic books become film, and movies spawn immersive, online multiplayer worlds, which in turn generate comics and books until we are virtually surrounded by these shared stories.

Cinemagogue began as film events in Seattle supported by the website cinemagogue.com, but has grown to serve and educate people around the world on how to truly enjoy film with a godly lens, to engage narrative in a way that edifies and even leads to natural, authentic evangelism. Many Christians complain about how to bring up their faith

into conversation, which reveals how little their faith overlaps with their "entertainment" time, the shared spaces we have to easily converse about how we perceive and believe, the water cooler conversations people are already having about the latest film, book, or television show.

We're all image-bearers of our Creator, a master storyteller whose narrative spans all of creation, a **meganarrative** in which every one of plays a part. Made in the image of our maker, we share a yearning to create - and be entertained by - stories. People immerse themselves in story, fiction and biography, much like Christians treasure the story of Jesus. It's our hope that people would enjoy storytelling mediums not just as "diversion" but with discernment, engaging culture around us and discovering how it distorts and mirrors the true tale of our existence.

Ultimately, we place all stories against the controversial story of Jesus Christ, who claimed not only to be truth incarnate but also the master storyteller, who spoke the universe into existence: central figure, ultimate protagonist and hero in the shared narrative that is our lives. Our goal is to equip more and more people - like your congregation, your students, your

staff, your leaders - grasp these correlations in meaningful ways that enrich their lives and the lives of those around them, for God's glory.

Cinema, meet truth.

James Harleman has been blessed to host events, lecture and preach for over a decade at Mars Hill Church in Seattle. He has also contributed written, audio and video content for The Resurgence, published articles for Collide magazine, and traveled around the country to serve churches, various conferences, schools and other institutions. Be sure to read our feedback from attendees, church leaders and filmmakers.

We're passionate about this endeavor and would love to collaborate with you. Included are options for evening events, two or three day conferences, or preaching on Sunday. Consider these ideas a springboard to an event or lecture tailored to your unique needs.

We're excited about participation with existing conferences and working alongside other speakers, bringing these messages as part of larger events tackling a wider array of issues. Don't hesitate to share your vision with us!



"Listening to your podcasts... opened my eyes to examine what I watch even closer. I have my list of favorite movies, but now I've been asking myself, 'why are they my favorite movies?' Some I had immediate answers to and others I had to think for awhile. I want to honor God with what I watch."

"...really convicted me in both the movie and gaming arena to analyze what I am watching/playing and why. I had almost zero discernment before stumbling onto your series..."

"Your perspective really blessed our family. My sons (age 7 and 10) are eager fans of the Transformers. (Your teachings) help them see beyond the surface to find Jesus in the midst of entertainment."

"I grew up on television in the 80's and can relate to the context you grew up in.... I thank God for you and your ability to glorify him in everything, no matter what – even cinema."

"I am currently in Afghanistan with the US Air Force. I recently stumbled across your (content) online... Thoughtful, blessed, right on target."

Feedback from Church leaders

"I'm a worship pastor in Atlanta, and I love the Film and Theology you guys do. You actually look at the film aspects and see how the artist's worldview comes through. We want our people to understand that a real relationship with Jesus will integrate all areas of their lives..."

"I feel inspired to run something similar at my own church. I live and work in the distant suburbs of London, England..."



"I am an elder at a very large, non-denominational church in Virginia Beach and I am absolutely captivated by the idea of doing Film and Theology at our church. I am coming to you for advice on how to best get started."

"I'm a youth pastor from Northern Ireland... and I was contemplating starting a new venture, similar to what you are doing... being a novice in this ministry, I have some questions..."

Thanks from Filmmakers

"Your talk was one of the final confirmations of our move to Los Angeles to re-engage the film business by getting upstream in culture and trying to influence from the top down. I worked as an assistant on a TV series for a year, and now I'm working at a digital marketing agency that does a ton of film/TV work, as well as writing/producing my own projects."

"I am a christian student filmmaker and I love your reviews. It's some of the best preaching I get because I can relate to it so well due to the movie/narrative aspect."

"As a person of Christ and a person who holds a degree in film I look forward every month to these sermons. I can tell you one thing for sure, God is using you in my life. Thank you for allowing Him to do so."

"I am South African, but I am a Junior film and Television student at Savannah College of Art & Design, and your interpretations of the films have helped formed the kind of filmmaker I am becoming, and also the way I experience films."



Option A: EVENING EVENT (select from two basic options)

1. FILM & THEOLOGY

Your chosen film with preceding 15 minute overview of engaging entertainment and 15-45 minutes (as desired) unpacking the narrative themes and discussion points.

2. REDEFINING ENTERTAINMENT

Basic foundation lecture on the place of entertainment in culture, entertainment as idolatry, and the redemption of this area in our lives. for God's glory.

Option B: WEEKEND EVENT

Friday: FILM & THEOLOGY Event

(see above description)

Saturday: Engaging Culture

- Session 1: Gospel and Culture

A definition of culture and a deep look at the role of church in our 21st century culture in regard to our commission and interaction with the world.

- Session 2: Redefining Entertainment

The place of entertainment in culture, entertainment as idolatry, and the redemption of this space in our lives for God-glorifying edification and evangelism.

- Session 3: Understanding Story

Unpacking a traditional literary understanding of story with the Bible narrative as the key to unlocking all narrative based on a biblical framework.

- Session 4: Common Concerns

(addressing questions, concerns and objections: Q&A)

Option C: THREE-DAY EVENT:

Sunday: Preaching at service(s)

(select from topics below)

Option D: SUNDAY PREACHING

(2 possible sermons suggested below)

1. Acts 17: The Gospel in context

Preaching from Acts 17 and Paul's sermon in Athens, we see an understanding of culture and religion that contextualizes the message to its hearers and inspires modern day Christians to emulate in their evangelism.

2. Eyes, Tongue & Heart

A biblical look that challenges religious presuppositions that lead to legalism, isolationism and a retreat from the world (from Jesus words in Matthew 15 and John 17, Matthew 20 and Phillipians 4). A call for Christians to be sailing "missional seas", not creating safe harbor.

OPTION E: Have an idea?

Don't be afraid to dream and inquire.

*Each engagement includes speaker's fee, plus travel and lodging (if necessary). Use of multimedia including PowerPoint and film clips accompanies most presentations so facility should be equipped with adequate technologies. Queries and negotiation encouraged to create opportunities for collaboration, so don't hesitate to contact us.