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Mr. Leightenheimer

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Career Entry Strategy Paper

The career that I am pursuing, in the goal of being an aspiring filmmaker, is to be a Christian film director for either an independent or a Christian film production company. I am pursuing this career because I love movies. Ever since I was little, movies have always been a method of escape from real life into another world for a temporary amount of time. When I entered high school, I became fascinated at the idea of a large group of people working together for a prolonged amount of time doing different jobs to create one big motion picture. When it comes to working on videos, I love being able to have a little bit of experience in multiple areas of the stages of production. This shows that I’m useful in more than one area of production.

The basic definition of a film director is a person who “controls the film’s artistic and dramatic aspects, and visualizes the script while guiding the technical crew and actors in the fulfillment of that vision” (Career: Film Director, 2013). Being a Christian heading into the entertainment industry will possibly get me into a life of belittlement and ridicule from those around me, but it wasn’t promised that life as a Christian was going to be easy. In fact, it was stated in the book of Matthew that Christ told His apostles that the world would hate them because the world first hated Him. I have trained myself not to care about what others have to say about applying my faith to every aspect of my work, and I’ll tolerate any comments or criticism in chasing my dream. I wish to choose this career path because I believe that Christian movies can be much better than they currently are. I think they can made with better quality, have less cliché content and storylines, and have more prolonged time in theaters. If these aspects are applied, Christian movies can be just as successful as any secular film. Because I believe this can be accomplished, I have been called to this profession on a mission to spread the Gospel and display God’s love through the medium of film.

The current demand for Christian filmmakers has been increasing over the last year. Due to the number of Christian and Bible-themed movies that have been released last year and earlier this year. While the movies that have been getting more publicity than people expected, some people have been skeptical about the movies. For example, last year when the movie *Noah* was released, many Christians had heard comments about the storyline of the movie wasn’t accurate to the original Bible story. When I first heard of this, I made my skepticism of the film very high.

Personally, I believe that if someone is going to be a movie based off a story, especially a story from the Bible, then they should create the story the way it was originally written or not at all. When I researched the movie, I discovered that the director of the film isn’t a believer. That was when I began to wonder how many Christian movies are made by actual believers. Based on my research, many Christians are made by believers, but some Bible-based films are made by those who don’t believe in God (Top Ten Films That Deserved Better Publicity, 2015). As far as needing additional training, it has been said that it’s not always essential, but helpful. Based on an interview with a cinematographer named Steve Gainer in American Cinematographer, he says that he never attended film school in order to reach his profession (Gainer, 2013). There have been times where I have thought continuing my education. If I want to become a director, I have heard that there are film schools that offer degrees specifically in Directing. In an old interview with Cedarville graduate Ethan Ransom, he told me about his attendance at the American Film Institute Conservatory, where they offer Master’s Degrees in Directing as well other professions (Ransom, 2015).

The entry-level salary for a Christian film director is lower than for a director of secular films. Often times, a director’s salary varies, depending on the economy and the director’s reputation (The Film Director Part I, 2011). It would also seem that a salary is essential when it comes to where you would complete your projects, if you were shooting in a studio or on location. Another interview by Stacie Passion mentioned that when she was shooting a film with her children, she was asked if she shot the film at her house or paid $5,000 to use someone else’s house (Passon, 2013).

In order to support myself during an apprenticeship or internship that I obtain in due time, I will make it a top priority to find an internship that will provide me with all the essentials, including compensation, housing, etc. The kind of internship that I receive will assist me in gaining experience to prepare me for entering the entertainment industry. This includes low-level jobs, including assistant positions and other interning opportunities. This can be a valuable way to make contacts that can help me move up in the film industry. Often times, the contacts that I make with people on my level may turn out to be as valuable as with those above me (How Becoming a Movie Director Works, 2011).

There are many aspects of being a film director in the entertainment industry. These aspects include salary, benefits, and training. My salary would most likely be determined on the type of film I direct. As I become more established as a director, I would start taking a percentage of what the film earns at the box office, rather than receiving a set fee, particularly if my film is a smash at the box office. As far as training is specified, I expect myself to work from the bottom on up, starting as a runner or production assistant in order to gain on-set experience and build up networking and contacts (Film Director, 2010). There are also a number of benefits that come with this career choice, such as health insurance, life insurance, retirement, travel expenses, etc. (Poser, 2007).

I will attempt to make more contact with the representatives through e-mail, where I will attach my resume and cover letter, phone calls, and other methods of contact, including using social media, if the contacts prefer it. After contact has been made, I will strive to make personal meetings if it will be in close distance. During the meetings, I will have copies of my resume, business cards, and my tablet on my person in the availability to display my online portfolio that will display all of my best work in the interest that my contact will want to view. If my contacts will show interest in wanting to work with me, I will volunteer to give my abilities to any specific jobs (Green, 2012). Once college is completed and I have received my degree, I would attempt to get a job position at an independent film company as a runner or production assistant and work my way up through the company.

In conclusion, my short-term goals for the remainder of my college career is to complete various courses that are essential to the completion of my study in order to graduate on time. During the final summer of college, I will complete an internship that will give me experience in film production. My intermediate goals for the first three years out of college is to maintain a job at a film production company while I work on my screenplay ideas and film proposals throughout my time away from the studio. Lastly, my long-term goals include continuing my job and working my way up through the company towards directing my first film. After directing for several years, I would like to still be involved in the industry by starting my own Christian-based film company.

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