
FIREPROOF OF MARRIAGE

CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE OF A FILM

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Abstract

This study tries to expose some of the difficulties of the today couple life which derive mainly from the secularization of the traditional-Christian meaning of marriage. The analysis of the movie *Fireproof* serves as a study material in this respect. This film highlights not only the 'parasites' of marriage, but also some solutions to enhance the relationship of those united in marriage under God and to avoid divorce.

Keywords: marriage, divorce, theology, cinema, Fireproof movie

1. Introduction

The Scripture clearly shows that marriage and family exist since man was created: creating Adam and Eve, God the Creator instituted the monogamous family (Genesis 1.27 and 2.24). As rightly said, "the human society cannot be imagined without family" because it is "one of the essential coordinates of humanity". "It is fundamental both for individuals and for society. Family is the place where the individual fully fulfils the vocation for community, which is characteristic to man and is related to the image of God in man, being the reflection of the intra Trinitarian communion on the human level." [1]

Regarding the Christian concept, we ought to remember the words of the Apostle Paul: "This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the Church" (Ephesians 5.32). In relation to the mystery of the union between Christ and the Church, marriage becomes a sacramental value of Christianity and thus "love of the spouses is moved from the psychological and social level to the spiritual and ontological one" [2]. The communion of love is the one which animates the relationship between spouses and "the mystery of marriage gives a deep spiritual dimension to the loving union and the reciprocal self-giving of two people". Not incidentally, the Church originally performed the sacrament of marriage closely related to the Sacrament of the Eucharist [3]. This liturgical act had a profound theological significance: marriage "is not a simple blessing of the union of man and woman, but the framing of its union in the perspective of life in Christ", "it is not a simple sanctification of a biological

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phenomenon, but its transcendence in view of the Kingdom of God” [2, p. 290-293].

Once considered the ‘cell of society’, marriage today is in a precarious situation. The postmodern society in which we live is eroding the traditional values, making the ‘venerable institutions’ such as marriage and family to be considered somewhat obsolete. Relations between persons of the same sex, prenuptial relations, divorce and contraception are considered natural, being related to the unrestrained expression of conscience and personal liberty. The ‘free’ living together is also very much promoted - in fact it is a counterfeit of the true communion of love. “This communion cannot develop without commitment, i.e. assuming some obligations, but in the climate of utter selflessness of people. As long as there is no willingful commitment in the total self-giving, is natural to be no climate for the development of true love and unity.” [2, p. 292]

Indeed, all liturgical worship of the Orthodox Church highlights another aspect which is essential to a ‘successful’ marriage: sacrificial love between spouses. The Song of the Sacrament of Marriage “O Holy Martyrs, who fought the good fight and have received your crowns” or the use of crowns suggests a sacrifice that is entailed by the living together of the spouses. Family life is a real struggle on all fronts; only if you possess the necessary weapons you can win it and get the long-awaited reward...

2. Marriage, Theology, cinema - an impossible relationship?

The question is: what could be done so that the man of today could rediscover the purpose and value of marriage? The confrontation seems to be unequal, because the media (newspapers, television, internet, etc.) assails us with messages in which not temperance but debauchery, not sacrificial love, but self-affirmation is the dominant ‘value’. Paradoxically, the same media which promotes the non- or even the anti-Christian message can be used to support the preaching of the message and values of the Gospel. For example, it took long to make a connection between Theology and ‘the seventh art’ – Cinema. The world of the film is considered an immoral world and the movies – especially those from Hollywood – are considered the main cause of the Christian values erosion [4]. The film is often just a disguised way of presenting certain messages with non-religious or occult political content [5], thus fulfilling other evil purposes and leaving the sphere of arts.

Although this impression is valid, it should not be generalized. More recently, some authors have begun to turn to some films as a teaching material relevant to illustrate certain doctrines of faith and Christian values [6]. Why should Theology “go to the movies”? [7] Because its impact on the life of the (post) modern man and consciousness is a major one [8]. We mention here the provocative book of the prematurely deceased Romanian film critic, Alex Leo Șerban [9]. Besides his excellent film criticism, he attempts to answer the question: why do we watch movies?

Antagonism between Theology and cinema should not be mandatory. In this study we will refer to a concrete example: a film that exposes the family crisis and offers solutions to them in the Christian sphere. It is the film *Fireproof*, 2008, directed by Alex Kendrick, starring Kirk Cameron and Erin Bethea. (The director himself provides important information about the message of the film in an interview taken by C.J. Darlington who served as a pastor in Sherwood Baptist Church [<http://www.titletrakk.com/movie-interviews/stephen-kendrick-interview.html>, accessed on 23.10.2012])

3. A film with an obvious Christian message

The film *Fireproof* presents the story of a family made up of Caleb, an experienced fire-fighter who occupies a leading position in the department he belongs to and Catherine, who works in a hospital in the city where they live. The movie presents their marriage which is in the seventh year and is in a difficult time.

The first part of the film introduces us to the time and space in which the entire action of the film takes place, presenting us the jobs of both spouses, Caleb and Catherine. A more personal aspect of Catherine is presented to us: a visit to her parents, her mother suffering from a paralysis which doesn't allow her to talk or to walk, being forced to spend her entire life in a wheelchair.

We may consider the following important sequence in the film as a plot, but it is actually showing us the state of the marriage, a state in which the communication between the two is obviously affected, each trying to defend himself and to impose his own terms as the only truth. On the one hand, Caleb is angry because he receives no respect from his wife; he even complains to Michael - a colleague and a good friend of him - that he is treated with respect anywhere except his own home. (At work he is a hero as we can see in the scene where he saves the little girl from flames, putting his own life in danger.) On the other hand, Catherine complains that her husband is too busy saving money for his dream (to buy a boat) and surfing the internet - where he probably finds a refuge, a surrogate to replace the suffering caused by the family disputes. Finally, the heated argument between the two ends in Caleb's nervous burst, accusing his wife in a brutal way, that she does not show him the 'proper' respect, which is for Caleb the 'point of marriage'. Their quarrel ends with Catherine's confession that she will leave and with Caleb's prideful consent.

An important aspect which the film introduces to us is the entourage of the two. If Caleb talks about his personal problems with his good friend, Michael, Catherine is surrounded by her colleagues with whom she shares her secrets, but they prove to be some friends of conjecture. Moreover, they use Catherine's confessions for the usual gossip and, instead of giving her a real aid, they exaggerate in conclusions, making no gesture to save her marriage.

Another important event in the film is when Caleb visits his parents. Being in an old conflict with his mother because 'she always corrects him', Caleb does not trust her advice and asks his father to talk to him in private. After

complaining to his father about his mother's presence, Caleb is eager to hear his father's advice. His father, John, confesses to his son that he has faced the same problems in the marriage with his mother and asks Caleb to postpone the impending divorce with 40 days. The request is accompanied by the promise that he will send by post 'something' to help him save his marriage - a program he will have to stick to every day.

The second part of the film presents actions which take place on several levels. We are suggested that Gavin - a doctor who is a colleague of Catherine - is interested in her and tries to take advantage of her difficult family situation. Caleb continues to comfort in the presence of his friend, Michael, but he is bothered by the fact that he presents the situation in its real dimensions. Caleb feels the words of his colleague as an affront so that the discussion of the two ends with Caleb's rejection of his friend's advice.

His father's promise materializes with the sending of a 40-day journal that Caleb finds in the post-box. Extremely curious about the package's contents, Caleb rushes to open it as soon as he gets home; he reads a few lines addressed to him by his father and then continues reading the first day of the journal. The first dare that he had to fulfil: not to tell his wife anything negative and if he was still tempted to reply like this, to refrain, to be silent.

Although reluctant and distrustful, Caleb succeeds in meeting the requirement of the first day of the journal, refraining from replying to his wife with malice. The second day keeps the rule of the first day but, besides that, Caleb will have to make an unexpected gesture of kindness towards his wife. He meets the request by preparing coffee for Catherine but she will not drink it on the grounds that she is in a hurry to her workplace. Although he is disturbed by his wife's reaction, Caleb will however continue to meet the requirements of the journal. The third day involves a greater 'effort': Caleb has to buy to his wife something to show her that he was thinking about her. He arranges for his wife to receive a bunch of flowers and a box of chocolates, but it is obvious that he is not willing to invest too much in this gift. Catherine receives her husband's gift but she is not impressed at all, given the visible state of the flowers decay.

The film is peppered with hilarious scenes which take place in the fire department where Caleb works as a coordinator. After one of these scenes, being on the fourth day of the journal, Caleb now has the mission to call Catherine, something he did not do before. Catherine's reaction is suggestive: she is surprised by her husband's call because he never called. When she meets her friends at the hospital, Catherine tells them about all the gestures that her husband made in the last days. But they interpret Caleb's gestures as an attempt to flatter her before divorce in order to get some material benefits following a possible partition. At home, Catherine finds Caleb in front of the computer, spending time to fuel his addiction to pornography. Being influenced by her colleagues' opinions, Catherine starts a conversation with her husband warning him that his attempts to benefit more after divorce will not be successful. At the same time, she tells Caleb that his addiction is a lack of honour. Caleb desperately calls his father to tell him that *the love dare* does not

work, but his father urges him not to give up. Meanwhile, the parents decide to increase prayer for Caleb, so that their son succeeds in fulfilling the requirements of the journal.

The film goes on by showing Catherine in the position to confess to her sick mother, but also to deepen her relationship with Gavin, her colleague - the married doctor from the hospital. In an attempt to recover, Caleb refrains from fuelling his addiction to pornography by not turning on the computer.

The eighteenth day of the diary marks a new dialogue between Caleb and Michael. It is the day when Caleb has to rediscover Catherine as he did at the beginning of their relationship. Michael's suggestion is to prepare a romantic dinner, to make a memorable moment. His try is a failure, ending with Catherine's direct confession that she does not love him anymore. Although she made this confession, Catherine goes to her room crying, obviously being sorry for what she said.

The next day, Caleb is visited by his father, the journal being in the nineteenth day. The meeting with his father marks a turning point for Caleb's progress. Through a dialogue imbued with a deep religious content, the father manages to convince Caleb about the role that God has in his life, that God loves him unconditionally. Caleb finds now a new sense of life and an absolutely necessary prerequisite in order to be loved or to love someone: in order to love you have to know what love is and how to love. This episode evokes the love of God and - as the fruit of His love - the fact that He sent His Son to redeem mankind. Caleb is convinced by his father, John, that he needs God's love in order to love and receive love.

Meeting Michael at work, Caleb confesses his revelation about God. Very excited about the new position in which his good friend was, Michael confesses that he went through a similar experience, going through a divorce due to the fact that he has not revealed God yet he 'did not dedicate his life to God' as he confesses in the film.

Catherine's relationship with Gavin is getting closer and closer, she even starts to confess to him aspects of her personal life. During a breakfast they had inside a restaurant, she tells him that her mother is ill, paralyzed and will need a more powerful equipment to improve her life. This episode will matter a lot in the dramatism of the film, as we will see later.

The twenty-third day marks a very important moment. Caleb is encouraged to get rid of the potential parasites that could endanger his life, including marriage. Defined in his father's journal as surrogates for pleasure, but with negative effects on the human life, they existed in Caleb's life, too. Moreover, he immediately identifies the main parasite which endangers his life: the computer and his addiction to pornography. He resorts to the radical measure to destroy his computer, thus avoiding any further attempts to use it and the possible misuse of it. The destruction of the computer is seen by Catherine, too, the computer being replaced with a beautiful - this time - bunch of flowers, accompanied by a note with a meaningful message: 'I love you more'. However, Caleb receives a heavy blow: the divorce papers.

The last part of the film shows a thrilling episode with a special meaning. Long interested in the purchase of accessories to enhance the lifestyle of her sick mother, Catherine discovers with amazement that the wanted bed and wheelchair were paid 'by a gentleman' and delivered to her parents' house. Here comes a confusing element: Catherine is completely convinced that Gavin is the one who paid for the equipment for her mother. Meanwhile, in another plan, the film introduces us to the moment when Caleb discovers a letter written by Gavin and addressed to Catherine. Caleb immediately reacts, he finds out who Gavin is, has a short conversation with him and threatens him, saying that Catherine is still his wife and he will not give up on her. If in the early days of the journal Caleb was devoid of any sentimental background, he now feels a burning desire to win his wife back. Scared of Caleb's intervention, Gavin is not as open towards Catherine, refusing her company (in addition, the film presents the encounter between Catherine and Anna, a patient who tells her about Gavin's lack of honesty: if he is courting a married woman, this would not prevent him from doing it while being married - as it really was).

One morning when Catherine is ill and must stay at home, provides the opportunity for discussions between Caleb and his wife. The meeting is full of great emotion, a sincere confession of Caleb and the uncertainty from Catherine who cannot trust the 'new' Caleb. It will all make sense to Catherine when she finds out that the real donor of the equipment for her mother is not Gavin, but Caleb. Totally impressed by this gesture of her husband, she then looks for him at the fire department to confess him that she has 'forgiven' him. The forty days of the diary have been crowned with success.

Although one could expect the film to end with the reconciliation and rediscovery of the two spouses, the script continues with the moment when, accompanied by his wife, Caleb visits his parents. In a private conversation with his father, Caleb learns from him that, in fact, the tasks of the journal have not accomplished by his father but by his mother: she found God and went through all the forty tasks to win back her marriage with John, who at one time wanted to give up on his marriage.

The film ends with the 'renewal' of the marriage vows between the two, this time in front of God in a marriage ceremony officiated outdoors, near the cross where - with his father's help - Caleb rediscovered God.

4. The Love Dare – 'notebook' with 40 steps

Published on the screenplay for the film, this 'notebook' has the following foreword: „Receive this as a warning. The forty-day journal cannot be taken lightly. It is a challenging and often difficult process, but an incredibly fulfilling one. To take this dare requires a resolute mind and a steadfast determination. It is not meant to be sampled or briefly tasted, and those who quit early will forfeit the greatest benefits. If you commit to a day at a time for forty days, the results could change your life and your marriage. Consider it a dare from others who have done it before you.” [10] Next, starting from one Bible verse, we present

the 40 steps that someone should take daily to save his/her marriage. The small volume also includes four appendix 1) 'The Locks and Keys of Effective Prayer', 2) '20 Questions for Your Spouse', 3) 'The Word of God in My Life' and 4) 'Leading Your Heart' [10, p. 166-177]. We will write here the list of the 40 principles and requirements (dares) renouncing – because of the lack of space – to the related comments, but giving reference to the Bible verses that inspired them [10, p. 1-165].

DAY 1: Love is patient (Ephesians 4.2) — The first part of this dare is fairly simple. Although love is communicated in a number of ways, our words often reflect the condition of our heart. For the next day, resolve to demonstrate patience and to say nothing negative to your spouse at all. If the temptation arises, choose not to say anything. It's better to hold your tongue than to say something you'll regret.

DAY 2: Love is kind (Ephesians 4.32) — In addition to saying nothing negative to your spouse again today, do at least one unexpected gesture as an act of kindness.

DAY 3: Love is not selfish (Romans 12.10) — Whatever you put, your time, energy and money into will become more important to you. It's hard to care for something you are not investing in. Along with restraining from negative comments, buy your spouse something that says, 'I was thinking about you today'.

DAY 4: Love is thoughtful (Psalm 139.17–18) — Contact your spouse sometime during the business of the day. Have no agenda other than asking how he or she is doing and if there is anything you could do for him/her.

DAY 5: Love is not rude (Proverbs 27.14) — Ask your spouse to tell you three things that cause him or her to be uncomfortable or irritated with you. You must do so without attacking them or justifying your behaviour. This is from their perspective only.

DAY 6: Love is not irritable (Proverbs 16.32) — Choose to react to tough circumstances in your marriage in a loving way instead of with irritation. Begin by making a list below of areas where you need to add margin to your schedule. Then list any wrong motivations that you need to release from your life.

DAY 7: Love believes the best (1 Corinthians 13.7) — For today's dare, get two sheets of paper. On the first one, spend a few minutes writing out positive things about your spouse. Then do the same with negative things on the second sheet. Place both sheets in a secret place for another day. There is a different purpose and plan for each. At some point during the remainder of the day, pick a positive attribute from the first list and thank your spouse for having this characteristic.

DAY 8: Love is not jealous (Song of Solomon 8.6) — Determine to become your spouse's biggest fan and to reject any thoughts of jealousy. To help you set your heart on your spouse and focus on their achievements, take yesterday's list of negative attributes and discreetly burn it. Then share with your spouse how glad you are about a success he or she recently enjoyed.

DAY 9: Love makes good impressions (1 Peter 5.14) — Think of a specific way you'd like to greet your spouse today. Do it with a smile and with enthusiasm. Then determine to change your greeting to reflect your love for them.

DAY 10: Love is unconditional (Romans 5.8) — Do something out of the ordinary today for your spouse — something that proves (to you and to him/her) that your love is based on your choice and nothing else. ... Demonstrate love to him/her for the sheer joy of being him/her partner in marriage.

DAY 11: Love cherishes (Ephesians 5.28) — What need does your spouse have that you could meet today? Can you run an errand? ... Choose a gesture that says, 'I cherish you' and do it with a smile.

DAY 12: Love lets the other win (Philippians 2.4) — Demonstrate love by willingly choosing to give in to an area of disagreement between you and your spouse. Tell them you are putting their preference first.

DAY 13: Love fights fair (Mark 3.25) — Talk with your spouse about establishing healthy rules of engagement. If your mate is not ready for this, then write out your own personal rules to 'fight' by. Resolve to abide by them when the next disagreement occurs.

DAY 14: Love takes delight (Ecclesiastes 9.9) — Purposefully neglect an activity you would normally do so you can spend quality time with your spouse. Do something he or she would love to do or a project they'd really like to work on. Just be together.

DAY 15: Love is honourable (1 Peter 3.7) — Choose a way to show honour and respect to your spouse that is above your normal routine. ... Show your mate that he or she is highly esteemed in your eyes.

DAY 16: Love intercedes (3 John 2) — Begin praying today for your spouse's heart. Pray for three specific areas where you desire for God to work in your spouse's life and in your marriage.

DAY 17: Love promotes intimacy (Proverbs 17.9) — Determine to guard your mate's secrets ... and to pray for them. Talk to your spouse, and ... really listen to them when they share personal thoughts and struggles with you. Make them feel safe.

DAY 18: Love seeks to understand (Proverbs 3.13) — Prepare a special dinner at home, just for the two of you. ... Determine to make it an enjoyable evening for you and your mate.

DAY 19: Love is impossible (1 John 4.7) — Look back over the dares from previous days. Were there some that seemed impossible to you? Have you realized your need for God to change your heart and to give you the ability to love? Ask Him to show you where you stand with Him, and ask for the strength and grace to settle your eternal destination.

DAY 20: Love is Jesus Christ (Romans 5.6) — Dare to take God at his word. Dare to trust Jesus Christ for salvation. Dare to pray, "Lord Jesus, I'm a sinner. But you have shown your love for me by dying to forgive my sins, and you have proven your power to save me from death by your resurrection. Lord, change my heart, and save me by your grace."

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DAY 21: Love is satisfied in God (Isaiah 58.11) — Be intentional today about making a time to pray and read your Bible. Try reading a chapter out of Proverbs each day ..., or reading a chapter in the Gospels ... As you do, immerse yourself in the love and promises God has for you. This will add to your growth as you walk with Him.

DAY 22: Love is faithful (Hosea 2.20) — Love is a choice, not a feeling. It is an initiated action, not a knee-jerk reaction. Choose today to be committed to love even if you feel that you don't get anything in return. Say to Him today in words similar to these, "I love you." Period. "I choose to love you even if you don't love me in return".

DAY 23: Love always protects (1 Corinthians 13.7) — Remove anything that is hindering your relationship, any addiction or influence that's stealing your affections and turning your heart away from your spouse.

DAY 24: Love vs. Lust (1 John 2.17) — End it now. Identify every object of lust in your life and remove it. Single out every lie you've swallowed in pursuing forbidden pleasure and reject it. Lust cannot be allowed to live in a back bedroom. It must be killed and destroyed — today — and replaced with the sure promises of God and a heart filled with His perfect love.

DAY 25: Love forgives (2 Corinthians 2.10) — Whatever you haven't forgiven in your mate, forgive it today. Let it go. Just as we ask Jesus to "forgive us our debts" each day, we must ask Him to help us "forgive our debtors" each day as well...

DAY 26: Love is responsible (Romans 2.1) — Take time to pray through your areas of wrong doing. Ask for God's forgiveness,... ask your spouse for forgiveness as well. No matter how they respond, make sure you cover your responsibility in love. Even if they respond with criticism, accept it by receiving it as counsel.

DAY 27: Love encourages (Psalm 25.20) — Eliminate the poison of unrealistic expectations in your home. Think of one area where your spouse has told you you're expecting too much... Promise them you'll seek to understand His ways, and assure them of your unconditional love.

DAY 28: Love makes sacrifices (1 John 3.16) — What is one of the greatest needs in your spouse's life right now? Is there a great need you could lift from their shoulders today by a daring act of sacrifice on your part? Whether the need is big or small, purpose to do what you can to meet the need.

DAY 29: Love's motivation (Ephesians 6.7) — Before you see your spouse again today, pray for them by name and for his/her needs. Whether it comes easy for you or not, say 'I love you', then express love to Him in some tangible way.

DAY 30: Love brings unity (John 17.11) — Isolate one area of division in your marriage, and look on today as a fresh opportunity to pray about it. Ask the Lord to reveal anything in your own heart that is threatening oneness with your spouse.

DAY 31: Love and marriage (Genesis 2.24) — Is there a 'leaving' issue involving the authorities in your life you haven't been brave enough to conquer yet? Confess it to your spouse today and resolve to make it right. ... Follow this

with a commitment to God to make your relationship the top priority over every other human relationship.

DAY 32: Love meets sexual needs (1 Corinthians 7.3) — If at all possible, try to initiate sex with your husband or wife today. Do this in a way that honours what your spouse has told you ... about what they need from you sexually. Ask God to make this enjoyable for both of you as well as a path to greater intimacy.

DAY 33: Love completes each other (Ecclesiastes 4.11) — Recognize that your spouse is integral to your future success. Let them know today that you desire to include them in your upcoming decisions, and that you need their perspective and counsel. If you have ignored their input in the past, admit your oversight and ask them to forgive you.

DAY 34: Love celebrates godliness (1 Corinthians 13.6) — Find a specific, recent example when your spouse demonstrated Christian character in a noticeable way. Verbally commend them for this at some point today.

DAY 35: Love is accountable (Proverbs 15.22) — Find a marriage mentor — someone who is a strong Christian and who will be honest and loving with you.

DAY 36: Love is God's Word (Psalm 119.105) — Commit to reading the Bible every day. Find a devotional book or other resource that will give you some guidance. If your spouse is open to it, see if they will commit to daily Bible reading with you.

DAY 37: Love agrees in prayer (Matthew 18.19) – Ask your spouse if you can begin praying together. Talk about the best time to do this... Even if your spouse refuses to do this, resolve to spend this daily time in prayer yourself.

DAY 38: Love fulfils dreams (Psalm 37.4) – Ask yourself what your mate would want you to become if it were possible. Commit this to prayer, and start mapping out a plan for meeting some (if not all) of their desires, to whatever level you possibly can.

DAY 39: Love endures (1 Corinthians 13.8) – Spend time in personal prayer, then write a letter of commitment and resolve to your spouse. Include why you are committing to this marriage until death, and that you have purposed to love them no matter what.

DAY 40: Love is a covenant (Ruth 1.16) – Write out a renewal of your vows and place them in your home. Perhaps, if appropriate, you could make arrangements to formally renew your wedding vows before a minister and with family present. Make it a living testament to the value of marriage in God's eyes and the high honour of being one with your mate.

5. Conclusions

The filmmakers have made a website to promote it. Here, as on other Internet forums, discussion showed the great echo that *Fireproof* had after its viewing. See also comments of some critics who praised the film [R. Winters Keegan, *Fireproof: When Filmmakers Believe in Miracles*, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1848758,00.html>, accessed

on October 23rd 2012]. Indeed, we agree with those who considered the film ‘a masterpiece’ in another sense than that to which we are accustomed, “Here is a great teaching in the true sense... namely that love is the most precious thing in the world, in fact the greatest gift from God! Very many people have a lot to learn from this superb film, regardless of age!” “A film which must be seen by all those who have family problems. A positive film, well directed, with well-developed characters.” And another comment points out: “This film speaks about the true love that you get to live only once in your lifetime. I think that it is a Christian movie, because it shows how God can change people’s lives.” [http://fireproofthemovie.com/, http://www.cinemarx.ro/filme/Fireproof-Fireproof-463331.html, http://www.cinemagia.ro/filme/fireproof-30177/, accessed on October 23rd 2012].

Even if the filmmakers belong to the Baptist confession - which is reflected in some moments of the film, particularly when emphasizing the direct personal relationship of man with God and in the last scene of the film, when the marriage vows are ‘renewed’ - we believe however that because of its universal Christian message, the film addresses to all those who face family problems. In this way its message becomes ‘trans-denominational’ and all Christians can watch a film which guides them spiritually in times of crisis.

In Alex Leo Șerban’s book that we mentioned above there is a quote from Irving Thalberg, producer at the prestigious company Metro Goldwyn Mayer who said that although the film will not live forever as a work of art, with a few exceptions, “it will still be the most effective way to show posterity how we live today” [9, p. 7]. While watching the movie we have referred to – of the many movies that are shot every year at the Hollywood ‘reservation’ [11], someone from the future will certainly realize that family is not broken and that the Christian values are absolutely necessary to ‘save’ it.

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