

**Blood Diamond. A film review by Rev Dr Steve Taylor
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Blood Diamond is a tough movie to watch. Set in Sierra Leone in the 1990's, Solomon Bo (Djimon Hounsou) is separated both from his family, and his son, Dia ([Kagiso Kuypers](#)), by civil war. Forced into diamond labour, Solomon finds, and then hides, a blood-red diamond of immense worth. The diamond attracts the interest of many, including smuggler and soldier-of-fortune, Danny Archer ([Leonardo DiCaprio](#)). The search, for the diamond, and for Solomon's family, is set against the brutal backdrop of civil war and human lust for power. Rated R16 for its' depiction of graphic and realistic war scenes, *Blood Diamond* pulls no visual punches.

Some movie fans will be attracted by the presence of one of Hollywood's golden boys, Leonardo DiCaprio. DiCaprio shows increased maturity as an actor, but is out-starred by Djimon Hounsou, who is superb as the seeking father. (Both DiCaprio and movie trivia fans, will be delighted to learn that in one scene, DiCaprio is filmed walking past his real life mother and his real life grandmother.)

The dialogue between African born and raised Danny Archer and war journalist Maddy Bowen (Jennifer Connelly) ensures a dialogue as tough as the R16 visual rating. Together they probe the role of Western journalists and governments in Africa, and the apathy of newspaper consumers, people like you and me.

The movie also conducts a tough and probing exploration of those who believe in God. Surveying the inhumanity and violent carnage of civil war, Danny Archer offers this commentary on the place of God in a world of suffering:

Sometimes I wonder if God will ever forgive us for what we've done to each other. Then I look around and I realize God left this place a long time ago.

Any Christian should find this a hard scene to watch. I suspect it would also be a hard scene for God to watch. What you do if you are a Creator God? Do you create humans as string puppets, unable to do bad things and thus never needing to seek forgiveness because God is always jerking the strings?

Or do you create humans with real choice? In doing so, you face the possibility that anyone with real choice has the freedom to exercise their real choice, both for good and for evil.

Yet for me, DiCaprio ends up as a Christ-figure. As the movie advertising posters boldly announce: "It will cost you everything." And so the movie ends costing DiCaprio his life. And in the process of dying, his blood staining the soil of the land he loves, he makes choices that usher light into darkness and open the doorway for a more systemic justice for Africa.

Blood Diamond is just a movie. But it brought to mind the words used to describe Jesus in Philippians 2:6-11, choosing to give up equality with God. And in his death, bringing light into dark places and ushering in the possibility of justice. A beautiful, yet bloody, image of Jesus for us to ponder this Easter.

502 words.

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