

Shrek 3 A film review by Rev Dr Steve Taylor

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A recent movie adventure included the taking of my family to *Shrek 3*. If you are a parent, or a grandparent, or an aunt or uncle, then you simply must do the same. *Shrek 3* continues a trend in recent film animation, that of mixing superb graphics with layers of clever dialogue, to ensure something for all ages.

I left the movie theatre pondering the question; “How could I review this movie as a family?”

A theologian once gave me a gift of two simple questions; “Who are humans?” and “Who is God in the world?” The theologian then challenged me to connect the two. Let me take up that challenge as I review *Shrek 3*.

Who are humans? The *Shrek* trilogy portrays a journey of discovery, as an ogre, called Shrek, learns to grow beyond the need to conform to outward peer pressure. As Shrek falls in love with the princess Fiona, he realises that he need no longer live life as a nasty, people-eater. As ogre and princess kiss, Fiona is transformed into her true self. Not her beautiful princess-self, but her true ogre-self. And so the credits roll on two ogres, learning to live happily ever after.

Thus the *Shrek* trilogy refuses the typical, Hollywood, once upon a time, beautiful princess, fairytale ending. Instead it suggests that life is lived to the full only when we discover what lies on our inside.

So as a parent, with two daughters maturing into a world determined to conform them to outward body and beauty pressures, I love the message of *Shrek*. I am grateful for the good news that we as humans need to discover what lies on our inside. This brings me to the second question.

Who is God in the world? In the beginning, in Genesis 1, God creates humans in the image of God. God then rests, rather pleased with the end product. This connects easily with what *Shrek 3* is saying about being human. It is what lies on the inside, God’s creative image, which we needs discovery.

But a quick check of the newspaper or a quiet inventory of my recent actions leaves me scratching my head. It seems impossible for humans to live life fully as God’s image.

Which brings us to the words in Romans; “We see the original and intended shape of our lives in Jesus.” Both a quick check and a good hard inventory of the life of Jesus expose a human who, in word and deed, lived fully as God’s original and intended image. So what God is doing in the world through Jesus is providing a career path toward fullness of life. It is what lies on the inside that counts.

The job of a film review is to review film. The job of a Christian filmgoer is to allow our children to review our human story in light of the God story. Which caused our family to exit *Shrek 3* singing “Then I saw God’s face, now I’m a believer.”

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