

Larry and Amanda Stephens

JUNE 2020



FREE movie during the month of June

One of the the most important projects Larry has been working on this year has been organizing showings of the movie, Just Mercy, for college students. The movie is adapted from a best-selling book and is the story of justice and redemption as a civil rights defense attorney struggles to free a wrongly condemned death-row prisoner. Larry’s work with this movie began before the death of George Floyd and the current uprisings in our

nation. God knew, however, the perfect timing of this film. Warner Bros recently contacted Larry and said they wanted to make the movie available for free to anyone during the month of June through Netflix, Redbox, and Vudu. Vudu has a family feature allowing you to cut out any bad language. On college campuses, the film has initiated discussions about racial tension and our hope is that it will also foster conversations that lead to the Gospel. If you haven’t had a chance to watch the movie, we encourage you to take some time this month. Below are some quotes from parents who have watched the movie with their family.

“My wife and I are planning to watch [Just Mercy] with our family and discuss. When our global exec team watched it in the theater together last January, we all left moved and pretty speechless. A timely film for these days.” — Erik (father of 2)

“Watched it with my teenagers after Ahmaud Aubrey’s murder and we talked for an hour afterwards. That never happens. Great film, great book, heartbreaking spotlight on death row system.” — Josh Newell, President of the Jesus Film

Thank-you for being a part of this ministry. We’re living in uncertain times, but we serve a God who is bigger than it all. The timing of this film project reassures us that God is at work. We feel grateful to lock arms with you to work on projects like this one. For our family, we have much to learn concerning injustice and oppression and would love your prayers as we discern ways to discuss this issue with our children and how we can raise them to be a part of the solution.

Larry + Amanda

80 San Antonio college students attend the Just Mercy movie showing. Great discussion afterwards.

“A lot of discussion happened among the students right after the movie. That was organic and really cool to see. This was a good stand alone outreach event.”

“We had two discussion group options the following day. One at UTSA at lunch, and the other in the evening at Las Palapas restaurant. We had about 7 students join the lunch group and about 15 in the evening. Good conversations.”

Michigan State University hosts 200 students on campus for Just Mercy movie and discussion

“We rented a movie theater to show Just Mercy. The movie raises the issues of justice, mercy , systemic injustices, and our assumptions about these things. Over 200 students attended; many stayed to discuss afterwards.”

Just Mercy Movie Update

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Before college campuses shut down due to Covid-19, Larry worked with local Cru campus leaders to buy out theaters for the showing of Just Mercy. Below are stories told from those outreaches.

► **University of North Dakota invites 99 students to Justice and Jesus groups after Just Mercy showing.** It was great on so many levels! It is very difficult for us to draw people to any event on campus as students are so busy with studies and work to pay for school, so over the last few years, almost any large group event has flopped. We had 99 people come out for the movie and only about 20 of us were from Cru!!! I loved being able to encourage and engage with students from Black Student Association and a multi-cultural church in town. We had prayed for 100 so we are celebrating God answering our prayers! We did a drawing for a \$50 gift card and asked people their thoughts on the movie. One of the options was inviting people to a Justice and Jesus group that will happen four times over a meal.

► **Freshman, Kaitlyn Kakey, shares perspective from University California Chico Cru Cultural Humility Week**



“Cru hosted a Cultural Humility Week that allowed me to better understand the racial injustices that have happened in America’s past and that still occur today. Before college, slavery and racism were topics that I only ever saw tackled in the history book and in the news. Cru provided a safe place for us to talk about these issues with a Christian perspective. The Just Mercy film gave me a visual and background knowledge that I can draw upon as I continue my faith journey and as I continue to make an effort to become cognizant of my own cultural judgements and racial biases.”

