

Andy Blackwelder
INT 110—Theology & Film

Film Title: *Changeling*. (Note: A *changeling* is a creature found in Western European Folklore that is usually the offspring of some legendary creature that has been left in the place of a human child)

Year: 2008

Director: Clint Eastwood. *Invictus* (2009), *Gran Torino* (2008), *Million Dollar Baby* (2004)

Original Release Form/Venue: Theater

Current Availability/Formats: DVD, Blu-Ray

Genre: Drama, History

Story Elements: The plot of *Changeling* is its most important story element. Christine Collins is in a battle with the LAPD to find her missing son, Walter. The LAPD, in an attempt to create some positive press, tries to convince her that another boy is her son. Her attempts to keep the file open and keep the search on for her son create a battle in which the LAPD does everything they can to discredit her story. It is only Rev. Gustav Briegleb, the local Presbyterian minister, who understands what is truly going on and attempts to help Christine by exposing the LAPD's injustice.

Film Language Elements: This film's most important film language element is setting. Los Angeles is a large metropolitan area with a well documented history of corruption among the Police force. The characters in the film also play an important role in developing the story. From Christine Collins' determination and Rev. Briegleb's desire for justice to the members of the LAPD and their disregard for the truth, the character's in this film drive the story.

Audience/ Cultural Context Elements: This film is mostly targeting adults, more specifically mothers. Mothers understand the bond they have with their children and would empathize with Christine Collins in her search to find her child and her helplessness as a woman in the 1920's and 30's.

Theology is found: Explicitly in the movie itself though Rev. Briegleb's involvement in seeking justice in this case.

Theological Themes for Conversation: What role does the church play in seeking justice?

Suggested Use of Film: Film as illustration of the theological theme

Recommended amount of film to view, and way to view it: Recommend watching up until Ms. Collins meets with Rev. Briegleb at the church, ending with the Rev. saying, "Mrs.

Collins... your son unfortunately would not be the first. But if you do it right, he may very well be the last.” Stop for conversation, then continue the movie.

Concluding or summary remarks: Injustice is all around us. A conversation of this nature can turn ugly fast as people get angry about the injustice in the world. Anger is an ok emotion, but reflect on how the church displayed anger and exposed injustice in this film. Discuss appropriate ways to demonstrate anger over injustice without “losing your voice” on the issue and being easily dismissed before your point is heard.