

License to Wed

Another film out on DVD, which I also do not want to really recommend, but comment on, is the intriguing and somewhat disturbing comedy with Robin Williams making another crazy and caricatured role his own. Williams plays a minister (presumably Episcopalian) Father Frank, a somewhat blatant and somewhat rude man, but with the necessary heart of gold. While this is certainly not a great film, I wish to acknowledge the helpful focus on pre-marital counseling. This is a solid consideration of the need to examine relationship issues and some of the sessions and role plays they have to undertake certainly raise critical relationship issues. He even has a contract which stipulates that the couple must refrain from having sexual intercourse until their wedding. Given that the majority of couples marrying cohabit today, I wonder how this would be received by an intended pair? I am aware that Russell Crowe is on record as saying that he and his future wife agreed to not sleep with each other for the three months before their wedding, trying to capture the special basis and newness that their being husband and wife would bring. Having indicated the positive aspect of the film, I need to point out one aspect which gave me the chills. I hope no minister or counsellor I know actually bugs the homes of the intended couple in order to find out how they are actually doing in terms of the pre-marriage counselling contract. I am presently undertaking research looking at contemporary marriage in Australia, mainly the question of why people marry, and still do so in large numbers. This film is more unusual when one considers the Australian context as now fewer than half of those marrying use a religious wedding celebrant. The main reason the main couple (Sadie played by well-known singer Mandy Moore, and Ben played by John Krasinski), in this film provide, is it is the church where she attended as a child, and Father Frank is the family minister, so who else would provide the ceremony? Overall, the helpful theme to this perhaps exploitative film, is do you want a wedding or a marriage?

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