



Wise man says it's a 'must see' film

## Description

## Review of *Elvis*, the new biopic by Baz Luhrmann



As a lifelong Elvis Presley fan, I eagerly awaited the arrival of the film *Elvis*. After viewing it, I was not

disappointed.

Elvis is played by Austin Butler. Elvis' manager Colonel Tom Parker is played by Tom Hanks. Both actors give very convincing performances.

I would've liked the film to have depicted more of the religious side of Elvis' life

We're taken back to Elvis' childhood and learn something of the Colonel's questionable background. We see how Elvis was greatly influenced by the style and music he heard at evangelical missions held in large circus-style tents.

While this is no doubt true, I would've liked the film to have depicted more of the religious side of Elvis' life – something which remained with him to the end. The movie could've made more of the fact that he won three Grammy awards – all of which were for his own recordings of gospel music.

The production could've also focused more on the humanitarian side of his character. Elvis gave charity concerts before they became fashionable. He was generous to both his friends and complete strangers. He had a wonderful sense of humour – and a disregard for racial segregation, refusing to go to Las Vegas unless his black backing singers 'The Sweet Inspirations' came with him.

While the film's producer uses poetic licence regarding some dates and places, the movie shows the huge impact Elvis had when he first appeared on the scene, changing the face of music and style by breaking so many of the accepted boundaries.

Criticisms of his early performances are very clearly depicted, showing how some regarded him as a danger to young people. I can't help wondering how today's social media would have treated him!

The Colonel comes across as a very controlling influence both on Elvis as a person and his career. Yet we are left wondering how popular and successful Elvis would have become without him. Their relationship continued throughout his lifetime, and although threatened, the break never came.

The 1960's era of making film after film is easily passed over – though these films were the only way of fans to see him – before the 1968 TV show which the Colonel had planned to be a Christmas special with Elvis singing various Yuletide songs.

The resplendent and resurgent black leather-suited Elvis and the song *If I Can Dream* certainly put an end to that idea, especially at the time America was recovering from the assassinations of Dr Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy.

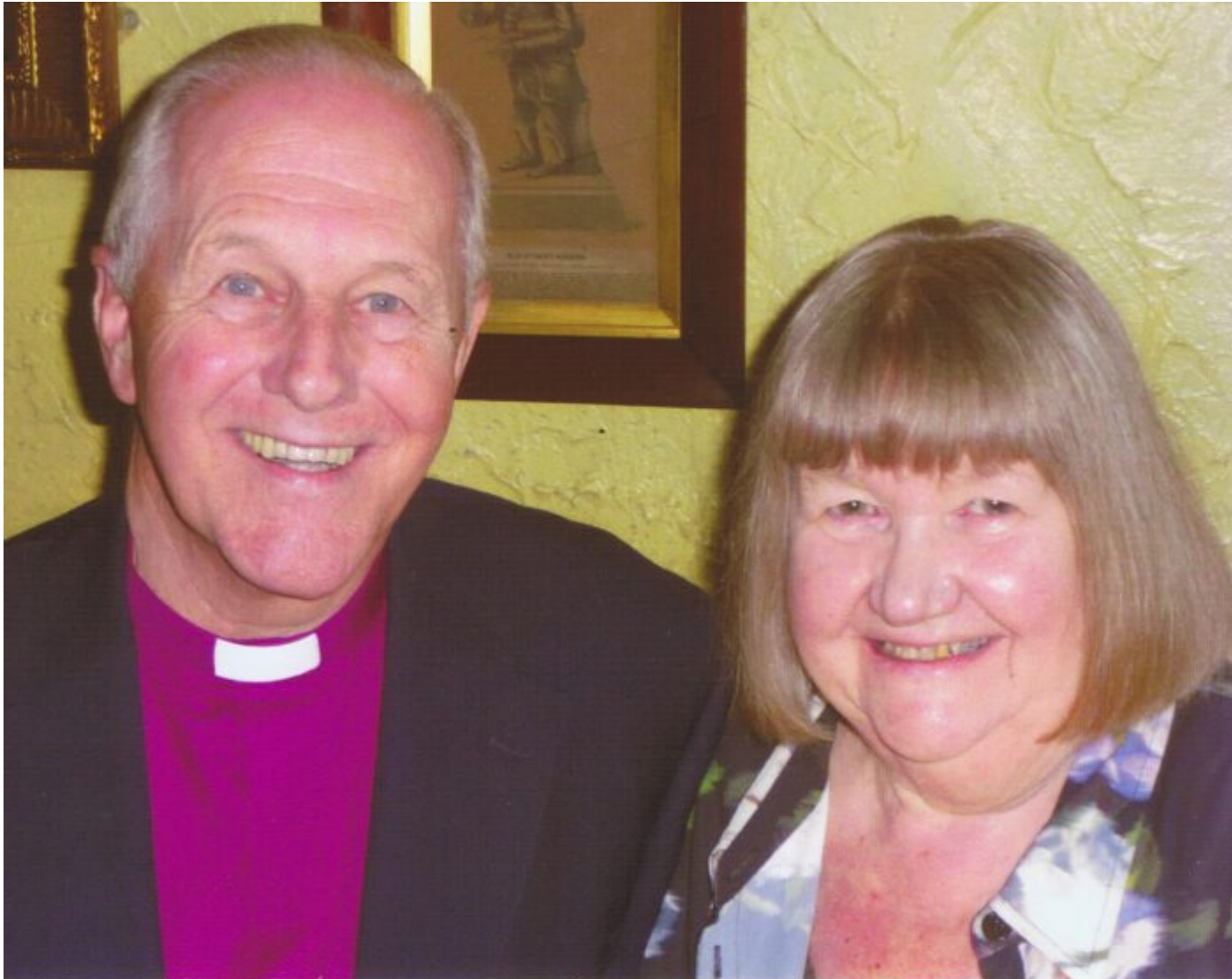
The arduous work rate Elvis had to sustain was to take a toll on his health and wellbeing

The Colonel's interest in making money not just for Elvis but also for himself is highlighted when he negotiates a contract for Elvis to appear at the newly opened International Hotel in Las Vegas. Financially it's a fabulous offer, but the arduous work rate Elvis had to sustain – both in Vegas and in

later tours throughout America – was to take a terrible toll on his health and wellbeing.

His dependence on prescribed medication is dealt with in a sensitive way and not overemphasised. The end comes in 1977, and the closing frames are of Elvis himself at the piano performing *Unchained Melody* with a voice still capable of reaching the heights, while his body is failing.

For me, as an Elvis fan, and despite my little grievances, this is a ‘must see’ film that will introduce Elvis to a whole new generation – 45 years after his passing.



*Revd Derek Aldridge is an MMHS resident and chaplain to the Strictly Elvis fan organisation. He is pictured here with his wife Janet. They shared their story in the [spring 2021 edition of Roof 'n' Roots](#).*

**Category**

- 1. News & reviews

**Date Created**

07/07/2022

**Author**  
cliveprice