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ENTERTAINMENT

PRESENTS

GOD'S NOT DEAD 2



Opens in UK Cinemas 29th April

Starring Melissa Joan Hart, Jesse Metcalfe, Pat Boone and Ray Wise

Directed by Harold Kronk | Written by Chuck Konzelman & Cary Solomon

Running time: 120 minutes

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Have faith. Speak truth. Stand firm.

When a Christian teacher is asked an honest question about Jesus in her public-school classroom, her reasoned response lands her in big trouble—almost before she finishes giving her answer.

This is the thought-provoking setting for *GOD'S NOT DEAD 2*, the new movie from Pure Flix. This inspiring drama examines the high cost of taking a stand for God in today's public square and advances many of the themes from the award-winning 2014 megahit *GOD'S NOT DEAD* with a cast of new and returning characters.

Grace Wesley (Melissa Joan Hart) helps students understand and enjoy history at Dr. Martin Luther King High School in Little Rock, Ark. Her love of teaching, her dedication to her students her students and her passion for truth all come from the same place: her dedication to Christ.

But her faith comes under attack when Brooke Thawley (Hayley Orrantia), a hurting student grieving the death of her brother, begins reading her late brother's Bible and asks Grace about the similarities between Jesus' teachings and those of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. King.

When Grace explains that what Jesus taught was an inspiration for King's nonviolent activism, her principal (Robin Givens) is informed, and school district officials demand Grace apologize for violating the "separation of church and state."

But Grace, with the emotional and spiritual support of her grandfather (Pat Boone), refuses to admit wrongdoing, saying she would rather stand with God and be judged by the world than stand with the world and be judged by God. Enter a lawyer (Ray Wise) for a zealous civil liberties group with no love for Christians, who convinces Brooke's parents to sue Grace in a landmark case designed to prove, once and for all, not only that God is dead, but that Jesus never lived.

Grace fights for her rights and her livelihood with the help of her union-appointed attorney, Tom Endler (Jesse Metcalfe), who must employ some unusual tactics in his efforts to convince the jury of Grace's innocence and prevent God's name from being banned from the public square.

GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 stars Melissa Joan Hart (*SABRINA THE TEENAGE WITCH*, *MELISSA & JOEY*), Jesse Metcalfe (*DALLAS*, *DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES*) Hayley Orrantia (*THE GOLDBERGS*, *THE X FACTOR*), Ernie Hudson (*GHOSTBUSTERS*, *OZ*) Sadie Robertson (*DUCK DYNASTY*), Robin Givens (*HEAD OF THE CLASS*, *BOOMERANG*), the late Fred Dalton Thompson (*LAW & ORDER*, *DIE HARD 2*) and Maria Canals-Barrera (*CRISTELA*, *WIZARDS OF WAVERLY PLACE*), with Pat Boone and Ray Wise (*FRESH OFF THE BOAT*, *MAD MEN*).

Stars from the original *GOD'S NOT DEAD* return as well, including fan favorites

David A.R. White (Rev. Dave), Benjamin Onyango (Rev. Jude), Trisha LaFache (Amy Ryan) and Paul Kwo (Martin Yip), along with a special appearance by Newsboys.

GOD'S NOT DEAD 2, reuniting the creative team behind the original, is directed by Harold Cronk (GOD'S NOT DEAD, JERUSALEM COUNTDOWN) from a script by Chuck Konzelman and Cary Solomon (GOD'S NOT DEAD, DO YOU BELIEVE?). Michael Scott, David A.R. White, Brittany Lefebvre and Elizabeth Hatcher-Travis and the late Russell Wolfe are producers.

Sparking a topical conversation

The phrase “ripped from the headlines” tends to conjure up images of murder-of-the-week TV movies. But those in front of and behind the camera on GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 say their new film takes the idea – pulling themes and a plot from the news of the day – and explores it in an eye-opening, non-sensational way they hope helps start a dialogue in the U.S. about freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

The film is the sequel to GOD'S NOT DEAD, the highest-grossing independent faith film of 2014, which took in more than \$60 million at the box office. It moves the action from the college setting of the first film to the public square, where high school teacher Grace Wesley (Melissa Joan Hart) is sued after answering a student's question about Jesus – and a civil liberties group with an agenda looks to make an example of her in its quest to remove God from public discourse.

If this fictional scenario sounds real, that's because hardly a week passes when there isn't another case somewhere in America challenging the right of everyday Americans to exercise their religious freedoms in public forums. GOD'S NOT DEAD 2, in fact, cites in its closing credits 25 such cases as inspiration for its plot.

“This is a very relevant movie for what's going on in our country and the world,” Hart notes. “There are a lot of Christians being persecuted, a lot of sacrificing the many for the one. We've stopped taking into consideration the freedoms this country was founded on.”

While no single case yet litigated has the exact specifics of what's portrayed in the film – a teacher accused for discussing Jesus as a historical, not divine, being – filmmakers predict it's only a matter of time until real life catches up to reel life.

“We're about a half-step ahead of the headlines,” says Chuck Konzelman, who co-wrote the script with Cary Solomon. “It's this whole idea that in society, and especially in schools, people are being told they can't talk about Jesus. Yet even atheist scholars will admit the historical personage of Jesus absolutely existed.

“Our constitutional law was not drafted in such a way that said you can speak about any historical person who ever existed except Jesus,” he adds. “So you can discuss Jesus in a historical context completely apart from faith tradition, and that has to be admissible in the public sphere.”

That's the argument Grace's attorney Tom Endler (Jesse Metcalfe) turns to after being handed some serious setbacks courtesy of a hostile civil-liberties group

attorney Peter Kane (Ray Wise) – calling expert witnesses to testify about Jesus the man, not Jesus the Messiah. One of those to take the stand is J. Warner Wallace, a longtime Los Angeles County cold-case detective who was an atheist when he began looking into the Gospels as “eyewitness accounts” of Jesus – and found the evidence of His life, death and resurrection to be so indisputable that Wallace became a Christian.

“That changed it all for me, because then you’re stuck with what do you do with this Jesus who rose from the dead?” Wallace says. “If this is a reliable account, and you believe the people who saw that actually saw it, well, then, that changes everything.”

Changing things is exactly what those involved with GOD’S NOT DEAD 2 hope to do. Hayley Orrantia, who plays Brooke Thawley, the student who asks Grace the question about Jesus that touches off the legal maelstrom, says she’s happy “we’re finally talking about the elephant in the room and asking, ‘Why can’t we talk about those sorts of things in the classroom?’

“As Christians, our goal is to appeal to those who aren’t a part of the faith and tell about Jesus and the Word of God,” Orrantia says. “So I think it’s a really great thing that we can find a way to put a storyline in there and be entertaining while also inspiring people.”

Hart, herself an outspoken Christian in Hollywood, agrees, saying she felt like it was her “mission” to be part of the film.

“After reading the script, I felt very called to do this movie. And really excited about it,” she says. “I prayed a lot over it. Had a lot of discussions with friends and family about it. And came to the conclusion that this is an important story to tell.

“I hope some people will come and find an answer here,” she adds. “I know there’s a struggle now with religion in public – it’s not easy to talk about. But hopefully this opens up some conversations.”

Director Harold Cronk, who also helmed the original GOD’S NOT DEAD, said he hopes his new movie shows Christians how to stand boldly and effectively for their faith.

“This is a story about courage, faith and hope,” he says. “It’s a walk with Melissa’s character down this path of ‘How far are you willing to go, what level of persecution are you willing to stand up to, to really show the world what you believe to be true in your heart?’ ”

What Grace Wesley ultimately decides is a great example for all believers, according to Robin Givens, who plays Principal Kinney, chief administrator of Grace’s school.

“Grace is a woman of faith who is willing to stand up for what she believes in a society that is trying to figure out if this is acceptable or not,” Givens notes. “Grace doesn’t want to offend anybody, but she’s willing to say, ‘This is what I believe, so why shouldn’t this be part of life?’ ”

It’s not just the Christian characters in the film who support Grace’s bravery in

standing firm in her faith. Attorney Endler (Jesse Metcalfe) is a nonbeliever who pulls out all the courtroom stops to secure a victory for Grace. Endler enlists in the fight because he believes the public square needs to be a place where all views are welcome – a sentiment shared by the actor who plays him.

“I like bringing attention to the argument that rages on about the separation of church and state,” Metcalfe says. “I think that’s really interesting, that there are some great points on both sides of the argument. At the end of the day, the message of the movie is really freedom to believe as you wish to believe and not being too rigid in controlling how people express themselves. “I think that’s the foundation of our country and what makes our country great.” So does Pat Boone, the legendary singer/actor who plays Grace’s grandfather, Walter. “There’s freedom of religion, but there’s also freedom of speech. And that freedom of speech has no provisos on it,” he explains. “It says you can speak, out loud, what you believe. And we’re encouraged to do that, unless it’s going to bring harm to somebody. That certainly can and should pertain to any expression of faith.”

It is a safe bet that moviegoers of many faiths – and none at all – will see GOD’S NOT DEAD 2. So what do the stars and filmmakers hope audiences will ultimately take away from the film?

“Any piece of entertainment and drama,” Wise says, “if it can make you think about the issues, or if it can reinforce something that you feel and believe in, then it’s done a good job.”

Producer Brittany Lefebvre takes her star’s thoughts a step further, saying she hopes her fellow Christians, while being strengthened in their faith, discuss their beliefs in a winsome way that attracts others to that faith.

“When we do get in these scenarios, we’re not asked to stand up and create a ton of noise or to get angry or malicious,” she says. “So what is our response as Christians when we are persecuted to this extent? I’m hoping this film sparks that conversation.”

‘Not only a film, but a movement’

It was the megahit nobody, not even the people who made it, saw coming. GOD’S NOT DEAD, made for just \$2 million by Pure Flix, nabbed more than four times that in its opening weekend en route to more than \$60 million at the box office to date.

Christian audiences hailed the movie for its bold portrayal of a very real contemporary struggle in the halls of higher education: atheist professors attempting to quash the beliefs of Bible-believing students.

“We had just heard that 65 percent of the kids who go into college as believers come out as atheists – and we were so struck by that,” explains Cary Solomon, who co-wrote GOD’S NOT DEAD with Chuck Konzelman. “It was so evil in our comprehension that we said, ‘Let’s use GOD’S NOT DEAD as the perfect vehicle to spotlight that situation.’ ”

That spotlight has now led to the sequel, GOD'S NOT DEAD 2, also written by Solomon and Konzelman. It tells a similar story – this one focused on efforts to curb religious speech in public school and the public square courtesy of a court case that could cost a Christian high school teacher her job.

Some key cast members from the first film are back – David A.R. White (Rev. Dave), Benjamin Onyango (Rev. Jude), Trisha LaFache (Amy Ryan) and Paul Kwo (Martin Yip), along with a special appearance by Newsboys. But a mostly new cast steps in this time around – including Melissa Joan Hart (as the embattled teacher), Jesse Metcalfe (as her attorney), Hayley Orrantia (as the student whose question about Jesus touches off the firestorm), Sadie Robertson (as the best friend of Orrantia's character) Ray Wise (as the opposing attorney), Robin Givens (as the principal) Ernie Hudson (as the judge), Pat Boone (as the teacher's grandfather) and the late Fred Dalton Thompson (in his final film role, as a senior pastor). Even former Arkansas governor, TV and radio host and GOP presidential candidate Mike Huckabee turns in a cameo as himself.

All the new members of the GOD'S NOT DEAD family have seen the first film – and say they liked it so much they had to be a part of GOD'S NOT DEAD 2.

"The first one was very moving," Hart says. "I loved the idea of the debate in the college setting and the professor trying to bully his way through, trying to force younger minds that are still molding into a certain direction instead of letting them think for themselves.

"I love that the film attacked that and stood up for the weak," she added, "for the few out there who might not have a voice."

Sadie Robertson, making her big screen debut in GOD'S NOT DEAD 2, said she feels like the original movie strengthened her own voice.

"The first film really did have an impact on my life," said Robertson, whose parents and co-stars on DUCK DYNASTY appeared in GOD'S NOT DEAD. "It really was different to me: It stood out; I took something from it. I went home and was encouraged and inspired to stand up for my faith."

Wise was also a bit blindsided by his response to the original. "I thought it was really great," he says, "I was quite surprised, really, because usually a

movie with that kind of a title doesn't live up to its expectations. But that one did. It was a fine story and a good cast."

For Givens, being cast in GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 made her a bit of a hero in her family – who were big fans of the first film long before the script for the second one showed up in her mailbox. Boone says the

original was "an eminently, wonderfully successful film." More successful than Pure Flix could have ever imagined, according to producer and

founding company partner Michael Scott. He says the filmmakers knew they had something special with GOD'S NOT DEAD, but were surprised when it turned into "not only a film, but a movement."

"I think it really was, for Pure Flix, a culmination of the more than 80 movies we'd

made – what we'd done right, what we'd done wrong, and what we'd learned from both," Scott explains. "We put all of that into GOD'S NOT DEAD to truthfully find a God-honoring product."

Now, both filmmakers and cast hope GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 finds the same success – most importantly as a God-honoring product.

"We've had so much junk and darkness thrown at us by culture, I think people are hungry in society," says Michael Tait, lead singer of Newsboys, who played a pivotal role in the original film, performing their hit song of the same title. "Every now and then people want to come up for a breath of fresh air. A little spark in the dark can light up the whole scene. GOD'S NOT DEAD was that little train that could. God chose to make that moment His moment, and, boy, did it blow up.

"Wouldn't it be great if it happened again with GOD'S NOT DEAD 2?" Harold Cronk, who directed both films, definitely thinks it would be great. "We heard so many stories of people who took nonbelievers to GOD'S NOT DEAD and

of conversions in the theaters," he recalls. "We wanted to make another film this time out that will hit the mainstream audience and show them that there's more out there."

Returning to the fold

GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 isn't your typical sequel: There's more going on here than the original cast returning for further drama, comedy or action and adventure. Here, an entirely new cast of characters primarily takes center stage – with a handful of key players from the first film reenlisting to continue their journeys in a storyline that once again explores the cost and courage required to stand for your Christian faith in an increasingly hostile culture.

Those GOD'S NOT DEAD characters returning in GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 include Rev. Dave, played by actor, producer and Pure Flix founding partner David A.R. White.

"The thing I like about his character is all of us have struggles," White explains. "In the first film, he felt like he was on the shelf, that God wasn't using him, that his life didn't have a purpose. And then, of course, we find out at the end of it what an important thing God had for him to do.

"So in this film we're kind of carrying along his journey. Being a pastor in a small town, there's not a lot of applause going on. You're not seeing huge miracles every day."

But the Rev. Dave of GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 is a man of renewed faith and commitment to his calling. This is evident when Martin Yip (Paul Kwo), the college student who became a Christian at the end in the first film, seeks out Rev. Dave to ask him some deep questions about his newfound belief.

"He's trying to find his place in the world in his new faith," Kwo says. "Martin represents our search for an intelligent Creator, an intelligent faith. That's his journey. He's asking all these

interesting, crazy questions – he's got 147 of them right from the beginning. And it's only growing longer and longer. And this pursuit for intelligent answers, it doesn't end."

Another returning character who ended the first film thinking differently about God is Amy Ryan (Trisha LaFache), the aggressive atheist journalist whose life is rocked by a cancer diagnosis and whose lack of faith is challenged by her unlikely encounter with the award-winning Christian band Newsboys. Amy also picks up in GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 with some questions about Christianity, although hers are a little less intellectual and a little more experiential than Martin's.

"She started to turn the corner a little bit in that first film, and we wanted to explore that a little more – what happens with Amy in the next chapter of her life," says Harold Cronk, who directed both films.

Key to her journey in the new film is that her cancer has gone into remission – and she finds herself, after turning to God in crisis, not entirely sure where to turn when the crisis at least appears to be over. She determines to focus her journalistic talents and passion on what it means to truly embrace the Christian faith – and along the way winds up covering the trial of public school teacher Grace Wesley (Melissa Joan Hart), whose battle to keep her job after being sued for mentioning Jesus in class forms the main plotline of the picture. Amy also finds herself in contact with members of Newsboys, again, as she struggles through determining what she truly believes about Christianity.

"It's not completely clear in the beginning where Amy is going to end up," LaFache teases. "But it's a fun journey to watch."

And, of course, Rev. Dave's return would not be complete without his reteaming with Rev. Jude (Benjamin Onyango), his upbeat and optimistic friend from GOD'S NOT DEAD.

"We've kept the tone with those guys – that lighthearted banter," director Cronk explains. "They really just want to serve the Lord and do everything they can to build and promote the Kingdom."

But once again, Rev. Dave finds himself a bit perplexed by a situation God has led him into: He ends up on the jury in the case against Grace Wesley.

"He doesn't understand why these things are happening to him. Why does he have to go on jury duty?" White says. "You know, nobody wants to go on jury duty – but for such a time as this God has a specific plan in the little details. And, in the end, this thing that he didn't want to do ends up being for God's glory.

"That's so important in all our lives," he adds. "If we say, 'Lord, use us wherever we're at, today,' we'll be amazed to see what God does."

'We are on trial every day because of our faith'

Truth, we've all heard said, is stranger than fiction. The makers of GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 also want you to know that in the case of their new movie, truth also makes for a more compelling and dramatic story than fiction could ever muster.

“What we want to do is keep this realistic,” co-screenwriter Cary Solomon explains. “We don’t want to go out and tell stories that are make-believe and are not relevant.”

That’s why, Solomon says, he and his writing partner, Chuck Konzelman, built the new film around a court case in which a Christian public school teacher is sued for talking about Jesus in her AP History class after a student asks a question comparing what Christ taught to the nonviolence espoused by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

The plot reflects, the writers say, not just grave misunderstandings and misapplications of the “separation of church and state,” but true, and growing, animus toward men and women of faith who stand up for, and sometimes simply speak about, Jesus in the public square.

“Christians are being persecuted out there,” Konzelman says. “It’s the last acceptable form of social bigotry. And it’s not only acceptable; it’s trendy. And that trendiness is catching additional momentum as time goes by.

“The snowball’s already rolling down the hill, and now we’ve got to work to stop it.” GOD’S NOT DEAD 2, they add, is their way of doing just that in the face of a situation

Solomon calls “morally wrong.” What about the cast members – the men and women into whose mouths Konzelman and

Solomon have put their bold and culturally defiant words? Do they also believe the scenario they bring to life onscreen mirrors real life?

Yes, they do.

“Christians as a whole are being shoved aside – people sort of roll their eyes and dismiss us, instead of respecting our faith as they do other religions,” says Melissa Joan Hart, who stars as embattled teacher Grace Wesley. “A lot of times as a Christian I feel that if I were a different religion there’d be more respect for the traditions of my faith and my church.”

Jesse Metcalfe, who plays Grace’s court-appointed defense attorney, Tom Endler, agrees with his co-star that the issue they depict in the film is present in everyday society. And he also agrees that’s a problem.

“A person’s faith being put on trial definitely is realistic because there are some situations that have been in the news over the last few years that touch on this issue,” he notes. “In Houston, some pastors were required to turn over their sermons so the government could see exactly what they were preaching about. I do think that’s a pretty clear infraction of freedom of speech.

“I don’t think any type of religious doctrine should be forced on anyone,” he adds, “but at the same time I don’t think we should have an oversensitive, kneejerk reaction to the mention of God in a public forum.”

The late Fred Dalton Thompson, who makes his final film appearance in GOD’S NOT DEAD 2 as a senior pastor, echoed Metcalfe’s comments, even using some of the same words.

"More and more sensitivity is being given to any concern that any individual might have so that the rights of the majority are sometimes overlooked," he noted. "Nobody wants to shove anything down anybody's throat, but we're having freedoms infringed upon that we, in my generation, grew up enjoying and there wasn't any question about."

Go down the cast list, and you get similar reactions.

- Robin Givens (Principal Kinney): "Someone's faith being put on trial is something that happens, in a strange way, all the time in this world. So I would say it's pretty darn realistic – yes."
- Ray Wise (Peter Kane): "That conflict and that debate is very timely. It's very 'now.' Almost every week in the papers you read a story about somebody complaining about something – saying a prayer in the cafeteria – so it's a very relevant topic."
- Mike Huckabee (Himself): "This is virtually ripped from the day's headlines by showing how people of faith are now being criminalized. A few years ago, such a film would be fiction that could someday be true; now, it's the story that has become true for believers across the nation."
- Pat Boone (Walter Wesley): "We are on trial every day because of our faith. Grade-school kids can't say Jesus is the person they most admire, valedictorians can't thank God, the team can't say a prayer before the game. We're taking God's name out of everything."
- Sadie Robertson (Marlene): "Faith being placed on trial is very realistic because, sadly, the moment someone stands up for their faith it gets a lot of attention because it's kind of rare. It should just be natural; it should just flow off of our tongues. But it doesn't because people are scared about what others are going to say or think – because people do say and do think very rude things."
- Ernie Hudson (Judge Stennis): "It's an issue we're constantly faced with. Normally these things don't get taken to court, but the possibility that they can is a bit of threat."
- Maria Canals-Barrera (Catherine Thawley): "It is frighteningly realistic to have a story in which somebody's faith is put on trial, sadly. I think true tolerance and true respect is, 'I don't agree with you, but I respect your humanity, and I will coexist with you peacefully because we live in a country that honors freedom – including freedom of faith.' " Canals-Barrera knows firsthand what she's talking about. So does Hart. No, they've never been dragged into court for expressing their Christian faith, but they have – as actresses in Hollywood – found themselves looked at askance and even "corrected" for their beliefs. Hart says she has a cross tattooed on the back of her neck that, depending on the meeting she's taking, she'll be sure to cover up with her hair. "I don't want to offend anyone," she says, "but I also don't want to shy away from who I am."
Canals-Barrera remembers watching the first GOD'S NOT DEAD and reacting to the atheist professor played by Kevin Sorbo. She wondered for a moment if it was realistic for him to be so zealously convinced there was no God – and then she remembered a moment from her own life. "I was

like, 'Oh, my. I have seen that. It does happen. I have seen people react with that ... energy,' " she recalls. "I remember saying I was so grateful to God because I had gotten a part in a show, and this lady felt she had to correct me that it wasn't God. And I don't know her that well. And I said, 'I know what you mean, because I remember when I didn't attribute a lot of things to a Creator. But I know, I really do know, it was God who did it.' "

"She really felt like she had to adjust me." Speaking of adjustments, Hart has an idea about how men and women of faith can act to change the culture that makes standing up for Jesus and what He taught a growing challenge – personally and legally. "Right now this country is moving in such a fast-paced direction," she explains, "that there need to be those people who stand up and say, 'Hey, what about what we did 100 years ago? What about 200 years ago? What about what our Constitution says? What about what the Bible says?'

"We need to remind people of our core values and really hold on to that."

One of the writers of GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 agrees with her about what their fellow believers need to do.

"What we're trying to explain to people in these movies," co-screenwriter Solomon says, "is, 'Look, we're 85, 90 percent of the country. If you just keep giving ground all the time, they're going to take that ground, and this culture, which is supposed to be inclusive, is going to exclude us and is going to try to get rid of us.' "

Pursuing a reasoned faith

Faith, as described in the Bible, is the "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen." But when you make a movie that revolves around a court case challenging whether Jesus Christ was a real person ... well, you're going to need some evidence that's a little more concrete.

That's just what the makers of GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 offer in their film, making a reasoned case for a Christian faith that can stand up to the rigors of the courtroom – and scientific inquiry.

"As we go through the series of GOD'S NOT DEAD movies – and I don't know how many there'll be – we want to answer a series of very determined theological questions," producer Michael Scott explains. "And, ultimately, my hope is to develop an army of people who can talk about their faith intelligently, and really take that to the world."

As a courtroom drama, GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 explores the intellectual aspects of the Christian faith primarily through the witness stand, courtesy of real-life experts who testify about the undeniable proof of Jesus' existence. Other experts also appear in a mock talk-show segment hosted by former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee (playing himself), in which they discuss the case at the center of the film's plot – in which a public high school teacher is sued for mentioning Jesus in her history class in response to a student's question.

While the ACLU consistently talks about the "alleged" words of Jesus, challenging his status as a historical figure, the defense musters a mountain of

evidence to counter that claim.

“Virtually nobody in the scholarly community holds that Jesus didn’t exist,” says Gary Habermas, professor of apologetics and philosophy at Liberty University and author of *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*. He appears in the films as one of Huckabee’s guests.

“There are a dozen and a half texts for Jesus outside the New Testament.”

Dr. Rice Brooks, whose book *Man, Myth Messiah* is featured in the film and who joins Habermas in the movie’s talk-show segment, seconds his fellow expert’s assertion. “To someone who has interest in history, I mean real historians, there is no question that

Jesus existed,” Brooks explains. “There are three times as many references to Jesus historically than to the Roman emperor Tiberius.”

GOD’S NOT DEAD 2 doesn’t only engage in deep thinking about Christianity in its legal scenes, though. The journeys of many characters, including Grace Wesley (Melissa Joan Hart), the teacher whose career is endangered when she’s sued, include meaningful moments of examining and questioning what it means to follow Jesus.

No character spends more time searching for answers than Martin Yip (Paul Kwo), who became a Christian at the end of the first film and now wrestles with what his decision means on a daily basis.

“Being a very intellectual person, Martin has lots of questions but very few answers, so he’s out there looking for the answers,” Kwo says. “Not just about God, but also for and about himself in his own life. For every question he asks, three or four more pop up.

“But that’s just what you do with science, so why shouldn’t it be the same with faith? Every time we ask a question, we learn more. But at the same time, because we learn more, there should be more questions.”

That reality plays out in Kwo’s off-screen life as well.

“It’s absolutely important for us to take faith intellectually and intelligently,” he says. “I don’t think faith and intelligence are two separate things. I think I’m pretty intelligent, and I’ve got a pretty strong faith myself.”

Hart can identify with her co-star.

“I imagine myself pretty fearless, so I don’t shy away from the things I believe or the things I want to say,” she says. “I want to debate. I want to talk about things. I want other people to tell me why they believe things. I love to have deep conversations with people about things you’re not supposed to talk about – religion and politics. Because I want to know more. And I want you to know more.”

It is that spirit – wanting to help moviegoers know more – that director Harold Cronk says drove him and his fellow filmmakers during every step of *GOD’S NOT DEAD 2*.

“Our goal is not just to preach to the choir with these movies,” he says. “We want to reach beyond the faith base and into more of the secular world. We want to get people asking questions about their faith and their beliefs.”

About the cast

MELISSA JOAN HART (Grace Wesley) is a veteran of television, film, and theater, having made her first national commercial at age 4. She recently completed her sixth and final season on the ABC Family series MELISSA & JOEY, for which she also served as executive producer. Melissa is best known for her starring role in SABRINA, THE TEENAGE WITCH. Melissa and her husband, Mark, recently launched their American-inspired boys-wear line called King of Harts—cool, fun, and edgy clothing that is modern with a vintage feel. Melissa works actively for a variety of charities, particularly those that benefit children. She resides in Connecticut with her husband and three sons.

JESSE METCALFE (Tom Endler), considered one of Hollywood’s rising leading men, has become a go-to actor in both television and film. Recent projects include the indie film DESTINED, the digital film DEAD RISING, and the Hallmark Channel’s original movie A COUNTRY WEDDING. His television programs have included the TNT reboot of DALLAS, in which he played Christopher Ewing. His first big-screen role was in the comedy JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE in 2006. He has won awards for his acting, including the Choice TV Breakout Performance Male at the Teen Choice Awards as well as a nomination for Choice TV Actor in a Comedy and a SAG Award for Best Television Ensemble.

DAVID A.R. WHITE (Rev. Dave) co-starred for three years on Burt Reynolds’ hit TV show EVENING SHADE, as well as earning many other roles in television and film, before becoming a founding partner in Pure Flix, now the leading producer of faith-based films. David is one of the most prolific actors and filmmakers in the faith-based arena, producing and starring in nearly 20 feature-length films. His credits include GOD’S NOT DEAD, DANCER AND DAME, BROTHER WHITE, REVELATION ROAD 1 & 2, IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, and many more. David’s passion remains to further enhance faith-based films with excellence in every way. His love for the Lord guides the projects he works on. David and his wife Andrea have three children.

HAYLEY ORRANTIA (Brooke Thawley) stars in the ABC hit comedy THE GOLDBERGS, playing Erica Goldberg, a beautiful but rebellious high school student with a smart mouth who, nonetheless, really loves her family. Hayley began singing professionally as well as writing songs at the age of 13, and she began studying acting and piano at age 15. She sang background vocals on a number of Disney albums before being part of the girl group Lakoda Rayne, which finished in ninth place during the first season of THE X-FACTOR. Her first film was the family movie COOPER AND THE CASTLE HILLS GANG. Born and raised in Texas, Hayley now resides in Los Angeles.

ERNIE HUDSON (Judge Stennis) is a beloved star of film, television, and stage who is well known for starring role in the blockbuster hits GHOSTBUSTERS and GHOSTBUSTERS 2. Among his most-recent credits, Ernie starred in Lifetime’s award-winning ensemble drama, CALL ME CRAZY. Ernie is also currently in the Emmy®-nominated Netflix series GRACE & FRANKIE. Along with Kevin Sorbo, he stars in GALLOWS ROAD, which premiered at the prestigious USA Film Festival in

Dallas in April 2015. *TO HELL AND BACK*, a modern-day retelling of *The Book of Job*, showcases Ernie as a family man whose faith is radically tested as everything he has earned and holds dear is taken away from him.

SADIE ROBERTSON (Marlene) is best known as one of the stars of A&E's *DUCK DYNASTY*, which highlights her family and their family business. A high school athlete and motivational speaker, Sadie spends her summers on mission trips and working at a Christian

youth camp spreading her message to peers about being confident in who they are and learning to "live original." Sadie also embodies the creative and entrepreneurial spirit of the Robertson, with multiple business ventures. Her Live Original brand includes her first book of the same name. Sadie competed on Season 19 of ABC's *DANCING WITH THE STARS* and finished second with her partner Mark Ballas.

ROBIN GIVENS (Principal Kinney) has long been working consistently on television, film, and stage. She recently made her directorial debut with the new play *JOY IN THE MORNING*, which she also co-wrote. In recent years, she has had recurring roles in the hit television series *TWISTED*, *90210*, and *CHUCK*. She began her acting career in 1986 as a guest on *THE COSBY SHOW*. That same year, she landed her breakthrough role, co-starring on the hit series *HEAD OF THE CLASS*. Other acclaimed projects include the miniseries *THE WOMEN OF BREWSTER PLACE* and the Broadway production of *CHICAGO*. Robin works on behalf of women, children, and families facing the challenges of domestic violence. Robin is the mother of two sons.

FRED DALTON THOMPSON (Pastor Henry), who passed away Nov. 1, 2015, served in the U.S. Senate representing Tennessee from 1994 to 2003. In addition to being a politician, Fred was also an attorney, lobbyist, columnist, radio host, and beloved actor. He was best known for his roles in *SINISTER*, *DIE HARD 2*, and the long-running NBC television series *LAW & ORDER*. He appeared in a number of faith-based films in recent years.

MARIA CANALS-BARRERA (Catherine Thawley) is a gifted actress who has showcased her talent across the board in entertainment: TV, film, stage, and voice acting. She is best known for her starring role in the three-time Emmy Award-winning series *WIZARDS OF WAVERLY PLACE*. She also appeared in the Disney Channel movies *CAMP ROCK* and *CAMP ROCK 2: THE FINAL JAM*. Her theatrical movie credits include *LARRY CROWNE*, *MASTER OF DISGUISE* and *MY FAMILY / MI FAMILIA*. Other television credits include *CRISTELA*, *BROTHERS GARCIA*, *MARIELENA*, *CORTE TROPICAL*, *THE TONY DANZA SHOW*, *BEGGARS AND CHOOSERS*, and *AMERICAN FAMILY*. Maria lives in Los Angeles with her husband and two children, playing the part of a real mom.

PAT BOONE (Walter Wesley) is the ORIGINAL American Idol with his trademark white buck shoes, perfectly combed hair and gleaming smile. Pat is a best-selling author, successful entrepreneur, chart-topping recording star, family man, and legendary humanitarian. With more than 45 million units sold and 38 Top-40 hits, Pat was recognized by *Billboard Magazine* as one of *Rock's Top 10* recording artists in history. In 2003, the Gospel Music Association inducted Pat into the GMA Hall of Fame. Pat first appeared on the record charts in 1955 when he was 20 years old and soon after became the youngest person to ever host a weekly musical variety show on ABC. His film credits include *STATE FAIR*, *JOURNEY TO THE*

CENTER OF THE EARTH, APRIL LOVE, THE CROSS AND THE SWITCHBLADE, and THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD.

RAY WISE (Peter Kane) is an easily recognized veteran of TV, film, and the stage. His breakthrough role was in the television series TWIN PEAKS. Ray has appeared in many more television series and more than 30 films, including ROBOCOP, X-MEN, THE PEACEFUL WARRIOR, BROTHER'S KEEPER, REVELATION ROAD 1 AND 2, BROTHER WHITE, and THE RAINMAKERS. Upcoming projects include RODEO DRIVE DIVA, RAGING BULL II, and ATLAS SHRUGGED PART 2. Among his many television credits are 24, PSYCH, MAD MEN, CRIMINAL MINDS, NCIS, LAW & ORDER: SVU, and dozens more. Ray lives in Southern California with his wife and children.

NEWSBOYS (Michael Tait, Duncan Phillips, Jody Davis, Jeff Frankenstein) have taken Christian music by storm since arriving on the scene in 1985 in their native Australia. Three decades later, the iconic band is an undisputed industry leader, garnering six gold albums, 8 million units in career sales, 33 #1 singles, multiple GRAMMY® and American Music Award nominations, and signature hits ranging from "He Reigns" and "Born Again" to their recent 15- week chart-topper, "We Believe." Expanding their reach into film, the band appeared in the 2014 Pure Flix hit, GOD'S NOT DEAD, inspired by their song of the same name. Newsboys are comprised of drummer Duncan Phillips, lead vocalist Michael Tait, guitarist Jody Davis, and keyboardist Jeff Frankenstein.

BENJAMIN ONYANGO (Rev. Jude) left his native Kenya in 1987 to study in the U.S., earning a bachelor of science degree in computer science from California State-Stanislaus. He moved to Hollywood to pursue a career in music and acting. His TV credits include GENERAL HOSPITAL, THE SHIELD, and THE X-FILES. His film credits include GOD'S NOT DEAD, FATHER AFRICA, THE BOY, DEFAULT, KWAME, THUNDER CHANCE, and TEARS OF THE SUN. Benjamin's distinctive voice can be heard in a number of voice-over projects, including NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM III, RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES, and THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL. He currently writes and produces the webseries TWO WORLDS and DYSFUNCTIONAL.

TRISHA LaFACHE (Amy Ryan) is a classically trained ballerina who began her acting career in New York City, appearing in films such as GARDEN STATE, NEVER FOREVER, and THE SECRET. Her television credits include LAW & ORDER; LAW & ORDER: SVU; and LAW & ORDER: CRIMINAL INTENT. She has also appeared in stage performances with the LAByrinth Theater Company and The Public Theater. Along the way, she also earned her law degree. Since moving to Los Angeles, her acting career has included roles in television shows CRIMINAL MINDS, MAD MEN, RAKE, and THE LEAGUE. She also played the hard-driving reporter Amy Ryan in GOD'S NOT DEAD.

PAUL KWO (Martin Yip) has appeared in numerous films and television programs. He has also appeared or provided his voice for numerous television and radio commercials for major international brands. Paul appeared in GOD'S NOT DEAD and reprises his role as Martin in the sequel. Other films include UNDERGROUND COMEDY; PACIFIC RIM; THOR: THE DARK WORLD; FUNNY PEOPLE; and MUMMY 3. He also appeared in the short film FORTUNE COOKIE MAGIC TRICKS, which has been shown in more than 20 film festivals worldwide. Paul's TV credits include SCRUBS and the remake of KNIGHT RIDER. His voice acting roles include THE BLACKLIST and BONES.

ABIGAIL DUHON (Jessica), born and raised in New Orleans, started dancing

when she was 2. She discovered her passion for music after Hurricane Katrina destroyed her family's home and their possessions. At the age of 6, she awoke to a song in her heart and wrote out lyrics

as a reflection on their circumstances. The song, "Beautiful," was part of her debut album when she was 10. She became one of the youngest artists to have a Christian song reach the top 100 Billboard Singles charts in 2014. Her second album, *Right Now*, combines pop music with EDM and dub step elements, creating an exciting alternative for Christian tweens.

About the filmmakers

HAROLD CRONK (Director) has had a career arc that's taken him from the high school classroom to directing the leading independent film of 2014 reads like a Hollywood script. Active in acting and the arts in high school and college, he graduated from Central Michigan University in 1998 and became a successful high school arts teacher, twice being honored as "Teacher of the Year." After landing a job as the art director on a television pilot, opportunities were opened for film and television projects: art and production design, then screenwriting, and finally directing. Highlighted by *GOD'S NOT DEAD* and now its sequel, Harold's movies include *RETURN TO THE HIDING PLACE*, *JERUSALEM COUNTDOWN*, *MICKEY MATSON AND THE COPPERHEAD CONSPIRACY*, and *SILVER BELLS*.

MICHAEL SCOTT (Producer) is a managing partner and co-founder of Pure Flix, the world's leading faith-based film production studio and faith-based film distributor. Michael has served as producer on more than 25 Pure Flix movies, including *GOD'S NOT DEAD* and its sequel. Michael's faith and passion to create high-quality, culture-impacting films and television programs to influence future generations served as the seed of inspiration that led to launching of Pure Flix. Previously, he ran Michael Scott Productions, a commercial advertising and production company that produced hundreds of commercials and advertising campaigns for numerous leading brands. Michael holds a degree in theology from Vision Christian Bible College and a degree in photography from Colorado's Institute of Art.

ELIZABETH TRAVIS (Producer) is an EMMY® Award-winning producer and world-renowned manager who has been actively involved in the entertainment industry for more than 30 years. With her guidance, her recording artists have achieved combined record sales of more than 30 million albums worldwide and received every possible industry accolade in their fields (including multiple GRAMMY® and EMMY® awards). In addition to being one of the Pure Flix co-founders and partners, she has worked on more than 100 movies for major film studios including Warner Bros., Fox, Paramount, Lionsgate, DreamWorks, and Sony.

BRITTANY LeFEBVRE (Producer) is Director of Production at Pure Flix. She started at Pure Flix in 2008 as a customer service representative before partners Russell Wolfe and Michael Scott began mentoring Brittany toward her goal of producing movies. Now, as a producer, production manager, or line producer, she has worked on a dozen Pure Flix movies, including *DO YOU BELIEVE?*, *WHAT IF ...*, *SARAH'S CHOICE*, *RETURN TO THE HIDING PLACE*, and *SILVER BELLS*.

RUSSELL WOLFE (Producer) lived out his faith in a powerful way as a Pure Flix co-founder, partner, producer, and actor. After a prayer-centered battle with ALS, Russell passed away on May 27, 2015. Among his final work efforts, Russell helped shape GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 as a producer. Until his final breath, Russell's focus remained on his life's ambition: "Keep the main thing the main thing: Christ and Christ alone." His legacy continues on through Pure Flix and GOD'S NOT DEAD 2. Russell is survived by his wife Alysoun and their two children.

CHUCK KONZELMAN and CARY SOLOMON (Writers) have had a 15-year career in Hollywood, including assignments for Warner Brothers, Sony Columbia, and 20th Century Fox. They have worked with producers Joel Silver, John Davis, Stan Lee (creator of many Marvel Comics superheroes), and Crusader Entertainment, as well as with A-list talent such as Bruce Willis and Sylvester Stallone. In 2008, they felt God calling them in a different direction and since have focused on faith-based entertainment. Their project WHAT IF ... was named one of Movieguide's 10 Best Family Movies of the year, and won the Crystal Teddy Bear (Special Faith and Values Award). Their latest films were GOD'S NOT DEAD and DO YOU BELIEVE?