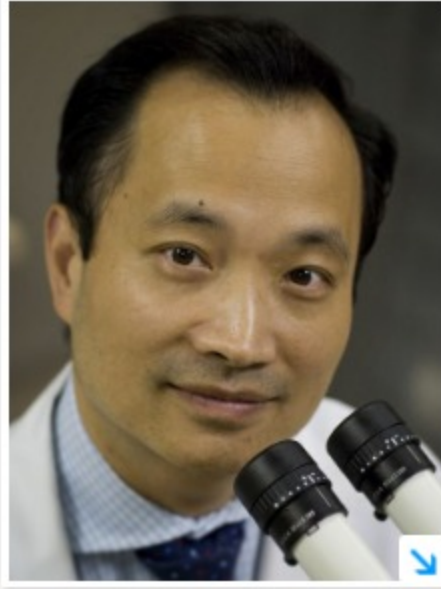


Ming Wang enjoys success of 'God's Not Dead 2'

Alex Hubbard, dhubbard@gannett.com 2:24 p.m. CDT May 2, 2016



(Photo: File Photo)

The Christian film "God's Not Dead 2," the follow-up to the 2014 box office hit, has been raking in the money in April, and it has done so with the contribution of a local doctor.

One of the characters in the films, which depict the interwoven stories of individuals coming to recognize the existence of God, is partly based on Nashville eye surgeon Dr. Ming Wang, whose story is featured in the book "God's Not Dead."

The new movie has hauled in nearly \$19 million after four weeks in theaters, and even after the book and initial "God's Not Dead" film, the success still

surprises Wang.

"I initially doubted that a faith-based movie as such could be commercially successful," Wang said Thursday via email. "Boy, was I ever glad to be proven wrong."

Wang, who has operated his own laser vision center in Nashville since 2002, came to Christianity only after leaving his native China to attend Harvard Medical School. Martin Yip, the character modeled after Wang, is a Chinese student who is compelled to explore the existence of God after a fellow student finds his own religious beliefs challenged in a college philosophy class.



THE TENNESSEAN
Ming Wang inspired 'God's Not Dead' film character

Wang, who grew up an atheist and was taught to only believe in the reason of science, told [The Tennessean](#) in 2014 that he was moved to reconsider his beliefs after observing the complexity of the human eye.

"I (learned) that the number of neuronal synapses in one person's brain is more than all the stars that we have ever discovered in the entire universe," Wang said. "I calculated that mathematically it would have taken trillions of trillions of trillions of years to randomly evolve into a structure as complex as the human eye, but the universe was presumably to have existed only for 13 billion years."

The success of the two films is impressive for independent films with a religious theme, but it also points to the success that many recent films with a religious nature have enjoyed — films such as "War Room" and "Miracles From Heaven."

"It's easy to put these movies on the side," Paul Dergarabedian, box office analyst at ComScore, told the [Los Angeles Times](#). "But it's hard to ignore movies that are this successful on a regular basis. I feel like this genre is really coming into its own."

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