

God's Not Dead 2

- 2016 Christian film
- Harold Cronk directed
- Pure Flix Entertainment released
- Released on April 1st, 2016
- 121 minutes
- 5 million budget

Quick Thoughts

- Phil
 - If you're a Christian you'll really appreciate this movie
 - If you're not a Christian, it's worth seeing because the story is well told and while there is an agenda, it doesn't sacrifice the agenda for story and artistry
 - It's great counter programming to other movies which I'm sure to most Christians is seemingly pushing its own agenda
 - It's always good to explore (every faith and religion - I believe)
- Marisa
- Mindy

Development

- Sequel to God's Not Dead

Writing

- Chuck Konzelman & Cary Solomon wrote it
- Chuck & Cary collaborated on *Earth vs The Spider*, *What If...*, *The Book of Daniel*, *God's Not Dead*

Story/Cast

- Amy, Martin, Rev. Dave, Rev. Jude, and Newsboys are all reprising their roles
- Melissa Joan Hart as Grace Wesley, a Christian teacher who struggles between giving up her faith or giving up her job
 - "For the longest time, while I played a witch on television [on 'Sabrina, The Teenage Witch'], the Christian community attacked me for popularizing the magic aspects on that secular TV show," Hart told the Chicago Sun Times. "Now it's the opposite. I'm getting grief for playing the good Christian woman who is being persecuted by the outside world!"
 - "Today, there are a lot of Christians being persecuted for their faith far beyond the freedoms this country was founded on," Hart told the Sun Times. "In the past, mainstream Christians were members of what we could call the big powerhouse religion at the time — and may have been doing a fair amount of persecuting minority religions. But now those Christians feel their faith is something that is trampled on or ignored. Now the tables have turned."

- "[I] felt a little bit of resistance to go and do this movie away from my family. I promised them I would be home," she said. "I had just finished six years of Melissa and Joey. This was my time to be home and be a mom. Now, I was feeling like I was picking up and leaving again."
- "I'm not someone to shy away from controversy. I actually enjoy taking it head on," she told CBN. "What we are trying to do here is to break down any boundaries and really show Christ's mission of bringing love and tolerance to the world."
- "First and foremost, we want to make a good movie. The character I was playing was very new to me," she said of Grace Wesley, the fictional teacher she portrays in the movie. "I had not really played a very introverted woman who stood by her faith, alone ... and she taught me a lot."
- Was born at 1:30 p.m. on Easter Sunday
- Pat Boone as Walter Wesley, Grace's grandfather
 - Great quote - "You of all people should know that during a test the teacher remains silent."
- Jesse Metcalfe as Tom Endler, Grace's lawyer and the neutral defense attorney
- Fred Thompson as Senior Pastor
- Hayley Orrantia as Brooke Thawley, a Christian student
- Robin Givens as Miss Kinney, the atheist principal
- Sadie Robertson as Marlene, a friend of Brooke
 - Her first appearance in a feature film. Her parents Willie Robertson and Korie Robertson' appeared in the original movie
- David A. R. White as Reverend Dave
- Benjamin Onyango as Reverend Jude
- Ray Wise as Pete Kane, the atheist prosecutor
- Ernie Hudson as Judge Stennis
- Paul Kwo as Martin Yip

Easter Eggs/Symbols/Comparisons

- Scenes were filmed at Benton High School in Benton, AR. Major-league ball player Cliff Lee attended this school

Directing

- Harold Cronk is known for *Jerusalem Countdown*, *Adventures of Mickey Matson and the Copperhead Treasure*, *God's Not Dead*, *Pirate's Code: The Adventures of Mickey Matson*
- Born in Reed City, Michigan, Cronk went to school in the Baldwin School District until about sixth grade
- Attended school in Scottville, Michigan, where he was active in the Theatre department and graduated from Mason County Central High School in 1993
- Cronk graduated from Central Michigan University in 1998, with a Bachelor of Science in Art and K-12 Education

- Cronk taught high school Art courses and was voted Teacher of the Year, for two of his four years at Evart High School
- When the Reed City elementary school hired another art teacher in 1998, Cronk made a point of introducing himself to the new-hire, Matthew Tailford
 - During spring break in 2000, Tailford landed a job as the Art director on a television pilot
 - *Dear Doughboy*, Cronk and Tailford traveled to Los Angeles to perform Production Design and Art Direction duties for the show
 - The experience in Los Angeles motivated the pair to try their hand at producing Cronk's screenplays *South Manitou* and *The Agent*
- Cronk and Tailford also had greater ambitions to develop their own screenplays, Cronk found that he enjoyed directing and Tailford was interested in producing and acting
- With some industry experience behind them, they returned to Michigan to create a ten-minute short, *War Prayer*, based upon Mark Twain's short story, *The War Prayer*, a controversial war-story that was embargoed by *Harper's Bazaar*, until six years after Twain's death
- After receiving several rejection notices from various film festivals, the *War Prayer* was accepted by the Beverly Hills International Film Festival
 - Won the festival's Best Director Award for 2006
- Cronk is currently the CEO of 10 West Studios
- The win for Best Director, at the Beverly Hills Film Festival, resulted in a three picture deal with Origin Entertainment
- God's Not Dead was Cronk's first significant box office opening, with a gross of \$2.8 million on Friday (March 21, 2014), and \$8.5 million for the weekend, in a limited 780 theater release

Production

- Produced by Elizabeth Hatcher, David AR White, Russell Wolfe
- Combined between them, they are known for *What If...*, *Mom's Night Out*, *Book of Esther*, *This is Our Time*, *Christmas Again*, *Redeemed*
- Message of Pure Flix:
 - Pure Flix is a Christian movie studio that produces, distributes, and acquires Christ centered movies. Our **VISION** is to influence the global culture for Christ through media. Our **MISSION** is to be the world leader in producing and distributing faith and family media. Since day one, we continue to strive to make a difference for His name.

Cinematography

- Brian Shanley is known for camera work on *Teen Wolf* but does lots of cinematography for religious based movies like *Do You Believe*, *Redeemed*, *Christmas with a Capital C*

Editing/VFX

- Vance Null is known for *Do You Believe*, *God's Not Dead*, *Tekken*, *Last Flight*, *Angels*, *Christmas with a Capital C*

Sound/Music

Promotion

- The day before the Iowa caucuses, presidential candidate Mike Huckabee (who appears in one scene) offered a free screening of the film
- Toyota's Group Vice President of Marketing, Jack Hollis initiated the Prius connection to the movie - "It was a passion project for him," said a media contact at Toyota
 - "shifting Toyota's image to a more heart-pounding brand"

Box Office

- In its opening weekend, the film grossed \$7.6 million (less than the original's opening of \$8.6 million), finishing fourth at the box office behind *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* (\$51.3 million), *Zootopia* (\$19.3 million) and *My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2* (\$11.2 million)
- To date the film has made 8.8 million

Reception

- On Rotten Tomatoes, the film has a rating of 12%, based on 25 reviews, with an average rating of 3.7/10
- The site's consensus states: "Every bit the proselytizing lecture promised by its title, *God's Not Dead 2* preaches ham-fistedly to its paranoid conservative choir."
- On Metacritic, the film has a score of 22 out of 100, based on 8 critics, indicating "generally unfavorable reviews"
- On CinemaScore, audiences gave the film an average grade of "A" on an A+ to F scale
- Bill Zwecker of the *Chicago Sun-Times* felt that the underlying issues presented in the film are relevant in today's world, but criticized its lack of subtlety, saying, "the entire film simply comes off as a two-hour, jazzed-up movie version of a sermon."
- Frank Scheck of *The Hollywood Reporter* criticized the film's "straw man" argument and its perceived victimizing of Christians: "Pounding its agenda with all the subtlety of a sledgehammer, *God's Not Dead 2* will no doubt please its target audience. Everyone else will be left wondering why its fans seem to be suffering from such a persecution complex."
- Jordan Hoffman at *The Guardian*, while deeming it "a much better movie" than its predecessor, noted that "it is unfortunately just professional enough that there are only brief instances of transcendent badness, rather than drawn-out sequences."

Sequel/Legacy

- Great article on trends of Christian/Bible movies:
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/from-exodus-to-gods-not-dead-2-the-new>

[-wave-of-religious-movies-explained/2016/03/30/01bb3468-f5b5-11e5-8b23-538270a1ca31_story.html](#)

Final Thoughts