

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

Jessica Bliss, jbliss@tennessean.com 2:52 p.m. CDT April 2, 2014



(Photo: Submitted)

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Two years ago, Rice Brooks chronicled in a book the life stories of six individuals, their atheist beginnings and their search to find God.

One of these individuals is [Dr. Ming Wang](#).

Wang, a cataract and LASIK surgeon in Nashville, holds a doctorate in laser physics. He graduated from Harvard Medical School with honors, and he was one of the first surgeons in the United States to perform laser cataract surgery.

This man — a highly educated person of science — also transitioned from atheism to Christianity while he was a student.

Wang's story, which was captured by Brooks in his book "God's Not Dead," served as the inspiration for the character [Martin Yip](#) in the movie of the same name, which was released March 21 and has made a splash at the box office with \$22 million in earnings.

"I grew up as an atheist in a family which believed solely in science," said Wang, who was born in China and raised by parents who taught at a medical school. "Everything was about scholarship, learning and science in our family. Education was the most important."

The movie tells the story of present-day college freshman Josh Wheaton, a devout Christian who finds his faith challenged on the first day of philosophy class when the professor informs students that they will need to disavow, in writing, the existence of God.

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Yip, a Chinese foreign exchange student, is in the class along with Wheaton and is moved to consider Christianity as he observes Wheaton's defiance of the professor's assertion that "God is dead."

In real life, Wang said he began to question the omniscience of science when he was a student at Harvard.

"I began to study human anatomy, including the eye, and found that the structure ... is so complex that I began to doubt if it could all (have) evolved from random," said Wang, who became director of the Vanderbilt Laser Vision Center in 1997 and founded his own laser vision center, [Wang Vision Institute](#), in 2002.

"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. 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.

"So, science, or at least science alone, cannot provide the answer as to how such a complex structure as the human eye has formed."

Influenced by a professor who, Wang said, showed him evidence of the existence of God, Wang became a Christian.

"I have come to realize that faith and science serve two different purposes, they are the two sides of a coin: science is about what things are, and faith is about why things are."

The movie, Wang said, will help in his continued effort to tell his story: "Believing in God, in faith, in research guided by faith, has inspired me to do all what I have done, medicine, charity, art ... everything."

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