

Film Spotlights Faith in the Face of Cancer

✖ One of the producers of *Facing the Giants* and *Fireproof* is releasing a new Christian film in theaters this week.

Letters to God, which opens nationwide Friday, spotlights the power of prayer and how the faith of a boy facing cancer changes his neighbors' lives. Inspired by a true story, the film stars Tanner McGuire as Tyler Doherty, an 8-year-old cancer-stricken boy who writes letters to God every day that eventually make their way into the hands of a troubled postman.

Photo: Tanner McGuire (right) plays a cancer-stricken boy in the movie *Letters to God*.

The cast features Robyn Lively (*Saving Grace*) as Tyler's mother, Jeffrey S. Johnson (*CSI*) as the postman and as a neighbor, Ralph Waite of *The Waltons*, who lost a child to cancer himself. (Watch trailer below.)

"Everybody has been touched in one way or another by cancer," said director David Nixon, one of the producers of the popular Christian films *Facing the Giants* and *Fireproof*. "But the real story is that these little letters were really prayers, and that's really what I would like for people to take away from the movie ... that you can have a connection with God and it can be as simple as writing a letter to Him."

The \$3 million film is one of a string of Christian films

Nixon is bringing to theaters through his Possibility Pictures. Like *Fireproof* and *Facing the Giants*, the films will target Christian audiences.

"We're not interested in making movies, we're interested in touching hearts through movies that would have a redemptive value, that would tell that gospel story," Nixon said. "We don't want to get preachy, we just want to tell simple stories about Christians and how they go through adversity."

Letters to God, co-written by Tyler's father, Patrick Doughtie, includes stories of cancer survivors and is being supported with an array of products to help churches counsel people facing a cancer diagnosis.

Zondervan is publishing a seven-book series to help people start a dialogue with those battling cancer, and the American Association of Christian Counselors is developing a counseling series for cancer for churches and individuals. The Great Commission Network also has created a sermon series and small-group study around the themes in the film.

"When people are at the bottom of their lives, when they hear the *cancer* word and they hear they're diagnosed, they usually go to a church," Nixon said. "So we want to have those materials ready for churches and pastors to use."

Churches have been buying out theaters in advance of the film's release, and social networking sites have been buzzing

about the film
for several weeks.

“People are jumping on the bandwagon over this little movie,” Nixon said. “We just believe God is going to use this movie mightily when it comes out, we don’t even know how He’s doing to use it.”

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