

'Heaven Is for Real' Shows a Vision of the Afterlife

The real-life tale of a child's remarkable trip to heaven and back has spent years on the best-sellers' list. Millions have read the bright yellow book *Heaven Is for Real*, and now the film adaptation arrives in theaters in time for Easter weekend.

Sony pictures tapped screenwriter and film director Randall Wallace to bring the best-seller to the big screen.

In a recent interview with CBN News, Wallace discussed the challenges of creating a movie that explored vision of the afterlife.

Vision of the Afterlife

"I think *nervous* is probably a good term. It was certainly in that field between nervous and sheer terror," Wallace said.

The film is based on a story from the Burpos, an ordinary Nebraska family that faced extraordinary circumstances. Their 4-year-old son Colton nearly died and had to undergo emergency surgery. Colton then awoke with undeniable visions of a trip to heaven.

Before entering the film industry, Wallace financed a year of seminary by teaching karate.

"The seminary training was wonderful for me in this in that I studied religion. I grew up in tent revivals and you always think about heaven in those contexts. And the great thing about that is heaven is presented as something glorious," he told CBN News.

That glorious presentation of heaven comes from a 4-year-old.

Playing Pastor Dad

Connor Corum plays 4-year-old Colton in his very first acting role. Oscar-nominated actor Greg Kinnear plays Colton's dad, Todd.

Kinnear described Todd's character to CBN News.

"Well, he is passionate. He clearly has a strong faith and a strong conviction about what he believes and a great love of his children," Kinnear said. "And I think those were the things for me to really try to translate as strongly to the audience as possible."

Todd Burpo is also a firefighter, pastor and a man struggling to understand what his son experienced and what to do about it. That struggle helped him write the book that has sold more than 10 million copies.

Kinnear wasn't familiar with the book before taking on the role.

"Turning it into a screenplay would be not easy to do," he recalled thinking.

"It is a tough thing to pull off so that it doesn't feel like a two-hour sermon," Wallace said. "That is, tell you a story, an honest story. And I thought he did an amazing job at doing that."