

Realism Helps 'Home Run' Score Big

Don't let the title fool you. *Home Run* is not simply a baseball movie.

Sure, the film centers around the life of a professional baseball player. And, there are a great deal of Little League baseball scenes throughout the flick. However, this film is about one man's battle against his overpowering addiction to alcohol, and the haunting memories of his childhood while growing up with an abusive, alcoholic father.

Most of all, however, it is a story of the redemption and healing that can only come through salvation through Jesus Christ.

Cory Brand is a tremendously talented player at the top of his game with the Denver Grizzlies, a professional baseball team. But, it is apparent early in the film he has a major problem with alcohol, due in part to horrendous childhood memories.

Cory has little regard for anyone but himself; and it is that self-absorbency that leads to a lengthy suspension from the game. It forces him to return to his roots in Oklahoma and to coach a Little League baseball team in his old hometown in place of his brother, who was injured in an accident that Cory caused.

There is no solace for Cory in Okmulgee, only more pain as he encounters his former girlfriend, Emma, and her son, Tyler, who is unaware that Cory is his father. Cory continues to drink through his recovery process at a local church, and his destructive personality doesn't win him any allies.

Cory graduates the recovery program with the help of other members of the group, but it isn't until he is released by the

Grizzlies that he realizes baseball and his career can't give him what he needs. The void of the love he never received from his earthly father can only be filled by his heavenly Father.

Only after he surrenders his life to Jesus is Cory afforded another chance with his career and the people he has hurt for so long. "I am powerless without God," he said. "I am a child of God, and I have a Father who loves me, on and off the field."

Perhaps the most attractive quality of the film is its realism. There is no quick fix for Cory's alcoholism. He wasn't able to overcome the addiction by sheer willpower, and he wasn't able to repair the numerous broken relationships in his life by his own efforts.

The pain that Cory, Emma, Tyler and Cory's extended family feels is real, as anyone who has ever had to deal with alcoholism can tell you.

Actor Scott Elrod's portrayal of Cory Brand is solid. The emotion and volatility that Elrod brings to his character are genuine and undeniable.

If it weren't for her limited participation in the latter part of the film, Vivica A. Fox might have stolen the show as Cory's sassy, feisty and resourceful agent, who is constantly putting out fires on her client's behalf. Fox's performance is brilliant, and her character's savvy in the area of public relations is shrewd, providing much-needed comic relief to the film.

Actor Drew Waters provided the perfect villain in the film (if there has to be one in a Christian movie) as Officer Pajersky, who also happens to be a rival Little League coach. Pajersky isn't awed by Cory's fame, and the interaction between him and Cory also allows the audience to laugh.

The movie, produced by Impact Productions of Tulsa, Okla., is

made in the genre of the Kendrick Brothers films *Fireproof* and *Courageous*. It brings real-life situations, but with faith-based answers to the big screen. Christians and non-Christians, baseball fans or non-baseball fans, all will want to see *Home Run*, scheduled for release in the spring of 2013.