

'Rebranding' the Father in a Film

Darren Wilson's *Father of Lights* aims to set the record straight about God's love through compelling storytelling

No one is more misunderstood, misperceived and misrepresented than God. As one interviewee says in the documentary *Father of Lights*, most people view God as either "mad or sad"—an angry, vengeful deity who's waiting to punish us sinners, yet who's pitifully needy for human affection.

Filmmaker Darren Wilson has had enough of the misconceptions about his heavenly Father, and he's out to set the record straight with his latest project, now available on DVD. The third in a trilogy of films that follow Wilson's journey of faith, *Father of Lights* aims to highlight a God so loving that He'll penetrate the depths of any darkness to draw His children into His light.

"We're attempting to rebrand the Father," Wilson says. "I wanted to make a film that explores the Father's heart, to figure out: Who is He? Who is He not?"

That exploration begins this time with Ravi, a soft-spoken Indian evangelist who receives his marching orders every day at 4 a.m.—via the audible voice of God. Though Wilson, who's made a habit out of playing the skeptic in his films, doesn't capture any of these supernatural exchanges, his cameras follow Ravi on a handful of miraculous encounters that include a spiritual showdown with a witch doctor powerful enough to kill local pastors with his curses.

As with others we meet—from Chicago gang leaders to a Hindu maharishi to devout Muslims at the Dome of the Rock—love wins. But as the cameras so beautifully capture by following various "everyday" believers around the world, this is no ordinary

love but an overflow of the Father's compassion for people that knows no boundaries.

Fans of Wilson's previous releases, *Finger of God* and *Furious Love*, will be familiar with the storytelling arc here, though *Father of Lights* takes slightly longer to establish its main focus amid covering ancillary but massive theological elements such as grace, persecution and the religious spirit. Charismatic leaders such as Bill Johnson, Reinhard Bonnke, Jack Deere, Andrew Wommack and Mike Bickle offer quotable insight, yet the stars of this show remain those who are visibly changed by an unexpected encounter with a loving Father.

Father of Lights alternates between their stories and those of believers imparting God's love—people like Mike and Deena Vant Hul, an American couple who, after a radical encounter with the Holy Spirit, abandoned their six-figure income, sold everything and moved to China to eventually launch an orphanage to the “unadoptables.” As we see the couple caring for lame, blind and severely disabled children, Wilson explains, “All that is expected of these kids is that they receive the love lavished upon them.”

Such poignant moments are typical of Wilson's ability to deftly weave together accounts of everyday believers doing remarkable things through God's supernatural love—undoubtedly part of the reason he's sold more than 120,000 DVDs to date largely on word of mouth. *Father of Lights* isn't the most dramatic movie of the series, but its simple, more evangelistically inclined message—that God is a Father who loves His children—is conveyed with some of the trilogy's most compelling stories yet. For those who love watching “God moments” unfold on-screen, this isn't just a memorable documentary, it's the gospel spoken through scenes that grip the heart.