

‘God’s Not Dead’ Executive Producer Urges Others to ‘Step Out of the Boat’

You may never have heard of Troy Duhon, but you probably have heard of the movie *God’s Not Dead*, which he bankrolled. Friday, he inspired me when he spoke at our Seminole County Prayer Breakfast locally, in which he challenged us to step out of the boat.

Troy is a successful businessman. His 23 car dealerships gross more than \$1 billion a year. That’s why he was able to write a check for a movie about an obscure book on apologetics called *God’s Not Dead* by Dr. Rice Brooks. He had never made a movie, so it was risky. But he stepped outside the boat, and the rest is history. An estimated 50 million people worldwide have seen the movie, and it’s become a movement with the sequel *God’s Not Dead 2* releasing April 1.

At the prayer breakfast, Troy told a moving story about his dad, formerly an alcoholic, who got saved when Troy was a teen and became a powerful Pentecostal preacher. In his later years, Troy and his dad became very close. His dad told him one day: “Son, if you keep your eyes on Jesus, you can walk on the water. If you turn around and look at His disciples, you’ll sink.”

Consider what stepping out of the boat meant for making a movie. First, it involved investing \$1 million. Add to that the fact that Christian movies are often low quality and lose money. So it’s very risky. However, this movie exceeded all expectations.

If you saw it, you know how good it was. It’s been enormously successful. It grossed well over \$100 million, making it perhaps the most successful independent movie of all time

based on return on investment. You can watch the trailer [here](#).

The success of the movie is so great that it has actually turned into a movement. This is a big story and one we covered in next month's issue of *Charisma* magazine. But the movie would never have been made if a businessman with a heart for evangelism had not said yes to God and stepped out of the boat.

Because I had gotten to know Troy, he invited me to the set to watch the second movie being shot in Arkansas. You can read what I wrote about it [last July](#). I got to meet the star, Melissa Joan Hart, and watch the classroom scene. Since then, I've been able to see the entire movie, which opens in a few days. To me, *God's Not Dead 2* is as good or even better than the first. You can watch the powerful trailer [here](#), and I urge you to go see it.

Troy's story is certainly amazing, if only for his success as a businessman and his participation in the movie. But there's another side to him. He's also a philanthropist.

Of his accomplishments and successes, Giving Hope Foundation holds the key to his heart. Troy's dad always told him that people will not care how many cars he sells, but God cares how many of His people he feeds. With that resonating in his head and heart, The Food Pantry of New Orleans was birthed. The Food Pantry is the flagship for the Giving Hope Foundation. Reading what Troy has done will inspire you to step out of the boat.

Giving Hope Foundation focuses on eight key areas of outreach/ministry. Those areas include: The Food Pantry of New Orleans, Hope for a Home, Hope House Orphanages, Giving Hope Retreat Center, Hope for Success, Hope Against Trafficking, Angola Re-Entry Program and Giving Hope Partnerships.

In under two years, The Food Pantry has supplied over 200,000

hot meals to senior citizens and impoverished families around the city of New Orleans. Nearly 850 free boxes of groceries are also given out monthly.

Through the adoption of their daughter, Annahstasia, Troy and Tracy Duhon saw the need for better living conditions in the overseas orphanages. Because they were unable to take these precious orphans home themselves, they decided to make a difference in the villages and communities these young children call home.

With the vision to build an orphanage on every inhabited continent, Hope House India was dedicated in 2014, Hope Honduras was dedicated in 2015, and Hope House Africa will be dedicated in 2016. Future Hope Houses are planned for Russia, Australia, South America and China. Hope for a Home reaches a similar need here in the United States. Every child needs a forever family, so Hope for a Home provides financial and emotional resources a family may need as they go through the adoption process.

“In partnership with the New Orleans Mission, Giving Hope Retreat Center provides a place of refuge, recovery and re-engagement for the homeless in our city,” Troy says. “Giving Hope Retreat Center provides a community to learn and grow. We are assisting these formerly homeless in learning a trade (Culinary, Auto Mechanic, Landscape, etc.). In doing so, they also become active members of society. Giving Hope Retreat Center will also house a Women’s Pavilion to reach battered and/or trafficked women. Hope Against Trafficking, a strategic campaign against human trafficking, is another targeted area for Giving Hope. Our goal is to bring awareness and develop strategic initiatives to meet the needs of individuals that have been a victim of trafficking. Hope for Success will help provide stylish business attire for these and other men and women to make an impression as they re-enter the workforce. Giving Hope also partners with the Angola Re-Entry Program, an already existing program set up for former inmates of Angola

prison. The connection of the automotive industry has allowed Giving Hope to provide employment to the graduates of this program.”

Because of the foundation of outreach that Troy and Tracy have built, Giving Hope Partnerships has resourced and inspired other businesses and businesspeople to reproduce this same spirit of outreach in their communities. From California to Nashville to Kansas City to Richmond, businesses are making a positive impact on the communities and Giving Hope to those in need.

I had the privilege of interviewing Troy for several podcasts of “The Strang Report.” You can download them next week from the Charisma Podcast Network. I believe hearing his story will inspire you, as it inspired me, to step out of the boat.