

Did Don Piper Spend 90 Minutes in Heaven?

A staff member at a Houston-area church in 1989, Don Piper's near-fatal crash with an 18-wheeler semi-truck changed the trajectory of his career.

After an extended period of recovery, once the book about the mishap released and skyrocketed in popularity, Piper left church life behind to speak to audiences worldwide. The one-time Southern Baptist pastor has now logged nearly 2 million miles while visiting all 50 states and many foreign countries.

While acknowledging there are numerous critics of his account, Piper more often encounters former skeptics who—after seeing pictures of his demolished car and multiple scars on his body—apologize for doubting him.

"I'll say, 'You don't owe me an apology,'" Piper says. "If it hadn't happened to me, I wouldn't have believed it either. I know this: I was dead on that bridge and I'm alive now. But I don't harbor any ill will. It's a faith thing. You either believe it or you don't."

In addition to doing his part to spread the Great Commission, the author formed Don Piper Ministries to distribute monies raised by his speaking engagements. Among the many recipients are a Pentecostal church on an Indian reservation in New Mexico, a children's ranch in Orlando, and a relief shelter for homeless men and addicts.

"People still need hope," Piper says. "We need hope for now, for a better life and eternal life. This story seems to resonate with people in ways I couldn't have imagined. Jesus is the only way to heaven. I want to help people go there, and I want to help them have a better life getting there."