

How David Wilkerson's Prophetic Word to His Brother Helped Launch Teen Challenge

In the late 1950s, Pastor Don Wilkerson helped his late brother, famed evangelist and bestselling author David Wilkerson, pioneer the groundbreaking Teen Challenge ministry in New York City, and he still ministers through the renamed Adult & Teen Challenge ministry center there today. But how did that come about?

Don shares the story with host Caleb McCall on the *Recovery to Recovered* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. He was attending Bible school when he first heard about David's ministry to gangs, he says, and he wasn't surprised. "My brother was always doing different things, on the edge in terms of ministry," he says. "And I didn't think anything of it."

Some time later, his sister invited him to visit New York to support David, who was holding an evangelistic crusade for gangs. Don shares the story. "'Sure, we'll go,' I said. So I went, [and] it just so happened in the providence of God, I was there the night that our most famous celebrated convert, the first convert, Nicky Cruz—yes, vice president of the Mau Maus—that he and his gang went forward."

That event served as Don's introduction to the ministry to which he would devote his life. "I didn't think I would ever be involved because I grew up in a preacher's home. My father was a pastor, and after school training, I had every intention of going back and pastoring with him in Pennsylvania in a nice church.

"Then my father suddenly died. And my dream—there went my dream. And so that meeting in the arena was kind of like the

seed that was planted in me, kind of a foretaste,” Don says.

But he still had no idea the Lord would lead him to join the New York City ministry.

“Then my brother called me when I was in school and asked if I would come and help. And he actually gave me a prophetic word on the phone, and he followed up with a letter. I kept that letter because he said in it, ‘I see that there is a revival coming among the troubled youth of our country.’”

Their partnership between the two brothers marked the start of a ministry that has seen thousands of young people escape addiction and turn to Christ over the years. For more of Don Wilkerson’s inspiring story, including his recovery from COVID-19, [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}