

Written by By Richard Kontz
Friday, 17 August 2018 05:27



Continuing a 7-part special by Richard F. Kontz on a Vietnam Vet he met while running the Bread of Life Christian Bookstore in 2015 through mid-2011.

Previously, I had found out how Don became an alcoholic in Vietnam, how he become a very angry and at times a very violent man, who lost his wife and family because of these problems, and how eventually he was accused and convicted of murder and served 11 years in prison.

Now I will continue his story. While in prison Don began to attend Church services offered by a local Pastor who had a weekly prison ministry. Eventually Don placed his faith in God and he began to seriously study God's word and devoured everything this Pastor bought into the prison for continuing study and for personal growth.

He told me "you know Rich, a lot of these guys who went into Church just did it to get out of work or to goof off – most of them didn't really care about God or learning and studying the word." He said, "a lot of them just wanted to "play the Pastor" to try to get him to do things for them or get things for them. And, a lot of times the poor man fell for it and they would just laugh at him and make fun of him later.

Don said he hated that – he said here is this man who cared about them and came every week to teach them about God and to pray for them and to help them and then they treated him like that. Don, said sometimes he would say something and then of course a fight would result. But he said I could take care of myself and I was known for being "crazy and wild" – especially, when he had "flash backs" to Vietnam.

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But, Don kept going to services and doing the bible studies and he found that the more he studied and prayed the calmer and more at peace he became. He said although the “flash backs” never totally stopped he was able to cope with them better and through the “meds” provided by the prison medical staff he was able to function better.

Eventually, Don and the Pastor became very good friends and Don began to grow spiritually to the point where the Pastor began to refer to him as his Assistant and Don was given some responsibilities to lead bible studies and to pray with people who wanted prayer.

After eleven years in prison Don was released early due to good behavior and upon release he joined the Pastor’s prison and street ministries.

He did apparently become a house parent for a men’s half-way house and he helped start a women’s half-way house. But, there came a point in running the two houses that Don and the Pastor had a falling out.

So, Don moved on – he said he went back and forth between Albuquerque and Farmington mainly and even went to Salt Lake for a while and Phoenix and Los Angeles. Then eventually he returned to Farmington and he sought out his pastor and he patched things up with him. But, by that time, the Pastor had shut down the half-way houses and only continued to pastor a local church. Then the pastor retired and was moving to Phoenix, and that is when Don asked him if he could catch a ride to Gallup, and when he checked into NCI in Gallup, NM.

Written by Richard F. Kontz. If you wish to comment I can be reached at rmkontz@q.com

To read the previous four chapters in this story, visit: gallupsun@gmail.com

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