

DAVID WILKERSON

May 19, 1931



April 27, 2011

---

# DAVID WILKERSON

---

A MAN OF UNLIMITED FAITH

---



LOVING HUSBAND AND FATHER, doting grandfather. Friend to the outcast and hurting. Fearless witness of Christ's saving power. Passionate voice for God to His church. Tender supporter of widows, orphans and the poor. And spiritual father to generation upon generation—from the destitute to the powerful, from adults to teenagers, from loved ones to strangers from every walk of life.

These traits only begin to define the life of David Wilkerson. For over six decades he served the Lord faithfully, founding and leading ministry outreaches that have grown internationally with each decade. Behind it all has been an unwavering belief in God's love for every human being and His relentless desire to reach them.

David Ray Wilkerson was born May 19, 1931, in Hammond, Indiana, to a line of devoted Pentecostal preachers. After he was ordained in the Assemblies of God, he married the love of his life—Gwendolyn Carosso, who would serve beside him in ministry for nearly sixty years.

From the very beginning "Brother Dave," as he liked to be called, applied a creative, innovative spirit to ministry. Yet he preached from anguish and pain, believing God works through our weakness. He knew that God confounds the wisdom of the world to reveal Himself—a truth proved again and again by the ministries Brother Dave founded.

In 1958 he traveled from his small church in Philipsburg, Pennsylvania, to reach out to young gang members on trial in New York City. "He had never been to New York—he had certainly never met a gang member or a drug addict," said his brother, Don Wilkerson. "He just came here,

with his simplicity, his naiveté, whatever you want to call it, and he changed people's lives."



As *The New York Times* wrote, "His method was an absolute model of simplicity, directness and total non-sophistication—he just went out on the streets and mixed with the kids and reasoned with them face-to-face, often quoting the Bible—and it worked."

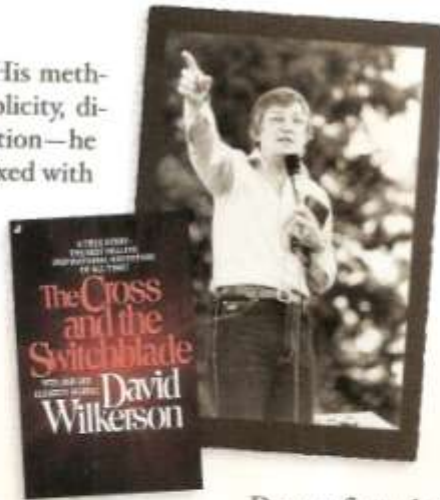
Out of that bold move was born Teen Challenge, a Christ-centered drug and alcohol rehabilitation program. The ministry became well known though the book *The Cross and the Switchblade*, which has sold over 50 million copies and been translated into 30 languages. Today Teen Challenge has grown to more than 1,000 centers in the United States and 80 other countries.

As a generation of restless teenagers emerged in the 1960s, the Lord stirred Brother Dave to found David Wilkerson Youth Crusades, an evangelistic ministry to young people. An entire "lost generation" of teenagers was inspired that their lives mattered greatly to God. The crusade ministry expanded its reach to all ages, and hundreds of thousands internationally heard and responded to the gospel of Christ.

In 1987, after crying out to God to raise up a testimony at the "crossroads of the world," Brother Dave returned to New York City to establish Times Square Church. Believing God for true revival on Broadway, Pastor Dave faithfully led this congregation for twenty-three years, delivering powerful biblical messages that encouraged righteous living and complete reliance on God. He is cherished as a spiritual father by congregants from over one hundred nationalities and all walks of life.

Brother Dave wrote prolifically, his books moving multitudes of readers toward a life of holy devotion to Christ. The dozens of books he authored were filled with powerful insight, clarity and conviction. And he lived out the Christ-like example he wrote of, speaking continually of his own weaknesses and Christ's faithfulness to him.

His ground-breaking book, *The New Covenant Unveiled*, transformed the understanding of Old Testament law for religious leaders and lay people alike—offering hope and freedom through the Holy Spirit to many caught in the bondage of sin and guilt. Many say Brother Dave's understanding and teaching of the



New Covenant was the capstone of his Christian ministry.

Having served as a pastor for many years, Brother Dave felt a burden for ministers and their spouses in their difficult work. In 2002 he and his elder son, Gary, began reaching out to pastors through conferences held in the U.S. and overseas, including many Third World nations—bringing renewed life and energy to precious servants of God.

In recent years, as Brother Dave reflected on his life, he asked the Lord how he might pour himself out for the gospel in his later time. God directed him to found Please Pass the Bread, supplying relief and meals to hungry children, widows and orphans throughout the U.S. and in impoverished nations. Please Pass the Bread currently ministers in eight countries and continues to expand.

The impact of Brother Dave's life in service to the Lord is immeasurable. His ministries have touched millions, and the God-inspired works he founded continue to flourish. His was a life of unwavering service to God—and unlimited faith in a loving heavenly Father.

He will be dearly missed. ☹



**DARK CLOUDS. POURING RAIN.** Cold wind blew through the tent where my father's body was to be lowered into the ground. Yet those who gathered at his gravesite after a glorious funeral found solace and even joy knowing that David Wilkerson had run his race, finished his course and left behind a legacy of millions of deeply impacted and transformed lives. Our family, close friends and ministry associates sang, "Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King! No more dying there, we are going to see the King!" Knowing the sting of death has lost its power, we rejoiced.

The funeral and burial are behind us now—yet the works of Jesus launched through my father's ministry are still moving on in full force. Dad was fond of saying, "The best is yet to come." I'm convinced he's right. The work of feeding starving children, ministering to the poorest of the poor, rescuing homeless

orphans and preaching the gospel to the most unreached will not be diminished during our watch.

This very week we are launching new feeding outreaches for Please Pass the Bread. Also this week homes are being built for the homeless by a World Challenge mission team in Haiti. This week new churches are being planted among unreached people in Northern India. And in the coming weeks and months—and, Lord willing, years—we will continue to feed hungry hearts with the David Wilkerson Daily Devotional and World Challenge Pulpit Series Newsletter.

I want to assure you that the vision and ministry of World Challenge and my father will continue. We still have the same Board of Directors, the same focus and the same leading of the

Holy Spirit for the work God has placed in our hands. I have been actively serving as President of World Challenge, Inc. for the past year and will officially take the role now. We will not make any major directional changes but will carry on in the same heart and with the same vision as my father.

Even though my father has gone to be with the Lord, God's work continues. The needs are still great and your continued support is appreciated as we reach out to the poor and needy.

GARY WILKERSON  
President, World Challenge, Inc.



## A NOTE FROM GARY WILKERSON

*"David served the purposes of God in his generation, then he died" (Acts 13:36).*



On Wednesday afternoon, April 27, 2011, my father, David Wilkerson, passed away in a car accident. We grieve the loss of a beloved father, a faithful husband and a holy man of God. My mother, Gwen, his wife of 57 years, was in the car also, but we are told she will recover fully.

Dad's 60-plus years of ministry have impacted the lives of those closest to him and extended to millions around the world. Today we feel a personal loss, but at the same time we rejoice knowing Dad lived life to the fullest, obeying God with devotion and loving Jesus radically.

He was known for his unlimited faith. He believed God could change the lives of gang members and transform the most desperate drug addicts. He believed that a dynamic church could be launched in the heart of Times Square, New York City. He believed he could be a man who loved his wife and children well—and he did.

Dad was not one for fanfare, acclaim or ceremony. He turned down invitations to meet with world leaders yet would give everything he owned to support a poor orphan or a widow in distress.

Like King David of old, Dad served God's purposes in his generation. He preached with uncompromising passion and relentless grace. He wrote with amazing insight, clarity and conviction. He ran his race well and when his work was done, he was called home.

I don't think my father would have retired well. I don't think he was one to sit in a rocking chair and reminisce about times past. I believe that Jesus, knowing this, graciously called him home.

Dad's last mission on earth was to be an advocate for the poorest of the poor—to provide relief and support for hungry children and widows and orphans. After founding Teen Challenge, World Challenge and Times Square Church, he sought to feed starving children in the most impoverished countries in the world. Today, Please Pass the Bread is saving the lives of thousands of children through 56 outreaches in eight countries.

And again like King David of old, after having served God's purpose, he died. I know if my father were able to encourage you with his words today, he would invite you to give your all to Jesus, to love God deeply and to give yourself away to the needs of others.

The works he began outlive him. We can all attest to his impacting us—not only in his preaching, writing and founding of world-changing ministries, but in his love, devotion, compassion and ability to stir our faith for greater works.

[www.worldchallenge.org](http://www.worldchallenge.org)



World Challenge, Inc.  
P.O. Box 260 Lindale, TX 75771

## WHEN ALL MEANS FAIL

DAVID WILKERSON'S DEVOTIONAL FROM APRIL 27, 2011,  
THE DAY HE WENT TO BE WITH THE LORD

To believe when all means fail is exceedingly pleasing to God and is most acceptable. Jesus said to Thomas, "You have believed because you have seen, but blessed are those that do believe and have not seen" (John 20:29). Blessed are those who believe when there is no evidence of an answer to prayer—who trust beyond hope when all means have failed.

Someone has come to the place of hopelessness—the end of hope—the end of all means. A loved one is facing death and doctors give no hope. Death seems inevitable. Hope is gone. The miracle prayed for is not happening.

That is when Satan's hordes come to attack your mind with fear, anger, overwhelming questions: "Where is your God now? You prayed until you had no tears left. You fasted. You stood on promises. You trusted." Blasphemous thoughts will be injected into your mind: "Prayer failed. Faith failed. Don't quit on God—just do not trust him anymore. It doesn't pay!" Even questioning God's existence will be injected into your mind. These have been the devices of Satan for centuries. Some of the godliest men and women who ever lived were under such demonic attacks.

To those going through the valley and shadow of death, hear this word: Weeping will last through some dark, awful nights—and in that darkness you will soon hear the Father whisper, "I am with you. I cannot tell you why right now, but one day it will all make sense. You will see it was all part of my plan. It was no accident. It was no failure on your part. Hold fast. Let me embrace you in your hour of pain."

Beloved, God has never failed to act but in goodness and love. When all means fail—his love prevails. Hold fast to your faith. Stand fast in his Word. There is no other hope in this world.

DAVID WILKERSON

[www.worldchallenge.org](http://www.worldchallenge.org)