

# 'Miracle on 14th Street'

Bedford native turned his life around

BY SARA KUHL [skuhl@tmnews.com](mailto:skuhl@tmnews.com)

Dan Turpin tells the story of a man, who after having a few run-ins with the law, turned his life around. It's his story, and one he hopes will help others seek a relationship with God. Turpin, who was born in Bedford and had more than a few run-ins with the law as a teenager, has been a pastor since 1987. He preaches to gatherings of 275-350 people each week in Florida at a Pentecostal church. He's also written four books in the past few years.

And those books now can be found circulating through various Indiana Department of Correction institutions, which according to Turpin, is where his journey and purpose



## Turpin's books

- "The Miracle on 14th Street" was the first book Turpin wrote (but published later). The inspirational story depicting Turpin's younger years was self-published in 2006.
  - "In-Turpin-Tation Of Revelation" is a study guide, Turpin said. The goal is to help readers "put the pieces of this complex puzzle together."
  - "Principles of Prayer: A study of the Lord's Prayer" was his second book, published in 1993. It guides readers through seeking the "presence" of God, instead of just the "presents" of God. Turpin wanted to focus a book on the Lord's Prayer because the Indiana Boys School had him recite the Lord's Prayer every day. He never understood what the words meant.
  - "Capture Time" is Turpin's newest book, published by Tate Publishing in 2015 and soon will be released in bookstores. It's goal is to assist readers with walking with God on a daily basis and focus. "Most of us are so busy today that we seldom stop and take time to listen to what is going on inside of us," Turpin said.
- He's now working on a fifth book, called "Just a Thought." All of these books can be bought from Turpin's online bookstore at <http://danturpin.com/bookstore/index.html>.

started.

Specifically, it started on 14th

Street, on Aug. 14, 1971, at 5:20 a.m. And it's the real-life inspiration for his first book, "Miracle on 14th Street."

Turpin remembers it well. After living in Orleans for 10 years and Frostproof, Fla., for three years, his family returned to Bedford.

At the age of 15, he had been arrested three times and detained. His crimes included theft (stealing beer from a store), vandalism and a probation violation when he ran away with a friend to Frostproof, Fla. In Florida, he was arrested for grand larceny and was taken to a juvenile detention center. He was still wanted in Bedford for breaking parole rules when he ran away to Florida again.

The car he used to escape broke down in Brooksville, Fla., and he was charged with fleeing to evade jurisdiction. Once again, he had run away with friends.

A police airplane arrived to transport him back to Indiana. It stopped for a break in Tennessee, and Turpin and one of his friends ran away from the cops yet again. Still a juvenile, he was sent to the Indiana Boys School a second time, he said. Not too long after he got out, he was arrested for theft and public intoxication.

"I was sent to the Indiana State Farm," he said. He was released Aug. 12, 1971.

The next day, he was at his friend's house "tripping on LSD." He started walking home, but became incoherent. His memory picks up again sometime during the early morning hours of Aug. 14, 1971.

"While high on LSD, I had a moment of self-realization," Turpin said. "A heart-wrenching, soul-searching moment. I saw two things that night.

"I saw myself for who what I was really like. I was a liar. I was a thief. I was a cheat, dishonest ... promiscuous. I also saw hope that night."

Turpin always believed in God, but never went to church. His family wasn't religious. He visited the chapel at the Indiana State Farm several times, sensing his life was off-track. But in the early morning hours of Aug. 14, it was different.

"I felt him in a sense that I never sensed before," Turpin said.

Turpin remembers kneeling in an empty lot on 14th Street, between R and T streets.

"I'm down on my knees praying," he said.

He didn't hear the car pull up near him. But he heard two car doors. He didn't turn to look — he was staring up at the sky at a star.

The car was a police car. Two officers approached him. One ordered him to get up. The officer tapped Turpin on the shoulder. Turpin didn't comply.

Instead, "I pointed up to the sky at the star, and I said, 'Bow down in the presence of the Lord,'" Turpin said.

The two officers picked him up and hauled him off to jail. He was in solitary confinement and "acting loony," he said. But it was the moment when he started to live his life for God. And while in jail, he read books — religious books — that inspired him to get his life turned around.

While leaving jail with his parents, a jailer told him to leave the state and never come back.

He remembers it was rough for him in Florida at first. He didn't think he'd fit in at church, so he hung around the same old friends and was arrested again. But he made a promise to God that it was the last time.

In 1974, in Florida, he graduated high school, went to college and earned degrees in education and Biblical studies in 1980. He then received a pardon from the governor for his crimes and started teaching in public school systems. Then, he had another moment with God. He realized he wasn't serving his purpose. So, after a few more years, he was ordained in 1985. He's been a pastor since 1987.

Sunday, Turpin came back to Indiana, and preached at the Putnamville Correctional Facility (formerly known as the Indiana State Farm), in the chapel, where it all started almost 44 years ago. It was a defining moment for him.

"In jail, I read book after book after book," Turpin said. "That gave me hope. Maybe (inmates will) be sitting in jail reading my books. ... Maybe they'll be given hope."

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