

Miraculous transformations!

He was well known for being the most violent drug dealer in the South Bronx. His reputation earned him the street name “Craze.” He had no understanding of God’s love for him or the future he could have by putting his faith in Christ. He only knew the lifestyle of the streets.

I met Craze 30 years ago. We had many conversations about his soul. I remember vividly when he came into our rented chapel after a discipleship class the first year we were there. He sat in the back quietly, not moving for more than ten minutes. He finally spoke and said, “I’ve never felt anything like this before.” The Holy Spirit had begun working on his soul.

Craze’s first child celebrated his first birthday during my first mission to Vietnam in January 1996. In my place, my wife, my mother, and my five-year-old daughter went to this drug dealer’s apartment and celebrated his son’s birthday. Their presence was never forgotten, opening the hearts of Craze and his wife and many from the streets who were there.

As time went on, Adrian (his real name) and Maribel had more children. Nine, to be exact! Having many children was not uncommon in our community. Having them all with one wife was unheard of! And raising them to stay out of trouble, off the streets, and dedicated to their education was unprecedented. My family and I became close to them and their children. Still, there was no response to the grace of God.

Adrian and his family moved out of the community many years ago. We remained in contact, often visiting them in their apartment. They eventually moved to Brooklyn. His oldest daughter Felicity contacted me a few years ago with an interesting question: “What kind of Bible should I buy?” God had stirred her heart. She has a heart for God.

What we experienced a few weeks ago was far beyond anything I would have ever imagined. Adrian and Maribel invited us to their apartment for dinner (pictured right). We were there for almost four hours, and ***more than an hour of that was worshipping the Lord! God has done miracles in their hearts!*** Adrian, who never had much education, struggles to read, but the Holy Spirit has taught him the lyrics of dozens of worship songs. He sings them all day long! ***His children even said that he often belts out worship songs as he walks down the streets and rides the subways. Adrian told me, “Maybe I’m crazy, but sometimes I feel like God is telling me to sing a certain song out loud with all my heart!”***



Craze in the early years in the South Bronx.



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Another life transformed!

When we met Victor 31 years ago, he was a street dealer. He was one of the seven who controlled that business in our community. In 1996, we renovated the former drug front into the first *Harvest Center*. Victor came by and asked if we sealed up the trap door they would use to shoot drugs into the apartment above if they were raided. We didn't even know about the trap door! Victor sealed it up for us.

When Victor was in the hospital, I felt compelled to visit him. As I waited in the hospital hallway, I wondered what his reaction would be. When he saw me, he came to me, wrapped his arms around me, and cried on my shoulder. Our relationship became different that day.

Victor and I would meet early in the morning to study the Word, before the other dealers were awake. I eventually baptized him and his girlfriend. The lure of the streets and his inability to get a job pulled him back into the business. Victor was eventually arrested and sentenced to prison in Upstate New York. While there, he was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor, given no chance to live.

Victor called me a few years ago. We talked for a while. He had been released on parole. **God had changed his life!** He was serving the Lord with all of his heart. And if that wasn't enough of a miracle, **he was completely healed of brain cancer!**

Victor now co-owns a New York-style pizzeria in the Atlanta area. We went to visit him. We embraced and cried on each other's shoulders. He testified about all that God has done in his life, saying, **"It's because of you. It's because you came to the Bronx."**

Victor and Adrian are examples of lives changed by the love of God. It took many years, and a lot happened in between, but **God never forgets. His seed truly will always produce the results He has ordained for it.**

I was blessed as I sat beside Adrian, hearing his scratchy voice worship our King as his wife and children joined him. For 30 years, I loved Adrian unconditionally and shared the Truth with him. For 30 years, we sowed and watered seeds of salvation. And for 30 years, the Holy Spirit was sowing salvation deep into their souls. Now, we see the fruit of it all in the form of miracle transformations in the lives of this man and his family!

Adrian wants his family to be baptized. I can't wait for that day!

In Isaiah 55:11, God said, **"It is the same with My word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it."** Thank you, God, for saving these souls!



Victor and I reunited after 27 years.



Adrian with his hand raised in worship.