



Spirit of Grace Herald

THE MINISTRY OF DENNIS
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Early Days in Christ

I gave my life to Jesus a long time ago. It was during the heart of what has been historically called the "Jesus movement," a time when young men and women were finding Jesus wholesale. This movement was a genuine spiritual awakening that swept across America in the late 1960's and early 70's. Long haired, "hippie" guys were showing up in church with their paisley shirts and bell-bottom pants, as well as stringy-haired young ladies who had tasted more of drugs, sex, and the counter-culture than most of their parents ever knew.

Until its last few years, the 60's had been a very secular decade for America. *Time Magazine* ran the famous headline: "Is God dead?" Christianity seemed to be on the way out. Churches seemed unable or unwilling to change from their conservative, ultra-orthodox, rather legalistic ways, and the young people in those days wanted nothing more than to get away from it as soon as they could. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, a genuine revival and outpouring of the Holy Spirit sprang up that reached from coast

to coast and drew hundreds of thousands of young people, along with a sizeable number of adults, to Jesus Christ. New praise songs were being written and sung as fast as believers could learn them, new styles of worship were being adapted, and there was an emphasis in the pulpits upon Bible teaching, of all things.

It was in this climate that I discovered Jesus Christ, in the waning days of winter in 1973. I was nineteen years old and was living in a dormitory, attending Southeast Missouri State University. I was entirely ignorant of the fact that a great spiritual awakening was going on all around me. In fact, I found Jesus in a rather quiet and solitary fashion. Somehow, I was moved to read the Bible in my little dormitory room. I really didn't believe much in the Bible, but I had heard it quoted and referenced even in some of the far-out, new age books I read, and finally decided to read some of it for myself and see what all the fuss was about. I started in the book of Matthew and resolved to read through the New Testament.

That was it: finis, done, complete. My life was forever changed. I was overwhelmed with Jesus as I read through the gospels, and somewhere between Matthew and Revelation I surrendered to Him. Before reading the Bible, I wasn't sure God existed. By the time I finished the New Testament I was His.

As I look back on those days, I can still feel the freshness, the excitement, and the newness of my early walk with Jesus. My attitudes about nearly everything were transformed. Instead of looking for a good time with girls, I began praying for a wife. I learned to be less critical. I remember sitting at the lunch table with some of my friends, and when we saw a girl come through the lunch line, we began to mock her among ourselves (I can't remember the reason). But I had barely made a cruel statement when I suddenly felt guilty, and knew I was doing something wrong. The Holy Spirit was sensitizing my conscience.



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I started doing the things Christians do, even though before then they had seemed dull and utterly pointless. I read the Bible every day. I went to church. I quit cursing and threw my dirty little magazines in the trash. At the time of this writing, all of this was forty-three years ago. Richard Nixon was the president. Eight-track tapes were the music player of choice. And the only way anybody I knew ever made a phone call was to either call from a phone in your house or go to a pay phone and drop a dime in the slot for a local call, or more coins for "long-distance."

A lot has changed since then. But, by the mercy of God, I am still a believer; I still trust Jesus Christ as my Savior and my Hope of heaven. "Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come. 'Twas grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home."

Next Month: NIGERIA

This December: *Two Separate Back-to-Back Weeks of Ministry*



While most Americans will be celebrating Christmas in their homes, Dennis & Benedicta plan to be in Nigeria, teaching God's people and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost. We are planning, not one mission, but two. For the week preceding Christmas and the week following Christmas they will be conducting missions in small towns in interior Nigeria.

In addition to spiritual ministry we will be providing a free medical clinic and clothes for orphans. We have already received funds from generous friends of the ministry to cover one of the two medical teams we

will provide, plus a dozen bicycles for pastors.

Christmas time in the interior Nigerian towns is a busy, special time. Many adults who have grown up in the villages and since moved away to the big cities to find work, return to the villages for family gatherings. During this time they love to attend special events, such as soccer matches or religious services, as a form of entertainment.

There is a tremendous potential for reaching many Nigerians in the villages at this time, and Dennis & Benedicta have decided to sacrifice a traditional American Christmas in order to reach Africans with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Please pray for this outreach, and please consider making a special donation to help us with it. **Ministering in two cities back-to-back is a great expense, but it is a worthwhile investment!**



Our Gift to You: To all who contribute to SOGM in November and request it, we will send a DVD of Dennis' sermon, recently preached in Frankfort, KY, "**The Strangest This God is Doing in the World.**" This message explains why evil is proliferating in an exponential fashion, and why there is still hope for us today!