



# Spirit of Grace

THE MINISTRY OF DENNIS  
& BENEDICTA POLLOCK

Herald

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**Spirit of Grace Ministries**

**P.O. Box 2068**

**McKinney, TX 75070**

**(530) 712-4253**

**Email: [grace@spiritofgrace.org](mailto:grace@spiritofgrace.org)**

**Website: [www.spiritofgrace.org](http://www.spiritofgrace.org)**

## Fallen General

A long time ago, when I was young in both years and in the faith, I began attending a dynamic church that was at the forefront of the charismatic movement in St. Louis, Missouri. It was my first experience with powerful anointed praise and worship. It was a beautiful experience. Sometimes the presence of the Lord was so rich that tears would stream down my cheeks in the worship service. The pastor was an exceptional man. He was a fine preacher, but his strongest gift was in his ability to exhort, encourage, and coax people to surrender their lives and their troubles to Jesus. He had a voice that seemed to drip with honey, and a great sense of spiritual timing. He always seemed to know what to say and when to say it. At times he would forego the sermon altogether and give words of encouragement and comfort in between worship songs, after which he would make an invitation for people to come forward and receive Christ. People responded in droves.

This church drew folks from all over the city. Men and women who were hungry for God and the latest move of His Spirit could hardly stay away, and many churches and ministries

were birthed in its revival atmosphere, my own included. One Sunday morning the service did not follow its usual pattern, however. We all quickly discovered the reason. The pastor had been discovered to be involved in an adulterous relationship. We were told that he would step down for three months, receive counseling, and then resume as pastor.

He never did return. Afterwards it was learned that he was actually involved in multiple adulterous relationships. His ministry there was over. I never saw this man again. As a fairly new believer with a strong sense of Christ's call on my life, it was a terrible blow for me. If this man, who seemed to be the essence of anointing and spiritual power, couldn't make it, what hope was there for any of us? Over the years I often thought about him and wondered whatever became of him. When I began using the Internet, I would do *Google* searches for him once in a while, but still nothing.



And then the other day I found him. His daughter and son-in-law had posted a three part recording on *YouTube* that he had done in the final days of his life. With several of his family and friends around him in the hospital, he had given a kind of rambling monologue about some of the spiritual lessons he had learned in the last months. My first impression was amazement at the physical change. When I had known him, he was in his late

thirties, nice-looking, and in the prime of his life. Now he looked like what he was, an old man who was not well. But of course that was to be expected. People seeing me after an absence of thirty-five years would probably experience the same reaction.

What I was really interested in was his life. What had he done since the 1970's? Was he still a believer? Did he have any regrets? The short *YouTube* video left more questions than it answered, but there were enough clues in his words to give me some ideas. It was clear that he had battled with shame for many years. He described going to churches and sitting in the back. He talked about going to Bible study gatherings and asking the leader, "Please, don't call on me (to share)."

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In the last ten years of his life he led some Christian Bible studies and fellowships, but without too much success. Sometimes he would tell the people, "If I were you, I wouldn't follow me," not exactly an inspiring thing for listeners to hear. He dabbled in business as well as ministry opportunities but without great results. And perhaps, saddest of all, he wondered why some of the key ministers and leaders that he had known in his glory days failed to keep in touch with him.

For someone who did not know who this man was or what he had done in the past, his recollections and insights would have been boring and meaningless. But I was fascinated and saddened. This man's life and testimony was a real-life fulfillment of a saying that my dad had said numerous times when I was a child: "Act in haste, repent in leisure." A man, who had been one of the key figures in the early charismatic renewal, had been left behind, reduced to a shell of the minister he once was.

It was not all bad news however. His last days were spent in the presence of people who obviously cared deeply for him. And most important, my former pastor was clearly still a believer. He spoke of being free for the first time in his life. After his dramatic fall, he had not run into the arms of the world. He had run back to the Jesus he had preached so eloquently. Sure, he had struggled with guilt, shame, and regret, but he had come to appreciate and understand the forgiveness and sonship we have in Christ Jesus as never before. It is not the testimony any of us would desire but it is still a powerful testimony. "If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared" (Psalm 130:3,4).

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