



# Spirit of Grace Herald

THE MINISTRY OF DENNIS  
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## Finishing Well

In Steve Farrar's book, *Finishing Strong*, he relates the following story:

*John Bisagno has been pastoring First Baptist of Houston for a number of years. When John was just about to finish college, he was having dinner over at his fiancée's house one night. After supper, he was talking with his future father-in-law, Dr. Paul Beck, out on the porch. Dr. Beck had been in ministry for years and that was inevitably the subject toward which the conversation turned.*

*"John, as you get ready to enter the ministry, I want to give you some advice," Dr. Beck told the younger man. "Stay true to Jesus! Make sure that you keep your heart close to Jesus every day. It's a long way from here to where you're going to go, and Satan's in no hurry to get you." The older man continued. "It has been my observation that just one out of ten who start out in full time service for the Lord at twenty-one are still on track by the age of sixty-five. They're shot down morally, they're shot down with discouragement, they're shot down with liberal theology, they get obsessed with making money...but for one reason or another nine out of ten fall out."*

*The twenty-year-old Bisagno was shocked. "I*

*just can't believe that!" he said. "That's impossible! That just can't be true." Bisagno told how he went home, took one of those blank pages in the back of his Scofield Reference Bible and wrote down the names of twenty-four young men who were his peers and contemporaries. These were young men in their twenties who were sold out for Jesus Christ. They were trained for ministry and burning in their desire to be used by the Lord. These were the committed young preachers who would make an impact for the Lord in their generation.*

Over the years John would hear of some of these men who had left the ministry, been caught up in immorality, left their wives, and so forth, and would draw a line through their name in the back of his Bible.

*Bisagno relates the following with a sigh: "I am now fifty-three years old. From time to time as the years have gone by, I've had to turn back to that page in my Bible and cross out a name. I wrote down those twenty-four names when I was just twenty years of age. Thirty-three years later, there are only three names remaining of the original twenty-four."*



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Farrar finishes with the conclusion: *"In the Christian life, it's not how you start that matters. It's how you finish."*

A major aspect of serving Jesus and finishing well is a dogged determination to do works that please Him day after day, month after month, and year after year. In Revelation He declares, **"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations"** (Revelation

2:26).

The good works of God will always and surely flow out of a life which is closely related to Jesus. Our Lord tells us, **"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me"** (John 15:4). When a young man and woman are married, the natural outcome of that relationship is nearly always children. Whether they have taken classes in sex education or think that babies come from long-legged storks, it makes no difference. When a man and a woman are married and live under the same roof, babies are almost sure to come.

# Finishing Well

Likewise, when human hearts are joined to the Lord Jesus in that abiding relationship of love, trust, faith, and devotion, good works and abundant fruit will surely result. In Romans we read, **“Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God”** (Romans 7:4).

Finishing well is, as Dr. Beck counseled his young son-in-law, a matter of keeping our hearts close to Christ. And from that fellowship we will be moved by the Holy Spirit to keep Christ’s works day after day. As our youth stretches into middle age, and middle age dissolves into old age, we shall find that our faith and our zeal are not diminished, and our passion for doing the will of God does not wane. And when the time of our departure comes, we will be able to say, like Paul, “I have finished the race; I have kept the faith.”

## Mission Matunda, Kenya - October 2015

### Lifting Up the Savior of the World in Kenya



This month Dennis and Benedicta are scheduled to minister in Matunda, Kenya. Will you join your hands and your hearts to ours? We very much need and desire your prayers and financial support.

Every time we go to Africa to lift up the name of Jesus Christ to the lost, and to feed the believers with the word of God, we see and hear such wonderful testimonies of transformed lives and churches. God’s word works! It accomplishes what He pleases and prospers in that for which He sends it forth.

At present we are in need of approximately \$3,500 to make up the full budget for this mission. Will you help us cover this? Even the smallest gift is greatly appreciated!

Plus... Shoes for the children / laptops and cameras for pastors

**It is our desire to minister physically to the Africans as well as spiritually. We Americans have been so richly blessed, we owe it to our African brothers and sisters to help them out in material ways, and to demonstrate that we are one in Jesus Christ. We are planning to purchase 200 pairs of shoes for children, and also bring a few laptops / tablets and digital cameras for pastors. Your generous donation will help us to bless the body of Christ in Africa and to show them that we American believers have not forgotten our African brothers and sisters! If you have a used laptop, tablet, or digital camera you would like to donate to this mission, ship it to us as soon as possible, and we will take it with us (working devices only).**



***YOUR DONATION BY CHECK WITH THE MEMO: MISSION: KENYA HELPS US TO CONTINUE TO REACH OUT TO THE GREAT CONTINENT OF AFRICA WITH THE GREATEST NEWS OF ALL – THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST! – OR FEEL FREE TO DONATE THROUGH PAYPAL OR A CREDIT CARD ON OUR WEBSITE: SPIRITOFGRACE.ORG.***