



Spirit of Grace

Herald

THE MINISTRY OF DENNIS
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Meeting an Old Friend

I met with an old friend the other day. We sat in a restaurant, sipped coffee, and talked about old times, a couple of old guys who had long ago said goodbye to their youth. Most would consider this a pretty ordinary event, but for me it was kind of amazing. There were a couple of reasons for this. First, my friend, Tom DeCaro, and I hadn't seen each other for probably over forty years. When we last saw each other we were both in our early twenties, just getting started in our adult lives and careers. All our memories of each other were based, not upon seeing the gradual changes to appearance, voice, and ways which we experience with close relatives with whom we interact frequently through the years. We had entirely lost touch with each other early into adulthood, and therefore the Tom I remembered was the Tom of my youth, and the same with the Dennis he remembered.

Secondly, during our growing up years, from the age of twelve until I left for college at eighteen, we had been nearly inseparable.

Our personalities seemed to be a perfect fit. We rarely argued, and did everything together. We both had a great love for games of all kinds and we played them non-stop: board games (there were no video games in those days), baseball, football, golf, card games, ping pong, and many others too countless to mention. We both caddied to earn extra money and learned to love the game of golf. We played golf all the time, and when we weren't playing it we were practicing it, chipping balls in our backyards, going to the driving range, and sometimes hitting full nine-irons from one back yard to another.

Recently I got to thinking about my old buddy and decided to put his name in *Google* and see if I could locate him. I had done this a couple of other times over the years without success. But this time there was a hit, although I wasn't so sure about it at first. There was a *Facebook* page with my friend's name, but the picture didn't look a thing like the guy I remembered. I went to the page and found that the schools and dates matched perfectly with my childhood friend. We connected, and to our surprise we discovered that we lived about forty-five minutes from each other. I immediately arranged a breakfast meeting with him, to renew our acquaintance and catch up on forty plus years of each other's lives and careers.

In the days preceding our meeting, I found myself in a state of wonder about my life. To experience this "blast from the past," this old and close friend who had been such an important part of my growing-up years forced me down memory lane, not only to my childhood, but to all the years since then. In my adolescence, I had moved away from God and lived an entirely secular life. I quit going to church early in my teens, save for perhaps Christmas and Easter. God and Christ were neither in my thoughts nor in my life in those days. In my second year of college I rediscovered Jesus Christ through reading the New Testament, out of pure curiosity. Somewhere between *Matthew* and *Revelation* I was drawn to Jesus.



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At that point my life took a radical turn toward God. I never looked back. Over the forty plus years between my youth and my current age I have pastored two churches, served as an assistant in a radio and television Christian ministry, and then founded *Spirit of Grace Ministries*. I have lost count of all the times I have traveled to foreign countries to preach and teach Jesus Christ. I have read the Bible through again and again. I became one of the despised “evangelicals.” Tom no doubt would have been pretty surprised to see how I “turned out,” except that he found my website before we met, and saw that the Dennis of today is not the same Dennis he had known in those carefree days of our youth. (I’m not just talking about the wrinkles!)

In some ways, I wish I had several more lifetimes to follow and serve my Lord Jesus, do more missions, and touch more lives. We only get one, and I could wish that I had served and followed more perfectly in this one life I have been given. Still, I have done what I knew to do, and in spite of my flaws and sometimes poor judgment, Jesus has honored me with, if not “much fruit,” at least some fruit. And for that I am thankful. I have no idea how much time I have left in this life, but I do know that whatever time I have, I will continue to follow Jesus, who mercifully touched a nineteen year old college sophomore and changed the course of his life.

Next Month: Uganda!



Dennis & Benedicta are scheduled to minister in Uganda in July. We praise God for yet another opportunity to travel to the great continent of Africa and teach and preach Jesus Christ to the beautiful African people. According to Wikipedia: “Uganda is one of the poorest nations in the world. In 2012, 37.8 percent of the population lived on less than \$1.25 a

day.”

Dennis and Benedicta go to this nation to encourage them that God has not forgotten them – and that through Jesus Christ they can experience forgiveness, salvation, freedom, and the shelter and provision of their loving Father in Heaven.

We need your help! Most evangelists are paid honorariums for their ministry, but we have to pay for the privilege of ministering to the African people. Please pray for us, and please considering making a generous donation toward this mission. Mark “Uganda Mission” in the memo line of your check, or note it when you donate through our website donation PayPal buttons (www.spiritofgrace.org). Thanks for caring!

“Does he not leave the ninety-nine
and...seek the one that is straying?”