

# Editorial: Shoring up the Foundations

**O**ur desire and effort to evangelize the world must be firmly grounded in God and His Word. The mission mandate that we hold dear must rest squarely on biblical foundations. We cannot proceed and expect success in this task with wrong or shaky motives or questionable ideals. World missions must have sure foundations, and unless these are firmly in place, we run the risk of being like the “foolish man who built his house upon the sand...and great was the fall of it.” (Matt. 7:26, 27)

This whole issue is focused entirely on the biblical mandate and basis of world missions. Although in the past, excellent articles have been written on this vital subject, (in fact some are reprinted and revised here in this issue) no one entire edition has been dedicated before to this all important subject. And it was time to do so, not merely because we haven't done it before, but for abetter reason.

Some years ago, the whole Mississippi basin experienced a major flood. Many of the levees (dikes) of this mighty river, designed to hold back its flood waters, were either totally destroyed or were in serious jeopardy due to the devastating flood. These have now been restored and repaired.

In the same way, we also need to shore up the mission foundations of God's purpose and plan, build them anew where they have been washed away or weakened in order to survive and to hold at bay the destructive influences of our secular world and culture that like a flood threatens to destroy us with equally devastating consequences.

Without any doubt, Christ is building His Church in every place among all peoples “that He might fill all things” and He is using His people to do it. (Matt. 16:18; Ef. 4:10-12) But Christ's Church must be built on solid foundations. At mid-point of the 90s—five years away from AD 2000—it's an excellent time to shore up the

basics and let God speak to us anew about His purpose and plan of world redemption.

Since the mission mandate and its foundations rests on God and His will, and is central to all of Scripture (as you will see in this issue), *God by His Spirit needs to reveal to us this vital matter*. For many of us it will come as a first time revelation, like a brand new discovery, while for others it will be a rediscovery, giving us an even deeper understanding. But to whomever and however it comes, *God Himself must disclose it*. It is like “the mystery of the gospel” that is made known by revelation and can only be known as such. So, whether we see it for the first time or rediscover it anew, the mission mandate and foundations, central to all of Scripture, must be disclosed to us by God Himself.

The fundamental question is: To whom will God disclose this central purpose, plan, promise and biblical mandate? Ask yourself: Will God disclose it to me, can He reveal it to me? Do I (we) have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches? May no doubt remain. What you will “hear” in the articles of this special issue is something the Spirit indeed is saying to the churches today. Question is: Do we have ears to hear what He is saying?

Having ears to hear essentially has to do with the ability to discern God's truth according to His view of things. In other words, it means being able to discern spiritual reality with God's help and from His perspective, according to His Word and purpose, revealed by His Spirit for us today in and for our “kairos moment” of history.

The apostle Paul put it this way: “I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or lofty wisdom... but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” Paul con-

tinues: “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.” And then he gives the bottom line: “the unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God.” Why not? Because “they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” Only spiritual men and women can discern spiritual reality because as Paul said, “we have the mind of Christ.” (See I Cor. 2)

Hence a fundamental directive is that we will need spiritual ears to hear what God wants to impart to us, including His Word to us in this issue. We will need to read the articles with spiritual discernment. You will find much more than interesting information, much more than “human wisdom of lofty words and persuasive arguments,” as Paul would say. It really has to do with receiving a spiritual gift that God wants to give us—that we all desperately need! Without the ability to hear we will miss it. At best, it will be just interesting information, just unique concepts, maybe.

Jesus reminds us of the flip side of this matter: “every one who hears these words of mine and *does not do them* will be like a foolish man.” We must be willing and eager *to do* what we hear! It is my conviction that God will not disclose anything of any real value to anyone (whether by means of this issue or anywhere else) who is unwilling to do what He says to do. Our hearts must be inline with His purpose, ready and willing to “observe,” (see Matt. 28:19) what He mandates. On this basis God will reveal His Word to us and the biblical mandate of missions will be revealed. May we see it clearly!

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