

## Editorial / Focus - September 1977

Why do so many Christians fall away? Why do so many Churches tear apart? Why are so many Charismatics disillusioned? Of course, we could be like the ostrich and bury our heads in the sands of optimism that neither hears the questions asked, nor considers them to be valid if heard. After all, don't the unbelieving Christians that keep asking such questions know that we are in the midst of the greatest spiritual awakening of the century? Right around the world news reports inform us of great gatherings to the evangelical fold, and some ten to fifteen million are now enjoying a charismatic experience. Let's stop being negative and enjoy God! We consider it is no more negative to ask these questions than it is positive to pretend the questions do not need asking. The questions are very valid in view of the real needs they highlight. Over the past eighteen years I have observed large numbers of professions of faith made in various evangelistic outreaches, with little abiding fruit. That is not to say evangelism is wrong and futile, as some have done, but to ask: Is there some missing dimension in our evangelistic preaching that brings people into Christ with inbuilt deficiencies that are going to leave them open to a later falling away? Likewise, the rise and fall of so many churches in vigour, zeal, life, and growth over the same period has been as disappointing as the evangelistic scene. Even more recently the growing disillusionment of increasing numbers who have had charismatic experiences that they thought heralded a final answer to most of their problems. They anticipated living constantly victorious, their churches aflame, the minister and deacons and other leaders were going to be mighty men in God, tearing down enemy strongholds in the kingdom of darkness and performing miracles and healings with a joyous regularity. But now growing disillusionment. What has gone wrong? In this issue of 'Restoration' we seek to examine a neglected area of our individual and church experience — our foundations, our roots. For a building is as strong as its foundations, and a tree only as healthy as its roots. We trust that our examination of these areas will provide some answers to our main questions. You will find enclosed the special Dales Bible Week report. Extra copies of this are available for circulation if you would like to send to your friends. These may be obtained by requesting the number you require, and please could you enclose covering postage which will help keep our costs down.