
Editor's Notes

Over the past few months a number of readers have commented favourably on my first issue of *Foundations*. This has been very encouraging and I trust that the journal will continue to prove stimulating and helpful. Please go on sending me your comments or suggestions, as I want the journal to be the best one of its kind on the market.

There have been two kinds of comments that I would like to highlight as they touch on the nature of a journal like *Foundations*. The first kind has been something like this: "Do you agree with everything in *Foundations*?", after which the questioner points out something that he (and by implication I) could not possibly agree with. My reply is, "No I don't agree with everything, nor should I". As a journal *Foundations*, like its parent the BEC, is as broad and as narrow as the gospel itself. I trust that there will never be anything in *Foundations* that contradicts the essential evangelical doctrines of our faith. But this journal is intended to be a forum in which men and women who confess the evangelical faith can explore theological issues. Inevitably there will be areas in which writers and readers disagree. That is good. If there are no disagreements among us it is pretty certain that we are not tackling as we should the great issues facing evangelicalism today. *Foundations* is not a party magazine or a denominational organ; it is the theological journal sponsored by a very diverse body seeking to serve an even more diverse readership. One of the banes of conservative evangelicalism, particularly among those of us who are independents, is the tendency not to tolerate legitimate diversity and to insist on theological conformity that is too precisely defined.

The other comment I want to highlight is one that takes exception to my commendation of J I Packer, Wayne Grudem and John Piper as examples of theologians who combine vital godliness with sound learning. It was pointed out that these men were associated with positions allegedly inconsistent with conservative evangelicalism. No doubt they have their faults and inconsistencies, but overall their ministries have been a blessing to many and have done great good for the kingdom of God world-wide. Whether or not we agree with them on every issue, surely they must be commended as men of God who are trying to work out their evangelical faith in a world that is changing very fast and throwing up new challenges to us all the time. The bottom line for *Foundations* is our commitment to the Bible as the inerrant, written word of God and to the gospel of God's grace to sinners. On that basis we need to strive together in doing theology that is creative, relevant, exciting, bold and strengthening to the spiritual life and evangelistic mission of the churches.

We go some way towards fulfilling that ambition in this issue. The theme is **Word and Spirit**, an expression that has been much used in recent years as churches have tried to come to terms with the charismatic movement. Advocates on all sides of the debate have appropriated the phrase and claimed that they are trying to keep the two together. I don't pretend to think that this issue deals with the matter exhaustively but I do think the various writers have shed some interesting light on the debate. I will let them speak for themselves and assure readers that we would be happy to publish letters which continue an appropriate dialogue with contributors.