

# Reversing the Flow

**By Pete Beck, Jr.**

## **Some History**

In the year 1812, a major earthquake changed the course of and temporarily reversed the flow of the Mississippi River. What awesome power it would take to achieve such a thing. No one would argue that God is the only One capable of producing such a phenomenon.

In 1900 the City of Chicago reversed the flow of the Chicago River by digging a 26 mile long canal through an 8 foot rise in the land. This was done to carry away the wastes of the growing city south into the Des Plaines and Illinois Rivers and thence into the Mississippi. Up to this point the wastes were flowing into Lake Michigan. Several typhoid plagues broke out in the 20 years preceding the decision to do something about the waste problem. This proved that man could reverse the flow of a river and bring health to the people.

There is a subtle but dangerous flow in the Body of Christ that I will attempt to alert you to in this brief vision letter. I am wondering if God will have to produce a tremendous earthquake in the Church to reverse it, or can we spiritually dig a canal of purity to reverse the flow? Let us pray that in Master Builders we can do our small part.

## **The Problem**

An apostolic brother from Central America told recently of his observations regarding the growth of apostolic networks in his area of the world. This applied to both those coming from the United States and the local ones springing up. He observed that they were gathering churches under their wings and directing the flow of funds and energy back toward the support of the apostolic-prophetic overseers in the network. Whether or not the American networks have been the role models for the local networks in establishing this trend or not, I do not know, but I suspect the worst. The result is that the local churches are encouraged to turn inward and backward and focus their energy and funds on sustaining their own growth and to support the apostolic network. The outward Kingdom thrust to plant and harvest is slowing and disappearing. Statistics show, incidentally that contributions to missions are down last year in the U.S. by 40 %. Hmm..!

Church growth is certainly a legitimate pursuit. I have no intention of diminishing our efforts in that area, but rather increasing them. Church health is however just as important and should be as much of a goal as church growth. They are twins in my opinion. That is why in our spring regionals the current recommended study of the book *Natural Church Growth* by Christian Schwartz must go hand in hand with other excellent books written on the subject of church growth. This book emphasizes healthy church growth for the right reasons.

Also, it is certainly not my intention to attack the idea of financially supporting legitimate five-fold ministry. The New Testament makes it quite clear that it is proper to do so. I encourage all Master Builder churches to support the work of the fellowship by contributing what they can to the general fund of Master Builders. There is a blessing to be had in it both to the ministry and to the supporting church. In Master Builders we have tried our best to role model the proper use of

funds contributed for the purpose of furthering travel and administration of the over all vision. We must maintain purity of both administration and purpose in this area. The money coming in at this point is used to further the vision and not for enhancing any man's bank account.

### **Trying to Reverse the River**

We are currently being used by the Holy Spirit to role model several important concepts in different parts of the world. Just recently in Mexico, Dominican Republic and Colombia, our teams have imparted the proper role of the apostolic team and have opened many hearts and eyes. We are doing much good. One of the main visions we have is to try to reverse the river concerning improper use of the prophetic and the improper emphasis on control and money of some of the apostolic ministries. We have a excellent vision and it is catching many hearts where we are able to get to the leaders. My book, *Not Many Fathers*, is now translated into Spanish and I hope to have it available soon for the brethren south of the border. I am encouraged everywhere that the vision and teaching in this book is revolutionary to the Latin culture.

### **The Real Point, a Warning**

The real reason I am writing this is not to stir you up to support my efforts or those necessarily of the rest of the Master Builder apostolic team, but rather to issue a warning. We must resist the subtle pressure to turn inward and concentrate on growth as some sort of idol or panacea for our seeming weaknesses. This seems to be inherent in the much of the church growth literature. It does not come right out and say this. But the temptation is there to see it that way.

Whenever the local church becomes larger in our efforts than the Kingdom, we are out of balance. The purpose of the church is to be a vehicle to carry out the commands of Christ. His last command was to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." The Holy Spirit baptism was given so that He could actually be with us and we could have the power to perform this, to be witnesses unto Him, not only in our own families and churches, but to the uttermost parts of the world.

The purpose of the five-fold ministry is to equip the church to fulfill this command. It is not to rule over the church or to exact tithes and offerings from it, although financial support is necessary as mentioned above. Whenever an apostolic network does anything to distract the local churches from the Kingdom vision, God will have to deal harshly with it sooner or later. I don't want that to happen to you or me. We must role model purity in this area if we are to have anything to preach in the nations.

Church growth and administration and youth programs, etc., are extremely important. Let us not diminish them, ever. But their purpose is solely to strengthen the church for the purposes of the Kingdom. Let's put our efforts always into His purpose. His purpose is to "GO" out, not to turn inward. His purpose in this age is redemption and expansion of the Kingdom. If we are consciously or unconsciously swimming against the river of God we are in trouble. He will surely send an earthquake to reverse the flow of our own personal river if it is flowing contrary to His. Guard your hearts please, for out of them flow the issues of life.