

Energy for Living

Life Needs A Firm Foundation

By Don Cummings

Our first home was a small trailer behind Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. My wife and I especially liked the extra space of a small room added on by a previous owner. Unfortunately, the foundation was not worthy of the structure it supported. Over the years the foundation began to sink and the room pulled away from the trailer. We could see daylight between the two structures on sunny days, and snow blew through the cracks on winter days. We spent some sleepless nights wondering how to fix the sinking foundation of that added-on room.

Builders know the foundation is the most important part of any structure. The leaning Tower of Pizza is an example of what happens when a weak foundation slowly gives way. The Pyramids are an example of how a strong foundation helps prevent monumental collapse.

Several years ago there was a mass migration of people moving to California, but the newcomers soon tired of the forest fires, earthquakes, and mud slides. These yearly disasters posed serious threats to life and limb and real estate. Few sights are as sad as pictures of homes slipping down a mountainside on a sea of slimy mud after the foundations have washed out from under them. At times like these people appreciate the value of a firm foundation.

Sometimes we use the language of construction to describe life. We ask our young people, "What kind of life do you want to build for yourself?" We sometimes speak of persons whose lives seem to be falling apart for lack of a firm foundation. One of life's storms has come along and washed the foundation out from under them. When I was a teenager my family was going through some hard times. My father was between jobs. We were coping with the stresses of unemployment in our home. I wasn't sure I would be able to return to college. I remember my mother saying that everything she had built her life on seemed to be falling apart. She felt like the foundation was slipping out from under her.

It would be difficult to overestimate the value of a foundation that is able to withstand the storms of life. The rains may come and the winds may blow, but bedrock gives unshakable support to the person whose life is built upon it. People seem to be searching for that kind of underpinning these days. Sociologists tell us the number one need most people feel is the need for a meaningful life. In their search for significance people are experimenting with many kinds of foundations for life. Most of these foundations are proving inadequate.

The Hoover Dam is a modern technological marvel. Its concrete base is over 60 feet thick. It is so strong that people have no reason to doubt its ability to withstand the worst of the pressures nature hurls against it. Those who work at Hoover Dam, and those who live in its shadow, can do so with confidence. The dam has been tested by time and has proven itself trustworthy.

Is there any foundation for life as time tested and trustworthy as the Hoover Dam? Many years ago Jesus said that whoever heard his words and patterned their life after his teachings was like a man who built his house on bedrock. Rains and floods and winds could come, but life would not fall apart because it was built on a solid foundation. Edward Mote, the hymn writer, had it right when he wrote, "On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand."