

How Firm a Foundation

If you live in a flood plane, you have a couple of choices. You can build dams to keep the water way from your home, or you can build a home that keeps away from the water. Residents of New Orleans recently discovered that the first option has problems. They're considering the second.

Engineering students at Louisiana State University propose retrofitting the shotgun houses of the Big Easy's Ninth Ward with "buoyant foundations," foam blocks attached to telescoping pilings. If the levees fail the spongy slab keeps the building above the waterline while the moorings keep it from washing away. Water, sewer, and power lines snap loose on quick-disconnect fittings. The house surfs the deluge like Noah's ark. When the waters recede it settles gently back to its previous address.

I don't know if the idea is feasible, but what intrigues me is that a floating house can survive only if it sinks solid foundations. Anchorless Styro-slabbed split-levels would just become so many shipwrecks if left to the whims of winds and waves. Their high rise requires deep roots. They can soar atop the white caps only if they sink deep into the bedrock.

In the Sermon the Mount Jesus proposed a famous metaphor about rock-rooted high-rises. While he did not go so far as to suggest the complex engineering of the LSU project, he did indicate that our ability to withstand storms is in direct proportion to the depths of our foundations. Christians can rise to any occasion as long as we have sunk below the occasional to the eternal. We can navigate the ceaseless change of social currents if we cling to the unchanging bedrock of saving faith. We can conquer the surf if we're dug in below the turf.

Dig deep into the anchoring solidity of immutable faith. Sail high above the tsunamis of sea-shifting fads. Find the freedom of a buoyant life in dedication to a fixed faith.

Surf's Up!
Doug