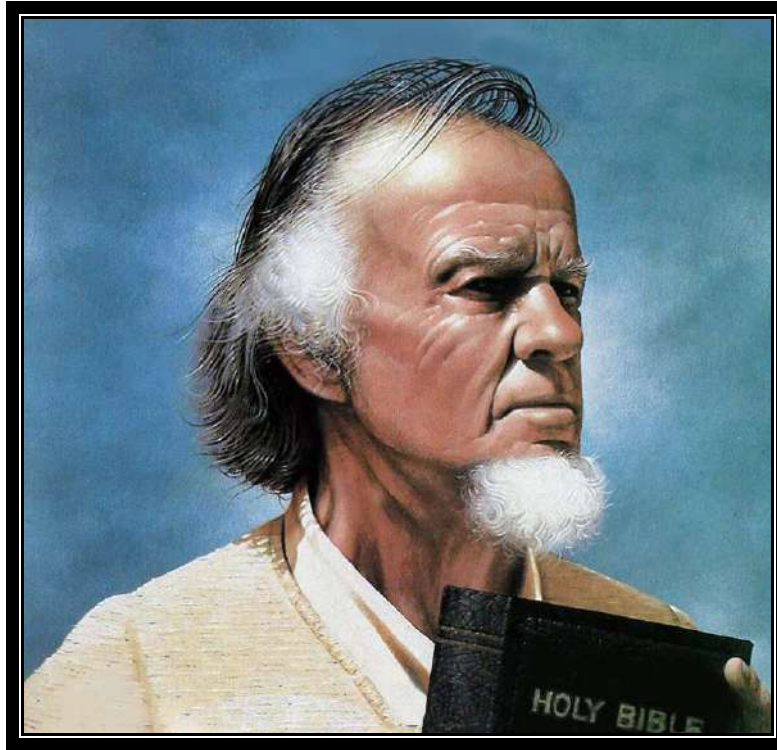


Francis Schaeffer

A Retrospective on His Life & Legacy



Jefrey Breshears

(Based on the book, *Francis Schaeffer: A Retrospective on His Life & Legacy*, by Jefrey D. Breshears with Eric A. Smith
(CentrePointe Publishing, 2022))

CONTENTS

PREFACE	1
INTRODUCTON	3
Whatever Happened to the Human Race?	
The Benedict Option: A Necessary Preface	
Cultural Homicide	
What's the Solution?	
My 'Great Awakening'	
1. FRANCIS SCHAEFFER: EARLY LIFE AND MINISTRY	7
A Unique Calling and Ministry	
Background and Spiritual Conversion	
Seminary and Edith	
Early Ministerial Career	
A Radical Reevaluation	
2. L'ABRI	9
A Spiritual and Philosophical Community	
Radical Finances	
3. WHOLISTIC CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP	15
A Prophet for Our Time	
"True Spirituality"	
"The Lordship of Christ in the Totality of Life"	
Evangelism	
4. PHILOSOPHY AND APOLOGETICS	19
"True Truth"	
Presuppositional Philosophy	
Schaefferian Apologetics	
The "Line of Despair"	
The Tripartite Nature of Philosophy	
Three Philosophical Principles	
5. HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?	29
An Historical/Philosophical/Theological <i>Tour de Force</i>	
The Summa of Secularism	
Christianity, Philosophy and the Arts	
Manifestations of Cultural Corruption	
The Totalitarian Temptation	
How Should We Then Live? The Impact	
6. CHRISTIAN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM	37
Love and Politics	
A Sacred Duty	

7. ASSESSMENTS	39
The Personal	
The Critics	
The Summa: Tributes	
APPENDIX	45
Dan Segal: "Franky Schaeffer: A Frank Assessment"	
L'Abri: An Update	
Francis Schaeffer: A Recommended Bibliography	
Bibliography: Sources Cited	



Francis Schaeffer: A Retrospective on His Life & Legacy

— PREFACE —

Francis Schaeffer’s Significance

A Personal Note.

- My first encounters with Schaeffer’s apologetical works.
- Early apologetical influences:
 - ▶ Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (1972).
 - ▶ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (1954); and
 - ▶ Clark Pinnock, *Set Forth Your Case* (1968).
- Christian cultural apologetics.

Schaeffer’s Significance and Relevance.

- Along with C. S. Lewis, Francis Schaeffer was probably one of the two most significant and influential Christian thinkers of the 20th century.
- Schaeffer was perhaps one of the twenty most significant and influential figures in American Christian history.*
- Our troubled time.
 - ▶ The forces of spiritual darkness have infiltrated and corrupted every aspect of our society and culture.
 - ▶ We desperately need Christian leaders who have the knowledge, the wisdom and the courage to honestly and forthrightly address the great evils of our day.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

* My list: “The 20 Most Significant and Influential Figures in American Christian History”:
 (1) John Winthrop; (2) Roger Williams; (3) William Penn; (4) Jonathan Edwards; (5) John Wesley; (6) George Whitefield; (7) Edward Wigglesworth; (8) Thomas Jefferson; (9) Francis Asbury; (10) Charles Finney; (11) Henry Ward Beecher; (12) “Alexander Hodge Warfield Machen” (Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield, and John Gresham Machen); (13) Dwight L. Moody; (14) Walter Rauschenbusch; (15) C. I. Scofield; (16) R. A. Torrey; (17) Aimee Semple McPherson; (18) C. S. Lewis; (19) Martin Luther King Jr.; (20) Francis Schaeffer; and (21) Billy Graham.

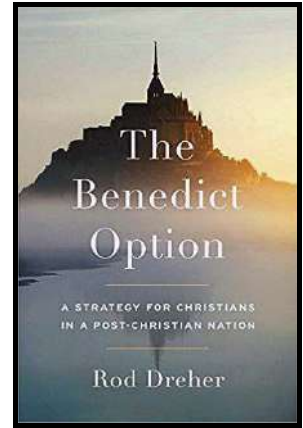
Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option* (Sentinel Press, 2017)

A Necessary Preface.

1. Is American culture getting progressively better or worse?
 - ▶ The “Christian America” myth.
 - ▶ R. C. Sproul: “I doubt if there has been a period in all of Christian history when so many Christians are so ineffectual in shaping the culture in which they live as is true right now in the United States.”

2. Is there a “culture war” in America?

- ▶ Jeffrey Breshears, *American Crisis: Cultural Marxism and the Culture War – A Christian Response*: “The idea of a culture war is not a popular topic, and anyone who raises the issue risks public ridicule and condemnation....



“In reality, there are two Americas whose values and goals are incompatible.... From point of fact, the culture war is real whether we prefer to acknowledge it or not. Furthermore, it is nothing new. It was present at the outset of American history, and from the beginning there has been an ongoing struggle between those who envisioned America as a potential New Jerusalem versus those who wished to create a New Babylon....”

“Prior to the 1960s the analogy of barbarians at the gates of American civilization would have served as an appropriate metaphor.... Now for more than fifty years cultural barbarians have been methodically besieging one citadel after another, ransacking the city and generally wreaking havoc. For a civilization as immense and complex as America, it takes a while, even once the barbarians have gained entry, for the whole city to fall. There are countless skirmishes and continuous house-to-house street fighting, and sometimes they are temporarily beaten back. But much of the city has already been overrun....

“America’s culture war is not an illusion, and those who refuse to acknowledge it are either spiritually and morally blind, egregiously apathetic, or too timid to engage it. Furthermore, the issues at stake are not trivial. They are substantive and serious, and they reveal fundamental differences regarding our understanding of truth, morality, and justice, as well as our view of what kind of society and culture America should be. Unfortunately, on matters such as these, there is relatively little room for compromise.

“Turbulent times call for people of courage and conviction who understand the issues at stake and are willing to engage the fight. As Christians, we understand that underlying the culture war is a spiritual struggle.... Furthermore, we know that the primary battleground in this war is the human heart, and that what we see manifest in our society and culture today is merely the expression of a titanic struggle between good and evil that is being waged in the spiritual realm.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

“Naturally, we would like to see Americans put aside petty partisanship, transcend their ideological differences, and unite in the cause of justice, morality and civility for the sake of all.... But unfortunately, this is unrealistic because the differences that divide us are not superficial or simply stylistic or primarily tactical. In substance, the division is between those who believe in absolute truth and universal moral laws versus those who think everything is relative and subjective. As radio talk show host Dennis Prager has noted, “America will be united only when one [of these worldviews] prevails over the other.” Many cultural liberals seem to understand this, but many cultural conservatives, including many Christians, apparently do not.

3. Is true Christianity countercultural?

- ▶ Authentic biblical Christianity is innately radical and countercultural: II Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:3-4; Eph. 2:1-2; Rom. 12:2; I Cor. 3:18-19; Jas. 1:27; 4:4; I John 2:15; etc.
- ▶ Throughout history the true church has often functioned as a prophetic church.
- ▶ America has been uniquely *influenced* by Christianity, and it is the erosion of these values that is the principle cause of our present crises.
- Three crucial points:
 - (1) American culture is rapidly degenerating into a new Dark Age marked by spiritual, moral, social, economic, and political chaos and collapse;
 - (2) A culture war has been raging in America for decades; and
 - (3) True Christianity has always functioned as a countercultural presence and a witness to a decadent world system that celebrates narcissism, hedonism, and materialism.

Cultural Homicide.

- Cultural suicide... or cultural homicide?
- Approximately 30% of Americans consistently uphold biblically-based moral, social and cultural standards.
- What is “evangelical” Christianity?
 - (1) **Biblicism:** The divine inspiration, historical reliability, and doctrinal and moral authority of the Bible.
 - (2) **Christocentrism:** The deity of Jesus Christ, his life and teachings, his sacrificial and atoning death, and his physical bodily resurrection.
 - (3) **Conversionism:** An emphasis on a spiritual “new birth” through belief, acceptance and devotion to Christ as one’s Savior and Lord.
 - (4) **Evangelism:** An emphasis on sharing the gospel with others.
- Approximately 35-40% of Americans consistently support the secular/socialist/progressive agenda.
- Approximately 30-35% of Americans “don’t know/don’t care.”

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

What’s the Solution?

- Not evangelism... alone.
- Comprehensive discipleship: “The Lordship of Jesus Christ in the whole of life.”
- Francis Schaeffer: A cultural watchman and “the “father of modern cultural apologetics.”
- Wholistic Christianity – not theocracy.
 - ▶ C. S. Lewis: “Theocracy is the worst of all [possible] governments.”
 - ▶ The primacy of Natural (moral) Law.
 - ▶ Francis Schaeffer: “We must be careful... not to imply that the United States ever was a ‘Christian nation’ in a truly biblical sense... or that the United States could ever properly be called God’s ‘chosen nation....”

My ‘Great Awakening’

Jefrey D. Breshears, *American Crisis* (2020).

- Academic background.
- A startling encounter: “*Professor Breshears – my conservative mentor!*”
- My disillusionment with America.
- “*Who will you be voting for in the upcoming presidential election, and why?*”
- Four cultural orientations:
 - (1) Cultural ascetics.
 - (2) Cultural consumers.
 - (3) Cultural connoisseurs.
 - (4) Cultural custodians.
- America’s political alignment.
 - ▶ Rarely is there an “ideal” candidate.
 - ▶ Politics is mostly about damage-control: electing people to office who will do the least harm – and then holding them accountable.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



“Pie, Doc, and Kuyp.”

- The integration of orthodoxy and orthopraxy.
 - ▶ Abraham Kuypers (1837-1920).
 - ▶ FS: “Through my work there is a common unifying theme which I would define as ‘*the Lordship of Christ in the totality of life.*’ If Christ is indeed Lord, He must be Lord of all of life – in spiritual matters of course, but just as much across the whole spectrum of life, including intellectual matters and the areas of culture, law, and government. I would want to emphasize from beginning to end throughout my work the importance of evangelism.... the need to walk daily with the Lord, to study God’s Word, to live a life of prayer, and show forth the love, compassion, and holiness of our Lord. But we must emphasize equally and at the same time the need to live this out in every area of culture and society.”
- The problem of pietism:
 - ▶ Piety: Devotion to prayer, morality, family, and one’s religious life.
 - ▶ Pietism: Exclusive devotion to one’s own spiritual/religious life.
 - A self-centered and a narrow view of discipleship.
 - Rev. Dr. James Henley Thornwell and the doctrine of “the spirituality of the church.”
 - ▶ Ranald Macaulay: Robust Christianity requires both proclamation and persuasion.
 - ▶ The “pietist hangover.”
 - ▶ Nineteenth century challenges to biblical faith: Enlightenment rationalism, Romantic escapism, and emerging scientism.
 - ▶ Propagating the gospel in an “intellectual vacuum.”
- The corporatization of church ministry.
 - ▶ Ministry as a profession rather than a spiritual calling.

Evangelism.

- Engaging the hearts and minds of non-believers.
 - ▶ Jerram Barrs: “Schaeffer was not interested in either abstract or purely academic apologetics. He was an evangelist.”
 - ▶ “Blind faith” is subjective and weak as it lacks any factual and rational foundation.
 - ▶ David Virtue: “Schaeffer was not primarily concerned with getting people ‘saved’ but in establishing sound reasons as to why Christianity was true and should be believed.”
- A disturbing trend in evangelicalism: an LCD approach to ministry.
 - ▶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s critique of “easy believism” in *The Cost of Discipleship*.
 - ▶ The problem of “seeker-friendly” churches.
 - ▶ Jaroslav Pelikan: The church should always be *more* than a school [i.e., more than an education institution] – but the church should never be *less* than a school.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- The problem of theological presuppositionalism.
 - ▶ Question: If total depravity were true, how could anyone be held accountable for thinking and acting immorally?
 - James 4:17.
 - ▶ John Calvin: “In regard to the constitution of the present life, no man is devoid of the light of reason.... “It is a fact that the [moral] law of God... is nothing less than a testimony of the natural law and of that conscience which God has engraved upon the minds of [all] men.”
- Predestination and free will.
 - ▶ Reflecting on his own conversion experience, Schaeffer understood that he had *chosen* to follow Christ.
 - ▶ God’s grace provides the opportunity for salvation, but God neither programs us nor overpowers our will.
 - ▶ Edith Schaeffer: “Man has been given free choice from the beginning. He is not a puppet, and no one will force him to believe, or act upon anything he does not want to. However, consequences of his belief and actions are set forth The choice is always his....
“We are not chessmen being moved about by God.... Our choices affect our own history and other people’s history.
- Apologetics provides plausible reasons for faith based on facts and sound reasoning as derived from God’s general revelation in nature and the special revelation in Scripture.
- The basic principles of Christianity 101.
 - ▶ Christianity is realistic – not romantic.
 - ▶ Christianity is counter to both “optimistic humanism” and nihilism.
 - ▶ Christianity embraces the thesis/antithesis dichotomies of life.
 - ▶ FS: “The biblical concept of justification is a total, personal antithesis.”
- Thomas Morris, *Francis Schaeffer’s Apologetics: A Critique* (1976).
 - ▶ Schaeffer’s apologetics is too cerebral and too clinical: “[A] totally dispassionate, disinterested, nonpersonal, mechanical operation” devoid of feeling.
 - ▶ Morris misrepresents the case: Schaeffer believed that conversion is a spiritual phenomenon that transcends mere intellectual assent to certain “foundational presuppositions” set forth in Scripture.
 - ▶ True conversion is best characterized, in the words of C. S. Lewis, as “surprised by joy.”
- Schaefferian soteriology.
 - ▶ Reason must rule emotions.
 - ▶ Conversion is the result of a heartfelt and transformational spiritual encounter with the living God through faith and commitment to Jesus Christ.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- ▶ Conversion is a spiritual phenomenon: the result of a living synergistic and symbiotic relationship between the convert and the Spirit of God.
- ▶ Believers should develop a thoughtful and robust faith based on factual and rational realities – not primarily on feelings and emotions.
- “Taking the roof-off.”
 - ▶ Non-Christians worldviews provide no foundation for living a meaningful life.
 - ▶ Any beliefs and values they have that are True, Good and Beautiful are borrowed from a biblical worldview.
 - ▶ Romans 1:18-32; 2:5-11 – the spiritual and moral bankruptcy of non-biblical belief systems.
- The issue of predispositions.
 - ▶ One’s worldview cannot be reduced merely to philosophical and theological beliefs.
 - ▶ Psychological and social factors.
 - ▶ “Predispositions” are the result of a complex mix of personal factors: our personality, moral convictions, mental and emotion state of mind, family life, environment, education, religious beliefs, life experiences, etc.
 - ▶ Os Guinness in *The Dust of Death*: “Becoming a Christian is an authentic choice of a whole person; it involves his or her reason, his or her emotions, and his or her will. It is in this sense that faith is more than rational.”
 - ▶ Thomas Morris: “In a very significant way predispositions seem to be more fundamentally constitutive of the person than any propositional beliefs which can be argued, evaluated, and changed. They in fact determine how arguments are perceived [and] how evaluations are made, and whether or not any belief changes result.... We cannot confidently argue people into the body of Christ. None of our arguments carries a guaranteed universal force which can compel every ‘rational’ person to assent to the truth of the gospel. We are always dependent on something in our listener over which we have no sure control.”
- Apologetics *confirms* rather than *compels* belief.
 - ▶ Apologetics assures Christians that biblical faith is factual, rational and credible, and it exposes false (erroneous and illogical) beliefs that non-Christians hold.
- Modern Western civilization presents entirely new challenges to the Christian faith.
 - ▶ Prior to the 18th century, Christians and non-Christians both believed that they could debate ideas on the bases of facts, evidence and reason.
 - ▶ The challenges of Immanuel Kant, Charles Darwin, *et al.*
- Modern realities require that we be prepared to clearly and effectively explain and defend the basic principles of Christianity and why we believe them to be true.
 - ▶ This requires that we consider both the propositional (intellectual) condition of those whom we encounter as well as their predispositional (psychological) condition.
- Schaeffer: The ultimate apologetic is one of comprehensive discipleship.

“The Line of Despair.”

- Modern man’s sense of alienation and hopelessness in living in a ‘post-Christian’ and disenchanted world.
- Modern philosophical suicide based on relativistic and subjectivistic presuppositions.
 - ▶ Under the influence of secular humanism, all aspects of culture have been desacralized and robbed of ultimate meaning.
 - ▶ Human beings as genetically- and socially-programmed automatons with no free will.
 - ▶ Meaningless and despair.
 - ▶ The impact on theology, education, the arts, morality, politics, etc.
 - ▶ A demonstrable decline in standards, quality, civility and credibility.
 - ▶ FS: “In almost every quarter of our civilized world [other than science and technology], truth and knowledge are ultimately considered a pointless joke.”
- Three areas of philosophy.
 - (1) Metaphysics (or ontology): The nature of being; the reality of what exists.
 - Prime Reality: What is the ultimate, eternal, self-existent and self-sufficient reality?
 - Origins: Why is there something rather than nothing, and what is the source of everything that exists?
 - The human condition: What is humanity in nature and essence?
 - Destiny: What happens when a person dies?
 - (2) Epistemology: The reality of knowledge; how we can know what is real.
 - (3) Axiology (morality and ethics): The fundamental principles of right-and-wrong.
- The perennial issues of life:
 - (1) Identity: Who (and what) am I?
 - (2) Origin: Where did I come from?
 - (3) Meaning: What am I doing here (or, What *should* I be doing here)?
 - (4) Destiny: What will happen to me when I die?
- The “line of despair.”
 - ▶ Traditional dichotomous thinking.
 - ▶ The emergence of Hegelian dialectics.
 - Thesis/antithesis/synthesis.
 - Redefining the parameters of the “Rational” and the “Non-rational” realms of reality.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

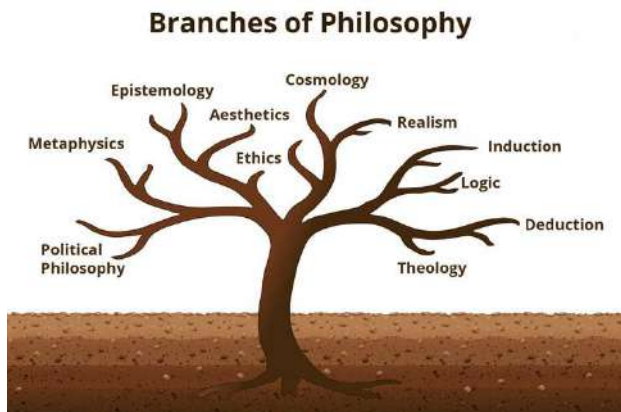
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



- In a godless worldview, there are only 3 options for human thinking and behavior:
 - (1) Libertarian libertinism: Radical individualism leads to social and cultural chaos.
 - (2) Democracy: Right and wrong are decided by majority rule.
 - (3) Totalitarianism: “Arbitrary absolutes” established by an elite oligarchy.
 - *Rex/Lex*: The government is supreme over the law.
 - Government by a political, bureaucratic and technocratic elite.
 - The works of Aldous Huxley (*Brave New World*, 1932) and George Orwell (*Animal Farm*, 1942; and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1948).
 - The warnings of G. K. Chesterton, C. S. Lewis, and other Christian social critics. [Ref. Jeffrey D. Breshears, *C. S. Lewis on Politics, Government, and the Good Society*, pp. 33ff.]
 - Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973): In the future, society will be controlled by amoral elites in government, business and education: Such a society “cannot provide a transcendent ethic.” In the future, humans will be reprogrammed, their consciousness altered and their behavior conditioned by authoritarian political, educational and technocratic elites (“experts”).
- The principles of “Natural Law” provide an ethical foundation for social and political civility. [Ref. Chapter 2: “Natural Law,” in Jeffrey D. Breshears, *American Crisis*.] True morality and justice

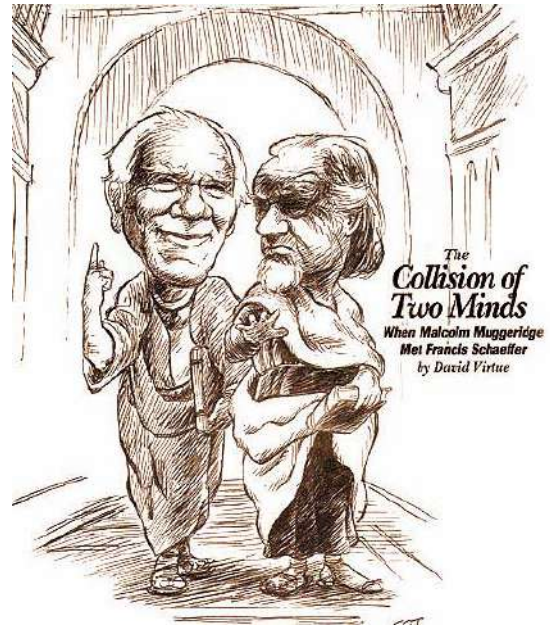
Natural Law 20 Basic Principles

1. There is a God (or gods, or some unifying power or principle) that is responsible for the existence and maintenance of the universe.
2. There is moral law to which we are accountable.
 - Certain attitudes, speech and actions are objectively right and wrong regardless of our personal/ subjective feelings about them.
 - These moral laws are absolute, universal and transcultural.
3. Citizenship obligations to one's society and state.
4. The rule of law (either a formal written code or informal customs).
5. The sanctity of human life and a prohibition on murder.
6. The right of self-defense.
7. Private property rights (including one's own body).
8. Protection from arbitrary government abuse or coercion.
9. The promotion of virtues such as wisdom, honor, courage, and moderation.
10. Honesty in normal interpersonal relations and commercial transactions.
11. Standards of social decency and propriety.
12. The sanctity of marriage.
13. Prohibitions on sexual promiscuity.
14. Prohibitions on incest and rape.
15. Respect for one's parents, ancestors and elders.
16. Proper protection and provision for children.
17. The value of kindness, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness.
18. The primacy of the common good over individual rights.
19. The principle of reciprocity and a tacit acknowledgment of the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”
20. The summary principle: “Do good and avoid evil.”

(3) An integration of Truth and Love.

- ▶ FS: "...[L]ove is not the end of the matter. It rests upon the character of God, [for] God is Love.... Both God's holiness and his love must be exhibited simultaneously."
- ▶ Truth and Love at L'Abri.
- ▶ Love as "the final apologetic."
- ▶ David Virtue: "I think L'Abri, as a Christian community, was in some ways a more powerful apologetic statement than all the theology and philosophy that flowed from Schaeffer's lectures and tapes."

[NOTE: Francis Schaeffer and Malcolm Muggeridge: "The Collision of Two Minds."]



A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes, spanning the width of the page below the image.

- Modern films:
 - ▶ Beginning in the mid-1960s, secularistic, existentialist, nihilistic and explicitly sexualized themes became common in many movies by influential filmmakers:
 - ▶ Schaeffer: At least these films are serious and thought-provoking, unlike the vast majority of romanticized, vapid and mind-numbing commercial movies.
 - ▶ Greg Jesson: “Schaeffer felt heartbroken affinity for the atheistic existentialist artists, poets, filmmakers, and philosophers... who were courageous enough to look into the abyss and see the logical consequences of their non-Christian views. They saw that in a godless universe everything is utterly absurd and hopeless.”

No matter what such people claim about how absurd and meaningless human life is, “they live their normal, everyday lives as realists” – and as if their lives and work had true meaning and purpose.

Manifestations of Cultural Corruption.

- Politics reflects the dominant cultural values and priorities of the day.
- Western culture, no longer influenced by Christian values, is decaying rapidly under the influences of secular/humanistic influences.
- Two dominant values: security and affluence.
 - ▶ FS: “When the students of the early sixties asked their parents and others, ‘Why be educated?’ they were told... ‘Because statistically an educated [person] makes so much more money a year.’ And when they asked, ‘Why make more money?’ they were told, ‘So that you can send your children to the university.’ According to this kind of spoken or implied answer, there was no [real] meaning [in life], and no [other] meaning for education.”
- The countercultural reaction: Sex and drugs and rock ‘n’ roll.
 - ▶ Just as hedonism and materialism – whether capitalistic or socialistic materialism – provides no foundation for meaning and value in life, nor does moral relativism.
 - ▶ The catastrophic consequences of the sexual revolution on the divorce and the illegitimate birth rates.
 - ▶ The culmination of all these anti-God values is “abortion rights” – the ultimate sacrament of the sexual revolution.
- Reflections on the Sixties:
 - ▶ FS: “After the turmoil of the sixties, many people thought that it was so much better when the universities quieted down in the early seventies. I could have wept. The young people had been right in their analysis, though wrong in their solutions. How much worse when many gave up hope and simply accepted the same values as their parents – personal peace and affluence.”



.....

.....

.....

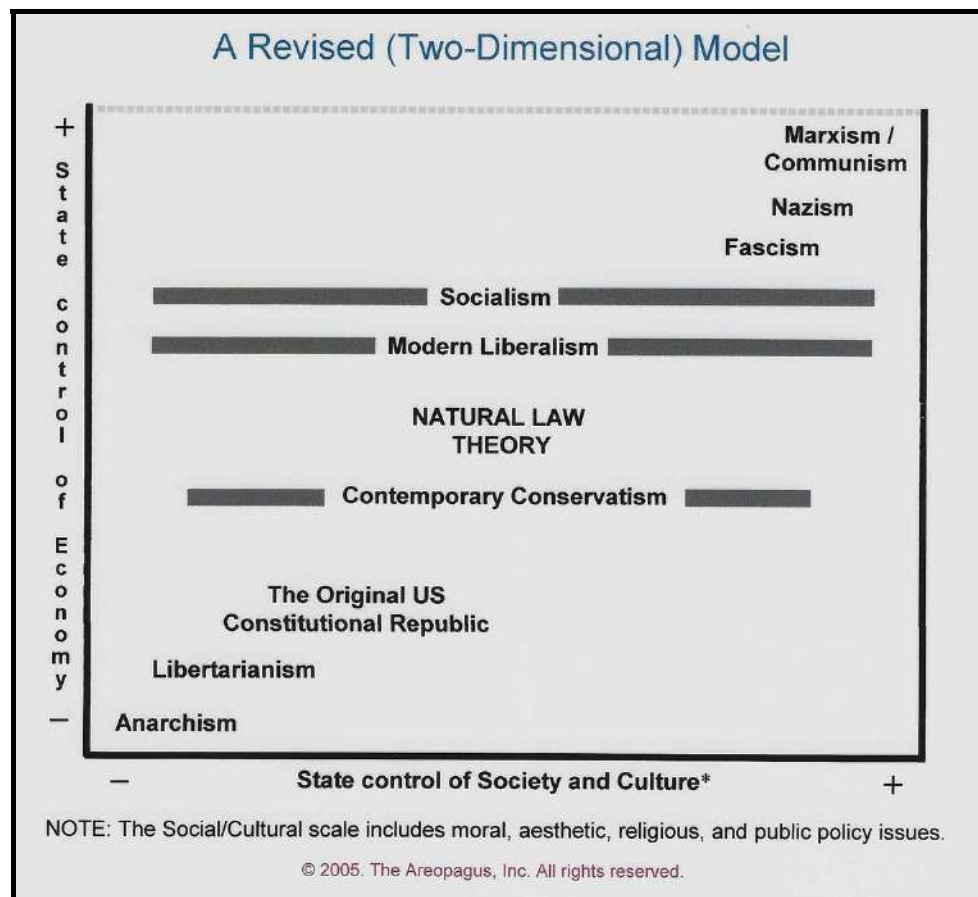
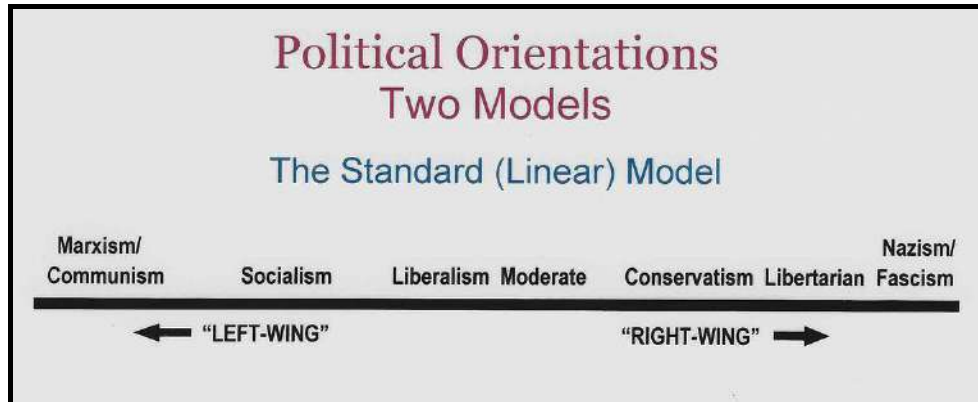
.....

.....

.....

.....

- The issue of media bias.
- The computer factor.
- Christians, like everyone else, are *conditioned (influenced)* by the dominant social and cultural values of our day – but our beliefs and actions are *not determined* by these forces.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- Jean Francois Revel, *The Totalitarian Temptation* (1977).
 - ▶ The world is “evolving toward socialism.”
 - ▶ Many politicians and bureaucrats – the oligarchic elite – are power-hungry authoritarians who seek to advance their agenda by controlling the cultural, social, economic and political life of the nation.
- Francis Sempa, “Revisiting Revel’s *The Totalitarian Temptation*” (2022).
 - ▶ Social and cultural revolutionaries won the culture war in America by default.
 - ▶ By the time conservatives recognized what was happening, it was too late: liberals and leftists dominate America’s cultural, social, educational, and political institutions.
 - ▶ Such institutions are increasingly powerful and prone to “the totalitarian temptation.”
- The ominous challenge of genetic engineering.
 - ▶ The dangers of genetic engineering and psychotropic drugs.
 - ▶ FS: “In the call for full genetic engineering the door is wide open for the most far-reaching manipulation” including an assault on our very humanness... It is analogous to treating human beings like machines.
 - The optimal question is this: “Who will control the controllers?”
 - What about people who refuse to cooperate with the scientists, the technocrats and the government’s bureaucratic “experts”?
 - “It all sounds very much like the ugliness portrayed in C. S. Lewis’s [futuristic novel] *That Hideous Strength* (1945)... Any modern authoritarian government has almost endless means of manipulation.”
- The history of the United States has been unique in world history due to the Christian influences that were incorporated into our society, culture, and political system.
 - ▶ FS: As these influences disintegrate, “there are only two alternatives in the natural flow of events: first, imposed order [authoritarianism or totalitarianism], or second, our society once again affirming that base which gave freedom without chaos in the first place – God’s revelation in the Bible....
 - This makes it imperative that Christians understand that the Christian faith is a comprehensive worldview that addresses “the whole spectrum of life” issue....
 - “Will we resist the authoritarian government in all its forms” regardless of how the authoritarianism is marketed?.... Let us be realistic. If we as Christians do not speak out as authoritarian governments grow from within or come from outside, eventually we or our children will be the enemy of society and the state. No truly authoritarian government can tolerate those who have a real absolute by which to judge [the government’s] arbitrary absolutes and who speak out and act upon that absolute. This was the issue with the early church in regard to the Roman Empire [as it applied to the worship of Caesar as Lord].”

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- The current state of the American church.
 - ▶ Due to a lack of lack of understanding regarding the great challenges of our time and a corresponding lack of emphasis on wholistic discipleship, Schaeffer had little confidence that the church would provide the kind of wise guidance and support that Christians need.
 - ▶ FS: “Much of the church is no help” because for so long most Christians have generally accepted the mainstream values of our society and culture – personal peace, prosperity, and an easy and comfortable lifestyle.”
- ▶ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88):
 - (1) An obsession with entertainment, affluence, and ostentatious living;
 - (2) A widening gap between the rich and the poor;
 - (3) An obsession with sex and hedonistic pleasure;
 - (4) The corruption of the arts, masquerading as originality and creativity; and
 - (5) The expansion of the welfare state, and patriotic apathy.



How Should We Then Live? The Impact.

- A dramatic effect on many Christians.
 - ▶ Os Guinness: “There I was as a student in the middle of ‘swinging London’ and the exploding Sixties, and no Christians that I knew understood what was going on at all. Then a friend took me to hear a strange little man in Swiss knickers, with a high-pitched voice.... I was intrigued and then hooked. Schaeffer was the first Christian I met who was concerned to, and capable of, connecting the dots and making sense of the extraordinary times that puzzled and dismayed most people.”
 - ▶ Ben Mitchell: “I first saw Schaeffer’s film series... in a philosophy of religion class at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.... Because of his amazing breadth of learning and his penetrating insight into the culture, he was a brilliant diagnostician.

“Schaeffer was also prophetic, both in the sense that he ‘forth-told’ the truth and that he ‘foretold’ the direction the culture was going.... He foresaw the downward spiral of 20th century nihilism, narcissism, and atomistic autonomy. He predicted something very much like postmodernism.... He prophesied that art would become pornography and that our culture would become increasingly anti-natal, sacrificing its offspring on the altar of its own crass pleasures.

“Beyond diagnosis and prophecy, however, Schaeffer provided strategies to equip Christians to engage their own culture.”

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

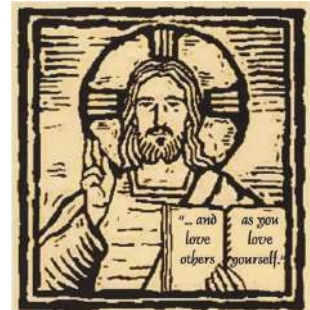
.....

.....

— 6 —

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL & POLITICAL ACTIVISM**Socio/Political Discipleship****Love and Politics.**

- Christians should be not only well-informed but actively engaged in the great cultural and political issues of the day.
 - ▶ Responsible Christians in a free society can ill afford to adopt a pietistic mindset that separates wholistic Christian discipleship from citizenship responsibilities.
- Politics is a necessary component of life.
 - ▶ Laws and public policies are either based on the universal moral and ethical principles of justice derived from Natural Law or else they are the arbitrary and tyrannical exercises of coercion by the power elite over everyone else.
 - ▶ Political ignorance, apathy and non-involvement only empower the most ambitious and ruthless elements in society.
- In a free society, political involvement is one aspect of living out the “Greatest Commandment” and “Golden Rule” (Matt. 22:36-39 and 7:12).
- Two questions to consider:
 - ▶ How can we love others if we are indifferent toward the kinds of laws and public policies and programs that regulate (and often control) their lives?
 - ▶ How can we possibly love others unless we are sensitive to, and attentive to, not only their spiritual and religious lives, but their physical, material, emotional, social, intellectual, and creative needs as well?
- “The lordship of Christ over the whole of life.”
 - ▶ Christian faith is more than a “personal relationship” with Christ.
 - ▶ Christianity is a comprehensive worldview.
- The realities of politics:
 - ▶ Politics is mostly about damage-control – i.e., keeping the very worst people out of positions of power and influence.
 - ▶ No manmade political party or ideology has a monopoly on truth, reason and wisdom – but some are far superior to others.



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

The Critics

Three Issues:

- (1) Some challenged Schaeffer's philosophical, historical and artistic credentials and assessments.
 - ▶ The argument: Schaeffer lacked the requisite education and cultural sophistication when addressing complex historical, philosophical and artistic themes and trends.
 - ▶ Ben Mitchell: Schaeffer "tended to oversimplify and smooth out some important historical and philosophical nuances."
 - ▶ Gregory Alan Thornbury: "Schaeffer's idiosyncratic method of dispatching complex philosophical and historical developments in a few sentences" detracted from his status among scholars.
 - ▶ Scott Burson and Jerry Walls in *C. S. Lewis & Francis Schaeffer: Some evangelical scholars seek to distance themselves from "popular apologists" such as Lewis and Schaeffer.*
 - ▶ EX: Schaeffer's interpretation of Thomas Aquinas' view on the Fall of mankind.
 - ▶ Richard Pierard in "The Unmasking of Francis Schaeffer:" "Schaeffer possessed nothing more than the ordinary training of an American clergyman.... He actually had not mastered any subject, and experts in the various disciplines complained that his knowledge of their particular areas was superficial and even erroneous. Partially, this reflected his lack of graduate education...."
- (2) Some accused Schaeffer of sowing "dissension and division within the evangelical community" by calling out influential evangelical leaders, publications and institutions.
 - ▶ Richard Pierard criticized Schaeffer's "uncompromising stand on biblical inerrancy, his tendency to think in rigid, black-and-white categories, and his difficulty in accepting criticism of his ideas."
 - ▶ Schaeffer's response: He unapologetically upheld traditional Reformed Protestant beliefs.
- (3) Liberal and "moderate" evangelicals criticized his political activism.
 - ▶ Some charged that Schaeffer was a theocrat who promoted the "Christian America" agenda of the Moral Majority.
[NOTE: Schaeffer's promotion of the principle of "co-belligerency".]
 - ▶ Richard Pierard: Schaeffer and other right-wing Christians "proclaimed abortion as the key social issue of our time...."
 "I, for one, am concerned that the Schaefferian over-simplification on the nature of modern secular culture has misled evangelicals into thinking they have the answers to the problems of our times.... The net effect of these developments has been to further divide an already badly divided evangelicalism.... The Schaeffers probably did not realize it, but they linked biblical Christianity to an oppressive right-wing subculture that surely deprives it of vitality."

.....

.....

.....

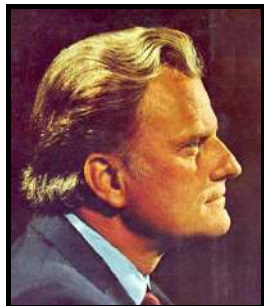
.....

.....

The Summa

Tributes.

- A visionary cultural apologist.
- James W. Sire: Francis Schaeffer was “the Jeremiah of the 20th century.”
- C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer were perhaps the two most influential Christian thinkers of the 20th century.
 - ▶ President Ronald Reagan: “He will long be remembered as one of the great Christian thinkers of our century.”



- ▶ Billy Graham: “He was truly one of the great evangelical statesmen of our generation. He was no ivory tower intellectual, but had a deep love for people and a profound commitment to evangelism. More than virtually any other thinker, he had keen insight into the major theological and philosophical battles of our time.”
- ▶ *Christianity Today* (1997): “When Francis Schaeffer first appeared on the American scene in 1965, evangelicals hardly knew what to make of him.”

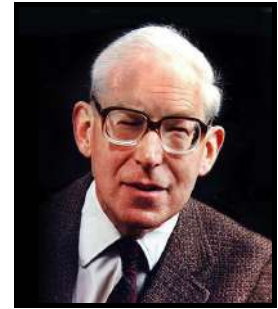
Despite his conventional education and early ministry, he became “no ordinary fundamentalist preacher. He and his wife, Edith, had lived for ten years in a student commune they had started in the Swiss Alps. When he lectured, he wore an alpine hiking outfit – knickers, knee socks, walking shoes. By 1972 he had added to his already singular appearance long hair and a white tufted goat’s-chin beard....

“During the next two decades the Schaeffers organized a multiple-thrust ministry that reshaped American evangelicalism. Perhaps no intellectual save C. S. Lewis affected the thinking of evangelicals more profoundly; perhaps no leader of the period save Billy Graham left a deeper stamp on the movement as a whole. Together the Schaeffers gave currency to the idea of intentional Christian community, prodded evangelicals out of their cultural ghetto, [and] inspired an army of evangelicals to become serious scholars....

“The Schaeffers showed an extraordinary ability to identify with the issues that concerned the student generation of the 1960s and early 1970s. Francis scorned postwar materialism, insisting that most Americans had no higher philosophy of life than “personal peace and affluence.” Though strongly opposed to communism, he refused to condone the arms race.... He urged respect for nature in a society that had fouled its own nest. He preached against racism, and at L’Abri he practiced what he preached. He sympathized with dropouts and drug users “because... the older generation hasn’t given them anything to care about.”

“Francis also thundered against the middle-class sins of the evangelical churches. He challenged evangelicals to adopt a ‘revolutionary’ mindset.... He insisted that American evangelicalism was too individualistic: ‘Christianity is an individual thing, but it is not only an individual thing. There is to be true community, offering true spiritual and material help to each other.’ He therefore urged Christians to welcome intellectuals, hippies, drug addicts – whomever God should send: ‘I dare you. I dare you in the name of Jesus Christ. Do what I am going to suggest. Begin by opening your home....’”

▶ J. I. Packer: “Francis Schaeffer was an amazing man – intellectually brilliant and set on truth, emotionally intense, devoted to God and compassionate; like Jeremiah, perplexed by the world, not because he didn’t understand it but because he did.”



J. I. Packer

▶ Os Guinness: “I have never met anyone with such a passion for God, combined with a passion for people, combined with a passion for truth. That is an extremely rare combination, and Schaeffer embodied it.... Francis Schaeffer was quite simply the most brilliant and compassionate face-to-face apologist I have ever met.”

▶ Chad Owen Brand: “For me, the 1970s were virtually bookended by Francis Schaeffer. I read *The God Who Is There* in 1972 and my intellectual life was transformed.... I had the overwhelming sense that I had crossed over into a new world.... and it convinced me that it was possible not only to make a credible case for Christianity, but that it might also be done in an attractive and compelling format. Schaeffer was the first apologist I ever read, and his impact on my thinking was profound.... As helpful as he was as a teacher to me when I was eighteen years old, now I read him as a prophet.”



Os Guinness

▶ Ben Mitchell: “When I reflect on the formative influences on my Christian life, I have to credit Francis Schaeffer as one of my most important mentors.... [H]is work has shaped my thinking and my ministry in ways I am sure I do not fully realize....

“His legacy is not primarily his intellectual contribution to the Christian faith....

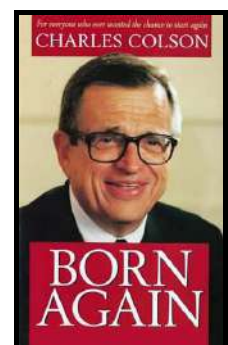
“Schaeffer’s greatest gift... was to provide a strategy and the courage to invade a culture of hopelessness and meaninglessness with a credible message of hope and meaningfulness....

“Schaeffer will be remembered as the person under God who motivated Christians to trace the history of ideas, discover the mind of contemporary culture, and penetrate it with a fresh, relevant, precision engagement aimed at transformation. He will be remembered as a Christian activist, in the very best sense of the term.”

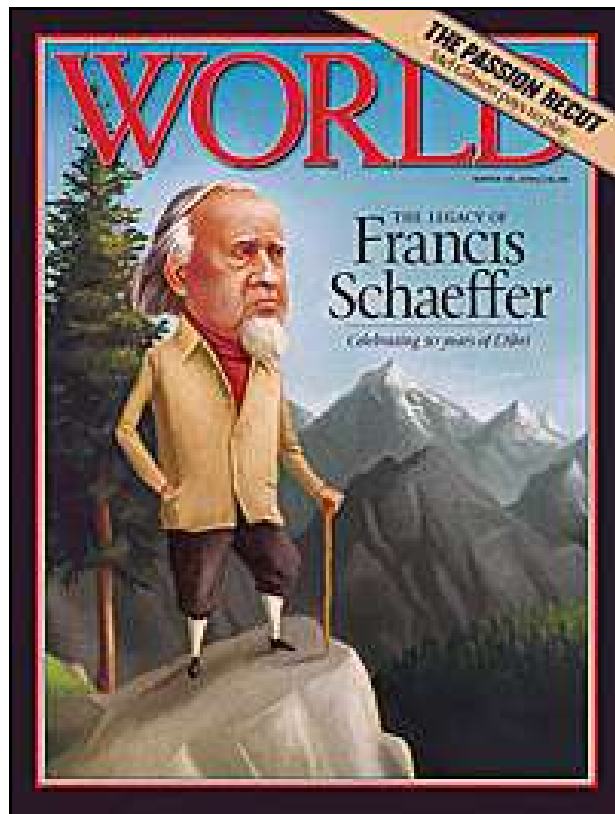
▶ David Virtue: “Schaeffer’s insights and his drive for a firm foundation for Christian belief will endure even in the face of watered-down theology and clerics who compromise in the face of withering cultural scorn. The biblical worldview that Francis Schaeffer fought so valiantly for will have to be recaptured if it is to reshape the postmodernist landscape into which we have all now plunged.”

▶ David Bebbington: “Francis Schaeffer taught evangelicals how to understand their world, exerting a profound influence over the next generation of young leaders.... His ministry at L’Abri... had persuaded him of the need to discern how alternative worldviews had interacted over time with the Christian faith. He led the way, long before it was fashionable, in analyzing culture.”

▶ Chuck Colson: “Francis Schaeffer was one of the great prophets of the 20th century.”



APPENDIX



Franky Schaeffer: A Frank Assessment

Dan Segal

In addition to their three daughters, Francis and Edith Schaeffer had a son. Little Franky was just three when the Schaeffers began their L'Abri ministry in 1955. So he came of age as the tumult of the 1960s exploded all around him. At L'Abri he shared space with backpacking hippies and assorted truth-seekers who'd dropped in to hopefully meet and interact with his renowned father. Later, as the elder Schaeffer began to forcefully address pressing moral and cultural issues, Franky was right there with him, producing and directing film projects such as *How Should We Then Live?* and *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* He also took the initiative to write books of his own.

In 1980 Franky moved to America, where his films had already been shown to large audiences, and here he forged strong links with leaders of the Religious Right. Franky became an important figure, going on six-month speaking tours. Franky started a newsletter with a newspaper format, "The Christian Activist," which like his books was aimed at rousing apathetic believers to actually do something about the immense moral/cultural rot just outside the church door – if not already inside.

Indeed, by 1980 the Sexual Revolution was making inroads into prominent evangelical institutions. Radical feminism, pre- and extra-marital sexual relations, no-fault divorce, abortion-on-demand, and homosexuality were now finding defenders even among some professing evangelicals. In response, Franky didn't merely write books; he also assembled a stable of other authors whose various works he commended to us as a package, together forming a systematic and comprehensive guide to the perplexed. In Franky's book, *Bad News for Modern Man* (Crossway, 1984), he compiled a list of recommended publications in a chapter entitled "The Literature of Christian Resistance." Most of these books and magazines addressed important social issues such as abortion and other human life issues, the U. S. Constitution and legal system, religious liberty, nuclear weapons, economics, socialism, and the challenges of living as a Christian minority in a secular culture, while others provided historical background on the decline of America and the West.

Franky personally sponsored some of these books and helped create others as he sought out previously obscure thinkers, becoming their literary agent and connecting them with a publisher.

In 1984 Dr. Schaeffer succumbed to the cancer that had debilitated him for several years. This alone would have traumatized Franky, who was only thirty-two at the time. But even as pressure mounted for Franky to carry on the family legacy and somehow fill his father's shoes, Franky had long been disappointed and even disgusted with the personality and character of many high-profile American televangelists and other evangelical celebrities with whom he had collaborated in recent years. Franky would fly in their private airplanes and appear on their programs, but although he enjoyed the sumptuous dining accommodations and other upgrades from the simplicity of L'Abri, his newfound companions grated on his nerves. He had already set aside his painting career, and was increasingly



Franky Schaeffer's caption:
"My father's nepotistic sidekick."

frustrated that he'd been unable to fulfill his dream of becoming a successful director of feature films. In his 2008 book, *Crazy for God*, he admitted that after criss-crossing the country giving his standard speech, "I always came back off the road wound-up and angry. I started to despise the people thronging my meetings, and to despise myself for despising them. I was also planning an escape. My plan was to jump from making evangelical documentaries to directing Hollywood features." [Franky Schaeffer, *Crazy for God* (Da Capo Press, 2008), p. 327.]

And indeed, suddenly, without warning and at the height of his success as an influential evangelical voice, Franky shut down his newspaper and other projects to direct *Wired to Kill* (1986), a post-apocalyptic action movie along the lines of *The Road Warrior*. With that, he never looked back. Over the next few years he went on to direct other feature films, but none were commercially or artistically successful, even by Franky's standards.

Once he had distanced himself from evangelical Christianity, Franky's beliefs also changed. He gravitated toward Eastern Orthodoxy, although in retrospect it appears that he was probably attracted more by aesthetics – the beauty of Orthodox architecture, icons, and traditional liturgies – than by any real theological considerations. Gradually, his connection with any form of Christianity lessened to the point that in 2014 he released a book entitled, *Why I Am an Atheist Who Believes in God* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform), a rather obvious contradiction-in-terms that not only exemplifies the rejection of his parents' religious faith but elementary logic as well.

Franky, who now referred to himself as "Frank", sought to revive his painting career while also continuing to write books. Several of his works seemed to be thinly-veiled fictionalized accounts of his own upbringing, portraying what looked to be his parents in a most unfavorable (not to mention, inappropriate) light. Frank eventually wrote a proper memoir, the aforementioned *Crazy for God*, that featured a very revealing subtitle: "How I grew up as one of the elect, helped found the Religious Right, and lived to take all (or almost all) of it back."

As Frank admitted in a PBS interviewer in 2008, "My youthful self would now denounce me as a heretic and an enemy. If I was 22 and in my fiery mode, I would start an organization to bring Frank Schaeffer down. That's the change in one lifetime." [*American Experience: God in America*. Public Broadcasting System (PBS), 2009.]

So what happened? How and why did the privileged son of Francis Schaeffer, who was raised at L'Abri and made films with his father before becoming moderately successful in his own right as a noted Christian speaker, author, and a leading figure in the pro-life movement, ultimately turn his back on his spiritual heritage and renounce it all? What fundamental defects in his psyche and character prevented him from remaining fruitful? Frank's own interviews and writings may shed some light.

We could, for example, ask Frank if his childhood was too unstable, too distracting and confusing in the whirlwind environment that was L'Abri. As he related in a 2008 NPR *Fresh Air* interview with Terry Gross:

[B]ecause my parents were so busy with the ministry, I basically grew up in the Swiss Alps where I could rove all over the mountainside and hitchhike home from wherever I happened to wind up in the evening in the valley or up in the mountains with a farmer on his truck. It was a wonderfully free childhood, and we were part of this little village. [Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*. National Public Radio (NPR), 2008.]

"A wonderfully free childhood," no doubt, but not one conducive to measured maturity. We might also question his relationship with his father. Frank does write that his dad was sometimes moody or

depressed, but at other times “he was the most magnificently wonderful father in the world, taking me hiking in the Alps, showing me beautiful things, telling me that the world was a good place, that art was important.” [Ibid.]

It was ironic, because we were these fundamentalist American Christians who didn’t believe in popes or bishops or tradition or hierarchy, and yet I spent my whole childhood being dragged to places like the Duomo in Florence, the Sistine Chapel, and my father saying, “Isn’t this beautiful? Isn’t this great?” [*American Experience: God in America*. PBS.]

So, not a bad childhood, then?

[M]y memories are evangelicalism mixed with herding cows in the high Alps mixed with opera singers and people who came through L’Abri. Bible studies, my mother’s pietism on one hand, but a very down to earth, good-heartedness on the other, where pregnant girls are coming to L’Abri as a place that will accept them to have a baby, where homosexuals – both lesbians and gay men – are welcomed.... In my childhood, before my dad got famous, it was a weird childhood, but it was not a bad childhood. It was, in a way, a great experience. [Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*. NPR.]

According to Frank, he did color outside the lines as he got older. At L’Abri he got a visiting girl pregnant, but fatherhood even under such unseemly circumstances apparently strengthened his moral outlook especially as it related to his pro-life convictions. As he tells the story: “I had this little girl, and Genie and I were these typical unwed teenage parents. I loved this little child. How on earth can anybody abort a baby?” [*American Experience: God in America*. PBS.] Although Frank and Genie married and have stayed together, this indiscretion exemplifies the fact that Frank, like any of us, was certainly capable of going off the rails.

Ironically, given the changes that would occur in his life just a few years later, Frank made an interesting point in his 1984 book, *Bad News for Modern Man*. Apparently concerned that some of his more sophisticated and highly-educated readers might find their more conventional, middle-class suburban brethren embarrassingly unsophisticated and therefore be tempted to abandon the fight for purely aesthetic reasons, he asked, “[Do] the foibles of those who are taking a stand on the crucial issues of the day provide us with an excuse to do nothing?... So you don’t dig white shoes, matching belt, and burgundy pants. But if this clown is the only one standing up for life and liberty, are you saying you’d rather die than work with him? You may get your wish.... Make sure you’re throwing out just the bath water and not the baby. Sure, have a glass of vino, and your films by Visconti and Fellini, but don’t mess around with Marxism just because some fundamentalist preacher doesn’t like it and you don’t like his leisure suits.” [Franky Schaeffer, *Bad News for Modern Man* (Crossway, 1984), pp. 87, 88.]

In retrospect, this is a rather revealing passage because Frank later admitted that his own departure from biblical Christianity was based at least in part on aesthetic considerations:

The way I would put it may come off as a little odd; but it had more to do with aesthetics than morality. I can remember thinking, as I was about to take the stage as the keynote speaker at the Southern Baptist Convention in front of some 23,000 pastors in the early 1980s, when my dad couldn’t make it, that I was heading into my late 20s and this was going to be the first day of the rest of my life. None of the folk to whom I was talking were the kind of people who liked the movies I liked, or were into the arts that I was into, or enjoyed the kind of music I enjoyed. My cultural background – growing up in Europe as Francis Schaeffer’s son – really had very little to do with White, middle-class, American Right Wing Christianity of the Jerry Falwell brand.... The kind of people that we were being successful with were the kind of people I didn’t like. It was a

real disconnect.... So I got out. I literally left the evangelical community virtually overnight. [Interview in *Liberty*, an Adventist publication (2020).]

Americans who grew up driving to strip malls may not grasp the sharp contrast young Franky experienced between his decades in an Alpine Swiss chalet and his sudden introduction to the more commercial world of megachurches and televangelists. As he related it, this was not only a matter of “culture shock” but also an affront to his value system:

I think my problem with remaining an evangelical centered on what the evangelical community became. It was the merging of the entertainment business with faith, the flippant lightweight kitsch ugliness of American Christianity, the sheer stupidity, the paranoia of the American right-wing enterprise, the platitudes married to pop culture, all of it... that made me crazy. It was just too stupid for words. [Frank Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, p. 389.]

Dad was not a fake. He was not a thief. He was not of those other folk’s ilk.... Dad worked on the edge of his bed in an old rocking chair with a tea tray. He didn’t even have a desk! We didn’t own a car. The first time I ever flew first class in my life was when we were out on the road and millionaires like Richard DeVos of Amway were footing the bill for our films. Dad and I were embarrassed by that sort of thing. So, coming from this humble, little ministry which, no matter what you think of the theology, was authentic, and suddenly stumbling into the big-time of the God business of America, was a shock to my system from which I couldn’t recover. [Interview in *Liberty*, an Adventist publication (2020).]

Two other factors entered into his growing disaffection with mainstream American evangelicalism:

The second reason was my marriage. I had been raised with the sort of domineering, Calvinistic, Evangelical thought that men should be in charge of everything. This made relationships worse. I was on the road six months a year, and when I’d come home, I’d always be angry with myself and with my family. I was in love with my wife. But it was no picnic realizing that the involvement with the kind of people I was spending time with, along with the strains it was putting on my own life as I was secretly wanting to go in different directions, was turning me into a world-class jerk. [Ibid.]

Under increasing stress, and clearly too immature to deal with all the mental and emotional pressure of being a high-profile evangelical celebrity, Frank underwent an intense period of rethinking his faith. However, unlike his father’s “hayloft experience” nearly forty years earlier, Frank never reemerged with his faith confirmed and stronger than ever. In his words:

Then I started questioning the theology itself. Did I really believe this stuff? Did I really believe that we were correct on the politics concerning gay issues or feminist issues or access to abortion? As I started to look at the issues in and of themselves from outside of being part of the movement, it all began to disintegrate. [Ibid.]

When one disconnects from the objective, absolute and eternal Truth of Scripture – the anchor of faith that stabilized his parents’ life, faith and ministry throughout their lives, then one is truly adrift on the turbulent ocean of life, “tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there” by every emotion, every trend, “and every wind of doctrine by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming” (Eph. 4:14). Such has been the apparent condition of Frank Schaeffer, who in his foolishness as a self-proclaimed “atheist who believes in God” can declare that “Morals do not come from sages like Jesus, Martin Luther King Jr., Muhammad, whomever; morals are evolved in us.” [Josiah Reedy, “Just

Repackaged Misogyny: Frank Schaeffer on ‘Real’ v. ‘Fake’ Family Values.” Juicy Ecumenism (2021).

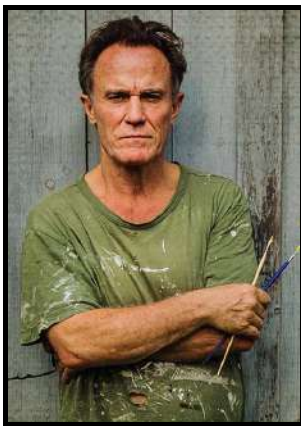
<https://juicyecumenism.com/> But in his case, it is clearly a matter not of evolution but devolution.

Was Frank Schaeffer, the privileged son of one of the great Christian evangelists and sages of the 20th century, ever truly a genuine committed Christian? Or was he always the prototypical rebel without a cause – or ultimately, an unrepentant prodigal son? Christianity is not inherited – it is born anew in each individual through the phenomenon of spiritual regeneration. As both his father and mother emphasized, one must resolutely *choose* to follow Christ, and do so out of a pure, sincere and contrite heart.

Over the years, many people experienced a life-changing conversion at L’Abri. The question is: Was Franky Schaeffer one of them? Did he ever truly believe in Christ, put his faith in Him, and surrender his life to his Savior and Lord?

What does Frank say about his own faith experience? His answers are not encouraging. In *Crazy for God* he wrote that “I also happened to sincerely believe in my father’s message, though ‘believe’ is perhaps the wrong word. Rather, I had not yet begun to question my indoctrination.” [Frank Schaeffer, *Crazy for God*, p. 258] When asked, “Do you remember when you first found faith? Do you remember the story of how you were born again, or converted?” Frank’s response was...

I don’t have any recollection of a moment. I essentially was raised in the faith and caught it like you would a genetic problem. It wasn’t something that I chose. It was more a question of, as time went by, making it my own: as a child, first out of fear that I would be lost; and then I guess in my teens and early 20s as an intellectual system that I bought into based on the fact that my dad pitched it to me, my mom had pitched it to me;... [and] finally as an intellectual decision to leave the faith that I had been raised in and see things differently. [*American Experience: God in America*. PBS.]



[Y]ou know, looking back what I realize is it’s been like coming up from deep under the water. You know I was conditioned to be a fundamentalist Christian. I don’t mean my parents sat down and said let’s make sure that little Franky here can never think a free thought. But if you’re raised on Bible stories from your mother’s knee, if every single sentence she finishes has a platitude or a religious part to it, if everything that you look at from sunsets to people you meet on airplanes has to be folded into this narrative, if you can never have an ordinary conversation with someone without witnessing to them about Jesus or giving them a tract or trying to steer it in the direction where they’ll ask you questions about religious things so that you can actually talk about something important instead of just their children

or their families or their careers or what they like, you know, bring your religion into the subject. If you do that from the time you’re born until you’re in your 20s, it takes you a long, long, long, long time to get the ringing out of your ears.” [Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*. NPR.]

Reflecting on his adolescent and young adult years as the presumptive successor to one of the most influential and well-known Christian evangelists and thinkers of the 20th century, Frank might best have summarized the true state of his soul in those years with one revealing comment in *Crazy for God*: “I was in The Work, but not of it” (ref. I John 2:19). My prayer is that he honestly and humbly is convicted of his arrogance and rebellion and earnestly seeks the Lord God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength. Therein is the only path to the Way, the Truth and the Life for which God created each of us.

So what's the bottom line? Perhaps Bob Dylan said it best when he wrote and sang...

*You might be a rock-n-roll addict, prancing on the stage
Money, drugs at your command, women in a cage...
You may be a preacher, preaching spiritual pride
Maybe a city councilman takin' bribes on the side...
But you're gonna have to serve somebody
Yes, you're gonna have to serve somebody
Well it may be the Devil, or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.*

(Bob Dylan, "Gotta Serve Somebody" (Special Rider Music, 1969))



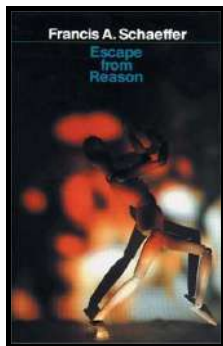
Francis Schaeffer: A Recommended Bibliography

1. *The God Who Is There: Speaking Historic Christianity into the Twentieth Century* (InterVarsity Press, 1968).



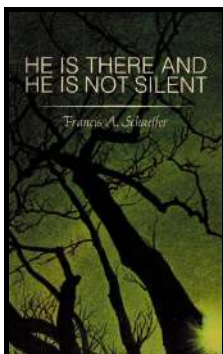
- A wide-ranging analysis of the intellectual and cultural climate of the second half of the 20th century and the impact of secular humanistic philosophy on every area of life from philosophy to art.
- Basic theme: The existence and relevance of God, and how modern man came to first distance himself from, and ultimately disbelieve in, the God as revealed in the Bible.
- Schaeffer called for a comprehensive spiritual and apologetical approach to the Christian life grounded in the principle of absolute truth: “The present chasm between the generations has been brought about almost entirely by a change in the concept of truth.... This change in the concept of the way we come to knowledge and truth is the most crucial problem, as I understand it, facing Christianity today.... Yet even now, years after the shift is over, many Christians still do not know what is happening.”
- David Virtue: “*The God Who Is There* directly exposed and challenged the intellectual presuppositions and cultural climate of the second half of the 20th century.”
- *Christianity Today* named *The God Who Is There* one of the “Top 50 Books That Have Shaped Evangelical Christianity.”

2. *Escape from Reason* (InterVarsity Press, 1968).



- A critique of the philosophy that underlies modern philosophy, science and popular culture.
- Basic theme: How the rejection of God and the emergence of secular humanism has caused man to lose contact with reality and reason.
- Objective reason must always prevail over subjective feelings and emotions.
- The Christian church must not only hold to the basic scriptural principles of the historic Christian faith but also effectively communicate these truths to the present generation.... “If we are to communicate the Christian faith effectively, we must know and understand the thought-forms of our own generation.”
- While the Bible does not provide exhaustive knowledge regarding all the issues of life, it does provide “true and unified knowledge.”
- The Protestant Reformation made many positive and necessary corrections in the course of Western history “and made possible the culture which many of us love – even though now our generation is throwing it away.... People today are trying to hang on to the dignity of man, and they do not know how to because they have lost the truth that man is made in the image of God.”

3. *He Is There and He Is Not Silent* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1972).

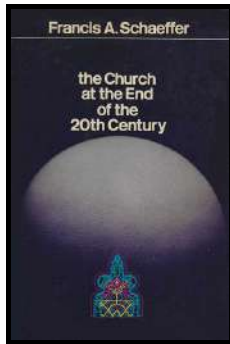


- Basic theme: There are compelling reasons to believe that God exists, and furthermore we can know God personally.
- The Bible is the greatest philosophy book ever written as it deals specifically with all three areas of philosophical inquiry: (1) metaphysics, the nature of being; (2) epistemology, how can we know anything for certain; and (3) morals, or how should we live?
- Regarding basic metaphysics, there are only three options for the existence of the universe: (1) it is eternal (and presumably self-created); (2) the universe had an impersonal beginning; or (3) a transcendent, eternal and omnipotent God created all

that exists. The first two options are absurd: impersonal mass, energy and motion have no will and no potential to create anything.

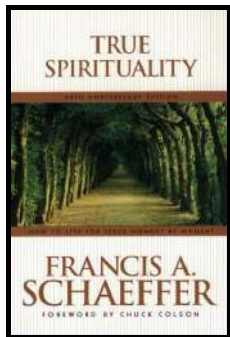
- God has revealed his character and nature, and his will and purpose for mankind, in Scripture.

4. *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century* (InterVarsity, 1970).



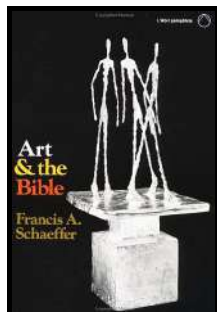
- Basic theme: Does the church have a future as we come to the close of the 20th century?
- The Christian church faces formidable opposition from the radical secular neo-Marxists of the New Left, the capitalistic corporate industrial complex that puts profits ahead of morality, a dishonest media establishment, and the technocratic elite who are driven by the philosophy and agenda of scientism. Church leaders and Christians in general must wake up and begin offering a biblically-based countercultural alternative to these insidious anti-Christian forces that seek to dominate and control our lives.
- Schaeffer: “In this book, I have attempted to describe the sociological milieu in which the church of Jesus Christ now finds itself.... In the midst of a culture cut loose not only from God and revelation, but also cut loose from reason – in a society easily subject to manipulation by the New Left or an Establishment elite – what future is there for the the institutional church?”

5. *True Spirituality* (Tyndale House, 1971).



- Basic theme: Christianity really is true, and it is as relevant to modern life as it always has been.
- *True Spirituality* is regarded by many as one of the great spiritual classics of the 20th century. Essentially a book on sanctification, Schaeffer notes that it probably should have been his first book. Unlike most of his books that engaged the minds of his readers, this one focuses on their hearts.
- In the early 1950s, after having served as a pastor for over a decade, Schaeffer was mentally and emotionally exhausted from all the stress and conflicts in his own life and those in his conservative denomination. In the throes of a serious existential crisis, he began to question whether or not Christianity was really true. Much of *True Spirituality* relates to the intense struggles he experienced at the time: Does belief in, and commitment to, Jesus Christ really make a difference in one’s life, and is Christianity really objective true? Vowing to “start at the beginning” – i.e., go back to agnosticism and totally reexamine every aspect of his Christian faith – this book is the product of Schaeffer’s honest search for answers.
- *True Spirituality* is a treasure trove of wisdom for Christians who yearn to discover what true spirituality looks like in everyday life. When it was published more than fifty years ago, the book had a considerable impact on evangelicalism as hundreds of young people flocked to L’Abri for answers to their own perplexing spiritual struggles. *True Spirituality* unpacks what real Christianity is all about and what it means to follow Jesus Christ wholeheartedly and unreservedly.

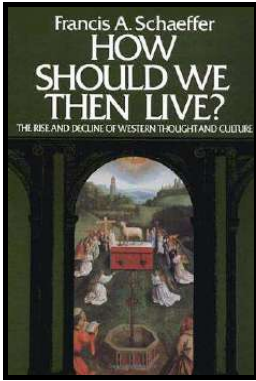
6. *Art and the Bible* (InterVarsity Press, 1973).



- Basic theme: The arts are an integral and creative expression of mankind having been created in the image of our creator God, and there is a biblically-based philosophy of the arts that Christians should understand and celebrate.
- *Art and the Bible* offers a Christian perspective on art in contrast to so much of contemporary art – painting, sculpture, music, movies, theater, TV, etc. – that promotes secularism, political propaganda and decadence.
- Schaeffer: “The lordship of Christ should include an interest in the arts. A Christian should use these arts to the glory of God... as things of beauty to the praise of God.... The Christian is the one whose imagination should fly beyond the stars.”

7. *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*

(Fleming H. Revell Company, 1976).

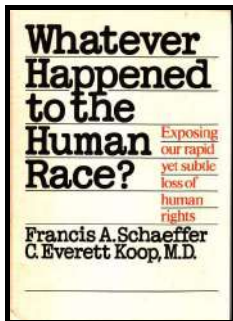


- Basic theme: The rise and fall of Christian-influenced Western civilization.
- Schaeffer: “This book is... an analysis of the key moments in history which have formed our present culture, and the thinking of the people who brought those moments to pass.... The choices we make in the next decade will mold irrevocably the direction of our culture... and the lives of our children.”
- Schaeffer: “In July 1974 my son, Franky, came to me with a suggestion... that a major cultural and historical documentary film series and book could perhaps be produced. Using my study over the past forty years of Western thought and culture as a base, we could attempt to present the flow and development which have led to 20th century thinking.” The result was *How Should We Then Live?* a panoramic overview of the major themes and trends in Western civilization from ancient Rome

to the mid-1970s.

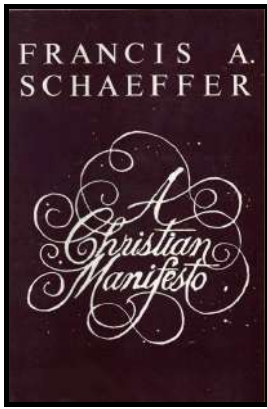
- *How Should We Then Live?* is an ideal primer for those interested in philosophy, history, and a comprehensive Christian worldview. In the book Schaeffer engages the ideas of Plato, John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, Voltaire, and many others, and examines the art, architecture, and ideas that shaped modern society.
- Marvin Olasky, Editor of *WORLD* magazine: *How Should We Then Live?* was produced by a genius who cared about the battle of ideas. It’s also the book I still recommend to students for a quick overview of ‘the rise and decline of Western thought and culture.’ Schaeffer brilliantly takes readers from ancient times through the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment, then discusses the breakdown in philosophy and science and moves on to art, music, literature, film, and much else....”
- Cal Thomas, syndicated columnist: “There are books that quickly go out of print and there are books for the ages. *How Should We Then Live?* is one for the ages.”

8. *Whatever Happened To the Human Race? Exposing Our Rapid Yet Subtle Loss of Human Rights* (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979).



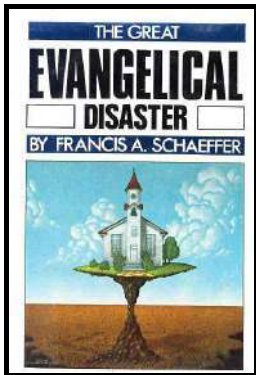
- Basic theme: Co-authored by Francis Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* analyzes the widespread implications and loss of human rights brought on by the practices of abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia.
- Choices are being made that undermine human rights at the most basic level. Practices once regarded as “unthinkable” are now considered acceptable as the destruction of human life is being sanctioned and practiced on an industrial-scale level by courts, the medical profession, and by parents.
- The book was dedicated “To those who were robbed of life, the unborn, the weak, the sick, the old, during the dark ages of madness, selfishness, lust and greed for which the last decades of the twentieth century are remembered.”
- The inhumanity of abortion and infanticide and euthanasia can only be compared to the Nazi Holocaust during World War II. As the Reichskommissar for the Ostland wrote to the Reichsminister of occupied Eastern territories in 1943: “Just imagine that these events were to become known to the enemy and were being exploited by them! In all probability, such propaganda would be ineffective simply because hose hearing and reading it would not be prepared to believe it.”
- Once the value of human life has been depreciated, as in the *Roe v. Wade* case, and once the idea of “quality of life” is substituted for the absolute value of every human life itself, we have entered a new era of barbarism.
- As with *How Should We Then Live?*, this book was a film/video series produced and directed by Franky Schaeffer.

9. *A Christian Manifesto* (Crossway Books, 1981).



- Basic theme: How a biblical Christian worldview relates not only to our spiritual and religious lives but also to the full range of social, cultural and political issues.
- In *A Christian Manifesto*, Schaeffer showed why morality and freedom are under assault in our society, and he implored Christians to change the course of history by returning to biblical Truth and by allowing Christ to be Lord in all of life.
- Schaeffer: “This book is the natural outgrowth of the books which have gone before. The earliest books, *The God Who Is There*, *Escape from Reason*, and *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*, dealt with the Lordship of Christ over all of life – philosophy, theology and the church, art, music, literature, films, and culture in general.... The next logical step: What is the Christian’s relationship to government, law, and civil disobedience?”
- In general, the evangelical church and its leadership have lacked the courage to stand up to the great threats to civil and religious liberty.
- Borrowing from John Knox’s theory of the right of revolution, Samuel Rutherford’s *Lex Rex: Or the Law and the Prince*, and the Natural Law principles of civil disobedience, Schaeffer urged Christians to get informed and engaged in the great culture war issues of our time. “If a law is wrong, you must disobey it.... At a certain point there is not only the right, but the duty to disobey the state.”
- Schaeffer: The culture war is real – it’s not an illusion. “As Christians we must stand absolutely and totally opposed to the whole humanist system.... The whole structure of our society is being attacked and destroyed.... It is not too strong to say that we are at war, and there are no neutral parties in the struggle.”
- Schaeffer: “I hope the window does not close [on religious and civil liberties]. I hope those with a humanistic world view who have increasingly controlled our culture... cannot close the open window with all their efforts. But if they do, if they take over with increased power and control, will we be so foolish as to think that religion and the religious institutions will not be further affected than they have been so far?”

10. *The Great Evangelical Disaster* (Crossway Books, 1984).



- Schaeffer’s last book focused on the theological, moral and cultural seductions which modern evangelicalism must resist, especially in regard to abortion, divorce and homosexuality.
- The cover blurb: “Have Christians compromised their stand on truth and morality until there is almost nothing they will speak out against? Has the evangelical church itself sold out to the world? In this explosive new book, Dr. Francis Schaeffer exposes the rise of compromise and accommodation, and the tragic consequences of this, within our society and within the evangelical church.”
- The book was dedicated “To a new, young generation – and to those in the older generation – who will stand and be counted as radicals for truth and for Christ.”
- Schaeffer: “Something happened during the last sixty years – something which cut the moral foundation out from under our culture.... Our culture has been squandered and lost, and largely thrown away. Morality itself has been turned on its head with every form of moral perversion being praised and glorified in the media and the world of entertainment....”

“I would say that the statement which I am making in the pages of this book is perhaps the most important statement I have ever written. It concerns what I call ‘The Great Evangelical Disaster’ and the greatest problem we who are Christians face in our generation.... My book hopes to help evangelical Christians see how much of evangelicalism has been accommodating to the destructive and ugly world spirit of our day; and to help young Christian radicals and others to stand courageously against this accommodation.”

Bibliography and Sources Cited

- Barrs, Jerram, "Francis Schaeffer: The Man and His Message." <https://www.covenantseminary.edu/francis-schaeffer-the-man-and-his-message>
- Becker, Dan. Interview with Dan Segal.
- Brand, Chad Owen, The SBJT Forum: "Dimensions of Francis Schaeffer's Life and Thought." http://sbts-WordPress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/equip/uploads/2010/02/sbjt_062_forum.pdf.
- Breshears, Jeffrey D., *American Crisis: Cultural Marxism and the Culture War – A Christian Response* (CentrePointe Publishing, Inc.)
- Breshears, Jeffrey D., *C. S. Lewis on Politics, Government, and the Good Society* (CentrePointe Publishing, 2020).
- Breshears, Jeffrey D. *The Case for Christian Apologetics: Defending the Truth of the Christian Faith in a Post-Christian and Skeptical Culture* (CentrePointe Publishing, 2021).
- Breshears, Jeffrey D., *Introduction to Bibliology: What Every Christian Should Know About the Origins, Composition, Inspiration, Interpretation, Canoncity, and Transmission of the Bible* (Wipf & Stock, 2017).
- Brooke, John Hedley, "Origin of Conflict." *Christian History*, Issue 107 (2013).
- J. Budziszewski, J., "Evidentialists and Presuppositionalists." Letters. *First Things* (May 2000).
- Burson, Scott R., and Walls, Jerry L., *C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer: Lessons for a New Century from the Most Influential Apologists of Our Time* (IVP Books, 1998).
- Duriez, Colin, *Francis Schaeffer: An Authentic Life* (Crossway, 2008).
- Fischer, John, "Learning to Cry for the Culture." *Christianity Today* (April 2007).
- Follis, Bruce, *Truth With Love* (Crossway, 2006).
- Guinness, Os, "Fathers and Sons: On Francis Schaeffer, Frank Schaeffer, and Crazy for God." *Books & Culture* (March-April 2008). Retrieved May 23, 2008.
- Guinness, Os, *Fool's Talk: Recovering the Art of Persuasion* (InterVarsity Press, 2015).
- Guinness, Os, *The Dust of Death: The Sixties Counterculture and How It Changed America Forever* (Crossway Books, 1994).
- Hamilton, Michael, "The Dissatisfaction of Francis Schaeffer." *Christianity Today* (March 1997).
- Hankins, Barry, *Francis Schaeffer and the Shaping of Evangelical America* (Eerdmans, 2008).
- Jesson, Greg, "Francis Schaeffer's Enduring Relevance: It All Comes Down to 'True Truth.'" <https://sbts-WordPress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/equip/uploads/2021/01/SBJT-24.2-F.-Schaeffers-Enduring-Relevance-G.-Jesson.pdf>
- Land, Richard, "Francis Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop's Invaluable Impact on Pro-Life Evangelicalism." <https://www.nric.org/archive/news/2003/NRL01/land.html>.
- Lewis, C.S., *Miracles* (HarperSan Francisco, 1947).
- Lewis, C.S., *The Weight of Glory* (William Collins, 2013).
- Little, Bruce, ed., *Francis Schaeffer: A Heart and Mind for God* (P&R Publishing, 2010).
- Mitchell, Ben, The SBJT Forum: "Dimensions of Francis Schaeffer's Life and Thought." http://sbts-WordPress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/equip/uploads/2010/02/sbjt_062_forum.pdf
- Moore, Russell, The SBJT Forum: "Dimensions of Francis Schaeffer's Life and Thought." http://sbts-WordPress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/equip/uploads/2010/02/sbjt_062_forum.pdf
- Morris, Thomas V., *Francis Schaeffer's Apologetics: A Critique* (Moody Press, 1976).
- North, Gary, and Chilton, David, "Apologetics and Strategy," in "Tactics of Christian Resistance: A Symposium." Geneva Divinity School (1983).
- Packer, J. I., "No Small People." <https://thedailyhatch.org/2013/05/23/j-i-packer-on-francis-schaeffer/>.

- Parkhurst, Louis Gifford Jr., *Francis Schaeffer: The Man and His Message* (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1985).
- Pearcey, Rick, "A Student's Appreciation of a Distinct Approach." The Pearcey Report. http://www.pearceyreport.com/archives/2005/09/francis_schaeff.php.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (University of Chicago Press, 1985)
- Pierard, Richard, "The Unmaking of Francis Schaeffer." *The Wittenburg Door* (April/May 1984).
- Reynolds, Gregory E., "Francis A. Schaeffer: A Unique Evangelist." https://opc.org/os.html?article_id=121.
- Reynolds, Gregory E., "Your Father's L'Abri: Reflections on the Ministry of Francis Schaeffer." https://opc.org/os.html?article_id=117.
- SBJT Forum: "Dimensions of Francis Schaeffer's Life and Thought." http://sbts-wordpress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/equip/uploads/2010/02/sbjt_062_forum.pdf.
- Schaeffer, Edith, *L'Abri* (Crossway, 1992).
- Schaeffer, Edith, *The Tapestry: The Life and Times of Francis and Edith Schaeffer* (W Pub Group, 1985).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., *A Christian Manifesto* (Crossway Books, 1981).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., "A Review of a Review." *The Bible Today* (Oct. 1948).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., *Art and the Bible: Two Essays* (InterVarsity, 1973).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., *Escape from Reason* (InterVarsity, 1968).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., *He Is There and He Is Not Silent* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1971).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., *How Should We Then Live?* (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1976).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., *Pollution and the Death of Man: The Christian View of Ecology* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1970).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., *The Church at the End of the 20th Century* (InterVarsity, 1970).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., *The Collected Works of Francis Schaeffer* (Crossway, 1982).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., *The God Who Is There* (InterVarsity, 1968).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., *The Great Evangelical Disaster* (Crossway Books, 1984).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., *True Spirituality* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1971).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., *Whatever Happened to the Human Race? Exposing Our Rapid Yet Subtle Loss of Human Rights* (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979).
- Schaeffer, Francis A., "Why and How I Write My Books." *Eternity* (March 1973).
- Schaeffer, Frank, *Why I Am an Atheist Who Believes in God* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014).
- Sempa, Francis P., "Revisiting Revel's *The Totalitarian Temptation*." (Jan. 11, 2022). https://www.realclearhistory.com/articles/2022/01/10/revisiting_revels_the_totalitarian_temptation_811442.html.
- The Wittenburg Door*, "The Door Interview: Who Is This Guy, and Why Is He saying All those Terrible Things About Us?" (April/May 1984).
- Thornbury, Gregory Allan, The SBJT Forum: "Dimensions of Francis Schaeffer's Life and Thought." http://sbts-wordpress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/equip/uploads/2010/02/sbjt_062_forum.pdf
- Virtue, David, "The Collision of Two Minds: Malcolm Muggeridge and Francis Schaeffer." *Touchstone Magazine* (Jan/Feb 1999). <https://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article>.
- Williams, Donald T., "True Truth: Francis Schaeffer's Enduring Legacy." <http://calvinistinternational.com/2014/09/24/true-truth-francis-schaeffers-enduring-legacy/>
- Wilson, Larry, "What Can We Learn From Francis Schaeffer?" *Presbyterian Journal* (Oct. 3, 1984).
- Worthen, Molly, "Not Your Father's L'Abri." *Christianity Today* (March 28, 2008).
- Yaconelli, Mike, "A Not So Fitting Memorial." *The Wittenburg Door* (April/May 1984).

