One day in high school, a friend asked me, “Why do you believe in God? Why are you a Christian?” I replied, “I have no idea what I believe anymore.”

This answer echoes in my ears, as it reflected the ongoing erosion of my faith. Despite growing up in a Christian home and attending a typical evangelical church, I was on the verge of walking away from the faith. One of the primary causes was my belief that Christianity lacked the substance to answer life’s questions. As I look back on that day, it strikes me how God later used Francis Schaeffer to awaken my faith and call me to ministry.

Given that the hectic nature of ministry limits a pastors’ time, pastors must be selective in their reading. Why, then, should any pastor choose to read Francis Schaeffer given all that there is to read, and given that he lived over a generation ago?

My own story illustrates the value of Schaeffer’s books. After high school, I decided to attend a local conservative Christian college, not out of any spiritual concern, but to play basketball. That did not last long. My basketball career ended after less than two seasons. One day by Providence, the
professor of my Christian Thought class assigned one of Schaeffer’s books. Throughout the semester, Schaeffer and my professor argued in unison for a fully developed Christian worldview, and I was never to be the same.

Since that day, I have devoured Schaeffer’s books, and his works transformed my understanding of God, Christianity, and life. Without his works, I would not be a pastor. Why was Schaeffer’s work so transformative? Because he offered real answers to the difficult questions of life. More importantly, his responses were distinctively Christian. In a world increasingly hostile to Christianity, such thinking is sorely needed.

In his day, Schaeffer appealed to younger people as they wrestled with living in a truthless age. Despite the prevalence of relativism, many younger people desired more. They wanted answers and to live by truth. Sadly, when these young people looked to the church, no answers were given. Today’s young people are also looking for real answers to life’s challenges, and Schaeffer can guide pastors on how to answer these questions in a distinctively Christian way.

The power of Schaeffer’s work is in his cultural engagement. This is a tricky subject, as many Christians tend towards one of two extremes when engaging the world. First, some move towards isolationism. They build walls and attempt to keep the world out, often out of fear. To this, Schaeffer reminds us that we should not fear any questions. The Christian worldview answers all of them and does so better than any other belief system throughout world history. Moreover, God calls the church to go out into the world, declaring the good news of Jesus Christ (Matt 28:16-20). Isolationism is not an option.

Second, many Christians attempt cultural engagement by accommodating and conforming to the world. To this, Schaeffer asserts that there is nothing Christians should envy because the Christian worldview explains everything in all of life. Christianity is neither intellectually nor culturally inferior to the systems of the world. Cultural engagement is not making the church more like the world, but, instead, it is about transforming lives with the truth of Christ.

Faithful cultural engagement comes by applying the total Christian worldview to all of life. In this way, believers can offer Christian answers to all of life’s issues. Pastors should read Francis Schaeffer to learn how to engage the culture by providing the total truth of Christianity as the solution to life’s most pressing dilemmas. In what follows, I offer six lessons Schaeffer can teach pastors about cultural engagement.
Schaeffer advocated for a free-range type of Christianity that refused to be caged by secularism. He asserted that Christianity offers an entire worldview—an understanding of all of life. Our faith is a total system of life. The unifying theme of Schaeffer’s work and the Christian worldview is “the Lordship of Christ in the totality of life.” For Schaeffer, the Christian worldview necessitates recognizing Jesus as Lord over everything. Nothing in life is off limits to Christ’s authority.

Schaeffer lamented that Christians often do not view life this way: “The basic problem of the Christians in this country in the last eighty years or so, in regard to society and in regard to government, is that they have seen things in bits and pieces instead of totals.” Here, Schaeffer was primarily addressing politics, yet his argument rings true to other areas of life as well. Christians must view all of life as under the lordship of Christ. Without such thinking, Christians live fragmented lives as they isolate their faith from day-to-day realities. Christianity addresses the totality of life, including everything from politics to taking out the garbage. If Christians miss this, they will inevitably think and live in pieces.

Jesus’ total lordship stands at odds with modern secularism as it exiles religion from public life. This casting out of religion is the heart of secularism as it divides life into either secular or sacred categories. Secularism asserts that faith has no place in public, secular life. If you want to be a Christian, that’s fine, as long as you keep it private. As Christians succumb to such thinking, their faith becomes irrelevant to much of life. Faithful pastors must push back against this separation and fragmentation. To do this, pastors should instruct people to see life in totals, not pieces. The lordship of Christ must resound from our pulpits if it is to reign in the pews.

Unfortunately, pastors unintentionally reinforce secularism by turning Christianity into a form of private pietism. Pastors do this by reducing discipleship to practicing the spiritual disciplines like prayer, Bible reading, and attending church. These disciplines are vital to our faith, but such a limited Christianity fits too comfortably within secularism’s cage. Schaeffer argues that because God created everything (Gen 1:1) and Christ reigns supreme over everything (Col 1:15-20), Christianity addresses all of life. As such, true spirituality is not limited to the spiritual disciplines, as it “is not fragmented
because it concerns the whole man in his whole moment-by-moment life.” If both the culture and churches teach Christians to view life in pieces instead of totals, is it any wonder that many believers find Christianity irrelevant to life outside of Sunday mornings? If pastors do not preach and teach in totals, they abandon their sheep to the dictates of secularism. In this way, Christianity truly becomes irrelevant to most of our moment-by-moment lives.

Schaeffer reminds preachers that God calls them to declare the lordship of Jesus Christ over all of life. Christianity is total truth for all of life. Our pulpits desperately need clear and passionate worldview thinking. This is hard work, but by preaching and teaching in totals, pastors equip people to push back against secularism with the good news of the risen Lord. Schaeffer guides us in this journey as he engages various parts of life, including art, philosophy, literature, history, movies, politics, science, psychology, community life, and the family.

**The Necessity of “True Truth”**

The central problem of our day is epistemological: How can we know anything? This crisis is nothing new; Schaeffer identified it as the core problem about sixty years ago. Without God, finding absolute truth becomes hopeless. Today, the only thing we are of certain of is our uncertainty. This postmodern mood infects much of life, and it is the natural end of much of Western thought. Schaeffer argued the best remedy the church could offer is to proclaim true truth.

Schaeffer traced this crisis of knowledge throughout Western thought. Two major turns to the subject laid the foundation of postmodernism. First, there was the turn to the self in the form of rationalism. This turn is the heart of the Enlightenment (modernism), as it elevated human reason as the foundation for truth. This belief was naïve at best, as debates raged throughout the Enlightenment, showing that seemingly reasonable individuals could not agree on just about anything. The search for an adequate foundation for knowledge continued.

Second, this led to another turn to the self, as Immanuel Kant and others argued that reality is conformed to our minds. By turning away from God and toward the self, the West took an inevitable path toward subjectivism. Without God, there is no basis for truth in any meaningful way. Or, as Schaeffer put it,
“Man’s finiteness is his smallness; he is not a sufficient reference point to himself.”

Modern life is an epistemological wasteland with no hope or desire for universal truth, leaving us in the “theater of the absurd.” As such, man gives up on truth and purpose as everything is ultimately meaningless. This is the postmodern mood. By looking to himself as ultimate, man blinds himself with himself. If individuals refuse to look externally to God, there is no basis for knowledge. Schaeffer’s solution is the infinite-personal God. As infinite, God is the foundation for truth. As personal, he makes man in his image, enabling us to know things rightly.

God alone is the adequate foundation for truth, but we replaced him with finite, broken humans. David Wells teases this out, “When God—the external God—dies, then the self immediately moves in to fill the vacuum. But then something strange happens. The self also dies. And with it goes meaning and reality.” As we replace God by turning inward, the self dies in want of an infinite reference point to bring meaning to our finite existence. Without a universal, particulars are meaningless. The theater of the absurd ultimately reduces everything to meaninglessness and uncertainty. All that remains in this postmodern wasteland are personal preferences, experiences, and power. Subsequently, individuals lose touch with reality. Bending the knee to the self leads only to absurdities, and thus individuals give up looking for true truth.

We see this absurdity at every level of society. Each individual chooses what is right and true for himself. Such reasoning leads to calls for tolerance and acceptance. Ironically, this tolerance does not extend to any who disagree with the current absurdities. As the self constructs their own view of truth, biology takes a backseat to feelings. Thus homosexuality and transgenderism become inherently and unquestionably good. Why? Because truth is found within, and therefore reality must conform to our emotions and personal experiences. Today, the only inviolable truth is the autonomous self. The theater of the absurd is rooted in the rejection of truth and of the God who is its source.

Schaeffer knew Christians must confront this problem head on, and this meant advocating for true truth. He coined the term because simply speaking of truth in our day would not communicate the biblical reality of universal truth. True truth emphasized that truth is not relative to the individual. To describe truth accurately in our age, preachers cannot speak merely of truth because people would understand it as only a personal preference or
experience. While Christians must experience God, our experiences do not determine what is true about him. Instead, all truth is God’s and is unified in him. Schaeffer writes, “Christianity is realistic because it says that if there is no truth, there is also no hope; and there can be no truth if there is no adequate base.” Christianity lives or dies by its treatment of true truth.

Unfortunately, relativism’s promotion of experience and feelings has also infiltrated the church. Many churches stress style over substance and experience over truth. Today, entire Christian movements emphasize mystical experiences over biblical doctrine. In all of this, the church reflects the spirit of this age instead of the truth of Christianity. For example, the popular song, God is Not Dead declares, “My God is not dead, he’s surely alive, he’s living on the inside, roaring like a lion.” It is wonderfully right that God, through the Holy Spirit, resides in his people, but the existence of God is not found by turning inward. This type of thinking reveals the epistemological bankruptcy of postmodern relativism. As a result, Christians detach faith from any correspondence to reality, and faith becomes a mere mystical leap or personal preference. It is a faith in faith with no real substance. Such a Christianity offers no distinctive hope as it echoes postmodernism.

To this, Schaeffer asserts God exists outside of us. He is the God who is there, and while he relates to us, his infiniteness is wholly external to us. This is good news because mankind has a reference point for truth, morality, and meaning; meaning and truth come from God, not from within ourselves. Christianity is a religion of knowledge and truth: “Biblical Christianity rests upon content, factual content. It does not cause people to react merely emotionally in a first-order experience.” Without truthful content, Christianity is just as worthless as the relativism of our day.

It is not enough just to believe in the existence of true truth, as such an epistemology must be rooted in the Christian worldview. Truth not only exists, it is united in God. He has spoken in propositions declaring truth so that mankind may know it. When people or societies detach themselves from that true truth, they become unhinged from reality and descend into the theater of the absurd.

The good news is, truth doesn’t care about our systems. Beliefs do not change reality. Schaeffer helpfully reminds us that “regardless of a man’s system, he has to live in God’s world.” In our relativistic age, preachers must emphasize there is true truth and that it is rooted in the God who is
there. His truth corresponds with his created world. None of us can escape his truth, no matter how hard we try, because we cannot escape his world. Only by boldly proclaiming such a vision of reality can Christians offer an escape from the theater of the absurd.

IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

Schaeffer cared deeply about ideas—not just about what we think but also how and why. In other words, it is not enough only to affirm the right beliefs; Christians must do so for the right reasons. Ideas are not neutral, and they impact more than our thought life. Ideas set us on a trajectory. Ideas have consequences. This importance of beliefs is true for individuals, groups, churches, and denominations. Abandoning the faith rarely happens overnight. It is often a slow process as the consequences of specific ideas are worked out over time.

In Escape from Reason, Schaeffer traced the decline of Western thought as its reliance on reason led inevitably to an ultimate irrationality. Often what we believe will save us leads to our undoing. Absolutizing human reason led inevitably to the rejection of human reason in favor of relativism. Modernism led to postmodernism. Schaeffer’s point: There are no neutral ideas in God’s world. We either submit to him or rebel against him. Where we start often determines our destination.

The consequences of ideas are also relevant for theology. In The Great Evangelical Disaster, Schaeffer issued a clarion call in defense of inerrancy. In that time, some people defended inerrancy, but some only affirmed the general reliability of scripture. The two sides did not appear far apart, but they were on two very different paths. Schaeffer described this disagreement as a watershed. At the point the water divides, the two streams look very close to one another. At the point of separation, strong disagreement over these two stances could appear to be an overreaction. Yet as the water flows down the mountain, the two streams end up hundreds of miles apart. This illustration is just as accurate for ideas as it is for rivers—the direction matters.

Compromising only a little on core doctrines can be appealing in the short term, but this is the path to final unfaithfulness. The evangelical world witnessed this truth as the successive generations of mainline denominations abandoned one doctrine after another. What appeared insignificant
to some was actually life or death. Even the subtle and nuanced rejection of inerrancy led to the death of many churches, schools, and denominations. Ideas have consequences.

Every generation of Christians faces pressure to compromise. The battles may change, but the temptation remains the same. Peace is appealing because it is a good gift of God, but a lasting peace comes only when Christ returns. In Schaeffer’s day, Christians faced the crisis over inerrancy. While that issue will return from time to time, evangelicals today are confronted with a debate over the sufficiency of scripture. Is God’s Word enough to diagnose our ills and prescribe the solutions? How we answer this question has profound consequences, not just for us but also for future generations. No matter the amount of nuance, there are only two trajectories. If the Bible is only mostly enough, then our path is set toward unfaithfulness. If Christians believe we need other too use worldviews as tools to assist us in our mission, then we will end up in a very different destination from those who affirm the full sufficiency of scripture.

Today, Schaeffer’s caution would greatly benefit evangelicals. How and what Christians argue sets a course not only for our ministries but also for the coming generations. Wisdom dictates prioritizing the sufficiency of scripture over and against ungodly worldviews. If evangelicals desire to engage the culture faithfully—and they should—then they must understand that arguments and ideas matter. If we are not moving towards God, then we are moving away from him, no matter how good our intentions may be.

**Real Answers to Real Questions**

Concerning reaching young people, Schaeffer wrote:

> It would be impossible to say how many have come to L’Abri from Christian backgrounds. And these young people have said, “You are our last hope.” Why? Because they are smart enough to know that they have been given no answers. They have simply been told to believe. Doctrines have been given them without relating them to the hard, hard problems which these young people are facing.  

Many young people today hunger for real answers, but there is a crucial difference in our day versus Schaeffer’s. Today, many evangelical churches
have replaced doctrine with entertainment in youth ministry. They barely attempt to teach the basics of the faith. Despite Christianity offering answers to life’s problems, many churches ignore the hard questions and focus on distracting our youth. Unfortunately, this also describes many adult ministries. Style rules over substance.

Schaeffer knew engaging the culture meant offering real answers to difficult questions. As the West abandoned its Christian roots, many despaired and gave up searching for answers. Universal truth became a non-starter. Europeans faced this despair honestly with deep pessimism and nihilism. Conversely, Americans distracted themselves from these issues through entertainment and material wealth.²⁰ Through such distractions, many avoid the despair of modern life.

Entertainment teaches and catechizes people to think superficially. Moreover, it instructs us to look within for meaning, purpose, and fulfillment. The voices of a thousand television shows speak in unison, “Follow your heart, life is found within!” The problem is, man cannot escape his finitude. If life is all about me, and I’m finite, then none of this really matters. We know it, and as we look within, we find uncertainty, anxiety, depression, and hopelessness. We intrinsically know that if life is all about me, then it is ultimately meaningless. After all, if Darwin is right, then man is no different than the squirrel in the front yard.

This meaninglessness leaves people longing for more. Loneliness, alienation, and dread haunt us. To this uneasiness, Schaeffer points to the mannishness of man. Humanity is unique in all of creation. Man’s worth is found in his relationship with the infinite-personal God. Without an infinite reference point, none of the particulars, including us, have meaning. All our answers to life’s questions must start with the God who is there and his self-revelation in scripture. This means the church must speak with content, explaining its doctrines in light of the postmodern world.

Sadly, offering real answers to life’s questions is uncommon within popular evangelicalism. Like our secularist neighbors, we can be distracted by the cultish need to entertain and innovate. Numerical growth trumps faithfulness and thus, to minimize offense, pastors exile controversial doctrines. Instead of confronting the abyss of modern life, Christians offer empty slogans like always uplifting, positive, and encouraging, and God wants you to be happy. Is it any wonder many youths go elsewhere for answers? In contrast, the Bible does not paint such a rosy view of life, as it acknowledges evil, sin, suffering,
oppression, and much more. When preachers ignore this, they treat the wounds of their people lightly.

Preachers must gaze unflinchingly at the problems of this life and offer a fully developed Christian response. This means offering real, distinctly Christian answers to life’s questions. It is not that Christianity provides the best solutions to life, but it is the only worldview that consistently answers all of them. Christianity is true to reality; therefore, it is not afraid to address the ugliness of life with compassion and hope. Schaeffer recognized that young people yearn for answers, but the church often refused to offer any. Today, young people are just as hungry, but they have grown up in a time where distractions reign supreme both inside and outside of the church. Answering these questions requires a serious study of scripture and a keen understanding of modern life. When preachers do this, they offer a shining Christian hope in an age of darkness and despair.

**Reject Despair**

Without any hope for truth, meaning, or purpose, despair marks our day. The search for true truth is viewed as impossible because there is no hope to find anything real beyond the self. Having abandoned this search, all that is left is despair. Schaeffer explains, “What is this despair? It arises from the abandonment of the hope of a unified answer knowledge and life.” This gloom marks our intellectual discussions and our day-to-day lives. All the distractions of the modern world cannot remove our angst and the haunting certainty of death. If life is only getting as much as I can, then this universe is an unhappy and meaningless accident. As Wells demonstrates, as a people, we have never had such comfort and material blessings, and yet we have never been so anxious and depressed.

If the dominant secular ideologies are correct, then humanity should be depressed and anxious. If naturalism is correct, then there is nothing special about man—he is just an impersonal blob of molecules. If the universe is strictly material, then there is no basis for love, meaning, or free will. All that is left is either biological or sociological determinism. Consequently, the worldviews of our day destroyed human freedom, dignity, and responsibility. The mannishness of man is gone because, in the end, he is an impersonal accident of an indifferent and cold universe. Man is no different than a sick and dying cat.
Likewise, if relativism is correct, then there is no right and wrong. Everyone can pick for himself. Could there a more shifting and unnerving foundation? If morals, meaning, and truth are self-determined, then they lose any real substance—it’s just a game individuals and societies play. Without a universal standard, man lives in despair with no answers to life’s most essential questions. The current dominant worldviews are not only bankrupt but also objectively ugly and chaotic.

Despite this reality, many Christians believe their faith is intellectually inferior to what we find in the world. Thus, a different despair sets in—one of inferiority. Schaeffer reminds Christians that no particular has meaning without reference to a universal. Man cannot make sense of morality, knowledge, humanity, or purpose without the God who is there—the one who speaks through scripture. The opportunity for Christianity at this moment is astounding as these worldviews cannibalize each other and lead to ugly and absurd conclusions. It is the church alone that offers a livable and beautiful worldview. The church tells of the glorious hope of the risen Lord Jesus Christ and his kingdom free of all that mars our modern age.

In response to the biological determinism, Christianity offers a high view of man—one where he is made in the image of God. Humans mirror God in his personality. Man knows, creates, loves, and relates and has a purpose beyond himself because he is like God. In answer to relativism’s despair, Christians know God is the fountain of truth, and he made us able to understand things truly. While our knowledge is limited and affected by the fall, humans can still rightly know truth. God is the universal that binds all truths together, and mankind is made in his image. In contrast to the loss of meaning in postmodern life, scripture declares God created humanity to be in relationship with him and others. As people love God and neighbor, they bring glory to our Creator, who is love. Christianity declares that because we find purpose as we relate with our Maker, our lives are not meaningless. There is no room for despair or intellectual insecurity in the Christian faith.

Christianity offers a hope-filled and beautiful picture of the world. Schaeffer declares: The Christian system is consistent as no other system that has ever been. It is beautiful beyond words, because it has that quality that no other system completely has—you begin at the beginning and you can go to the end. It is as simple as that.
As society spirals down the hole of despair in regards to meaning, truth, and morality, the Christian worldview offers a beautiful, hope-filled, and comprehensive picture of reality. All of life has meaning as God directs it to his desired end. When man severs himself from God, despair is inevitable. Pastors must embrace the splendor and power of the Christian worldview as it is infinitely more beautiful than its opponents. Then we must declare it to a world trapped in despair. There is no room for despair if Jesus reigns over everything—and he does.

**Preach Both Truth and Love**

For Schaeffer, truth was not a mere intellectual exercise; it was meant to be lived. For example, the fact that God made man in his image means there are no little people.\(^{26}\) No individual is lesser based on income, ethnicity, sex, or ability. Every person bears God’s image; therefore, we must love everybody. The Christian worldview impacts how we live. If it does not, then it is worthless.

In his final book, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, Schaeffer called for Christians to hold to both truth and love. This truth is a flaming truth—one that has content and drives us to action.\(^{27}\) It aligns with reality and is built on the foundation of scripture. Love, though, is also an imperative for Christians. Too often, individuals pit these two virtues against one another, but Christians must practice both.

Schaeffer saw how some people emphasized either truth over love or love over truth. If we Christians practice truth in the absence of love, we end up with either a cold intellectualism detached from life or a tyrannical fundamentalism contrary to the heart of God. Conversely, if we practice love without truth, we end up with never-ending compromises that pollute the church and destroy the gospel. In our relativistic age, it appears the greater temptation is to emphasize love over truth. Yet, Schaeffer reminds Christians that holiness and love mark God’s character. Therefore, his church must hold both in tension. Without truth, there is no foundation for love, but without love, there is no hope of salvation.

As relativism exiled true truth, a distorted view of love moved in. Such a distortion is at the heart of many current deceptions. For example, *love is love* became the rallying cry of the LGBTQ movement. It is a simple slogan, but
it neutered much of the evangelical response because few people today want to be known as anti-love. The irony is, love is love is a definitional reality, not really an argument. Love is love is true, just as a boy is a boy is true. None of this defines what love actually is.

Consequently, love became the club used to silence opposition to the sexual revolution. Yet, such a love lacks content and mirrors lust more than the self-giving love of God. Schaeffer demonstrated that the church has a unique opportunity to show such self-sacrificial love in unison with truth, especially among Christian brothers and sisters. If love is not tethered to the truth, it loses its moral goodness, and it loses its form. Love is not just the right thing to do; it is doing the right thing. Love requires a moral foundation.

Without that moral foundation, love transforms into a mere feeling someone evokes in me. Consequently, love becomes selfish because it’s about what the individual gets—butterflies and pleasure—from someone else. Such a view of love is ripe for abuse, demonstrated by the hyper-sexualization of our society and the horrors of sexual exploitation. Without the character of the infinite-personal God, love is loveless. It is ugly and destructive because it does not reject evil (Rom 12:9).

The Bible offers truth about the content of love but ties it to the holy character of God. Love and holiness are united. God acts out the totality of his character, best described as a holy-love. Love rejoices with the truth. It rejects evil, it is not self-seeking, it seeks the good of others, and it is rooted in the God who is there. Such a love requires a moral backbone. Truth and love need each other.

Thus God calls the Church to declare both love and truth, holiness and compassion, judgment and forgiveness. The mark of the Christian is not just knowledge of truth but also how that truth transforms our lives. Christians know that man is unique, that God offers redemption through Christ, that there is meaning to life, and that everything will be set right in the end. These truths are not merely to be confessed but must impact our living. When churches practice both truth and love, they reflect the very character of God. The witnesses the world needs are Christians with a firm conviction of truth and a self-sacrificing love rooted in the God who is there.
Conclusion

Schaeffer warned of the decay of Western culture, and that decay has reached an advanced stage. The present cultural insanity is sure to intensify in the short term, but this is no cause for despair. It offers Christians a unique opportunity. Relativism and its secular contemporaries trap people below the line of despair, leading to all sorts of anxieties and hopelessness. This is the reality of life in a postmodern world, but Christianity offers truth and hope. These opposing worldviews are bankrupt, ugly, incoherent, and hopeless. It is time to display the beauty of the Christian worldview by contrasting it with what the world propagates.

Schaeffer calls on Christians to live the Christian worldview, and this happens only as we submit all of life to the lordship of Christ. Therefore, cultural engagement can never be mimicking the lies of the world but rather exposing their bankruptcy. Then, the church must offer the uncompromised and total hope of the Christian worldview.

Pastors should read Schaeffer and learn how to answer today’s questions as Christians. Engaging the culture is essential to a faithful witness, but it must be done from the total Christian worldview. By reading Schaeffer, the preacher learns to speak true truth to dying men and women. Christians can pierce our cultural fog only by confronting it with the light of God’s truth. Christianity alone coheres with reality, and this ought to encourage pastors everywhere. Schaeffer proclaimed:

Christianity is not a series of truths in the plural, but rather truth spelled with a capital “T.” Truth about total reality, not just religious things. Biblical Christianity is Truth concerning total reality—and the intellectual holding of that total Truth and then living in the light of that Truth.

Christianity answers culture’s dilemmas, but will Christians have the courage to speak total truth to them? It is here that Schaeffer helps, guides, and encourages pastors.

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1 Unless otherwise noted, all references to the writings of Francis Schaeffer will be taken from The Complete
How Should We Then Preach?  


3 Francis A. Schaeffer, The Great Evangelical Disaster (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1984), 11.


4 Schaeffer, The God Who is There, 1:156.

5 For fuller development of this concept see Nancy R. Pearcey’s book Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from its Cultural Captivity (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004).

6 Schaeffer traces Western thought and its logical trajectory in his two books Escape from Reason and The God Who is There in The Complete Works, vol. 1.

7 Ronald H. Nash, Life’s Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 252-271.

8 Schaeffer, He is There and He Is Not Silent, 1:294.

9 Schaeffer used this phrase to describe the reality of making sense of this world without the personal-infinite God. Without that reference point, we are left with utter meaninglessness. See He Is There and He Is Not Silent, 1:286.

10 Schaeffer, He is There and He is Not Silent, 1:329-344.


12 Schaeffer, The God Who is There, 1:45.


14 Newsboys, “God’s Not Dead (Like a Lion),” track 2 on God’s Not Dead, Inpop Records, 2011, Compact Disc.

15 Schaeffer, The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century, 4:88.


18 Schaeffer, The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century, 4:70.

19 David F. Wells, Above All Earthly Pow’rs; Christ in a Postmodern World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 184-188.

20 Schaeffer, Escape from Reason, 1:235.

21 Wells, God in the Whirlwind, 22-23.


23 See He Is There and He is Not Silent in The Complete Works, vol. 1.

24 Schaeffer, The God Who is There, 1:168.

25 To read Schaeffer’s full thoughts on this see No Little People in The Complete Works, vol. 3.

26 Schaeffer, The Great Evangelical Disaster, 81-82.

27 Wells makes this point well in God in the Whirlwind.

28 Pearcey cites these words of Schaeffer in Total Truth, 15.
Francis Schaeffer Began: June, 2006 | Finished November: 2006

I. Chapter One: Ancient Rome

A. History and Culture Flows According to the Thoughts of the People

1. Each has their own Presuppositions
   a. "As a Man Thinks so He is" is Quite Profound
   b. People Catch their Presuppositions like a Child Catches Measles
      They catch them from their culture, family, peers, etc. One should be more thoughtful about one's presuppositions.

B. Three Lines of History

There are three lines of history, the knowledge of which is essential in understanding where we are today:

1) Philosophic; 2) Scientific; 3) Religious.
   We see this philosophy alive and well today.

1. This is Not to Say that the Reformation was Blind to all Progress
   They learned from the Renaissance but... Schaeffer's accusations with responses.

Mr. Schaeffer's attacks on the Catholic Church (before he began his walk towards the Catholic Church late in life) fall into a few categories that he repeated frequently in the book "How then should we live?"

The themes are: Christians should never have let Greek philosophy into the faith. Å Below is a list of quotes found in the book "How then shall we live?" with short responses and links to further information: Criticisms of Catholicism. Responses. How Should We Then Live? by Francis Schaeffer