

**The Great Evangelical Disaster**  
by Francis A. Schaeffer Crossway Books, Westchester,IL 1984,  
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Dr. Francis Schaeffer is a prophet calling the Church back to God, who is there and who is not silent. He critically exposes her sins, follies and weaknesses and paints with bold strokes the direction she should take.

Schaeffer is known for his cultural awareness, his intellectual alertness and his compassionate life-style. His work at L'Abri with students and inquirers has become world famous. His theological and philosophical underpinnings places him squarely in the Reformed camp. Throughout all of Schaeffer's works one will find the Lordship of Jesus as a unifying theme. If Christ is indeed Lord, He must be the Lord of all of life.

In his latest book *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, Schaeffer pleads - emotionally, passionately and courageously - with evangelicalism for a change of course. And I urge the Reformed community to pay careful heed to his urgent message. Our Reformed world and life view has also become influenced by some of the same modes of thought as evangelicalism.

The world is on fire. We live in a post-Christian era. The Christian consensus and ethos are gone. The last 60 years have given birth to moral disaster. Secular humanism is a vicious enemy. The moral absolutes have disappeared. The picture is terrifying, and what has evangelicalism done? It has neither waged the battles nor has it often even seen the issues at stake. Evangelicalism has done many things for which we can be greatly thankful. But it has become part of the problem. Its mentality of accommodation is a disaster. Evangelicalism has become influenced by the spirit of the age. Schaeffer says. "The evangelical accommodation to the world of our age represents the removal of the last barrier against the breakdown of our culture. And with the final removal of this barrier will come social chaos and the rise of authoritarianism in some form to restore social order."

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The spirit of accommodation is THE evangelical disaster. Why does evangelicalism make so little impact today? It has accommodated its view of Scripture. Many now hold a weakened view, are influenced by a new neo-orthodoxy, and have accepted higher critical methods of the study of the Bible. What happens when we let go of a high view of Scripture? Everything becomes affected-even our view of life. "A high view of Scripture and a high view of life go hand-in-hand. You cannot be faithful to what the Bible teaches about the value of human life and be in favor of abortion. But the opposite is also true. Theological infiltration in the form of a low view of Scripture and cultural infiltration in the form of the devaluation of human life likewise go hand-in-hand." Evangelicalism has also accommodated itself in its new call for participation in the World Council of Churches (WCC). Many evangelicals at the WCC's 6th assembly in Vancouver commended the WCC to their fellow evangelicals. Dr. Peter Beyerhaus, a professor at the University of Tübingen in Germany, was of a different opinion. He gave evidence of the fundamental incompatibility of the WCC's program and philosophy with the historic orthodox Christian faith. And large sectors of evangelicalism are also accommodating their view of the Kingdom. Many are now confusing the Kingdom of God with a socialist program.

Over against accommodation, Schaeffer advocates a strict antithetical stand. His view on the antithesis has been strongly influenced by his friend and co-worker, the late Dr. Hans Rookmaker, a noted Dutch Reformed scholar.

As Christians we are locked in a battle of cosmic proportions. A spiritual battle (Eph. 6:12). And the Bible is the weapon we must use in our warfare. Schaeffer says, and rightly so, "But it must be the Bible as the Word of God in everything it teaches-in matters of salvation, but just as much where it speaks of history and science and morality. If it is compromised in any of these areas, as is unhappily happening today among many who call themselves evangelicals, we destroy the power of the Word and put ourselves in the hands of the enemy."

Evangelicalism must go back to a strong view of Scripture. It must draw the line between those who take a full view of Scripture and those who do not. It must be courageously engaged in a loving confrontation with all that is wrong and destructive in the Church, our culture, and the nation. Schaeffer chides separatists for their often harsh and unloving mentality and tactics. Truth always confronts. But truth must always be couched in love. But to have a strong view of scripture is not sufficient. Schaeffer says, "It is the obeying of the Scripture which is the watershed! It is believing and applying it to our lives which demonstrate whether we in fact believe it." Schaeffer is not only orthodox, but also compassionate. I appreciate the emphasis on these two orthodoxies - truth and practice.

The Great Evangelical Disaster is a provocative book, typical Schaeffer style, tempered by love. It is a heart cry of a deeply committed and concerned Reformed Christian. The book is 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." I hope that Schaeffer's warnings will be heeded, and his challenge taken up before it is too late.

Johan D. Tangelder  
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