

Truth with Love: The Apologetics of Francis Schaeffer by Bryan A Follis.
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In the mid-1960s, Francis Schaeffer, the founder of L'Abri Fellowship in Switzerland, became known as a highly effective apologist who succeeded in helping many young people grasp the truth of the gospel. He had a high view of nature and authority of Scripture. He was sharply critical of those who rejected its inerrancy. He contended for a revelation that was without error in all that it affirms. He pointed out that anything less than a position of full inerrancy would lead to the rejection of the authority of Scripture. Central to his ministry at L'Abri was prayer and his distinctive person-centred approach. He wanted to help the individual by showing personal compassion and sympathetic listening. He was always ready to give honest answers to honest questions. Personally, I am greatly indebted to Schaeffer and L'Abri. In the 1970s, I spent three weeks at the Dutch branch of L'Abri. The fellowship was wonderful, and intellectually and spiritually stimulating. I also had the privilege of meeting Schaeffer at the North West L'Abri Conference in Calgary, and in Toronto had the opportunity to listen to his introduction of his film series, *How Then Shall We Live?*

Schaeffer was also the author of at least 23 books. Through his lectures, books, and film series, and as a critical interpreter of contemporary life and thought, Schaeffer emerged as a fresh intellectual voice in the evangelical movement. Even the secular media took notice; *Newsweek* magazine, for example, caricatured him as a fundamentalist "guru." Widely read in current literature, Schaeffer regularly lamented the moral and cultural decay of the West. He believed that perhaps culture could change for the better if evangelical believers were mobilized for engagement. But at the end of his life he had become pessimistic about the readiness and capability of American evangelicalism to provide a viable alternative to modern secular culture. This was evident in his book *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, published the year of his death (1984).

Schaeffer was convinced that if the gospel is to be effectively communicated "we must understand the thought forms of our generation." The exposure of basic presuppositions was central to his method of encountering all opinions on any subject. His favourite method was to push an unbeliever to the extreme of his or her own presuppositions to show how dark the world is without Christ. He did not regard himself as an academic apologist. He saw himself primarily as an evangelist who dealt with philosophical, intellectual, and cultural questions as part of his work in leading people to Jesus Christ. He was more concerned about people than procedures. He aimed to bring a clear, strong and honest Christian message and to demonstrate its relevance and reality. Schaeffer was a generalist in an age of specialists. He used broad strokes and popular language. He was an able communicator who possessed the gift of discernment. He was not a careful scholar. Sometimes his broad-brush analysis led him to describe events or personal attitudes that were factually inaccurate. He was a general practitioner with a heart burdened for the millions in spiritual darkness. He sought to present the Gospel to 20th century people, showing what it means "to believe it, to think it through, and to live it out." Critics have severely criticized Schaeffer for his lack of in-depth scholarship. Among them was Clark Pinnock, who was at times rather personal

and patronizing. He regarded Schaeffer as being, much of the time, "beyond his depth." But no one can specialize in every subject.

Schaeffer spoke and wrote from a Reformed-evangelical perspective. His works demonstrate how strongly influenced he was by Abraham Kuyper's thinking. In line with Kuyper, Schaeffer stressed that Christians are to act like Christians in every sphere of life. Everyone is always under the norm of Scripture whether at home, at work, or in the classroom. Schaeffer was a member of the Association of Calvinistic Philosophy. He often acknowledged his indebtedness to Hans Rookmaaker, who was an art professor at the Free University of Amsterdam and director of the Dutch L'Abri. Unfortunately, Follis does not mention the impact Rookmaaker had on Schaeffer.

Follis' book provides the reader with timely material for an ongoing discussion of the many facets of Schaeffer's works. His ideas are still powerful and noteworthy. Follis rightly points out that when Schaeffer is considered in the totality of his writings and ministry, and as we consider his stress on both rationality and spirituality, he has much to offer in the twenty-first century. I highly recommend this book to college students, teachers, and pastors.

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