

Schaeffer Lecture 5

February 27, 2023

5A: 1951-1968

Synopsis: “headwinds”—both on the personal level (spiritual crisis) and in relation to the mission board and popular support; the door opens for the launch of L’Abri; success leads to discontentment (a need to expand the reach of the ministry); Edith has to overcome her own resistance to a paripetitic ministry; serial lectures lead to the publication of books; family grows with marriages and the expanding footprint of L’Abri; Franky V is born; during this timeframe Fran will publish 48 articles (see bibliography)

- **1951**
 - Chalet de Frenes put up for sale; move to Chalet Bijou
 - Edith pregnant and miscarries
 - Fran’s spiritual crisis—back to the beginning (agnosticism)—is Christianity really true? are there good and sufficient reasons for believing it?
 - two contributing factors to Fran’s spiritual crisis: Allan MacRae’s criticism for moving to Europe and Barth’s letter in response to his speech on New Modernism
 - spent months walking alone in the woods and pacing in the hayloft of Chalet Bijou
 - Edith was fearful but Fran’s convictions were renewed; he sensed a calling to a greater work
 - building tensions: how to minister, how to communicate the gospel, plus disappointment with the state of the churches
 - troubled by the lack of spiritual fruit among the separatists and in his own life (long struggle with anger)
 - Christianity as a balanced whole; moment-by-moment supernatural reality; objective truth of scripture but experience of relationship afterward; joy should not be a burden
 - Fran posed the problem to Edith in the following way: what difference would it make if you removed everything regarding prayer and the work of the Spirit from the Bible? if no difference, then it shows that you are only working in your own strength and have no spiritual power
- **1952**
 - August: Franky V born
- **1953**
 - US furlough—spoke 346 times in 515 days; taught Pastoral Theology at FTS; his talks developed from his spiritual crisis and became a series on sanctification which proved controversial; some wondered if he was starting to compromise his views

- Fran’s “new” message of love was misunderstood by some as accommodation
- the Mission Board reconsiders his charge
- daughters attended school in Germantown; Priscilla graduates

- **1954**
 - May: Highland College awards honorary Doctor of Divinity
 - meantime, not clear whether they will have enough money to return to Switzerland; the Schaeffers would often use money (or the lack of it) as an indication of God’s will in a situation; after eight months of prayer the funds to purchase return fare were in hand (just in time)
 - support from the mission board was flagging; their missionary salary was cut and opinions began to turn against them
 - Sept: returned to Champéry; L’Abri had its beginnings before the end of the year
 - Franky contracts polio and has damage to one of his legs
 - Susan contracts rheumatic fever
 - idea for L’Abri develops; desire to demonstrate the existence of God; never having a plan, but trusting in God to provide for their needs
 - by 1954 they were already having visitors from distant places like Asia and Central America
 - Fran continues “local” and international speaking; touring and speaking across Europe
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 - growing belligerence in the BPC will lead to a split with McIntire, Schaeffer, and others starting the EPC

- **1955**
 - January: Edith has her inspiration of L’Abri from Isaiah 2; Fran will name it based on Ps 91:1
 - February: residency permits cancelled; less than two months to relocate out of canton Valais *and* Switzerland—but they could stay if they purchase property in a Protestant canton
 - Schaeffers had been an “undue religious influence” in the Roman Catholic town of Champéry
 - April 1 moved to Huemoz (canton Vaud) and find what will become a permanent home for L’Abri
 - purchased Chalet les Melezes just before the deadline; received the \$1000 earnest money in response to prayer—and had to raise another \$7500 by May 31 for the downpayment (they received just enough, just in time—from 156 donors)
 - May 6 Priscilla brings a friend from college in Lausanne—followed afterward by a steady stream of curious visitors
 - June 5: resignation from Independent Board and launch of L’Abri
 - four founding principles:
 - 1. ask God to meet their financial needs (no fundraising)

- 2. no recruiting—relying on God to send help
 - 3. no long-term plan (day-to-day; open to God’s direction)
 - 4. no publicity
- so certain of God’s leading that Fran “would have been disobedient not to step forward”
- June 21: the appeal of their extradition came through
- “The real battle is in the world of ideas.”
- Catherwood: “Few leading Christians have stressed the importance of the mind more than Francis Schaeffer.”
- L’Abri was designed to provide a family atmosphere (Edith’s gifts of hospitality were indispensable); many visitors came from dysfunctional family backgrounds
- L’Abri as a “spiritual orphanage”—modeled in part by the works of Hudson Taylor and George Muller; it was “international” from the beginning
- religious backgrounds included: Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Hindus, atheists, agnostics, liberal Christians, Roman Catholics
- students came from Haiti, India, Argentina, Canada, England, Scotland, America, Scandinavia
- physical work was part of the routine: four hours/day working in and around the buildings
- George Seville served as a “home secretary” back in America; he helped distribute Edith’s letters and supported L’Abri in prayer
- **1956**
- split in BPC; Collingswood Synod led by McIntire
- Columbus Synod (where Fran followed); later EPC then RPCES; merged with PCA in 1982
- BPC founded Covenant College and Seminary which followed the Columbus Synod
- April: Jane Stuart Smith visits (from FindAGrave.com obituary: “In the mid 1950s, under the guidance of Dr. Francis Schaeffer of Switzerland’s L’Abri Fellowship she became a Christian believer. In 1959, she gave her final performance as Brunnhilde in ‘Die Walkure’ and joined L’Abri where she worked in the dining hall, lectured on music, formed a choral ensemble, and studied hymn writing and the theology of Bach.”)
- July: Hans and Anky Rookmaaker visit; they will later start a Dutch L’Abri
- students were typically of three types:
 - 1. twentieth century people—university students who disbelieve truth and sin; most of the visitors in the 50s and 60s were in this category
 - 2. young people from a Christian background who have turned from the faith
 - 3. older Christians who couldn’t answer the questions of the younger generation
- three methods of teaching:
 - 1. sermons (using simple language)
 - 2. lectures (usually in a series)
 - 3. one-on-one conversations (or small groups)
- Socratic approach: asking questions that made it possible for each person to “discover” truth (and to own it)

- Fran’s own background included reading from an assortment of books and magazines (a practice which would bring criticism!); he always learned as much as he could from visitors (e.g., students of Heidegger); hence, learning was an integral part of his “teaching”
- topics covered the spectrum: books, arts, philosophy, theology, science, ethics, politics, law, drugs, current events, medicine, lifestyles, religion (from this, is it any wonder that Fran saw Christianity as the “integration point” for all spheres of life?)
- “No questions were disallowed. . . . We must never be shocked.”
- **1957**
- Priscilla marries John Sandri; church in Ollon where William Farel preached in the 1500s; P/J will study in Lausanne for a year before moving to STL for to attend Covenant Seminary
- expanding the ministry: renting Chalet Beau Site
- **1958**
- Cambridge England speaking engagement; Fran wanted to debate C.S. Lewis over the historicity of Gen 1-11 (Lewis considered it mythology)
- on this occasion, encountered a young law student named Ranald Macaulay
- during Christmas break a number of English students came to visit from Oxford, Cambridge, and St Andrews—including Ranald Macaulay
- **1959**
- during the summer, more than 185 visitors from 16 countries
- return to England for a lecture series (arranged by Ranald/Susan; Susan was a student at Oxford)
- **1960**
- Jessie Seville dies at 85; Edith hadn’t seen her in six years; she returned to America to visit George (recall that he taught at FTS until 80 yo); Franky is treated at Pittsburgh Children’s Hospital to surgically repair his leg crippled by polio
- Farel House completed with the help of \$20k donated by Edith’s cousin Marion who had been a missionary to Egypt; William Farel had convinced Calvin to remain in Geneva; Farel’s temperament was to be a model for students of L’Abri
- fall—reporters from Time Magazine visit L’Abri
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- during the early 60s Fran speaks at many university campuses; his college debate experience helps him think on his feet
- “Cambridge Debate” with a humanist (date uncertain): Fran won so decisively that he decided never to debate again—he wanted to win *people*, not *arguments*

- **1961**
- January: *Time* article published: “Missionary to Intellectuals”
- the publicity brought some additional interest to L’Abri, but Fran knew he’d have to travel in order to reach a wider audience; L’Abri would always be a small work
- Susan marries Ranald Macaulay in Ollon; they moved to England so that Ranald could study theology at London University
- a young German law student visits L’Abri while studying in Lausanne: Udo Middleman

- **1963**
- C.S. Lewis dies

- **1964**
- 1964 Debby marries Udo Middleman; they relocate to STL for Udo to attend Covenant Seminary
- John/Priscilla take up residence in Chalet Mazot; John taught French and helped with the tape ministry
- Susan and Ranald start English L’Abri
- by now, L’Abri includes five chalets
- new chapel is opened in Huemoz; it will become the International Presbyterian Church

- **1965**
- Fran’s lectures at Wheaton during Spiritual Emphasis Week; the lectures were printed and will later become GWIT
- Mark Noll: “The danger is that people will take him for a scholar, which he is not.” (Noll barely mentions Schaeffer in his history of the American church)

- **1968**
- first L’Abri conference in Ashburnham England; 450 attend; showed Fran the need to widen his audience through books
- books would naturally follow the practice of sharing reprints of his lectures

Honorable mention:

- “late 60s” acquired Chalet les Sapins
- Fran is livid when he finds out that one of his lectures was secretly recorded; but it proved to be the beginning of a fruitful tape ministry that would be useful to students at L’Abri as well as others around the world

5B: EFR (all)

chapter 1

- Aquinas: man's will is fallen but his intellect is not
- does Schaeffer make the same mistake as Aquinas by relying so much on reason and evidence?
- educational defect: failing to understand/teach relationship between disciplines (complexity); "the things of man and never unrelated parallel lines"
- Western thinking as analytical; Eastern thinking as holistic
- Aquinas reintroduced nature, but in an autonomous way such that "nature eats up grace" (i.e., the upper story of grace is replaced by the lower story of nature)
- Raphael: *The School of Athens* (Aristotle-particulars/Plato-universals): "Where do you find a unity when you set diversity free? Once the particulars are set free, how do you hold them together?"
- da Vinci's despondency: he would not abandon hope of a unity of universals and particulars

chapter 2

- Reformation: the whole man is fallen—intellect and will
- we have true knowledge on the basis of scripture—incomplete, but true
- "Man has value because of who he was originally before the Fall, who he is by his creation."
- man is morally guilty, but he is not nothing; the modern view of man is that he is nothing
- how does this answer the question of what man is *now*, after the Fall?
- modern man in his revolt is not a piece of theatre; he is unprogrammed and therefore morally guilty
- "Christ died for man who had true moral guilt because man had made a real and true choice."
- the "chasm"—on the side of personality, between God, man, and everything else; on the side of infinitude, between God and everything else
- "Modern man sees his relationship downward to the animal and to the machine."
- illustrated by the modern concern for *speciesism*—"the assumption of human superiority leading to the exploitation of animals"
- response against Platonism: "The soul is not more important than the body. God made the whole man, and the whole man is important." does this statement make anyone else a little squeamish?
- "In Holland . . . they emphasized . . . a Lordship of Christ in culture." Schaeffer as a Kuyperian? How is the Lordship of Christ to be expressed by the Christian in relation to culture?

chapter 3

- basis for science: “Christianity gives a certainty of objective reality and of cause and effect . . . the object, and history, and cause and effect really exist.”
- how does this work as a starting point? what is still being assumed? (think about the limitations of positivism)
- what do scientists today have to “build on” in the way of presuppositions? where do those come from?
- man is not part of the “machine” but he can affect the working of the machine (cause and effect in an open system)
- as nature becomes autonomous and eats up grace, we end up with determinism
- civilization as a constraint leading to the “Bohemian ideal”—autonomous freedom (without restraint)
- de Sade: what is, is right
- man thinks freedom (autonomy) leads to enjoyment; instead it leads to cruelty (i.e., sadism is the end result—because fallen man is never content with self-destruction)
- mass media’s contribution to spreading the new way of thinking (but requires people to be uncritical in order to accept it)
- “education” as a conduit—starting with the children

chapter 4

- Barth: religious truth is separated from historical truth
- fallen man is not able to save himself, but he is able with his reason to search the scriptures, and he has responsibility to do so
- man makes the upstairs leap into irrationality because he cannot live as a machine
- new theologians rely on religious words—connotation words—that create the illusion of communication
- “optimistic evolutionary humanism” has no rational foundation; its hope is rooted in “the leap of *mañana*”
- the new mysticism is *faith in faith*

chapter 5

- contemporary art as “ugly”; without knowing it, the artist is expressing the fallen nature of man
- how does architecture demonstrate that science is not autonomously free?
- science vs science fiction
- abstraction making the canvas into a new universe—“playing at god”
- what is the point of playing god when communication is lost?
- Terry Southern: *Writers in Revolt*: man is only psychologically oriented—with the result “that there is no such thing as crime: it destroys the idea of crime”
- the hope that pornography will provide a new golden age

chapter 6

- Foucault: following Rousseau to its conclusion: the ultimate in autonomous freedom is insanity
- “The really dangerous thing is that our people are being taught this twentieth-century mentality without being able to understand what is happening to them.”
- how is this possible? how is it different in the church? how *should* it be different?
- Capote: *In Cold Blood*: no moral judgment—just observations
- no logic, no categories
- no antithesis → no categories → no distinctions → no discernment (and just like that, we are back to de Sade)
- “faith is unchallengeable because it could be anything—there is no way to discuss it in normal categories”; religious things are in the category of the nondiscussable—beyond the reach of proof or disproof
- what matters is an encounter with Jesus—but how is this any different that Jaspers’ unutterable “final experience”?
- how common is it today for Christians to seek an “experience” of the Holy Spirit? how does “experience” prove anything unless you’re a mystic—where proof is no different from feelings?
- “Jesus” as an undefined symbol that can be used to justify evil

chapter 7

- without a Christian basis for morality, there is no basis for law
- without a basis for morality and law, there is no “problem” of evil
- nor is there a basis for evangelization
- necessity of scripture for the revelation of Jesus
- Christ as the Lord of all life, including the intellectual life; “any autonomy is wrong”
- the lordship of Christ provides the “form” which makes true “freedom” possible
- Christianity as the system that requires man to start with himself—and provides the basis for it
- can man “start with himself” on biblical grounds? what are the real dangers?
- if man does not seek an upward relationship with God, he will turn downward to the creation
- fallen man still bears God’s image; he is fallen but he is still man—he has become neither a machine nor an animal nor a plant
- “Man is lost because he is separated from God, his true reference point, by true moral guilt. But he will never be nothing.”
- when man “enters the water” he causes ripples that never end