

# **Schaeffer Lecture 7**

## **March 13, 2023**

7A: 1978-1984 (and beyond)

**Synopsis:** Fran’s diagnosis is grim, but treatments put his cancer into remission so he can carry on with work and travel; he goes on to finish several more books and updates all the rest for a release of his complete works; the cancer that brings him to Minnesota bears spiritual fruit including conferences and a new L’Abri campus; his political engagement helps give rise to a conservative resurgence; after his death Edith expands her own ministry with particular emphasis on art and music; the Schaeffer legacy endures to the present day with L’Abri campuses around the world.

biographer Colin Duriez: “It was in the final phase of [Schaeffer’s] life, taking up less than a decade . . . that his impact upon America became colossal.”

- **1978**

- October: what was expected to be a routine checkup revealed an enlarged spleen and lymph nodes; biopsy confirmed cancer (lymphatic system and bone marrow)
- Fran’s abdominal lymph nodes were enlarged to the size of a football
- Debby and Franky hastily arrive from Switzerland
- initial treatment takes six months—5 days of chemo followed by 16 days of rest; the chemo was tolerable but the “rest days” brought fatigue and abdominal pain
- Edith quickly locates a townhome in Rochester; large enough for the children as they come to visit periodically
- Edith would frequently read to Fran during his extended treatment—they particularly enjoyed Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers; much time was also taken up with prayer; meanwhile they received many words of encouragement from friends and supporters from around the world

- **1979**

- January—Rochester: speaking to hospital chaplains and doctors
- showed *HSWTL* to a full auditorium at John Marshall High School
- took chemo treatments in the morning and led Q&A discussions in the evening
- many of his doctors and caretakers were already familiar with his work and prevailed upon him to lead seminars even during chemo
- often met with small groups in his home; when more space was needed, the Plummer House was used
- often received visitors wanting help fighting for truth in their denominations
- always made himself accessible—even while waiting for chemo treatment
- F/E always prayed for God to surprise them with the people who came to talk—they believed everyone was sent by God

- by the end of the first cycle of treatment, Fran was much improved—he was strong enough to start speaking again
- March—full remission; F/E leave Rochester
- summer—Rochester Conference with more than 2000 people from 47 states
- August—lymph nodes enlarged; begins more chemo (this time orally, which makes it possible to continue traveling)
- September—*WHTTHR* seminars began in Philadelphia and westward (20 in all); this series was designed to encourage action from an assortment of co-belligerents (e.g., fundamentalist, evangelical, Reformed, Roman Catholic, Mormon)
- while in Massachusetts Fran develops shingles
- by the end of the American tour, pessimism is setting in because of low turnout and growing opposition to the message
- fall—Fran sends Edith to Cambridge to fill in for a scheduled engagement; by the time she returns in December Fran is worse
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- Moral Majority founded
- L’Abri HQ moved from CA to MN
- Southborough, MA opens—Dick and Mardi Keyes would move from English L’Abri to run the new campus
- 
- *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* (with C. Everett Koop) (FSV Production)
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- R: *Christianity with a Human Face* (with Jerram Barrs)
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- **1980**
- February—relapse—followed by more chemo
- White House visit; *WHTTHR* seminar in DC
- Hyde Park Pro-Life Rally (England) followed by march to Trafalgar Square; John Stott and Malcolm Muggeridge were part of the rally
- speech at a conference sponsored by the PCA (Consultation on Presbyterian Alternatives): “We Don’t Have Forever”
- Crossway expresses interest in publishing his complete works; the books would all be updated and printed in a multi-volume set
  - five volumes, 2000 pages, one million words
  - the updated works would include some new material like “The Question of Apologetics”
  - “I’m only interested in an apologetic that leads in two directions, and the one is to lead people to Christ, as Savior, and the other is that after they are Christians, for them to realize the lordship of Christ in the whole of life.”
- June: L’Abri conference in Rochester with more than 2000 in attendance
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- S: *Something Beautiful from God*
- F5: *Plan for Action*

- **1981**
- *CM* as a point of disagreement—historical accuracy; how to engage culture and when to engage in civil disobedience
- unlike previous works which were developed over decades, *CM* was a new topic; until this point abortion was seen as a largely “Roman Catholic issue”
- *CM*—along with the two film series—helped to create a new Christian right which had considerable clout during the Reagan years; Fran saw the election of Reagan as a unique opportunity for political change toward a more humane view of life
- Daymon Johnson, historian: “Francis A. Schaeffer became one of the major intellectual and spiritual forces behind the New Christian Right during [the] 1980s.”
- governor of MN hosts a dinner in St Paul to honor Fran’s pro-life work
- by 1981 Edith is busily at work on *The Tapestry* and has been notably unavailable for other engagements
- John W. Whitehead (constitutional attorney) worked with Schaeffer as a research assistant and went on to found the *Rutherford Institute* in 1982 (“a nonprofit civil liberties and human rights organization”)
  - Whitehead’s 34 books include: *The Second American Revolution* 1982, *Arresting Abortion* 1985, *Religious Apartheid* 1994, *Church v. State* 1996; he also produced three video series including “Grasping for the Wind: Humanity’s Search for Reason” 1997 which can be found on [YouTube.com/@visionvideo](https://www.youtube.com/@visionvideo)
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- *A Christian Manifesto*
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- *E: The Tapestry*
- **1982**
- Crossway publishes the complete works subtitled *A Christian Worldview*
- 10<sup>th</sup> GA of the PCA: Schaeffer speaks on the occasion of RPCES joining PCA: “A Day of Sober Rejoicing”
- Edith is embarking on a project to publish a selection of family letters; she has been writing 50,000 words/year since 1947 (over two million); there will be two volumes that come from this work
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- *S: How to be Your Own Selfish Pig*
- *F5: Addicted to Mediocrity*
- *F5: A Time for Anger*
- *F5: Reclaiming the World: Conversations with Francis A. Schaeffer* (documentary film—[YouTube.com/@carl875](https://www.youtube.com/@carl875))
- **1983**
- received honorary Doctor of Laws from Simon Greenleaf School of Law
- began work on *GED*

- June—Atlanta—L’Abri Conference (see YouTube.com/schaefferstudies)
- October—led a small protest at Methodist Hospital in Rochester to bring attention to Mayo Clinic doctors offering abortion; demonstrated that it isn’t necessary to have large numbers in order to act
- November—Thanksgiving dinner at Huemoz: Fran served the family but ate little himself; for the next week he would alternate between sweats and chills; a visit to the hospital in Switzerland resulted in him being rushed back to Rochester; during this time he’d been working on *GED* with the assistance of his publisher Lane Dennis
- the diagnosis was serious: lymphoma was regressing and Fran suffering from intestinal bleeding; half of his colon was subsequently removed; but after surgery he improved greatly and instructed Edith to buy a house
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- between 1979 and 1983 Fran will publish 17 more articles
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- E: *Common Sense Christian Living*
- E: *Lifelines*
- **1984**
- January—Edith returns to Switzerland to pack their belongings; by the time she returns she finds that *GED* has been completed, Fran is out of the hospital, and he is eager to begin a speaking tour to promote *GED* (13 seminars)
- March—Knoxville—L’Abri Conference (see YouTube.com/schaefferstudies)
- by the end of the speaking tour, cancer was worse; Edith summons the children
- Fran spent Easter at Mayo before returning home to be cared for by family
- “By God’s grace I have been able to do more in these last five years than in all the years before I had cancer.”
- Schaeffer solved Camus’ dilemma—he fought against the plague without fighting against God; he would reassure other cancer patients, “God hates your cancer”; neither disease nor treatment are a sign of insufficient faith
- “You don’t embrace death. You see it as a terrible, terrible enemy.”
- Duriez: “His dying reflected the way that he had lived, through his early years as a pastor, then as a missionary, and then in his pastoral work at L’Abri.”
- Fran took comfort in Ps 84:5-7: going on *from strength to strength* (which was later engraved on his headstone)
  - Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.
- Fran asked Edith if she intended to remain in Rochester; when she answered affirmatively he asked to be buried there
- May 5 he returns home to spend his last days with family; the care shown by his family makes an impression on the nurses

- even at this late stage his doctors are still looking for treatment options; Fran’s appreciation (and his view of death) is expressed in the statement: “Thank you for fighting.”
- May 13 Sunday listens to a broadcast sermon by DJK warning about Marxism—he is encouraged that some are continuing to fight
- May 15—after midnight the family reads their daily devotional and scripture; this is the same devotional F/E have shared since college (*Daily Light*)
- died peacefully at 4am—his tired face “turned to wax”; Edith would say that his absence “was so sharp and precise. Absent. Now I only observed the absence. . . . precisely at 4am.”
- May 20—service at John Marshall High School; 800 in attendance; the final episode of WHTTTHR was shown—the segment that Fran had described as his clearest presentation of the gospel message
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- *The Great Evangelical Disaster*
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- F5: *A Modest Proposal*
- F5: *Bad News for Modern Man*
- **1985**
- graveside memorial service in Rochester
- Edith would carry on her work of writing and speaking for another 15 years; also helping establish L’Abri in Rochester
- 
- F5: *Is Capitalism Christian?* (editor) (this will be the last of Franky’s books that I mention)
- **1986**
- the gift of a Steinway piano would be the occasion for Edith traveling to NY to research her book *Forever Music*; here she met Franz Mohr and would collaborate with him on *My Life with the Great Pianists*;
  - as a child in Germany Mohr lived through WW2; he would later be converted after reading Schaeffer’s books
- Edith had a special ministry to artists and musicians after Fran’s death
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- E: *Forever Music*
- **1987**
- E: *The Art of Life* (ed. L.G. Parkhurst; illustrated by Floyd Hosmer)

- **1988**
- Francis Schaeffer Foundation New York
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- E: *With Love, Edith (The L'Abri Family Letters 1948-1960)*
- **1989**
- Jerram Barrs establishes the Francis Schaeffer Institute at Covenant Seminary
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- E: *Dear Family (The L'Abri Family Letters 1961-1986)*
- **1990**
- *Schaeffer Trilogy*
- **1992**
- E: *The Life of Prayer*
- E: *My Life with the Great Pianists* (with Franz Mohr)
- **1994**
- 80<sup>th</sup> birthday—Edith returns to her childhood home in China
- 
- E: *A Celebration of Marriage*
- E: *Ten Things Parents Must Teach Their Children*
- **1995**
- JSS: *The Gift of Music: Great Composers and Their Influence* (with Betty Carlson)
  - Betty Carlson was “artist in residence” at L'Abri for 37 years and published a number of books including: *From the Mountains of L'Abri* 1973; *Unhurried Chase to L'Abri* 1973; *A Song from L'Abri* 1975; *Reflections from a Small Chalet* 1979
- **1997**
- JSS: *Great Christian Hymn Writers* (with Betty Carlson; foreword by Edith Schaeffer)
- **1998**
- *The Finished Work of Christ* (ed. Udo Middleman)
- 
- E: *Mei Fuh: Memories from China*

- R: *Being Human* (with Jerram Barrs)
- **1999**
- S: *For the Family's Sake*
- JSS: *Great Women Authors: Their Lives and Their Literature* (with Betty Carlson)
- **2000**
- Edith has plans to work on another book, but is slowed by age and moves back to Switzerland where she can be cared for by family and friends
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- E: *A Celebration of Children*
- **2002**
- S: *Books Children Love* (revised)
- **2004**
- U: *The Market-Driven Church*
- **2007**
- U: *The Innocence of God*
- **2008**
- U: *Christianity versus Fatalistic Religions in the War Against Poverty*
- **2011**
- U: *Neither Necessary Nor Inevitable*
- **2013**
- March 30: Edith dies at 98
- the scripture reference on her side of the gravestone is Ps 30:5 "Joy cometh in the morning"
- **2017**
- R: *As for the Saints Who are in the Land*
- **2022**

- *S: For the Children's Sake*

what could I say about Os Guinness? he went on to such a distinguished ministry that for most of us he stands completely on his own feet

in the end we can accurately say that L'Abri planted the seeds for many people: conversion, marriage, ministry (in an assortment of vocations)

we feel sure that Fran would agree that L'Abri was never meant to stand alone but to prepare others to live more purposefully in this world—whatever their calling might be

### 7B: A Christian Manifesto (all) and Dick Keyes Sentimentality

how do we tackle a book like this? like *CATE*, it lands a few good punches, but also raises some difficult questions; as with his other works, we have to do a lot of reading between the lines to discern Schaeffer's theology and his apologetic; there is obviously both a warning and a strong call to action; but we also have to ask whether the strategy Schaeffer presents was worth the time it took (50 years) and the cost (65 million lives); and in the end (we are certain) that it changes nothing in regard of constitutional protections, nor cultural values, nor behavior

we wonder if Fran pulled his punches in *CM* because of his concern about the manner in which some “crazy” people would use it as a justification for violent revolution; it might also be the case that his argument lost some force because of concern that people under oppression would use it the wrong way (or add to their own persecution by open defiance of the government); we have to remember that *CM* was published several years before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the USSR

we might also wonder if Fran pulls punches because he is afraid of stepping over the line of emphasizing purity (truth) to the exclusion of love—and if so, as judged by whom? if the unbeliever gets to judge whether the Christian is being nice enough when he speaks the hard truth, then the effect will be censoring Christians from ever speaking with conviction about anything of urgent importance

in the news this week: Eric Utter, “Does Artificial Intelligence Have ‘Rights’?” *American Thinker*, 3/11/23 (quoting from an article in the *Los Angeles Times*): “Suppose we respond conservatively, declining to change law or policy until there's widespread consensus that AI systems really are meaningfully sentient. While this might seem appropriately cautious, it also guarantees that we will be slow to recognize the rights of our AI creations. If AI consciousness arrives sooner than the most conservative theorists expect, then this would likely result in the moral equivalent of slavery and murder of potentially millions or billions of sentient AI systems—suffering on a scale normally associated with wars or famines.”



Utter adds: Most progressives/leftists purportedly do not believe in God the Creator. They don't want the competition. They wish to be God so they can decide who—or what—has rights, and who—or what—does not. For the most part, they have created AI. As AI's God, they think they can grant it rights.

those of you who are fans of Michael Crichton's writing will appreciate his wrestling with the inevitable moral dilemmas we are facing because of technology; the future is now here

#### chapter 1 – abolition of truth and morality

- the problem of seeing things in bits and pieces—each part as a symptom of a bigger problem (demonstrates that even Christians have difficulty relating the parts to the whole; and here we might add the challenge of developing a *systematic* theology that relates to all of life)
- the “shift” Schaeffer describes must (by implication) be a byproduct of an earlier loss of truth; it's not enough to say we've lost the Christian consensus when that was itself an inadequate base to build on; the “goal” is not getting it back because it was never going to last
- why do we try to fight issues one-at-a-time? isn't this a symptom of the same problem of seeing things in pieces?
- are we surprised that the liberal churches have come out in favor of abortion? what do we then say to the churches which oppose abortion but remain silent about it?
- the form-freedom balance—and why it seems to be an unstable system
- survival of the fittest as the operating principle of humanism—brute force; why would it be any surprise that genocide is part of the bargain? if we do not understand the brute force model of authority then the church and family and all will soon be under the wheels of the government bus
- scripture as the source of all authority for men and nations (here we're surprised that Schaeffer doesn't make reference to Deut 17:18-20—the law for kings)
- Schaeffer makes the point of how futile it is to try nation-building on the concept of form-freedom without the underlying basis (here we immediately think of Muslim countries)
- regarding the form-freedom balance, I would put it like this: when men abandon the biblical form of marriage and family, the government cannot exercise enough force to glue the shards of society back together again; of course, the humanistic state sees itself as the central organizing principle of society—*not* the family

#### chapter 2 – foundation for faith and freedom

- Samuel Rutherford and *Lex Rex*; Rutherford served on the Westminster Assembly and published his book during the same time frame (1644—the year the *Directories for Worship and Government* were completed)
- we're a bit surprised that Schaeffer doesn't mention an earlier work from the French Reformation, *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* (1579)

- America’s founding documents were built “on a Christian consensus” but the question is whether they are truly Christian; can pluralism be counted a biblical virtue? it remains a point of contention today whether “state” has some role in suppressing idolatry as the Reformers believed (see handout)
- the “separation of church and state” (false doctrine) is being used to silence the church, with the result that the state is now overtaken with humanism as its religious base; by divorcing government from any sphere outside itself, there is no longer a mechanism for accountability and restraint (we should not expect the internal checks-and-balances to be sufficient)
- Schaeffer fails to mention how WCF was significantly revised in 1788 to accommodate the emerging American political framework (what we might describe as a self-inflicted wound)

### chapter 3 – destruction of faith and freedom

- warning sign? you know you’re in trouble when a Supreme Court Chief Justice says “Nothing is more certain in modern society than the principle that there are no absolutes.” (I’m afraid someone is going to have to explain how that is a “principle” and how it was established with such “certainty”)
- Schaeffer cites William Bentley Ball describing two abrogations of the Constitution: delegation of legislative power to the bureaucracy, and “ultra vires” (taking on powers that are not delegated—which is consistent with the humanist view of unlimited authority)
- “Pluralism has come to mean that everything is acceptable. This new concept of pluralism is suddenly everywhere.” (more recently the concept of *multiculturalism* has been in favor)
- Schaeffer wants to know where the Christian lawyers were while law was being overthrown by humanism; he also calls out theologians for not sounding the alarm (and educators as well)
- I am inclined to see the problem as *structural*: i.e., a weakness in the original design that would only hold up for so long; the Constitution and BOR have made it possible for government to divorce itself from the church and then to increasingly marginalize the church until she has no influence either in state or society

### chapter 4 – humanist religion

- humanist religion as a mass delusion—reinforced by constant repetition and a perception of authoritative evidence behind it; we might even suggest that it has been hypnotic in its effects and that most people (even in the church) are sleeping through the revolution
- humanism as the favored religion (but we prefer not to call it that); and the irony is that it has no objection to enforcing its beliefs
- “We certainly must use this freedom while we still have it.”
- culture, society, government, law “because the church has forsaken its duty to be the salt of the culture”

- “We must realize that things can easily be presented on television so that the *perception* of a thing may be quite different from fact itself.” (like January 6?)
- Charles Peters, 1980: the media “are part of the show” in Washington, DC
- “[The] ability [of the communications media] to change our *perception* of any event raises serious questions concerning the democratic processes.”

#### chapter 5 – revival revolution reform

- revivals are normally accompanied by social action—examples include Wesley and Whitefield
- Wesley saved England from its own French Revolution
- Blanchard and Finney: “If a law is wrong, you must disobey it.”
- Finney: “Arbitrary legislation can never really be obligatory.”
- First Great Awakening “helped sow the seeds of the American Revolution”
- lament regarding WHTTHR: “The call for a public stand against abortion . . . was not widely accepted at first.”
- seminars were not well attended: “much of the evangelical leadership did not want to become involved”—in some cases creating obstacles for people to attend
- abortion as a symptom (which begs the question, why are we fighting it as an isolated problem?)
- I totally agree about the problem of complacency in the church—especially among leaders who can be the most vocal critics of pro-life efforts

#### chapter 6 – an open window

- two tracks: first, an open window; second, closed window
- “We must try to roll back the other total entity.”
- political opposition to Koop’s nomination—“total disregard for objective reporting”
- both liberals and conservatives will end up in the same place from the humanistic base
- doesn’t this already make America a “uni-party” state? we have two factions of the humanist party arguing over the details

#### chapter 7 – limits of civil obedience

- what made it possible for our founders to rebel against the English crown?
- irony: in a humanistic system there is no ground for obedience to the state (only guns and money)
- God establishes the state; does he intend for it to be autonomous? no, it must be under the law of God like all else
- state as a delegated authority
- early Christians were persecuted and killed for disobeying the state; at some point there is not only a right but a duty to disobey the state
- Knox as a vivid example of resistance to tyranny; he went further than Calvin and Luther in arguing for the right and duty of individuals to resist the state (I would argue

that DOLM defaults to the citizen when all other magistrates have abdicated their duty to resist)

- Knox: the power of kings “is limited by God’s word”
- Schaeffer mentions the Huguenots but doesn’t refer to *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos* (1579)
- civil disobedience and Reformation were part and parcel almost everywhere
- *Lex Rex* follows in 1644: “the law is king”—and a lawless king is to be disobeyed
- surveys show that 9 out of 10 rulers prefer the Divine Right of Kings—the king’s word is law because God appointed him
- *Lex Rex* was considered political rebellion in Rutherford’s day
- the state is to be under God’s law; any acts contrary to God’s law were illegitimate
- “Tyranny was defined as ruling without the sanction of God. Rutherford held that a tyrannical government is always immoral.”
- tyranny is satanic and must be resisted; ruling power is conditional and can be withdrawn
- “Only when the magistrate acts in such a way that the governing structure of the country is being destroyed—that is, when he is attacking the fundamental structure of society—is he to be relieved of his power and authority.”
- here we would point out the “fundamental structure” of every society is the *family*—the institution that Marxism is particularly keen to destroy; hence many of the “bits and pieces” (including abortion!) are part of this strategy but many Christians are too busy getting divorced to notice the pattern

#### chapter 8 – use of civil disobedience

- three forms of resistance for the private individual: protest (including legal action); flight; self-defense
- two forms of resistance for the group: protest; self-defense
- lesser magistrates as a shield against tyranny
- Locke secularized Rutherford; IOW, he removed the Christian foundation for government
- before force is employed, we must work for reconstruction—to correct and rebuild society; Fran would later distance himself from the label “reconstructionist”
- “In a fallen world, force in some form will always be necessary.”
- “At this time in our history, protest is our most viable alternative.”
- protest is also a form of force—nonviolent resistance
- “The state will not tolerate any gods besides itself” (Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn)—and there is the principle that it is tyranny for the state to take the place of God
- we are in a war, and there are no neutral parties

#### chapter 9 – use of force

- when flight and protest are not possible, defensive force is the last option
- American colonists viewed the British as revolutionaries attempting to overthrow colonial government

- Schaeffer goes on to outline a strategy of resistance to stop abortion—but he makes it clear that he is not for theocracy
- “There is no New Testament basis for a linking of church and state until Christ, the King returns. . . . We should not wrap Christianity in our national flag.”
- the role of American clergy in setting the stage for revolution (“black regiment”)
- the Founders had a bottom line or there would have been no revolution
- “If there is no place for civil disobedience, then the government has been made autonomous, and as such, it has been put in the place of the Living God.”
- my impression is that many Christians immediately duck behind Romans 13 *as if there were no other authorities established by God to provide balance in society*

chapter 10 – by teaching by life by action

- “*law and government are used by this false view of reality as a tool to force this false view and its results on everyone else*” (italics in original)
- not only so, but we need to connect the dots: behind freedom of speech are two additional rights that are even more fundamental: freedom of *thought*, and freedom of *conscience*; we have no reason to believe that a tyrannical government will be content to allow you either of those freedoms once freedom of *speech* has been stripped away
- “when *any office* commands what is contrary to God’s Law it abrogates its authority”
- Schaeffer warns about seeing things in bits and pieces but seems not to see abortion is downstream of the more basic truths about God and family; abortion is a matter we must confront, but it took 50 years of hacking at the branches to finally overturn RvW
- “With the window open we must try to roll back the results of the total world view which considers material-energy, shaped by chance, as the final reality.” is this a solution, or just a rant? is the goal to restore a so-called consensus that has already proved to be inadequate?
- “[we] must practice all the possible Christian alternatives simultaneously with taking stands politically and legally.”
- we are not living under scripture if we do not practice the “bottom line” of civil disobedience on the appropriate level
- Schaeffer seems not to see that “the world view which produced the founding of the United States” *was never an adequate foundation*—putting it back won’t fix the problem!
- finally we might notice that Schaeffer never describes this shift in worldview as a spiritual battle: all traces of truth, beauty, justice, etc., must be stamped out right down to the level of individual conscience—God must be expelled from his creation
- while the Christian must endure considerable suffering and opposition from the spiritual forces in the heavenlies, we must never surrender our conscience to evil—and that is the principle that connects us back to the early Christians who refused to bow before Caesar

## Dick Keyes – Chapter 5 Sentimentality

- sentimentality as a serious threat to Christianity—both from the inside and from the outside
- outsiders who see a sentimental Christianity will be turned off by it; insiders will be ruined by it
- “sentimentality sees a world without sin, evil, brokenness, ugliness, cruelty, complexity, or confusion”
- sentimentality as a self-referential emotion: “feeling about your feeling”
- actions do not come from sentimentality—we are distracted away from responsible action
- “The sentimentalist is averse to the idea that all people have a natural [fallen] capacity for evil.” i.e., the sentimentalist is essentially Pelagian
- “Media sentimentality is vast and starts early. . . . [it] filters out what is upsetting and evil in the world and stimulates emotions that are comforting, soothing, and positive.” IOW, sentimentality is *delusional*—disconnected from the reality of the world as it really is
- “We live in a society where everything is scripted”—including our feelings; we are in a post-emotional society
- clichés as an expression of feeling without action—even when sincere
- “Much of the TV news is designed to make you feel good about yourself for feeling bad”—even though you can do nothing to change the horrors you’re seeing on the nightly broadcast
- one might even suggest that the images on the TV are designed specifically to neutralize you from taking any action—to create a sense of overwhelming learned helplessness (and hopelessness); mass media has made it possible to be inundated with the miseries of the whole world at one time
- as regards evangelism: “for the person who is sentimental and not a Christian, his sentimentality itself will block him from seeing the need to take Christ seriously” (which idea we could also apply to the sentimental *false* Christian)
- the story about the departing pastor rings true (a narrative I’ve witnessed more than once): “God is leading me to a different place of service” because I am miserable and can’t stay here any longer but it wouldn’t be polite to say that out loud
- the “apologetic problem”—people suspect Christians are being dishonest by refusing to admit doubts (and they are right)
- “When sin is denied, trivialized, or euphemized, the basic fabric of the Christian theology of redemption or salvation becomes superfluous or unnecessary.”—and that is what liberalism hath wrought in the church!
- sentimentality as a filter for what is uncomfortable—what I call Fairy Tale Christianity which must always have a happily-ever-after no matter how tragic the story line—“the sentimental person is protected from experiencing any urgency or seriousness about these dissonant feelings”—which brings us back to Schaeffer’s approach of “taking the roof off” so that the person can feel the force of reality pressing against their beliefs
- “God’s reality and the reality of his creation bring reality checks to us if we have ears to hear and eyes to see.”—therefore helping people to understand the experience they’ve had but who lack the categories to understand it

- “Deep down, he is very shallow.”—which describes about 99% of Americans—“Go as deep as you want and you still get shallowness, superficiality, self-preoccupation, vanity, triviality, and self-indulgence.” and the irony is that this is what passes for sophistication today (I may know nothing about American history, but I know everything about the Kardashians)
- “What sort of persons do we become if we deny or trivialize our own suffering, anxiety, doubt, depression, anger, sense of inferiority, and inadequacy? We become fake, hollow, phony people driven by fear of discovery.”—and that goes a long way toward explaining why we are so far from experiencing true fellowship in our churches