

# The Dissatisfaction of Francis Schaeffer (Part 1-Intro)

by Francis Schaeffer

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*Francis Schaeffer's life and ministry had a profound impact on American evangelicalism, influencing the thinking of evangelicals and shaping the movement as a whole.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 27:17, 1 Corinthians 12:12, Ephesians 4:11, Colossians 3:23, 1 Peter 4:10

**Topics:** "Christian Community", "Evangelicalism"

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## Description

Francis Schaeffer, a unique fundamentalist preacher, reshaped American evangelicalism by promoting intentional Christian community, inspiring serious scholarship among evangelicals, encouraging traditional family roles, and solidifying opposition to abortion. His influence extended to various individuals including Jesus People organizer Jack Sparks, musicians Larry Norman and Mark Heard, political figures like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, and scholars such as Os Guinness and Clark Pinnock. Schaeffer's life, marked by diverse experiences across continents, offers a distinct perspective of evangelicalism contrasting the modern world's trajectory.

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## Transcript

When Francis Schaeffer first appeared on the American scene in 1965, evangelicals hardly knew what to make of him. He was 53 years old. His Christian faith had been formed in the furnace of the fundamentalist-modernist controversies of the 1930s, and he was a card-carrying member of the impeccably fundamentalist Bible Presbyterian Church. He defended passionately the idea of the inerrancy of Scripture, a doctrine that had already seen some slippage in evangelical circles.

Yet this was no ordinary fundamentalist preacher. He and his wife, Edith, had lived for ten years in a student commune they had started in the Swiss Alps. When he lectured, he wore an alpine hiking outfit -- knickers, knee socks, walking shoes. By 1972 he had added to his already singular appearance long hair and a white tufted goat's-chin beard. Most curious of all, he seldom quoted from the Bible. He was more apt to talk about the philosophical importance of Henry Miller (then regarded as the most pornographic writer in American letters).

During the next two decades the Schaeffers organized a multiple-thrust ministry that reshaped American evangelicalism. Perhaps no intellectual save C. S. Lewis affected the thinking of evangelicals more profoundly; perhaps no leader of the period save Billy Graham left a deeper stamp on the movement as a

whole. Together the Schaeffers gave currency to the idea of intentional Christian community, prodded evangelicals out of their cultural ghetto, inspired an army of evangelicals to become serious scholars, encouraged women who chose roles as mothers and homemakers, mentored the leaders of the New Christian Right, and solidified popular evangelical opposition to abortion.

The Schaeffers left an imprint on the wildly diverse careers of

Jesus People organizer Jack Sparks;

musicians Larry Norman and Mark Heard;

political figures Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson,

Jack Kemp, Chuck Colson, Randall Terry,

C. Everett Koop, Cal Thomas,

and Tim and Beverly LaHaye;

and scholars Harold O. J. Brown, Os Guinness,

Thomas Morris, Clark Pinnock, and Ronald Wells.

Strange bedfellows, indeed, and this is part of the puzzle of Francis Schaeffer.

Clues to its solution are spread across a half-century and two continents -- from Westminster Seminary, the art galleries of Europe, and an English boarding school to the Mayo Clinic and the U.S. Supreme Court. And in the end, when the pieces of the puzzle are all assembled, the life of Francis Schaeffer gives us a picture of a side of evangelicalism quite at odds with the trajectory of the modern world.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/francis-schaeffer/the-dissatisfaction-of-francis-schaeffer-part-1-intro/>

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