

# Mostyn Roberts on Francis Schaeffer

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Date: 16 July 2013

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, I will start at the beginning with Schaeffer and it's probably the easiest place to start. As I say, you are a crowd, some of you I know probably know Schaeffer better than I do, others perhaps not so well. He was born in 1912, last year therefore was his centenary, born in Germantown in Pennsylvania, United States, of German stock. His grandfather Franz Schaeffer II had gone there in about 1869, he was killed in a railroad accident in 1879, then his son Frank went to sea, took part in the American-Spanish War in 1897. Why American Spain should we saw a war in 1897? I don't know, I never studied the history but they were and Francis' dad was in it. And Frank, the father, married a girl in English stock, English immigrants who'd gone through America in the mid-19th century, they called Bessie Williamson and

Francis was born of this union in 1912. It was a very working class background and I think it's actually interesting with Schaeffer to remember this, to, you know, they say the boy makes the man or whatever and a lot of what Schaeffer later became you can almost see in the first 15-20 years of his life. His father and mother gave him no real intellectual encouragement, his father wanted him to be a working man, he was given practical jobs to do, practical tasks, mechanical things, his father didn't have much encouragement for him to go to to do education or anything like that, there wasn't a lot of cultural interest in the home, nor was there a spiritual interest. His father thought that ministers were a waste of space, they just sprouted on a Sunday, didn't know what hard work was. And though his mother went to an independent evangelical church, she didn't obviously have much spiritual life and so there was very little spiritual or no spiritual interest really in the home. But he went to school and one of his teachers, a lady called Diddy Bell, did open the doors a little bit on the world of art for him and he heard a bit of music, Tchaikovsky's 1912 Overture, began to hear this, you know, there was a world outside his rather dour German town, industrial boyhood. Boyhood. And he was involved in the scouts and he won a scouts speaking competition. And he started going to the local Presbyterian church because of the scouts connection. And a Sunday school teacher at this church put him in common with a Russian count who wanted to learn English. And Schaeffer this time was about 16 or 17, you know. The Russian count wanted to learn English by reading a biography of Catherine the Great. And it didn't take long for Schaeffer even at 17 to realise that probably another course of action was needed.

[ 2 : 5 9 ] So he went along and bought a, ordered a teacher, you know, how to teach English book. And he was given, by some providence, no one knows how, a book on Greek philosophy.

And he went home and he just, he said, you know how this was like, he said, coming home. This mistake in his life. He thought it was absolutely wonderful.

Wonderful. I had no idea what happened to the Russian count in his English lessons, I must admit. But, um, maybe, I don't know, maybe they continued on in other lines. So he began reading Greek philosophy.

And he, he soon found, he said that the questions just outstrip the answers. He just, his mind was, was just turned on by this. But he said questions. So where's he going to find answers?

He more or less dismissed Christianity anyway, because of his parents' attitude. And he's only been going along to hear probably rather liberal type sermons. And, um, then he said, well, I should give it a fair crack of the whip.

[ 3 : 5 6 ] I'll read the Bible, as you do. And so what you do if you read the Bible, where do you start? Well, you start with Genesis. Where do you end? You end with Revelation. I mean, there's no one to tell you any different, does you? You don't have Bible study notes, which jump from Mark to Jeremiah, back to Ezekiel, and then through to Revelation.

No, you start with Genesis, and you know, you work through to Revelation. Because who is to tell him any different? And he started reading this alongside Ovid at bedtime. How many of you read the Bible at Ovid at bedtime?

No? No, okay. Anyway, Ovid soon fell by the wayside. And he continued, and he finished the Bible in six months. And the picture you get is that he probably was a Christian by the end of that. He was just convinced by it. But that was in 1930 when he was 18. A couple months later, he was walking through Germantown, and he realized there was an evangelistic tent on the green. And there was an Italian evangelist, or an American-Italian, Antony Zioli. And was bringing people in to hear the gospel. And Schaeffer went in, and he walked to the front. He said, I unreservedly give my life to Christ.

[ 5 : 04 ] Now, I think he was probably a Christian before then. But this was a kind of public commitment, public seeding of it, you know. And then he started taking, before the week was out, he was taking friends along.

So, what have you got now in Schaeffer? By the age of 18, you've got a man brought up in a school of hard knocks. A tough lad. A practical lad.

He knew his way around. He could do all sorts of practical things with his hands. He had jobs cleaning out and scaling, descaling big fuel tanks. He worked on a fish wagon.

You know, he knew how to do handwork. You've got a lad also who is convinced by the Bible. Particularly Genesis. Even at that early stage, he used to say, I found answers in Genesis.

That's not the organisation. But he found the answers in Genesis to the kind of questions that the Greek philosophers were asking. So, already you've got this kind of basic...

[ 6 : 07 ] You almost got Schaeffer there. A man utterly convinced that the answers to life's big questions are found in the Bible. And very particularly when you go back to the very basics.

You have a God who is a personal God. A God who created everything. A God behind whom there are no other answers. And a God from whom no one can escape.

In the sense that every unbeliever is living in this God's big world. So, unbelievers who are trying to live opposed to God are never going to be able to do it.

There's always going to be some point of major inconsistency in their lives because of who God is. You just can't get away from the reality of God. Now, all of those things, I'm sort of reading back a lot of that stuff.

But nonetheless, you can just see the seed points there of what really is going to be Schaeffer later on. Now, what's he going to do next? Well, he soon begins to feel a call to the ministry.

[ 7 : 08 ] He says, I want to preach this Christ. I want to preach this gospel I'm convinced of. So, he had to go back to school. And eventually, the following year, he got another job in a, I think it was some kind of clothing factory.

That ended when the ladies were being badly treated. He was very concerned that they were being unfairly treated. And they called for strike and he jumped on the counter and shouted strike, strike. And his job came to an end.

And so, he went to a place called Hampton Sydney College in Virginia. His father was very much against it. His parents were very much against it.

And on the day he was about to leave, his dad stood at the door and said, Son, I don't want you to go. I don't want you to go. I don't want my son to be a preacher. I don't want you to go. So, Schaeffer just didn't want you. He turned around. He went down to the cellar.

And he got a coin out of his pocket. And he tossed a coin. Heads he'd go. Tails he would. It was heads. Try again. Told by Gideon, right? Tossed a coin. Tails he'd go.

[ 8 : 07 ] Head. It was tails. He went to the door. Dad, I've got to go. I've got to go. And just as his dad slammed the door, he said, Son, I'll pay your first six months. And in fact, his father was converted a couple of years before he died in about 1940, 41.

But that was, he believed that this was right. By the way, he always said he'd never advise anyone else to seek guidance like that. But sometimes the Lord is gracious to us, isn't he?

So he went. He went to Hampton Sydney College. He was, he had a tremendous time there. Some fascinating experiences.

He used to try to get a prayer meeting going. Um, they didn't, the other students didn't want him to do it. And, uh, he, uh, he, he said, um, one guy said, I'll only go if you carry me.

So Schaefer carried it. And Schaefer was, you know, about that high in his stocking feet. You know, he wasn't, wasn't a big man. Um, he used to help the students when they came home drunk on a Saturday night, back to their rooms, uh, on condition that they'd go to church to them on a Sunday morning.

[ 9 : 24 ] So he used to take them along to church on a Sunday morning. And, um, so you, you've got this kind of picture. And then he, he met, um, during his time there he met Edith. Edith Saville, as she was, was the daughter of, um, CIM in those days, China in their mission.

They're sure I met, uh, family. George Saville was, was in, in, in the mission. And they met at a, at a meeting in a, in a church where there'd been a very liberal talk given to the young people.

And they, Edith and Frank, Frank were both there. Not, I didn't know each other, they were both there with Frank. And Edith was incensed by this talk. I was about to get him to say something.

When this young man bobbed up from the other side and, um, said, I can't answer all your questions, but I know that Jesus Christ is my savior and I know, believe that God is true.

And Edith said to her friend, who is that young man? And then just as he sat down, Edith popped up and she made a very eloquent address because of her background. She knew far more theology than Francis ever knew, and I thought ever knew that you were at that stage anyway.

And, uh, Francis said to her, who is that young man? And they were introduced afterwards and, uh, he said could you take her home and said she, she didn't know, she had a date. He said, I'll break it. Um, come with me.

[ 10 : 34 ] Um, come with me. In fact, her date was to go to a girlfriend's house for a coffee, but he didn't know that. So he was, and they had a wonderful, uh, um, sort of, uh, exchange of letters which you can read about in, in Edith's tapestry.

Um, and they got married in, I think, 1935. Uh, and then, um, he went to Westminster, which was the college that Gresson Machen started. I won't go into the history, but there'd been a split that Gresson Machen led the Orthodox Presbyterians, the Reformed Presbyterians away from the Presbyterian Church which they feel helped to become a liberal, and from Princeton Seminary especially particularly.

And they started this new seminary, Westminster, in Philadelphia. And, um, Schaeffer went there and he spent, I think, a year or two there. Then Schaeffer, because he was quite, in a, in a group who were quite separatists, he and people like Karl McIntyre and others left Westminster and formed another seminary called Faith Seminary in Wilmington in Delaware.

And, um, that was over issues like a supposedly hyper-Calvinism went above Westminster.

Whether that was justified or not is difficult to say, but they felt there was hyper-Calvinism.

And also because Schaeffer and others believed you shouldn't drink and so forth. There was this, they were, they were far more strict on things like that. Whereas Gresson Machen said no Christians should have liberty to drink.

[ 11 : 59 ] So you may or may not agree with Schaeffer for reasons for doing that. But they separated. So in fact he didn't finish his course of Westminster, he went to this place then. Then he entered the Bible Presbyterian Church, which is a new denomination which is set up to accommodate the, I suppose, fundamentalist Presbyterians of which Schaeffer was at that time.

And he then had three ministries between 1938 and 1948. Two in Pennsylvania. Um, one in Grove City and the other in Chester.

And then a third ministry in St. Louis, Missouri. And so that's where, I won't go into detail in those at all in time. So, um, but that's where then, um, Edith always looked back to St. Louis, Missouri, which was fashionable and elegant and lovely.

And Edith always loved things that were fashionable and elegant and lovely. So she always enjoyed St. Louis, Missouri, um, better than the ones in Pennsylvania. Uh, features of their work were children's works.

They started children's works there. Um, Schaeffer was prepared to challenge the status quo on racism and things like that.

[ 13 : 06 ] Um, and he showed tremendous vision as a pastor and the churches all grew under him. He had great ministries in all of them. And also he's becoming, he's becoming a leader in the denomination.

Then in 1947 the mission arm of the Bible Presbyterian Church sent him to Europe to investigate two things. Firstly, the spiritual condition of things in Europe in view of liberalism and Barcianism.

And secondly, the strength of children's work. He had three gruelling months, which you can read about in my book, or other books as well. But I won't go into detail on that either.

Uh, so he, he spent his three months as kind of sightseeing, as kind of sightseeing tour. Uh, and had 180 appointments in 90 days. Visit 13 countries and 31 cities.

He met people like Ola Hallesby in Norway, Martin Lloyd-Jones in London, people like that for the first time on this tour. In 1948 he returned to, quote, strengthen the things that remain and to set up children for Christ in Europe.

[14:06] I always think that people who, who would only know Schaeffer as the kind of academic philosopher, would be astonished if they knew that Schaeffer really first came to Europe to do children's work. And he was usually loved by children.

He used to, apparently he got his record for boys into a Model T Ford as 21. When he used to collect them to take them to his camps. So, um, they went to Switzerland.

Uh, then the family, all of them, they settled near Lausanne. And, uh, there's a succession of chalets. I always try to remember, I can never remember the chalets, but there are lots of chalets that lived in over the period. Um, and, uh, what did he do?

He initially travelled in Europe, he taught on dangers of Bargainism, he expanded children for Christ's work, he sought to build up an evangelical alternative to the World Council of Churches. In other words, he was really interested in building up what they called the International Council of Christian Churches, which was an evangelical foil to the World Council of Churches.

He met Hans Rookmaker on one of his trips in Holland as well, who was a great friend of his. Um, and one of the interesting things at this point, even in 1948, he, he, there was an article he wrote on Apologetics, which you can see exactly the main points of Apologetics which come through in his major writings 20 years later.

[15:24] It's interesting that, uh, his thought, his thought was, was in form, in structure, it was there already in 1948. Uh, long before Lebris started, and long before he wrote his books.

So I'm trying to say this because, you know, the, the thing about Schaeffer is, everybody's sort of associating with Lebris, they think everything started with Lebris, that Schaeffer started with Lebris, all his ideas began in the 1960s.

That wasn't so. In the 1960s, things were just coming into the open. But actually, the man that Schaeffer was, the, the fundamental ideas he had about Apologetics, his fundamental theology, was there in the 1940s. Uh, it was just that the Lord lay him into a different kind of image.

And, um, things were becoming tense in the denomination, his, the Bible Presbyterian Church. Eventually, um, because of a lack of love, as Schaeffer saw it, a kind of harsh separatist attitude, and, um, uh, a failure to, um, evidence and manifest love and holiness together.

And, uh, he was becoming disillusioned then a bit with his denomination at that point. And then in late 1950, early 1951, he went through this very famous, but profound spiritual crisis, of which nobody knows a great deal.

[16:40] Um, but he, he, he, it's known that he, he, he felt spiritually dry, lack of reality in his spiritual life. Uh, and he went through a profound searching and asking deep questions about whether Christianity was true.

Um, and he came through that, although Edith was really worried about it, whether the whole, you know, the whole thing was going to implode and they'd have to go back to America.

He used to paste the hayloft in one of the chalet, chalet v. Jules, walk around. It was quite a, a difficult time. But he came through it with his faith greatly strengthened.

And, in fact, Edith would say, and others would say, that his ministry really owes a lot to that time. Because it enabled him to understand the questions that people that he came to him were going through.

It enabled him to understand people who really experienced deep doubts and real doubts. Uh, and it enabled him to be able to answer them, um, with, um, with real feeling and sympathy and experience of them.

[17:45] It wasn't just intellectual stuff he was trotting out. And those of us like me, you know, if you try to be a shaper, if you try to give all these answers that seem so clever on paper, you find it, it comes terribly fat and terribly dry, at least in my experience.

And the reason is, we are not shaper. We haven't gone through the furnace that he went through. I'm not saying there's no value in learning and reading what he does, but it's helpful.

But, but the stuff that just seemed to come so naturally from him was born of his experience and, uh, not just book study, book learning.

But he went through this crisis. Uh, they went back to America for a year or so. He taught, uh, he did, he taught mainly, um, the book that, what mainly became True Spirituality.

Uh, and William Edgar, if you want a good book that's been published recently, William Edgar's book, Shape on the Christian Life, does a good job of summarizing True Spirituality until talking about Shape's Attitude and the Christian Life. But True Spirituality was really born of his Hayloth experience.

[18:46] And, um, he played, he did six talks on this in America. Um, I think on the, on sanctification was the main subject. And, um, he would always say that was actually fundamental to the life of, of the Marie.

Well, they came back to Switzerland. They thought the Lord was leaving them there. They were told they had to leave in six weeks. And what Colin Durian calls the 29th chapter of the Book of Acts happened.

Uh, or something like that. And, um, uh, amazingly, they got all the money they needed and they were able to buy a chalet in Huaymo, the little village. And in May 1955, Le Brie was born.

And that's where it all, and that's where that, it started. They resigned from the international, they resigned, sorry, from the, from the Bible Presbytean Church. And they started the International Presbytean Church. It's interesting, by the way, also, the International Presbytean Church was started the year before Le Brie.

So, the church didn't grow at Le Brie. They'd already started the church in Champéry, I think, the previous, the previous area, before Le Brie started. It was interesting to see the sequence of events there.

[19:50] Le Brie was a place to find honest answers to honest questions, and a place to see, not only, you get intellectual answers, but a demonstration of the personal, infinite God was really there. You know, they really wanted to demonstrate, by living by faith, that, that, that God is real.

And I always say this, I said, I think, I've got a Christian, Christian, Christian webinar last week. There should be no other explanation for a Christian life, ultimately, than that God exists. If you're living by faith, your life, fundamentally, is a mystery to the world.

If you're living by faith, the roots of your life are beyond the scrutiny of the rationalist, materialist, secular world around us.

People can't quite understand you. Sometimes they'll hate that. Other times they'll ask you questions, and we're called to give a reason for the defense, a reasonable hope that is within us, aren't we? But it's really because our life should be asking questions of the world.

And I think this is what we want him to be to be. Certainly churches should be, that church should be an astonishment to the world. Why do churches exist? Well, ultimately, because God is there. Because God is real.

[20:56] That's the only reason. And once churches lose that sense of living by faith, then we become compromised. So, it's interesting that influences too, I think, but Edith's Hudson Taylor background, you know, living by faith, identifying with the people you're working with.

Hudson Taylor used to work with Poitone. I'm sure there are Chinese and admission influences on the Schaefer's as they started this work at Labrie, really. And, well, they continued Labrie.

I won't go on to say too much about their work at Labrie. I visited there in 1981, very privileged to go there. I had a personal interview with Schaefer. And it was lovely to meet him.

And I recount the details in the book. In 1968, he began to publish his books, and quite a lot of them were published in the few years after that, Escape from Reason being the first.

Just quickly to wind up his life period, he did these film series, How Should We Then Live?, which is analysis of Western culture, which went very well, really.

[22:08] Although people cringe a bit when they see it, particularly these days. Looks a bit amateurish. And then he did whatever happened to the human race. The...

Is that a comment on that? The anti... And the anti-abortion and youth and age issues. And he did that with Chuck Coop. And that was really arising out of the Rowan Way Supreme Court decision in 1973, which effectively offered abortion on demand.

And made it a constitutional right, actually, as well, in America. So, after that, in 1970, these were difficult years. When he finished filming in 1978, the second film series, he was diagnosed as

having lymphoma.

And for six years, he was undergoing treatment. Working very hard as well, lecturing, teaching. His last book was *The Great Evangelical Disaster*. I think that's one of his great legacies to the Church. I think that's a book that every minister should read. It's a terrific defense of the inerrant scripture, which was always one of the Sheper's great concerns. Going right back to Bart and the battles with Bart in this coming.

[ 23 : 17 ] Many Evangelicals are quite soft on Bart, and they were then, but he saw the dangers of Bart's mysticism about the... You can live with an errant scripture.

When Sheper says you can't, that's just nonsense. And he died in May 1984. I love this little thing that Edith wrote about his death at 4am on May 15th.

And he was absent. The absence was so sharp and so precise. Absent. As for his presence with the Lord, I had to turn to my Bible to know that. I only know that a person is present with the Lord because the Bible tells us that.

I did not have a mystical experience. My husband fought for truth and fought for the truth of the inspiration of the Bible, the inerrancy of the Bible, all the 52 years that I knew him. But I never have I been more impressed with the wonder of having a trustworthy message from God, an unshakable word from God, than right then.

And so she wrote of his death. Okay, that's just a little bit about his teaching. His apologetics.

Schaeffer's basic idea is that the unbeliever inhabits the Creator's world and cannot avoid it.

[ 24 : 47 ] The unbeliever and the believer share common ground but not neutral ground. Right? Common ground, we all live in God's world. But it's not neutral, it's God's world.

There's no such thing as neutral territory in this world. Yet the unbeliever is rebelling against God.

And so there's going to be some point of tension.

I shape this. Some inconsistency. At which the position he adopts intellectually, various levels of consciousness and clarity, is going to be at variance with how things are.

And the two things that Schaeffer said the unbeliever will always clash against is the manishness of man, what I am as a human being, made in the image of God, I reflect God, I am a person. He says that you can't explain that any other way than by a personal God existing.

If you're rebelling against that, and you always somehow or other live having consistencies. And the other thing was the form of the universe, the bloody world in which we're made. He would say that modern art designers would have houses where people would just walk out of the window, or they'd have the door on the first floor or something clever like that, to try to show that they were not bound by the rules of reason.

[ 26 : 16 ] But he said you couldn't get people walking through walls. At some point, people are going to crash into the reality of the way things are. And he said that if you just sort of follow this through with people.

And so essential to his apologetics and evangelism are the doctrines of creation and the fall. And he said what you've got to try to do with a non-Christian is to take the roof off.

You've got to expose the unbeliever to the painful realities of his position. And let me just, from *Death in the City*, I've just got to, this is one of the things that he would say.

One of the things he says that distinguishes man from animals and machines is his moral motions. Right? He says men have different morals or mores, but one never finds people without moral motions. Right?

[ 27 : 28 ] And what he means by that is that everybody is a moral creature and we all make judgements. At some level we're all saying certain things are right and wrong. The most, you know, avid atheists, the Richard Dawkins of this world, are able to say that genocide is wrong.

And they usually accuse the God of the Bible of it. But on what basis do they say it's wrong? That's the point. They have no fundamental basis for saying things are right or wrong.

And so relativism is always going to rub up against this fact that the way we are made is moral and the universe is moral. And so, you know, you're going to have this basic act.

And he would say the two points he'd always make with apologetics. You've got to keep in mind the Christian system. He was unapologetic about the fact that Christianity is a system of truth.

From God the Creator to man, the way we're made, the moral system, the moral laws we have to live and so forth. He was saying that it's working through the Christian worldview and you need to work through the implications of that.

[ 28 : 44 ] And in his day particularly, he was concerned about this kind of forcing people to make decisions for Jesus when they only half understood who God was.

Or that he even existed. People being pushed into decisions without proper grounding in understanding. And that was something he ran up against time and time again with young people who came to the room.

Probably, I was one of them actually, in 1981. And the other thing about Schaefer is that he was very flexible. He would say, you know, if you meet the Philippian jailer who says, What must I do to be saved?

Well, you don't take him back to the God the Creator and, you know, start doing an apologetic lesson and things like that. The guy is clearly under conviction. He's saying, you share the gospel with him. So, you've got someone who's got real intellectual questions and you treat him seriously. You treat people where they are. And so, I think people who think that Schaefer was always trying to put everybody into a kind of intellectual straitjacket, I think he misunderstood him. He was always concerned that people came to Christ.

[ 29 : 52 ] But he was more aware, possibly, than many of his day, of the dangers of emotional, voluntaristic experiences and decisions.

Rather than clearly understanding. He was fundamentally impressed by the importance of the mind. And that we should have that kind of level of understanding. So, he was very flexible.

You just read a number of categories. You know, was he an evidentialist? Was he an inconsistent evidentialist? Was he a presuppositionalist? Was he an inconsistent presuppositionalist? What kind of apologist was he? You know, they have all these different is-isms in apologetics.

And there are reasons for saying there's possibly one. But, he didn't fit easily into boxes. And the reason was he wasn't really interested about coherent philosophies of apologetics.

He was interested in reaching people for Christ. I think I said at the end of my book, he was fundamentally a pastor and evangelist all his life. And the apologetics, he had his own system.

[ 30 : 53 ] But he was pragmatic in how far he pushed it. Individual cases. I won't go into his- his gospel, I think, was pretty standard really.

I mean, he was a Westminster Confession man. An interesting one, his premillennialism possibly would be a surprise to some people. But he was definitely premillennialist in his eschatology. And, but his gospel I think was- I'm still- I'm using actually with Bible studies with a young man in our church, who's not got a great education.

I'm using his 25 basic Bible studies. You know that he produced? He produced them in 1954 for Dr. Otten. They're still in print. And they're great. And I- We just worked through two or three of these sections.

And they're still useful. The other big thing was the history of ideas. And again, I don't want to go into this in C.D. But basically, his big issue was that the great enemy is relativism.

[ 31 : 53 ] Now, we can see that now. But he was seeing it in the 1950s and 1960s. And he once said the Christians are missing the point. He said they made a great fuss about four-letter words on television.

Of course, he didn't endorse four-letter words. Let's think of that for a moment. But he said that they're completely missing the point. They're straining at gnats and swallowing at camels. They are making a fuss about these issues, which were really only symptoms of the bigger issue that we completely lost any sense of absolutes.

And meanwhile, the church and the bishops and all that were trying to buy into relativism themselves. And in fact, liberal theology and Barthianism were just relativism brought into theology. So he was very perceptive in seeing. And he made the point, you know, his analysis of culture, the history of ideas, was that we have a world of particulars around us, things, and we need to explain it.

And there's a world of universals. And he, grace and nature are the words that were traditionally used for those. And then he follows this kind of train of theology and philosophy from Aquinas right through Kant and Hegel and Kierkegaard.

[ 33 : 11 ] And so two things happened. One is we began to have a very high view of human reason, which became highlighted of the Enlightenment in the 18th century.

And we also began to think we could do without God speaking to us.

We lost confidence in his revelation. So we begin now to try to understand the world around us from our own position. And so we cut off the idea of a revelation which actually explains the world. We cut ourselves off from a true source of revelation, a true source of truth, which explains the world for us. And then he says that the rationalists were quite open about that, but they still sought, you know, the Enlightenment.

They still tried to find an explanation of life. They still tried to find... He said, when you come into the 20th century, the anti-centralists are saying, we can't find an explanation for life. Life is absurd.

[ 34 : 13 ] Life is going nowhere. Nihilism, nothingness. Throw it all up. Suicide is the most logical answer. And Schaefer said, you know, you're right. On your premises, you're absolutely right. He was very careful about how he said that, because he knew that for many people who came to him, it was a deeply tragic issue.

And he didn't just say that lightly. But he said it, saying, yeah. Yeah. Why isn't suicide the right answer? The only answer is because you've got to start from a different viewpoint.

You've got to start from a different worldview about the meaning of what it is to be human. And then he said, you get from the next century, you come to the postmoderns, who say, not only are we not going to be fine any reason, but we're not going to try to.

We're going to make a virtue of non-reason. And truth can't be found, but not only that, there isn't any truth there anyway to be found. And even if there were, it would be a bad thing.

Right? So truth from being unfindable becomes undesirable, becomes non-existent, and becomes a bad thing ultimately. You know? And that's where postmodernism... And he began to see that, and he even quotes some people in *Escape from Reason* in the 1960s, who were getting to the point that madness is its own virtue, for example.

[ 35 : 27 ] You know? Madness is the most... And so he was actually seeing postmodernism thirty years before it was becoming popular evangelical currency. Because he just traced it through.

Now, again, people will differ on the interpretations of his... of his scheme of history of ideas. Personally, I believe that in the big picture, it works pretty well.

It's still pretty convincing. And even in this... If you only take the conclusion that basically we are struggling with relativism, we're seeing it all around us, don't we?

You know, our children in schools are being taught that. It's just the very air we breathe now. And, uh... So, I think Kurt Schaefer had his finger on the pulse, even if you don't agree with the details, as many didn't, of all that he's doing.

He came into quite a lot of flack, by the way, from people like Mark Nolan, George Marsden, American evangelical historians, for, um... Some of his interpretations of American history. Americans, of course, Christian nation, and the...

[ 36 : 31 ] You know, how Christian was the Constitution, the Bill of Rights in the 1700s, and that kind of thing. Uh... People have... You know, I'm not an expert in American history. I think...

I understand... Schaefer would be to talk about a Christian consensus. He never tried to pretend that Thomas Jefferson was an evangelical Christian, for example. But I think he talked about a Christian consensus, and he would... And I think he's probably right on that. That those men were working within a Christian worldview, even if it was...

They were personally probably deists, or humanists, or whatever. So... Um... When you come to, um... Then...

His... Writings... Um... I only just recommend that you... You do read *True Spirituality*. Don't... Don't... Don't write... Don't rely even on William Edgar's very good summary of it.

Read... Read the book itself. If you want to understand Schaefer, he always said that... You know, to understand where he came from, you need to see the spiritual struggles. Uh... And...

[ 37 : 30 ] It... He wasn't just an intellectual who thought, I have a good idea. Let's set up a... Let's set up a trendy hippie commune in the Alps, with a lovely view, and invite everyone to come. That wasn't the case.

There were people coming to him for six years before they started to bring. From the time they went to Switzerland, they got young people coming in. They got people from the villages popping in.

There were some finishing schools for posh English young ladies and others in the locality.

They'd come, and they'd have the... And so, really, the whole Liberty thing was not a bright idea. It was a response to a ministry that clearly was happening at the time. And, you know, they never...

And they were always very clear too, and I believe Philip Ries still is, that if the money stopped coming in, and if it was clearly there was no need, that they stop. You know? Only the church has a divine right to exist on earth.

No human organisation. And the other thing I find Philip Ries was two contents, two realities.

[ 38 : 28 ] And I'll finish off on this, really. Two contents and two realities. This was a paper he gave the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation in 1974. And he talked of two contents.

Sound doctrine and honest answers to honest questions. Right? Sound doctrine, honest answers to honest questions. True truth, you've heard that phrase.

Christianity is a body of truth. Right? We mustn't separate faith from reason. We've got to... We've got to base what we say on truth. And then he said, be prepared to answer questions.

And he said, everyone's got questions. Even the shipyard worker, I'm sure he must have been thinking of his own dad. He said, they can't ask it in the way the intellectual might, but they've got the same basic questions.

And we must try to answer people's questions. His working class background gave him tremendous respect for working people. And a tremendous ability to relate to all manner of people.

[ 39 : 33 ] He was unique in my experience. Whoever you were, he could make you feel you were really important. Whoever you were, you felt you had his attention.

And people noticed that time and again. That he listened. And he always made this point. He said, if you're going to answer people's questions, you've got to listen to people. And he listened not just to individuals, but to the culture as well.

He could listen to what was going on in the world. And so had an ability to speak into it. So the two contents were really intellectual doctrine and answers to the questions. The two realities were true spirituality and the beauty of human relationships.

He said, live by faith, moment by moment, in the finished work of Christ. If you read true spirituality, you'll come across that phrase time and time again. The finished work of Christ. I became a Christian once for all who writes upon the basis of the finished work of Christ.

Through faith. Thus justification. The Christian life sanctification operates on the same basis. But moment by moment. I find this phrase coming into my preaching sometimes. Moment by moment. I suddenly realize where it's coming from here.

[ 40 : 39 ] It's the same basis. It's Christ's work. The same instrument. Faith. The only difference is that one is once and for all. And the other is moment by moment. If we try to live the Christian life in our own strength, we shall have sorrow.

But if we live in this way, we will not only serve the Lord, but in place of sorrow, He will be our song. But how in a Christian life is the power of the crucified and risen Lord through the agency of the Holy Spirit?

By faith, moment by moment. Now that's not an arrogant intellectualist, is it? That's not a rationalist to speak. That's somebody who knows God. And he talks about the Holy Spirit. He talks about faith. But he's very concerned too. And for someone like myself, who had been brought up in the charismatic world in the 1970s and 80s, or rather influenced by it at least, it was very important for us at that day, young people, to be hearing about the importance of reason and intellect and not become anti-intellectual.

Because the charismatics were saying, you know, just have an experience. You know, get zapped. That's all you need. All your problems solved. And Shekhar was clear that wasn't the way.

[ 41 : 44 ] I'll just read one or two little snippets from Death in the City. And he is speaking really mostly from Jeremiah at this point.

And he talks about the importance of truth. And he talks about the nation being under the wrath of God. And we must not be afraid of saying these things. We have to preach the truth as it is to people.

But he also goes on to say that we must practice the truth. And must maintain the full doctrine of historic Christianity.

Christianity must be fully maintained. And then he goes on to say that we must keep on speaking and acting, even if the price is high. I think this is a word today.

Christianity says it is not a modern success story. It is to be preached with love and tears into the teeth of men, preached without compromise, without regard to the world's concept of success.

