Francis Schaeffer (1912–84)
by Dr. Art Lindsley
Scholar-in-Residence

Francis August Schaeffer was born on January 30, 1912 in the small town of Germantown, Pennsylvania. His life, books and Switzerland-based ministry L’Abri have had immense and wide-ranging impact on this generation, personally touching many people, including me. How was Francis, together with his wife Edith, able to impact so many people?

First, he was able to get people to think about the large issues of life and reality. I remember when Schaeffer came to speak in a chapel service at Seattle Pacific University where I was an undergraduate. Like most of my classmates, I had been brought up as a believer, but I had never heard anything like what Schaeffer was discussing. He dealt with the Trinity, the nature of the Creation, the reality of the Fall, and the intellectual credibility of faith in Christ. In many ways, it was over my head at that time, and I can even remember that my mind hurt as I tried to follow him. However, I was so fascinated by what he said that, following his talk, I attended the question-and-answer time in the Student Union.

That first exposure later led to my reading his books Escape from Reason and The God Who is There, both of which opened new arenas for exploration.

Over the years, as I have met and talked with others who encountered Schaeffer, my response seems to have been typical. Like me, many believers had been exposed to a more narrow perspective on the faith and had no idea of the comprehensive implications of that faith or how the Biblical worldview answered questions in a uniquely persuasive way. In many ways, life is like a key chain that contains many keys, only one of which unlocks the lock.

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Faith in Christ is that key according to Schaeffer; no other view is adequate to explain the nature of reality.

(continued on page 12)
A Wake-up Call
by Tom Tarrants, President

Dear Report Reader,

As I write this note, we are watching in disbelief as the images of devastation flicker across the television screen. We have even heard the sound of rescue vehicle sirens streaming through our area toward the Pentagon to evacuate the injured. We are both deeply saddened and greatly sobered. May God have mercy on our land.

In light of these events, we can now see that Os Guinness delivered a prophetic message at the inaugural First Wednesdays Lecture September 5th: “Riding the Storm: Trusting God in Times of Suffering.” I urge everyone to order the tape; it is truly excellent and will be an invaluable help to you, I promise.

These are serious days, times to consider our call to discipleship with fresh resolve and energy. The Institute is working to make available many opportunities to aid you in your pursuit of God. I trust you will be able to benefit from some or all of the following:

TAPES—See page 14.
• Os Guinness First Wednesdays Lecture: “Riding the Storm: Trusting God in Times of Suffering”
• Jim Houston Conference: “Spiritual Living in a Secular World: Enduring Insights From Saints of Ages Past”

CONFERENCES & SEMINARS
• David Prior Conference, Ministry in the Marketplace, September 28-29, The Falls Church Episcopal
• October Seminars, Effective Discipleship in the Marketplace, October 2, 9, 16, and 23; The Falls Church Episcopal; David Prior speaks to integrity, ambition, balance, success and failure, respectively.
• Tom Wright Conference, Resurrection and Life After Death: Exploring the Christian Hope, November 9-10, The Falls Church Episcopal

Don’t miss these exceptional ways to help grow your heart and mind.

In faith,

Tom

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C. S. Lewis said: “I am not asking anyone to accept Christianity if his best reasoning tells him that the weight of evidence is against it.” He develops his case particularly in such books as *Mere Christianity*, *The Abolition of Man*, *Miracles*, and *The Problem of Pain*. Lewis decidedly gave place to rationality. However, while upholding a place for rationality, he was opposed to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, which gave almost no place to the human imagination or to the idea of belief in a personal God. In other words, he opposed what in our day is called Modernism.

**LEWIS AGAINST RATIONALISM**

*Pilgrim’s Regress* was Lewis’s first apologetic book written only two years after he came to faith in Christ. In this book, John, the hero, sets out from Puritania on the quest for a vision. Unlike Pilgrim in John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, he does not encounter generic temptations on his path to glory, but intellectual advocates of the modern world similar to what Lewis faced everyday at Oxford. One of the first such characters is Mr. Enlightenment, a proponent of rationalism (Modernism). Remember that Puritania is a place where they believe in the Landlord (God):

> ‘And where might you come from, my fine lad?’ said Mr. Enlightenment.
> ‘From Puritania, Sir,’ said John.
> ‘A good place to leave, eh?’

> ‘I am so glad you think that,’ said John.
> ‘I hope I am a man of the world,’ said Mr. Enlightenment. ‘Any young fellow anxious to better himself may depend on finding sympathy and support in me. Puritania! Why, I suppose you have been brought up to believe in the Landlord?’

> ‘Well, I must admit I sometimes feel rather nervous.’
> ‘You may make your mind easy, my boy. There is no such person.’
> ‘There is no Landlord?’
> ‘There is absolutely no such thing—I might even say no such entity—in existence. There never has been and never will be.’

> ‘And this is absolutely certain,’ cried John, for a great hope was rising in his heart.

> ‘Absolutely certain. Look at me, young man. I ask you—do I look as if I was easily taken in...?’

(continued on page 4)
'But how do you KNOW there is no Landlord?'

'Christopher Columbus, Galileo, the earth is round, invention of printing...gunpowder!!' exclaimed Mr. Enlightenment in such a loud voice that the pony shied.

'I beg your pardon,' said John.

'Eh?' said Mr. Enlightenment.

'I didn’t quite understand,' said John.

When Mr. Enlightenment argues against the truth of many religious stories, John summarizes his argument:

'I think I see, most of the stories about the Landlord are probably untrue; therefore, the rest are probably untrue.'

'Well, that is about as near as a beginner can get to it perhaps. But, when you have had scientific training, you will find that you can be quite certain about all sorts of things which now seem to you only probable....'

'I’m not sure that I have really understood your arguments, Sir. Is it absolutely certain that there is no Landlord?'

'Absolutely, I give you my word of honor.'

Notice how the rationalist covers the deficiency of argument with dogmatic assertions. You are tempted to say, "Methinks thou dost protest too much." The atheist is asserting a universal negative statement that there is absolutely no God.

How would you go about proving such an assertion? The interesting fact is that the negative statement is harder to prove than the positive. For instance, how could you prove the statement, "There is no gold in Alaska."? You would have to determine the borders of Alaska, and how deep Alaska goes, and dig up every square inch of Alaska. If there was one square inch you didn’t dig up, you might find gold there. On the other hand, how could you prove the positive assertion, "There is gold in Alaska."? You need only find one piece. If there were any gold in Alaska, you would presumably find it sooner than proving that there was none. Similarly, what would you have to know in order to know that "There is no God"? In a word, everything. If there was one thing you didn’t know, that one thing might be God. We are so far from knowing everything that there is to be known that the above dogmatic assertion is not only un-provable but also arrogant.

One time, a friend asked the famous atheist Madalyn Murray O’Hair a question: "How much of that which there is to be known do you claim to know, 10%?" She laughed and said, "O.K. 10%." He asked, "Is it possible that God might exist and be part of that 90% of reality that you admittedly don’t know?" She paused and was silent for about a minute. Then she said, "A qualified ‘no,’" and quickly moved on to another question.

Often, atheistic arguments depend a lot more on rejecting in a confident manner any belief in God, on name-calling, or on condescending phrases and attitudes to cover their lack of argument. They pretend to be a lot more certain than their arguments warrant. The Postmodernists have strongly and rightly attacked this audacity. There is much about life and reality that is not directly accessible by means of reason. Again, this is not to deny a significant place for rationality, but it is a rejection of rationalism.

Dealing With Doubt

Lewis develops his case for Christ in many places, and parts of that case will be developed in future articles. If Christianity cannot face the toughest questions of our
Many believers today are not aware that the most brilliant minds of all history have been believers. Thinks such as Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Edwards, and Lewis have given answers to the classic objections. However, even after one establishes a strong intellectual framework, this will not necessarily assure the absence of doubt. In fact, most of the doubts we encounter are emotional or spiritual in origin rather than intellectual. C.S. Lewis maintains:

...supposing a man’s reason once decides that the weight of evidence is for it, I can tell that man what is going to happen to him in the next few weeks....there will come a moment when he wants a woman, or wants to tell a lie, or feels very pleased with himself, or sees a chance of making a little money in some way that is not perfectly fair; some moment at which it would be convenient if Christianity were not true. And his emotions will carry out a blitz. I am not talking of any moments at which any real reasons against Christianity turn up. Those have to be faced, and that is a different matter. I am talking about moments where a mere mood rises up against it.... Now faith in the sense in which I am here using the word is the art of holding onto the things your reason has once accepted, in spite of your changing moods. For moods change whatever view your reason takes.

For instance, one young man was having regular doubts about his faith. After a couple meetings, we mutually agreed that I had answered the intellectual questions he had brought to me. However, it was clear to me that this would not end his doubt. He had been deeply hurt by his parents and by various people in his life to the extent that he had a great fear of trusting or committing himself to anyone, including God. The emotional issues must be addressed before a passionate commitment can be sustained.

Although we will not develop the subject much here, there is much doubt of a spiritual origin. We need to put on the helmet of salvation, the belt of truth, the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and take up the shield of faith in order to quench the “fiery darts” of the evil one. (Eph 6:10-18) These “fiery darts” often consist of all kinds of doubts, especially about the goodness of God. There are times when we find certain situations to be incomprehensible; we don’t know why these things are happening to us. But, like Job, we can know why we trust in the God who knows why. In other words, there are times in which it may be wise to trust God even though it may seem to us unreasonable. C.S. Lewis argues:

In getting a dog out of a trap, in extracting a thorn from a child’s finger, in teaching a boy to swim or rescuing one who can’t, in getting a frightened beginner over a nasty place on the mountain, the one fatal obstacle may be their distrust.... We ask them to believe that what is painful will relieve their pain, and that which looks dangerous is their only safety. We ask them to accept apparent impossibilities: that moving the paw farther back into the trap is the way to get it out—that hurting the finger very much more will stop the finger from hurting, that water which is obviously permeable will resist and support the body... that to go higher and onto an exposed ledge is the way not to fall.
And we have no liberty to compromise him. We need today more leaders like Athanasius in the fourth century who maintained the deity of Jesus and the doctrine of the Trinity, even when the whole of the rest of the church was determined to follow the heretic Arius. ‘It is his glory’, wrote C.S. Lewis in appreciation of Athanasius, ‘that he did not move with the times; it is his reward that he now remains when those times, as all times do, have moved away.’

So this is our dilemma. How can we be loyal to the authentic Jesus and simultaneously present him relevantly to our contemporaries? It is good to present Jesus in the best possible light, so as to commend him to the world. But it is not good, in order to do so, to eliminate from the portrait everything which might offend, including the offence of the cross. There is always a price to pay for this kind of feeble-minded accommodation. Jesus is wrenched out of his original context. He becomes manipulated and domesticated, and what is then presented to the world is an anachronism, even a caricature.

How can we avoid making this mistake ourselves? How can we present Jesus Christ to the world in a way that is simultaneously authentic and relevant? A double discipline seems to be needed, negative and positive. The negative is to rid our minds of all preconceptions and prejudices, and resolutely to renounce any attempt to force Jesus into our pre-determined mould. In other words we must repent of Christian ‘procrusteanism’. Procrustes, in Greek mythology, was a brutal robber who compelled his victims to fit the dimensions of his iron bed. If they were too short, he stretched them. If they were too long, he chopped off their feet. The Christian Procrustes exhibits a similar inflexibility, forcing Jesus into his way of...
thinking and resorting to ruthless measures in order to secure his conformity. From Procrustes and all his disciples, good Lord deliver us!

The positive counterpart follows. We have to open our minds and hearts to whatever the biblical text gives us, and to listen to the witness of the whole New Testament to Christ.

This double discipline is never more necessary than in evangelism. For often it is not that people have rejected Christ, but that they have rejected a pseudo-Christ. Dr. Peter Kuzmic, President of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, Yugoslavia, has put it in this way:

_We must renew the credibility of the Christian mission. Missions and evangelism are not primarily a question of methodology, money, management and numbers, but rather a question of authenticity, credibility and spiritual power.... In going out to evangelize in Yugoslavia, I frequently tell our seminary students that our main task may be simply to ‘wash the face of Jesus’, for it has been dirtied and distorted by both the compromises of institutional Christianity through the centuries and the antagonistic propaganda of atheistic communism in recent decades._

So by close attention to the witness of the New Testament, and in the interest of authentic evangelism, hopefully our vision of Christ will continue to clarify. At all events, however blurred and distorted our image of him may still be now, we have been promised that, when Christ appears in glory, ‘we shall see him as he is’ (1 John 3:2), the authentic, the incomparable Christ.

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1 Quoted from an article ‘A Credible Response to Secular Europe’ in the *Evangelical Review of Theology*, June 1994.
“When you come to the end of your life and have nothing but death to look forward to and nothing but memories to look back upon, what will you need to conclude that your life was a success and that you’re satisfied?”

That is the kind of question we need to hear from time to time but might prefer not to hear, because it poses uncomfortable challenges—about what we understand by success and failure, how we evaluate our lives, what is ultimately important.

A recent poll of 1,000 people aged between 18 and 24 suggested that “young people who fail to achieve their life goals by the age of 30 are seen as ‘failures’ by their peers and are under so much pressure to succeed, that they sacrifice their health and leisure for success.” Among the young people interviewed “tight deadlines were set for finding a life partner and having money, a senior career position and a home. More than half had set time goals such as being a home owner by the age of 26, getting married at 27 and being rich at 29.” The study showed that 41 percent had given up a healthy diet and lifestyle in their attempts to attain all their goals and targets, and one in two had cut out holidays, hobbies and seeing family and friends.

Winning and Losing

Success and failure are generally linked with winning and losing. Winning and losing have a close connection with the world of competitive sport. Sport has assumed a pervasive place in today’s culture, and its influence on our understanding of both success and failure is as powerful as the importance of examinations at school and college. There it is damaging to fail, and it is vital, not just to pass, but to achieve high marks and top grades—i.e. to succeed, not only against a benchmark but also in competition with others. So you can succeed and fail at one and the same time.

These factors can be seen at work in the highly competitive marketplace of the City [London’s Financial District]—and indeed, in most marketplaces today. As the man said, a “winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing!” Mere success is not adequate; it must be greater success than others. Nor does one “success” guarantee anything for anyone—“you are only as good as your last deal.” This, too, is reflected in the sporting world. Former athlete, now politician, Sebastian Coe has said, “Real success is consistency—the hardest bit is…to do it again and again and again.” Comedian
Billy Connolly says exactly the same, “You need to be good again and again and again.”

But if, to be a success, you need to keep on performing and producing results, this has to be kept in focus with two other priorities—potential and perspective. Bob Alexander, formerly chairman of NatWest, says: “What is success for one individual as a magnificent use of their talents would only be a modest use of talent by another.” Another athlete, Roger Black, said recently about winning a silver medal, “To me it is gold because it represents the best I could do.”

Perspective, too, is vital. The marketplace today seems dangerously locked into immediate results. But success, from a wider and more strategic standpoint, is something that can be noted, measured and appreciated only over the long haul. Sebastian Coe says, “To say a successful outcome is only if you win would be ludicrous, because the single most important contribution that any race has made to my career was the race in which I finished third.”

Success and Wealth
Success linked exclusively or mainly to wealth and material prosperity may be open to serious question, but it has most of us by the throat. Such an attitude is fed remorselessly through the media, by advertising and particularly in the way employment, promotion, bonuses and perks are shaped in the marketplace. “Success stories” are commonplace—take this recent article:

In the past dozen years Gerry Robinson has enjoyed the sort of success of which most people can only dream: a huge personal fortune, a beautiful house and family and plaudits from turning Granada Group around from a floundering giant to a major player in hotels and independent television….It is a long way from Dunfanaghy, the little fishing village on the north-east corner of Ireland where Mr. Robinson was born in 1948 and brought up with his five brothers and four sisters. They lived on the edge of the village in one of a row of tiny semi-detached bungalows where cars are still a rarity. The house was so small that there was not room for all the children to sit down to meals together.

Such a rags-to-riches story is fairly typical of the drip-feeding by which we are fed a certain kind of success. The columnist betrays his own addiction to it by writing of “a beautiful house and family” in the same phrase—as though property and people are possessions of equal value and to be equally called “beautiful.” Presumably failure—for the writer—means to have an ugly house and an ugly family, even more than having no house and no family.

The article is also a good example of another common perception of success—and, by implication, of failure. If you start poor and turn out wealthy, you are a success. If you start wealthy and end up poor, you are presumably a failure. If you start poor and end up poor, you are a failure. If you start wealthy and end up wealthy, you are unlikely to be seen as a failure—but neither will you be seen as a success.

Ignoring the Spiritual
Because we are living in the 21st century and the third millennium A.D., we need to appreciate that this is not new. Maybe more people are succumbing to such a materialistic concept of success, but essentially it is rooted in a worldview that diminishes and dismisses the importance (or even the existence) of the spiritual. A somewhat
unexpected spokesman for recovering the value of the human spirit appears in the person of the German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche. Writing in 1882, the same year in which he famously declared that “God is dead,” Nietzsche had this to say:

The American lust for gold, and the breathless haste with which they work,... is already beginning to infect old Europe with its ferocity and is spreading a lack of spirituality like a blanket. Even now one is ashamed of resting and prolonged reflection almost gives people a bad conscience. One thinks with a watch in one’s hand, even as one eats one’s midday meal while reading the latest news of the stock market. One lives as if one might always “miss out on something”....Living in a constant chase after gain compels people to expend their spirit to the point of exhaustion in continual pretence and overreaching and anticipating others. Virtue has come to consist in doing something in less time than someone else.

The Absence of Joy

When Nietzsche talked about “spirituality” and the human “spirit,” he was referring to specific aspects of human life—e.g. culture, good taste, “the ear and the eye for the melody of movement,” honesty, openness, sociability and the arts, “taking a walk with ideas and with friends” and particularly what he calls “joy.” “People are becoming increasingly suspicious of all joy,” he commented. Intriguingly, in the film American Beauty, Lester asks the success-driven Carolyn, “When did you become so joyless?”

There would, for example, be many today who would agree with William James (brother of the American novelist Henry James) who, in a letter written to H.G. Wells in 1906, referred to “the moral flabbiness born of the exclusive worship of the bitch-goddess Success.” He went on to say, “That—with the squalid cash interpretation put on the word ‘success’—is our national disease.”

A certain kind of success, in other words, or a particular attitude to that kind of success, corrodes and erodes the human spirit. The title of a book sums it up well—The Paradox of Success: When Winning at Work Means Losing at Life. That kind of success is ultimately failure. Thomas Merton, author of Seven Storey Mountain, was an American Trappist monk who found a great deal of fame and fortune as a writer in the second part of the 20th century. He was called “the most famous Catholic in America after John F. Kennedy.” He had two incisive comments to make about his success as an author. One is personal—“I have a comfortable sense of success that I know to be meaningless.” The other comment describes “the colossal sense of failure in the midst of success that is characteristic of America (but which America can’t face).”

Merton, doubtless, had his own diagnosis of the “sense of failure in the midst of success.” For our own purposes it is, perhaps, sufficient to say that any “cash interpretation” put on the word “success” is indeed “squalid” and leaves its adherents spiritually dissatisfied and empty. Nor is this the experience simply of individuals who go down that route—it can come to possess entire companies and communities. It can possess a whole marketplace. At root it buys into the illusion that success is “something added to a person rather than something that grows out of a person.”

Back to the Bible

What does the Bible have to say about success and failure? The first thing to stress is that the two words are unknown in the Bible—in the sense that we use them today. Some English translations of both the Hebrew and the Greek origi-
Success...and Failure

...nals refer to plans, for example, that succeed or fail. If there is any biblical theme about success and failure, it is linked to particular courses of action that meet with success or failure. The outcome depends, in most cases, on whether God is behind it or not. But no biblical writer speaks of individuals as being a “success” or a “failure.”

The single perspective says a lot about the Bible’s worldview and priorities, as compared with the modern attitudes outlined in previous pages. It is not that in the Bible there is no concern for material things—quite the opposite, in fact. The Old Testament, in particular, is constantly talking about both prosperity and adversity. This is classically summed up in the ultimatum put by Moses to the people of Israel in virtually his last instructions: “See, I have set before you life and death, blessing and curses. Choose life….”

In these words Moses is encapsulating the Old Testament understanding of success and failure. Prosperity is the result of the blessing of God and is to be found in the presence, the protection, and the provision of God. The biblical writers are well aware that merely material prosperity is quite possible without any acknowledgment of God. But it remains merely material and does not lead to abundant living. In fact, it results in adversity at virtually every other level, in remoteness from God in life and in death. That is living under a curse—it is certainly not a blessing. “To fail is to have God’s blessing withdrawn, lose the esteem of God, shrivel up spiritually, become small-souled.”

**God and Human Failure**

One of the key perspectives in the Old Testament comes almost like a refrain throughout the narrative of Israel’s most successful leader—David. From the time, at the age of 16, he triumphed over Goliath with a sling and a stone, David knew full well that any success he had was due to the presence and the blessing of God—“In everything he did he had great success, because the Lord was with him….” “The Lord gave David victory wherever he went.” David himself was happy to acknowledge this publicly: “With my God I can leap over a wall…It is God who arms me with strength…He enables me to stand on the heights…You stoop down to make me great…You have made me the head of the nations…Exalted be God, my Savior.”

But, even with David, it was his success that proved his undoing. Standing on the heights and head of the nations, he lost touch with God and followed his own inclinations. As a direct result, he acted in defiance of all he knew about God’s will and forfeited the blessing of God—unleashing a trail of misery and havoc at home and at work. David failed at the point where he was succeeding. Very little changed for him materially, but in his soul and in his spirit he became a scarred man and his family became a scarred family—hugely successful, but deeply scarred.

That is why the word “prosper” is much more helpful than the modern word “succeed.” One of the relevant Hebrew words in the Old Testament occurs 65 times—“it refers to successful activities in different areas of life, usually in the sense of accomplishing effectively what is intended.” It is also used of certain things that work properly—e.g. a tree “thrive,” a weapon “prosper,” a journey “succeed,” a waistcloth “is useful.” In general terms the Hebrew word “emphasizes that God alone is the one who gives success.” God’s presence and God’s grace enable both people and things to be effective and to work properly—i.e. to meet his desires as Creator and Sustainer of life.

(continued on page 15)
Schaeffer’s method was to push the nonbeliever to the logical conclusion of their false assumptions. Alternatively, he would push the nonbeliever to an adequate basis for their highest aspirations. For instance, one young man arrived at L’Abri an atheist, although passionately committed to social justice. He was gently persuaded to see that if his atheism were true there was no secure basis for any absolute value, including justice. He could either give up claim to knowing what was just or find a basis for it in an absolute standard of right and wrong, most adequately grounded in an infinite-personal God.

Schaeffer often argued that, when it comes down to it, our options are few. Our origins arise out of: 1) Nothing, 2) The Impersonal, or 3) The Personal. Schaeffer argued that the Personal-Infinite God alone was the key that unlocked the secrets of the Cosmos.

A second reason for Francis Schaeffer’s enormous impact was his emphasis on both the dignity and fallenness of mankind. In one of his classic sermons, “No Little People,” he says:

Though we are limited and weak in talent, physical energy, and psychological strength, we are not less than a stick of wood. But, as the rod of Moses had to become the rod of God, so that which is me must become the me of God. Then I can become useful in God’s hands. The Scripture emphasizes that much can come from little if the little is truly consecrated to God. There are no little people and no big people in the true spiritual sense, but only consecrated and unconsecrated people. The problem for each of us is applying this truth to ourselves . . . only one thing is important: to be consecrated persons in God’s place for us, at each moment. Those who think of themselves as little people in little places, if committed to Christ and living under His Lordship in the whole of life, may, by God’s grace, change the flow of our generation.

One way in which he demonstrated this respect for the dignity of individuals was through hours of listening and lovingly speaking the truth of Christ to people he met. In fact, his wife Edith maintains that much of his education was from discussions with other people rather than from books alone. Edith writes in L’Abri:

Rather than studying volumes in an ivory tower separated from life and developing a theory separated from the thinking and struggling of men, Fran has been talking for thirteen years now to men and women in the very midst of their struggles. He has talked to existentialists, logical positivists, Hindus, Buddhists, liberal Protestants, liberal Roman Catholics, Reformed Jews and atheist Jews, Muslims, members of occult cults... brilliant professors, brilliant students and brilliant drop-outs! He has talked to beatniks, hippies, drug addicts, homosexuals and psychologically disturbed people.... The answers have been given, not out of academic research (although he does volumes of reading constantly to keep up), but out of this arena of live conversation.

He answers real questions with carefully thought out answers which are real answers....

Francis Schaeffer believed in involving himself in life—in answering the real questions of real people.

Third, the very foundation of his life was a passion for Christ, shown in his book True Spirituality. At one point, having arrived in Europe after a number of years as a pastor in a conservative Presbyterian church, he had a crisis of faith. For several months, he wrestled with whether his faith was “true truth,” not just his own perception of things but objectively real. At the end of that period, he strongly reaffirmed his faith and a passion to live by trusting in Christ. One of
Profiles in Faith: Francis Schaeffer

the ways this was demonstrated was by praying about finances but not sending out any letters asking for money. Many times God answered their prayers at just the right time giving them the exact amount needed. Prayer was a way of life at L’Abri. Anky Rookmaaker writes: “What impressed me most...was that the Schaeffers believed in prayer, and that their prayers were answered often in a very direct way.... It was so different than prayer so often is—not just a blind hope, but in faith, believing that God did hear and that He would answer....” Schaeffer not only involved himself in the lives of real people, he also demonstrated faith in a real God.

Fourth, Schaeffer manifested a place for the significance of the arts and artists. I can vividly remember hearing Schaeffer speak at Geneva College on what later became a short book, Art and the Bible. He spoke to the tragedy of many Christian young people who had a passion for music, painting, sculpture, film, etc., but were discouraged from that pursuit by well-meaning parents and church leaders. They were unable to see a vision for truth, goodness and beauty that was not merely focused on specifically Biblical and redemptive themes, but on all of creation. For instance, Schaeffer noted that Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. He especially pointed out that Solomon “spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that grows on the wall; he also spoke of animals and birds and creeping things and fish” (I Kings 4:32-33). In other words, his topics were not merely “religious” but included all of creation. Thus, there is a place not only for “Christian music” but also for music which can give glory to God. Schaeffer also pointed to the importance of listening to contemporary culture—plays, music, movies, and literature—as an act of love enabling us to speak more compassionately to our generation.

Fifth, Schaeffer emphasized the importance of antithesis. The biblical view, he contended, involves acknowledging a contradiction between true and false prophets, right and wrong, good and evil, salvation and judgment, the broad way and the narrow way. J.I. Packer writes, “For Schaeffer the most tragic—because the most anti-human—thing in life was willful refusal by a human being to face the antithesis or rather the series of antitheses, with which God in Holy Scripture confronts us, and in this perception I think he was right.”

Schaeffer has gotten much criticism for being either wrong on details of philosophy or over-simplistic on the history of art or other areas. He was an evangelist not always concerned with the nuances of the specialist scholar. His was the place of the crusading “cartoonist” whose simple sketches give valuable insights into life. Again, Packer writes: “My guess is that his verbal and visual cartoons, simplistic but brilliant as they appear to me to be, will outlive everything else. I am sure, however, that I shall not be at all wrong when I hail Francis Schaeffer...as one of the truly great Christians of my time.” Although he could deal with the details of academic discussion, Francis Schaeffer’s greatest gift was to identify the larger religious and personal issues which lie behind the various intellectual smokescreens. In his focus on what was truly important and in his refusal to let his listeners remain on the level of the superficial, his legacy will endure. ✠

J.I. Packer: I hail Francis Schaeffer...as one of the truly great Christians of my time.
A Conference on Capitol Hill

On September 7-8, the C.S. Lewis Institute conducted a conference on Capitol Hill with Dr. James Houston speaking on “Spiritual Living in a Secular World” at Christ Our Shepherd Church. Pastor Stuart McAlpine welcomed those attending the conference, calling it a long-awaited and much-prayed-for event, the first of what he hopes are many conferences on Capitol Hill. Thanks be to God.

Dr. Houston’s lecture titles were “Paul and the Emancipation from the Stoic Self,” “Augustine and the Western Tradition of Self-Knowing,” “Bernard of Clairvaux and Life-Shaping Desires,” and “Jonathan Edwards and the Shaping of Godly Character.” The tapes are highly recommended as a rich source of challenge to the thirsty heart!

Cassette tapes of the series “Spiritual Living in a Secular World: Insights from Saints of Ages Past” by Dr. James Houston are available. The four-tape set is in an album and easy to keep in the car for travel. The price of each cassette tape set is $29, shipping in the continental U.S. and handling included. Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery. Call to order: 703/914-5602 or 800/813-9209. Visa & MasterCard accepted. Visit our website for more ordering information.

Oxford Summer Study Program Report

During the last week of June and the first week of July, thirty friends of the C.S. Lewis Institute took part in the Institute’s first Oxford Summer Study Program. Timed to coincide with the Summer School offered by Wycliffe Hall, Oxford in conjunction with Regent College, Vancouver, B.C., the Study Program began with a brief visit in Ireland with Lewis’s stepson Douglas Gresham. Two full weeks in Oxford were filled with outstanding teaching by J.I. Packer, Alister McGrath, Eugene Peterson, and our own Art Lindsley.

Watch the website and future Report issues for 2002 Oxford Summer Study plans.
God’s Shalom

The other key Hebrew word occurs over 250 times and is linked with the first. It is shalom. It is commonly used as a greeting today—as then—but it enshrines all that human beings long for and (still more significantly) all that God intends for his world. It covers fundamental realities such as peace, friendship, happiness, well-being, prosperity, health, luck, kindness, salvation. Shalom, therefore, comes to us as an alternative goal to the modern drive for success. “All shalom comes from God and he is the foundation of shalom. Shalom is the result of restored righteousness and cannot be achieved while one is persisting in sin and evil.”

So, how do we discover the shalom of God? How do we establish that shalom in our daily lives at work, at home, with others, on our own? Here we need to return to the same words quoted earlier, when we referred to the illusion that success is “something added to a person rather than something that grows out of a person.” If I am more concerned for the person I am becoming than for the things I am achieving or the results I am producing, I will remain open to God’s will for me, God’s word to me, God’s ways with me.

The Prince of Peace

This is where Jesus Christ presents himself to us as the prince of peace, or the one who bestows shalom on those who acknowledge him as the Lord of their lives. This prince of peace “is himself the whole man, the perfectly integrated, rounded personality, at one with God and humankind.” Because he is whole, integrated, rounded, he can make us whole as we make room for him day by day. “On a personal level, peace means fulfillment; to die in peace is to have lived a fulfilled life, to have achieved all God planned. Peace is well-being and a freedom from anxiety. In relationship it is goodwill and harmony. Towards God, it is the full realization of his favor.”

Success, then, is to reach the end of our lives having achieved what God put us here to become i.e. like his Son, Jesus Christ. Putting it like that underlines that we cannot achieve this by ourselves. We need the blessing and the grace of God. More than that, we need the daily presence of God, because shalom “is the gift of God and can be received only in his presence.” Jesus himself IS our shalom. He preached shalom. He made shalom possible and available through the blood of his cross and he himself is our shalom, our peace. As the prince of peace he looks after our success and he looks after our failures.

There is a glorious prayer of blessing, given by God to Moses to pass on to Aaron as high priest to pronounce and to go on pronouncing on the people of Israel: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace (shalom).”

God’s blessing, God’s protection, God’s presence, God’s grace, God’s peace—that all adds up to being fulfilled and being complete. That is success. Anything else is, ultimately, failure. ♦

[The preceding is an abridged version; a full-version will be made available to Success...and Failure seminar attendees. Ed.]

October Seminars

David Prior will give four seminars on Effective Discipleship in the Marketplace on October 2, 9, 16, and 23 at The Falls Church Episcopal. He will speak on “Integrity,” “Ambition,” “Balance,” and “Success and Failure,” respectively. The seminars are $29 each or $99 for all four. Attendees receive the tape and monograph; those attending all four will receive a monograph binder and tape album as well.

Call 703/620-4056 to register.
Rev. David Prior, “Ministry in the Marketplace” Conference, September 28-29, 2001 at The Falls Church Episcopal, Falls Church, VA

“Effective Discipleship in the Marketplace,” four Seminars, Tuesday evenings, October 2, 9, 16, 23, 2001: “Integrity,” “Ambition,” “Balance,” and “Success and Failure,” respectively; 7:30-9:00, The Falls Church Episcopal, Falls Church, VA

Dr. N.T. Wright, “Resurrection and Life After Death: Exploring the Christian Hope,” November 9-10, 2001 at The Falls Church Episcopal, Falls Church, VA

COMING IN 2002

Dr. Ravi Zacharias, June 7-8 at McLean Bible Church, Vienna, VA

Dr. Michael Green, at Truro Episcopal Church

COMING IN 2003

Dallas Willard & Richard Foster, May 2-3

New Conference Registration Number: 703/620-4056

Please help us be good stewards: If you receive unwanted copies of Report or you wish to no longer receive Report, simply call 703/914-5602 in the Metro area or 800/813-9209 or e-mail us at info@cslewisinstitute.org. We will be happy to make the necessary changes. Thank you!

C.S. LEWIS INSTITUTE

4208 Evergreen Lane, Suite 222 • Annandale, Virginia 22003

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