

Francis Schaeffer on Defending Truth in Dystopia: Remembering the Biblical Base of Truth as the Watershed of Christian Faith & Practice

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Abstract:

In the Spring of 1976, Dr. Schaeffer gave a lecture before the combined convention of the National Association of Evangelicals (NEA) and the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) association in Washington D.C. It was the 33rd annual convention of the NEA and a meeting in Washington D.C., where over 2000 persons would be in attendance. The event was called "Let Freedom Ring." President Gerald R. Ford himself would open the convention and also speak at a service of prayer for the nation. It is perhaps one of the most significant speaking events of Dr. Schaeffer's career. Yet, what was his topic? "Inerrancy: The Watershed of the Evangelical World." This lecture will explore both the history of this event, how far we have come from this point in history, as well as the application of the prophetic content of that lecture to our current dystopian struggles.

An Historic Event

The actual starting date of the Let Freedom Ring conference was February 22, 1976. The author of this paper was turning six years old on this day and unfortunately was not in attendance. Yet, more importantly, the conference starts on George Washington's birthday in the bicentennial year of our country. America will be 200 years old in July. The event would be held at the Shoreham Americana Hotel and the main lectures would take place in the now historic Regency Ballroom, the location that has hosted numerous presidential balls since President Franklin D. Roosevelt. President Ford would say several things of significance in his opening remarks, but to our topic, this quote should resonate with us:

We can believe in the faith of our Fathers. We are the heirs of our Fathers' faith, and it can be a source of strength and comfort and understanding for us, as it was for them. It remains our duty to remember our religious heritage, to teach it to our children, and to order our own lives with courage, with justice and kindness and in the love of God.

Billy Zioli & Gerald Ford & Francis Schaeffer

Also, during Gerald Ford's opening remarks, President Ford mentioned, "My good friend, Billy Zioli" In our time, many have forgotten the significance of this relationship and some may not even know who Billy Zioli is. Billy Zioli is an interesting person in this context as he connects President Ford and others to Dr. Schaeffer. Zioli got his start in Youth for Christ and at a certain point had been the founder of outreach to athletes in professional sports, often meeting with them and speaking on Sunday mornings, often prior to games. At their first meeting, Ford was

Zioli's Congressman and they began to work together at various events. Ford and Zioli would also often meet for prayer and discussion. When Vice-President Agnew resigned, during the Nixon administration, Ford at this time was the minority leader in the House of representatives. Zioli had been asked to deliver a prayer before the House that morning. After his prayer, he was ushered into the downstairs House dining room. Amidst the walk, Ford was being hounded by the press who were asking about comments from both sides of Congress stating "This is the man for the job!" Zioli would leave a note to Ford stating that he believed he was the man God had chosen for the job. Zioli notes in his writings that this was not his sort of style to do this sort of thing. Nevertheless, God had led him to do so. Two days later it would be announced that Gerald Ford had been nominated to the Vice-Presidency.¹ After that visit, Zioli suggested to Ford that he should send him a weekly memo. These would be a collection of prayers that would form the book, *God's Got a Better Plan* much later. These started in October of 1973 and would continue thereafter.

It is at this point the connection with Dr. Schaeffer becomes apparent. Zeoli would study at L'Abri in 1974 during the midst of the Watergate crisis, sending letters to Ford written in advance. He recollects calling Ford to pray with him over the matter. By August 9 of 1974, he would be giving his inaugural speech. Thereafter, Zioli would become something of a regular chaplain to the White House ministering to both Ford and the Ford family.

While the Schaeffer connection is perhaps not as stately profound, it is rather significant providentially in its own right. First, as Billy Zioli was the president of Gospel Films, the company that would produce the *How Should We Then Live?* film series by Dr. Schaeffer. However, more significant than this. Zioli was the son of the evangelist Anthony Zioli. One of Schaeffer's biographers, Colin Duriez, would record in his work, *Francis Schaeffer, An Authentic Life*, that forty three years earlier on August 19th, 1930, Young Schaeffer would write the following:

August 19th, 1930 - Tent Meeting, Anthony Zeoli—have decided to give my whole life to Christ unconditionally.

You see, Schaeffer had been converted under the ministry of Anthony Zioli, the father of Billy Zioli the later friend and chaplain to the president. God's providence on display.

In Context to Schaeffer's Works

Firstly, we should understand that Schaeffer is here the final speaker of the conference. He is taking a break from filming *How Should We Then Live?* series just to attend the event. During the lecture, Schaeffer purposely transitions and reads a portion of his material presented at the Lausanne Congress in 1974. This material would later be published by the Lausanne Congress in a book called *Let the Earth Hear His Voice* and then Dr. Schaeffer would later publish it as a booklet called, *Two Contents, Two Realities*. Dr. Schaeffer later self-documents the connection of this material in his *Complete Works*. Herein he mentions the 1976 conference in *No Final Conflict* and further connects it with both his lecture to the Lausanne Congress in 1974, but also his work *Genesis in Space and Time*. Moreover, the subject matter would also be more deeply

¹ See the Preface to *God's Got a Better Idea* by Billy Zeoli. Zeoli, Billy, *God's Got a Better Idea*, Flemming H. Revell, 1978. Preface.

developed in his work, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*. The author will be drawing from each of these works as needed to develop the needed understanding of what Dr. Schaeffer is trying to convey in context.

Defining the Watershed

The term watershed may not be immediately on our vocabulary in our time, unless we are students of geology. Yet, a watershed is “An area or ridge of land that separates waters flowing to different rivers, basins, or seas.”² This ridge of land serves as a dividing line and the water therefore flows in different directions.

Yet, how did Schaeffer mean to use this term? As mentioned, eventually, the content from this talk and his early presentation at the Lausanne Congress in 1974 would evolve into the elements used in Dr. Schaeffer’s work, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*. Part two of that book is also entitled, “*The Watershed of the Evangelical World*.” Herein, we find the following most definitive explanation of the term from Dr. Schaeffer himself:

Not far from where we live in Switzerland is a high ridge of rock with a valley on both sides. One time I was there when there was snow on the ground along that ridge. The snow was lying there unbroken, a seeming unity. However, that unity was an illusion, for it lay along a great divide; it lay along a watershed. One portion of the snow when it melted would flow into one valley. The snow which lay close beside would flow into another valley when it melted.

Now it just so happens on that particular ridge that the melting snow which flows down one side of that ridge goes down into a valley, into a small river, and then down into the Rhine River. The Rhine then flows on through Germany and the water ends up in the cold waters of the North Sea. The water from the snow that started out so close along that watershed on the other side of the ridge, when this snow melts, drops off sharply down the ridge into the Rhone Valley. This water flows into Lac Lemman—or as it is known in the English-speaking world, Lake Geneva—and then goes down below that into the Rhone River which flows through France and into the warm waters of the Mediterranean.

The snow lies along that watershed, unbroken, as a seeming unity. But when it melts, where it ends in its destinations is literally a thousand miles apart. That is a watershed. That is what a watershed is. A watershed divides. A clear line can be drawn between what seems at first to be the same or at least very close, but in reality ends in very different situations. In a watershed there is a line.³

² Oxford Languages (default via Google search).

See also: "a dividing ridge between drainage areas" "a crucial dividing point, line, or factor" from ~ Websters, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/watershed>

³ Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer*. Chapter 2. - Volume 4, Page 325. (Book: “*The Great Evangelical Disaster*”)

Dr. Schaeffer is using this context in an illustration that is familiar to him, but in a way that distinctly speaks to the problems of his time and our own. He goes on to say the following:

What does this illustration have to do with the evangelical world today? I would suggest that it is a very accurate description of what is happening. Evangelicals today are facing a watershed concerning the nature of biblical inspiration and authority. It is a watershed issue in very much the same sense as described in the illustration. Within evangelicalism there are a growing number who are modifying their views on the inerrancy of the Bible so that the full authority of Scripture is completely undercut. But it is happening in very subtle ways. Like the snow lying side-by-side on the ridge, the new views on biblical authority often seem at first glance not to be so very far from what evangelicals, until just recently, have always believed. But also, like the snow lying side-by-side on the ridge, the new views when followed consistently end up a thousand miles apart.

What may seem like a minor difference at first, in the end makes all the difference in the world. It makes all the difference, as we might expect, in things pertaining to theology, doctrine and spiritual matters, but it also makes all the difference in things pertaining to the daily Christian life and how we as Christians are to relate to the world around us. In other words, compromising the full authority of Scripture eventually affects what it means to be a Christian theologically and how we live in the full spectrum of human life.

This is a larger elaboration and foundation of the general premise of “watershed” Dr. Schaeffer used within his talk at the NAE-NRB conference.

Holding to a strong view of Scripture on not holding to it is the watershed of the Evangelical world. The first direction in which we must face is to say most lovingly but clearly, “Evangelicalism is not consistently Evangelical unless there is a line drawn between those who take a full view of Scripture and those who do not.”⁴

Two Reasons

Dr. Schaeffer, in his talk, gives us two general reasons why we should hold to a strong view of Scripture. The First is actually a grouping of two thoughts to be held together that I will break apart here. First, “What the Bible teaches about itself” and as a finer related point of that notion, specifically, “What Jesus teaches about Scripture.” Then his second point is simply this, an overall warning, that “There are hard days ahead” if we do not hold to a strong view of Scripture.

As to the first concept, we should understand that Dr. Schaeffer is summarizing something that he will later convey in his work *No Final Conflict*,⁵ that lays out the overall evidence for defending Scripture that Schaeffer uses based on the factor of what the Bible says about itself. The factors are namely as follows:

⁴ Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Watershed of the Evangelical World*, Feb 24. 1976. Lecture Audio.

⁵ Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: Volume Two, A Christian View of the Bible as Truth*, Westchester, IL, Crossway Books. p125, (*Book: No Final Conflict*,)

- The literary conventions of Genesis
 - the regular *toledoth* phrase of “these are the generations of”
 - The rendering of subject matter in a literary pattern of dismissing unimportant concepts and then continuing on with significant concepts
- The New Testament treating the Old Testament and Genesis as truth
 - Jesus, within Scripture, treats the Old Testament as truth about Himself.

In Dr. Schaeffer’s talk at the conference, after giving us the first point, he explicitly states, “this should be enough in itself” for holding to a strong uncompromising view of Scripture. Meaning, if we are a follower of Christ we would simply be faithful. We would further recognize that there is enough evidence by the nature of both the work of Christ in our lives, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, yet also the forthright testimony of Scripture and Christ himself, to hold firmly in this area. Moreover, and after all, the founder of our faith, Jesus, is telling us that the Scriptures speak of him! Here’s a most straightforward example from Luke:

[24] Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.” [25] And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! [26] Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” [27] And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:24–27 (ESV)

Yet, unfortunately now for several generations there are those that instead of heeding the voice of the founder of their faith, there are some who only want the general religious experience. They are comfortable dismissing the validity of Scripture to get it. Schaeffer warns that this began with the Neo-orthodox and Existential religious movements, but now has been adopted into Evangelicalism proper. It has grown year-by-year since Dr. Schaeffer began to sound this warning.

The heart of of Neo-Orthodox Existential Theology is that the Bible gives us a quarry out of which to have religious experience, but that the Bible contains mistakes where it touches that which is verifiable namely history and science, but unhappily we must say that in some circles this concept now has come into some of that which is called Evangelicalism. In short, in these circles, the Neo-Orthodox Existential Theology is being taught under the name of Evangelicalism.⁶

While one can question why some would want to hold a false view of Christianity, one should realize that this is what Schaeffer diagnoses as a religious leap. These people want the feel-good aspects of the religious experience, but want to divorce it from its foundations. They want a romantic notion of Jesus, but not the full Biblical Jesus. Thus, in the process, truth itself is lost. The “hard days ahead” that are now upon us would impact the following areas. There will be problems for ourselves, problems for our children, and finally problems for our spiritual descendants Dr. Schaeffer says.

⁶ Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Watershed of the Evangelical World*, Feb 24. 1976. Lecture Audio.

The issue is where the Bible is propositional truth, that is truth that may be stated in propositions where it touches history and the cosmos, that is all the way back to pre-Abrahamic history, all the way back to the first eleven chapters of Genesis or whether instead of that it is only meaningful where it is considered religious.

T.H. Huxley, the biologist, the friend of Darwin, the grandfather of Aldrus and Julian Huxley, wrote in 1890 that he visualized the day not far hence in which faith would be separated from all fact and especially all pre-Abrahamic history and that faith would then go on triumphant forever. This is an amazing quote from 1890, before Existential Philosophy or Existential Theology. He foresaw something clearly, and I am sure he and his friends saw this as some sort of a joke, because they would have understood well, that if faith is separated from fact, and specifically pre-Abrahamic space-time history, it is only another form of what we today call a trip.⁷

Consensus Lost

Christianity is no longer providing the consensus for our society.⁸

Therefore, due to the loss of the Biblical foundation, the basis of truth is lost and Christianity continues to decline in our culture. Thus Dr. Schaeffer wishes us to wakeup to the reality that “the consensus is lost” and that our view is in the minority.

When we think of this, we should understand what Dr. Schaeffer means by the Christian consensus. He does not mean that America was ever exclusively Christian. Dr. Schaeffer is not saying that all American founders were solidly Christian. Nor is Dr. Schaeffer saying that people lived purely Biblically in a “golden era” during the founding of the United States. Rather, Dr. Schaeffer is saying that there was a Christian Consensus and that a large portion of the population held to Christian values. Moreover, that consensus of belief was in line with much of Protestant Reformation thought. There was a Christian Ethos at work in our society. Thus finally, the character exhibited in the literature of the time shows respect for Christian values, The aspirations of the country at that time held respect for the Christian moral base of ethics and people in practice were largely church-going. This is verifiable in many ways, but one key example that can be understood easily is that many of the founding educational institutions were distinctly Christian or were founded by Christian leaders. Harvard and Yale originally had Puritan roots. Princeton was Presbyterian Reformed. Oxford, was founded in the United Kingdom by religious orders. Cambridge originally had Christian leaders. We are a long way from the most respected educational institutions in America being Christian in ethos or even in tolerance.

⁷ Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Watershed of the Evangelical World*, Feb 24. 1976. Lecture Audio. In this portion of the audio, Schaeffer is quoting from his Lausanne Congress lecture from 1974, which eventually was published in book form as *Two Contents, Two Realities*.

⁸ Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Watershed of the Evangelical World*, Feb 24. 1976. Lecture Audio.

Inerrancy Rejected

The Reformation with its emphasis on the Word of God being the revelation of God in all that it teaches, provided a freedom in society and yet a form in society as well.⁹

This understanding is significant in that our society regularly accuses Christianity as being moral oppression, when in fact it is a basis for freedoms in that it limits the power of those who would abuse others and the whole of society. We need to constantly put this before the people we encounter. The author has been asked many times, "Why would you insist on legislating morality?" To that I respond, "Name one law that does not have moral implications." To this I generally get silence or attempts to ignore the request. Our society needs to be reminded that if you are without morals, you are amoral.

Now how did the decline of the Bible happen? Much of the beginning of the decline can be traced back to the movements in theology during the 1930s where our institutions began to shift away from their teaching of the Biblical base. As history moved forward, the impacts would be more and more felt.

In retrospect we can see that ever since the late 1930s in the United States, the Christian consensus is the minority view and does not provide the consensus for society moral or law any longer. We who are Bible believing Christians no longer represent the status quo of our society.¹⁰

Later he states,

Scholars like J. Gresham Machen who pointed out that the foundation upon which Christianity rest was being destroyed. What is that foundation? That foundation being that the personal God who exit has not been silent, but has spoken, in propositional truth in all that the Bible teaches, in history, the cosmos, and moral absolutes, as well as the meaning system, the value system of the Bible and religious subjects.¹¹

Loss of Truth

Dr. Schaeffer wants us to understand that the loss of the Biblical base that has removed the Christian consensus in our society results in the loss of the foundation of both individual morality, but also the basis for law in our society.

Christianity is no longer providing the consensus for our society, nor, as far as that is concerned, and being in Washington, D.C., neither is Christianity presenting the consensus for which our law is based. We are in a time when Humanism is coming to its natural conclusion in morals, values and law. All that society has today is relative values

⁹ Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Watershed of the Evangelical World*, Lecture Audio. Feb 24. 1976.

¹⁰ Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Watershed of the Evangelical World*, Lecture Audio. Feb 24. 1976.

¹¹ Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Watershed of the Evangelical World*, Lecture Audio. Feb 24. 1976.

based only upon statistical averages and that is all.¹²

Dr. Schaeffer, in other places, warns of the statistical averages by questioning the 51% mentality.

This present generation has been raised by the first full post-Christian generation, and thus the memory is all but gone. In government and in morals, the base is gone and the hedonistic, subjective whims of a 51 percent majority, or an elite, are all that is left. Only sociological averages and arbitrary judgments remain.¹³

Arbitrary Absolutes

Eventually, the loss of truth results in the replacement of truth with arbitrary absolutes. What will the mob choose? Schaeffer's contention elsewhere in his works is that mankind will bring about essentially anything that he can. His only constraint is the current moral compass of the consensus. If one does not have a Biblical base, one can default to whatever comes to mind. For example, while some might parade the notion of "making the world a better place" the end thereof can be catastrophic as some will have the idea that making the world better involves the extermination of others. The difficulty for Christians shall be to make sure that we understand that there will be arbitrary positions along a continuum. Some we encounter might be romantically inclined to hold to the remnant memories of the older "Christian values" while others will believe that the best way to enhance society will be to follow the current cultural trends or at worse, delete a portions of the population. The two extremes should be something regularly on our radar. We must applaud the romantic "Christian values" and then direct them to the true basis for why the view they hold is true and yet we must condemn the others that would bring destruction and chaos. Remembering again the earlier quote:

All that society has today is relative values based only on statistical averages and that is all.¹⁴

Conflicting Absolutes

The arbitrary ideas that people place in the place of the truth principles established by Scripture result in random ideas that eventually devolve into conflict. While it might seem like the unified decline of our time has people marching forward in lock-step, in reality they are merely lock-step on selecting arbitrary absolutes to replace views of the Christian consensus. They may hold on to some consensus notions romantically, but they are not consistent with their own absence of a moral base. People will not ultimately be unified in their positions and they will eventually collide

¹² Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Watershed of the Evangelical World*, Lecture Audio. Feb 24. 1976.

¹³ Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: Volume Four, A Christian View of the Church*, Westchester, IL, Crossway Books. p72. (Book: *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*).

¹⁴ Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Watershed of the Evangelical World*, Lecture Audio. Feb 24. 1976.

in conflict.

One can think of numerous examples of this in current society. Schaeffer's analysis as well as his apologetic of tension show us that this is transpiring in several forms. Therefore the author is of the opinion that the following are examples of this today:

1. Movements against general reality
 - a. Trust the Science vs Gender Science
 - b. Transgender Athletes vs Female Athletes
 - c. Trans Rights vs Human Rights
 - d. "Born this way" vs Abortion Advocates
 - e. "Born this way" vs Science: Cell Gender Markers
 - f. "Born this way" vs Female Anatomy
 - g. Cancel Culture vs Free Speech
 - h. Racial Marxism vs Whiteness
 - i. Racial Accommodations for Math vs Math as a Science
2. Movements in contrast to the remnants of the religious base
 - a. Cancel Culture vs Religious Freedom
 - b. Ban Prayer in School, but Authorize Transgender Indoctrination
3. Movements in contrast to other secular movements
 - a. Gays against Groomers
 - b. Feminist for Palestine, Queers for Palestine
 - c. "My Body My Choice" vs Vaccine Mandates
 - d. Logical contradiction of Racial Appropriate (bad) vs Gender Appropriation (good)
 - e. "Transgender Day of Vengeance" vs Anti-Gun Advocates
 - f. Covenant Shooting (by Trans) vs Anti-Gun Advocates

The Desire for Order Amidst Chaos

We should ask ourselves, "What happens when worldview conflicts result in cultural upheaval?" Without the Biblical Reformation base, there will be loss of freedom. The loss of the freedoms naturally produces chaos.

The Reformation with its emphasis on the Word of God being the revelation of God in all that it teaches, provided a freedom in society and yet a form in society as well. Thus there were freedoms in the Reformation countries such as the world had never known before and yet without those freedoms leading to chaos because both laws and morals had the consensus surrounding them, resting upon what the Bible taught. That situation is now finished and you cannot understand it for yourself or for your spiritual or physical children unless you understand in reality, that situation really is finished.

This new situation transpires as we lose the secondary blessings that we have been given from

the Biblical base and these in turn are used against society. Dr. Schaeffer explains:

True Christianity also brings with it many secondary blessings. One of those secondary blessings that Christianity brings with it and what it has brought with it in Reformation Countries has been titanic freedoms! The titanic freedoms we have had, yet without those freedoms leading to chaos because the Bibles absolutes provided a consensus upon which freedom can operate, but once this consensus has been removed, as it is today, then the very freedoms that have come out of the Reformation and the Reformation countries, these very freedoms became a destructive force in society, leading to chaos. What was a secondary blessing, removed from the Christian basis then became destructive.¹⁵

When conflicting absolutes take their shape, the conflicts they create conflict in the natural world. The competing ideas become destructive and breed chaos. Dr. Schaeffer, in his book, *How Should We Then Live?* Quoted Eric Hoffer as saying, "When freedom destroys order, the yearning for order will destroy freedom."¹⁶ and this is really at the core of how authoritarianism arises.

Partly Lines

To review therefore, let us consider the flow that brought this decline. The rejection of the Bible and Inerrancy, brought about the loss of truth in our culture. The loss of truth brought about a loss of moral values and the basis for law. The moral base was replaced by arbitrary absolutes. The arbitrary absolutes would result in conflicting worldviews and movements. This is what we are seeing today. The next step will be when the conflicting worldviews devolve to chaos through more and more social conflict. The government will be forced to step in to regain control. In the effort to regain order in the midst of chaos, some form of authoritarianism begins to take hold. If pluralism creates enough disorder in society, the state will eventually step in to regain control by force. This inevitably brings about the loss of freedoms.

Let me be clear that Dr. Schaeffer did not suggest a political party in his presentation in Washington, but it is known that Dr. Schaeffer was in fact a Conservative. Moreover, he was speaking at a conference of Conservatives. Yet he would have no doubt differed with a lot of what we see today on the Right as well as on the Left, as both have declined. Therefore, one thing that should be noted by Bible Believing Christians is that while both Dr. Schaeffer and ourselves may hold to Conservative values, yet even now, these views are being slowly and systematically thrown off by many on the Right in addition to likewise being more quickly utterly distorted by those on the Left. For by mere casual observance of the various conflicting movements we can see the Left's embrace of numerous areas of immorality in general, but especially in the area of sexuality.

¹⁵ Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Watershed of the Evangelical World*, Lecture Audio. Feb 24. 1976.

¹⁶ Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: Volume Five, A Christian View of the West*, Westchester, IL, Crossway Books. p244, (Book: *How Should We Then Live*)

The Left, while having a form of concern in certain areas that some Christians might be able to agree with in the concepts of protecting nature and human rights. History is clear that the Left has regularly chosen many wrong solutions and is now currently steeped in immorality. Furthermore, the Left has removed God from the Democratic party stance. The adoption of various sexual groups and celebrating them is truly Godless. The adoption of Marxism, Cancel Culture, DEI and government principles of Socialism represent real threats to our Constitutional Republic. Christians must be honest that by supporting the Left one is supporting not just the killing of the unborn but a massive level of corruption and immoral behavior. If a Christian can somehow stay on the Left, which is something the author personally cannot understand or condone, one must call out these immoral positions and direct people to return to Biblical values, if nothing more, for the sake of the peace in society.

The Right, on the other hand, while usually not openly embracing the same level of social immorality as the Left, has often made up for it in congressional moral and ethical compromise. The common perpetrators have been those stipulated as RINOS (Republican in name only) who often seem to be more concerned with keeping their positions through compromise than actually leading by the proper principles they claim to profess. Yet, those holding out for true values that at least partially align with Christianity, such as those in the MAGA (Make American Great Again) movement and its leader, will often do so with some degree of unChristian caustic language, and disparagement, which the Left loves to use to target Christians with the charge of hypocrisy. While there are numerous exceptions who still are fighting and arguing for a return to Biblical values without such tactics on the Right, Christians need to be sober to the fact that some Republicans are sadly displaying compromised values themselves in our time and that we are just a faction of the overall group. Likewise, the Left paints Christians on the right with guilt by association. Moreover, we are a minority that the Left has labeled distinctly as "Far Right." Suddenly, the founding principles we align with are labeled extreme.

Further, the author has regularly read Republicans and/or MAGA making statements that they are throwing off Conservative values and going with the more expedient of "what is good for America" because they do not wish to disparage their Gay or Trans friends. Although Conservatism in itself is not entirely Christian and is even skewed by some who hold it, it is perhaps the last remnants of the morals of the Christian base in American politics. However, without the Biblical mooring, these precepts are now seen as "romantic notions" that can be tossed off without question. After all, they have lost their backing authority and are now seen as merely novel opinions about how to live that don't fit our time. Here the Christian must speak and begin to reinforce values and their base in our culture and remind Conservatives what they are fighting for. Applaud those who hold fast to the values, but direct them to their source!

So while one can see that in many ways the visibly immoral changes are occurring at a slower rate in one party than the other. In this, we are to use good judgment in voting for the lesser of the two evils as it is safe to say that we will not get the perfect candidate that completely aligns with the Christian ethos. Therefore, it seems obvious to the author that our vote morally belongs with discernment to the Right at this point of our nation's history, while it still holds to the remains of Conservative concepts, even if at times inconsistently so. Yet, I encourage those of another opinion to explore cordial discourse and consider the author's perspective.

Authoritarianism

However, it must be stated firmly that we must be distinctly sober about merely embracing political parties in a declining world. Let us be very sober here, if the decline continues we will finally find ourselves standing alone without a party. As ultimately, with respect to party, Dr. Schaeffer in fact eventually predicted the probability of a coming irrelevance of Left and Right politics in our future. It is arguably what would happen if the trends he saw, as well as what we are seeing in our time continue. Both parties could eventually be degraded without the Christian ethos. While co-belligerence work on core issues is recommended by Dr. Schaeffer on certain policies to obstruct the decline, wherein we work with others to take a moral stance, it does have its moral limits when both sides have finally devolved. Here is what he later wrote:

At that point the words left or right will make no difference. They are only two roads to the same end. There is no difference between an authoritarian government from the right or the left: the results are the same. An elite, an authoritarianism as such, will gradually force form on society so that it will not go on to chaos. And most people will accept it—from the desire for personal peace and affluence, from apathy, and from the yearning for order to assure the functioning of some political system, business, and the affairs of daily life.¹⁷

As we think about all of these things, we should be very sober minded about what is likely to happen beyond our current political party. The result of Left/Right politics, if the Biblical base is not restored (and this is the most important caveat here) is a continual de-evolution where just like in the *Pit and the Pendulum* by Edgar Allan Poe, the blade swings Left to Right, yet each time sinking one step lower. Lower and lower it swings, until bringing ultimate harm.

As we think about all of these things, we should also be sober minded about what will continue to transpire should we not succeed, with the Lord's help, in turning back the tide.

- Further erosion of culture
- Further moral decline
- Further erosion of disciplines of learning:
 - Philosophy
 - Law
 - Science
 - Art
 - Humanities and Social Sciences

¹⁷ Schaeffer, A. Francis, *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: Volume Five, A Christian View of the West*, Westchester, IL, Crossway Books. p230, (Book: *How Should We Then Live*)

- Further erosion of government
- Drift toward anarchy
- Authoritarianism to control anarchy

Conclusion: Standing Firm

Our job as Christians should again be to applaud the memories of Biblical principles and the good that some still desire to do, perhaps being driven by the grace of God that still remains. Then we are to direct them to the source. Yet likewise, we must condemn the decline, by pointing out the tensions and standing firm in our obedience to our Heavenly Father. Ultimately, we must stand firm for the full view of Scripture without compromising, as we are in the days that Dr. Schaeffer warned would be challenging. We are on the precipice looking over the edge at the dark future that our children are now inheriting. The days are evil. Yet, we must be constantly mindful to speak truth to the tensions of dystopia. There are still some who will listen. For as we highlight tension, here is a place where truth can thrive as it defeats the world's contradictions and testifies to lost souls. We must always remember that the times are in the Lord's Sovereign hands and that ultimately He will prevail. Therefore, it is our role, we are the light of Christ, a testimony to the nations, to stand for the truth of Scripture. It is time to stand firm like Martin Luther saying, "Here I stand. I can do no other! God help me! Amen."

Dr. Schaeffer would end his talk on this most significant topic asking us a pointed question which is relevant here:

What have you got to say to your relativistic children, learning relativism in the philosophy classes, in their psychology classes and in their sociology classes if you do not have this kind of a Scripture like [William] Cowper spoke?

A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age;
It gives, but borrows none.¹⁸

¹⁸ Cowper, William. *The Bible, the Light of the World* (1719)