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Review: Letters of Francis A Schaeffer

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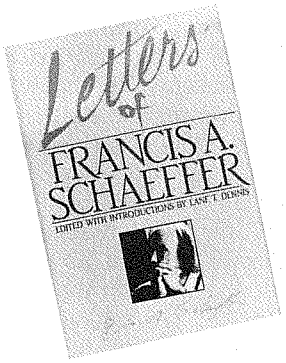
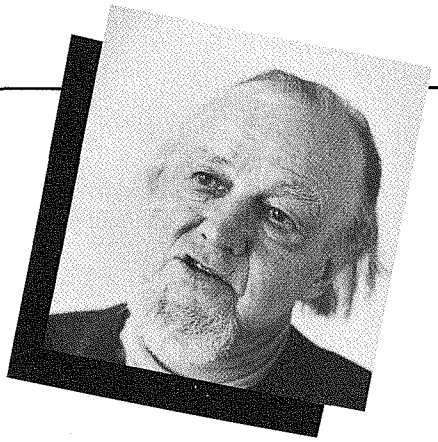


LETTERS OF FRANCIS A. SCHAEFFER
edited by Lane T. Dennis

Francis Schaeffer has been recognized as one of the foremost Christian thinkers of the twentieth century. He will long be remembered for his books, tapes, and lectures, but his greatest personal ministry may well have been his letters. Anyone who ever received a letter from Francis Schaeffer received a twentieth-century epistle. Mine is several pages long and I shall cherish it for the rest of my life.

An excerpt from
LETTERS OF FRANCIS A. SCHAEFFER



July 19, 1963 Chalet les Melezes
Huemoz sur Ollon, Switzerland

Dear Kristiana:

Thank you so much for your letter of July 2. I cannot tell you how deeply I was touched by it. I understand too what you write about the difficulty of finding a consolation and reality. I think there are really two things to see: first, that when a person goes through the kind of difficulty you have gone through, this kind of feeling is not to be unexpected; and secondly, all men since the Fall—although in a far lesser degree and a far lesser agony than you have known—also have some such problems.

Increasingly I am so aware that just as there are no perfect people physically, so there are no perfect people psychologically. There are differences in intensity of physical problems and differences of intensity in psychological problems. But there is no such thing since man has revolted against God as people who are completely well, either physically or psychologically. Thus, as I have people come here who have problems, my own contact with them always involves a very deep realization that there may be differences of degree and kind of problem, but it is not that they are sick and I am well. I think this makes for a depth of human contact that is so lacking in much medical and psychiatric treatment. So often the doctor stands without a human contact with those who are before him. But when we come to one another on a really Christian basis, it seems to me this need not be the case; rather, we can stand together as poor people who are marked with the sorrow of a mankind who has revolted against God.

He was an amazing man with a rich mind and a warm heart. He loved people and deeply cared about how they thought. His letters reveal this aspect of his life and ministry. The pages of this volume of his letters clearly reveal him as he really was. He was perhaps the last great letter-writer of the Christian era. Few people have a file of correspondence worth reading, let alone worth publishing! But he did.

Each letter in this collection is personally captivating and intellectually enriching. Each takes the reader on a spiritual journey through the mind and heart of the greatest Christian thinker of our times. Because of their chronological arrangement, these letters also take the reader on a journey through the last half of the twentieth century. Though the times changed, he did not. He was ever committed to the same principles upon which he had built his own life, family, and ministry.

Letters of Francis A. Schaeffer is a compelling odyssey of epistolary advice from a modern "Apostle Paul" on spiritual reality, daily living, marriage and the family, childbirth, pain, divorce, sickness, and death. His strong conviction against abortion as the murder of the unborn is clearly sounded, as are his beliefs regarding homosexuality, premarital sex, and male/female roles. His advice is biblically based, theologically sound, and essentially practical.

If you wanted to meet Francis Schaeffer but never had the opportunity, read the *Letters of Francis A. Schaeffer.* You will come away believing that you did in fact know this incredible man whose words were always wisdom, love, and truth. (Crossway Books, 1985, 264 pp., $15.95)

■ **Ed Hindson**