

THE CRISIS OF TRUTH AND THE CALLING OF THE CHURCH: THE RELEVANCE OF FRANCIS SCHAEFFER'S ANALYSIS IN THE POST-TRUTH ERA

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Abstract: *The contemporary world is experiencing a crisis of truth, characterized by the dominance of emotions, personal beliefs, and ideological narratives over objective facts and moral absolutes. This phenomenon, known as the post-truth era, has significant ethical, social, and theological implications, particularly for the Christian Church. Francis Schaeffer, a prophetic evangelical thinker of the twentieth century, provided a penetrating analysis of Western culture's departure from absolute truth in his seminal work, "The God Who Is There." Schaeffer warned that the rejection of transcendent, divinely revealed truth would inevitably lead to moral relativism, societal disintegration, and the collapse of meaningful communication. This paper critically examines Schaeffer's analysis in light of contemporary post-truth dynamics and explores the Church's theological and prophetic responsibility in responding to this cultural crisis. The study argues that Schaeffer's call for the Church to reclaim its commitment to biblical truth, cultivate intellectual discernment, and courageously confront cultural falsehood remains profoundly relevant today. By engaging both theology and public discourse, the Church is challenged to be a countercultural community that bears witness to the truth of the Gospel amidst a society increasingly indifferent to facts and moral objectivity.*

Key Words: *Post-Truth Era, Francis Schaeffer, Objective Truth, Church and Culture, Apologetics*

I. INTRODUCTION

In an age defined by rapid technological advancement and unprecedented access to information, a disconcerting phenomenon has taken root: the erosion of truth. Often referred to as the post-truth era, this condition marks a departure from traditional notions of objective reality, where emotions, personal beliefs, and subjective experiences increasingly outweigh

factual accuracy in shaping public opinion.¹ This shift is not merely a philosophical quandary but a tangible societal challenge, influencing political discourse, public health decisions, and even the foundations of trust within communities.² The implications of a society adrift in a sea of misinformation are far-reaching, threatening the stability of democratic institutions, hindering effective problem-solving, and fostering division and

¹ Ren Warom, "Reprogramming the Signifiers: An Analysis of Post-Truth as a Narrative Atmosphere Deriving from a Shift in the Sociocultural Narratives" (University of Birmingham, 2023).

² Erika Moravčíková, "Media Manipulation and Propaganda in the Post-Truth Era," *Media Literacy and Academic Research* 3, no. 2 (2020): 23–37.

polarization.

The proliferation of social media and the echo chambers they create have exacerbated this crisis. Algorithms designed to maximize engagement often prioritize sensational or emotionally charged content, regardless of its veracity, thereby contributing to the spread of fake news and biased narratives.³ Individuals are increasingly exposed only to information that confirms their existing beliefs, reinforcing biases and making it more difficult to engage in constructive dialogue with those holding differing viewpoints. In this environment, the concept of a shared reality becomes increasingly elusive, replaced by fragmented and often contradictory perspectives.

Amidst this growing crisis of truth, the insights of Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984), a prominent 20th-century theologian, philosopher, and cultural critic, offer a valuable lens through which to examine and respond to the challenges of the post-truth era.⁴ Long before the term post-truth gained widespread currency, Schaeffer warned of the dangers of relativism and the abandonment of objective truth in Western culture.⁵ He argued that the rejection of a transcendent moral foundation, rooted in a biblical worldview, would inevitably lead to societal fragmentation, moral decay, and the erosion of individual freedom.⁶ Schaeffer's analysis provides a framework for understanding the underlying philosophical assumptions that contribute to the post-truth phenomenon and offers a path toward restoring a commitment to truth in both public and private life.

The post-truth era has been the subject of extensive scholarly inquiry across various disciplines. Political scientists have examined the role of disinformation in shaping electoral outcomes and undermining democratic

processes.⁷ Sociologists have explored the impact of social media on the formation of identity and the polarization of public opinion.⁸ Communication scholars have analyzed the rhetorical strategies employed in the dissemination of fake news and the manipulation of public sentiment. Philosophers have grappled with the epistemological implications of a society in which truth is increasingly subjective and contested.⁹ This multifaceted examination underscores the urgency of understanding and addressing the challenges posed by the post-truth era to democratic governance, social cohesion, and individual well-being.

While existing research provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of the post-truth phenomenon, relatively few studies have specifically explored the relevance of Francis Schaeffer's thought to this contemporary crisis. Some scholars have examined Schaeffer's critique of modern art and culture, while others have focused on his influence on the evangelical movement in the United States.¹⁰ However, a comprehensive analysis of how Schaeffer's philosophical and theological framework can inform our understanding of and response to the post-truth era remains a gap in the existing literature.

It's important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. *Primarily*, engaging with Schaeffer's work requires careful attention to its historical and theological context. Some critics argue that Schaeffer's approach can be overly simplistic or that his reliance on a particular interpretation of Christianity may limit its appeal to a wider audience. *Moreover*, measuring the direct impact of philosophical ideas on complex social phenomena, such as the post-truth era, is inherently challenging. Therefore, this

³ Wade Munroe, "Echo Chambers, Polarization, and 'Post-Truth': In Search of a Connection," *Philosophical Psychology* 37, no. 8 (2024): 2647–78.

⁴ Francis A Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*. (Downer grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1968).

⁵ Francis A Schaeffer, *Escape From Reason* (Downer grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1968).

⁶ Francis August Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and The Decline of Western Thought and Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1976).

⁷ Jeffrey Friedman, "Post-Truth and the Epistemological Crisis," *Critical Review* (Taylor & Francis, 2023).

⁸ Dominic Malcolm, "Post-Truth Society? An Eliasian Sociological Analysis of Knowledge in the 21st Century," *Sociology* 55, no. 6 (2021): 1063–79.

⁹ Piero Polidoro, "Post-Truth and Fake News. Preliminary Considerations," *Versus* 47, no. 2 (2018): 189–206.

¹⁰ Joel Carpenter, "Reawakening Evangelical Intellectual Life: A Christian Scholar's Review," *Christian Scholar's Review* 51, no. 2 (2022): 127–51.

research will focus on elucidating the conceptual connections between Schaeffer's thought and the dynamics of post-truth, rather than attempting to establish causal relationships between them.

Several recent works provide a foundation for bridging Schaeffer's thought and contemporary concerns about truth. Carl Trueman's *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* traces the development of identity politics and expressive individualism, themes that resonate with Schaeffer's critique of the modern self.¹¹ James Davison Hunter's *"To Change the World"* examines the challenges and opportunities facing Christian seeking to engage with culture in meaningful way.¹² These work, while not directly addressing Shaeffer's relevance to post-truth, offer valuable insights into the cultural and intellectual lanscap that Schaeffer sought to address.

This research distinguishes itself by offering a novel synthesis of Schaeffer's thought with the contemporary problem of post-truth. It will systematically analyze Schaeffer's diagnosis of Western culture's ills, highlighting the parallels between his concerns and the key characteristics of the post-truth era. Furthermore, this study will explore how Schaeffer's emphasis on objective truth, the importance of reason, and the necessity of cultural engagement can provide a framework for understanding and responding to the challenges posed by post-truth. By retrieving and re-contextualizing Schaeffer's insights, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural forces shaping our present moment and offer a renewed basis for truth and integrity in an age of uncertainty.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of post-truth describes a cultural condition where objective facts are increasingly less influential in shaping public opinion than personal beliefs and emotions.

According to Ejue et al, post-truth is "not simply a claim that truth doesn't matter, but an assertion that one's feelings are more trustworthy than facts."¹³ This phenomenon is rooted in the relativistic epistemology of late modernity, where subjective perspectives replace absolute moral and metaphysical truths.

Francis Schaeffer, in *The God Who Is There*, foresaw the consequences of Western society's abandonment of absolute truth. He argued that the denial of transcendent, divinely revealed truth would lead to moral collapse, cultural despair, and the fragmentation of human communication.¹⁴ Schaeffer's critique remains strikingly relevant in the current cultural moment.

From the preceding discussion, it becomes clear that the post-truth era signifies more than a mere neglect of factual accuracy; it reflects a deeper crisis in how truth is understood, shaped by the relativistic thinking of late modern culture

In response, the Church is called to reassert its prophetic identity as a community committed to truth, offering a theological and moral witness against the dominance of relativism in the post-truth age.

III. METHOD

This research employs a descriptive-qualitative approach to explore *The Crisis of Truth and the Calling of the Church: The Relevance of Francis Schaeffer's Analysis in the Post-Truth Era*, a methodology particularly well-suited for gaining an in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena within their natural context. Moving beyond the measurement and quantification favored by quantitative methods, this qualitative approach emphasizes *the interpretation of meanings, experiences, and perspectives*. The descriptive element aims to provide a detailed and nuanced account of the phenomenon under investigation, setting aside preconceived

¹¹ Carl R Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of The Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and The Road of Sexual Revolution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2020).

¹² James Davison Hunter, *To Change The World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in*

The Late Modern World (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2010).

¹³ Olympus G Ejue and Daniel Sunday Etim, "Post-Truth Society and the Social Media in The 21st Century," *Creative Artist: A Journal of Theatre and Media Studies* 18, no. 1 (2024): 75–88.

¹⁴ Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*.

notions to allow themes to emerge directly from the data.¹⁵ Qualitative descriptive studies are the method of choice when straight descriptions of phenomena are desired. A qualitative descriptive study aims to describe a phenomenon in a comprehensive and naturalistic manner, remaining close to the data and the surface of words and events.¹⁶ In doing so, this approach not only respects the integrity of participants' voices and contextual realities but also facilitates the development of grounded theological insights that remain attentive to both textual tradition and contemporary experience. As such, qualitative-descriptive research represents a constructive and adaptable tool for contextual theology, providing churches and scholars with the means to engage faithfully and critically with the dynamic interplay between *Scripture, tradition, and culture*.

A literature review is a critical and systematic examination of scholarly works related to a particular research topic. According to John W. Creswell, a literature review involves a written summary of journal articles, books, and other documents that describes the past and current state of information on a topic, organizes the literature into themes or categories, and documents a need for a proposed study.¹⁷ In line with this, Lawrence A. Machi and Brenda T. McEvoy emphasize that a literature review is a systematic, explicit, and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners.¹⁸ To conclude, a literature review functions as an organized and thorough evaluation of existing academic

work related to a specific research area. John W. Creswell explains that it involves compiling and summarizing previous and current studies, categorizing them into relevant themes, and highlighting areas that require further investigation. Likewise, Lawrence A. Machi and Brenda T. McEvoy point out that a literature review is a clear, methodical, and repeatable process used to identify, assess, and integrate scholarly and professional writings.¹⁹ Collectively, these views emphasize that conducting a comprehensive literature review is essential for framing a research study within its scholarly context.

IV. RESULT and DISCUSION

The Post-Truth Era: An Overview

The term post-truth gained widespread attention in recent years. It refers to circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. In this era, traditional markers of truth-empirical evidence, expert consensus, and rational debate-are increasingly sidelined by narratives that resonate emotionally, regardless of their factual basis. The post-truth era thus signals a cultural shift in how societies value and negotiate truth claims.

The conceptual foundation of post-truth is rooted in postmodern critiques of objectivity and meta-narratives, which question the possibility of a single, absolute truth. As Jean-François Lyotard argued, modern societies are marked by an *incredulity toward metanarratives*, leading to a fragmentation of knowledge and a pluralization of truths.²⁰ In this context, personal and group identities often shape what

¹⁵ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 4th Ed. (Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE Publications, 2018).

¹⁶ John W. Creswell and V. L. Plano Clark, "Revisiting Mixed Methods Research Designs Twenty Years Later," *Handbook of Mixed Methods Research Designs* 1, no. 1 (2023): 21–36.

¹⁷ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 4th Ed.

¹⁸ Lawrence A. Machi and Brenda T. McEvoy, *The Literature Review: Six Steps to Success*, 3rd Ed. (Thousand Oaks CA: Corwin Press, 2016).

¹⁹ Lawrence A. Machi and Brenda T. McEvoy.

²⁰ Lyotard critiques the dominance of metanarratives—grand, overarching stories or ideologies that claim to explain and legitimize knowledge, truth, and human history (such as the Enlightenment idea of progress, Marxism, or religious doctrines). Lyotard argues that in the postmodern era, people become increasingly skeptical of these totalizing narratives. Instead, knowledge and meaning are seen as fragmented, diverse, and localized, leading to an era characterized by incredulity toward metanarratives. He suggests that in a postmodern society, no single story or ideology can claim absolute authority, and multiple small narratives coexist. Jean-François

is accepted as true more than evidence or reasoned argumentation.²¹ This condition has been exacerbated by digital media, where information circulates rapidly without the traditional gatekeeping roles once held by academic institutions and professional journalism.

A significant factor contributing to the post-truth phenomenon is the transformation of media landscapes. The rise of social media platforms such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *YouTube* has democratized information production and dissemination. However, it has also led to echo chambers, filter bubbles, and the viral spread of misinformation. Research by Lewandowsky et al, highlights how misinformation persists even after corrections and how individuals tend to process information in ways that reinforce their existing beliefs and values, a process known as motivated reasoning.²² Thus, A major factor behind the rise of the post-truth era is the shifting media environment. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have made it easier for anyone to create and share information. However, this has also contributed to the formation of echo chambers and filter bubbles, where misinformation spreads rapidly and people are mainly exposed to opinions they already support.

In political contexts, the post-truth dynamic becomes particularly evident. Political leaders and commentators often deploy emotionally charged rhetoric and selectively curated facts to mobilize supporters and discredit opponents. As Michael Hannon observes, in the post-truth era, what matters is not whether something is true, but whether it is believed, and whether it serves a political or ideological function.²³ This has serious implications for democratic societies, where informed public discourse is foundational to legitimate governance.

Religious communities are not immune to the challenges of post-truth culture. Theologians and ethicists have begun to examine how Christian communities can respond to an environment where truth is frequently contested and manipulated. Bateza suggests that Christian ethics must reclaim a commitment to truth-telling and critical discernment, offering a countercultural witness in an age prone to deception and confusion.²⁴ The church, therefore, has both the opportunity and the responsibility to model communities grounded in truth, humility, and intellectual integrity.

Thus, the post-truth era reflects broader cultural transformations in epistemology, media practices, and political rhetoric. It challenges societies and religious communities to critically assess how truth is pursued, communicated, and lived out in public and private spheres.

The objective Truth in The Post-Truth Era

Francis Schaeffer's concept of objective truth stands as a firm theological response to the relativistic tendencies of modern and postmodern thought. For Schaeffer, objective truth is a reality that exists independently of human perception, grounded in the unchanging nature and revelation of a personal, infinite God.²⁵ He argued that Western civilization's progressive departure from belief in absolute, God-given truth has resulted in moral relativism, cultural fragmentation, and existential despair. Schaeffer asserted that central Christian claims-such as the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ-are not religious myths but historical facts, providing a firm foundation for the Christian worldview. This historical grounding distinguishes Christianity from subjective spiritualities and relativistic philosophies.

Moreover, Schaeffer maintained that objective truth possesses universal authority, binding all people regardless of culture or

Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, 1979.

²¹ Mike Sutton, *The Postmodern Condition by Jean-François Lyotard*, *Philosophy Now* 157 (2023): 54–55.

²² Ullrich K H Ecker et al., *The Truth Is Misinformation Remains a Threat*, n.d.

²³ Michael Hannon, *The Politics of Post-Truth*, *Critical Review* 35, no. 1–2 (2023): 40–62.

²⁴ Anthony M Bateza, "Truth Telling in a Post-Truth World by D. Stephen Long," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 42, no. 1 (2022): 225–26.

²⁵ Francis A Schaeffer, *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publisher, 2001).

belief. He contended that without a transcendent moral source, human societies lack a sufficient basis for justice, dignity, and moral order. Despite humanity's finitude and fallenness, Schaeffer believed that humans, being made in the image of God, retain the capacity to know truth through both natural revelation and Scripture.²⁶ In a culture increasingly shaped by personal sentiment and emotional appeal rather than reasoned conviction, Schaeffer's defense of objective, knowable truth offers a critical, enduring resource for contemporary Christian apologetics.

Another essential aspect of Schaeffer's understanding of objective truth is its foundation in history (as discussed above). Schaeffer was deeply committed to the idea that the central events of the Christian faith—such as the creation of the world, *the incarnation of Jesus Christ, His death, and His bodily resurrection*—are not mere *religious myths or symbolic narratives, but actual, historical events*. This historicity is critical because it gives Christianity a claim to truth that goes beyond personal experience or cultural tradition. It asserts that what Christians believe is not just true for them but factually true in the real world.²⁷ Francis Schaeffer's defense of objective truth remains a vital contribution to Christian thought in the context of contemporary cultural relativism and the post-truth era. By grounding truth in the personal, infinite God and anchoring Christianity's core claims in historical events, Schaeffer provided a firm epistemological foundation for the Christian worldview. His insistence that the events of creation, incarnation, and resurrection are historical realities underscores Christianity's capacity to speak not merely to personal belief but to the objective order of the world itself. In an age where truth is often reduced to subjective preference, Schaeffer's theology calls the church to reaffirm the historical and universal nature of divine truth as essential for both faith and public witness.

Schaeffer insisted that this objective truth is both universal and authoritative. It is

not limited by time, culture, or individual belief. What God has revealed about Himself, about humanity, and about morality is binding on all people, whether or not they acknowledge it.²⁸ Without such a foundation, Schaeffer contended, societies have no firm basis for justice, human dignity, or moral values. Truth, in this sense, is not subjective or negotiable, but an unchanging reality to which human beings must conform.

Finally, Schaeffer emphasized that although human beings are finite and fallen, they are capable of knowing objective truth because they are made in the image of God. Through both nature and divine revelation in Scripture, people can perceive the reality of God and His purposes. This knowledge, while limited, is real and meaningful, and it serves as the basis for reasoned faith and moral responsibility. In a cultural moment dominated by relativism and emotionalism, Schaeffer's insistence on the knowability and necessity of objective truth remains a prophetic and relevant voice.

The Importance of Reason in Post-Truth Era: A Reflection on Francis Schaeffer Teaching

In recent decades, public discourse has increasingly moved toward what many scholars describe as a post-truth era. In this cultural moment, objective facts are often subordinated to personal emotions, subjective preferences, and social narratives, resulting in a climate where truth itself becomes negotiable. Amid this intellectual and moral crisis, the work of Francis Schaeffer stands out as a prophetic and necessary voice. Schaeffer, an influential Christian apologist and cultural critic of the twentieth century, placed significant emphasis on the integration of faith and reason, contending that rational reflection is essential both for authentic Christian faith and for the health of civilization itself.

Schaeffer argued that Christianity offers a rational and coherent worldview capable of addressing the fundamental questions of human existence. In his seminal work, *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*,

²⁶ Schaeffer.

²⁷ Schaeffer.

²⁸ Schaeffer.

Schaeffer maintained that the Christian God is both personal and infinite, and has communicated intelligibly with human beings.²⁹ This divine communication, according to Schaeffer, establishes the foundation for knowledge, meaning, and moral order. Reason, then, is not an enemy of faith but a gift from God that enables humans, as His image-bearers, to comprehend and engage with the created world meaningfully. Schaeffer rejected the false dichotomy often posited between faith and reason, asserting that a biblically grounded faith is both intellectually satisfying and logically defensible.

Central to Schaeffer's critique of modern and postmodern culture was the observation that Western thought had increasingly fragmented knowledge into disconnected categories. In *Escape from Reason*, Schaeffer traced how, beginning with the Renaissance and accelerating through the Enlightenment, Western thinkers gradually abandoned the concept of objective, God-given truth, replacing it with human-centered relativism.³⁰ As a result, reason was limited to the empirical sciences, while questions of morality, purpose, and meaning were relegated to the private, subjective realm. Schaeffer identified this dualism as a primary cause of cultural and moral disintegration, arguing that it leads to a situation where truth is no longer seen as universal but as individual preference.

In the contemporary post-truth climate, Schaeffer's analysis proves remarkably prescient. The rise of digital media, social platforms, and identity politics has amplified the tendency to prioritize personal emotion and group narratives over rational analysis and factual evidence.³¹ In such an environment, reasoned argument and logical consistency are often dismissed in favor of emotive rhetoric, social allegiance, and the manipulation of public opinion. Schaeffer's insistence that truth must be both coherent and publicly knowable offers a compelling corrective to these trends. By

engaging culture through rational discourse and demonstrating the internal coherence of the Christian worldview, believers can challenge the relativistic assumptions of the age and present Christianity as a faith rooted in both revelation and reason.

Schaeffer further warned that the rejection of reason leads inevitably to authoritarianism and the erosion of human dignity. When truth is no longer objective and binding, society is left vulnerable to those who wield emotional or political power to shape public narratives. In *How Should We Then Live?*, Schaeffer documented the historical consequences of this intellectual decline, illustrating how cultures that sever moral values from objective truth inevitably collapse into either despair or tyranny.³² In response, he called upon Christians to reclaim a thoughtful, reasoned faith capable of engaging both the academy and the broader culture.

Thus, Francis Schaeffer's teaching on the importance of reason offers an enduring resource for addressing the intellectual and moral challenges of the post-truth era. His affirmation of reason as integral to both faith and cultural life underscores the necessity of thoughtful, rational engagement in the defense of truth. Schaeffer's vision encourages the church to resist the fragmentation of knowledge and to uphold the coherence, historicity, and rational credibility of the Christian faith in an age increasingly shaped by subjective sentiment and moral relativism. ***Why Francis Schaeffer Believed Culture Engagement Is Necessary in the Post-Truth Era?***

The emergence of what is now termed the post-truth era, where objective facts are frequently overshadowed by personal emotions, social narratives, and subjective opinions, has led to a serious crisis in public discourse and moral consensus. In this context, the question of cultural engagement becomes not only relevant but essential for the Christian witness. One thinker who anticipated and spoke powerfully to this cultural condition was Francis Schaeffer.

²⁹ Schaeffer.

³⁰ Schaeffer, *Escape From Reason*.

³¹ Schaeffer.

³² Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and The Decline of Western Thought and Culture*.

Throughout his ministry as a pastor, theologian, and apologist, Schaeffer consistently urged Christians to engage culture thoughtfully, critically, and redemptively. His reasoning for this cultural involvement was rooted in both theological conviction and an acute understanding of the consequences of cultural disengagement.

At the core of Schaeffer's thought was the belief that Christianity speaks not only to personal salvation but to all of life, including the arts, philosophy, politics, and societal structures. Schaeffer rejected the notion that faith is a merely private or spiritual matter disconnected from public and cultural concerns. In *The God Who Is There*, he argued that because God is the Creator of the entire cosmos, His truth applies universally to every sphere of human existence.³³ Consequently, Christians are called not to retreat from culture but to thoughtfully participate in it, bearing witness to the truth of the Gospel in every area of life.

One of the primary reasons Schaeffer advocated for cultural engagement was his conviction that ideas have consequences. He traced the intellectual history of Western civilization and demonstrated how shifts in philosophy, art, and ethics eventually reshape the broader culture. In *How Should We Then Live?*, Schaeffer warned that the abandonment of objective truth and moral absolutes would inevitably lead to social and moral collapse, as people lose any coherent basis for justice, human rights, and ethical decision-making.³⁴ Without engagement from Christians offering a rational and moral alternative, Schaeffer believed society would fall prey to nihilism or authoritarianism.

In the post-truth era, this warning feels particularly urgent. The erosion of objective standards has contributed to a culture increasingly driven by sentiment, identity politics, and emotive rhetoric rather than by reasoned debate and shared moral principles. Schaeffer foresaw such trends and contended that Christians, as stewards of divine truth, have a responsibility to engage culture to

preserve both truth and human dignity.³⁵ He recognized that cultural disengagement by Christians often leaves a vacuum readily filled by secular ideologies that may be hostile to biblical values.

Furthermore, Schaeffer believed cultural engagement was necessary for the effective communication of the Gospel. In a society fragmented by competing worldviews, he argued that Christians must understand the intellectual and cultural assumptions of their contemporaries to address them meaningfully. In *Escape from Reason*, Schaeffer criticized forms of Christianity that relied solely on personal testimony or mystical experience without providing intellectual content.³⁵ He insisted that the Christian message must be presented as both historically grounded and rationally coherent to be credible in the public square.

Finally, for Schaeffer, cultural engagement was an act of love and obedience. He maintained that Christians are called to care about the world because God cares about it. The command to love one's neighbor extends beyond personal relationships to include a concern for the ideas and structures that shape society. As image-bearers of God, humans are called to exercise stewardship not only over creation but over culture. Cultural engagement, for Schaeffer, is therefore part of the Christian's vocation to bring every aspect of life under the lordship of Christ.

In summary, Francis Schaeffer's call for cultural engagement remains profoundly relevant in the post-truth era. His theological convictions about God's sovereignty over all of life, the consequences of ideas, and the necessity of rational, public faith compel Christians to actively participate in cultural conversations. In doing so, believers can offer a coherent, compassionate, and truthful witness in a fragmented and confused world.

V. CONCLUSION and SUGGESTIONS

Upon reviewing Francis Schaeffer's thought and its relevance to contemporary culture, it becomes evident that his critique of truth's decline and his appeal for Christian

³³ Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*.

³⁴ Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and The Decline of Western Thought and Culture*.

³⁵ Schaeffer, *Escape From Reason*.

involvement in society remain both timely and indispensable. Long before widespread cultural awareness of this issue, Schaeffer identified what he described as a profound crisis of truth. He observed the steady rejection of objective, absolute standards in philosophy, morality, and public life, replaced by relativism and subjective worldviews. The current post-truth environment, marked by the dominance of personal feeling over factual accuracy, confirms the cultural direction Schaeffer anticipated.

At the core of this cultural breakdown lies the abandonment of objective, transcendent truth, rooted in God's character and revelation, as the basis for knowledge, ethics, and social order. Schaeffer argued that societies severed from these foundations inevitably slide into moral confusion and cultural disintegration, leaving them vulnerable to manipulation by prevailing social and political forces. Today's digital culture, shaped by misinformation, ideological echo chambers, and emotionally charged rhetoric, starkly illustrates the dangers he foresaw. Schaeffer's concern was not merely abstract but pastoral and prophetic, as he believed these trends would erode human dignity and weaken the integrity of the church's public witness.

In response to this crisis, Schaeffer championed the integration of reason and faith, affirming that Christianity is not an irrational, private belief system but a reasonable, historically verifiable, and publicly meaningful worldview. In a cultural climate increasingly hostile to logical reasoning and objective facts, his call to restore reasoned and reflective Christian engagement holds significant contemporary relevance. Schaeffer insisted that faith, far from being opposed to reason, fully embraces it, acknowledging that all truth ultimately belongs to God. This unity between reason and revelation enables the church to engage society's intellectual and moral challenges with clarity and compassion.

Furthermore, Schaeffer was deeply convinced that philosophical and theological ideas inevitably shape cultural realities. Through his analysis of Western intellectual history, he demonstrated how the denial of

objective truth undermines freedom and justice, leading ultimately to despair or authoritarian control. In today's post-truth world, where public narratives are easily manipulated by those wielding emotional and political influence, Schaeffer's warnings carry fresh urgency. His vision challenges the church to be a prophetic, truth-bearing presence in society — exposing deception, affirming human dignity, and offering hope grounded in God's unchanging truth.

Ultimately, Schaeffer contended that the church's mission is not to retreat from culture but to engage it thoughtfully and redemptively. He called Christians to discern the underlying worldviews shaping modern life, to evaluate them against biblical truth, and to present the Christian faith as an intellectually and morally satisfying alternative. This requires courage, integrity, and a gracious, thoughtful posture toward those navigating the contradictions of relativism.

In summary, Schaeffer's analysis continues to offer valuable insight for addressing today's crisis of truth. His critique of modern thought, defense of the compatibility of faith and reason, and appeal for cultural involvement remain essential for the church's witness. By reclaiming its role as a bearer of divine truth across all areas of life, the church can fulfill its God-given task of being both salt and light in an increasingly fragmented and confused world.

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