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In 1955 an American family moved into a chalet on the side of a steep Swiss alp. They did not know exactly why God had brought them there, what He wanted them to do, or even where the money to live on would come from. But He began opening doors, and people with questions about life's meaning began finding the way to their home.

Edith Schaeffer, wife of Dr. Francis Schaeffer, tells the remarkable story of how God led them step by step, as that one small chalet grew into a whole community. It took the name L'Abri (French for shelter). Day by day, God faithfully provided for their family, and eventually for the entire community.

The Schaeffers believed that truth must be demonstrated as well as debated. They wanted to show the world through the transformed lifestyle of a believing community that the personal-infinite God is really here in our generation. In a society losing the ability to distinguish between Christian and non-Christian values, truth and untruth, good and evil, L'Abri equipped people to make that distinction.

For more than thirty years, people have come to L'Abri from all walks of life and from many countries, searching for truth and reality. There they find someone who cares for them personally, who listens carefully to their questions, and who gives them answers based on an uncompromising commitment to Biblical truth. L'Abri now has branches in several other countries and has affected the lives of literally thousands of people around the world.

L'Abri Details

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From Reader Review L'Abri for online ebook

Jonas Erne says

Inzwischen zum vierten Mal habe ich nun Edith Schaeffers Buch „L'Abri“ gelesen. Jedes Mal berührt es mich wieder erneut zutiefst, zu lesen, wie eine Familie aus den Staaten in die Schweizer Alpen zieht, in ein kleines, abgelegenes Dorf, und plötzlich aus der ganzen Welt junge Menschen anzieht. Was für diese Menschen so attraktiv ist, sind zwei Dinge zugleich: Da waren Menschen, die sie ernst nahmen, mit all ihren Fragen, Zweifeln, Gedanken, sie einlud, alles zu sagen und ihnen half, den christlichen Glauben zu verstehen. Und dann war dieselbe Familie da, die ganz ohne Bettelbriefe, ganz ohne Spendenaufrufe, einfach Tag für Tag das Notwendige aus Gottes Hand erbat. Und bekam. Da wurde Gottes Größe für sie plötzlich lebendig. In diesem Leben und im Lieben. Auch mit dem ganzen Verstand.

Die Familie Schaeffer hat Mission mal ganz anders gemacht. Zunächst einmal haben sie sich nicht hingesetzt und geplant. Nein, sie haben sich auf den Weg gemacht und sich von Gottes Vorsehung Schritt für Schritt führen lassen. Nicht immer ganz einfach, denn es gibt da auch Widerstände. Am ersten Ort in den Schweizer Alpen bekehren sich zu viele populäre Katholiken, da kam plötzlich ein Bescheid, dass sie die Schweiz innerhalb von sechs Wochen zu verlassen hätten. So öffnet ihnen Gott – sozusagen im letzten Moment vor der Ausweisung – eine neue Türe in einem kleinen Dorf, weit abgelegen von jeglicher Stadtnähe. Dann ist es also ein Missionswerk, das nicht „zu den Menschen“ geht, sondern die Menschen zu sich kommen lässt. Und sie sind gekommen. Im Laufe der Jahre sind tausende von jungen Menschen nach L'Abri gekommen, haben am Familienleben teilgenommen und sich in abendlichen Diskussionen mit dem biblischen Weltbild befasst. Und nicht zuletzt haben sie auch nicht auf Zahlen gesetzt. Der einzelne Mensch zählt, nicht die Masse an Menschen, die kommen. Es waren immer nur gerade so viele aufs Mal da, dass alle zu Wort kommen konnten, und gerade das war auch so wichtig. Es war ein Missionswerk für junge denkende Menschen, von denen viele schon längst mit dem christlichen Glauben abgeschlossen hatten. Wer kann denn sowas heute noch glauben? Edith und Francis Schaeffer konnten – und wussten es auch sehr anschaulich zu erklären. Außerdem war ihr ganzes Leben eine große Erklärung des Christentums.

Bei jedem erneuten Lesen dieses Buches beginne ich zu beten: Herr, schenke uns heute noch mehr L'Abri! Noch mehr Schaeffers! Und noch mehr Türen und Gelegenheiten, um der jungen Generation so klar und deutlich die wahre Wahrheit nahe zu bringen. Um es mit Francis Schaeffer zu sagen: Der einzige Grund, weshalb jemand Christ werden soll, ist der, dass das Christentum wahr ist. Ich empfehle das Buch sehr gerne weiter und gebe ihm fünf von fünf möglichen Sternen.

Coyle says

Excellent material, though this could have used a hefty editing. Certainly the chronology and characters could have been straightened out a bit. It wasn't always clear what order things were happening in, and there was far too large a cast of characters, though of course that's part of the point of L'Abri. This does accomplish its task in that it makes me want to learn more about Francis Schaeffer and L'Abri. It does not, however, make me want to do so by reading more of Mrs. Schaeffer's books.

Recommended for those interested in how a modern Christian non-church community might look at a practical level.

Heather says

Previously I read Edith Schaeffer's The Hidden Art of Homemaking with an online group led by Cindy Rollins and enjoyed it, so when I spotted an older copy of L'Abri at a used book sale, I snapped it up. After spending almost year on my bookshelf waiting its turn to be read, I plucked it off the shelf on a Thursday night on a whim and read it exclusively until I finished it Saturday morning right before lunch. I knew the basics about Edith and Francis Schaeffer's story, had read books and articles by their adult children and have even met people who visited their L'Abri home in Switzerland. But Edith's straightforward recounting and conversational descriptions engaged me entirely and I gobbled up the book. Her writing style and principled lifestyle reminds me very much of Elisabeth Elliot which is not really a surprise. They are both godly women who have left a legacy of faithfulness for others to follow.

Christine says

Such an interesting read of how L'Abri got started (in spite of the Schaeffers' original intentions in moving to the Swiss Alps. Stirring chapters on living by prayer, and in comparison, she made me feel quite lazy and unproductive when looking at just how much was accomplished each day. No Facebook/email distractions for one!! She wrote it in such a way as to be evangelistic as well. Writing out some answers Francis S gave to people's inquiries.

I thought this section particularly thought-provoking. Francis asks: Supposing we had awakened today to find everything concerning the Holy Spirit and prayer removed from the Bible - that is, not removed the way liberals would remove it, but that God had somehow really removed everything about prayer and the Holy Spirit from the Bible. What difference would it make practically between the way we worked yesterday and the way we would work today, and tomorrow? ...Aren't most plans laid out ahead of time? Isn't much work done by human talent, energy, and clever ideas? where does the supernatural power of God have a real place? (pp 64-65).

I'll leave it at that.

Kate says

The writing at times was a bit too disjointed but I did appreciate learning the Schaeffers' story and steadfast faith.

Jared Smith says

Edith Schaeffer's prevalent desire throughout L'Abri is to catalogue the work that God did in their lives and thus fulfill her and her husband Francis' greatest aim in life - to show others that there is a God, He is personal, and He is there. Though sometimes the chapters read like long blogs posts, overall L'Abri is a fantastic testament to the work God was doing (not only the Schaeffers' lives but also in the world at large)

that reads like a well-worn memoir. I felt as if Edith had invited me into their living room to tell me their story - and I enjoyed every minute of it. This book gave me the same feeling that I get when I go visit the country; time seemed to slow to a stroll and the pressures and demands of life evaporated. Edith puts on no pretense as she writes - and in that way you can tell she writes truly. Her story is there for those who are interested and my what a treasure it is!

On another note, there is little of Francis' work (meaning his lectures, words, thoughts or ideas) in this story. That does not detract from the story one bit, I think I just expected to hear more from him. But all of his works are quite accessible so I am not terribly disappointed.

Alexis Neal says

Francis Schaeffer's widow recalls their years at L'Abri, a retreat-cum-commune they founded in the Swiss Alps. Although they originally intended to serve as more traditional missionaries to Switzerland, the Schaeffers ended up opening their chalet to literally hundreds of visitors who came to ski the slopes and talk through difficult questions with Edith and her husband. From their first few years in Switzerland, through all sorts of political, financial, personal, and physical obstacles, to their eventual settlement in Huémoz, she looks back on the Lord's faithfulness and his supernatural provision for them and their ministry.

This book is a wonderful meditation on God's faithfulness to answer the prayers of His people--and of His ability to raise up and bless the ministries He ordains. In the midst of the intellectual confusion and quest for truth that characterized the 1960s, Francis Schaeffer was a voice for truth--an example of intellect and faith blended together without compromising either. Edith does not delve into all her husband's ideas and arguments; her story is focused on God's provision and the answers to prayer. And indeed, she shares story after incredible story of the Lord meeting their needs--sometimes at the last possible moment.

The Schaeffers hoped, by their reliance on prayer, to demonstrate to the world the *reality* of God. Still, some of their ideas, if taken too far, could result in an attitude of *testing* rather than *trusting* God. For example, Edith claims that they deliberately chose not to communicate ministry needs to the church or to other Christians, so that if and when they were met, all would know it was the Lord who had done it. At some point, the decision not to avail ourselves of the resources the Lord has given us is simply *foolish*. However, it seems that Edith may have overstated the case, as apparently update letters were sent to supporters, and some needs were made known. They just didn't advertise their needs in every possible way.

Also, it must be noted that Edith is not a great writer. The narrative jumps around, skipping forward a few years, then backtracking, then moving forward again, and she rattles off name after name and endless short anecdotes that do not seem to tie back into the story in any meaningful way, except as a catalog of people the Lord has blessed through L'Abri. Still, her style is engaging, and the end result is quite readable, for all its unorthodox chronology. The editing in the bulk of the book seems to restrain the worst of her tangents. The final chapter (a later addition to the book, summarizing the more recent history of L'Abri) does not appear to have been significantly edited, and sadly is a rather atrocious, rambling mess.

All in all, it's a very enjoyable and convicting story about a family that decided to really live out their faith by trusting God to provide, and about the God who brought glory to His name in unexpected ways as a result of their obedience. Definitely worth reading.

Madison says

Beautiful. Just beautiful. She's so real, and God is so great.

Sarah says

This book really challenged the way I view possessions and even the way I use my time during the day. It is so encouraging to read a book from the perspective of someone who has really "given it all" on a daily basis. I realized that if I truly believe in God's ultimate sovereignty, I need to live a life that wouldn't make sense unless it's true. He is truly trustworthy to provide everything we need in life, financially, emotionally, relationally, etc. I was so encouraged by reading this book the first time that my husband and I read it together afterward. He loved it just as much!

Phil Princey says

Another book that's been sitting on my shelf for years and finally have got around to reading.

A book written in 1969, this edition having an added chapter about the continuing story five years later. Written by Edith Schaeffer about the ministry her and husband Francis started in Switzerland called L'abri. It has wonderful Christian testimonies of answered prayer and of faith, getting through challenging circumstances.

I loved the stories about the family and their thrilling adventure building a community in the little town God had led them to. It is quite a remarkable story. And how God specifically brought the people to them from all over the world so they could deliver their unique ministry to them. Diverse people from all walks of life that were seeking answers somehow found their way into the home of the Schaeffers.

At times Edith made me feel she was strained for space to write all the accounts of people and their stories. That frustrated me because I felt some accounts could have been shortened anyway while others really needed to be detailed more, and it was also somewhat bothering me not getting the ages of the children as they were growing up in the various accounts. Despite this, I love the way she relates stories about her children and others. And I was able to get some insight into her life and Francis Schaeffer; both legendary Christians and writers.

Surprisingly there wasn't much on the personal relationship of her marriage but the book achieved what the author set out to do, which was to demonstrate the God who is there, who guided them in the smallest of details, as well as providing all that they needed.

Elizabeth says

Interesting and encouraging account of how Francis and Edith Schaeffer were led to create L'Abri, a family-style mission of helping people work through their intellectual and spiritual doubts. Although I really got bogged down by the amount of names of people who were converted at L'Abri and had a hard time keeping

track of who was who, it was convicting to see how much they trusted God with providing for them and were excited to be a part of God's plan.

Laura C. Robb says

An encouraging story of faith and God answering "impossible" prayers over and over. And a great reminder that God really provides "daily bread."

James Harmeling says

I have wanted to read this for some time and am glad I took the opportunity now. This book is the summation of the steps of faith taken by the famed Schaeffers moving from St.Louis to the Swiss Alps by the leading of the Holy Spirit without clarity of task, provision, or even lodging. Their decision to limit their financial requests to prayerful petitions makes sense now that I read Edith's parents having served with CIM.

While sometimes bogged down in details and listing of names, I found the story inspirational even though it occurred half a century ago. The questions posed to Schaeffer are the same ones asked today. Students today even look similar to the "beat" generation of the 50's. While many are familiar with Schaeffer's books and his original film series, I was not aware of its origin or how it all came together. It was truly a work of God using a remarkable man with brilliant originality and simplicity and a godly selfless woman with a servant's heart and Abrahamic faith.

The book will be filed in my library under hospitality because that is what this ministry was all about. I was challenged to consider how to use my home in my location to be a light, refuge, and haven for those in my church, my neighborhood, and my network as well as anyone else the Lord brings.

Melissa says

Francis Schaeffer and his wife, Edith, miraculously obtained a home in the mountains of Switzerland. They prayed that God would provide the needs of the home and send spiritually hungry people to them. Hundreds of people "asking honest questions and seeking honest answers", found their way to L'abri.

The book has a somewhat confusing structure, probably because Schaeffer's editor wanted her to start with something exciting, so she chose to start her book with an avalanche that happened a couple years after their move to Switzerland.

Despite the structural issues, the book is a very good read. I loved reading about the hundreds of answered prayers, as well as the interesting culture of L'abri.

Daniel and Rebekah Eikum says

This book really inspired me. I love the emphasis on the God who is REALLY THERE, the continuity of

truth and the beauty of living in community. They gave up everything for the message of truth. It's amazing to see what fruit came out of their sacrifice. And yet Edith Schaeffer is so honest about how hard it was day to day. I love when she recounts about the summer when she watered her garden at midnight. She inspires such dignity while embracing the most humble of tasks because they are done in love. And the way the gospel changed lives in that context of serving and loving is EVERYTHING. Edith Schaeffer is such a hero to me!
