

Life at L'Abri

In the previous lesson I spoke about the basic characteristics of L'Abri. In this lesson I will describe what L'Abri was like when I was there in Switzerland in the summer of 1967 until the summer of 1968. That will be the best way to give you an idea of what the Schaeffers' life was like. I will describe what a normal day was like, what a normal weekend was like, or perhaps I should say an abnormal weekend, because every weekend was abnormal in comparison to ordinary life. I will describe the situation there to give you some idea of what they were doing.

If you could see a map of the Rhone Valley, where the Schaeffers lived, you would see that the train line goes south to Italy toward Milan. In the other direction are the Lake of Geneva and Lausanne and Geneva itself and Monterrey. They originally lived in the village of Champéry, in the canton of Valais. On the other side of the valley is the Protestant canton of Vaud. These are the towns that appear repeatedly in the stories that you might read from Mrs. Schaeffer. There was a little town called Aigle at the bottom of the valley. There was a little town named Ollon, which you would pass through on the road. Next was the town of Huemoz itself; Huemoz-sur-Ollon, was the name of the little river that ran through the valley. Then came the next two towns, Chesieres and Villars. Many years later the Schaeffers moved into a house in Chesieres. The town of Huemoz was situated around 3000 or 4000 feet up the mountainside where they lived.

I want to describe what life was like in Switzerland at that time, from 1967 to 1968. I had just become a Christian a few months before. I hitchhiked from England to Switzerland, leaving the day after I graduated from the university. I arrived there one Saturday in the middle of one of their busy weekends in June 1967. By that time there were multiple houses.

When they first started the work, after they had been thrown out of Champéry, the first house they put a down payment on was Chalet les Melezes. A couple of years later they started renting a chalet next door. By the time I was there in 1967 there were eight houses around Huemoz that L'Abri was using. There was Chalet Bethany, which was on a road to a village called Panex. There was a tiny apartment that was in the middle of the village, right next to the village inn. There was also a tiny back road that was only accessible by car for a short distance and then it came to a dead end. That was where another of the chalets was, which was where Schaeffer's eldest daughter Priscilla lived with her husband. There was also Chalet les Suppan, which they had prayed for back in 1955 and 1956 and which they got about 10 years later when it was bought and given to the work of L'Abri by somebody who had worked with Amy Carmichael at Dohnavur Fellowship in India for many years. When I went there in 1967, Schaeffer's youngest daughter, Debbie, was living there with her husband, Udo Middleman. There was also another chalet, which Jane Stuart Smith lived in, the opera singer from Milan, who originally came from Roanoke, Virginia. She lived with Betty Carlson, a writer from Illinois, and the two of them live there together now. There was also another chalet. So there were eight houses scattered throughout the village of Huemoz that L'Abri had in 1967.

Let me tell you a little bit about what it was like. In the houses during the summer there were around 60 people staying in the various chalets during the week. On weekends that number could go up to 100. In the winter, when L'Abri was at its quietest point, there were 20 to 30 people staying in the houses during the week and 30 to 50 on the weekends. It was an extended and busy summer. People would start arriving in larger numbers any time from April until October or November.

People stayed in all the different houses. There were a few people living in Chalet les Melezes with the Schaeffers. As I mentioned, there was Mrs. Schaeffer's mother, and there was Gracie, the woman who had an accident. She was a lovely person, but she had the mind of a 10-year-old. There were usually a couple of men staying in the bunks in the basement of that house. And there were usually three or four girls living on the middle floor, along with Gracie. The Schaeffers and Frankie, their son, who was about 15 at the time, and grandmother were living on the top floor.

Chalet Bethany could take up to 20 people. Chalet les Suppan sometimes had up to 20 people. Chalet Bourdonette usually had between 10 and 15 people. Chalet Rionci had only two or three. Chalet Tzi-No was a tiny chalet, and it had just John and Priscilla and their family. All these people were scattered around the village. Sometimes there were other people staying in *pensions* around, who had come in to study. A *pension* was a small bed-and-breakfast type of place that people could stay in around the village. They would also stay in other small villages in the area, like Chesieres and Villars. Other people who were not staying were constantly coming and going.

The lives of those of us who lived and worked there were made more difficult when tourists would arrive occasionally and want to see Schaeffer. That happened more often later than in 1967, because in 1967 he was only beginning his first books. Within five years, however, there were people who arrived as tourists to see L'Abri and Francis Schaeffer. At that time in 1967 there were not people like that. Yet there were constantly people who were just dropping in. Some of them would write ahead of time, but many people would just turn up to stay there at any time.

People were living in the various houses and every day a meal list was put up in a central place in Chalet les Melezes. All the people staying would have their different meals at the different houses. So you would be moved around. You would probably eat breakfast at the house you were living in. Then lunch and dinner would probably be in one of the other chalets.

At the beginning, L'Abri only had guests, people who were coming for a weekend or a few days. There was no charge for them in 1967. Later, the Schaeffers had people who wanted to stay for longer periods of time. Guests could stay for up to 10 days. At first, that is all there were. One or two people would stay with the Schaeffers to help them. Some of them became workers, like Dorothy Jamieson, who I mentioned was the first person outside the family who stayed to help them and then became a worker. Of course, for those who were staying as helpers or workers there was no charge, and they even got a tiny amount of support or salary. That has developed since that time, since there are now families who work at L'Abri, and they need enough to live on. They are given a proper salary today, but in the beginning they were only getting a little pocket money.

As L'Abri developed, more people started coming and wanting to stay for extended periods of time to study. The Schaeffers developed what they called Farel House. It was named after the Swiss Reformer, William Farel, who had preached in that part of Switzerland. He preached throughout the small villages like Huemoz in the sixteenth century. He was a close associate of Calvin. He was a preacher who went throughout the villages, preaching the evangelical Gospel in the mountains. They named their study center after him.

Once Farel House was started and people wanted to stay for periods longer than a week or weekend, they began charging a fee for those people. Primarily it was to help them take their studies seriously. People would stay for two weeks, a month, or three months. They would stay to study in depth. Many of those who did that were Christians who wanted to come and spend some time studying with Schaeffer, thinking with him, and working through things. For Farel House they charged a fee, and they still do. If

somebody comes to L'Abri as a student, rather than as a guest for a few days, they are charged a fee toward the cost of their expenses. I estimate that in all the years I worked in the English L'Abri, the fee that people paid covered about 15 percent of our costs to run L'Abri. The rest of the cost, 85 percent, is still dependent on completely unsolicited gifts from people.

L'Abri today is where it was at the beginning, which is totally dependent, month by month, on gifts that are given for its ongoing work. We get letters from our colleagues in England so we can pray for them. For the last three months, the whole of L'Abri has been in a position in which at the beginning of the month they have not had anything to pay the bills for that month. Their prayers have been answered quite dramatically in the last few days of each month so they can pay their bills. That seems to be a bigger thing now that there are whole families who work there. Yet when the Schaeffers started, they were scraping the bottom of the barrel all the time. Each month they only had enough money to pay the bills that came that month. They would do repairs as money came in for them. L'Abri is back in that position now.

There was a long in-between period, from 1968 until 1984, which was the time of Schaeffer's death, that the Schaeffers gave all of their royalties to L'Abri. Those provided something of a cushion. Yet even when his books were selling well, at the height of his popularity, the royalties from the books covered at the most about 40 percent of L'Abri's budget for the year. That was a gradually growing amount from 1968 onward, when the first books were published until 1984 or 1985. During that period when the royalties were coming in, because his books sold a great many copies, L'Abri built up a cushion of finances that meant that if they did not receive a cent they could remain open for five or six months before the work would have to close completely. All through that time they were still dependent on gifts. Five or six months' cushion is not much of a cushion when you have 12 or 15 families who are dependent on the work for their livelihood. It was not much security in a worldly sense.

That was only at the height of Schaeffer's books selling. Now L'Abri is back to where it was at the beginning and where it was still in 1967 when I went there. It has no cushion whatsoever. Every month it exhausts all of its finances. It is an ongoing demonstration to God's answers to their prayers. It was a dramatic thing as a young Christian to come and see that. You came into a situation in which they were dependent on gifts from people coming in, often from people they did not know. Over our years working in the English L'Abri, many of the people who supported L'Abri with gifts, sometimes through one-time gifts and sometimes regularly, were often people we did not know at all. We would write to them and thank them. It was amazing to be supported that way. There is very little regular income. There are a very few people who give regularly to L'Abri that you can count on. There are very few churches who give regularly. Even today, the majority of the gifts that come in are for less than \$1000. With the size of L'Abri now, it needs a great deal of money. In England, by the time we left there, it was costing around \$150,000 per year to run the branch because of all the people working and staying there. Almost all the gifts are between \$5 and \$1000, mostly on the smaller end of that.

Are the branches of L'Abri autonomous? That is not an easy question to answer. The Dutch branch has always been completely independent financially. The other branches have a degree of independence. There was no autonomy in a strict sense, because all of them report their finances monthly to L'Abri's treasurer. Everyone is aware of everyone else's financial situation. The salary of those working in the different branches is made as close as possible to equal across the different nations in which L'Abri works so that everyone is treated equally. The way L'Abri works, you do not get a salary increase as you work longer. Somebody who just begins the work can be paid the same amount as somebody who has worked there for 15 or 20 years. You are paid on the basis of the number of your children and other

factors of need rather than through a graduated salary scheme. So there is uniformity in the way finances are dealt with throughout the branches.

All the branches of L'Abri are completely interdependent in terms of praying for one another, working together, encouraging one another, and meeting together once per year. The directors from the different branches meet together once per year for a week to pray together and talk about the work. So there is no autonomy in that sense at all. Yet in practice from day to day, each branch operates with a fair degree of independence. Each branch is also dependent on gifts that are given to that branch directly. There is not an absolute financial independence in that sense, though, because if they run short, there is a general fund. There are people who simply give to L'Abri rather than to the English L'Abri or Swiss L'Abri or American L'Abri. There is a general fund from which any of the branches can draw on when in need. Yet most of the finances come to the branches independently and individually as people pray for their work and support their particular work.

Let me return to describing what life was like at L'Abri in 1967. I described the houses of L'Abri and the people who lived there. The next issue to consider is what kinds of people went there when I went there as a young Christian in the summer of 1967. There were all sorts of people. You cannot categorize them as belonging to any particular group. There were quite a few people who were not Christians at all. Since that was the height of the hippie period, there were many counter-cultural people.

I can give you an illustration of one person who came there. After I had been there for a couple of weeks, which was how long I originally intended to remain there, I decided I was going to remain and work there for a year. I thought I should go home and tell my parents that I was going to do that. So I hitchhiked back to England. I explained to my parents what I was going to be doing. A non-Christian who was at L'Abri came with me to visit my family. Then I hitchhiked back to Switzerland from England. On the way there, in the middle of a cabbage patch in France, I encountered a hippie. He was stealing a cabbage from somebody's field because he did not have anything to eat. We started talking, and I told him where I was going and invited him to go with me. So he came back to L'Abri with me. He was a really wild guy.

There were all sorts of people there. There were college teachers and lecturers. There were doctors and lawyers. There were dropouts. There were ordinary families. There were people who were young Christians who had all kinds of questions. There were people who were about to give up their faith. There were people with all kinds of emotional and psychological problems. There is always a great mixture of people staying at any branch of L'Abri. That is one of the things that makes working there challenging. You get such a mixture of people coming, and you cannot predict what kind of people you are going to have, what kinds of questions they are going to ask, and what things they are going to be struggling with. With up to 100 people there on the weekends, there was a huge variety of people. There were quite a few men from Africa there. There were people who were working in Europe with Operation Mobilization who had come there to study for a while.

How did people learn about L'Abri? At that time, there were not even any books. Most people learned about L'Abri, and still do today, through personal contact with somebody. One example is the guy from the cabbage patch. I was not stealing from the cabbage patch, but he was. There were many people who simply met people in all kinds of ways and would turn up at L'Abri. Some years later, when I was there visiting for a L'Abri directors' meeting, there were two men there from Afghanistan. They came from a completely Muslim background. They had come to the conclusion that God was completely different from what they had been told. They prayed that God would reveal Himself to them. Then a young Australian who had been at L'Abri in Switzerland and was traveling across Asia on his way back to

Australia stopped in their village and managed to communicate to them that L'Abri in Switzerland was a place they could go to learn about God. They came there, I met them there, and they became Christians. So people came there in all sorts of ways from all kinds of places.

Many of them were people who had encountered individuals in some place. Some were from places in the United States. Maybe there was a teacher at a college who knew about L'Abri and had a student who started asking questions. The teacher could tell the student about a place where he or she could find some answers and that Schaeffer would help him. There were others who went because somebody in their family or church had been helped. It is the same today. While there are many people who go because they have read a book or heard a L'Abri member speaking at a conference, there are many people who still go because they have met somebody who has said it is a helpful place to go. At that time, in 1967, almost everybody came by word of mouth. I had heard about it through the person I was converted through at the university. He was a Canadian who had spent some time studying at the Swiss L'Abri. He had spent a few weeks there between two of his years at the university where he was doing a Ph.D. in philosophy. He found Schaeffer very helpful. He used to play tapes by Schaeffer in his apartment on Saturday nights. That is how I was converted. He encouraged me to go to Switzerland when I graduated. There were many other people there like that who had become Christians through somebody who had been at L'Abri, just as I had. All sorts of people were coming in all sorts of ways.

What about the schedule at L'Abri? Every Monday was a day of prayer. The day would always start with Edith giving a talk on prayer, which was supposed to be for 20 minutes but would usually be for at least an hour. Then there would be a short time of prayer together. Then everybody would go back to their various jobs or study. If you were at L'Abri as a student, you would study at Farel House either in the morning or in the afternoon. Then you would help with the work that needed to be done around the place for the other half of the day. When I went there, they had recently had a chapel built. Farel House was a room in the basement of that chapel where up to a dozen people could listen to tapes at the same time. That was where you would go to study for half of the day, and then you would help around the houses with cooking, cleaning, or gardening the other half of the day.

Monday was a day of prayer. After Edith's talk, there was a list on which everyone would sign up for half an hour or more to pray. They would pray for their own needs and particularly for L'Abri, its needs, and the people staying there. So every Monday had a chain of prayer going through the day. This went back to the beginning of the L'Abri when Edith started doing this with her children. You would go to your work or study and then you would take time out to pray specifically for the work of L'Abri. Then there would be a prayer meeting on Monday evening after supper.

Usually on Tuesday and Thursday there was a lecture or Bible study in the evening. The weekends were incredibly busy. The Schaeffers would have a day off on Friday. It was often not much of a day off for Schaeffer, because if the weather was good he would often go for a walk with people staying at L'Abri. He would take them for a hike in the mountains on his day off. Sometimes, even if it was a day off, Edith would do extraordinary things for people. Let me give you an illustration from my own life. Edith has always been a matchmaker. She saw that Vicki and I were beginning to get together. My wife was Schaeffer's secretary the year I was there. She was already there when I arrived in June. In October, Edith saw that we were beginning to spend a little time together. I was working in the houses as Edith's cook and gardener, and my wife was working as Schaeffer's secretary. When she saw us beginning to get together, she spent half the night before her day off, both the night before and early that day, making us a special picnic. She thought she would put her hand in helping us get together. When we went for a hike that day, it was a beautiful day in October. It was actually my birthday, October 20. Edith had prepared the most beautiful picnic lunch you can imagine in order to help our romance along. She had

roasted a little chicken. She had made cookies, cakes, and sweetbreads. She had put in a cloth tablecloth and cloth napkins and silverware. She had it all packed up, and it was her contribution to helping us get together. I had great delight in telling her that evening that we actually got engaged the night before. We appreciated her kindness. It was her day off, but she had risen early to prepare that for us. That gives you an idea of the kind of concern for individuals that they were prepared to take on and that they always took on in their lives. You could not be there without experiencing a sense of how they treated each person as an individual and how they cared for each one.

On the weekends, masses of people would start arriving on Friday evenings. Breakfast on Saturday was usually in the house where you were living. For lunch every Saturday, I would start making the meal right after breakfast. We would have about 20 people for lunch on Saturday. The other thing I had to do Saturday morning was to make bread for Edith. Since it was for so many people, their huge kitchen table would be completely covered in dough when we made bread. It took a powerful person to knead that amount of dough. She would serve it to everybody on Saturday evening for supper and for Sunday tea. She would come up after breakfast on Saturday morning and give us instructions on what she wanted us to make for lunch. They were detailed instructions. If Edith ever thought that you did not know exactly what she meant, then she would draw for you what size she wanted the carrots or onions chopped or whatever else you were preparing. After a while, when you got to know her standards, you knew what to do without her doing all that. Yet she would still prepare a detailed menu.

She would then go back down to start working in her office. At that time in 1967 she was writing the *L'Abri* story. Schaeffer was writing *The God Who Is There* and *Escape from Reason*. The first books were in the pipeline at that time. Edith would go down to work in their office. He would be upstairs in his office. There was so much going on in their house all the time that it was very noisy, because it was a little wooden chalet. Schaeffer would have to play music upstairs all day long in order to do any work and drown out the noise that was coming up from below through the wooden floors. He played classical music all day long to enable himself to work. He was working in his little bedroom where he had a little chair at the end of the bed. On Saturday he would do some dictation to my wife, who was his secretary then. In the morning after breakfast he would spend some time working on his sermon for Sunday. He would also spend time talking to people who were there only for the weekend and had come to see him.

About a half hour before lunch, Edith would appear to put the final touches on the lunch. We would have everything prepared and cooking, and Edith would do the last-minute creative things that she wanted to do. Lunch was supposed to be ready at one o'clock. Inevitably she would appear at twelve-thirty and we would be just about ready to serve and then somebody would come in to talk to her. She would stand there with a ladle in her hand, and even though you would be ready to serve and there were 30 people sitting there waiting for lunch, because she gives people her total attention, lunch would not get served until she finished that conversation. So you would be trying to keep everything hot for half an hour or even an hour while she gave whoever it was her undivided attention. It was quite frustrating after having prepared everything on time to have everything stop in its tracks.

While we were serving lunch, and while she was serving lunch, because she would oversee the serving every day, Francis would have a discussion with people at the table. Lunch would often go for one and a half or two hours. It would start at one o'clock, and it would often not end until three o'clock. This was a typical Saturday lunch with a lengthy discussion going on around the table. Schaeffer would typically answer people's questions. He almost always ate cold food and hardly anything at all because he would give his complete attention to whoever happened to be asking the questions.

When we finally got lunch cleared up on Saturday afternoon, Edith and I and whoever else was helping would start working on supper. At that time she was still serving supper to everybody. Often in the summer that was to 100 people. We would make sloppy joes or pizza for 100 people. That was why we made so much bread dough in the morning. We were preparing to serve 80 to 100 people every Saturday night. It would be a simple supper that you could do in huge amounts like that. I can assure you, however, that when you are cooking for large groups like that, nothing is simple.

After supper there would be a discussion every Saturday evening. There would be people who were not even staying for the weekend who would turn up for that Saturday evening discussion. There would often be up to 100 people crammed into their downstairs living room, on the stairs, or out in the garden if the weather was nice, and they would hear through the windows and the door. Schaeffer would encourage people to ask whatever questions they wanted to ask. As you look back at his ministry, his ability to answer questions and discuss issues was the greatest gift that God gave him. The thing that was immediately obvious in every discussion was his compassion for the people asking the questions. He had sympathy, understanding, and readiness not to condemn any questions, doubt, or problem that was raised. One could see some wonderful discussions during those Saturday evenings. When there were masses of people, they would have the discussions in the chapel. You could easily get over 100 people in there. Those are some of the things I remember most clearly about my time there, the way Francis would answer people's questions. There were almost always non-Christians asking very basic questions.

On Sunday morning, breakfast would be in the house you were living in. I was living in Chalet Bethany. Then there was a church service held in the chapel on Sunday morning. Schaeffer was usually the person preaching. For the first many years, he was the only person who was preaching there. As the church there grew, however, other people began to join him in the work of preaching and teaching there. Yet he would usually preach on Sunday morning. It was usually a sermon that was an hour in length. They were good, long sermons with lots of meat.

As soon as he got back from church he would dictate to my wife until lunchtime. That was how his Sundays went, and how hers went too, which used to make me rather annoyed when we were engaged because it meant we had very little time together on Sundays.

For Sunday lunch they would usually have about 30 people. They always had a particular practice for Sunday lunch of usually having new people there. They were people who had come for the weekend or especially for the church service. Their practice on Sunday lunch was to go around the table and systematically ask people who they were, where they came from, and where they were spiritually. Every one of those accounts that people gave would always lead to a discussion. This meant that lunch would often start at one o'clock and it often would not end until four o'clock or four-thirty. If you have 30 people and you are giving each one a chance to say who he is, where he comes from, and why he is there, and if you leave time to have a discussion about some of the questions they had, then it made for a long lunch. Edith would always make something special for lunch on Sunday. She put a great amount of creative effort into her cooking. She is still the same today. I have been able to stay with her a couple of times in the last few years. Even though she is well into her seventies, she still lavishes attention, affection, and concern on you if you stay with her in her home. She produces some wonderful meals, and that was always the way she was.

You might think that was enough meals for the weekend, but at that time they were serving tea to everybody on Sundays. Sunday tea usually had between 30 and 50 people. Many people start to leave who had only come for the weekend. For Sunday tea, she would make, and have us help her make, all

kinds of dainty little sandwiches. The bread was cut quite thin. You had to get about 40 slices out of a loaf of bread. It was not because she was parsimonious but because she wanted to have bread that was wafer thin so that the sandwiches would taste even better. We would also make cakes and other kinds of things.

Sunday tea was not usually a time for discussion. It was held in the living room, and people sat around casually. For Sunday lunches, even if there were 20 to 30 people there, they would have half a dozen tables crammed into their dining room. There was one big table that sat about a dozen people. Then there were four or five smaller tables that each could fit four or five people. Yet everyone was paying attention to the discussions, to the questions that different people from all over the room were asking Schaeffer. It was a meal that was carried on with a dialogue. For Sunday evening tea and for Saturday dinner when there was up to 100 people, those events were completely informal, and people would sit in various locations and have conversations in twos and threes. Any sit-down meal at the table, however, like Sunday or Saturday lunch, always had a formal discussion with only one person speaking at a time so that everyone could pay attention to what was being said.

As you can imagine, the schedule was quite hectic. In the summer, as Edith's helper and cook, we would do many extra things as well. I was often up with her, because if you worked for her you kept the same hours she did. I was just out of college, so I was young and healthy, or at least I thought I was. Yet after three months of it I was shattered and in need of a holiday. I was up before seven in the morning to get the bread from the baker. We were often up until one the next morning making pickles and relishes or freezing corn from the garden. So even after the day was over and you had cooked meals for so many people, there were still other things to do afterward. I remember that summer there was such a huge crop of green tomatoes and cucumbers from the gardens that when the first frost came, we had so much relish that we made it in the bathtub. We made 80 quarts of relish. We had to scrub out the tub with bleach to make it spotlessly clean first, and then we made a huge tub of relish for the Saturday evening suppers. It was incredibly hard work trying to keep up with Edith and work for her.

That gives you some kind of idea of the kind of schedule they went through. On weekdays Schaeffer would always dictate for several hours each morning. He was amazingly prompt at answering letters. He would try to reply to every letter he received within two or three days of receiving it. Already at that time he was getting huge amounts of correspondence. They were from people who wanted to come or people who had been there and were writing to him for help. They were people he had met in different places. By that time there were also various Christian leaders from around the world who would write to him to ask for his advice. My wife could give you a list, although she would not do it because of privacy, of the names of many people you would recognize from all sorts of different denominations and Christian groups around the world who were writing to him for advice and spiritual wisdom. He would dictate for hours, and he would expect those letters to go out that afternoon or the next day. Once he had them dictated they had to go. Working as his secretary was tremendously hard work as well.

He would also spend part of the time working on the manuscripts for *The God Who Is There* and *Escape from Reason*. Then he would spend part of the time talking to students who had come to study at L'Abri. At that time he was still seeing every person who came through individually to talk to them about their study program, including what tapes they were going to listen to, what books they were going to read, and what their questions were. If the weather was nice he would almost always go for a walk with at least one person. The hills around there were incredibly beautiful. It is really one of the most beautiful places on earth, there in the Alps, in every season of the year.

I have said all this to describe a little bit about what their life was like. They worked hard. There was no way one could doubt their commitment to what they were doing and their commitment to the people who came there. Of course life there was far from ideal in all kinds of ways. Yet without any doubt, there was a substantial demonstration of the effect that the Christian faith has on people's lives. You could see the way they were giving themselves to that work and the people who came there. The Schaeffers were a dramatic demonstration of the preparedness to be like a grain of wheat that falls into the ground and dies in order to bear fruit. It certainly did bear fruit in people's lives. That quality of life opens people's minds in a dramatic way. When people see a substantial demonstration of Christianity being lived, they are so much readier to hear what you have to say and hear the way you answer questions. Whole lives of human beings are interconnected. So when you touch somebody's heart, or when you feed their body, they are much more ready to listen to what you have to say.