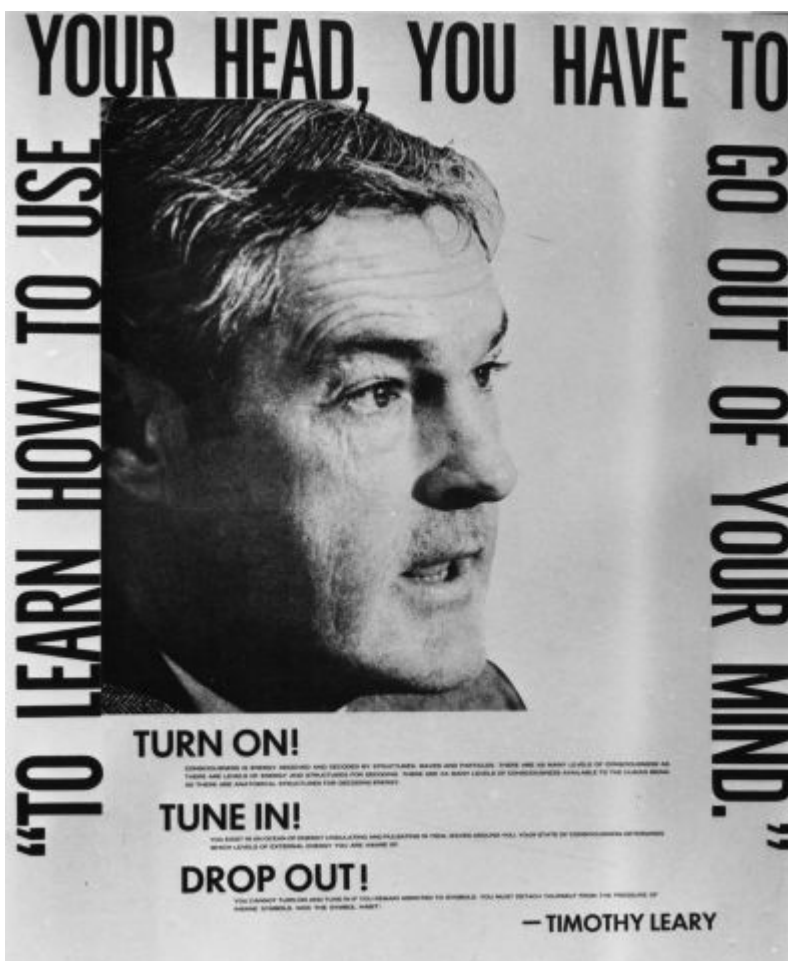


Tune in! Turn on! Drop out!

Something with interesting worldview significance happened in the month of October. The “high priest of LSD,” Timothy Leary, had been convicted and imprisoned in the US for using and promoting illegal drugs, especially LSD, a popular hallucinogenic drug. President Richard Nixon called Leary “the most dangerous man in America.” Leary had escaped from prison and fled from the US. We had heard that Leary had taken refuge in Switzerland and was living in Villars, just a couple miles away from L’Abri. Apparently, Leary had heard of a Christian community just down the road where numbers of longhaired hippies were staying.



There was speculation about whether there might be a meeting

between Fran Schaeffer and Tim Leary. There was a desire that Leary might come into contact with biblical Christianity through Schaeffer but also a concern that Leary might try to use L'Abri as a platform for his views about drugs. That meeting eventually took place on October 2, 1971. My friend Greg recalls the meeting in these words. "At dinner, Leary was very self-absorbed and not a little blown out from all of the LSD he had taken. He proved to be very obnoxious company. But Schaeffer had been compassionate enough to spend an afternoon in conversation with him about the gospel, telling no one of his encounter with this famous man." There's no evidence that Leary's close brush with the Gospel left any lasting impression.

Some of the people who came to L'Abri came out of circumstances that were overwhelming and difficult for me to relate to. There was a young woman who stayed in the same chalet with Margaret and me. She was a student who had been swept up in the terror following the 1964 military coup in Brazil and imprisoned by the military regime. During her imprisonment, she endured terrible suffering including near starvation. The experience left her a broken woman. Some of the women who shared a room with her would discover food that she had taken at meal times and hidden away in her dresser. We were thankful that she had come to L'Abri (The Shelter). She did come to faith in Christ and began to experience mental, physical, and spiritual healing.

After I had put the garden to bed, I turned my attention to a long overdue indoor project at Chalet Les Mèlèzes. Ever since they had moved into Les Mèlèzes in April 1955, Fran and Edith Schaeffer's only place of refuge was their rather small bedroom. Fran placed a board at the end of the bed and worked there on sermons, lectures, books, correspondence and other writing projects. The picture by Sylvester Jacobs shows Fran

at work in his bedroom with a secretary behind him taking dictation at a small bedside table. If the Schaeffers wished to speak to guests privately, the Schaeffers would invite them to their bedroom.



Photograph by Sylvester Jacobs

On the other side of one wall of the Schaeffer's bedroom was a small room that was once used by their son Franky. By this time, Franky was married and living with Genie on the first floor of the chalet. It was decided that my friend Greg and I would be tasked with making an opening through the wall and turn Franky's old room into a proper sitting room and work area for the Schaeffers. Neither Greg nor I had any great carpentry skills, but we figured how hard can it be? You just remove the wood paneling on either side of the wall dividing the two rooms, exposing the studs, then frame in an opening between the two rooms. When we removed the paneling, we discovered not studs, but a wall of solid wood. That's how the older chalets in Switzerland were built to resist avalanches and heavy loads of snow on the roofs. Looking at the picture of Les Mèlèzes, you can see what look like decorative braces under the upper balcony. Those turn out to be a series of large planks that run from the front to the back of the house.



Greg and I discovered that L'Abri owned only antiquated hand tools for the task. We ended up using a brace and bit to make a line of holes through one of the boards, which we then opened up with chisels. We were then able to get a two-person saw into that initial opening. With Greg in one room and me in the other, we managed to saw down through the wall. It was then that we discovered that the boards were also pegged together. I cannot remember how many days the entire operation took. We were able eventually to clean up and box in the opening. We were pleased with the way the project turned out, and more importantly, so were the Schaeffers!

As a worker at L'Abri, I was able to take part in the rich life of the community. I attended lectures, seminars and uplifting worship on Sundays. I enjoyed the far-ranging discussions at meal times. I knew that I was always free to

seek out interactions with students. I remember one such conversation. I was speaking with a young man who, like me, came to L'Abri as an unbeliever but who was seriously pursuing the Truth. He had been reading in John's Gospel. He had just read the text in John 13 that speaks of Jesus stooping down to wash His disciples feet. He said that, if Jesus Christ was truly God in human flesh, as the Bible claims, this was one of the most stunning accounts he had seen in the life of Jesus. I could not agree more heartily.