

## **The Christian confronted by homosexuality**

The title of our paper comprises two terms. On the one hand we have the word " Christian ", and on the other that of " homosexuality ". What holds these terms together is the verb " confronts ". Before coming to terms with our subject, which will above all deal with the Bible's reaching on the age-old phenomenon of homosexuality, it is necessary briefly to say a few words on the expression " Christian ". This will be the object of our introduction.

What can today be the meaning of the expression " Christian " at a time when under that expression are affirmed the most contrary spiritual and doctrinal positions ? If, in a still relatively recent past, Christians defining themselves within strongly distinctive denominational institutions, had a certain facility in sending one another dogmatic anathemas, today the situation is very different. The vertical barriers between Christian denominations have largely fallen with as result considerable doctrinal and spiritual confusion. If the term " Christian " has become a vague expression, the same trend is to be seen – as a result of the spread of the ecumenical mentality – of the very sense of identity of the various Christian denominations. Today one no longer really knows what it means to be " Reformed ", or " Lutheran ", or even " Evangelical ". Everywhere one observes a loss of denominational identity. It has even become difficult for a practicing Roman Catholic (despite the fact that the exercise of the Magisterium has, to some extent, been maintained) what can be the precise content of the faith he claims to profess. This can, for example, clearly be gathered from the highly ambivalent text resulting from the discussions between Roman Catholics and Lutherans on the doctrine of justification. The same can be said of the agreements signed between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics in the same areas. Such examples could easily be multiplied. All parties to these dialogues seem to be at a loss as to their own denominational identity. Nevertheless it must be admitted that the Roman Church, in spite of the great confusion today in its midst, still maintains – at least with regard to a part of its hierarchy – a certain persistence in its traditional theological diplomacy aiming at attracting as many lost brothers as possible to the bosom of Mother Church.

For those who wish to confess themselves Christians in a more or less coherent manner, this difficult quest for their true identity is aggravated by the powerful syncretistic movement, which in the last ten years has so vigorously replaced ecumenicalism. Such confusions render the treatment of our subject difficult. For on the question we are examining the greatest of confusions is to be found

among those who claim to be Christians. To speak only of my country, Switzerland, it would be very difficult (if not impossible) to make up one's mind in a precise and coherent fashion on what constitutes the homosexual phenomenon by basing oneself on the affirmations of all those who claim to be Christians. To realise the extreme variety and even blatant contradictions between the various positions which claim to be Christian on the subject of homosexuality, it is only necessary to consider the various " Christian " declarations made with regard to the Gay Pride held in the traditionally Catholic and conservative canton of Valais in the summer of 2001. The Catholic Bishop of Sion, after having lit the bonfire by calling this homosexual manifestation a " diabolical temptation " rapidly retreated under the violent pressure of the media and the main political parties largely won over to the themes defended by the homosexual lobby. He maintained his opposition in theory while proclaiming to all who could hear the great tolerance of the Church with regard to the rights of minority groups. The Protestant Church of the canton of Valais (which calls itself " Reformed "), faithful in this to its moral and doctrinal pluralism, hastened to open its doors to a homosexual celebration. Evangelicals (whether charismatic or not) shone as usual by their lack of engagement, at least as far as what can be observed. The only Christian vigorous and highly visible opposition to this manifestation came from young laymen close to the Roman Catholic traditionalist movement founded by Mgr Lefebvre at the Saint Pie X Seminary in Ecône. They considered this Gay Pride as an offense to God and a serious danger for the young people of their region, particularly as the explicit aim of the manifestation was to demand the introduction of " homosexual education " into the public schools of this canton. It is interesting that these traditionalists were joined in their protest against this public exposure of a perverse life-style by a little group of Christians, members of the small Evangelical Baptist Church of Sion whose anti-Catholic Reformed positions are well known in the canton.

How can we recover our bearings in such confusion ? Where is one to place the truly Christian point of view ? For we remain convinced that on this particular ethical question – the importance and significance of the homosexual phenomenon – there without doubt exists a specific and precise (that is non-equivocal) Christian position in conformity to the clear, unchangeable and infallible teachings of the Bible. How then are we to discern such a doctrinal position in the confusion engendered by the great variety of opinions all claiming to represent an authentic Christian standpoint.

It is evident that in the limits of this conference we cannot hope to answer such a question exhaustively. But, in order to make our purpose of our remarks on this difficult and delicate subject understood, a few additional remarks are necessary.

What do we mean by the word " Christian " which figures in our title ? What in fact is this " Christianity " we claim as ours ? We are here forced to distinguish between what we call " the

historical Christian faith " and what, for want of a better expression, we must call " modern Christianity ". The distinction to which we here draw your attention is no longer that of a vertical (or confessional) differentiation between the different branches of the Church Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, etc.), but a horizontal demarcation which passes through all the elements of which the universal Church is composed. Within every Christian denomination you will find (this in a great variety of proportions) the presence of partisans of the Historic Christian Faith and adherents of its " modern " version. How are we then to distinguish the historical faith from its modern version ?

The essential question concerns the attitude of the " believer " with regard to the Bible.

— Is the Bible – the Jewish *Tanak* (known to us by the name of the Old Testament) and the *Apostolic Witness* (what we call the New Testament) – truly the inspired and infallible Word of God, and as such the final authority for the teaching and practice of the Christian faith ?

— Or is the Jewish and Christian Bible only a human word, no doubt spiritually and morally useful and an inspiration for our thoughts and actions but which, as is the case for all human endeavors, necessarily fallible ? In this case it is in no way a norm for all men, in every place and at all times.

This question of final authority is at the heart of every faith, even of the faith we have called " modern Christianity ", where the locus of authority is placed in man's reason and in his feelings. Is this authority merely human, as is the case with the " modern " version of the Christian faith ? Will it then have an exclusively " rational ", " scientific ", " experimental ", in brief " critical " attitude to divine Revelation, to the Bible ? Or is the authority of the *Tanak* and of the *Apostolic Witness* recognized as fully divine, as the historical Christian faith maintains ? With the latter position, the final authority with regard to faith and works, to intelligence and action, is inscribed in the very detail of the verbal texture of Holy Scripture. This is the faith of Eastern Orthodoxy (with John Chrysostom and Justin Popovitch, for example), of Roman Catholicism (with Thomas Aquinas and Pius X, for example), of Protestantism (with John Calvin and Cornelius van Til, for example) and of the Evangelical movement (with John Bunyan and Louis Gaussen, for example). All, in spite of their evident differences, firmly hold, in conformity with the teachings of Holy Scripture, to the infallible divine authority of the Bible.

We present here four tests which will allow us to distinguish the historical Christian faith (which we confess is ours) from that which we consider its modern travesty:

— Firstly, in the perspective of the historic Christian faith, the absolute criterion for defining what constitutes homosexuality—a criterion which will determine the attitude of every faithful Christian will adopt on this question—is the specific teaching to be drawn from the Bible on this subject, as it is found in the *Tanak* and in the *Apostolic Witness*. Such a normative truth cannot be discovered,

either in the tradition of the Church taken by itself, nor in the experience of man abandoned to his own resources. It cannot be found either in the varied lessons of history, nor in the different points of view that can be drawn from sociology. I hasten to add that this in no way implies that we must neglect any useful information capable of facilitating our reading of the sacred text to be gleaned from the various fields of human research. But for the one who bases his beliefs on the norms of the historic Christian faith only Holy Scripture is, in the last resort, habilitated to determine the significance and the importance of these empirical facts.

—Secondly, the historic Christian faith we defend has a definitely historic character. What I want to say by this is that as from the beginnings of the history of the Church, the constant confrontation between the historic Christian faith and errors which have continuously attacked it, has led to a deepening of its understanding of its own doctrinal affirmations and a better discernment of the errors which have always sought to destroy it. It is thus that with a common voice the Christian Church confesses the essential symbolic texts of Church at its beginning: the Apostolic creed, the Nicene creed, and the definitions of the Council of Chalcedon, all of which are faithful expressions of the content of the Scriptures, which, in the final count, are alone normative. In our effort to come to a Christian definition of homosexuality and to demonstrate the true meaning of this way of life, we must take into account the cumulative doctrinal wisdom carefully accumulated by the Church throughout its history. The attacks directed, specially today, against the position defined by the historic Christian faith on the matter of homosexuality force us to seek better to understand the nature, the character and the effects of this phenomenon.

— Thirdly, the historical Christian faith bases itself on a realist epistemology. This means that the content of the Christian faith can be formulated in carefully defined concepts. Thus, if these concepts are dogmatically and logically true, the affirmation of their opposite must of necessity be false. With regard to homosexuality, it is thus possible, from the point of view of the historic Christian faith, to define precisely what the Bible teaches us on the nature and on the effects of the homosexual phenomenon, both on the personal and social planes and in the physical and spiritual spheres.

— Finally, the historic Christian faith does not simply consist in doctrine, but is also and inseparably a way of life, an ethical obedience, both socially and personally, obedience received from God as a gift of his grace. Such a faith seeks thus to conform itself to the revealed will of God, to his normative prescriptions, to his Law, as it is contained throughout Holy Scripture, both *Tanakh* and *Apostolic Witness*. With the help of the grace of God it is possible to walk in a growing faithfulness to the divine will. This means that in the context of the historic Christian faith what we discover in Scripture of the role and meaning of the homosexual phenomenon must lead us to acts of obedience both personal and public, in our families and in our Churches, but also with regard to the civil and

criminal laws of the Commonwealth. It is this practical aspect of the historical Christian faith which makes it possible for those who find themselves imprisoned in the abnormal way of life that is homosexuality<sup>1</sup>, to entertain the firm hope of being gradually and durably delivered of their obsessions by the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is to this task of biblical discernment that we shall now turn.

## **I: Homosexuality examined from the perspective of the structures of creation**

It is not possible to speak correctly of redemption of morality without first considering the structures of reality established by God in the beginning for the whole of that reality established by God which we call nature, or the universe and which the New Testament calls the world, the *cosmos*. It is one of the principal purposes of the first two chapters of the book of Genesis to describe God's majestic unfolding of this simultaneously cosmic and human order. It is only after having established the foundations of such a creational biblical metaphysics that one can construct a truly biblical ethic and a coherent doctrine of redemption.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.  
And the earth was without form, and void ;  
And darkness was upon the face of the deep.  
And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Genesis 1:1-2

From preexisting nothing – *ex nihilo* – God sovereignly creates all spiritual reality (the heaven) and the all physical reality (the earth). But the earth was unformed and void of all creatures. That is to say that the universe come by divine *fiat* into existence did not have its definitive form, nor was it peopled by God's creatures. It was the divine work of the six days for God to complete his creation, to perfect it, to finish the work begun<sup>2</sup>. During these six days God ordered and peopled the earth. This was a work of progressive differentiation. Light is separated from darkness. A space—the firmament-atmosphere—separates the waters below, the primeval ocean, from the waters in the clouds. Then the earth is separated from the waters to form the continents and the oceans. On this earth freed from the primeval ocean, God causes plants to grow, each plant reproducing itself according to the divinely established stability of its species. Then in the firmament, in the heaven

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<sup>1</sup> Sébastien, *Ne deviens pas gay, tu finiras triste*. Témoignage, François-Xavier Guibert, Paris 1998. See the following books for a realistic description of the homosexual movement and the lifestyle it promotes : Paul Cameron, *The Gay Nineties. What the Empirical Evidence Reveals About Homosexuality*, Adroit Press, P.O. Box 680365, Franklin, Tennessee 37068, 1993 et Scott Lively and Kevin Abrams, *The Pink Swastika. Homosexuality and the Nazi Party*, Founders Publishing Corporation, Box 20307, Keizer, Oregon 97307, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> On this fundamental question of the divine unfolding of the universe in the six days of creation see the following two essential books : Oliva Blanchette, *The Perfection of the Universe According to Aquinas, a Teleological Cosmology*, Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, 1992 and Norman Kretzman, *The Metaphysics of Creation. Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles II*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001.

God places the stars, the sun and the moon, each in his proper position. Then God peoples the seas with water creatures and the heaven with birds, all firmly established in their particular essence, each reproducing itself according to its species. Finally on the sixth day God shapes all the animals from the earth fashioning them so as to reproduce each and everyone according to its species. God's creative acts culminate in the creation of man, the very image of God, as the crowning gift of the whole creation. God's ultimate creative act was the that of woman.

If I have briefly described the creation week, labour by which God, by stable and progressive steps, gradually differentiates his original creation, it is because these first two chapters of the Bible give us a concrete description of the divine categories from which the creation was ordered. These categories have the very same stability as the Word which brought them into existence. This creational order, this order of nature, does not change, cannot change until that day when it will be entirely renewed in the new creation. Here, in the first two chapters of Genesis, we have the metaphysical foundations of the created order. If the original order of the universe has been profoundly affected by the cosmic effects of man's sin, this pristine order has nonetheless not been abolished. In its essence, the created order has in no way been shaken by the effects of man's fall. This is what God himself affirms in oracles given to the prophet Jeremiah:

Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light for the day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereon roar. The Lord of hosts is his name.

If these ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

Jeremiah 31:35-36 <sup>3</sup>

These words remind us of the promises God made to Noah after the Flood :

And the Lord smelled a sweet savour ; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground anymore for man's sake ; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth ; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Genesis 8:21-22

God thus categorically affirms the stability of his creation, of that order which we have just seen was established by him during the six days during which were created the heaven and the earth and all that they contain. And this divine order established by God for the whole universe includes

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<sup>3</sup> See further in the same book,

Thus saith the Lord : If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth . Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them. Jeremiah 33 : 25-26

the distinction of essence, the substantial difference, fundamental to the very existence of the human species, between man and woman.

Here is how our founding text deals with this question :

And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him ; male and female created he them.

Genesis 1:26-27

This account of God's ultimate creative act is placed at the end of the sixth day. It is completed in the second chapter of Genesis by the detailed account of the creation of woman.

And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast in the field, and every fowl of the air ; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them ; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field ; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept ; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said: This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh ; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Genesis 2:19-23

This text establishes the fundamental metaphysical distinctions our argument requires. First is affirmed the fundamental distinction between man and animals, for Adam cannot recognize in any of the animals brought before him one capable of being his helpmeet, of corresponding truly to his own nature. In spite of certain similarities man belongs to a completely different order from animals. The woman, drawn from his side is truly similar to him, his helpmeet, and by this fact created in his resemblance. Very literally the woman is bone of man's bones, flesh of his flesh. The very name Adam gives to the wife God brings to him brings out at one and the same time their essential unity and the radical difference which separates them. As a male man is here called *Isch* ; as a female the woman is called *Ischa*. We know that in Biblical thinking the very act of giving a name manifests not only the authority of the one who names over what he names, but even more strongly declares the very nature of the object defined by the name given it. Thus Adam in recognizing in Eve his very counterpart, affirms both their resemblance and their difference. He affirms the permanent unity of the human race of the human species whose every member is created in the image and resemblance of God, and declares the essential difference between man and woman, their essential distinction, their blessed complementarity. The divine account of the creation of the woman continues:

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife ; and they shall be one flesh.

Genesis 2:24

This text contains a foundations metaphysical affirmation. It defines once and for all the creational order, the order of nature as regards man and woman and the relations the must cultivate. The detachment of the husband from his parents and his attachment to his wife have as purpose that they be together constituted one flesh. This signifies the conjugal union, both physical and human, but also the natural fruit of this union, the child which will normally be begotten from that carnal act. We now know in the most decisive manner that the child is constituted in one flesh of the genes of his father and his mother. In a sense he is his father and his mother. That is why honouring them is such a blessing to him. We understand here much more clearly why it is so criminal (and contrary to nature) for man to come to separate what God himself has united. Man in leaving his father ad his mother established a new home, a new institution. The woman moves from the authority of her father to that of her husband, from paternal to conjugal protection. It is here that one finds established the definitive order between man and wife, the essence, the very substance of the immutable created relation between man and woman.

These reflections on the created order help us better to understand the precise nature of sin. The Bible defines sin in a number of ways: missing the goal established by God, is one ; another is to abandon oneself to impurity, to anything contrary to God's holiness ; still another, better known, is any act of disobedience to God's commands. An essential aspect of sin, one which we do not sufficiently consider, is that of rejecting God's order, of choosing the disorder which issues out of the disordered imagination of man rather than submission to the divinely established order of creation. The apostle Paul refers to this when he writes to the Corinthian Christians :

For God is not the order of confusion [or disorder], but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

1 Corinthians 14:33

With this remark we are closing in on the subject of our conference. For the text of Genesis does not say :

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his husband ; and they shall be one flesh.

Nor does it affirm :

Therefore shall a woman leave her father and her mother, and shall cleave unto her wife ; and they shall be one flesh.

Yet this is what pretended by those who not only defend the error of considering homosexuality as a normal and legitimate form of human love but in addition that such a relation should be recognized institutionally as a legal form of " marriage ". With such an inversion of the created order we have to do with a disorder concerning nature itself, a perverse act committed against the original order of creation. Before being a sin, homosexuality is an act against nature, an act of revolt which raises its head against the order of creation itself and, in the final count, against the One who conceived this order and created it, the Lord God Almighty, Creator of the heaven and the earth and all they contain.

## II. Homosexuality examined in the light of the Torah, the Jewish Law

With this perspective in mind the legislation concerning homosexuality contained in the Torah becomes much more comprehensible. These drastic laws aim at repressing acts which are explicitly directed against the order of creation, acts which subvert the order at the very base of human happiness and social peace. With this kind of disorder we do not have to do with ordinary sins, like theft or even adultery, noxious actions which manifest their capacity for harm within the order of creation, but with acts which aim at subverting the created order itself.

What the is homosexuality ? How are we to define this disorder ? The regretted Greg Bahnsen, all too early taken from the eminent place that should have been his in God's Church, in his excellent book *Homosexuality a Biblical View*, gives the following definition which we will make our own of the word " homosexual " :

(...) the general term *homosexual* will be used here for any person, male or female (thus including lesbians), who engage in sexual relations with members of the same sex or who desire to do so. Homosexuality is an affectional attraction to, or active sexual relation with, a person of the same sex <sup>4</sup>.

Before examining the demands of the Mosaic law, analogous revelation of the Eternal law, of God's own thought, and perfect echo of the Natural law inscribed in the conscience of all men, we must say a word concerning those who suffer from homosexual temptations, whether they be men or women. We must carefully distinguish those who are simply subject to such temptations from others who abandon themselves to their fantasies and, even more, from those engage in homosexual acts and become homosexual activists, fanatic propagators of the world wide gay revolution. Homosexual temptation is not in itself a sin as long as one does not abandon oneself to one's inner lusts and satisfy them with others. The Christian, as well as the non-Christian can fight such tendencies and as

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<sup>4</sup> Greg Bahnsen. *Homosexuality a Biblical View*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1978, p. 5.

witness those who have struggles with them and come out of their narcissistic hell, one can be victorious in such a battle. Far from judging men and women struggling against such temptations, our Churches should rather do all they can to come to their aid. We can be very thankful that here and there we can find groups of Christians who give their time and energy to helping men and women who, in considerable moral distress, struggle against such temptations<sup>5</sup>. With regard to those homosexuals who openly practice their vice and strive to foist it on society at large as a normal expression of human sexuality appropriate measures must be found to render their actions ineffectual. No doubt, by the grace of God, such perverted men and women can also escape from this vicious circle but this will require of them true repentance, a lasting change in their lifestyle and a complete abandonment of that perverse ideology which was up to then the justification of their wretched lives. The blood of Jesus Christ, his pardon acquired for sinners at the cross, is fully sufficient to cleanse anyone from the worst sin.

What does the law of Moses say of this question ? We shall now examine the teaching on this matter contained in chapters 18 and 20 of the book of Leviticus. After forbidding different forms of incest and sexual relations during a woman's period, we read the following injunctions.

I am the Lord.

Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind ; it is an abomination.

Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith; neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie thereto; it is a confusion.

These laws receive the following commentary :

Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things ; for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you ; and the land is defiled ; therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.

Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations ; neither any of your own nation nor any stranger that sojourneth among you. For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you and the land is defiled. That the land spew not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spewed out the nations that were before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people.

Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein ; I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 18:21-30

In the 20th chapter of the same book we read :

And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

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<sup>5</sup> Gérard J. M. van den Aardweg, *The Battle for Normality. A Guide for (Self-) Therapy For Homosexuality*, Ignatius, San Francisco, 1977.

And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness ; both of them shall surely be put to death their blood shall be upon them.

And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death ; they have wrought confusion ; their blood shall be upon them.

If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination ; they shall surely be put to death ; their blood shall be upon them.

And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness ; they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they ; that there be no wickedness among you.

Leviticus 20:10-16

So much for the book of Leviticus.

Let us now consider the teaching of the book of Deuteronomy on some other infringements of the statutes on sexual offenses. These laws make us understand the great importance the Jewish Torah accorded to the protection of marriage and to the preservation of the purity of conjugal relations.

If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman so shalt thou put evil away from Israel.

If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her ; then ye shall bring them both unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die ; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city ; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife ; so that thou shalt put away evil from among you.

But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her ; then the man only that lay with her shall die ; but unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing ; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death ; for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter. For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her.

If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found ; then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife ; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.

Deuteronomy 22:22-29

The book of Exodus gives the following precisions concerning the last case :

And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.

Exodus 22:16-17

These different laws on sexual offenses are the careful enumeration of case laws, that is the application to particular cases, of the seventh commandment:

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

We see in these cases how God in his legislation given to Israel is concerned with the particulars of the application of the law. It is clear the, for example, a young couple in love who sleep together by imprudence or excess of passion is treated very differently from the adulterous lovers who destroy the sacred divine covenant of marriage, or those who not only defy God's law, but the order of nature itself by sleeping with persons of the same sex, or even with animals. For the first there is the obligation to marriage, with the payment by the bridegroom of the dowry this entails; for the latter, the death penalty.

Let us now briefly consider what the statutes from the book of Leviticus teach us concerning homosexual relations.

—1. Firstly, such publicly known acts are considered to be of the greatest seriousness by Jewish law. Like voluntary homicide, adultery, incest and bestiality, open homosexual behaviour is considered as worthy of the death penalty. Why such severity ? A comparison of Biblical Hebraic law with the contemporary legal systems of ancient Near East monarchies such as Assyrian, Hittite or Babylonian Law, show a certain moderation in the Torah's application of the death penalty. As Roland de Vaux has well shown<sup>6</sup>, all the cases of death penalty in Hebrew Law can be summed up under one head: public offenses against God. Direct offenses, such as public blasphemy, false prophecy, acts of magic and witchcraft, etc.; in an indirect way in attacking the two expressions of the image of God in society: a) the specific image of God, man, whose integrity and life are to be protected by the death penalty; the family, image of the heavenly family (the Holy Trinity) whose integrity and life are also protected by the capital sentence. It is from this perspective, the protection of the family, that in Hebrew law the death penalty is applicable to publicly known cases of homosexuality, adultery, incest and bestiality. These various perversions with regard to the biblical order relating to the family are thus severely repressed by divinely inspired biblical Hebrew legislation. Infringement of these laws led to exemplary punishments.

— 2. The second point to note is the consequences for a nation, or a people, who willfully to ignore and reject the judicial implications of this legislation. The exemplary condemnation by the Torah of the most serious crimes attacking the family are in fact a system of judicial protection of the integrity of that foundational institution of society. In this way society protects itself from its own inherent tendencies to self-destruction. What our text tells us is that if such crimes are tolerated by any society, if they are covered by the leniency of Law courts and, worse still, if they come to be

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<sup>6</sup> Roland de Vaux, *Les Institutions de l'Ancien Testament*, Cerf, Paris, 1989, Tome I, ch. 10.

legitimated by laws which institutionalize crime, the inevitable consequence will be the destruction of the nation itself. Our text is particularly clear: the earth itself will : out the inhabitants of a land which tolerates such abominations on its soil, which cautions them judicially or which legitimates them institutionally. Such acts, affirms our text, incite creation itself to reject from its bosom all people who tolerate the current practice of such *mores* become generally acceptable to the population. John Hartley's commentary is here particularly appropriate :

But for Israel a close bond exists between human behaviour and the fertility of the land. When the people obey God's laws, God blesses the land, and it bears abundantly. But if the people defile themselves by immoral, particularly sexual, practices such as the former inhabitants of the land practised, they will defile the land. The land will become so nauseated by such behaviour that it will vomit out its inhabitants. It is God himself who will administer the emetic causing the land to vomit our its inhabitants. Only by getting rid of that which is making it sick can the land recover.<sup>7</sup>

—3. Third, Biblical perspective, establishing an organic bond between the cosmos and men's comportment, has become largely foreign to us since the XVIIth Century scientific revolution. For this new mental paradigm, quickly imposed as the dominating intellectual norm of the whole of society, transformed the traditional mental framework, operating an erroneous separation between what was deemed " scientific " and what was not. In this new world view the only objective reality recognised was that which submitted to the mathematical and statistical norms of the new science. This new mode of thought by which we have all been deeply influenced, rid the modern world of the Biblical perspective—the true perspective!—of the Covenant established by the Creator with his creation. The Biblical doctrine of creation places man—for good or for ill—at the head of creation as God's vice-regent. Man's moral or immoral actions will have an organic impact on the functioning of the universe. Contrary to the teachings of modern science, the moral behaviour of man has an objective (i.e. real) consequence on the functioning of the created order, interferes with the functioning of the laws of nature. In this non-reductionist perspective, moral norms and actions are no less objective than are scientific laws and the technology drawn from them.

Let us take a comparison drawn from modern medicine. When an organ is grafted from a living organism to another the phenomenon of incompatibility and rejection is often observed. The organism cannot bear this intruder and rejects it. In a similar way the creation defends itself, that is defends the organic order (this includes the moral dimension of this order) which God has given it, and rejects those people who drastically infringe the cosmic order established by the Creator. How does this happen? Often by the self destruction of a society that tolerates such perverse practices. It is clear that a society that tolerates the systematic destruction of the biblically normative family,

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<sup>7</sup> John E. Hartley, *Leviticus, Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 4, Word Books, Dallas, 1992, p. 298.

foundational structure of any society, cannot long hope to survive. It is simply not possible to maintain a society (or anything else for that matter) when one goes against the very rules which constitute it. It is, for example, perfectly clear that a society largely constituted of male and female homosexuals cannot reproduce itself physically. That parody of normal sexuality, practised between persons of the same sex, is by nature sterile. One of the causes of the demographic crisis which strikes a short-term fatal blow at modern industrial societies the world over, can without difficulty be assigned to the general toleration found in these nations of those perverse sexual practices so vigorously repressed by the Jewish laws we are examining <sup>8</sup>.

— 4. But there is more. Such perverse acts – which include homosexual behaviour – are, according to our text, considered by God to be " abominations ". The Hebrew expression used here is that of *to ebah*, whose root meaning is " to hate, to be horrified by ". In the Bible an abomination is something that is utterly repugnant to God, something that is hateful to him and provokes in him an emotion of horror. It is the *summum* of evil, the ultimate perversion of human action. It is because of this that such actions call forth God's irrevocable judgment. If public authority does not repress such actions (it does have the means of extirpating them, only God can do this), God himself will do it. If the society has become so evil that it is materially impossible to suppress such actions the society is ripe for God's judgment. This is the clear teaching to be drawn from the destruction of the ancient world by the flood at the time of Noah; from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah at the time of Abraham and Lot; from the extirpation of the heathen nations from Canaan by the armies of Israel at the time of Joshua; from the two destructions of Jerusalem at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and of Titus. For it is not only nature, the ever constant order of creation, that spews out such utterly evil nations from the land given them for a time, but the holy God himself who holds them responsible for their evil deeds and rejects them in utter disgust.

— 4. Finally our texts speak of bestiality (Leviticus 18:23) and incest (Leviticus 20:12) in terms of " confusion ". This notion of " confusion " applies to all the sexual deviations with regard to the created order that we are at present examining. The term " confusion " is of course not applied exclusively to sexual disorder, but to disorders affecting the original perfect (" good ") order of creation. The Biblical notions of purity and holiness are not used in Scripture according to strictly rational moral categories as we understand them today. They are related to the created order and thus have a metaphysical character. Holiness and purity consist in keeping separate what God has himself

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<sup>8</sup> See, among many other studies, Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, VII. The Seventh Commandment, Presbyterian and Reformed, Philadelphia, 1973, pp. 333-447 . Pitrim A. Sorokin, *The American Sex Revolution*, Porter Sargent Publisher, Boston, 1956 ; Pierre Chaunu et Georges Suffert, *La peste blanche*, Gallimard, Paris, 1976.

established as separate. Thus impurity and profanation consist in mixing what should be kept separate. Here sin is considered under the angle of the destruction of the created order. This is what the Bible means by " confusion ". Josef Pieper carefully examines this characteristic of evil actions in his classic study of sin:

Prior to the rise of modernity everyone shared the common conviction that the first and most decisive standard for determining norms of conduct in the whole realm of human action must be *nature*: what man and things are " by nature " is what determines norms for good and evil. Moreover, the phrase " by nature " basically meant: by virtue of having been created, by virtue of one's being a creature <sup>9</sup>.

Contrary to the positions defended by hyper-modern philosophers or theologians such as Roger Garaudy or Jurgen Moltmann – in this they are worthy disciples of Jean-Jacques Rousseau – human liberty does not start from zero, is not provoked by man's actions *ex nihilo*. This view of human freedom has in fact a much older origin ; it dates from the fall of man, Adam's will to determine as from zero, that is by himself alone and in opposition to God and to the order of nature, the founding categories of good and evil. The modern notion freedom is but a philosophical rehash of original sin. Moltmann and Garaudy, as typical moderns, seek freely to determine by themselves the difference between good and evil. In this they refuse to consider the existence of God, the manifestation of his revealed will in Scripture and the order of the universe which witnesses in such a clear fashion to the ordering action of its Creator. In answering this modern position, Pieper goes on:

In reality *everything* that we do of our own responsibility, whether or not we are Christians, can be set into motion *at all* only on the basis of this fundamental presupposition: that both world and human beings called into existence by virtue of their creatureliness. Moreover, from just that same presupposition – our reality as creatures – we are presented with the standard, the boundaries, the norm for our decisions, decisions which are *not* drawn " from nothing ", but are decisions *of* the creature, *as* a creature <sup>10</sup>.

John Hartley, in his recent Commentary on the book of Leviticus from which we have just quoted, indicates the necessarily creational – and thus never autonomous – structure which acts as an inescapable framework – whatever arrogant men may pretend – of every human action:

The cosmology of the Old Testament [in our view the *true* cosmology] places barriers between the divine realm and the human realm and between the human realm and the animal realm ; any mixing of these barriers is considered unnatural, a confusion. The confusion is both of species and of social roles<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Josef Pieper, *The Concept of Sin*, St. Augustine's Press, South Bend, Indiana, 2001, p. 36.

<sup>10</sup> Josef Pieper, *Ibidem*, p. 40-41.

<sup>11</sup> John E. Hartley, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

We could indicate many hierarchical categories drawn from the creational order – husband-wife, old-young, masters-servants, elders-church members, teachers-students, officers-soldiers, sovereign-people, etc. – whose ignorance, through the idolatrous abuse of the mathematical notion of "equality", leads us all frequently to commit this sin of confusion. The well known anthropologist Mary Douglas, in her classic study of impurity, gives us a remarkable analysis of this biblical principle which demands of us that we conform our actions to the order defined by these original categories, first principles we can without error consider as defining " the original metaphysical order ", the unshakeable cosmological order of all reality as it came forth from God's hands at the conclusion of the six days of creation, order that still stands today. Mary Douglas writes in her classic study *Purity and Danger* :

The use of the word " perversion " [used sometimes to translate the word " confusion " we are here studying] is a highly significant mistranslation. The original in Hebrew is *tebhel*, which means " mixture " or " confusion ". [...] We can conclude that plenitude or perfection is typical of holiness. It also requires that individuals conform to their class and that no confusion be found between distinct groups of objects. [...] Holiness extends, according to other precepts, to species and categories. Hybrids and other confusions are thus abominations.

This shows us, among other things, the intrinsic impurity of the theory of evolution and of all forms of equalitarianism, which produce, in the fields of biology and social organization, all kinds of mixtures and, as a result, utter confusion between species and social categories. Mary Douglas continues :

To be holy means to distinguish carefully between the categories of creation, that is to formulate correct definitions, that is to be capable of discrimination and order. In this way all the rules relative to sexual morality are examples of holiness. Incest and adultery [and *a fortiori* homosexuality and bestiality] (Leviticus 18:6-20) are the very opposite of holiness, as they go against order. Morality is thus in no way opposed to holiness, but the latter consists more in the separation of what must needs be separated than in the protection of the rights of husbands and brothers <sup>12</sup>.

She adds elsewhere,

[...] if what is impure is that which is not in its proper place, then we must examine it from the point of view of the reality of order. What is impure, what is " dirty " is that thing which cannot be included if one wishes to maintain a particular order <sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> We quote from the French translation (which we have retranslated), for this is the only text available to us. Mary Douglas, *De la souillure. Essai sur les notions de pollution et de tabou*, François Maspero, Paris, 1971, pp. 72-73.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 59.

From this discussion we can see that, according to the teaching of the Torah and following the metaphysical, moral and judicial definitions provided by the law of Israel, this sin, this metaphysical disorder, this moral and social disorder which is the nature of homosexuality, merits the death penalty ; that it will lead the nations who tolerates it to extinction for the very soil will spew them forth ; that it is a horror, an abomination in the eyes of God ; and, finally, that it is a confusion which sets the very order of nature topsy-turvy, muddling and disrupting the creational categories themselves. It is this last aspect that led Francis Schaeffer to characterise homosexuality (as is the case also for feminism) as being above all an intellectual, a philosophical disorder. He clearly perceived that this moral perversion is first of all a perversion in thinking, a confusion of terms, a categorical incoherence, a disorder of the mind with disastrous consequences. The homosexual plague is the rotten fruit of the whole of modern philosophy: first nominalist with Ockham, subjectivist with Descartes, idealist with Kant, dialectic with Hegel and finally existentialist with Sartre. Based on this perverse philosophical tradition, this epidemic of the homosexual lifestyle, is the consequence, on the one hand of the separation, at the heart of modern culture, between Science and Metaphysics and, on the other, of the chasm between modern philosophy – a war with Metaphysics and Theology – and every thought of the Creator.

This is clearly brought out by the apostle Paul in his definitive analysis he makes of the homosexual phenomenon. Thus the very movement of our argument leads us naturally to examine what the New Testament has to say on our subject and, in particular, to the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Christian Church in Rome.

### **III. Homosexuality as seen by the Saint Paul, Doctor of Israel and Apostle to the Gentiles**

We read the following text in the first chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves, who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto

vile affections ; for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another ; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient. Being filled with unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity: whisperers ; backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affections, implacable, unmerciful.

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Romans 1:18-32

We find ourselves here in front of a text which, we might say, founds the structures of the theological and metaphysical history of fallen man. In this history of sin the question before us, that of the significance of male and female homosexuality, finds a choice place. Our text teaches us that this particular moral phenomenon cannot be considered outside the general history of sin, apart from the history of the relations of the holy and just God with a humanity which has voluntarily turned away from him. It is clear that we shall not here undertake the detailed study of so rich a text but simply try briefly to indicate its fundamental orientations and decisive axes, so as to permit us better to understand the place of homosexuality in the history of the relations of God with men.

### **1. In the beginning God**

By the act of creation, in making all things, God sets his seal on every creature thus marking their origin. Thus every being in the universe bears, we might say, the very sign and the precise reflection of the One who is its divine Conceiver and Creator. Thus, indicates our text, nothing in the universe is due to chance ; everything speaks loudly and clearly of God the Creator. The truth of the divine origin and of the unfathomable wisdom and unlimited power of He to whom witnesses the smallest particle of His creation is thus evident to every man who comes into the world. Man's sense and his intelligence have been given to him so that he might recognize the Creator of the Cosmos through the clear and unambiguous witness of all his works and, in thus recognizing him for the only true God, give him the worship, the honour and the glory which are his due.

### **2. After original goodness, sin and the fall of man**

But this first truth of God as Creator, Sustainer and End of all things was not kept by men. Instead of submitting to God, of worshiping him and of thinking their thoughts in function of the original divine categories of creation, they chose to imprison this Truth by their unjust actions. That

is, actions not conformed to the will of God the Creator, as it manifests itself in the order of his good creation, order confirmed by His particular revelations, but led to anarchy and death by man's vain imaginations. Because they thus refused the clear evidences of their senses and the right reasoning that should have followed, evidences and reasoning that should have led them to worship God to express their gratitude for his goodness to them, God judges them inexcusable. He thus abandons men to their vain autonomous reasonings, that is to a way of thinking having broken with the divine categories, those inscribed by the Creator in the cosmos and in the very functioning of human thought and infallibly revealed by His Holy Spirit in Holy Scripture. It is thus that man, thinking himself wise, has become intellectually and spiritually blind.

But their true condition is very different from that which, in their arrogance, they imagine to be theirs. Their intellectual and categorical emancipation from God's own thoughts has plunged them in darkness. Their heart has thus been deprived of that divine light, the Logos by which all things were made, in which they subsist and towards which they tend, which illuminates all things, the Creator's intelligence. In their unfathomable spiritual blindness, deprived of God's light, they have given themselves over to idols. Having replaced the divine creational categories by their own vain thoughts they replace the living God, Creator of heaven and earth, by mere creatures, corruptible man, birds, animals and reptiles.

Today we should speak of intellectual idols, of philosophical, cultural, scientific, technical and political idolatry. Today we have to do with sophisticated conceptual systems elaborated as from man's first revolt against the original categories established by God to order his creation. In the modern world the systematized idolatry produced by this intellectual revolt has led to the creation of world, and artificial social, and political order (in fact a systematized disorder) disorder, structurally opposed to God. This fossilised system holds us prisoners of artificial, anti-natural, immoral and impious structures, and inversed order from which the very thinking of God has been systematically excluded.

### **3. Man's morally disordered condition fruit of his categorical disorder and of the idolatry which it inevitably entails**

Having lost his intellectual bearings, having distanced himself from the truth, man has abandoned himself to his emotions, to his passions, which lead him to all and any direction. In the created structure of man's being, truth holds the first place, will follows and emotion crowns the accomplishment of what is good. In the disordered structure of sinful man, it is now emotion, passion that holds the first place; the will follows enslaved to emotions and to passions broken loose; and finally, autonomous reason (the truth of yesterday) serves as the ideological justification of evil's triumph.

Then God's judgment manifest itself on such men. He abandons them to their own schemes and gives them over to the impurity of their sinful hearts. They no longer know how to separate purity from impurity, holiness from profanity, good from evil according to the divine categories of the created order. God abandons them to disorder, to shameful passions which not only break Gods commandments, expression of God's holy nature and image of the order of creation. But, having replaced the truth of God by lies, they are given up to all sorts of false categories of their own invention. In the end, like those politicians who make a pretence of governing us, they can no longer distinguish their right hand from their left.

#### **4. Homosexuality, culmination of a long process of intellectual disorder, of impiety and of immorality**

As we saw in the first part of our conference, the divine work of the six days of creation was that of the establishment of order, the progressive organization of God's masterpiece, the passage from an unformed and unfilled universe to the plenitude of its perfection. What Paul describes here is the very opposite. It is nothing less than the deconstruction by man of the created order. As we saw also, the deconstruction of this divine order began with man's refusal to recognize the power and the wisdom of God through the infallible witness of his works. Then man abandoned himself to idolatry ; he replaced the only true God by imitations of his own fabrication. Finally, such a process led man to abandon himself, or rather for God to abandon him, to allsorts of sins. The homosexual phenomenon is thus the moral and social culmination of the perverse disintegration of a culture in the direction of spiritual, intellectual and moral deconstruction. Thud the homosexualisation of a given society is not simply the sum of its individual perversions. This is not just an individual and personal phenomenon. The very texture of society is changed. That is why the homosexual phenomenon is often associated with the destruction of the creational structures of the family: loss by parents of the sense of their sexual identity ; abandonment by the husband of his role of head of his wife (the feminization of men) ; the aggressive dominating masculinization of the wife and mother, a parody of masculinity which is the true character of what has wrongly been termed the " feminist " movement.

This homosexualisation of the texture of society is the fruit of a long process by which a culture loses its theological, moral and metaphysical categories. This loss of intellectual order projects itself in the disappearance of order in the society at large. The respect of the creational order is replaced by what bears a striking likeness to social, political and cultural anarchy. To the perfected cosmos as it issued forth from the fashioning hands of God, in all its goodness and beauty at the close of the sixth day of creation, is substituted what strongly resembles chaos. Al things fall to pieces, everything loses its original order, all things fossilize into the fraudulent pretended order of

antinomian, mechanical, life stifling totalitarian systems. This is the " death in the city " of Francis Shaeffer, the " city of the dead " of Jan Marejko's *technocosmos*, the " culture of death " of John Paul II. We are not here simply confronted by the immorality of man's revolt against God's commandments, nor by an amoral indifference to divine laws. But here we have to do with fixed disorder, the anti-natural structure of a homosexual society which is blindly hurtling towards God's inescapable judgment. And we observe that the issue of such disorder, the culmination of such a growth in evil is not simply the result of the free choice of men. It is, in the final resort, the effect the direct intervention of God who, in his sovereign judgment, precipitates a society which willfully rejects him, more and more rapidly on the slippery slope of its eternal damnation. On this toboggan we no longer perceive those landmarks which formerly guided men. For men have gradually effaced from the range of their vision, not only the moral distinctions of God's laws, but also (and this is even more damaging) all those first categories which are the very foundations of the order of creation. Man's revolt here culminates in a labour of de-creation.

When men (and women!) who hold authority in the Church of God – as it is the case with the successor in Calvin's chair in Geneva, the woman Moderator of the famous *Société des Pasteurs*, Madame Isabelle Graesslé – come publicly to defend in the name of the Christian faith such homosexual and lesbian practices, they place themselves voluntarily under that solemn condemnation with which the text of the Epistle to the Romans we have been considering, closes:

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Romans 1:18-32

## Conclusion

In a period increasingly characterized by conceptual disorder, it is of the highest importance that the divine landmarks, be they creational, theological or moral, be, once again, clearly brought to the attention of God's Church. Before proclaiming the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ to the lost, to those for whom, not only the dogmas of the Christian Faith and its moral norms have become incomprehensible, but who have lost all sense of the creational and biblical categories of which we have spoken, it is of the greatest importance to reestablish in the minds of our contemporaries, the structures of God's creational order. This is what we have tried to do this evening. Only then can we undertake the fundamental task of proclaiming the Gospel of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ to the men and women of our time lost in the endless labyrinth of the metaphysical, spiritual and moral chaos which constitutes our so-called " post-modern " world. The way most of our contemporaries live manifest a world view from which have disappeared those first categories, amongst which that

distinguishing men from women. The darkness which we today have to pierce is such that the proclamation of the order of creation must precede that of God's Law and, still more, that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For without this first metaphysical creational order, reflection of the thought and the character of God the Creator, neither the Law of God nor the Redemption of Jesus Christ can have any meaning.

God's people has always been confronted by the phenomenon of homosexuality. This was as true for the Church of the Old Testament as that of the New, for that of the Church of the Apostles and Fathers as for the Church of our day. For, as the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, we find ourselves today more advanced in the history of salvation than were our forefathers, that is closer to the day of judgment (Hebrews 10:25). But we must today come to confront something new: the fossilization, the hardening, what we must call the institutionalization of evil. This was unknown to our fathers, even in the most corrupt periods of human history <sup>14</sup>. What I am specifically thinking of here is what is called in France the PACS, bastard legislation instituting pretended " marriages " between persons of the same sex, judicial absurdity which our Swiss legislators also seek to impose on us <sup>15</sup>.

Such a situation places the Church of Jesus Christ before the most serious responsibilities: the Truth of God, whether it be with regard to Creation, the Law or the Gospel, must today (as in the past) be proclaimed clearly and audibly, but in particular in such a manner as to answer the specific challenges of this time.

This is what, with the help of God and your patience, I have attempted before you this evening.

Jean-Marc Berthoud

Lausanne, 6th of April in the year of the Lord, 2002

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<sup>14</sup> Jacques Bichot et Denis Linsel, *Les autoroutes du mal. Les structures déviantes dans la société moderne*, Presses de la Renaissance, Paris, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> See the *Réponse de l'Association vaudoise de parents chrétiens à la consultation fédérale sur la situation juridique des couples homosexuels en droit suisse*, which was sent by the AVPC to our federal authorities in a recent governmental consultation of concerned bodies on this question.