

you can't love people who aren't like you. Even if that were true, the problem is that the alternative is much worse. We see it around us: drugs and crime, the death of learning, millions of children with no father, a culture that slides into barbarism. There is no solution to human life; there is only better or worse management of our savagery.

In 1 Corinthians 13, the chapter the Westminster fifth grade memorized, Saint Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Much of what he wrote in that letter is said with great beauty, but we do not put childish ways behind us completely. I hope my daughter does not, for what she has is more than a happy childhood, more than being placed in social circles where some day she will find a loyal, family-centered husband. This is sitting next to Christ, shoulder to shoulder, until she dies. This is how to have a happy life.

Brian Kirkpatrick writes from Augusta, Georgia.

Letter to a Student

by Jonathan Chaves

History and Nature



Thanks for your response. I enjoyed it immensely, and I believe you will understand that this is debate as it should be, not the invective that often substitutes for intellectual vibrancy these sad days.

One of the pitfalls of this point in history is that everything ends up reduced to discussions of "slavery." One single institution is used to paint the entire past with a broad brush as "oppressive." With such an attitude, a society is forced to spit on the graves of its ancestors, and no civilization that does that can survive. Slavery has been practiced in various histor-

ical contexts; in Western civilization it has never been a norm, and during its relatively brief existence in the American South, it was vehemently protested against by such poets as William Cowper and William Blake in Britain as well as the whole abolitionist movement. If you ever look into some of the writers in *Chronicles* such as Clyde Wilson, you'll find that the South would in all likelihood have phased the practice out without the Civil War occurring; of course, we cannot know for sure. But everything cannot be reduced to this alone. Even giving women the vote is legitimately controversial; the whole feminist argument about women being collectively "oppressed" is ahistorical and open to rebuttal. As early as 1910 G.K. Chesterton wrote a brilliant essay called "Feminism: The Mistake About Women."

The whole attempt to frame history in terms of the oppression of one "group" by another derives from Marx. It goes no further back than that. And because counter-Marxist arguments are not systematically presented to your generation of students, you are left taking for granted what is in fact highly contentious.

On the question of homosexuality, the cultural left, joined by the libertarian right, have swallowed the claim that people are "gay" by nature, as they are male or female, black or white. Are they? What is "nature"? And what happened to free will, without which we are not even human? It has been argued that there is a certain chromosome which causes a man to engage in criminal activity. Does that mean the activity—robbery, murder—must be condoned? Of course not. We all agree that if a man has a biological urge to do something agreed to be wrong, he can and must mortify or suppress it. So the real question is whether the action or behavior is wrong. Robbery? Murder? We have a solid consensus that they are wrong. What about an urge or desire to have carnal relations with someone else of one's own sex? Down through the ages, and virtually universally, it has been considered to be wrong. Exceptions, such as the

philosophers' cult of homosexual relations with boys in ancient Greece, or the samurai cult of homosexuality in medieval Japan, prove the rule in the sense that neither of these was fully or openly accepted by the societies in question. As C.S. Lewis pointed out years ago, the ancient Greeks always referred to it, on the rare occasions when they did, with a "snicker," and in Japan Ihara Saikaku wrote a series of hilarious parodies of the samurai cult in the 17th century.

Like all conservatives, I prefer not to argue on the basis of "rights," as sooner or later one right will come into conflict with another, and there will be no way to determine the conclusion except by placing arbitrary decisionmaking power in the hands of the judges who happen to be sitting on the bench at a given moment. This puts inordinate power in the hands of a few individuals.

Where does that leave us, the first generation in the history of the world with a "movement" to legitimize homosexuality in the public square? It looks as if the argument that "gayness" is a natural part of personal identity won't work, because we universally reject any claim that kleptomania, even if granted to be "natural," is an aspect of identity. We still cling to the insight that men possess free will. So, is the behavior morally acceptable? For the first time in history, there is a critical mass ready to answer "yes." This is an argument for tolerance in the true sense. (I think something is wrong but will look the other way. If I see nothing wrong with the thing, I can't be said to "tolerate" it; I fully accept it without question.) It is no argument for what the "activists" are pushing for, and are actually achieving incrementally, largely on the strength of the argument that homosexuality is "natural," "biologically" driven. (In publications aimed solely at fellow "gays," some activists openly acknowledge that they think it is a choice—and defend it on those grounds. "Let us do what we want to do!") To have public, legal, institutional validation of what has been considered an aberration throughout

history is to act foolishly.

If you have no problem with homosexual acts, then there apparently is no problem for you. What about me? Could I have a lifelong friendship with someone who is "gay"? Yes, I could and have. Because we shared a great love for Chinese art, of which he was an internationally famous collector. We simply avoided talking about his perversion.

Down through the centuries, society has dealt correctly with the situation—generally speaking, silence in public and tolerance in private. We now have a truly bizarre reversal, with homosexual activists saying to those opposed, "We are coming out of the closet; you must take our place." And that includes a photographer fined \$6,000 for refusing, on religious grounds, to take a "wedding" picture of two men. (These are not the only grounds for considering homosexuality to be wrong; a card-carrying atheist can think so as well, because the male-female polarity is foundational in nature.)

We are now left with a simple power struggle in the political sphere. I stand with those who uphold the traditional understanding of marriage, male and female, usually monogamous, sometimes polygamous, sometimes polyandrous (in other cultures). Every individual may enter into marriage. Two men do not and cannot constitute a "marriage"; they have no "right" to redefine basic concepts.

This is probably much more on the subject than you wished, but you see how as an intellectual community we have been forced into a false position: unquestioningly accepting a framing of the "debate" by one of the two sides. Without clearing the air of this error, there can be no proceeding to a deeper level of discourse. And that is a great shame.

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Letter From Québec

by Luc Gagnon

The Quiet Apostasy of Québec



The Canadian province of Québec is the only French-speaking region in North America where the official language is still French. It is spoken by more than 80 percent of the population. Québec is the last living bastion of the French North American Empire founded in the 17th century. It was the realization of Catholic and Royal France at her zenith, the France of Molière, Pascal, Racine, Bossuet, Fénelon, Olier, and Louis XIV. It was a work of colonization, and it was a work of evangelization for the native tribes.

Québec City was founded in 1608 by a generous explorer and ship captain, Samuel de Champlain, who became the first governor of the colony and collaborated closely with the Catholic Church. The Recolet Brothers, a group of reformed Franciscans, came to the city in 1615, and the Jesuits arrived in 1625. In 1635, the Jesuits created a college in Québec City, one year before the foundation of Harvard College in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In 1673 Blessed François de Laval was consecrated at Saint-Germain-des-Prés Abbey (Paris) as the first Roman Catholic bishop in North America. He had established the Seminary of Québec in 1663 for the sanctification and the education of the clergy. As the founder of the Church in Québec, he lived a simple and evangelical life with his community of priests around the seminary and the cathedral until his death in 1705. The Ursulines, led by Blessed Marie de l'Incarnation, founded the first school for French and native girls in 1639, the same year that the Augustinian Sisters founded the first hospital in Canada, the Hôtel-Dieu of Québec City. The eight Holy Canadian Jesuit Martyrs, known in the United States as the North American Martyrs, shed their blood in the 17th century among the native tribes for their evangelization efforts. Montreal was founded in 1642 by

members of the French Society of the Blessed Sacrament, led by Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve, for the conversion of the natives and the building of a Catholic society. Originally, the city was called Ville-Marie.

The 1763 British conquest, which followed the defeat of the French army on the Plains of Abraham (September 13, 1759), was a difficult test for the young French Catholic colony of 60,000. The British Parliament's Québec Act of 1774 permitted the free practice of the Roman Catholic religion, and the French community was able to survive thanks to a compromise between the English crown and the French Canadian elite, particularly the clergy. Yet recruiting was difficult for the Canadian clergy and religious orders. In 1773 the Jesuits were suppressed by Pope Clement XIV. By order of the British governor, they were not allowed to recruit any novices until the death of their last member in 1800. With the help of many priests who had been expelled from France by the anticlerical revolutionaries after 1789, the French Canadian Church launched a Catholic revival. This gained ground after 1840 under the guidance of Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montreal, and Louis-François Laflèche of Trois-Rivières, an old city founded in 1634. This inaugurated a period of stability for the Church and society that lasted more than 100 years (1840-1960). It was nourished by one of the highest birthrates and one of the highest rates of religious and priestly vocations in the Western world. Québec was then described by American and English Canadian sociologists as a "priest-ridden province."

World War II was a critical period for the traditional way of life of the French Canadians. A few years before, for the first time in history, a majority of French Canadians were living in an urban environment. This posed a great challenge for the Church. It was difficult to reach the faithful in the city among the Protestants, Jews, and nonbelievers, particularly in Montreal. With the war also came the need for many women to work outside of their homes. The Liberal government