

Reformed Faith and Life

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“ *An overseer must be well thought of by outsiders (1 Tim. 3:7)* ”

Dear friends,

Being a pastor in a secularized environment

One of the markers of secularization in France which is to me at the same time sad and amusing, is the rather disconcerted look that appears on the face of many people when they ask me what I do for a living. When I reply: I am a pastor, their mouth falls open and they look somewhat puzzled. I may as well have said: I am a drug trafficker, or I am the leader of a dangerous sect. Very few will ask me what being a pastor implies. I presume they find it somewhat threatening. Let me illustrate this. In one instance, we had invited a newly-wed (middle aged) couple for a light dinner at our home. The husband, an event organizer and DJ, spent a good two hours explaining his job to me in the minutest detail, sharing his excitement about what he is doing, the nitty-gritty of being a professional DJ, his project to set up a future event venue in town because apparently there is a tremendous need for it. Though I have never set foot in a discotheque (see, in my youth I used to attend concerts and the opera in Paris, having quite different taste from our guests...) I made sure I reacted with genuine interest and asked pertinent questions. And so, trying my best to be a polite host, I did not interrupt the flow of his fascinating explanations. It must have been 10PM when he eventually asked me what I did. A deafening silence followed the gloomy announcement... A dark cloud suddenly fell on the conversation. His facial expression seemed to indicate real dismay. Later during that long evening, I was unexpectedly told that he had sorted his own personal issues and that in his own eyes his life was in good order. I took it to be an indirect way of leading me to understand that no preaching, no call to face God and his Word was needed at all, in case I might want to engage in such unwelcome talk (which I had not done).

What kind of Christian witness can you bring in this type of situation? I always recall Paul's recommendations to Timothy regarding overseers (1 Tim. 3), particularly how they should be perceived by outsiders: *He must be sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable (v. 2); moreover he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil (v.7)*. Prayers before meals when you have people eating at your table are a powerful way to indicate to whom your thoughts and heart are turned to, for no one can deny you (as yet!) the right to pray in your own home.



Da Vinci's last painting, St John the Baptist, expresses a clear androgynous physical and spiritual ideal.



*A strong Reformation is needed
in our own midst*



Further strides into secularization

The French Parliament had to reschedule its planned debate about the legalization of surrogate motherhood for lesbian couples and single mothers, as well as other ethical and societal issues. It is still in the pipeline, but the current political and social climate with its continued contestation and unrest – made it too dangerous for the government to stick to the original schedule. It is quite significant that a member of the presidential majority party (an avowed Roman Catholic lady) has had the courage to denounce the existence of a powerful pro LGBTQ lobby within the national Parliament, despite intense peer pressure and even threats of being excluded from the party. Reflecting on these societal trends and the advancement of the homosexual and transgender agenda, I have just completed an article for our website which points towards the recurrent androgynous myth and ideal in our Western civilization, which has copped up from time to time since the Greek philosopher Plato spoke of it almost twenty-five centuries ago. Today this ideal seems to be the source of a new sort of “ecumenism”, uniting secularists, neopagans and even a host of church leaders, around a new concept of being human: *freedom* from the male-female distinction would thus become the prelude to *freedom* from any other differences between individuals, so that perfect *equality* may eventually lead to a brave new world of perfect *brotherhood* in the new humanistic *Kingdom*.

In the meantime, my series of videos on the Ten Commandments is steadily growing, despite various technical impediments which regularly hinder the smooth production of these short expositions of God’s Law.

Seminar on the foundations of the Church

Early in April I will be on my way to Orange (South of France) in order to lead a series of seminars on the foundations of the Church according to the New Testament at a small local Evangelical church. I believe there is a tremendous need to strengthen local churches by showing them what Scripture teaches about being Church/Body of Christ. Only if Christian communities strive to become *churches* in the proper – Biblical – sense, with full submission to the authority of the only Head, the Lord Jesus-Christ, will there remain some cement and salt capable of opposing the total disintegration of our society and culture in the above-mentioned idolatrous *Kingdom*. In this respect a strong Reformation is needed in our own midst!

In His name

Rev Eric Kayayan



The city of Orange has a Roman theater built during the reign of emperor August, whose statue features in its center.

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