

Speech of  
**Professor Pierre Chambon**  
1988 Co-Winner in Science

Your Royal Highness Prince Nayif bin Abd Al-Aziz  
Your Highnesses, the Princes  
Your Eminences, the Ulama  
Your Excellencies  
Ladies & Gentlemen

In accepting the King Fayçal International Prize for Science, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the King Fayçal Foundation and its committee for this generous gift and the recognition that it conveys. It is a great honor and privilege to be awarded this Prize in a country which has given such a high priority to the development of higher education, Science and Medicine. I accept it as the representative of the many members of my laboratory who have collaborated with me over the last 20 years. The achievements on which the award is based are the fruit of their enthusiasm and devotion to science. Special thanks are due to my wife, Brigitte, for her persistent help and understanding. I would also like to thank all of those who have funded our research over the years, especially the CNRS, the INSERM and our Faculty of Medicine in Strasbourg.

I have attempted in my scientific work to address basic problems related to the chemistry and molecular biology of heredity, which have to be solved in order to advance our understanding of pathological disorders, such as hereditary diseases and cancer. The work of my laboratory has contributed to the “Genetic Revolution” which, over the last 15 years, has drastically changed our ideas on the structural organization, expression and evolution of the hereditary material. What is the structure of the building blocks of this material that we name genes, how are they turned on and off in our cells during early development and then in adult tissues, how are the different cell

types generated and which role do hormones play in these processes ? These are some of the questions that we have addressed. We have already given some answers and hopefully, some of our studies will lead to a better understanding of some cancers.

Science is the most challenging of modern adventures, a unique chance to discover things which have never been seen before. The excitement of being a molecular geneticist is to participate to the exploration of life and to discover how it operates. It is also the conviction that progresses in biological sciences will contribute in the future to the understanding and treatments of major diseases. Let me thank again — very sincerely — all those who have enabled me to take part in this adventure and to be present here today.