

FEET Conference 2022 – A Report

‘Hope for the World: Eschatology as a Source of Life for the Mission of the Church’
The 2022 Conference of the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians

What does evangelical theology have to say about hope? To a world that experiences hopelessness and to a church that tries to minister in such circumstances? Apparently, it has much to say. An important theological event was dedicated to the topic of hope: the biennial conference of FEET (the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians) was held in Prague (in the Czech Republic) from 26 to 30 August 2022 on the theme ‘Hope for the World: Eschatology as a Source of Life for the Mission of the Church’. Sixty participants from all over Europe, theologians of various disciplines involved in theological research and training, came together to discuss academic papers, participate in workshops, hold disciplinary groups in Old Testament, New Testament, Systematic Theology/Church History, Practical Theology and Apologetics, as well as meet in regional groups.

Evangelical theology speaks not of a generic hope, but of the hope that is rooted in the biblical story. It is foreshadowed in the expectations of Israel in the Old Testament, accomplished in the life and work of Jesus Christ, and proclaimed and lived out in the life of the Church empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Bible is the book of hope. The papers read at the conference provided food for thought by giving an overview of this hope in its Old and New Testament trajectories (Prof. Dr Julius Steinberg, Germany), discussing the implications of the Christian hope for apologetics and mission (Dr Yannick Imbert, France), focussing on the resurrection of Jesus as being the ground of our hope (Prof. Dr Christian Stettler, Switzerland), dealing with the relationship between hope and God’s judgement (Dr Jiří Bukovský, Czech Republic), and intertwining the topic of hope and the Kingdom of God with the pursuit of social justice (Dr Alexander Geychenko, Ukraine). These main papers received a response by another evangelical scholar prior to being discussed by the whole meeting.

Stimulating Bible readings were given by Dr Myrtho Theocharous (Greece) on hope in the book of Habakkuk, by Dr Külli Tõniste (Estonia) on how hope shapes the book of Revelation, and by Dr Stephen Dray (UK) on biblical hope according to Hebrews 10. Given the tragic war in Ukraine, Dr Roman Soloviy (Lviv, Ukraine) gave a moving report of how the Russian invasion of Ukraine has brought about death and despair and how Christian hope can energise Christians and society at large not to give up even in the midst of such evil.

FEET was founded by Dr John Stott (1921-2011) and others. The current chair is Prof. Dr Gert Kwakkel (Netherlands and France). The members’ meeting during the conference paid tribute to members of the Executive Committee who had served the Fellowship for many years (Drs. Hetty Lalleman, Pavel Cerny and Klaus Bense) and elected as new members Drs Jiří Bukovský, David Kramer and McTair Wall.

In conversation with the European Evangelical Alliance (represented by Dr Frank Hinkelmann and Samuel van der Maas), FEET plans to hold a joint conference in 2024 on the topic of evangelical identity. Almost fifty years after the foundation of FEET and fifty years after the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation, the question returns: what are the marks of evangelical identity? Surely this significant topic deserves the theological input that FEET can offer.