

NEWS LETTER

October 2022

INTRODUCTION

FEET is looking back on a great conference in Prague during the summer and looking forward to an online conference on Karl Barth's famous book *Der Römerbrief* at the beginning of November. This newsletter contains a report on the former and an invitation to the latter. We also update you on other developments among evangelical theologians in Europe. We are grateful to God for his blessings on our work, which enable us to make a modest contribution to sound theology in our part of the world.

I encourage you to share this newsletter with likeminded colleagues, if necessary in translation. Please pray regularly for our work. And see you online at the Barth conference on 4 and 5 November!

Pieter Lalleman



This issue contains no new statement on the war in Ukraine. We remind our readers of the articles by Johannes Reimer and Roman Soloviy in the previous newsletter, which is available online at <https://feet-europe.org/newsletter>

Do sign up for our unique online conference on Karl Barth!



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In 2009 FEET had numerous sympathisers but only 25 actual members. The previous issue of this newsletter gave the number of 75 members, not counting the members of the German AfeT and the Swiss AfbeT. After the Prague conference we are at 90 members, although not all have paid their membership fee. This increase is a reason for thankfulness! This newsletter is sent to some 1000 addresses of FEET members, friends and institutions. Please notify the secretary (and the publisher of EJT, if applicable) of any changes to your address. Please use the addresses secretary@feet-europe.org and subscriptions@aup.nl. Members, please remember to pay your membership fees. Please forward this newsletter to any others who might be interested in FEET.

Towards the future

For me as a citizen of the United Kingdom, September was tumultuous. We have witnessed the appointment of a new Prime Minister and, traumatically, the death of our beloved sovereign Queen Elizabeth II – the only head of state most of us had known. We have also seen the succession of a new king, Charles III. All of this has given virtually everyone in the United Kingdom pause for deep reflection.

Some have commented that the Queen seemed eternal, she was the glue and inspiration of the nation (and a strong Christian presence at its heart). Somehow, life seems far more uncertain now. Our hopes, uncertainties and fears have come to the surface amid our deeply felt grief. As a nation we are being prompted to ask who we are and what we want to be. We are asking ourselves what are the values that we share and how do we expect our past and present to ‘morph’ into the challenges that a fast-changing world inevitably brings?

In many ways the reign of Elizabeth II suggests some of the answers. Most British people love ceremonial and (we say it to one another so that others do not hear) we do it better than most if not all other nations!

Part of the reason for this affection for the past is that our past shapes us. To cut ourselves off from that past is to sever a vital artery that makes us who we are. For us, in the United Kingdom which has been largely free from some of those events that have disrupted life on mainland Europe, this gives us the securities we treasure. For all the very many faults that, retrospectively, we recognise have characterised our national past, our sense of community is consolidated (in all its multi-ethnic nature) by the shared past.

But we also recognise that the British monarchy changed under Elizabeth II. Elizabeth faced challenges which, as a traditionalist, she found very difficult and she did not always negotiate change as well as she might have done. She reluctantly recognised that she was living in a fast-changing world and did her very best to serve in the role to which she believed God had appointed her. None of us will forget her ‘parachuting’ into the 2012 London Olympics as the associate of James Bond or her tea party with Paddington Bear only a few months ago. If you have not seen them, Google them!

Finally, Elizabeth was a disciple of the Lord Jesus. It is reliably reported that, when her father gave his first Christmas radio broadcast in 1939, it was she, scarcely a teenager, who gave him the words to read from Minnie Haskins' poem, 'God knows'. It reads:

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."

And he replied:

"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

This faith guided her and gave her the strength to be head of state for seventy years. Recognised as a woman of prayer by those who knew her, toward the end of her life she was more confident in sharing the vital role that Jesus played in her life. Someone recently commented that her Christmas broadcasts revealed her to be the best evangelist in the Church of England! One might wish, then, that these things might help shape our national future.

However, I have been made freshly aware recently, that the same need to honour the past, recognise the changing times and nurture love for Jesus should characterise both myself and, I would suggest, European evangelicals. This became clear to me as I have been revising for publication a number of books that, over the last fifteen years or so, I have written on a number of forgotten first and second generation leaders of the Great Awakening.

Every historian knows that those individuals that they research usually become friends. For me this is true of George Charles Smith, Thomas Wills, James Bakewell Wildbore, Jacob Grigg, John Eyre, Thomas Biddulph and others. When I get to glory theirs are the mansions upon whose front doors I will wish early to knock! In each case, I recognise that I stand upon their shoulders and I recognise kindred spirits: the Gospel that throbbed in their veins does, I hope, throb in mine too.

And yet... there is a vast gulf between their world and mine. We might well embrace one another in Christian affection and love, but I would have been uncomfortable in their world as, I am sure, they would be in mine. Indeed, the very things that made them so successful in their own day would, unless they changed, undoubtedly undermine the effectiveness of their ministries today.

At the end of 1611, John Robinson, the pastor of the exiled English congregation in Leyden, gave a valedictory address to the many from his congregation who were to emigrate to the New World. In his sermon he famously told them that, 'the Lord hath yet more light to shed forth from his most holy Word.' He recognised the fact that in a New World, new challenges would require fresh insight from the oracles of God. Old answers and practices would simply not do!

All of which leads me to my point. The Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians was founded nearly fifty years ago as an initiative of Dr John Stott (who for a while was one of the chaplains to Elizabeth II) and others. In recent years as a Fellowship we have been reflecting upon our future.

We recognised that the world (including the academic world) has radically changed in fifty years and that we need to find ways of embracing present and future realities if we are to continue to have a vibrant role in our continent (and beyond). This may well bring painful challenges; especially for those of us who are more traditionalists. At the same time, however, we will need to recognise that to forget the past is only likely to lead to shipwreck.

At the conference in Prague I had the privilege to give the final Bible reading. The text was Hebrews 10:19-25. I noted that hope, the theme of the conference, lies at the heart of the passage.

This hope is expressed as a confidence of access to God mediated, solely, through the Son. For the writer such mediation is possible for two reasons. First, the mediator is God incarnate. Secondly, his mediation is effective since he bore the penalty of our sins by his own death as our substitute. In other words, the writer to the Hebrews held to what is known as the penal substitutionary view of the atonement. I suggested then, and suggest again now, that these truths lie at the heart of evangelical self-identity. On this alone can we establish our present and build our future.

Stephen Dray

Introducing David Kramer

FEET has a new secretary, Dr David Kramer. We were the first to interview him.

Where were you born, where have you lived and where are you living at the moment?

I was born in Kitchener, Ontario, Canada and lived there until I was 22 years old – with a couple of sojourns to Madrid and Málaga in between. I completed an Honours BA in European Studies and Spanish at the University of Guelph. At 22, I moved to Germany to study at the (then) Theological Seminary of the Liebenzell Mission. After getting married, my wife Tine and I worked at the Amano Christian School in Chingola, Zambia, for two years, where we taught and were responsible for the volunteer teams.



Then we moved to Benicarló, on Spain's east coast, to help a fledgling church plant for six years until things seemed fairly stable. At that point we returned to Germany from where I continued my studies, completing my PhD at the University of Aberdeen under Phil Ziegler in 2020. Presently, we live in the northern Black Forest in the small town of Bad Liebenzell, near Stuttgart.

What is your current position?

Currently I am lecturer in Systematic Theology at the Internationale Hochschule Liebenzell, which grew out of the Theological Seminary and is affiliated with the Liebenzell Mission. I teach dogmatics, theology of mission, and a course on Christian eschatology.

Do you have a family?

My wife, Tine, is a special needs teacher, specialised in language disability; we have been married for 18 years. We have three daughters: Elea (aged 13), Fiona (10) and Junia (7), making for a very lively home.

Do you have a favourite theologian? A favourite theological book?

I would be hard-pressed to name a single favourite theologian or book. Kevin Vanhoozer's *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* and Paul Hiebert's *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts* were both important for me as I worked through epistemological and hermeneutical questions in seminary.

For my missiological thinking Lesslie Newbigin's corpus (e.g. *The Open Secret*),



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to which my teacher Jürgen Schuster introduced me, has been formative.

Timothy Tennent's approach to relating systematic theology and missiology in his *Theology in the Context of World Christianity* was eye-opening. Of course, N.T. Wright, on whom I did my doctoral studies, has been important for my thinking, e.g. his magisterial *The Resurrection of the Son of God* and the more popular *Surprised by Hope*. Finally, I should mention a growing fascination for John Webster, whose *Culture of Theology* I found highly stimulating, as well as a (not uncritical) interest in Wolfhart Pannenberg's approach to systematics. These last two are an odd pair, I know.

What are your hobbies?

The last few years have been hard on hobbies. I enjoy spending time with the family, either taking day trips, going to the local pool, or watching movies. Making music either with the guitar or the piano refreshes my soul. Other than that, I like to travel, spend time with friends and have a game of chess once in a while.

How did you first find out about FEET?

I first noticed FEET through the *European Journal of Theology*.

What is your role in FEET?

I have recently been elected for the role of Secretary, as successor to Klaus Bensel.

What is your ideal for the next period?

As a first step, I need to get to know the FEET network better, in order to get a sense for where we are today. My ideal for a theological association like FEET is to identify theological themes that challenge us across Europe and address them in ways that European evangelical scholars find helpful.

This means picking up on themes that bubble up from our church networks on the one hand but also looking ahead from the vantage point afforded by a scholarly position to the kinds of challenges that evangelical Christians in Europe will be facing soon, and for which it is our task to prepare them. In this vein, Jim Memory's recent *Europe 2021: A Missiological Report* has done the evangelical community an invaluable service.

Anything else you want to tell us?

For me, scholarship and mission go hand in hand. While for some this connection may seem obvious, many evangelicals in the pew view scholarship with a hint of suspicion (and this not without reason). By providing a forum for discussion, networking and hard work on important theological questions, I hope that FEET's labours will continue to be of real spiritual benefit not only to the participating scholars, but that this blessing trickles down to the churches and Christians who live as witnesses to Jesus Christ day by day all across Europe.

Do sign up for our unique online conference on Karl Barth!

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FEET Conference 2022 – A Report

'Hope for the World: Eschatology as a Source of Life for the Mission of the Church'

‘What does evangelical theology have to say about hope to a world that experiences hopelessness? And to the Church that tries to minister in such circumstances? The answer is ‘much and in many ways’ in the light of the recent biennial FEET conference held in Prague from 26 to 30 August 2022. Dedicated to the theme ‘Hope for the World: Eschatology as a Source of Life for the Mission of the Church’ sixty participants gathered from all over Europe. Theologians from a range of disciplines came together to give and discuss academic papers, participate in workshops, join in groups dedicated to their own areas of expertise as well as gather in regional groups.

Addressing hope, evangelical theology does not speak in general terms, but of a 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 thus constitutes the textbook for our 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 Oleksandr Geychenko, Ukraine). Each paper was accompanied by a response from another evangelical scholar prior to being discussed by the participants.



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Stimulating morning Bible readings were given by Dr Myrtho Theocharous (Greece) on hope from the book of Habakkuk, by Dr Külli Töniste (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 (Ukraine) gave a moving report on how the Russian invasion of Ukraine has brought about death and despair, but how Christian hope can energize Christians and society at large not to give up even in the midst of prevailing 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 Benschel) 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.



**Could you review a book in the European Journal of Theology?
Do you want to recommend a book for review in the Journal?
Then contact the review editor, Dr Hans Burger, at jmburger@tukampen.nl**

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FEET Conference 2022 – A Report



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Online conference on Karl Barth's Römerbrief



The year 2022 marks the centenary of the publication of a book that rocked the theological world in 1922: the second edition of Karl Barth's commentary on Paul's Letter to the Romans, generally known as the 'Römerbrief'.

Why was this book so important? Is it still important? What does it tell us about Barth, the most important theologian of the twentieth century? Did Barth do justice to Paul? Are later generations of theologians ignoring this book?

Why was this book so important? Is it still important? What does it tell us about Barth, the most important theologian of the twentieth century? Did Barth do justice to Paul? Are later generations of theologians ignoring this book?

In November 2022 FEET will be offering an online conference on this topic. On Friday 4 November the focus will be on systematic-theological aspects. The conference will open at 16:00 hours and continue until 21:00 hours on that day, with an ample break in between. Friday's speakers and their topics are:

Professor Cornelis van der Kooi (Free University of Amsterdam): 'Struck by an arrow. Barth's Römerbrief as a bold step towards doing theology in our times'

Professor Andrew T.B. McGowan (University of the Highlands and Islands): 'Barth, Van Til and Torrance – Evangelical reception of Barth'

Reponses to both papers will be given by Professor Philip Ziegler (Aberdeen).

On Saturday 5 November 2022 we will focus on New Testament aspects of the topic. The conference will resume at 9:30 hours and conclude at 14:00 hours, again with a generous interval. The speakers and their topics are:

Professor Roland Deines (Internationale Hochschule Liebenzell): 'Did Barth really write a commentary on the Letter to the Romans? The absence of Barth's Römerbrief in recent (German) commentaries on Romans'; with a response by Mikko Sivonen (Finland)

Dr Octavian Baban (The Baptist Theological Institute of Bucharest and University of Bucharest): 'Reconstructing Paul's portrait and message in Romans: the continuing relevance of Barth's exegesis and biblical theology in his Römerbrief'; with a response by Dr Myriam Klinker-De Klerck (Universiteit Kampen-Utrecht)

Registration is possible via [this link](#)

The conference fees are as follows:

	Eastern Europe	Rest of Europe
One day	3 Euros	10 Euros
Both days	5 Euros	15 Euros

NB All times are Central European time.

Changes at the Tyndale Fellowship

The chair of the Tyndale Fellowship, Dr David G. Firth, has announced plans to establish the Fellowship as an independent charity. Thus the Fellowship will be moving away from the administrative oversight of Tyndale House, Cambridge, UK, but remain closely linked to it. The change is due to complete on 1 November 2022.

‘This change has been carefully planned to ensure that both the House and the Fellowship continue to flourish’, explained Firth. ‘Our relationship with Tyndale House remains one of great importance, and the House and the Fellowship are committed to mutually supporting and encouraging one another.’ As two independent charities Tyndale House and Tyndale Fellowship will be able to take full advantage of two different governance structures in a common mission: Tyndale House led by a board and executive and Tyndale Fellowship as a scholarly society led by its members.

The Tyndale Fellowship will continue to facilitate an annual conference for its six study groups, including a combined conference every four years. Enabling biblical, theological and philosophical researchers from across the globe to engage with each other in the best of evangelical scholarship remains a priority for the Fellowship.

News from Spain

Leonardo De Chirico alerted us to the following news on the website [Evangelical Focus](#). Spanish Protestant faculties of theology held their first joint congress. Over 40 professors from the five Protestant faculties offering officially recognised degrees discussed strategies for improving the quality of teaching.

The first congress of the Spanish Faculties of Theology integrated in the Commission for Accreditation of Protestant Theology Centres and Degrees of the Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities of Spain (FEREDE) was held in Madrid, from 26 to 28 June 2022. Under the theme ‘Training, vocation and spirituality of the theology student today’, the pedagogue and master in theology, Edith Vilamajó, and the psychologist and family therapist, Esteban Figueirido, guided the participants in a reflection on the profile of the theology student today and the important work of the teacher. They spent two days in an atmosphere of dialogue and reflection, working on the development of strategies to help the faculties to be more effective in the training of students.

Joint work

The congress was attended by 43 professors from the five faculties of Theology that have their degrees officially recognised by Spain (The Assemblies of God Faculty of Theology, the Adventist Faculty of Theology, IBSTE Faculty of Theology, SEUT Faculty of Theology and the Baptist Faculty of Theology). ‘It has been a time of blessing and reflection in which we have been able to work together for the improvement of the quality of our teaching and to grow in fraternity among the teachers’, said one of the participants of the Congress.

Making theological education visible

The congress ended with an event in the assembly hall of the Faculty of Philosophy and Philology of the Complutense University of Madrid to make theological education visible.

Professor Ramón Sebastián from the Baptist Faculty of Theology presented a paper entitled ‘Main trends in Spain in the last 50 years and their effect on Spanish Protestantism’. After his lecture, Antonio Simoni, professor at the Assemblies of God Faculty, joined him in an interactive panel. Both stressed the need to respond as evangelical Christians to a society in crisis, recalling that God has answers to all human questions. ‘As evangelical Christians, we will be relevant as long as we respond to the challenges of our society anchored in the word of God and depending on the work of the Spirit’, Simoni pointed out.

The event was attended by the director of the University Institute of Religious Sciences of the Complutense University of Madrid, Juan Antonio Álvarez-Pedrosa, who had a few words of greeting, along with the executive secretary of FEREDE, Carolina Bueno.

At the same event, the Baptist Faculty of Theology, founded in 1922, was congratulated on the celebration of its centenary.

"Religious Freedom in the Caucasus – history, theology and practice"

Sola Forum Fifth International (on-site) Conference

📍 *Tbilisi, 28-29 October 2022*



By Dr Tatiana Kopaleishvili

The Caucasus, and Georgia in particular, is a meeting place for political and civilisational contradictions. It has a colourful religious history and experienced seventy years of forced secularization. After regaining their independence, the countries of the region are still searching for a balance between retaining their historical heritages and forming pluralistic and democratic states. Hence issues of religious freedom are an important topic for reflection and formulation. What does religious freedom mean for both majority and minority religious groups? What should be the role of the state in this process? How should the rights of religious groups and individual believers be guarded?

Our conference will explore the challenges and opportunities of these fundamental rights: provide legal, historical, theological and practical analyses, explore possibilities for the future in the Caucasus and beyond. The working languages of the conference are Georgian, English, Russian, German and Armenian.

The Sola Forum Conference of this year is organised in collaboration with the Sola Forum Board. This 'Sola Forum', inspired by the five 'Solos' of the Reformation, was founded to offer an opportunity for Evangelicals in the Caucasus to reflect theologically, to support theological endeavour in the region and to do so together with those from other Christian traditions. Conferences have been held annually since 2017 at different institutions in Tbilisi, Georgia. Previous conferences were dedicated to topics such as Evangelical presence in the Caucasus, ethics and matters of inter-church cooperation. Visit us on [YouTube](#).

Do sign up for our unique online conference on Karl Barth!

European Journal of Theology Issue 31.2 (October 2022)

This issue of the European Journal of Theology opens with a substantial and important editorial by Christoph Stenschke. This is followed by a narrative exegesis of the story of Jacob in Genesis by Barbara Dörpinghaus, who focuses on two key passages, Genesis 28:10–22 and 35:1–15. She appraises the narrative role of Jacob in this light.

Rejecting previous interpretations, Iain McGee sheds light on an obscure concept used by John Calvin, viz. the *sensus divinitatis*, with the help of the concept of *semen religionis*. Joshua Searle shows that he is impressed by the re-published German Baptist confession of faith which is entitled ‘Rechenschaft vom Glauben’ and he shares his enthusiasm with the readers. He particularly praises the centrality of God’s reign in the confession. Finally, Laura Dijkhuizen analyses the processes through which women gained positions of leadership (or not) in Dutch Evangelical churches in recent years. She suggests that the presbyterian model enables easier and more deliberate decisions than the congregationalist model.

As usual the issue concludes with the book reviews, prepared under the responsibility of review author Hans Burger. Published by Amsterdam University Press (AUP), the European Journal of Theology is still receiving praise for its fresh new look. AUP is offering the Journal at a reduced price to subscribers in many countries. Note that the advertised rate only applies to subscribers in Western and Northern Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada; the reduced rate applies in the rest of the world!

Please notify the secretary (and the publisher of EJT, if applicable) of any changes to your address.

Please use the addresses secretary@feet-europe.org and subscriptions@aup.nl.

Executive Committee

At the business meeting during our conference in Prague, three veterans stepped down from the Executive Committee: the doctors Klaus Bensel, Pavel Černý and Hetty Lalleman. Klaus served FEET for 12 years as a competent secretary and we owe him tremendous thanks for the many hours he gave to us. Both Hetty and Pavel served on the Committee for no less than 24 years and we thank them as well. We are grateful that Pavel will continue to look after our website, together with his son Jakub.

Three new persons were elected to the Committee and we warmly welcome them: the doctors Jiří Bukovský, David Kramer and McTair Wall. Elsewhere in this issue you can read more about David. McTair lives in Paris and is a missiologist. He teaches at the Faculté de Théologie Évangélique in Montreal, at the Faculté Libre de Théologie Évangélique de Vaux sur Seine (France), in Madagascar and Tchad, and he coordinates the European francophone missiologists.

Jiří is Academic Dean of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Prague and a pastor of the Christian Fellowship. He is a New Testament specialist and at 35 years relatively young. Members met him at the recent conference in Prague, where he delivered an excellent paper.

These changes mean that from 2022 the members of the Executive Committee of FEET are:

Gert Kwakkel, Netherlands / France, chair; email chairman@feet-europe.org.

David Kramer, Germany, secretary; email secretary@feet-europe.org.

Gert F. Hain, Germany, treasurer; email treasurer@feet-europe.org.

Jiří Bukovský, Czech Republic

Leonardo De Chirico, Italy

Stephen P. Dray, England

Knut K. Kirkholm, Norway

Tatiana Kopaleishvili, Georgia

Pieter J. Lalleman, as editor of EJT

Roman Soloviy, Ukraine

McTair Wall, France



Our website is <https://feet-europe.org/>