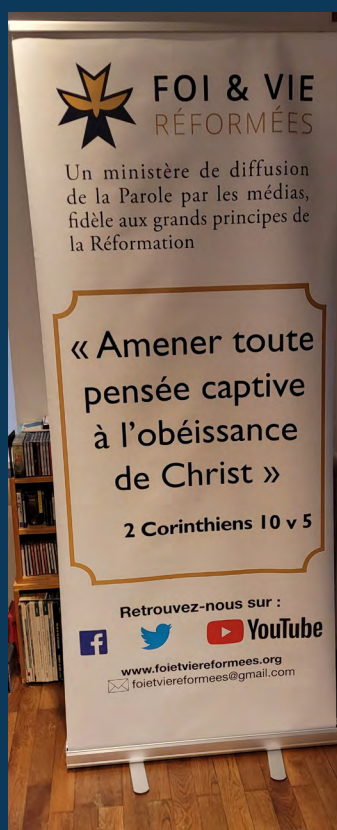


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Our new 'Reformed Faith and Life' roll-up was delivered to us at the Evangelical Centre

“ THE LORD WILLING I WILL CONTINUE PREACHING  
IN SMALL OR LARGER CHURCHES ”

## Looking back and ahead

*Dear friends*

Another year of our Lord will be coming to a close in a few days, leading us all to reflect on recent events, attained or missed goals in our lives, and more generally the situation of a much troubled world, always intent on following deceitful ways rather than God's righteous paths. We, at *Reformed Faith and Life*, also reflected on our activities during a recent steering committee meeting. At the end of November, shortly after holding a well-attended webinar on the complementary roles of pastors and elders in the local church, several of us gathered in Paris to attend the *Evangelical Centre*. The *E.C.* is a large annual get together of Evangelical Protestant churches and ministries. There we could connect again with old partners, make new acquaintances with common projects in view, and promote the work of RFL among Evangelicals. Many of them are still *Arminian* in their theology, though with various gradations. In a way, our presence at the *E.C.* – modest as it may look with our small exhibition stand – challenges this dominant current.

At the close of the year we also planned ahead for 2022: I have been invited to speak about the place of good works in the life of Christians at a Protestant theological crossroads in Montauban (South West of France) at the end of January. Immediately after, I should be flying to South Africa for my annual visit to the churches there, returning by mid-February, provided circumstances and travelling restrictions allow it. *Reformed Faith and Life* is also coordinating and organizing a get together of Reformed minded individuals and family scattered throughout France. We have scheduled it on the week end of 18-20 March, near Toulon, where an active Reformed evangelist – very positive towards RFL –, is allowing us to use a well-equipped holiday site able to accommodate large groups. Together we will envisage ways to remain in touch with each other and foster small Christian communities that will remain in close fellowship with one another. Another webinar on the Church, this time devoted to the ministries of deacon and doctor, should take place on May 7. In the meantime, the Lord Willing I will continue preaching in small or larger churches, producing articles, podcasts and videos for our website and Facebook page, corresponding with fellow believers throughout the world.

## Christmas versus false 'evangelion'

One of my latest podcasts dealt with the meaning of the Greek word *evangelion* – *evangel* or Gospel in English (*évangile* in French). I reminded my listeners that in Antiquity, this word was often applied to the “good news” of an earthly ruler ascending to the throne. This accession was supposed to bring happiness and peace to his subjects. That was particularly the case when Octavius-Augustus defeated his last enemies at the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. and inaugurated a brilliant reign of 40 years, during which our Lord was born. Herod the Great (the murderer of so many members of his own family and the killer of countless infants in and around Bethlehem) also tried to present himself as a benefactor of the Jews: among other things, he started rebuilding the Jerusalem Temple. Our Lord, however, had little time and esteem for these “benefactors” who rather act as tyrants while claiming to bring *good news* to those they actually oppress (Mark 10:41; Luke 22:25). He even called Herod the Tetrarch – one of the sons whom the previous Herod had not murdered – a *fox* (Luke 13:32)! Has the scene of world leaders really changed for better since our Lord uttered these damning words? How interesting also to note that a census ordered by Caesar Augustus led Joseph and Mary to come to Bethlehem in order to be registered. As is well known, such censuses were organized every 14 years or so as tools for centralized taxation and military purposes. Back then there were no bar codes to pin and control individuals, but the overall purpose of the methods used was rather similar.

I often wonder how we Christians read our Bible when we conveniently bypass the teachings and implications of so many passages warning us against all kinds of local and global Caesars. They claim to be God, demanding that their subjects render them what is theirs, while acting as if they are exempt from rendering to God the things that are God's. To be quite honest, it is of very little use to lament today the sad example of a majority of German Christians during the years of the 3d Reich almost one hundred years ago, if our own pietism blinds us to the totalitarian claims of our modern *Caesahydrae* on our spirits, souls and bodies... As we just celebrated the birth of the King of Kings at Christmas, let us remember that the Son of God came to earth to claim his legitimate heritage from the hands of the Prince of the world, and to declare a final, victorious war against him and all his henchmen (Psalm 2).

In His name

*Rev Eric Kayayan*

“ THE WORD EVANGELION WAS OFTEN APPLIED TO THE ‘GOOD NEWS’ OF AN EARTHLY RULER ASCENDING TO THE THRONE. ”

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