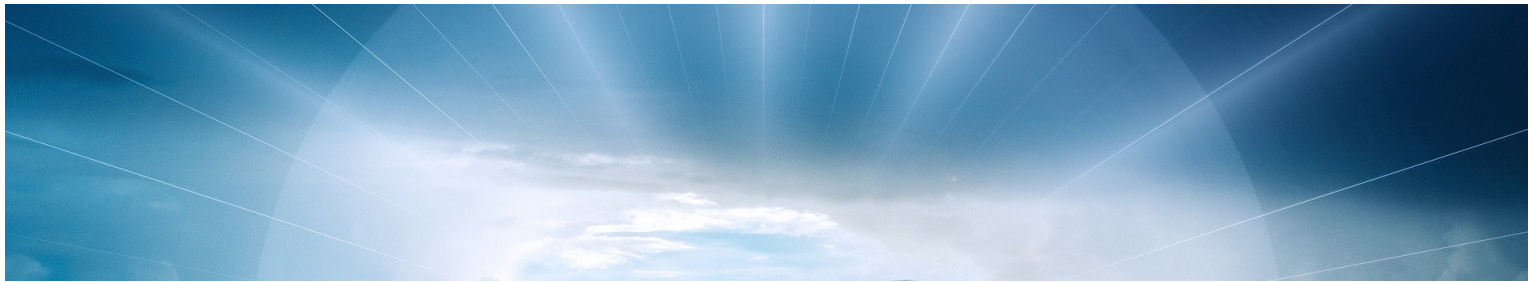




## INSTITUT PRIVE DE THÉOLOGIE PROTESTANTE ET ÉVANGÉLIQUE

NOVEMBER 2020



Dear friends,

In recent articles a well-known French philosopher, André Comte-Sponville, had some interesting comments to make on the panic generated by the present worldwide epidemic; this has been considerably amplified by the media, especially with regards to the reality of death. It's as if our contemporaries suddenly discovered that they were mortal! Covid-19 has brought them face to face with a reality they desperately wanted to ignore because they see death as a failure! In a desire to reassure people, Comte-Sponville says this: *"I have good and bad news for you. The bad news is that we are all going to die. The good news is that most of us will die from something other than Covid-19."* He goes on to say that *"finitude, failure and obstacles are fundamental to our human condition. We will continue to panic over every epidemic until we accept death."* Admitting the reality of death gives us the means to appreciate life. Thus *"we love life all the more, as we become aware of its brevity, its fragility and its value."* In other words we must make the best of human existence because there is nothing after death!

This awareness requires us to live a more intensive life while recognizing that health is only a "means of achieving happiness" and not an end in itself. Good health merely adds to the quality of life and cannot in any way take the place of core values such as justice, love, generosity, courage and freedom.

There is wisdom in Comte-Sponville's approach, with his emphasis on the precious character of life on earth, the importance of recognizing our finiteness, the limits of our human condition and the importance of the ethical standards and values that bring meaning and depth to our existence.

However we get the impression that he has drawn on the Judeo-Christian heritage but left out its world- and life- view and biblical roots. He clearly rejects the existence of a sovereign, personal God to whom we are accountable and with whom we can enjoy an intimate relationship. We are only actors in this world and there is nothing beyond the horizon! As to his acceptance of the limits of human life, especially of death, it is more akin to resignation.

In contrast the Scriptures emphasize the scandalous nature of death in a

broken world. It is the ultimate enemy whose power is rooted in sin, qualified as rebellion against our ultimate Vis-à-vis and his wisdom. It is precisely because the Bible distinguishes between the origin of being and the origin of evil, that sin, suffering and death are a tragedy. A tragedy we can face without fear and in confidence because the triune God has reversed the course of history, of our history, in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus-Christ. In Him we have passed from death to life, a life that transcends this earthly horizon. May the Holy Spirit give us the wisdom to be ambassadors of good news in the midst of a troubled, faltering and weeping world, speaking peace, comfort and lasting hope that seeks to alleviate fears and anxieties! Since the "steadfast love of the Lord is better than life" it awakens within us trust, appeasement, hope and praise (Ps 63.4).

With our warmest greetings from Provence, in Him who is our comfort and joy,

Pierre Berthoud

Chairman

## 2 new ThM programs taught in English! “Biblical Interpretation”, and “Public Theology”



While the seminary is still committed to reaching out the French-speaking world, we also believe that this goal will be furthered by strengthening the presence of the seminary in the international evangelical world. The ThM program in Reformed Public Theology focuses on the place and role of Christians and the Church in a post-Christian world which is sometimes hostile to the foundations of the Christian faith.

The first semester is structured around a course entitled "A Survey of Public Theology" in which the various theories of public theology are assessed from a reformed perspective. The semester also includes research seminars on specific topics concerning the role of Christians and the church: the definition of the private and public spheres, public ethics, etc. The second semester is devoted to writing a ThM thesis. Dissertation topics can be chosen from all

areas related to the public dimension of theology.

The ThM in Biblical Interpretation offers specialized training in biblical exegesis (Old or New Testament). This program in English includes a semester of modular seminars and a semester of dissertation preparation. The first semester includes research seminars on various topics in exegesis, biblical languages and the history of interpretation. The second semester is devoted to writing a ThM thesis. Dissertation topics can be selected from all areas of biblical interpretation: Old or New Testament, languages (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic), textual criticism and ancient versions, biblical theology, hermeneutics, and the history of interpretation. May we continue to serve the Church of Jesus Christ faithfully!



## NEW BIBLICAL LANGUAGES PROGRAM

**Beginning fall 2020 FJC set up a new Biblical languages program for distance students.**

Hebrew and Greek will be taught over two years, the first year being given over to the study of grammar and vocabulary, the second to in-depth reading of some key texts of the Old and New Testaments. So what is special about this program? In addition to all the teaching material (text books and recordings) there are regular teaching sessions on Zoom with Michaël de Luca, the professor in charge of the program.

The program in Biblical languages, a requirement for distance students, is also open to those who would like to learn more about the Biblical texts, both Hebrew and Greek. 6 people have already been enrolled.

## MICHAEL DE LUCA

In October Michaël De Luca successfully defended his doctoral thesis at the **Evangelische Theologische Faculteit Leuven (Leuven Faculty of Evangelical Theology in Belgium)**. The subject of his thesis was an empirical study of the Jewish Messianic interpretation of the passage in Jeremiah 31 that speak of a « new covenant ». He worked under the direction of Mart-Jan Paul, a Dutch professor, and his co-director Evert van de Poll, who is also Dutch but whose published works on missiology are in French.



He analysed the way that Messianic Jews (Jews who believe in Jesus) interpret the prophecy of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31. His study was based on field research using an exegetical questionnaire and interviews with the leading figures of the Messianic Jews movement in France, Belgium and Switzerland. His research showed that the interpretation of messianic Jews is very close to the Christian interpretation, and particularly close to the Reformed concept of covenantal theology in some cases. However, it differs from them in that Messianic Jews maintain that the new covenant as presented in Jeremiah 31 is primarily intended for Jews. These findings should encourage us to be more zealous in bringing the gospel to Jews, along with messianic Jews who recognise Jesus as their Messiah.

## YANNICK IMBERT



On 16th October I was invited to teach an apologetics class for an association whose aim is to train people in church-planting. It was very encouraging to have fellowship with the 10 people attending.

On 1st November I spoke at a day's conference on transhumanism at the Evangelical Church in Orange. First I preached on Biblical anthropology, then gave two lectures.

October I gave several interviews for Radio Dialogue, a Christian radio station, and another is scheduled in December just before Christmas.

Giving public lectures has not been possible, so I have been able to devote more time to writing projects. My second book on transhumanism, *The allure of humanoid technology : from the promises of transhumanism to hope Christ*, is due to be published by Excelsis in 2021. Another book on the sabbath (whose title is yet to be decided) has been given the go-ahead by Christian Editions.

Finally, I have written entries for two dictionaries in French, the Dictionary of Evangelical Theology (for which I wrote the introduction and 4 entries), the second is *Apologetics for All*, for which I've also written 4 entries. Both are due to be published in 2020.

I too wrote 4 entries for the Dictionary of Evangelical Theology : the inspiration of the Bible, the order of salvation, divine providence and the three offices of Jesus Christ.

I was the main editor of a book on mission (*A Covenantal Vision for Global Mission in the Reformed Tradition*, Phillipsburg, P & R, 2020), for which I wrote two articles and Pierre Berthoud one. Other contributors were Peter Lillback & Henk Stoker.

I also wrote the Preface for *Au milieu de tant d'épreuves. Lettres de consolation* (In the midst of many trials. Letters of comfort.) by John Calvin, in Calvin Collections.

## PAUL WELLS





## **ERIN IMBERT : LIBRARIAN**

I grew up in a Christian home in the United States. While I attended a Baptist church during my childhood, I first encountered an explicitly reformed theology in high school, which provided the theological structure and consistent worldview that confirmed me in the faith and formed my Christian life. I studied business and economics in college and worked as an accountant for eight years. During that time I was asked to serve as treasurer for the Huguenot Fellowship, a non-profit organization in the U.S. that supports the Faculté Jean Calvin. Through my involvement with the Huguenot Fellowship I came to love the work of the Faculté and also, incidentally, met my husband, Professor Yannick Imbert. Prior to moving to France in 2016 I studied at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. As a lover of both books and theology, I am delighted to serve as the new librarian at Faculté Jean Calvin. I look forward to welcoming friends of the Faculté to the library on their next visit.



## **MARIE BAUDRIER**

**Marie Baudrier started working at the Faculté Jean Calvin seven years ago, when the library was about to undergo a radical modernization process.**

A great lover of books, Marie went about implementing the changes with great professional competence.

She also taught Greek to first-year students, and innovated with an evening course in Greek. She was a real help to the students in their reading and choice of books and also took the time to listen. She was a good team-worker, working intelligently and cheerfully with the professors and other members of personnel. We will miss her good humour, but we pray the Lord will bless her as she moves on to pastures new, nearer her family.

## **YOU CAN HELP THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL SHINE**



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