



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

### **Can a gospel minister be considered faithful to Christ and His Word who promotes the sale of books by those who proclaim error and associate with the enemies of Christ?**

That is the question which must be asked about Dr Joel Beeke's activities as Editorial Director of "Reformation Heritage Books".

In this transcript of part of a sermon by Pastor Ralph Ovadal, Pilgrims Covenant Church, that question is asked and details of the character of the books Dr Beeke sells clearly detailed.

The answer ought to be all too clear!

## **Will the Steward Be Found Faithful?**

Please note: This sermon by Pastor Ovadal can be heard in its entirety [here](#).

The following is the closing portion of a sermon preached on February 9, 2014 by Pastor Ralph Ovadal. The text of the sermon is 1 Corinthians 4:2: "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." By way of illustration, in this last part of his sermon, Pastor Ovadal provided a good deal of documentation concerning the grossly corrupted nature of Reformation Heritage Books, Dr. Joel Beeke, editorial director.

*"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."* Our specific application today is a minister's responsibility to spiritually nourish the Lord's people with wholesome, healthful, safe spiritual food—that is, right preaching and teaching. And without doubt, this includes guarding the household of faith from unwholesome, unhealthy, dangerous spiritual food, including that preached and taught by unfaithful and even false ministers and teachers. Now, most certainly, that includes written teaching. I have spoken of the disobedience and danger of ministers who are sound in their preaching and teaching but who are keeping preaching and ministry fellowship with unsound ministers and teachers. I want to briefly focus now on that which is so often entirely overlooked. As a minister of Christ, I would be an unfaithful steward of the household of faith if in any way I promoted, recommended, or justified a book written by an obviously unfaithful minister or teacher, let alone if I urged the Lord's people to read such a book by such a person, let alone if I even disseminated for free or for a price such a book.

In the context of our text and by way of application, I call your attention, as we have done in several articles, to Reformation Heritage Books (RHB). But why this particular Christian book publisher and distributor, Reformation Heritage Books? Because the editorial director of RHB is an extremely influential, knowledgeable, gifted minister of Christ: Reformed, evangelical, highly esteemed by many Christians as a faithful pastor cleaving to the old paths in the midst of a great falling away, a faithful steward of the household of faith. And so, multitudes of Christians trust this minister to nourish the body of Christ with only wholesome, healthful, safe spiritual food. And the stated mission of Reformation Heritage Books is, quote, "to glorify God and strengthen His Church through the publication and distribution of Puritan and Reformed literature." Certainly when a minister of the reputation, experience, knowledge, gifts, and stature of Pastor Joel Beeke assures the Lord's people of that purpose, most will be confident that the books they purchase from RHB will be written by faithful men and that not only these books will contain healthful, wholesome spiritual nourishment for their souls but also, with that being the case, certainly other books and sermons of such individuals will be Christ-honoring, worthwhile, and trustworthy. Am I wrong to state that conclusion? Can someone tell me how I could be wrong? It is a simple matter and ought to be beyond controversy.

The title of a regular RHB-printed publication featuring some but far, far from all of their books is *Pick Up and Read*. Now, what is this but an urging of Christians to spiritually feed their souls, to pick up and read the teachings of the men, and women, whose books are sold by RHB—that is, their teachings in those books, and of course by extension, then will not many also take it to mean their teachings available elsewhere? Pick up and read these books which "glorify God and strengthen His Church." Yes, such books—portioned out under the oversight and management and encouragement of one of the stewards of the household of faith, a minister reputed to be of the stuff of the Puritans and revered by many—such books must



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be filled with healthy, wholesome, nutritious spiritual food for the soul. Such is not the case at all.

This is a very serious thing, to urge Christians to read particular authors who are represented as sound, faithful Christian ministers and teachers. This is a portioning out of spiritual food to the household of faith. As a minister of Christ, I cannot, I must not, if I would be faithful, recommend to you or any Christian or anyone at all books written by ministers or teachers who are not faithful and sound in their teaching and in their practice. To do so would be to sin against Christ and His church; to do so would be to confuse, compromise, and corrupt the Lord's own blood-bought church. To do so would make me an unfaithful steward of the household of God, an unfaithful shepherd of the blood-bought flock of Christ.

Now, in an article published by Rev. Ivan Foster and me in June of 2012 and then in another one in January of 2013, we warned about the deeply corrupted nature of Reformation Heritage Books, that is, with regard to the books being promoted and sold. We gave examples; and all but several of those books are still being marketed by RHB, with many others of a similar nature being added. As you will see, RHB has only become more dangerously corrupted as to the books offered, not less.

Having once again raised this matter, by way of sermon illustration and warning, integrity demands that I provide evidence which justifies the warning I have once again raised in the context of our text, *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."* With that in mind, bear with me as I run through some of the authors RHB promotes and whose works RHB offers. I will also mention some of the ministers and teachers RHB has posted endorsements from, that is, for particular books. RHB has chosen to post these endorsements as encouragements for Christians to buy certain books.

Why would a ministry post endorsements for books which it markets? I know ministry and market seem to be oxymorons. In truth, I am not sure if RHB is a ministry or a for-profit business; but that is not the issue today. Why would a Christian book publisher/distributor—and RHB is both—post endorsements for books from particular ministers and teachers? Isn't the message that these proven, able, faithful, trustworthy men endorse this Christian book; so you ought to consider buying it and can feel confident you will feed your soul on safe, wholesome spiritual food? So, endorsements, especially these posted with the approval of a minister such as Joel Beeke, are no small thing.

Let's run through some of the unfaithful ministers and teachers whose teachings, that is, in books, RHB promotes and sells. This is by no means an exhaustive list. I do not have time to say much about any of them, just a few words here and there. Some names you will know instantly; others you may not. Some are simply but deeply compromised, others very corrupt in word and practice, others outright apostates. Some are personally nice individuals and well-meaning. Others are no doubt followers of their father the devil. None are teachers the Lord's people should learn from and be influenced by.

I do also want to mention that a great number of RHB authors are Manhattan Declaration signatories. By that, I mean these are high-profile individuals whose names were already affixed to that grossly ecumenical, Christ-dishonoring document when it was made public and available for others to sign or, in the case of several, affixed soon after. Simply put, the authors of the Manhattan Declaration—Chuck Colson, Timothy George, and Roman Catholic Robert George—recruited these key signatories because of the great influence they have in drawing many others to follow their example. In some cases, I will mention if an individual was a signatory of the MD; in some cases, I may not. And as for the sum total of those I do mention, it is not by any means the total of the MD signers whose books are sold by RHB, or for that matter, whose endorsements are posted on the web site of RHB.

Every bit of the documentation I am about to share was checked and rechecked and current as of this past week, which began February 2, 2014. Charismatics, women teachers, New Calvinists, ecumenists, Refo500 personalities, Romanists, and apostate Protestants—where do we begin?

Reformation Heritage Books offers a book by Fuller Theological Seminary graduate and woman teacher Joanne Jung, assistant professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Biola University. BIOLA, the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, is, simply put, a fountain of apostasy and has been for a long, long time. The school and its professors teach and are involved in all manner of unscriptural, anti-scriptural activities from Romish contemplative practices, including through Biola's Institute of Spiritual Formation, to gross ecumenical events.

RHB carries multiple books written by woman teacher Nancy Leigh DeMoss, whose teaching platform includes a daily Christian radio broadcast. RHB also has posted multiple endorsements from DeMoss.



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RHB offers multiple books by Nancy Guthrie and has posted multiple endorsements from her. A bio for Guthrie posted at RHB tells us, “Nancy Guthrie teaches the Bible at conferences around the country.” A RHB endorsement for the Guthrie book *The Wisdom of God: Seeing Jesus in the Psalms and Wisdom Books (A 10-Week Bible Study)* includes this: “I love Nancy’s infectious passion for teaching the Old Testament in a relevant, practical, spiritual, and Christ-centered way.” That endorsement was by David Murray, a professor at Dr. Beeke’s Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary.

RHB markets multiple books written by Elyse Fitzpatrick and makes use of multiple endorsements from her. Fitzpatrick is a Bible teacher and the author of fifteen books, such as *Comforts from Romans: Celebrating the Gospel One Day at a Time* and *Because He Loves Me: How Christ Transforms Our Daily Life*.

Kathleen Nielson’s teachings, in the form of multiple books by her, are available from RHB, including the series *Living Word Bible Studies*; and RHB makes use of multiple endorsements by Nielson.

By the way, Joann Ford Watson is the compiler of six books of eighteenth-century woman Bible teacher Anne Dutton’s writings, which are available from RHB. RHB informs us, “Joann Ford Watson is the H.R. Gill Family Professor of Theology at Ashland Theological Seminary . . . She is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church, USA . . . She has worked in Calcutta with Mother Theresa’s order, the Missionaries of Charity.”

Another woman Bible teacher whose writings are offered by RHB is ecumenical, Manhattan Declaration signatory Joni Eareckson Tada, whose deep theological compromise and errors I outlined earlier in this message. In fact, RHB carries multiple books with contributions from Eareckson Tada and has posted multiple endorsements from her on the RHB site.

Should the Lord’s people be directed to women teachers, including in some cases apostates, for spiritual nourishment?

Turning now to unsound, unfaithful men ministers and teachers, RHB sells about two dozen books written by charismatic, contemplative John Piper who is increasingly showing the fruit of an out-and-out apostate. RHB also sells multiple books which have contributions from Piper; and RHB makes use of multiple endorsements from Piper, including an endorsement for Dr. Joel Beeke’s *Meet the Puritans*. Presumably, Dr. Beeke solicited John Piper for that endorsement for the book which is published and sold by RHB. But then again, other endorsements for the book include J.I. Packer, R.C. Sproul, Albert Mohler, Ligon Duncan, and several other New Calvinists. But soliciting such ministers for endorsements for books he has written is not out of the ordinary for Dr. Beeke. We could give other similar examples.

Christians can order from RHB the book *With Calvin in the Theater of God: The Glory of Christ and Everyday Life*, which is described thus: “Stemming from the Desiring God 2009 National Conference [a John Piper conference], this volume includes chapters by Julius Kim, Douglas Wilson, Marvin Olasky, Mark Talbot, Sam Storms, and John Piper.” Now, I could not recommend that bunch of teachers. But for the sake of time, I will just mention that Rev. Wilson is the pastor of Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho. He is a leader of the Federal Vision movement with its heresy. Wilson holds Roman Catholics to be Christian brethren. His YouTube site also includes videos in which he boasts of drinking beer and of his beer bottle collection. In fact, in one video, Wilson tells Christians to thank the Lord for the beer brand they drink. Should members of the household of faith be encouraged to nourish their souls on this man’s teachings?

I might also mention that Marvin Olasky is a Manhattan Declaration signer and that RHB also sells a book authored by Olasky and makes use of multiple endorsements from him.

You just heard the name Sam Storms mentioned. RHB also markets two books authored by the deeply charismatic New Calvinist Sam Storms and carries multiple endorsements from him.

Another charismatic New Calvinist RHB offers teachings from is C.J. Mahaney, in fact, marketing multiple books written by him and making use of multiple endorsements from him.

Piper, Storms, Mahaney are not the only charismatic New Calvinist ministers whose teachings—that is, in books they have written—are disseminated by RHB. Manhattan Declaration signatory Wayne Grudem is another charismatic RHB promotes by selling a number of his books and using multiple endorsements from him.

Joshua Harris is another one. I might just mention that Harris’s church was a sponsor of the 2011 Summer of Mercy pro-



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life event which included a Roman Catholic exorcism ritual, not in Harris's church but at another site. During the multi-day Summer of Mercy, a Roman Catholic priest spoke in Josh Harris's church. We did quite an in-depth report on that event in our "The Ripening Corruption of New Calvinism: The Next Generation" *Heart of the Matter* program. RHB offers the body of Christ multiple books written by Joshua Harris and makes use of multiple endorsements from him.

Those are charismatic teachers whose books RHB disseminates to the Lord's blood-bought flock. What do you think: will a minister who directs the household of faith to be spiritually fed by such men as I have named, and will name, be found faithful by the Lord?

RHB carries and sells multiple books written by New Calvinist Thabiti Anyabwile, a minister who fervently promotes so-called holy hip hop, or rap music. RHB also carries many books containing contributions from Anyabwile and makes use of multiple endorsements from him. Obviously, Anyabwile is far from the only rap promoter or New Calvinist author whose books RHB sells; but you might remember that Anyabwile recently charged with racism some Reformed ministers who spoke against rap music. He is that aggressive in promoting what the Reformed rappers call "lyrical preaching."

Multiple books written Dr. Albert Mohler are available and promoted by RHB, also books with contributions from him; and many endorsements from Dr. Mohler are also posted on the RHB web site. Of course, as I mentioned earlier in this message, among his other errors in teaching and practice, Dr. Mohler is a Manhattan Declaration signatory and currently involved in the Standing Together movement with Mormons.

RHB sells about a dozen books authored by J.I. Packer of Evangelicals and Catholics Together and also a Manhattan Declaration signer. RHB also offers a couple dozen more edited by or with contributions from him, and RHB makes use of scores of endorsements from him.

How about Timothy George: is he a man Christians should be taught and spiritually nourished by? Is George a teacher who glorifies God and whose teachings strengthen the Lord's church, per RHB's stated purpose? Southern Baptist Timothy George is the dean and professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School and theological advisor for *Christianity Today*, chairman of the board of the Colson Center for Christian Worldview, and currently the chair of the Doctrine and Christian Unity Commission of the Baptist World Alliance. Suffice it to say, none of that is good! Timothy George, who likes to speak of Mary as the "Mother of God," has been very active in the International Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue and the Evangelicals and Catholics Together movement and documents. He also joined with the late Chuck Colson and Romanist Robert George to author the Manhattan Declaration. Yet RHB uses multiple endorsements from George. Now, going back to what I shared earlier about endorsements for books, does this not send the clear message that RHB considers Timothy George to be a proven, able, faithful, trustworthy teacher of the Lord's people? Does our Good Shepherd lead us to spiritual pastures infected with the noxious teachings of the likes of Timothy George? Keep that question in mind, and substitute in other teachers and ministers I will go on to name.

Among other books Christians are urged to pick up and read by RHB—Pastor Joel Beeke, editorial director—are two books containing contributions by New Calvinist, Manhattan Declaration signatory, and theistic evolutionist Timothy Keller. RHB also makes use of multiple endorsements from Keller, who is very active in teaching and promoting theistic evolution.

I keep mentioning Manhattan Declaration signatories whose books RHB sells and whose endorsements RHB makes use of. Let me list a few more without even mentioning any other errors in teaching or practice, for instance, promoting rap and CCM or ecumenical associations.

Erwin Lutzer: one book with contribution from him sold by RHB, one endorsement from him posted by RHB

Russell Moore: one book authored by him and two more with contributions from him sold at RHB, multiple endorsements from him posted by RHB

Randy Alcorn: multiple books with contributions from him sold by RHB, multiple endorsements from him posted by RHB

Bryan Chapell: multiple books by him sold by RHB, multiple endorsements from him posted by RHB

Ligon Duncan: multiple books authored by him and multiple books with contributions from him sold by RHB, multiple en-



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endorsements from him posted by RHB

William Edgar: one book with contribution from him sold by RHB, multiple endorsements from him posted at RHB

Peter Lillback: multiple books by him sold at RHB, multiple endorsements from him posted by RHB

John Woodbridge: one book with contribution from him sold at RHB, one endorsement from him posted at RHB

You are all familiar with the lewd-talking, beer-drinking, rock-and-roll Pastor Mark Driscoll, Mars Hill Church and the Acts 29 Network of churches he founded and continues to be so active with. Let me just run through endorsements posted from and books written by individuals from Mars Hill and the Acts 29 Network—that is, books sold by RHB and endorsements posted by RHB.

Mark Driscoll: one endorsement from him posted at RHB

Darrin Patrick (vice president of the Acts 29 Network): one book with contribution from him sold by RHB, multiple endorsements from him posted at RHB

Justin Buzzard (part of the Acts 29 Network): one book by him sold by RHB, one endorsement from him posted at RHB

Mike Wilkerson (a pastor at Mars Hill): one book by him offered by RHB

Trisha Wilkerson (wife of Pastor Mike Wilkerson and herself a counselor and women's leader at Mars Hill): one book by her available at RHB

RHB makes use of multiple endorsements from *Christianity Today*, which is certainly not a publication any faithful minister would encourage the Lord's people to read!

Among books RHB urges the body of Christ to "pick up and read" are two by the late and very much apostate John Stott. RHB also makes use of multiple endorsements from him. A children's biography of John Stott is also sold by RHB. This is what RHB says about the author: "Julia Cameron is Director of Publishing for The Lausanne Movement. She lives in Oxford." The Lausanne Movement is something Christians need to be warned to stay clear of. RHB also makes use of endorsements from two other individuals from the Lausanne Movement.

Now, there are a number of professors of Roman Catholic universities—identified on the RHB web site as such—whose books RHB disseminates to the body of Christ. I am not saying all are Roman Catholics, but all teach in Romanist universities. These include:

Maarten Wisse (KU Leuven): RHB sells one book co-authored by him.

Mark Noll (University of Notre Dame): RHB offers multiple books with contributions from him and has posted multiple endorsements from him on the RHB site.

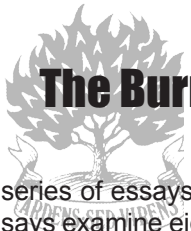
George Marsden (University of Notre Dame): RHB sells multiple books authored by him and has posted multiple endorsements from him on the RHB site.

Randall C. Zachman (University of Notre Dame): RHB offers multiple books by him and has posted one endorsement from him on the RHB site.

Let me give you a few examples where RHB also endorses and spreads among the Lord's people the teachings and the influence of Roman Catholics from the past—that is, through book sales. RHB offers *Pages from Church History*. The description of this book on the RHB web site is as follows: "Introduces the entire sweep of church history through classics by Polycarp, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, a Kempis, Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, Edwards, the Wesleys, Carey, and Bonhoeffer." I am sure you noticed the Romanists in that list as well as the modernist Bonhoeffer. And apparently, all on the list belong to the same church of Christ!

RHB sells the book *Shapers of Christian Orthodoxy: Engaging with Early and Medieval Theologians*. This book contains a





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series of essays by various authors, edited by Bradley G. Green. Here is an excerpt from the RHB promotion: “These essays examine eight key theologians, from Irenaeus to Aquinas, and suggest how to view and *appropriate their insights*” (emphasis added). On the web site for InterVarsity Press, which publishes this book, it lists the following as the theologians examined: Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas. Without getting into a discussion on each of the theologians listed, it should be enough to point out that Origen was a rank heretic while Thomas Aquinas was a thirteenth-century Roman Catholic priest, and among the claims to fame of that great Doctor of Popery is being the father of modern-day Liberation Theology. In his *History of Protestantism*, the faithful J.A. Wylie likened the writings of Aquinas to a polluted fountain.

The book *Soul Recreation: The Contemplative-Mystical Piety of Puritanism* is offered by RHB. This book is said to provide “a distinctively Protestant foundation for recovering the contemplative life while recognizing the significant contributions of the Western Catholic tradition.” This book is written by Tom Schwanda, a professor of Wheaton College, hardly a bastion of faithful Christianity! It contains teaching favorable to the Roman Catholic Desert Fathers, Ignatius of Loyola, Thomas Mer-ton—all Romanists—emerging church leader Richard Foster.

RHB promotes for sale the book *The Medieval Church*, declaring that it “introduces the reader to the fascinating interplay of authority and dissent, the birth and development of doctrinal beliefs, the spirituality of the common person, and the *enduring allure of Christian mysticism*” (emphasis added).

The book *The Trials of Theology* is sold by RHB. The description of it on the RHB web site encourages students of theology to study the “wisdom” it contains, the teachings of, among others, C.S. Lewis and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

RHB offers multiple books written by Dr. Herman Selderhuis, the director of Refo500 and president of the Refo500 Reformation Research Consortium (RefoRC). RHB also makes use of multiple endorsements from Selderhuis. RHB sells an official Refo500 book edited by Selderhuis and Karla Apperloo-Boersma, project leader of Refo500. The title page of that book which, by the way, was just published in 2013 states, “edited on behalf of Refo500”; the back cover has the Refo500 logo and again states that it is edited on behalf of Refo500.

I need to draw this presentation of documentation to a close. I will just mention that RHB sells multiple books from each of the following New Calvinists whom I have not yet mentioned and also makes use of multiple endorsements from each: Tim Challies, Mark Dever, Paul Washer, and Derek Thomas.

Let me also just share, with little comment, a few more names of individuals whose endorsements—in some cases, multiple endorsements—RHB has chosen to use on the RHB web site to market books. A number of these are also Manhattan Declaration signatories: new evangelical Tony Evans; charismatic Matt Chandler; the infamous apostate Richard Mouw; Jim Daly from Focus on the Family; Ravi Zacharias; Joel Belz; Chuck Colson; Gary Bauer; and Adrian Warnock, a leader at the horribly corrupt Jubilee Church, London, which is part of the equally corrupt Newfrontiers and has the Alpha Course: apostasy sums up those organizations. And going on, RHB also posts endorsements from the disgusting Liz Curtis Higgs, woman teacher and author of *Bad Girls of the Bible*; rock star Alice Cooper; Roman Catholic Francis J. Beckwith; and Jerome Neyrey, professor at the University of Notre Dame. And we could go on *ad nauseam* with the list of compromised; in some cases, badly corrupted; in some cases, outright apostate RHB apparently believes are sound and faithful enough to the word of God to use endorsements from or, even worse yet, peddle their books to the body of Christ.

“Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” Our specific application today is a minister’s responsibility to spiritually nourish the Lord’s people with wholesome, healthful, safe spiritual food—that is, right preaching and teaching—and without doubt, this includes guarding the household of faith from unwholesome, unhealthy, dangerous spiritual food, including that preached and taught by unfaithful and even false ministers and teachers.

These are such corrupt, confusing times. A minister can preach and teach all that I have this morning; and so long as he avoids practical examples, that is, so long as he avoids “naming names” or at least certain names by way of example and warning, he will receive commendation as a faithful man and able preacher. But once make a needful, particular application and warning, things suddenly change. Scripture no longer applies, and facts are no more facts. So we must give examples in a message such as this one, in an age such as this one, if we are to do good for the Lord’s people and be faithful to our Master.



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Those are some of the unfaithful, unsound, compromised, and in some cases, even apostate authors whose books RHB offers the body of Christ as being healthful, wholesome spiritual nourishment for their souls and to supposedly “glorify God and strengthen His Church.” When the minister presiding over, guiding, and acting as editorial director of such a Christian book publisher/distributor has the reputation and gifts and influence that Pastor Beeke has, this is a very serious matter and worthy of the concern of all ministers concerned for the honor of Christ and the spiritual good of His church, including generations following us.

But, if things go as they usually do in this time of deep spiritual downgrade, there will be a concerted effort to discredit the sound documentation I have presented and kill the message of concern and warning by killing the credibility of the messenger with various subjective charges, such as slanderer, talebearer, divider of the brethren. Yet ministers issuing such well documented warnings such as what I have sounded today, as a portion of my sermon and an application of my text, have a right to ask that question our Master put to the religious rulers of His day, who by the hand of one of their officers struck Him in the face: *“If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?”* Yes, if I have spoken evil today, if I have wrested the Scriptures or presented falsehoods or aired anything but plain, accurate, verifiable facts, bear witness of this. Show me where and how I have wrested and misapplied the word of God or presented falsehoods. Bear witness of the evil in an honest, forthright manner open to the judgment of sincere men.

But, if I have properly taught and rightly applied the word of God and the facts I have presented are accurate and true, then should you not rather acknowledge the truth and act accordingly, instead of verbally smiting the minister who shared it out of duty and love? But, do what you will, I have done what duty requires, and that is what counts to me. In other times—and today, in other places—ministers have laid down their lives in defense of the Lord’s truth and His flock. Amen.

*This sermon by Pastor Ovadal can be heard in its entirety [here](#).*