



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

### Dr. Joel Beeke - an enigma

Dr Joel Beeke is a well known and very well liked Calvinist from the United States. He is "Professor of Systematic Theology and Homiletics at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, pastor of the Heritage Netherlands Reformed Congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan USA, editorial director of Reformation Heritage Books, and editor of the Banner of Sovereign Grace Truth" (Dr Beeke's Sermonaudio site).

Many would speak of Dr Beeke's pleasing persona and preaching style. None of these things is denied in the least. However, the company that Dr Beeke keeps on his conference-circuit perambulations does cause great concern to those anxious to obey God's commands on separation from error, wickedness and apostasy.

The days of apostasy that are to mark the close of this age are upon us. This is a time of increasing "lawlessness". We are seeing the introduction to those days spoken of by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:8. "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." The term "wicked" means "the lawless one". As we approach the revelation of the Antichrist, men will be seen overthrowing the rule of God's Word and replacing it with their own notions and speculations and acting in a lawless fashion.

Sadly, Dr Joel Beeke, for all his gifts and talents, seems to be content to mingle with those who are involved in the denial of God's truth and the overthrowing of the gospel that Dr Beeke professes to embrace and teach.

He has been challenged about his associations but seems incapable of understanding the wrong that he is doing. My concern is that he is both destroying his own testimony and the testimony of those who are prepared to continue their fellowship with him, while he allows his ungodly associations with deniers of God's truth to continue.

There is that about Dr Beeke's life and circumstances which reminds us of the story of Billy Graham in his early days. Hopefully he and the Fundamentalist world have learned from that sad history. (See 'The Tragedy of Compromise', Ernest D Pickering, pages 49-77.)

Such fellowship and spiritual alliances as Dr Beeke maintains are offensive to God and that offence will ultimately result in the Lord withdrawing His favour from Dr Beeke and manifesting His anger. We may learn this truth from the consequences of the follies of Samson, Eli and David, to name but a few.

It must be said that the shadow of the Lord's disapproval will fall also on those who refused to acknowledge Dr Beeke's wrong-doing and encouraged him in his error by maintaining their fellowship with him and refusing to rebuke him in love as a true brother and friend should do.

These are elementary Christian truths.

There have been voices raised against Dr Beeke's behaviour. They have been raised in obedience to God and a concern for the witness of God's truth in these days and in love to both Dr Beeke and all of the flock of God.

I wish to highlight these warnings and urge God's people to consider them and both heed them and pray for Joel Beeke and for all who like him foolishly stray beyond the bounds of God's truth in matters of fellowship and witness.

Pastor Ralph Ovadal and I are responsible for a document highlighting Dr Beeke's errors. It follows this introduction.

I have also listed radio programmes produced and hosted by Pastor Ovadal which deal with this issue.



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### Of Ducks and New Calvinists

A Warning from Pastor Ralph Ovadal and Rev. Ivan Foster  
June 25, 2012

There is an old saying, "If it looks like a duck and walks like a duck and sounds like a duck, it's a duck." Now, when it comes to at least some New Calvinists, that saying may need to be modified a bit. There are certain ministers whose ministries, when examined, look New Calvinist; and when it comes to the doctrine of separation, they walk like New Calvinists. But, as to their preaching, they do not often sound like New Calvinists. As a result, the undiscerning among the Lord's people come under the harmful influence of such men. We write as two ministers with a great concern about the rapidly growing New Calvinist movement. Failure to practice what the Scriptures teach concerning separation from serious error, and certainly those involved in it, is a key distinctive of New Calvinism. With that in mind, by way of warning, we would also ask our brethren to then consider some basic facts concerning the ministry of Dr. Joel Beeke.

The first thing we would mention is that Dr. Beeke apparently sees no problem with joining together with New Calvinists and, sad to say, in at least one case, even outright apostates in ministry labors, as we will document.

Dr. Beeke joined with a number of New Calvinists, including John Piper, to preach at Piper's 2011 Conference for Pastors (<http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/conference-messages/by-conference/2011-pastors-conference>).

Over the past few years, including 2011, Dr. Beeke has joined with New Calvinists to speak at the deeply compromised Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals conference ([http://www.alliancenet.org/CC\\_Content\\_Page/0,,PTID307086\\_CHID811018\\_CIID,02011.html](http://www.alliancenet.org/CC_Content_Page/0,,PTID307086_CHID811018_CIID,02011.html)). He also joined with a number of New Calvinists, such as Dr. Al Mohler, to speak at the Ligonier (R.C. Sproul's ministry) 2012 National Conference (<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/audio-video-now-available-2012-national-conference/?aref=SS>). Dr. Mohler, a Southern Baptist, has been an enthusiastic promoter of New Calvinism and is a signee of the Manhattan Declaration (<http://manhattandeclaration.org/the-movement/leaders-list.aspx>). We assume the reader is very familiar with that document which brazenly declares Roman Catholics and the Orthodox to be Christians and followers of Jesus Christ who believe and preach the same gospel of Christ as do evangelicals. It bears noting that Dr. Mohler is currently on the board of the deeply compromised Focus on the Family.

Dr. Beeke spoke at 2010 and 2011 conferences (<http://www.ncfic.org/lovethechurch> and <http://www.ncfic.org/gcm-speakers>) put on by the National Center for Family Integrated Churches, which includes charismatic and Pentecostal churches, such as the Unity Temple of Praise, Syracuse, New York, which describes its government as "pastors, apostles, prophets, evangelist[s] and teachers." The NCFIC network (<http://www.ncfic.org/church-network>) also includes churches which use contemporary "Christian" music. There are other serious problems with the NCFIC as well. Currently, Dr. Beeke is also slated to preach at a 2012 NCFIC conference (<http://www.ncfic.org/harvest-speakers>).

In 2010, Dr. Beeke joined in preaching fellowship with Southern Baptist Timothy George to speak at a Refo500 event. George is the dean and professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School and theological advisor for Christianity Today; is on the editorial boards of First Things, Ecclesiology, and Books & Culture; and is currently the chair of the Doctrine and Christian Unity Commission of the Baptist World Alliance. It is an understatement to simply say, none of that is good! Timothy George, who likes to speak of Mary as the "Mother of God," has also been very active in the International Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue and the Evangelicals and Catholics Together movement/documents. He also joined with the late Chuck Colson and Romanist Robert George to author the Manhattan Declaration. That document was made public at a news conference on November 20, 2009. Then, ten months later, Dr. Beeke joined with Timothy George, Albert Mohler, and some other speakers with whom we are not familiar, to speak at the Refo500 event ([http://www.refo500.nl/content/files/Files/Refo500\\_Conference\\_Louisville.pdf](http://www.refo500.nl/content/files/Files/Refo500_Conference_Louisville.pdf)).



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But even more shocking is the Refo500 organization itself and Dr. Beeke's entanglement with it. Reformation Heritage Books (Joel Beeke, editorial director) and Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (Joel Beeke, president) have entered into a partnership with Refo500, an ecumenical organization which seems intent on overturning the Reformation. Dr. Beeke even appears in a Refo500 promotional video during which (4:18-5:38) he speaks of that partnership we have just mentioned (<http://youtu.be/LTnWXnmYgB8>).

The Refo500 organization (<http://www.refo500.nl/en/news/6>) is made up of "Protestant and Catholic organizations, universities, seminaries, museums and so on." One current project of Refo500 which is being carried out by a Roman Catholic university is "The Council of Trent - an interdisciplinary, interconfessional and international perspective" (see attachment 1). Other organizations listed as Refo500 partners and sponsors or members include such deeply corrupted, even apostate Protestant institutions as Fuller Theological Seminary and Beeson Divinity School as well as a number of Roman Catholic organizations and institutions such as the John XXIII Foundation for Religious Studies (see attachment 2). By the way, one of the presentations at the Refo500 event Dr. Beeke spoke at was titled "An Ecumenical Celebration? How to Work Together with Fruit and without Frustration" (see attachment 3).

We have already mentioned that apostate Protestant organizations are a part of Refo500. This includes the Remonstrant Church which denies any number of the essential doctrines of our faith (see attachment 4) and boasts of such accomplishments as these: "The Remonstrants were the first church in the world to open marriage for same-sex couples. It did so as early as 1986. The Remonstrants were one of the first churches in the Netherlands to ordain women as ministers. The Remonstrants are open for dialogue with members of other Christian denominations and of other religions. They were among the churches that established the World Council of Churches in 1948" (see attachment 5).

This year's Puritan Reformed Conference (<http://puritanseminary.org/invitation-to-prts-conference/speakers/>), August 23-25, 2012, put on by Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary of which Beeke is president and professor of systematic theology and homiletics, is having Derek Thomas as one of the speakers. Thomas is the editorial director for the deeply compromised Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals.

Currently, Dr. Beeke is also scheduled to speak at the January, 2013 G3 Conference (<http://www.g3conference.com/>). This event is hosted by a Southern Baptist Church, Pray's Mill Baptist Church, Douglasville, Georgia (<http://praysmill.com/>). We would hope the reader has knowledge of how utterly corrupt the Southern Baptist Convention is (women pastors, charismatic churches, ecumenical, modern Bible translations, involvement in the orality movement, etc.: <http://tinyurl.com/southernbaptistconvention>). This particular church offers, among other services, adult sports, a car rally, and a married couples cruise. At the G3 Conference, Dr. Beeke will also be joining with certain New Calvinist speakers.

In recent years, Dr. Beeke has even co-authored books with such New Calvinists as Albert Mohler, John Piper, R.C. Sproul, John MacArthur, and others (see attachment 6). Dr. Beeke has added his contributions to books also containing chapters by such men as C.J. Mahaney, Ligon Duncan, Mark Dever, Timothy George, John MacArthur, Albert Mohler, and R.C. Sproul.

With the context of New Calvinism in mind, another concern we would bring to our brethren's attention has to do with Reformation Heritage Books (RHB, <http://www.heritagebooks.org/>). As already noted, Dr. Beeke is the editorial director of Reformation Heritage Books. It would seem obvious that as editorial director, Dr. Beeke would bear a great deal of responsibility with regard to the books offered by RHB. Here too, he has shown no inclination to separate himself from individuals teaching and practicing obvious error, so as not to endorse teachers and teachings which mislead and corrupt the Lord's people. In what we are about to share concerning RHB, we do not believe we are being hypercritical or unrealistic concerning maintaining a biblical standard. We also wish to stress that what we are about to present is by no means the sum total of similar documentation available concerning RHB.



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The stated mission of Reformation Heritage Books, we are told, "is to glorify God and strengthen His Church through the publication and distribution of Puritan and Reformed literature." The title of a regular RHB publication featuring their books is Tolle Lege, "Pick up and read." Yet we would ask the reader to consider just some of the authors whose works are sold by RHB—in some cases, even published by RHB—and consider whether the Lord's people should be urged to "pick up and read" the teachings of such men and whether their books are such that "glorify God and strengthen His Church."

Currently, RHB carries over two dozen books authored by John Piper, four more books which contain contributions by him, and a number of other books which carry endorsements by Piper. RHB book offerings include a number by New Calvinist charismatic ministers, such as Piper, C.J. Mahaney, Sam Storms, and the deeply ecumenical Josh Harris. Harris's church was a sponsor of the 2011 Summer of Mercy pro-life event which included a Roman Catholic exorcism ritual. During the multi-day Summer of Mercy, a Roman Catholic priest spoke in Josh Harris's church (<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=32121028377>). This may seem hard to believe, but as is the case with everything we present in this letter, it is well documented. One of the two Harris books available from RHB contains an endorsement by Chuck Colson, leader of the ECT movement and one of the main authors of the Manhattan Declaration. In fact, currently RHB carries books actually authored by a great number of Manhattan Declaration signees.

In addition to those already named, there are a number of other New Calvinists whose books—in some cases, quite a number of books—and writings are available at RHB, such as, but not limited to, John MacArthur, Ligon Duncan, R.C. Sproul, J.I. Packer, Tim Keller (who is even a theistic evolutionist), Philip Ryken, Thabiti Anyabwile, and Mark Dever. Quite a number of books by Dr. Albert Mohler are also available at RHB. Another Southern Baptist, Timothy George, is a contributor to two books sold by RHB.

RHB sells the book *The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World*. That book is described as follows: "Six of today's leading pastor-theologians—John Piper, Voddie Baucham, D.A. Carson, Tim Keller, Mark Driscoll, and David Wells—have joined together to offer Christians a practical, biblical vision of Christ's supremacy, so they will be better prepared to present the undeniable truth to a searching society." By the way, two other books offered by RHB carry endorsements by Mark Driscoll.

For the sake of book promotions, Reformation Heritage Books makes use of endorsements from the likes of Richard Mouw, George Marsden of the University of Notre Dame, Ravi Zacharias, Erwin Lutzer, Tony Evans, Bob Lepine, Dennis Rainey, John Piper, Mark Driscoll, C.J. Mahaney, Joshua Harris, Charles Colson, Joni Eareckson Tada, Nancy Leigh DeMoss, Paul Washer, J.I. Packer, John MacArthur, Al Mohler, Timothy George, Tim Keller, R.C. Sproul, Thabiti Anyabwile, Ligon Duncan, Mark Dever, Philip Ryken, and Derek Thomas.

For example, *Meet the Puritans*, published by Reformation Heritage Books and authored by Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson, carries endorsements by J.I. Packer, R.C. Sproul, John Piper, and John MacArthur. Other RHB books edited by Dr. Beeke carry endorsements by various New Calvinists as well as men such as Richard Mouw, president of the apostate Fuller Theological Seminary. Mouw is a key signatory of the Manhattan Declaration and has been, and still is, deeply involved in a movement which aims to bring Mormons and Christians together. As part of the effort, in 2004, he spoke at a "worship" service in the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. His official bio tells us, Mouw "served for six years as co-chair of the official Reformed-Catholic Dialogue, and is a leader for interfaith theological conversations, particularly with Mormons and Jewish groups."

RHB sells a number of books by Thabiti Anyabwile, a Gospel Coalition council member who is an enthusiastic champion of what he has called "holy hip hop" and "lyrical theology" performed by rappers such as Lecrae and other rap artists.

Christians can also order from RHB the book *With Calvin in the Theater of God: The Glory of Christ and Eve-*



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ryday Life, which is described thus: "Stemming from the Desiring God 2009 National Conference, this volume includes chapters by Julius Kim, Douglas Wilson, Marvin Olasky, Mark Talbot, Sam Storms, and John Piper." The reader has perhaps not heard of Douglas Wilson. Rev. Wilson is the pastor of Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho. He is a New Calvinist and a leader of the Federal Vision movement. He currently has a video posted at his YouTube site (<http://www.youtube.com/user/CanonWired>) in which he explains why many Roman Catholics are actually saved 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, he tells Christians to thank the Lord for the beer brand they drink. Mr. Wilson, who considers himself a "paleo-Confederate," co-authored with Steve Wilkins and published a small book defending slavery in the South.

Incredibly, Reformation Heritage Books also offers books by two professors from Roman Catholic Notre Dame University. Those two men are Randall C. Zachman and George Marsden. There are a number of books available from RHB which present such men as Blaise Pascal, Thomas a Kempis, Thomas Aquinas, and C.S. Lewis as Christians and which contain their writings. By way of examples, we offer these two from the RHB web site: <http://www.heritagebooks.org/products/Pages-From-Church-History.html>

Pages From Church History (endorsed by Timothy George)

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.

<http://www.heritagebooks.org/products/The-Trials-of-Theology.html>

The Trials of Theology

Students of theology can find themselves strengthened and renewed while they study, but it can also be a time of trial. This reader shows how to navigate such trials as we study for and then engage in Christian ministry. It includes wisdom from voices past: Augustine; Martin Luther; C. H. Spurgeon; B. B. Warfield; Dietrich Bonhoeffer and C.S. Lewis. Several modern authors also show how to navigate various aspects of theological study successfully: D. A. Carson (Biblical Studies); Carl Trueman (Church History); Gerald Bray (Systematic Theology); Dennis Hollinger (Christian Ethics); and John Woodhouse (Seminary life). The book shows how we can move from being 'lost among words' as we study of theology, to being 'lost for words' in praise of God.

Currently, RHB sells a book authored by Colin Hansen, editor-at-large for Christianity Today. Not surprisingly, two John Stott books are also available through RHB.

We would especially urge our Christian brethren to consider that RHB also offers a number of books containing the writings of "Eighteenth-Century, British-Baptist, Woman Theologian" Anne Dutton. Certainly Dutton was just that—a woman theologian, in open disobedience to the Word of God. Consider, for instance, just this from RHB: "Volume 4 of Dutton's writings includes her early work *The New Birth* (1734); her unique pseudonymous work *Treatise on Justification* (1778); her work on grace *A Discourse concerning God's Action of Adoption* (1737); *A Discourse on the Inheritance of the Adopted Sons of God* (1748); and her theological letters on the marks of a child of God (1761) which offer advice in holiness from the end of her literary career." Relevant also to RHB offering the teachings of Anne Dutton is the description of the compiler of those teachings: "Compiler Joann Ford Watson is the H.R. Gill Family Professor of Theology at Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, Ohio. She received her B.A. from DePauw University, her M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary, and her Ph.D. from Northwestern University. She is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church, USA, with rural-parish pastoral experience and inner-city experience. She has worked in Calcutta with Mother Theresa's order, the Missionaries of Charity" (<http://www.heritagebooks.org/selected-spiritual-writings-of-anne-dutton-theological-works-vol-4/>).

A book by Joni Eareckson Tada is found at RHB as are a number which contain contributions by her. Tada, a woman teacher, is a dyed-in-the-wool New Evangelical and signee of the Manhattan Declaration. Books authored by Joanne J. Jung and edited by Nancy Guthrie are also available from RHB. Jung is associate professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Biola University; and Guthrie teaches at Christ Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee and speaks at conferences worldwide. At the present time, RHB sells eight



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books by Nancy Leigh DeMoss, a woman Bible teacher who is widely broadcast on Christian radio. Kathleen Nielson is another woman Bible teacher whose books—currently nine books, to be exact—are sold by RHB.

We believe that Reformation Heritage Books and Joel Beeke, its editorial director, are doing much to justify a wide range of badly compromised ministers and ministry leaders, and their error, in the eyes of many unwary and uninformed Christians. This grievous situation is quite contrary to the RHB-stated aim to “glorify God and strengthen His Church.” We also believe that Dr. Joel Beeke, by yoking with unfaithful ministers to preach to the Lord’s people at various conferences, is doing much to justify those men, and their error, in the eyes of many unwary and uninformed Christians. Furthermore, to our knowledge, Dr. Beeke has never admitted any wrongdoing or regret for doing so, even when personally confronted. As to Dr. Beeke’s partnership in Refo500, there he has brazenly yoked with grievous apostasy including Roman Catholicism. As a veteran minister and the president of a seminary named Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, he surely cannot be said to be ignorant of the terrible, damaging compromise and sinful nature of his actions.

Given what we have documented in this letter, we would suggest that it is hard to escape the conclusion that Dr. Beeke would seem to be New Calvinist himself. This is a serious conclusion, and we do not make it lightly, and certainly not gladly, but rather based on undeniable facts. We certainly have nothing personal against Dr. Beeke, nor do we have any “axe to grind.” Certainly all of the information we have shared is current, very public, and none of it of a personal nature. In fact, it is all information that Dr. Beeke is apparently very comfortable with, and a good deal of it even came from his ministry web sites or the RHB book catalogue, with the rest coming from organizations he has joined with in ministry fellowship. The one exception would be the documentation of several books which Dr. Beeke co-authored and which are sold on Amazon.com. We are not interested in “smearing” in any way Dr. Beeke. Our prayer is that he will repent and return to “the old paths, where is the good way.” Our great concern is for the glory and honor of Christ Jesus and His blood-bought church. It is that heartfelt concern and heartfelt conviction that prompted us to write this warning.

Ralph Ovadal is the pastor of Pilgrims Covenant Church, Monroe, Wisconsin. Ivan Foster is a retired minister of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster.

### ***Heart of the matter* broadcasts in which these issues are addressed:**

- **They’re no Puritans! Profiles in New Calvinism**

Pastor Ralph Ovadal and Guest Rev. Stephen Hamilton profile the leaders of the New Calvinist movement and their defining errors.

10/22/2010

- **Secondary Separation and the New Calvinist Whirlpool**

Guest Rev. Ivan Foster

5/20/2011

- **The Ripening Corruption of New Calvinism: The Next Generation**

The main focus of this report, which includes many short sound bites, is the growing “Reformed” hip hop culture and the main players in that unfolding, at times shocking, tragedy.

10/28/2011

- **The Southern Baptist Convention: A Cauldron of Compromise and Corruption, Part 1**

With guest Pastor Timothy Williams

6/1/2012

- **The Southern Baptist Convention: A Cauldron of Compromise and Corruption, Part 2**

With guest Pastor Timothy Williams



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6/8/2012

- **Should They Be in That? Two Influential Reformed Ministers and a Thing Called Refo500**  
6/15/2012