



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

### An exchange of E-mails with Dr Joel Beeke on the subject of his fellowshipping with those from whom he ought to be separated

by Rev Ivan Foster, minister of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster (Retired)

The subject of Dr Joel Beeke's attendance at a number of conferences at which there were speakers from various religious backgrounds including Roman Catholic priests, Ecumenists, Charismatic ministers, supporters and promoters of 'hip-hop gospel music'; his connections with Refo500, an ecumenical organisation seeking to exploit the upcoming 500th anniversary of Luther's famous action in 1517 when he nailed his 95 theses to the church door at Wittenberg; his membership of and participation in gatherings organised by the Evangelical Theological Society, was highlighted particularly in two programmes on the "Heart of the Matter" radio broadcast, hosted by Pastor Ralph Ovadal of Monroe, Wisconsin, USA (<http://www.pccmonroe.org/newcalvinism.htm>). The two programmes were aired on \*July 6th, 2012 and the follow up programme on January 4th, 2013.

Following the July 6th broadcast, it was reported to Ralph Ovadal and to Ivan Foster, who shared in both programmes, that Dr Beeke had acknowledged his error in being linked with Refo500 and had broken all links with the organisation. His word on the matter was taken since he had intimated this to a number of ministers who were his friends.

However, in the second programme of January 3rd, it was pointed out that Dr Beeke had not severed his links with Refo500 and that further compromising associations had come to light.

The reaction of some of Dr Beeke's friends and associates toward Ralph Ovadal and me has been pretty severe. We were accused of being in breach of the ninth commandment and particularly those sins highlighted in the Larger Catechism. I quote this comment which was sent in an email to Ralph Ovadal, Stephen Hamilton and me.

*According to the Westminster Larger Catechism, "The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment, are, all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbours...detracting, talebearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh and partial censuring, misconstruing (sic) intentions, words and actions,...evil suspicion, envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any, endeavouring or desiring to impair it..., neglecting such things as are of good report..."*

Abundant documentary evidence was given in support of what was stated on the radio programmes, which also appeared as printed articles, the articles actually containing even more crucial information on Dr Beeke, that is they documented the situation at his Reformation Heritage Books and also highlighted New Calvinist conferences where Dr Beeke was, and in some cases is scheduled to speak. In the articles and broadcasts there was a strict avoidance of any abusive terminology regarding Dr Beeke's person. Since no attempt has ever been made to refute what we stated, such criticism was unbecoming, to say the least. Where is the evidence to support this allegation of grossly unchristian behaviour on our part? None is offered and yet we are the villains of the piece!

It appears that there is much more concern to defend the person and conduct of Dr Beeke than there is to consider his actions and activities and whether they offend the Lord.

If what Ralph Ovadal and I have said and written was in error and wronged a brother in Christ then show us where we are wrong. It is not Christian to whisper and mutter disparaging opprobria behind our backs!

Following the January 3rd programme, I was approached by a brother whom I greatly regard, urging me to



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contact Dr Beeke in order to urge upon him the error of his ways.

### Matthew 18:15-17

Maybe a word here about Matthew 18:15-17 is relevant. There were those who faulted Ralph Ovadal and me for not contacting Dr Beeke directly before we issued our statements. Let it be said that Dr Beeke HAD been contacted by ministers who were concerned about what he was doing in sharing platforms with some unsavoury characters long before our public criticisms. He took little or no heed to what was said and pressed on with what I consider are disobediences to God's Word.

There was no obligation whatever on us, commenting as we were on the very public activities of Dr Beeke, to contact him when others have already done just that to no avail.

I quote from a very good article on the subject of the teaching of Matthew 18:15-17 and its bearing on a public controversy of this nature. The full article may be read **online here**.

"Very often the first response to any public witness against sin, or the public censure of a Christian who has sinned publicly, is an accusation that to make such a public denunciation is contrary to the Saviour's teaching in this passage. Usually it is asserted that there cannot be a public censure of sin until private overtures have been made to the offender. This has the effect of diverting attention from the original error and focuses attention on the one trying to protest against it. But what does this passage teach? Is it addressing the matter of public sin at all?"

"It is also clear from God's word that public defiance of God's word by a professing Christian merits a public rebuke without the necessity of first following this 'private approach' protocol. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." (1 Timothy 5:20 AV) Here Paul is addressing the sin of elders in the Church."

"Several examples of this public rebuke of sin may be cited:

Matthew 16:23 – The Saviour denounced Peter immediately and publicly for his foolish words. It was important for the other disciples to see immediately that what Peter was suggesting was of the devil! The Saviour acted quickly and publicly because of the serious danger that lay in the attitude that had spoken these words.

1 Corinthians 5:3 – Paul denounced the notorious offending believer in Corinth, even instructing the elders of that congregation to hand the man over to the devil for the destruction of the flesh. This was a very high level and public censure by the Church. Yet Paul was not even present when he wrote these words. There was no private approach followed by Paul nor did he instruct the elders to take such an approach. Public sin required immediate public action.

Galatians 2:14ff – Paul denounced Peter publicly and immediately for his hypocrisy and folly. Barnabas and others were caught up in this foolishness that was instigated by those who came as the emissaries of the Apostle James. These were 'high powered' offenders! Two Apostles were directly or indirectly involved in this sin. Yet although all were within the same Presbytery structure and although Paul recognized the purview of the court of the Apostles and elders (Acts 15:2) in deciding such questions, he immediately and publicly rebukes Peter. Clearly, he does so to prevent the spread of this erroneous practice which was a threat to the very basis of the gospel – though Peter obviously did not see it that way initially."

After prayer, I agreed to the brother's request and sent an email to Dr. Beeke.

That was followed by a brief exchange of emails. I have to say that Dr Beeke's response to my contact was most amazing. He was very polite. I have no complaint there whatsoever. But given the nature of the topic we are considering - obedience of God's Word regarding fellowship with those who are the enemies of God's truth and others who are happy to mingle with promoters of error - I would have thought that such would bring a swift response and a strong defence by Dr Beeke of his position. That was not Dr Beeke's response.



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If I were contacted on such a serious matter, I would immediately quote a series of verses from God's Word in defence of my position. That would not cost me any time or effort. These verses are written on my heart.

Dr Beeke clearly takes time to travel to various conferences and gatherings. I would have thought it appropriate and necessary to make time to put down the answer to our concerns, since it requires only the verses from God's Word which justify his activities.

For this reason I am amazed that Dr Beeke did not give any such response. Instead he wrote of contacting me by phone sometime in the future and perhaps meeting me face to face in 2014!

In reaction to Dr Beeke's response and the ongoing rather dishonest and devious campaign by Dr Beeke's defenders, I have decided to publish the email exchange that I had with him. I have concealed the names of third parties and a private phone number referred to in these emails.

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### **#1 - My initial contact with Dr Beeke in which I seek to briefly set out our concerns about his platform associations**

Dear Dr Beeke,

I was recently approached by XXXX XXXXXXXX with your request to call you on the telephone.

I did not think that was an advisable course of action to take, since such a means of communication would not provide either of us with a full understanding of our respective positions.

However, I was further approached by Dr XXXXX XXXXXXXX of XXXXX FPC, someone you recently met at a conference in the XXXXXX area. He was most anxious that I go the extra mile in this matter and set forth my position, my objections to your relationship with those whose theological views and whose associations are not in accord with the teaching of the Word of God.

After prayer, I felt strongly that I should attempt to present you with this further appeal and explanation of our protest against your involvement with those who are linked to Romanism, New Evangelicalism, New Calvinism and many other falsehoods, both old and new.

Perhaps I might introduce myself first. I am a retired Free Presbyterian minister who was converted at the age of 20 and 10 months later was starting as a student for the ministry of the FPC. Those were days of blessing and power. They were also days of contention and battle. The two go together. When the Spirit of God moves amongst the people of God their zeal for the Lord will manifest itself in earnest efforts to win souls for Christ and also earnest contention for the purity of the faith once delivered to the saints. I retired in 2008 after some 44 years of preaching.

Your name came to the attention of Pastor Ralph Ovadal, Stephen Hamilton and myself as a result of research into and protesting against the views and actions of New Calvinists such as John Piper. It was then that we discovered your links with such men. (<http://www.pccmonroe.org/newcalvinism.htm>) After an initial warning against the wrong you were doing by keeping company and endorsing such company, further research led us to your links with Refo500 and its affiliates.

The issue that arises from your associations with Refo500 and your various endorsements of its activities form the basis of the last two articles in which I was associated with Pastor Ovadal. These are also found at the link above.

I must stress, Dr Beeke, that Ralph Ovadal and I strove to present only the truth of God in these articles and broadcasts. We avoided speculation, exaggeration and innuendo. Indeed, it was publicly stated that we



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wanted no part nor lot with any from within the Dutch Reformed community who might have an axe to grind regarding yourself. We were going to deal only with facts.

I must also stress that our motives were based upon a desire for the honour of our Saviour, Whose honour and glory are so maligned by friends so-called and foes in these days; the wellbeing of the saints of God everywhere; last but not least, your own spiritual wellbeing. We deem you a brother in the Lord, irrespective of the controversy we have with you.

The links you have formed through sharing various conferences with New Calvinists etc are wrong in the light of God's Word and must be broken.

This you acknowledged yourself, or so we were led to believe by some friends who reported this to us, following the 'Heart of the Matter' broadcast and article, June 25th 2012. We were told that you were unaware of the character of some of the links you had formed through your association with Refo500. It was also reported to us that you would immediately seek to sever all such links forthwith.

That acknowledgment on your part substantially bears out all that Ralph Ovadal, Stephen Hamilton and I had said of these links and associations you had formed.

Furthermore, when Dr XXXX XXXXXX showed you the statement that Dr Herman Selderhuis had made regarding the Spanish young people and the pope, you (in Dr XXXXXX words) immediately rejected what Dr Selderhuis was espousing and said that you did not agree with it. You further repudiated the activities of a Refo500 conference in the far east which involved Jesuits.

I do find it hard to understand just how you, a man educated and well versed in the history of the Reformation and the ways and works of popery, could find yourself amongst such company and be ignorant of the nature of that company.

A very long article on your links with those who are modernistic in theology, ecumenical in their activities, apostate in their nature is to be found on the Pilgrim Covenant Church site, the link to which I have already supplied.

I beg you to consider what this article says, for so much related to your spiritual wellbeing depends upon your reaction to the truth set forth there.

As I have already noted, it was reported to us that you stated that you were determined to break all links with Refo500, subsequent to the revelations set forth in the June articles and broadcast, 'Of Ducks and New Calvinists'. But as Dr XXXXX XXXXXX interview with you (not to mention the article and broadcast of January 3rd 2013) proved, you are still involved with Refo500 and its nefarious activities some six months after you stated you were going to break all links with Refo500 and its associates.

I am prepared to accept the assurances you gave to Dr XXXXXX on January 18th that you were in ignorance of the matters he brought before you. But of course that begs the question of how a man of your experience could find himself in such company for such a length of time and be ignorant of the false teaching they espouse and have openly proclaimed. From your statements on various internet sites, it appears that you have been a friend of Dr Selderhuis for many years and have shared various platforms with him. How then could you be ignorant of his ecumenical and New Evangelical views, which Dr XXXXXX extracted from him within a brief conversation at that conference in which he met you?

Have you not been foolish and naive in the extreme?

I do not say these things to humiliate or insult you but to drive home the reality of the position you find yourself in. Speaking the unvarnished truth is an act of love, not bitterness. So ought ministers particularly to speak. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ," Ephesians 4:15.



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Dear Dr Beeke, the proof of your heart's attitude toward the errors and falsehood promulgated within the confines of Refo500 will be seen in your utter withdrawal from EVERY contact with it and all that it represents - irrespective of the cost to you or your reputation. No good can come of such associations though doubtless many will tell you that your influence will do much good. A clean man touching the unclean results in him becoming unclean and utterly failing to impart his cleanness to the one who was contaminated.

"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean," Haggai 2:11-13.

What steps then should you take? The answer to that question is found in the Word of God. If you have done wrong and sinned and are in the wrong company then the Bible makes plain what your response should be - REPENTANCE!

I would be ashamed to instruct you in the statements of the Westminster Shorter Catechism on the nature of true repentance. I acknowledge your greater acquaintance with the Confessional documents from the era of the Reformation and its immediate aftermath.

However, it is necessary for me to press this matter home.

The outworking of true repentance is seen in the response of Zacchaeus to the Saviour's call, Luke 19:8. "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."

There was an immediate and public repudiating of all that had been wrong in his life hitherto.

It is further illustrated for us in the lives of God's people in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra when many had formed improper and unscriptural marriages with those from the surrounding nations. "And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do," Ezra 10:10-12.

What a heart-wrenching action was involved in the steps necessary to obey God and put the matter right. Yet, they immediately set about taking the necessary steps irrespective of the cost.

That is what true repentance is all about. And that, dear Dr Beeke, is what you must do if you are truly earnest and genuine in your protestations of being against the things which Refo500 espouses.

It entails a total ceasing to participate in its gatherings or anything that it sponsors or is linked with. It entails the cessation of all promoting of materials, articles and books in which there are found the views of those authors who espouse error. It has been acknowledged by you that your RHB store promotes many books which are contaminated with abominable errors and falsehoods. True repentance will require you to forgo such sales and promotions irrespective of the commercial loss.

So acted Zacchaeus. And so acted the great men in that era wherein we both glory. The Reformers, the Puritans, the Covenanters, all responded to the teaching of God's Word with courage and honesty, counting not the cost.

I urge you please to consider this appeal and assure you of my prayers that the Lord will give you the victory to the glory of His name, the hindering of the devil's kingdom of darkness and the furtherance of His people and cause.

Should you wish to respond to this email I would be happy to engage in a profitable exchange on this vital matter.



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Sincerely in Christ,

Ivan Foster.

30th January 2013.

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### #2 - Dr Beeke's reply

Dear Rev. Foster,

Thanks so much for corresponding directly with me. The two major concerns you have expressed have been resolved. Refo500 has told me that they have now done a thorough purging of my name and ministries from its site as originally requested. And I have also requested that my name be deleted from WRF.

I would like to speak to you in person sometime in the future as I believe that we have a lot more in common than you realize and that we can learn from each other. I hope to be coming to No. Ireland early next February, D.V. Would you be willing to speak with me at that time?

Meanwhile, if you have any other concerns about me or my ministry, I would appreciate it if you would call me directly. My number is XXXXXXX, x XXXX. Many thanks, and may the rich blessings of our sovereign, gracious Lord be with you.

Warmly,

jrb

15 Feb 2013, at 16:27,

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### #3 - My response

Dear Dr Beeke,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your email and to assure you that I will give it a considered and detailed reply very soon.

Sincerely In Christ,

IF.

Friday, February 15, 2013 11:33 AM

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### #4 - Dr Beeke's reply

Dear Rev. Foster,

I have always been of the conviction that e-mail is the worst possible venue for resolving difficulties, so please do not send a detailed reply. I would far rather speak with you. If waiting until next Feb. is too long to speak in person (which is by far the best), perhaps we can at least speak together by Skype, so we can





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see each other, and begin developing a relationship. Thanks for honoring this request.

The best time to call me is on a Friday. During the seminary semester my time is exceedingly precious; in fact, I am overwhelmed most of the time, so if you could call me after the semester is over—say on May 17, that would be a great help to me. We could arrange a time for that day. Or, I would be glad to call you at my expense. Kindly let me know the phone number or hopefully, skype address, and I will call you that day at the time that you choose.

Warmly, in Christ,

jrb

15 Feb 2013, at 16:57

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### #5 - My response

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Dear Dr Beeke,

I must confess that I much prefer a document to the telephone in that 'off the top of your head' responses feature largely in telephone or Skype conversations, whereas I believe that the nature of the matters we are dealing with require careful and considered wording and presentation. There is no science that must be more exact than that of theology, given the weighty matters that it deals with and the terrible and eternal consequences of error.

I have no problem whatever talking with you face to face - indeed, I only wish I could do that so that you could gauge and judge something of my heart and spirit in this matter and I yours. But I would still wish to put down in writing what my problems with your position and practices are.

I am retired. I seek no advancement in the public arena that 'the ministry of Christ' has become. In fact I deplore the show business attitude which seems to pervade the cause of Christ today. I feel that the whole spirit of such is utterly contrary to the spirit of the ministry of Christ and His apostles.

My only concern is the honour of Christ and the purity of the witness to His Word today. That is why I am concerned about your links with Refo500 and also the personalities who are part of its structures.

But it does not end there. We must come to the your selling, recommending and promoting of books which are, by virtue of their authors and their contents, unsound. It is this entanglement that I believe is utterly detrimental to your witness and stand and must bring upon you the censure of good men, not to mention the disapproval of the Lord.

Dear brother, these matters must be met head on! I am not for niceties and polite exchanges. It is my Saviour's testimony that consumes my heart and causes me to 'speak the truth in love'.

I must ask you therefore to permit me to set down in an email a detailed response to your first reply. That alone can form the basis of a future discussion of whatever form.

Sincerely in the cause of the Saviour,

IF.

15 February 2013 17:25:12 GMT

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### #7 - A FULL EXPLANATION OF OUR CONCERNS ABOUT DR. BEEKE'S ASSOCIATIONS

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Dear Dr Beeke,

In our recent brief exchange of emails you indicated that you would prefer it if I did not send you an email detailing my views and concerns. In response, I said that I hoped that you would permit me to do just that, since I believe that no other means of communication or expression is adequate to deal effectively with my concerns. After all, it is the medium by which the Lord revealed His will to men and in which He chose to preserve it for time and eternity. "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing," Hosea 8:12, KJV.

My reference to a detailed email was couched as a request but perhaps you did not understand it as such and therefore have not responded but were awaiting my submission.

On that assumption, I am forwarding to you a detailed explanation of my concerns. I might say that it is, in essence, what is contained in the article mounted by Ralph Ovdal on his internet site, for we are one in this matter. (<http://www.pccmonroe.org/2013/01.03.htm>)

The position you have adopted is a public one since there is a full record of your meetings and activities, thanks to your extensive use of the internet and its various interchanges. Therefore a public examination of your position is perfectly in order and your response to such an examination is likewise something that the people of God have a right to scrutinise. Peter was brought before the people of God, Galatians 2:11. So was David, 2 Samuel 12:7. None of us can live unto ourselves but our actions are subject to examination. "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men," 2 Corinthians 8:21, KJV.

Both Ralph Ovdal and I have publicly stated our views on your position, given the documented evidence for our views and have been ready to have our position subjected to honest examination.

Nothing of that sort has happened. Rather, all that has taken place is that we have been miscalled and abused, but not one element of the case we set forth has been challenged.

Despite that, it would be our sincere desire that we attempt to persuade you of the error of your position. It is to that end I pen this email.

### **BIBLE SEPARATION**

I believe it necessary to deal first of all with the matter of the Bible doctrine of the believer's separation from sin and from sinful associations and fellowship, for that appears to be the issue at the centre of our differences.

I am copying what I prepared for my contribution to the 'Heart of the Matter' programme of January 3rd 2013.

"I would like to deal first of all with Biblical separation from that which offends God.

What does such separation entail?

I recall hearing the late Dr Carl McIntire, a man who undoubtedly took a great stand for the truth of God in his early days, preaching on separation from 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 and emphasising the command of God in verse 17: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." He said that separation from the unclean thing entailed a refraining from even the merest touch. The word "touch" carries the meaning of contact by embracing and clinging to right down to the slightest touch.

Dr McIntire was of course correct. God has chosen His words most deliberately and we should take note of them. Separation from sin means not the merest touch or contact is to be tolerated.





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This matter is illustrated for us in God's instructions to Moses regarding Dathan and Abiram. We read in Numbers 16:25-26: "And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins."

Just being in the company of these men or a touching of those wicked men or anything that was theirs, was enough to condemn a person to God's judgment.

This has to be noted in the context of our present controversy.

This truth is again illustrated by the words of Eve in the Garden of Eden when she reiterated the command of God regarding the tree. "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die," Genesis 3:3. Though the words "neither shall ye touch it" are not expressed in the prohibition uttered by God, it was implied. Such a touching of the fruit as to pull it from the tree, a taking of it in the hand, and a putting of it to the mouth in order to eat it was forbidden. A touch was the beginning of a taking and eating and a defying of God.

This then is the degree of separation God requires and no amount of theological juggling or philosophical quibbling can alter or weaken that Scriptural truth."

The application of this law by God is most exact. In the book of Joshua we read: "And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you," Joshua 7:10-12, KJV.

I believe it fair to say that most Israelites would have been unaware of Achan's sin but that did not spare them from the judgment that fell upon the nation.

Ignorance or naivety are no excuse!

In my email of 30th January, 2013, I referred to God's people in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra when many had formed improper and unscriptural marriages with those from the surrounding nations. "And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do," Ezra 10:10-12.

What a heart-wrenching action was involved in the steps necessary to obey God and put the matter right. Yet, they immediately set about taking the necessary steps irrespective of the cost. What commitments had been undertaken by these men yet, because these commitments were wrong and contrary to God's Word, they had to be abandoned forthwith. There was no working out of arrangements made and then separation. No, it was to be immediate.

This is the pattern for us all and it is the pattern for you, Dr Beeke, with regards to your improper links with those who are living and speaking contrary to God's Word.

It is wrong for you to "honour" speaking engagements which "dishonour" the Lord and His Word!

The point I wish to make is that God holds guilty of a sin those who, while personally innocent of the sin in question, nevertheless persist in associating themselves with those who are guilty.

This is highlighted in the New Testament by the words of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 3. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh



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disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; . . . . "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother," verses 6-7, 14-15.

This principle underlies the following scriptures.

"For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds," 2 John 1:11, KJV.

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues," Revelation 18:4, KJV.

A man becomes guilty of another man's transgressions when he persistently associates and fellowships with him and thus gives the impression that he considers him innocent of any sin. This defiance of God requires the Church to treat the offender and the man who refuses to obey God's strictures upon the offender as both being guilty of sin and therefore they are to be separated or withdrawn from.

Herein is our problem with your associations with those who embrace unscriptural doctrines and lifestyles.

I will make no mention of the World Reformed Fellowship since you have indicated to me in an earlier email (15th Feb '13) that you have requested that your name be deleted from its files, other than to express my astonishment at your naivety in ever seeking membership of such an ungodly crowd without first checking the character of those you were entering into fellowship with.

### **1. Refo500 is a hotbed of Romanism, false ecumenism and theological modernism.**

A man with whom you are personally acquainted and whom you hail as a friend, Herman Silderhuis, is a prominent leader of Refo500.

An interview with him on the internet indicates this man's compromised theological position and that Dr Selderhuis is a thorough-going ecumenist. I found this interview with Dr Selderhuis on the site of "Acton Institute". It is called "**Reformation and Rediscovery: An Interview with Herman J. Selderhuis.**"

Dr Selderhuis is answering the question: "What is the current state of religion in Holland and, more broadly, Christianity in Europe?"

He replied: "Well, when we look at church numbers and church attendance, it does not look good. I just lectured today on the developments in former Eastern Germany, the former German Democratic Republic, and linked that to developments in Germany in general. The Protestant Church in Germany has lost 2.5 million members in the last ten years, which is quite a bit. You still have a lot left, but ten percent has vanished and it is a trend. As for the Netherlands, the perspective is that within the next ten years, 1,000 churches will close.

On the other side, you see new developments. Young churches are emerging. You see church planting movements. We see missionaries from foreign countries, those countries European churches used to send missionaries to and now they are coming back. They say that you brought us the Gospel, now we will take it back to you so you can learn from it again. So on the one hand, the institutional churches have a hard time nowadays, but Christianity as a way of life and a way of faith has a future and there are developments among young people. A perfect example is the young Catholic convention in Spain and the Pope attended the event there and hundreds of thousands of young people attended that Mass, and they were enthusiastic about it.

These two developments are contradictory. What I do see is that young people need a clear message. They want that. They want to hear what is right and what is wrong. There is chaos—there is ethical chaos, there is political chaos—now who will give us straight talk? Who tells us what way to go? There is a need for that and the Pope is preaching a clear message and young people are attracted to that."



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These words indicate the thinking of Dr Selderhuis on Romanism. He believes that the enthusiastic reception given by young people to the words of the Pope is a welcome indication of hope for Christianity.

Clearly he does not view the pope as does the Westminster Confession of Faith or the Reformers in general. The WCF says of the Pope : "There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalts himself, in the Church, against Christ and all that is called God."

How can any person who claims to walk in the faith and footsteps of the Reformers and Puritans rejoice in the embracing of the Pope's words by tens of thousands of young people as does Dr Selderhuis? How can he herald such an event as a token for good and a mark of the Christian Church advancing?

You shared a platform with Dr Selderhuis in XXXXXX and when challenged about the above quotation by Dr XXXXX XXXXXXXX you repudiated what Dr Selderhuis had said. Dr Selderhuis was also asked about the interview by Dr XXXXXXXX and he acknowledged he had said it and then proceeded to attempt to justify what he had said.

Such opinions as those of Dr Selderhuis are rife on Refo500 linked sites. Has it not participants from Roman Catholic institutions such as the Catholic University of Leuven? This June, Refo500 is sponsoring a conference in Kenya called 'Encounters between Jesuits and Protestants in Africa' (<http://www.refo500.nl/en/news/view/594/call-for-papers-conference-encounters-between-jesuits-and-protestants-in-africa.html>)

To take part in any gathering under the Refo500 banner or to share a platform with anyone who is a proponent of Refo500 and its agenda is to become guilty of the sins of that person and of the errors one may find in abundance on the Refo500 network, irrespective of how one may disagree with Refo500's objectives and activities.

Jonathan did not agree with his father Saul's attitude to David but he stayed with him when David went into the wilderness and he shared in Saul's ignominious death on Mount Gilboa, 1 Samuel 31:8. Jonathan could have shared in the glory of David, the man he knew was God's anointed, but by staying with his father he forfeited that honour. That is the teaching of the Scriptures we have just looked at as well as many others we could have looked at.

That means, Dr Beeke, your associations, platform-sharing and public meetings under the auspices of Refo500 make you guilty of the sins incurred by the gross violations of God's Word involved in the statements by Dr Selderhuis and the ecumenical meetings involving the Catholic University of Leuven and the Jesuit Historical Institute in Africa and other like gatherings too numerous to name.

These gatherings cannot be justified, as some have attempted to do, by claiming that they do not come under the strictures that worship services with non-believers would come under or by saying that such gatherings are on a par with a debate between a believer and a non-believer.

Dr Beeke, you do not contend with the promoters of error that are to be found on Refo500 platforms. You did not rebuke Dr Selderhuis for his wicked error when he praised the Pope and his teaching. You do not refute the hip-hop advocates among the New Calvinists when you share gatherings with those who favour such activity.

Paul on Mars' Hill presents a model for us to follow. His opening words are words of rebuke! "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you," Acts 17:22-23, KJV.

Your silence in the face of the errors and follies of many of those you have shared platforms with makes you as one of them. "In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as



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one of them," Obadiah 1:11, KJV.

## 2. What about Reformation Heritage Books?

Dr Beeke, your book site commends and promotes those whose orthodoxy must be seriously questioned, to say the very least.

You promote men such as:

- **John Piper**
- **C.J. Mahaney** (charismatic)
- **Joshua Harris** (charismatic and extremely ecumenical)
- **Adrian Warnock** (charismatic; Alpha Course; Jubilee Church, London; (Newfrontiers)
- **Wayne Grudem** (charismatic)
- **Sam Storms** (charismatic)
- **Matt Chandler** (charismatic) Endorsement.
- **Mark Driscoll** (charismatic, punk rock lover, blasphemer etc, etc.) 2 books with endorsements from him.
- **Mike Wilkerson** (a pastor, as RHB tells us below, at Mark Driscoll's church)

These books and others that you sell from your site ought not to be recommended by one who claims to promote and defend orthodox Christianity. That you do makes you guilty with the authors of promulgating error and corruptions, misleading the flock of God and spreading confusion.

Surely you must see that!

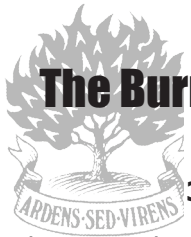
Then there are books by men like:

- **Herman Selderhuis** about whom we have already written.
- **Timothy George**, as mentioned before, this man recently attended and spoke at the 13th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, October 7-28, 2012, in Rome where he addressed the assembly thus: "Dear Holy Father, Venerable Fathers of the Synod, brothers and sisters in the Lord". He also likes to speak of Mary as the "Mother of God," and has also been very active in the International Baptist-Roman Catholic Dialogue and the Evangelicals and Catholics Together movement/documents.
- **RC Sproul**, a New Calvinist and friend of 'rock star' Alice Cooper, whose 'Christianity' Sproul endorses.
- **Al Mohler**, a signatory of the ecumenical Mahattan Declaration and is guilty recently of extolling Pope Benedict XVI. "[Benedict XVI] has offered a brave and intelligent defence of truth against a relativist tide, and he has been a stalwart friend of life."

These, and others we have not listed, are all men deeply compromised and guilty of departures from the faith.

Yet you recommend these men's writings and ministry through promoting their books or the receiving of their endorsements.

Whether you and your friends like it or not, Dr Beeke, that makes you guilty of the sins and errors of these men. That is the teaching of the Word of God.



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### 3. Again, you are in membership of the Evangelical Theological Society.

What a mishmash of theological error that is!

The Evangelical Theological Society provides information about itself on its site. "The following organisations are affiliated. The academic and scholarly societies who currently meet with the Evangelical Theological Society in its Annual Meeting are the Evangelical Philosophical Society, Near East Archaeological Society, Adventist Theological Society."

A link is provided to the Adventist Theological Society and takes you to their web site, on which it is stated, "A Theological Resource for the Seventh-Day Adventist Church."

That makes you to have common cause with the Seventh Day Adventists for that is what it means to be in a 'society' with them.

The Evangelical Philosophical Society idolises the likes of Thomas Aquinas, C.S. Lewis, Søren Kierkegaard, and Aristotle and many others of that ilk.

Likewise, your membership of the Evangelical Theological Society 'yokes' you with such and provides a cloak for their errors and heresies.

Again, the Evangelical Theological Society is grossly ecumenical. The individuals involved in the ETS include apostate Protestants and New Evangelicals (including charismatics) as well as Romanists, Orthodox, and those already mentioned.

You took part in the 'Caring for Creation' gathering held November 14-16, 2012 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. One of your yokefellows at that event was 'Christian' feminist Mimi Haddad, longtime president of Christians for Biblical Equality. Another of your co-labourers was N.T. Wright, a key leader of the New Perspective on Paul movement.

The Orthodox Church was also at that ETS conference in Milwaukee in the person of "Father" Wilbur Ellsworth. A number of Roman Catholics delivered papers as well. One such Romanist who spoke — in fact, twice and also appeared as a panelist — was Francis J. Beckwith, professor at Baylor University and the author of a number of books, including 'Return to Rome: Confessions of an Evangelical Catholic. The title of one of Beckwith's papers was "From Catholic to Evangelical and Back Again: Reflections of a Revert Five Years Later."

Subsequent to the conference, Beckwith wrote about his many ecumenical friends he fellowshipped with at that event: "I continue to hope and pray with our Lord, 'Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.' That article can be found at 'The Catholic Thing'. Its title is "Evangelicals, Catholics, and the Ecumenism of Conviction."

Right after you spoke, Dr. Beeke, a paper titled "Confessing before Barmen: Karl Barth's Early Lectures on the Reformed Confessions" was presented. Karl Barth was a modernist heretic. This particular session of the conference was constructed by the ETS Reformation Studies Steering Committee of which you are a member.

Another Roman Catholic who spoke at the Milwaukee ETS conference is Priest Robert Sirico of Acton Institute. He teamed up with Dr. Timothy George of Beeson Divinity School, chairman of the board for the Chuck Colson Center for Christian Worldview, for a presentation titled "The Life and Legacy of Charles W. Colson". Dr George recently attended (as already noted) and spoke at the 13th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, October 7-28, 2012, in Rome where he addressed the assembly thus: "Dear Holy Father, Venerable Fathers of the Synod, brothers and sisters in the Lord."

Consider this statement from a presentation given by Chris Castaldo at the ETS conference in Milwaukee,



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titled "Crossing the Tiber: Reasons for Conversion at the Catholic/Protestant Intersection." "One becomes a Catholic when he recognises the sacramental presence of Christ embodied in an institutional church, receiving from it sanctifying grace that leads to salvation. On the other hand, one is an evangelical Protestant when he has embraced Scripture as the supreme authority, coupled with a born again experience that appropriates justifying grace by faith alone." Castaldo is the director of the Ministry of Gospel Renewal for the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College. In his presentation, Castaldo spoke of the conversion of John Henry Newman to Romanism and Peter Martyr Vermigli to Protestantism. Those who read the paper he presented will find that Castaldo equates conversion in either direction to be moral, spiritual equivalents.

The ETS conference also featured a panel discussion on purgatory. The three-member panel included the Romanist Beckwith and two Protestants.

Dr Beeke, these are those you fellowship with, publicly associate yourself with and thus indicate they are 'your people'! This is the teaching and the blasphemies you endorsed by your presence and participation.

Is it any wonder that there are those of us who feel aggrieved at what you are doing and find it hard to understand that a man of your intelligence cannot figure this out for himself?

Do you really believe that you can mingle with such and not offend God, mislead His flock and not give "great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme," 2 Samuel 12:14, KJV?

This email has the full support of Ralph Ovadal for together we desire to see you recovered from the entanglements herein listed.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Ivan Foster.

20th February 2013.

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### #8 - Dr Beeke's reply

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Dear Ivan, I'm been overwhelmingly busy of late—it is my busiest time of the year. I'm teaching full time at the seminary, and pastoring a flock of 800 souls, average over 100 e-mails a day, etc., so it is almost impossible for me to find adequate time to respond adequately to all of these concerns during the seminary semester. Once the semester is done I have a bit of breathing room. Right now, hundreds of e-mails are piled up that I don't even have time to read adequately, much less respond to. I will do my best to call you as soon as I can, but it won't be for some weeks as I also have several speaking commitments in these weeks. In fact, I'm leaving for the plane in 6 hours so need to pack yet and try to catch a few hours of sleep before I go. So please do have patience with me and we will be back in touch as soon as I am able. Thanks for your understanding.

Warmly,

jrb

Joel R. Beeke

21 Feb 2013, at 03:37

### #9 - My response





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Dear brother Beeke,

Given the nature of what it is I am alleging, I do find your answer most strange indeed.

I think that I can put no better example before you for you to emulate than that of King Josiah in 2 Kings 22:11-13, KJV.

"And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, Go ye, enquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us."

Had not the young king many duties pressing upon him? However, he recognised the imperative nature of what he read in the Book of the Law. The future wellbeing of his kingdom depended upon his acting on the words he read.

I am not so much asking you to take time to answer me but to get before God and ask Him about the things I write.

If what I say is true in any part then you may forfeit the blessing of God to which you owe the many duties you are engaged in by not attending to this matter as a priority.

Most sincerely in Christ,

Ivan Foster.

Feb 21st 2013.

To date there has been no further response from Dr Beeke.

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Ivan Foster.

11th March 2013.