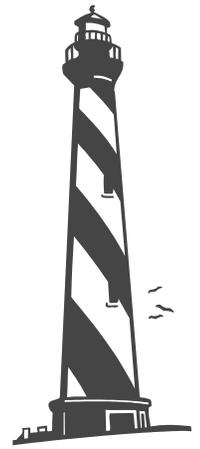


# THE BEACON BEAM



June 2020

## TRUTH FOR TROUBLED TIMES

### 10 Things You Should Know about Reformed Theology

by Joel R. Beeke, Paul M. Smalley

(This article is part of the *10 Things You Should Know* series.)

#### 1. Reformed theology celebrates the glory of God.

The heart and soul of Reformed theology is the glory of the triune God (Ps. 96:3; John 17:1). For this reason, it is often called “God-centered” theology. B. B. Warfield said, “The Calvinist, in a word, is the man who sees God. . . God in nature, God in history, God in grace. Everywhere he sees God in His mighty stepping, everywhere he feels the working of His mighty arm, the throbbing of His mighty heart.” The magnificent obsession of Reformed Christianity, and indeed the very purpose for which mankind exists, is “to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever,” as the Westminster Shorter Catechism says.

#### 2. Reformed theology uses logic, but takes its stand on the Bible.

We must use logic to communicate clearly and coherently. Otherwise, we speak in empty riddles that darken people’s minds instead of bringing

light. However, human wisdom cannot lead us to God (1 Cor. 1:21). God is so much greater than we are, and his ways so much higher than ours, that we can only know him truly as he makes himself known in his Word (Isa. 55:6–11). Therefore, Reformed theology builds all of its doctrines upon the study and interpretation of the Bible, the written Word of God (Isa. 8:20). John Owen said, “The student of theology must demonstrate by his life the absolute authority of the Scriptures, and show himself devoutly submitting his own will and judgment to the authority of the Bible in all matters.”

*God is so much greater than we are, and his ways so much higher than ours, that we can only know him truly as he makes himself known in his Word.*

#### 3. Reformed theology helps us to understand and apply all Scripture.

In Reformed exegesis and hermeneutics, context is king. The largest context is what the whole Bible teaches on the particular topic at hand. Since all Scripture is inspired or “breathed out” by God (2 Tim. 3:16), the Bible presents a coherent message on each point of its doctrine and ethics. Reformed theology helps us by providing a systematic presentation of biblical truth so that we can interpret Scripture with Scripture (“the analogy of Scripture”). The Westminster Confession of Faith says, “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.”

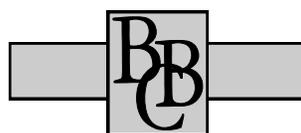
#### 4. Reformed theology is historical and confessional.

Tradition can be the bane or blessing of the church. Tradition hurts the

*(Continued on page 2)*

#### Beacon Baptist Church

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Gregory N. Barkman, *Senior Pastor*  
Michael R. Karns, *Minister of Christian Education*  
Robert F. LaTour, *Minister of Families*  
Gregory L. Phillips, *Minister of Music*

#### Sunday

Morning Worship...9:30 AM  
Sunday School.....11:10 AM  
Evening Worship.....6:00 PM

#### Wednesday

Prayer Meeting.....7:00 PM  
IMPACT Clubs.....7:00 PM  
Teen Ministry.....7:00 PM

*(Continued from page 1)*

church when we elevate it to divine authority (Matt. 15:6–9) but helps the church when each generation receives, examines, and passes on what our predecessors learned from the prophetic and apostolic word (2 Tim. 2:2). Innovation can be very helpful for technology, but in Christian doctrine we should seek the “old paths” (Jer. 6:16) in order to hold to “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Reformed theology informs our faith with centuries-old Christian doctrinal standards such as the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort, the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, and the Second London Baptist Confession.

#### **5. Reformed theology holds to ancient catholic orthodoxy.**

Reformed theology does not depart from our ancient Christian heritage but affirms the catholic, orthodox doctrines of God and Christ that form

the backbone of the great confessional tradition of worldwide Christianity. Though the Reformers were excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church, they did not cast off the Trinitarian faith of the councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon. They affirmed the doctrines that God is three persons in one divine nature (Matt. 3:16–17; 28:19), and that God the Son took a truly human nature without ceasing to be fully God—two natures in one incarnate person (John 1:1, 14). Reformed theologians have proven ardent defenders of the orthodox doctrines of God and Christ against heresies old and new because those doctrines are revealed in God’s Word.

Joel R. Beeke (PhD, Westminster Theological Seminary) has written or co-authored one hundred books, and edited another one hundred titles. He is president and professor of systematic theology and homiletics at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, a pastor of the Heritage Reformed Congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan,

as well as the editor of *Banner of Sovereign Grace Truth*, the editorial director of Reformation Heritage Books, the president of Inheritance Publishers, and vice president of the Dutch Reformed Translation Society.

Paul M. Smalley (ThM, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary) is faculty teaching assistant to Joel Beeke at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. He previously served for twelve years as a pastor in the Baptist General Conference in the midwestern United States.

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## *Congratulations! Class of 2020*

*We commend the following Graduates for their recent accomplishments:*

### *High School*

- Caitlyn Craig**—*Alamance Christian School*
- Jonathan Freeman**—*Alamance Christian School*
- Micah LaTour**—*Alamance Christian School*
- Micah Lowe**—*Cornerstone Academy*
- Laura Phillips**—*Alamance Christian School*

### *College*

- Marianne Freeman**—*Bachelor of Science in Communication Disorders, with a Minor in Voice, Bob Jones University at Greenville, SC*
- Matthew Phillips**—*Bachelor of Music Education, Bob Jones University at Greenville, SC*

### *Postgraduate*

- Rachel Knierim**—*Master of Arts in Teaching for Elementary Education, North Carolina University at Greensboro, NC*



# STILL THINKING ABOUT CORONAVIRUS

by Greg Barkman

It's still the foremost topic upon most minds as COVID-19 continues to impact nearly every person within the United States, and indeed, in most of the world. Who would have imagined such wide-sweeping change because of a microscopic virus? This will surely go down in history as one of the most significant events of the twenty-first century, and we have yet to see what lies ahead, or when things will return to normal. Some are saying that the old "normal" is gone forever, and life, as we have known it, will never be the same. I recently read one scientist who predicted that COVID-19 will be with us forever, that it will never go away. I surely hope he's wrong! No doubt all of us have done some serious thinking about this strange disease, and here are a few of my recent contemplations.

## WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVES?

It's not hard to list a number of negatives resulting from coronavirus, the most obvious of which is illness and death. Daily newscasts keep us updated on the numbers; how many have been infected, how many are hospitalized, and how many have died. This grim reminder makes it impossible to push the danger out of our minds. COVID-19 is a fierce enemy.

Which leads to a second negative, fear. With so much death and destruction on every side, it's easy to allow fear to control us. Thankfully, most of the Christians I talk to do not demonstrate the same fear as unbelievers, but among those who do not know the Lord, I sense that fear has become an almost all-consuming reality. The panic felt by many is almost

palpable.

Another negative is social isolation. The social distancing required, to reduce our risk of contagion, forces us into a level of isolation which is both unfamiliar and detrimental to our wellbeing. We isolate to protect our physical health, but at what cost to our mental and emotional welfare? Christians have communion with Christ to keep them healthy, but what about those in the world who are cut off from social contact? Some have suffered severely, and it is certain that many who were sick have died more quickly because of the anguish of isolation.

Economic hardship is another major result. It would be difficult to find anyone who has not been impacted negatively, and some have been pushed to the precipice of financial ruin. Millions have lost their jobs. Millions more have seen their savings and investments evaporate within a few days. Business owners are struggling to stay afloat, and many have gone under never to return. State and local governments are reeling because of lost tax revenue at the same time their safety-net resources have been drained in amounts unprecedented in several generations, if ever.

Last, but not least, churches have been unable to assemble and have scrambled to find ways to minister to their people and to keep their members connected to the church. Those who are not strong spiritually are exceedingly vulnerable at this time, and pastors and spiritually healthy members are kept busy shoring up the weak. These are but a few liabilities caused by this pandemic, with doubtless more that could be

listed. It would be difficult to overstate the serious consequences of this strange little virus.

**WHAT ARE THE POSITIVES?** Is it possible to talk in positive terms about COVID-19? I think it is, and we are helped by considering some of the benefits of this seeming disaster. For starters, consider the slower pace which has been forced upon most lifestyles. I don't need to convince you that most Americans live a hectic lifestyle crammed with too many demands. It seems to be the inevitable result of modern technology. Ironic, isn't it, that the very technology that frees us from much of the physical drudgery of our forefathers, has produced more, not fewer demands upon our lives? I'll forego the temptation to analyze the reasons for this, but suffice it to say, most Americans live at a hectic pace that would have astonished our ancestors. There is really something to be said for a simple rural life without the distractions of modern technology. Our grandfathers may have arisen at four o'clock to begin a long day of hard labor by milking twenty cows, but they had time to reflect upon their lives without the constant interruption of cell-phones, radios, televisions, and computers. Oh for a return to that long lost simpler way of living! But it's gone forever, swallowed up in the advancements of modern living. Yes, you've come a long way, baby, and it's not all improvement. But then, COVID-19 strikes, and busy lives come screeching to near standstill. Many have no job to occupy their time. Others now work from home,

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eliminating the extra hours formerly spent on grooming, dressing, and transportation to a distant work location. Nearly everyone finds many of life's former pressures greatly reduced. Suddenly, there is time to think, to meditate, to read, and to pray.

Which is another positive. I read recently that millions of Americans report an increased involvement in prayer during recent months. The pressures of modern life tend to crowd out time for prayer. We know we shouldn't let that happen, but it does. That is, until it doesn't. There are plenty of difficulties related to the coronavirus, but extra time to read our Bibles and pray isn't one of them! The slower pace forced upon us isn't all bad, not by a long shot.

Additional time to reflect also means extra time to be aware of others and their needs. Most Americans, and surely all true Christians, really care about their neighbors, but busy lives tend to crowd out awareness of the needs of others, as well as the time necessary to speak an encouraging word and extend a helping hand. But God has arranged a huge slow-down to address that problem, and for that, we are grateful.

The present pandemic has

produced a heightened sense of our own vulnerability. A new disease for which there is presently no vaccine, highly contagious, and responsible for tens of thousands of deaths, has surely exposed our helplessness. There is something sinister around us over which we have no control, and for which there is no guaranteed protection. That should make us keenly aware of our fallibility.

Which, if this produces a greater spiritual awareness, has to be considered a good thing. It's too easy to rush through life at rapid pace, scarcely giving thought to the grave and what lies beyond. But this situation forces us to think about life, death, eternity, heaven, hell, and our relationship with our Creator, and that is no doubt the greatest positive of all. If millions of Americans give serious thought to their soul's salvation, COVID-19 may turn out to be one of the greatest blessings God could send.

**WHAT IS GOD DOING?** I don't know, and neither do you, but I hope He has sent this virus to arrest our attention, humble us to the dust, re-evaluate our priorities, and give greater attention to Christ's claim upon our lives. If so, which Christian would not rejoice and bless God for

His abundant kindness to the sinful children of dust?

*Frail children of dust, and  
Feeble as frail,  
In Thee do we trust, nor find  
Thee to fail.  
Thy mercies how tender!  
How firm to the end!  
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer,  
And Friend.*

(Robert Grant, 1779-1838)



Friends, are you spending an inordinate time watching the news, spending more time watching current events than you are in God's word? Are you getting so caught up in the crazy narrative of the present time that you are forgetting why we're here? Are you forgetting God's purpose for this world?

We are a just a small blip in history. Kingdoms come, and Kingdoms go, but only God's Kingdom is eternal. While we ought to be aware of our surroundings, if all your efforts are spent being anxious about politics and current events, you are putting your trust in something transient, something certain to fail. Seek first the Kingdom and his righteousness...proclaim the good news of Christ's victory over sin and the certainty of his return to judge the world. The Lord reigns.

—John Hendryx, *Monergism*

# PRAISE IS ESSENTIAL

by Greg Phillips

It may be that our corporate worship will be resuming when you are reading this, and I certainly hope that is the case. Although all of life is worship and we should worship the Lord when we are alone, gathered worship is a particular command given to the people chosen by God. Gathering together, praying together, singing together, sitting under the preaching of the word together are all essential in the life of the believer. With this in mind, consider Psalm 117, although shortest of the psalms, and its teaching of the praise we should render when we come together.

*Praise, the LORD, all you Gentiles!  
Laud Him, all you peoples!  
For His merciful kindness is great  
toward us, and the truth of the LORD  
endures forever. Praise the LORD!*

The command to praise begins Psalm 117 with three words in English: Praise the LORD. It is a simple translation of Hallelujah! A Psalm ought to begin with this command, since Psalms are the inspired hymnody of God's chosen people Israel, written in the days of David. It is a command to adore and to exalt the great and mighty name of Jehovah, and it appears frequently in the Psalms, including the last phrase of the preceding one, Psalm 116. The surprise comes in the context: Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles! What! These worshippers of the God of Abraham are singing a command for Gentiles to praise Jehovah? This psalm clearly shows the purposes of God to gather for Himself a people from every type and class of people from all His creation. The apostle Paul speaks to this inclusiveness in Romans 15 when he quotes from this tiny Psalm and other Old Testament sources in ex-

plaining the eternal intent of God to bring together all kinds of people to praise Him.

We should respond to this great command and its scope with at least two actions. The first is to praise God for making us, those outside of Israel, to be fellow-heirs of His promises. He has made a people for Himself of all nations and all people. The second is to be reminded that God does not respect or value people in the same way that we do. The second chapter of James bluntly shows us that we deceive ourselves when we look at outward and earthly things to judge the Kingdom of God. We all are equally sinful and corrupt in the sight of God, and all equally undeserving of His grace. He calls us by His good and wise eternal purposes. How can we fail to praise God all the more for bringing us who once hated Him to become ones who know and love Him!

The reasons for praise in the second verse of Psalm 117 follow on the idea of God's inclusive gospel from verse one. Biblical praise does not spring up merely from the command or from our desire to worship God; it is the result of considering the truth of God and what He has done. God's merciful kindness is great toward us.... We have glimpsed already the mercy that brings sinners, and Gentile sinners, no less, into the kingdom of God, but we must ponder the greatness of the kindness and mercy of God. It is great or strong and prevailing. Imagine how the universal flood of Noah in Genesis 7 overcame everything on the face of the earth. This Psalm compares the scope of the merciful kindness of God to a flood! It prevails over us and our sin in an incompara-

ble way. "There is an abundance of it in the heart of God, in His covenant, and in His Son which is displayed in redemption by Him, in the forgiveness of sin, and in the conversion of sinners and their everlasting salvation. Particularly there has been an inundation or deluge of it in the Gentile world where it has flowed and overflowed. Where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded, and therefore the Lord is to be praised!" (John Gill)

Another reason for praise follows the first: the truth of the LORD endures forever. The promises of God are reliable, and backed by omnipotence. They simply cannot fail. Guaranteed. He promised to Abraham to bless all nations, and it will continue to happen until the Kingdom of God is fulfilled. This reliability of God is a cause for constant and grateful praise, and it brings us around to the final command of this small Psalm: Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! As we gather once again, may we praise Him as we ought, for He has shown merciful kindness overflowing to us and to all His chosen ones, set out from all peoples. In difficulty, sickness, sorrow and even in death, He will keep us forever!

# *On The Feminine Side*

*by Marti Barkman*

*Dearest Beacon Sisters,*

*I've enjoyed connecting with many of you by text, emails, phone calls and even some snail mail. I hope you are doing well in what has become a long drawn out ordeal and, as the hymn says, that God's purposes are 'ripening fast' in your life. And what a joy it was to meet together this past Sunday!*

*A couple of items for your information... There will be weddings and bridal showers coming up in June and July. Many are busy putting together the details. Most weddings are private these days, so check your emails for any final details. You should have received an email with information about showers a few days ago. Because it's coming up quickly, I'll mention the first event which is a private wedding for Nathan Phillips and Rachael Krierim on June 20th in Asheville. We will be collecting gift cards for them and they need to be in hand by June 14, either at the ushers' station, church office, or my mailbox. Since they are moving to Texas, this is the best way to 'shower' them.*

*And I wanted to give a shout out to Lori Craig for the beautiful hydrangea arrangements we've been enjoying in the on-line view of the platform. Lori was about 12 when we first met, and I was her Home Economics teacher when she was in 8th grade. And she's been blessing us for many years now, sharing her talent for floral arranging. Thank you, Lori!*

*How I would love to sit down with you and hear about what is going on in your life and family. I pray often for many of you. It's been eventful here, finishing the project of cleaning out my mother-in-law's house just before my rib-cracking accident. The healing process has gone more quickly than I had feared and I think I'm back to 75% normal activity. It's the small things I can't do...coughing, sneezing, and yawning as well as getting out of a chair! Why is not being able to laugh so funny? And have you ever tried to hold your rib cage while sneezing into your elbow?*

*I'm grateful for all the help I've received and enjoyed while convalescing. Greg did the grocery shopping for me the first week after my injury, the first time in fifty years of marriage I can remember his having to do the shopping. We didn't need much and almost everything on the list was found easily, either in the produce or dairy sections. Only one item gave him trouble...a pie crust, the kind that comes rolled up, two to a box, usually somewhere near the dairy section. Pillsbury. In spite of the kindness of several other shoppers who tried to help, he never found them. Not to be defeated...he had a special interest in finding it... he came home with a pie crust mix from the baking goods aisle. I'd never seen one of those before and was pleased that, though it was hard to work with, it was quite delicious. And my husband was not unhappy to learn what goes into apple pie, (his favorite dessert) in fact, I wouldn't be surprised if he shops for the ingredients in the future! You'll find my recipe at the bottom of the page in case you are still in the baking mood.*

*Speaking of food, I enjoyed being on the other side of the doorbell during these last few weeks as some wonderful meals have arrived to feed first Greg and me and then our extended family as we gathered for Mary Barkman's funeral. My mother-in-law lived to age 98 and it was a sweet time to celebrate her life and to have nearly all our family here. And what an incredible help to not only not have to cook, but not even decide what we would eat! The hundreds of meals I've taken to others take on new meaning when the food is on my table. How delightful to receive love so tangible to the taste buds.*

*Though there are so many things I miss from our typical Sunday schedule, I have enjoyed having extra time in the Sunday morning quiet, extra time to read and pray and meditate. On one of those recent mornings I came*

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across this I had written in a notebook early in the year, talking about how God often withholds good from us. Why would he? Four reasons:

- We aren't ready for it
- We will misuse it
- Someone else needs it
- We need something else

Let's relate this to the subject of worship. Worshipping together is good. We love it, need it, are looking forward to gathering again. But for these months, God has ordained that we worship in a different manner. Go through that list above and ask yourself; 'Am I ready to return to 'normal' life and worship? Have I used this time wisely and carefully. Is there someone who would accept an invitation to join me by livestream who would be unlikely to come to church? And did we need something different for a time, a setting that minimizes attention to the physical and maximizes truth? And have we needed a new appreciation for what it means to be a member of the family?'

We know we 'should not make everything about me' and we tend to think of the current crisis as being about people in millions and billions, not just you and me. But this IS about you and me! God has brought this about for us...the two of us, the one writing and the other reading these words. This is a time for to 'make this about me'. Let's take this personally and answer those questions.

Loving and missing each of you, and hoping you enjoy the pie!

Marti

### French Apple Pie

#### Ingredients:

- 1 9-10" pie crust
- 3 large Granny Smith apples, peeled and sliced VERY thin
- 3-4 large Honey Crisp apples, peeled and sliced
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon

Fill pie crust with apples; top with cinnamon and sugar mixture.

#### Topping:

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup flour
- 6 Tbsp butter

Mix dry ingredients and cut in butter until crumbly. Sprinkle over pie. Bake at 350 until apples are tender and nicely browned.



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## THE BEACON BROADCAST

### Monday thru Friday

WITA 1490 AM (Knoxville, TN)	9:30 a.m.
WKBA 1550 AM (Roanoke, VA)	10:00 a.m.
WKPA 1390 AM (Lynchburg, VA)	10:00 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	12:15 p.m.
WBAG 105.9 FM (Burlington, NC)	12:15 p.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	2:00 p.m.
WDZY 1290 AM (Richmond, VA)	6:15 a.m.
	10:00 a.m.
WDZY 103.3 FM (Richmond, VA)	6:15 a.m.
	10:00 a.m.
WSKY 1230 AM (Asheville, NC)	7:15 a.m.
WYYC 1250 AM (York, PA)	5:00 p.m.
WYYC 98.1 FM (York, PA)	5:00 p.m.

### Sunday

WCRU 960 AM (Charlotte, NC)	9:30 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WDRU 1030 AM (Raleigh, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WLES 590 AM (Richmond, VA)	10:30 a.m.
Harbour Light of the Windwards	9:30 p.m.
1400 AM/94.5 FM (Caribbean)	
WGNQ <a href="http://mixlr.com/wgng-radio">mixlr.com/wgng-radio</a> (M-F)	8:45-9 a.m. & 4:45-5:00 p.m.

(Internet station based in Greenville/Washington, NC)

### Monday thru Sunday

WXTH-LP 101.7 FM (Richwood, WV)	10:05 a.m.
	10:05 p.m.

# BEACON HIGHLIGHTS FOR JUNE

## CALENDAR

Due to the present COVID-19 crisis,  
our calendar is subject to change.  
We encourage you to follow our  
announcements on our Beacon  
website: [www.beaconbaptist.com](http://www.beaconbaptist.com)

## MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

01 Rachel Knierim  
03 Mary Lee Harper  
Ron Massey  
Melanie Moody  
05 Cheryl Ingold  
07 Jeff Barnt  
15 Linda Spencer  
17 Suzann Lynch  
Christen Verroi  
20 Nellie Hunter  
21 Shirley Watkins  
22 Robin Allred  
23 Christie Carpenter  
24 Dorothy Campbell  
Gail Ellis  
25 Gary Allred  
Louise Day  
26 Ryan Brigman  
29 Kevin Kooy  
30 Sue Elliott

## MISSIONARY BIRTHDAYS

01 Isaiah Jensen\*  
05 Micaiah Bixby\*  
Alethea Johnson\*  
21 Tammy Honeycutt  
30 Larrie Bunyan

\*Children of Missionaries

*We express our heartfelt  
sympathy to the families of:*

Mary Barkman  
David Crowder  
Ray Culberson  
Carol Mearns  
Durwood Owens  
Oma Riley

*The Beacon Beam*  
Beacon Baptist Church  
PO Box 159  
Alamance, NC 27201

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