

THE BEACON BEAM

July 2020

SUMMER REFLECTIONS



by Joel R. Beeke, Paul M. Smalley

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

(1-5 were included in our June issue of the BEAM.)

6. Reformed theology exalts Jesus Christ as our only Mediator.

Christ is everything to believers (Col. 3:11). The Holy Scriptures teach us to "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8). Earlier we noted that Reformed theology is Godcentered; here we clarify that it is centered on the triune God who comes to us through the only Mediator, Jesus Christ. The Puritans portrayed the gospel as the greatest love story ever told—the Father's heavenly match of his perfect Son with his fallen and sinful bride, the church. They traced in glowing detail his mediatorial office as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people. The knowledge of Christ is a topic of immeasurable glory, unsearchable riches Christ" (Eph. 3:8). John Flavel said, "The study of Jesus Christ is the most noble subject that ever a soul spent itself upon. . . God's

heart is opened to men in Christ."

7. Reformed theology presents a comprehensive worldview—more than five points.

When people ask, "What is Reformed theology?" they often receive an answer couched in terms of "the five points of Calvinism," the doctrines of total human depravity, unconditional divine election, Christ's death for the elect, God's sovereignty in saving them, and their final perseverance in grace to eternal life and glory. Or, they might hear the five *sola* (Latin for "alone") principles: standing on Scripture alone, we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.

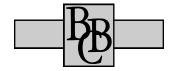
However, a survey of a Reformed catechism or systematic theology shows that there is much more to Reformed theology than the doctrine of salvation. Reformed theology also includes the biblical doctrines of God's eternal being and works of creation, providence, and government; of the origin of mankind, our nature, our fall into sin and its consequences; of Christ's glorious person, natures, offices, incarnation, sufferings, and death, and the glory that followed; of the Spirit and his work in creation and redemption; of the church, its constitution, mission, and ordinances; of the Christian's experience of grace, his life of thankful service in obedience to God's law, and the ministry of prayer; and finally, the glorious things that are yet to come as God accomplishes all his holy will. Reformed theology is a proclamation of "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) insofar as God has revealed it for us to know (Deut. 29:29).

8. Reformed theology breathes a

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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)

spirit of practical godliness.

God-centered teaching calls us to God-centered living. The Word aims to inculcate the wisdom of God's Word through faith in Christ (2 Tim. 3:15), and the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord (Prov. 9:10). Though it is possible to do theology in a spiritually arid, merely intellectual manner, Reformed theology has historically aimed at the same Paul had in his teaching: "love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5). Reformed divines often speak of "piety" as a synonym for "true religion." John Calvin said, "Indeed, we shall not say that, properly speaking, God is known where there is no religion or piety. . . I call 'piety' that reverence joined with love of God which the knowledge of his benefits induces." Although Reformed theology can be taught on a high academic level, it aims to expound the knowledge of God in such terms that children can practice it at home and adults, in their trades (Col. 3:20-25). Gisbertus Voetius, a renowned professor of Reformed theology, regularly gave his time to catechizing orphans. The English Puritans encouraged people with no more than a basic education to have family devotions so that God's Word permeates all of life (Deut. 6:7). The men of Old Princeton held that "truth is in order to goodness."

9. Reformed theology promotes evangelism and missions.

Reformed doctrine has been treasured by some of the greatest evangelists of all time, such as George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. The missionary expansion of the church came as God's answer to the prayers of Reformed and Presbyterian churches, taught by the Westminster Directory for the Public

Worship of God to intercede for "the propagation of the gospel and kingdom of Christ to all nations." Reformed theology is a worldview of missionary optimism, because Christ shall surely save all whom the Father gave him, all the sheep for whom he died, as they hear his voice calling to them in the gospel (John 6:37-39; 10:11, 16, 26-29). Such Reformed optimism prompted William Carey to say that we must "expect great things" and "attempt great things" in our missionary endeavors. Furthermore, the Godcentered perspective of Reformed Christianity offers the highest motive that can sustain an evangelist or missionary: "for his name's sake they went forth" (3 John 7).

10. Reformed theology sustains faithful preaching and evokes continual praise.

The Reformers and Puritans theologized in their preaching and preached their theology. The Reformers and Puritans took their cue as preachers from the apostle Paul: "I believed, and therefore have I spoken" (2 Cor. 4:13). This was not merely a method they embraced, but the fruit of their encounter with the living God through the truths of his Word. Like Paul, they preached God's Word as in God's presence (2 Cor. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:1-2). And like Paul, their theology overflowed in blazing doxology (Eph. 1:3–14). Thus, Reformed theology is a grand assertion that "of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever" (Rom. 11:36). Wilhelmus à Brakel said, "God possesses within Himself all glory and worthiness to be served," and therefore, true godliness is "to live unto God at all times and in all things with all that he is and is capable of performing," for "He is God and by virtue of His nature this is His worthy due."

Joel R. Beeke (PhD, Westminster Theological Seminary) has written or coauthored 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.

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Black Lives Matter

by Greg Barkman

Our nation was rocked by the image of a white police officer pressing his knee onto the neck of a black man for more than eight minutes. George Floyd could be heard gasping for breath and moaning "I can't breathe," but Officer Derek Cauvin refused to back off. Bystanders appealed for Cauvin to release his victim, but he ignored them. The resulting death plunged the USA into chaos as protesters by the thousands took to the streets of nearly every city, and in some places windows were smashed, stores looted and buildings torched. Police, protesters, and bystanders alike were injured and a few killed.

Most Americans were appalled by this tragic death, and sobered by the undeniable evidence of police brutality. It's now impossible to pretend it doesn't happen. Sadly, this was not a mere aberration, but the latest example of a pattern of abuse that spans decades. Many black Americans have genuine reason to fear unequal treatment at the hands of the police. Serious reform is overdue.

Do black lives matter? Yes they do! We need to acknowledge that long standing racial prejudice continues to erode the American promise of equality. Too many white Americans seem oblivious to the unequal treatment that blacks experience on a regular basis. One nation under God? In theory yes, but often it looks more like two different nations occupying the same territory, one white, one black.

But if there is going to be lasting change, we must be willing to engage in honest conversation about every aspect of this issue. Talking about only one slice of the pie while stifling conversation about the other pieces will not achieve harmony. We need to be able to discuss a number of related matters, not simply abuse by bad cops.

BLACK PEOPLE KILLED BY OTHER BLACKS MATTER TOO.

Every year, thousands of blacks are murdered in the neighborhoods of Chicago, Philadelphia, and other major cities, more often than not by the violent actions of black thugs. Black drug dealers and gang leaders kill people of their own race at alarming rates. Where are the protesters marching in these high crime neighborhoods demanding the end of such wanton slaughter? Do black lives matter only when they can be used to promote a particular agenda? Why does someone killed by a rogue policeman create an international uproar, but the myriads killed weekly by criminals merit little attention?

WHITE LIVES MATTER TOO.

In today's heated environment, saying, "White lives matter too," can get you fired from your job. Since when does an affirmation of equality become evidence of racial prejudice? Can't we agree that ALL lives matter? Murder is unacceptable wherever it occurs and whomever it victimizes, regardless the color of their skin. Can I get an "Amen"?

POLICE LIVES MATTER ALSO.

How many policeman are killed each year at the hands of law breakers, both black and white? Why is it acceptable, even desirable, that cops lose their lives, but people of color should not? Surely decent people agree that whenever anyone loses his life by an act of violence, it is a serious tragedy. Defunding the police is a convoluted response to police brutality. Does anyone really think that eliminating the police will end violence? It is precisely because there are violent and lawless people in this world that we need the police. It is an unspeakable tragedy when a policeman, sworn to uphold the law and protect human life is himself an angry and violent person who abuses his authority to assault others. most of the people who do this are not wearing police uniforms. Let's identify the bad cops and get them off the streets, because we desperately need the good ones, who are the vast majority, to protect us from thieves, rapists, and murderers.

FAMILIES MATTER A LOT.

Studies reveal that the vast majority of criminals come from broken homes without a stable father. Why isn't more attention directed to the break-down of the family? But not only is that an all too often ignored piece of the pie, but some actually applaud the disintegration of the family. Are we swatting flies while ignoring camels? Clearly, a legitimate movement of genuine grievances about racial disparity is being coopted by some whose goal is the dissolution of American society.

UNBORN BABIES MATTER TOO.

Why do only some black lives seem to matter? Thousands of babies are aborted every year in America, and statistics demonstrate that more black babies are aborted per capita than white. If black lives matter, shouldn't protesters be marching on abortion clinics to demand the end of murder in the womb? Do black lives matter only when they are killed by the police, but not when butchered by abortionists?

STORES AND BUSINESSES MATTER TOO.

No building is worth as much as a human life, but burning down businesses only hurts the neighborhoods that benefit from those establishments. Groceries, pharmacies and restaurants pay taxes to maintain schools, pave streets, and deliver clean water, not to mention provide valuable goods and services and much needed jobs. The people who live where rioting occurs are hurt most by looting and destruction. In most cases, rioters descend from other places, satisfy their thirst for violence, and then return to the safety of their homes. They say they advocate for justice, but seriously harm the very people they claim to help. Nothing justifies theft and destruction of property. Where are the protesters demanding protection for the businesses that benefit people of every color?

RACIAL PREJUDICE IS A

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TWO-WAY STREET.

I recently read a newspaper column asserting that only white people are racially prejudiced. Really? How can anyone believe this? Only by first creating a skewed definition of racial prejudice and then utilizing it to deny what both observation and experience know to be true. Let's be clear about two things. First, racial prejudice is wrong whenever and wherever it occurs. It should be eradicated from human society. Second, racial prejudice is practiced within every segment of society among every race and color. Progress moves slowly when one group accuses another of prejudice while ignoring the same among themselves. Everyone needs to own and deal with the prejudice that lingers within his own heart.

THERE IS NO SOLUTION APART FROM GOD.

We need to acknowledge that racial

prejudice is a sin which can only be cleansed by the blood of Christ. We can educate people to behave differently with some success, but lasting change occurs only within a renewed heart created by the regenerating power of God's Spirit. The problem isn't skin as much as sin. Failing to recognize this consigns reform to failure. You cannot have peace apart from the Prince of Peace. You cannot have love without the God of love. You cannot have equity while rejecting the God who is no respecter of persons.

ETERNAL SOULS MATTER THE MOST.

Finally, we must realize that black lives, white lives, and all human lives matter here upon earth, but eternity is far more important. What does it profit a man if he gains the dignity and respect he desires, but dies without Christ, spending eternity under God's righteous condemnation? Let's talk

about what matters most, the gospel of Christ, without ignoring real injustices that need to be addressed.



by Marti Barkman

Dear Beacon Sisters,

July 2020

Can you remember, back to grade school days, learning the proper way to write a letter? An informal letter starts with the date, putting a time frame around our thoughts. On the chilly and rainy day on which I write to you, I dated this letter July 2020, the correct date, but it seems wrong. It's not the kind of weather we associate with hot July days and it seems impossible that 2020 is half over! We say it every year...Can you believe it's this far into the year? How can it be summer or autumn or Christmas already?? But this year has been different. It's not that time has passed so swiftly, but almost as if we've lost the past three months since the pandemic began. It took only seconds to write that date, but July 2020 has been a long time in coming.

After the date, we write the greeting..."Dear Sisters". I have one sister, Faith, not quite two years older than me, and my dearest friend. And two dearly loved sisters-in-law, Marci and Nancy. I gave birth to four daughters and only once did I have a preference between boy or girl; my second pregnancy found me hoping for another daughter. I wanted my little girl to have a sister. We are blessed to have many sisters, related by our relationship to our Heavenly Father and our church family. If you are feeling somewhat isolated, if you are an extrovert living an introvert's life right now, pick a sister... maybe one you don't yet know well. Let's make the 19 in COVID-19 stand for the number of sisters we've stayed in touch with during otherwise lonely days. We have so many ways to stay in touch but don't forget about the old-fashioned letter. Phone calls and text are wonderful and quick but nothing is quite like a message created with pen and ink. A treasure to be saved and savored.

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And now, Sisters, it's time for the body of the letter. That could be whatever we would talk about if we were sitting in a room together. I visited Bonnie Kooy this morning for the first time in many months and we found it difficult to get to the business for which I came! There was just too much catching up to do! As I anticipate meeting at some future date with my Sunday School class again, I want to start by asking everyone to tell the class one thing they learned since we last met in long ago March. What have you read, watched, observed, thought through? We are hoping to get socially distant in my back yard sometime in the next few weeks, once the ringing of wedding bells is passed. So if you are in the WOW Class, be watching for that announcement.

If you were here with me, I would enjoy telling you what I've done differently with my personal Bible reading this year. For years I've read from a one-year Bible, and every year I come across the same passages that are puzzling to me, things I don't understand, and intend to look up in my Study Bible for an explanation, but that is a task seldom done. So this year I'm reading from the ESV Study Bible and reading not only the commentary on the verses, but those many pages of very interesting information at the beginning of each book. It will take me much longer to make my way through the Bible, and I won't finish it in one year. But stopping to read the notes and trying to understand more of what I'm reading has been beneficial. I found reading Deuteronomy again particularly interesting. Rather than being a book filled with lots of laws and regulations that appear to have little connection with our culture, these chapters are Moses' last words of instruction to the nation of Israel, the people he has led from captivity to freedom in a land long-promised to them by God. Moses loved his people, but reading the account of the long forty years it took to make that eleven day trip, the word 'endure' seems to best describe the experience. So when God tells Moses he will not be allowed to enter the land because of his disobedience in the matter of the striking of the rock, my heart always breaks for this man. The subject comes up multiple times and God's answer to Moses' request to enter the land is always No. Our God is so merciful and gave umpteen chances to his chronically disobedient children...why deny Moses, a man who in God's own words was like no other man on earth?

Could it be that it was so much more than God's withholding something good from Moses? God was giving him something far better! God sent him to the top of Mount Nebo so he could see the land that was to be theirs, and it was there that Moses died. Where *God himself* buried the body of this faithful man! And then what did God do for Moses? He took him to himself, to a life infinitely superior to what he would have experienced in Canaan. What would Moses have experienced had God granted his desire to live in Canaan? Yes, joy in reaching the long-sought destination, but once there, there were battles to fight, other nations to drive out. And the people themselves? They were still people of rebellious hearts. Crossing a border didn't change that. Read ahead in Joshua and you'll find the second generation after Moses' successor is described as a people who didn't even know the Lord. We can't imagine what awaits us when we reach our heavenly home, but we can be sure what won't be there!

In my letter to you last month I gave you some things to think about in this matter of God withholding good things. The truth is this: What God chooses for us is better. We often think of God's choice as something of lesser quality that we have to accept because He is God, but that is so far from the truth. God's choice IS better... because He is God.

We've come to the ending of our letter-writing. Left is the complimentary closing and signature. 'Complimentary' because it is meant to express my regard for you. So I will use a word which expresses what I feel for all my sisters....

Fondly,

Marti

Game Plan



Bob LaTour

The Apostle Paul used the imagery of boxing and running, contests that were part of the Olympic and Isthmian games, to teach spiritual truth. Games have consequences. Tournaments are set up to give the team with the best record in their regular-season games the "easiest" path to victory because they have persevered and earned it. In a tournament, one team or person wins and another team or person loses until only two are left to "battle" for a championship. Sometimes better teams are "upset" or beaten by another team that they normally would defeat. As a former coach, I have experienced both sides of that coin. Indeed, in team sports, it is possible for a team with good players who play as a unit to beat a collection of individuals who have superior abilities, but who do not blend their talents to execute a game plan. For that to happen, each of the players must personally prepare ahead to do their best for the good of the whole. Spiritually, God has given us a "game plan" that we must personally implement. Our commitment to doing so impacts other "teammates," spectators and "opponents" as well.

The blending of talents is the responsibility of leadership. Leaders operate by a philosophy or a set of principles that forge individuals into one unit. If that philosophy is sound and permeates a team from the first pre-season practice to the final post-season game, it fosters structure, unity, focus and purpose. Members who buy into it and prepare diligently can rest assured that they will have an opportunity to do their best. That may not result in winning on the scoreboard, but it will result in the satisfaction that they did all that they could. I can honestly say

that out of hundreds of soccer games coached, four losses were among my favorite memories because of the character and work ethic displayed by the players who "lost." All four teams finished strong. Likewise, in every church, leadership operates according to a philosophy of ministry that impacts preaching the Word, praise through worship, and the proclamation of the gospel through local outreach and missions. Like coaches and teams who desire to use sports to make an impact that lasts a lifetime, "church success" should not ultimately be measured by numbers on a "scoreboard," but how its efforts impact lives for eternity.

The following five headings are the "skeleton" of principles that eventually formed my philosophy of ministry as a coach. They are part of an "evolution" that began with a naive twenty-two-year-old simply sugarcoating secular coaching approaches with "spiritual overtones." I believe that Paul taught these general principles using sports as an illustration.

INTEGRITY: II Timothy 2:5 "If anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules." We must have the spiritual integrity to seek God's glory first and foremost. That will not happen if we violate the laws of the game, nor will it happen if we violate the laws of God. Integrity goes beyond adherence to guidelines; it embraces the spirit of the game and of fair play. I Corinthians 10:31 "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to THE GLORY OF GOD."

INTELLIGENCE: I Corinthians

9:24 "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air." Knowing the tactics necessary to excel is a vital part of pursuing excellence in any endeavor. Spiritually, we need to know the truth and have the convictions that come through studying to show ourselves approved unto God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed because we rightly divide the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15).

IMPROVEMENT: Philippians 3:13 "Not that I have already attained or am already perfected; but I press on that I may lay hold of that for which Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended ("seized with eagerness"); but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead...." Paul did not see himself as having "achieved the goal." Private practice is preparation time for public performance. It is a time for each team member to get "on the same page." It is a time to forge common goals and hone individual skills for the good of the whole and not for yourself. It is a time to understand that the team in the other jersey has an agenda that is not in your best interest. It is a time to pay a price in line with your potential when the stands are empty so that you can do so when the stands are full. Spiritually, private devotions and church attendance are preparation time to "produce in public." Without it, you will not be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks

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you a reason for the hope within you (I Peter 3:15). Spiritually, we had better realize that there is a team in the "other jersey" that has an agenda that is not in the best interests of Christians and who do not play by the same rules. (In Matthew 5, Jesus tells us how to respond to their hostility.)

INTENSITY UNDER CONTROL:

I Corinthians 9:25 "And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become dis-"The qualified. Greek 'discipline' literally means 'to bruise, to beat black and blue." Philippians 3:14 "...I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." "I press" employs a word meaning "to move rapidly and decisively after an object." What we do for Christ should never be done half-heartedly. We should give our all no matter what the task at hand. Along with the intensity, there must be the commitment to "run with endurance

the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:1b-2a). Two thoughts: 1) "Play" with urgency as though today was your last "game;" it may be. 2) Don't ever "stop running" until you have crossed the finish line that God has ordained! (Job 14:5; Psalm 139:16).

INFLUENCE: People notice individuals/teams that seek to play with a level of class that does not belittle an opponent whom they beat and that does not begrudge an opponent who beats them. Spiritually, we are to not only look out for our own interests, but also for the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4). We are to make an impact for the welfare of others with their salvation first and foremost on our minds. The INTEGRITY of doing all for the glory of God must result in "playing the game" with eternity's values in view. We must play with a desire to INFLUENCE others for their eternal good. I Corinthians 10:32-33 "Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I please all men in all things, not seeking my

own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

May God enable us to say with Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:7). In other words, "I followed 'the game plan' to the best of my ability!"

I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:14

THE BEACON BROADCAST

Monday thru Friday		Sunday	
WITA 1490 AM (Knoxville, TN)	9:30 a.m.	WCRU 960 AM (Charlotte, NC)	9:30 a.m.
WKBA 1550 AM (Roanoke, VA)	10:00 a.m.	WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WKPA 1390 AM (Lynchburg, VA)	10:00 a.m.	WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	12:15 p.m.	WDRU 1030 AM (Raleigh, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WBAG 105.9 FM (Burlington, NC)	12:15 p.m.	WLES 590 AM (Richmond, VA)	10:30 a.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	2:00 p.m.	Harbour Light of the Windwards	9:30 p.m.
WDZY 1290 AM (Richmond, VA)	6:15 a.m.	1400 AM/94.5 FM (Caribbean)	
	10:00 a.m.		
WDZY 103.3 FM (Richmond, VA)	6:15 a.m.		
	10:00 a.m.	WGNQ mixlr.com/wgng-radio (M-F)	
WSKY 1230 AM (Asheville, NC)	7:15 a.m.	8:45-9 a.m. & 4:45-5:00 p.m.	
WYYC 1250 AM (York, PA)	5:00 p.m.	(Internet station based in Greenville/Washington, NC)	
WYYC 98.1 FM (York, PA)	5:00 p.m.		,
Monday thru Sunday			
WXTH-LP 101.7 FM (Richwood, WV) 10:05 a.m.			
	10:05 p.m.		

BEACON HIGHLIGHTS FOR JULY

CALENDAR

14 Elders/Deacons Meeting

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

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS

02	Darryl McElhannon
03	Johnny Faust
04	Donnan Faucette
	Tommy Marley
05	Texie Owens
12	Linda Zachary
14	Jon Kucewicz
16	Frances Easley
19	Littie Norris
21	Bob Caldwell
	Bruce Councilman
23	Ryan Cardwell
27	Michael Abernathy
	Randy Phillips

Joan Zensen Leann McElhannon

Jamie Beck

Mike Redd

28 30

31

MISSIONARY BIRTHDAYS

06	Lila Green*
07	Eunjoo Andersen
08	David Andersen
09	Tim Bixby
12	Wanda Taylor
14	Hannah Green
20	David Cassells
	Amy Jensen
25	Chris Hill

^{*}Children of Missionaries

We express our heartfelt sympathy to the families of:

John Duncan Lee Hamilton Tommy Wall Dick Whitehead

The Beacon Beam

Beacon Baptist Church PO Box 159 Alamance, NC 27201 Return Service Requested

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