

Overture to Affirm and Bind Ourselves to the Biblical Doctrine of the Young Age of the Earth

Whereas, we are tempted to submit ourselves and the Sacred Scriptures to the human and fallen authorities of secular science and reason; and

Whereas, Darwinian theories of evolution, which exclude the possibility of divine creation from nothing and teach billions of years of death contrary to Scripture's history of redemption, require immense spans of time to account for the biological state of our world; and

Whereas, contemporary cosmological and geological arguments for the immense age of the universe, which also exclude the possibility of divine creation and intervention, have been widely accepted in universities, schools, and in popular society as the truth; and

Whereas, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17); and

Whereas, "We confess our adherence to the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments, as to the pure, clear fountain of Israel, which alone is the one true guiding principle, according to which all teachers and teaching are to be judged and evaluated" (Book of Concord, Solid Declaration, Binding Summary, 3); and

Whereas, the writings of Moses, including the book of Genesis, are both theologically and historically authoritative for Christ and his apostles, (Matt. 19:4; 22:31; Luke 16:31; 24:44; John 5:46-47; Acts 10:43; etc.); and

Whereas, our Synod's publicly stated position on the age of the earth is set forth in A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod, Article 5 (adopted 1932):

We teach that God has created heaven and earth, and that in the manner and in the space of time recorded in the Holy Scriptures, especially Gen. 1 and 2, namely, by His almighty creative word, and in six days. We reject every doctrine which denies or limits the work of creation as taught in Scripture. In our days it is denied or limited by those who assert, ostensibly in deference to science, that the world came into existence through a process of evolution; that is, that it has, in immense periods of time, developed more or less of itself. Since no man was present when it pleased God to create the world, we must look for a reliable account of creation to God's own record, found in God's own book, the Bible. We accept God's own record with full confidence and confess with Luther's Catechism: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures.

Whereas, the genealogical evidence provided by Genesis chapters 5 and 11, which dates the earth's age near 6000 years, excludes the lengths of time necessary to wholly or partially accept cosmological, geological, archeological, and biological theories which posit millions and billions of years of this earth's existence; and

Whereas, "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:25); therefore be it...

Resolved, that the Rocky Mountain district of the LC-MS memorialize the Synod in convention to confess

- That the inspired and inerrant Scriptures' relate the authoritative historical accounts of man's creation and redemption; and
- The straightforward reading of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 can and should be used to limit our public teaching about the age of the earth to less than ten thousand years instead of millions or billions of years;

And be it further

Resolved, that pastors, teachers, professors, and synodical officials be memorialized to speak openly and without shame about our church's unanimous confession of the Scripture's authority against the deemed to be erroneous doctrines and secular authorities which assert a history contrary to God's Word and develop resources for the education of the laity on this issue.

Luther on the Genesis 5 genealogy:

This is the greatest glory of the primitive world, that it had so many good, wise, and holy men at the same time. We must not think that these are ordinary names of plain people; but, next to Christ and John the Baptist, they were the most outstanding heroes this world has ever produced. And on the Last Day we shall behold and admire their grandeur. Likewise, we shall also see their deeds. For then it will be made manifest what Adam, Seth, Methuselah, and the others did; what they endured from the old serpent; how they comforted and maintained themselves by means of the hope of the Seed against the outrages of the world or of the Cainites; how they experienced various kinds of treachery; how much envy, hatred, and contempt they endured on account of the glory of the blessed Seed who would be born from their descendants. No one must think that they lived without the severest afflictions and endless crosses. These facts will be made manifest on the Last Day.

Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 1: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 1 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 334–335.