

5. THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS

To Confess the Biblical Six-Day Creation, to Encourage Pastoral Conferences to Study Our Synod’s Statements on Creation, and to Help Congregations Concertedly Address Issues Related to the Intersections of Faith and Science

RESOLUTION 5-09A

Overtures 5-11-24 (CW, 432-38)

WHEREAS, The Holy Scriptures teach that God is the Creator of all that exists (Gen.1:1; Ps. 33:6, 9; Heb. 11:3; Col. 1:16; John 1:1-4); and

WHEREAS, Issues related to the intersection of faith and science continue to top the list of concerns of young people in our church body (see Mark Kiessling and Julianna Shults, “The Search for Young People: 2017 Research of Millennials and the LCMS,” *Concordia Journal* 44, no. 4 [Fall 2018]: 19-32); and

WHEREAS, The number of new discoveries (*e.g.*, in genetics and paleontology) and technology (*e.g.*, artificial intelligence) continues to increase at an exponential pace; and

WHEREAS, Many pastors and other church workers may not be familiar with Synod’s statements regarding the scriptural teaching on creation and our place within that creation; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention confess that Holy Scripture teaches that:

- God created the world in six natural days. We confess that the duration of those natural days is proclaimed in God’s Word, “There was evening, and there was morning, the first day” (Gen. 1:5);
- the creation of the first man, Adam, who was made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), was an historical event;

- death came into the world as the consequence of Adam's sin (Rom. 5:12);

and be it further

Resolved, That pastors and other church workers be encouraged to confess, witness to, and uphold in their teaching the Synod's publicly stated positions as 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."

And in *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, Article V (adopted 1973):

We believe, teach and confess that God, by the almighty power of His Word, created all things. We also believe that man, as the principal creature of God, was specially created in the image of God, that is, in a state of righteousness, innocence and blessedness.

We affirm that Adam and Eve were real historical human beings, the first two people in the world, and that their fall was a historical occurrence which brought sin into the world so that "since the fall of Adam all men who are propagated according to nature are born in sin" (Augsburg Confession II 1). We confess that man's fall necessitated the gracious redemptive work of Jesus Christ and that fallen man's only hope for salvation from his sin lies in Jesus Christ, his Redeemer and Lord.

We therefore reject the following:

1. All world views, philosophical theories and exegetical interpretations that pervert these Biblical teachings and thus obscure the Gospel.
2. The notion that man did not come into being through the direct creative action of God, but through a process of evolution from lower forms of life, which in turn developed from matter that is either eternal, autonomous or self-generating.
3. The opinion that the image of God in which Adam and Eve were created did not consist of concreated righteousness, that is, a perfect relationship to God.
4. The notion that Adam and Eve were not real historical persons and that their fall was not a real historical event which brought sin and death into the world.
5. The opinion that original sin does not deprive all men of their spiritual powers and make it impossible for them to be in the right relationship to God apart from faith in Jesus Christ.

and be it further

Resolved, That pastors be encouraged to study and discuss within their pastoral conferences (district and circuit) the Commission on Theology and Church Relations reports: *Creation in Biblical Perspective* (1970), *Together with All Creatures: Caring for God's Living Earth* (2010), and *All Things Hold Together in Christ: The Intersection of Science and Christian Theology* (2015); and be it further

Resolved, That pastors care for and instruct their people, especially their young people, by addressing issues related to the intersection of faith and science by leading thoughtful discussions that:

- help them remain faithful to our confession as set forth in the Scriptures, exhibited in our Confessions, and affirmed in the Synod's publicly stated positions; and
- address accurately and honestly the assumptions, theories, and findings of scientists along with the challenges that they raise for Christian thought;

and be it finally

Resolved, That pastors encourage and equip their people to look for and engage in respectful and thoughtful conversations that give a Christian witness.