

**SWD President's Response to the Handling of the Jurchen Article on Creation,  
Specifically, What I consider the Failure of CSL Leadership.**

March 2018

*From Willie  
For Minutes*

I have asked for this time for several reasons.

1. After the public email dust-up between myself and Paul Hegland surrounding the Jurchen article, on December 6, 2017 I formally apologized to Paul for my "ad hominem" remarks about his person. Graciously he forgave me and I him. As a direct result of that reconciliation, Paul expressed his desire to draft a letter to inform the whole CSL board of that reconciliation. I agreed.
  - a. Paul drafted the letter which he sent to me for my review on **12.18.2017**. Paul Hegland states in his email: "Attached is my draft of such a letter. I offer it to you with my full permission to edit it as you see fit. I have no pride of authorship here; the whole idea here is that this represents both of us. Shawn and Dale, I also bow to your editorial suggestions. "Both Chairman Kumm and President Meyer were "cc'd" in that email.
  - b. My schedule was a bit hectic, as is often the case for a district president. I was not able to read or react to it immediately, though I intended to respond. From my perspective the letter was a bit wordy. It merely needed to outline that reconciliation had taken place between Paul and myself. Paul clearly stated the following in his email:

My apologies for the delay in sending this email. I was hoping that either Dale or Shawn would chime in with their thoughts about my suggestion – a joint letter from you and me to the BOR about our email disagreement several weeks ago.

Attached is my draft of such a letter. I offer it to you with my full permission to edit it as you see fit. I have no pride of authorship here; the whole idea here is that this represents both of us. Shawn and Dale, I also bow to your editorial suggestions.
  - c. NB. While Paul and I still disagree over the manner in which the SWD Pastors' Conference expressed their dissent to the Jurchen article by drafting a resolution, we have reconciled; and I rejoice in that reconciliation.
  - d. Imagine my surprise when on **12.21.2017** Paul's letter to me was sent out to the whole board from the office of CSL's president before I had the opportunity or courtesy of responding. As I stated in an email to the whole Board, while the letter expressed my sentiments, the letter was not written by me; but it was sent out above my name, as if I endorsed it, and had given my permission for it to be shared. I had not.
  - e. Later in the day of **12.21.2017** I emailed Pam asking who approved the sending out of that joint letter. Her response: "Dr. Meyer asked me to send to just the Board of Regents."
  - f. Since this was a board matter and not a faculty or seminary matter, from my perspective it would have been better if that notification came from Paul and myself; or from the chair of the CSL Board.
  - g. Shortly after the New Year Dale sent an email apology, stating: "My understand had been that when my office received the letter from John and Paul, we were to send it out. Obviously I understood that wrong and apologize for having Pam send it out prematurely." [spelling and grammatical errors are part of the original]

I thank President Meyer for his apology. Yet I am dismayed that the agreed-to process and trust were violated.

2. The matter of the SWD Pastor's Conference Resolution.

- a. The SWD Fall Pastors' Conference met in Lake Geneva, October 16-18, 2017. One of the few resolutions that was brought forward for consideration was titled: *"To Confess and Reaffirm Six-Day Creation and the Official Position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod."*
- b. The resolution was brought forward by one of the SWD pastors, which is his right. It was opened for discussion, and after minimal comment it was adopted. It is true that the Jurchen article was referenced. However, the resolution does not mention the Jurchen article; nor does the resolution mention Concordia Seminary St. Louis. The resolution was made unanimous by the Pastors' Conference in a subsequent and separate motion; with no one speaking against or voting against that unanimous resolution.
- c. It needs to be stated clearly that the resolution does not mention any seminary or university by name.
- d. What also needs to be stated very clearly is that, although I am the president of the South Wisconsin District, I did not speak pro or con to the resolution because of my role as a CSL regent. It is my opinion that the pastors of SWD needed to voice their opinion; which is what they did.
- e. In the days that followed several professors contacted various SWD pastors taking exception with the resolution that was passed by the SWD Pastors' Conference, as well as seeking more information about what brought that about. Several of those pastors who were contacted by CSL professors reached out to me as their ecclesiastical supervisor. They were concerned about the phone calls, concerned that the CSL professors did not understand why the SWD Pastors' Conference would take such a position. I encouraged them to suggest that the professors call me; after all I am the SWD ecclesiastical supervisor. None did.
- f. The SWD Pastors' Conference unanimously took a position consistent with the ordination vow which each LCMS pastor has taken; which involves a "quia" subscription to the Lutheran Confessions, which includes an obligation and responsibility to confront public sin publicly.

The following words are from Dr. Martin Luther himself, commenting on the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment in the *Large Catechism*:

**284]** All this has been said regarding secret sins. But where the sin is quite public so that the judge and everybody know it, you can without any sin avoid him and let him go, because he has brought himself into disgrace, and you may also publicly testify concerning him. For when a matter is public in the light of day, there can be no slandering or false judging or testifying; as, when we now reprove the Pope with his doctrine, which is publicly set forth in books and proclaimed in all the world. For where the sin is public, the reproof also must be public, that every one may learn to guard against it. [Triglotta, page 661]

- g. In response to that SWD resolution, sadly the CSL faculty drafted an open letter to SWD pastors chastising the Pastors' Conference for the manner in which this was handled.
- h. For that the SWD Pastors Conference was publicly admonished by the CSL faculty; the faculty requesting that the resolution be withdrawn.

This is exceptionally alarming. A seminary faculty scolds two whole districts for standing on Holy Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions.

3. Regarding the resolution which was adopted by the SWD Pastors' Conference it is more than an interesting to note that neither the chair of the SWD Pastors' Conference nor the secretary of the SWD Pastors' Conference forwarded the resolution to CSL. The secretary admitted to me that he didn't know what to do with it; he didn't know where to send it. There was no official notification for CSL regarding the resolution. It appears that the CSL faculty was reacting to a resolution that they had not formally received. Why?

In light of the fact that CSL did not formally receive the SWD Resolution, the response of CSL's faculty and leadership is distressing. Does the CSL faculty see itself as, not accountable to the church, but above the church?

4. A Surprise Creation Conference planned without the knowledge of SWD.

- a. Sometime in early December 2017 I learned that a Creation Conference was being planned, coordinated by CSL and CUW, to which all SWD pastors will be invited, and that the seminary would host a special breakout for SWD pastors. The shocking aspect of this Creation Conference is that no one had contacted my office, nor had anyone bothered to ask if SWD pastors would even be interested in such a conference. Again, imagine my surprise.

- b. My note to Pat Ferry on 12.16.2017 states:

Now, as President Meyer related the other day, a Creation Conference is being planned at CUW in conjunction with the CSL faculty; apart from any input from SWD pastors or district leadership. It is my understanding that this conference will be hosted with a specific break-out for SWD pastors. I need to state clearly that as the ecclesiastical supervisor of South Wisconsin I am NOT in favor of this Creation Conference!!

Why host a conference that will only serve to further divide and foment conflict in our synod, and this district? Such a conference is an inappropriate way to deal with this matter.

In accord with our LCMS bylaws the Jurchen article needs and any actions pertaining to it ought to be discussed within the parameters of the CSL regents who are given expressed authority in such matters; not in the court of public opinion like a Creation Conference.

My hope is that you allow the Board of Regents the opportunity for this to take place. The regents have a responsibility here; and should be afforded to opportunity to honor their obligation.

- c. As a result of my objection, President Ferry and then President Meyer ceased planning the event.

Again, distressing.

5. LCMS Bylaws misapplied.

- a. In the wake of the planned creation conference, President Meyer invited me to CSL. He states: "Hence, before anything else, I invite you to come down and visit with some of us at the Seminary, or if it would be better, we'd come to you. I want you to hear from our faculty leaders what we believe on this topic and as brothers we need to respond to your concerns. This would also help fulfill Bylaw 3.10.5.7.9.a: "If the board of regents receives a complaint against a member of that seminary's faculty or administration concerning any matter, including those specified under Bylaw 3.10.5.7.5, it shall direct the complainant first to meet

face-to-face with the respondent in an attempt to resolve the issue (in the manner described in Matthew 18:15)." As their supervisor, you'd be carrying their concerns, and yours, in this conversation. You can be assured that our people will be gracious and fraternal.

b. My email response dated 12.22.2017:

While I appreciate your kind words about my position as a district president and a member of the board of regents, I must decline your gracious invitation to have a conversation with members of the CSL faculty about the Jurchen article.

Below are my reasons:

1) My consistent position has been that the Jurchen article is a matter for the Board of Regents; that in accord with Bylaw 1.9.1.1(d) and the introductory sentence to bylaw 3.10.5.7.9. This is a matter for the Board of Regents.

2) In your email below, you cite Bylaw 3.10.5.7.9 (a) as the reason why I should have a conversation with members of the faculty over the Jurchen article. However, and I need to say this with emphasis, I am NOT a complainant in this matter. Bylaw 1.10.4(d) defines a complainant as follows: "(d)Complainant: A party and/or parties to a dispute who initiate an action to settle a conflict under the provisions of the Synod's dispute resolution process." I have initiated no action against the seminary or any of its faculty. I am not a complainant. The resolution of the SWD Pastors' Conference is the resolution of the SWD Pastors' Conference. That resolution speaks for itself. When the resolution was brought, I neither spoke pro or con. I remained silent because I am a member of the CSL Regents.

The interesting aspect of the resolution adopted by the SWD Pastors' conference is that it does not mention CSL or even the Jurchen article. The resolution is simply titled: "To Confess and Reaffirm Six-Day Creation and the Official Position of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod". In point of fact, the sixth Resolved mentions "seminaries" (plural). The seventh Resolved mentions "universities" (plural). The resolution mentions NO dispute. The resolution mentions no seminary and no university in particular. And yet, the CSL faculty replied to all SWD pastors as if a dispute was being filed. Why? That reaction is interesting. What is this all about??

Because of all that I will not and cannot in good conscience participate in the discussion which you mention in your email of Tuesday, December 19. This is a matter for the regents as a whole to consider. If this matter is not addressed thoroughly at our February meeting, I will call for a special regent meeting regarding all this.

It is my understanding that letters have been have been received by both yourself and the chair of the Regents, Rev. Kumm, regarding the Jurchen article. (I have been copied on a couple.) That makes this Jurchen issue a matter for the Board of Regents to discuss. That is in accord with the following Bylaws:

- Bylaw 1.9.1.1(d) Each of the Synod's schools is accountable to the Synod through its respective president and board of regents for the content of its professional journals and all of its published materials that are not the official publications of the Synod (Bylaw 3.4.3.7). The editorial boards of such publications shall serve as their own doctrinal reviewers.
- Bylaw 3.10.5.7.9 The board of regents shall have authority to investigate, hear, and act on any complaint arising out of Bylaw 3.10.5.7.5.

In a phone conversation recently, you mentioned the possibility of bringing the regents together for a special conversation about the Jurchen article, and I look forward to that



discussion (whether it is a special meeting or a regularly scheduled meeting). Again, this is a matter for the Regents to consider.

May our gracious Lord Jesus, born of the Virgin, grant you peace and joy.

- c. I had filed no complaint. There was no reason to make me the complainant. My position has consistently been that this is a matter for the Board of Regents to investigate and to resolve. Designating me as a complainant would have only marginalized my responsibilities as a regent regarding all this.
- d. This is now the 7<sup>th</sup> month and the third regent meeting since the Jurchen article was published; and we have yet to discuss all that transpired. Now at this meeting we at least receive a partial timeline with an indication that we will discuss this matter in August of 2018, a full year after the article was printed.

Disturbing. Distressing.

6. Dr. Eric Hermann's involvement.

- a. Just before Christmas, 2017 a friend alerted me to the fact that Dr. Hermann was making rather public, disparaging remarks about the "SWD president" on "Facebook". I captured the pertinent responses and am sharing those with you. It is interesting to note that the exchange ceases when someone asks Dr. Hermann if he has spoken to me. He has yet to do that.
- b. Dr. Hermann's remarks about the South Wisconsin District President:  
"Eric Hermann: And just so this is all abundantly clear--the President of the South Wisconsin district is also on our Board of Regents. The bylaws that I posted above clearly direct a member of the board to address such concerns in a very different manner, directing complainants to a face to face meeting."
- c. Those were the same bylaws quoted by President Meyer, in an attempt to make me a complainant.
- d. What is more disturbing, in his remarks Dr. Hermann endorses various elements of what is considered the old earth theory. Below is part of what Dr. Hermann says:

There are some interesting points about death that relate more to the nature of biology as it was and is created. For example, what about micro organisms, bacterial growth and death (e.g. gut bacteria that makes digestion possible), whales and krill and most of ocean life, birds and insects, etc.? Do the Scriptures really exclude death in such an absolute sense from the original creation? But more interesting is the theological and exegetical question here. Theologians like Irenaeus, Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther all believed that humans were created mortal by nature. Immortality was a special gift given to humans and even if they had not sinned they would eventually need to be clothed with immortality. Thus mortality seems to be a property of creation and immortality only resides with God.

Luther on Genesis: "Adam possessed a natural and movable body, a body which generated, ate and labored. These exertions are considered to produce decay or at least some kind of change, by which at length man is naturally worn out and destroyed. But by this appointment of nature, "the tree of life," God provided a remedy, by the use of which man might have a long and sound life, without any diminution of his powers and in perpetual youth."

A little earlier Luther speaks of the translation of the corporeal life that needs to be sustained by food (and the tree of life if one is to live on without diminishment or death) into a spiritual

From Wille  
to Minutes  
2/10/18

life where God's life now rises from within: "Paul moreover here teaches us that Adam, even if he had not sinned, would yet have lived a corporeal life; a life which would have needed meat, drink and rest; a life which would have grown, increased and generated, etc., until God should have translated him to that spiritual life, in which he would have lived without natural animality, if I may so express it; namely, a life from within, derived from God alone; and not a life from without as before, sustained by herbs and fruits. And yet he would have been a man with body and bones, etc.,"

- e. Based on his own words it surely sounds as though Dr. Hermann endorses the old earth theory.
- f. Why? Where is any of that found in Holy Scripture? Isn't Holy Scripture our formal principle? Why speculate on things not recorded in Holy Scripture? Such chatter only confuses.

Quite distressing and disturbing. This Board of Regents has a responsibility here; as does the president of CSL to ensure that what is taught at CSL is in accord with Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. It is time for the CSL regents to exercise oversight.

**7. No apology for either ~~for either~~ the Wyoming District or the South Wisconsin District.**

- a. Both districts were scolded for the manner in which they addressed what they saw as a violation of what we believe, teach, and confess. Both districts were chastised for passing a resolution endorsing our belief and confession that God created in the world during the span of 6, 24-hour day creation.
- b. Both districts acted in accord with Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions. Both districts should be commended for their clear confession; not chastised.
- c. While Dr. Arand and Dr. Jurchen have apologized for their respective roles in publishing and writing the article, there has been no apology by the faculty or the seminary leadership to either to the pastors of either the Wyoming District or the South Wisconsin District for the letters which were sent to them; nor has there been any hint of such an apology.
- d. Why? Ought not the church react when an article is published by a seminary which is inconsistent with our confession?

This lack of an apology to the faithful pastors of two LCMS districts is most distressing of all.

Sadly, yet respectfully submitted

Rev. John C. Wille

SWD president

Member of Board of Regents, Concordia Seminary St. Louis Mo.

From Wille  
for Minutes  
2/22

## OVERTURE

### To Confess and Reaffirm Six-Day Creation and the Official Position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

WHEREAS, the Holy Scriptures teach that God is the Creator of all that exists, (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 33:6,9; Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16; John 1:1-4) and

WHEREAS, Genesis 1 details the creation of the world by God in six days, each of which consisted of 24 hours, and

WHEREAS, the Holy Scriptures are inspired by God the Holy Spirit, and are without error and infallible (John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21) and

WHEREAS, the Scripture teaches that Adam was a real man and it is the consequence of his sin that death has come into the world (Romans 5:12-19) and

WHEREAS, theistic evolution or old earth creationism which teaches that God used an evolutionary process to create mankind and that death is a natural occurrence, not the result of Adam's sin, is in direct contradiction to the teaching of the Holy Scripture and

WHEREAS, the official position of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod regarding creation is, "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.'" (*A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*, 1932), therefore let it be

RESOLVED, that the South Wisconsin District Pastors Conference confess and reaffirm that God created the world in six days, each of which consisted of 24 hours, and let it also be

RESOLVED, that the South Wisconsin District Pastors Conference confess and reaffirm that Adam was a real man and that it is the consequence of his sin that death has come into the world, and let it also be

1 RESOLVED, that the South Wisconsin District Pastors Conference confess and reaffirm  
2 that theistic evolution or old earth creationism is in direct contradiction to the teaching  
3 of Holy Scripture and let it also be

4  
5 RESOLVED, that the South Wisconsin District Pastors Conference confess and reaffirm  
6 the official position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod regarding creation, “We  
7 teach that God has created heaven and earth, and that in the manner and in the space  
8 of time recorded in the Holy Scriptures, especially Gen.1 and 2, namely, by His almighty  
9 creative word, and in six days. We reject every doctrine which denies or limits the work  
10 of creation as taught in Scripture. In our days it is denied or limited by those who assert,  
11 ostensibly in deference to science, that the world came into existence through a process  
12 of evolution; that is, that it has, in immense periods of time, developed more or less of  
13 itself. Since no man was present when it pleased God to create the world, we must look  
14 for a reliable account of creation to God’s own record, found in God’s own book, the  
15 Bible. We accept God’s own record with full confidence and confess with Luther’s  
16 Catechism: ‘I believe that God has made me and all creatures.’” (*A Brief Statement of the*  
17 *Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod, 1932*) and let it also be

18  
19 RESOLVED, that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod also confess and reaffirm its  
20 official position regarding creation, and let it also be

21  
22 RESOLVED, that the South Wisconsin District Pastors Conference encourage the  
23 seminaries to endorse and uphold Synod Bylaw 3.10.5.7.9, which empowers seminary  
24 Presidents and Boards of Regents to investigate any allegations that Biblical teaching is  
25 not being upheld in their institutions and gives specific prescription for how such an  
26 investigation should be carried out, and let it also be

27  
28 RESOLVED, that the South Wisconsin District Pastors Conference require the Universities of  
29 Synod to teach in accordance with our doctrinal position in regards to creation, and let it be  
30 finally

31  
32 RESOLVED, that the South Wisconsin District Pastors Conference send this resolution as  
33 an overture to the 2019 Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

34  
35 Respectfully submitted,  
36 South Wisconsin District Pastors Conference  
37 Fall 2017



Concordia Seminary  
A Seminary of  
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod  
Founded 1839



801 Seminary Place  
St. Louis, MO 63105  
314-505-7000  
www.csl.edu

From Wells  
for Minutes  
2/10/17

## CONCORDIA SEMINARY

### An Open Letter to Our Brothers in the LCMS South Wisconsin District

December 1, 2017

Dear Brothers,

We are writing to you with regard to our life together as fellow pastors in the ministerium of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

We were greatly saddened to receive a copy of the overture that the LCMS South Wisconsin District Pastors Conference at its 2017 fall conference resolved to send to the 2019 Synod Convention. Although the resolution does not mention the article, "The Age of the Earth and Confessional Lutheranism" by our colleague Dr. John Jurchen at Concordia University, Nebraska, in the summer 2017 issue of the *Concordia Journal*, the content of the resolution is clearly aimed at this article.

Our first concern is with how we relate to one another when we run across statements in writings or articles that seem to be unclear, confusing, questionable or perhaps even wrong. Should we immediately assume the worst and conclude that the author is promoting false doctrine – even when the author or publication has not provided cause for such a reading? Should our first response to error – perceived or actual – be not to seek clarification or correction from the author? A resolution that proposes the first thing to do is to adopt an overture to the Synod convention that asks the Synod to "encourage the seminaries to endorse and uphold Synod Bylaw 3.10.5.7.9, which empowers seminary presidents and Boards of Regents to investigate any allegations that biblical teaching is not being upheld in their institutions . . ." is a sad commentary on our life together as a Synod and our respect for one another as brothers and co-workers in ministry.

Our second concern is with the treatment of the issue itself. Dr. Jurchen clearly states at the beginning of his article that he is attempting to answer in a responsible way questions raised by a parishioner, paying close attention to statements the Synod has made on the issue. Did the article receive a fair reading and a thorough discussion at your conference with regard to its purpose, thesis, arguments and conclusion? Were questions raised and discussed about the Synod statements that Dr. Jurchen cites and why those statements are not more explicit about the issue? The concept of fairness requires that issues be discussed in order to determine what actually is being said and what is being heard.

At this juncture, we are primarily concerned with how we may best live together as a church and with one another as brothers in the church's ministry. This is not to say that false teaching is not a serious matter. Of course it is! And it is not to say that we should not deal with it appropriately – especially when it is persistently promoted and defended. Such a practice is the model set for us by the Preface to the Book of Concord whose authors stated about their own condemnations: "it is our will and intention thereby to condemn only the false and seductive teachings of the *stiff-necked teachers* and blasphemers of the same..." [italics added] (Par 13, Kolb-Wengert edition), that is, those who refuse to engage in conversation, to reconsider or refuse to reconcile.

In the interest of leaving no doubt as to where we stand and what we teach on the subject of creation, we can unequivocally state that we hold to and teach in accordance with the Brief Statement's paragraph on creation, both its thesis and antithesis, which reads:

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."

This is a wonderfully crafted statement that begins with a confession of God as creator of heaven and earth and then concludes with its significance for us as expressed by Luther's catechism. In other words, what do we confess with the affirmation that God is creator? We confess, "I am God's creature!" (LC II 13).

We recognize the article in question has generated concern regarding some of its statements and conclusions, some of which our faculty shares, and we are aware that some of the points could have been stated more clearly. In fact, the article has generated discussion within our faculty, and we are looking forward to continuing that conversation with the entire Synod. As a beginning toward that end, and in the interest of strengthening our life together and clarifying our witness to the world, we are preparing a series of posts that provide an orientation to the debate currently taking place in evangelical circles along with an assessment of our Lutheran take on these issues. These will be posted on [concordiatheology.org](http://concordiatheology.org).

Given these acknowledgements, we respectfully request that you retract your resolution and engage the author and us in conversation. It is difficult to see how such an overture as has been adopted will not cast a cloud of suspicion over the author, Concordia University, Nebraska, and the seminaries (particularly Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in whose *Concordia Journal* this particular article appeared). Luther calls us to something higher when he teaches us not to slander or defame our neighbor but instead to honor God by "speaking well" of our neighbor and "explaining everything in the kindest way."

In Christ,

The faculty of Concordia Seminary

Andy Wrasman James Uglum and Mark Preus, I have now read the whole article.

I remember what I did when I first skimmed it... I saw that he was showing the many Christian groups that advocate for Old Earth Creationism (usually including death in the animal kingdom before the Fall), and then I just went to his conclusion section, because I don't need a long list of all the false teachers on the subject. Reading the entire article today I saw what frustrated me at my first look at the article, which is what is said on page 72. He says that Scripture doesn't tell us if there is death in the animal kingdom before the Fall...

Really? Scripture is silent on this issue? He did the typical OEC move by pointing out that Romans 5 is about Adam and humans, not animals... but isn't Romans 8 about all of creation being subjected to frustration and bondage to decay? Wouldn't that be the YEC teaching on the matter as he pointed out in the article, that YEC really do see the world falling apart in all facets of God's intended design? How is a world where creation is subjected to bondage and decay from it's origin a "very good" world? How does millions of years of animal death and whole extinctions of species of animals before the Fall of Man sit well with a God who cares for even the sparrows? How is Scripture silent on this issue?

That's what rubbed me so wrong. He opens the door for parishoners and students to be OEC's who hold to millions of years of death in the animals kingdom as part of God's creation by saying Scripture is silent on the matter. This means we can't even make a stance that there wasn't death in the animal kingdom before the Fall either. The author never says his actual position either. So how does he not open the door for teachers to hold this position too?

And reading the whole thing today ... he seemed to say the YEC needs to fully, teach OEC with all its in and outs or we are strawmanning their position... I get it... but how in depth do we have to do this? Do we really have to go Hugh Ross lengths to teach a false position just to be fair to the false position? Let's just go to Scripture. I don't need to do all the science back and forth with Hugh Ross.

James Uglum, are you in agreement with his conclusion that Scripture is silent on the matter of death in the animal kingdom?

Also troubling to me is that he admits that there are OECs who don't hold to a historical Adam and Eve... I know people like this personally who do teach at Lutheran high schools... I don't see him necessarily condemning all the many false teachings that come about from OEC. It seems he could open the door to a lot more than just the false teaching of God creating a very good world full of animal death for millions of years.

Erik Herrmann Andy, these are good questions. There are some interesting points about death that relate more to the nature of biology as it was and is created. For example, what about micro organisms, bacterial growth and death (e.g gut bacteria that makes digestion possible), whales and krill and most of ocean life, birds and insects, etc.? Do the Scriprures really exclude death in such an absolute sense from the original creation? But more interesting is the theological and exegetical question here. Theologians like Ireneaus, Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther all believed that humans were created mortal by nature. Immortality was a special gift given to humans and even if they had not sinned they would eventually need to be clothed with immortality. Thus mortality seems to be a property of creation and immortality only resides with God.

Luther on Genesis: "Adam possessed a natural and movable body, a body which generated, ate and labored. These exertions are considered to produce decay or at least some kind of change, by which at length man is naturally worn out and destroyed. But by this appointment of nature, "the tree of life," God provided a remedy, by the use of which man might have a long and sound life, without any diminution of his powers and in perpetual youth."

A little earlier Luther speaks of the translation of the corporeal life that needs to be sustained by food (and the tree of life if one is to live on without diminishment or death) into a spiritual life where God's life now rises from within: "Paul moreover here teaches us that Adam, even if he had not sinned, would yet have lived a corporeal life; a life which would have needed meat, drink and rest; a life which would have grown, increased and generated, etc., until God should have translated him to that spiritual life, in which he would have lived without natural animality, if I may so express it; namely, a life from within, derived from God alone; and not a life from without as before, sustained by herbs and fruits. And yet he would have been a man with body and bones, etc.,"

## Edit History

Erik Herrmann Andy, these are good questions. There are some interesting about death that relate more to the nature of biology as it was and is created. For example, what about micro organisms, bacterial growth and death (e.g gut bacteria that makes digestion possible), whales and krill and most of ocean life, birds and insects, etc.? Do the Scriptures really exclude death in such an absolute sense from the original creation? But more interesting is the theological and exegetical question here. Theologians like Ireneaus, Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther all believed that humans were created mortal by nature. Immortality was a special gift given to humans and even if they had not sinned they would eventually need to be clothed with immortality. Thus mortality seems to be a property of creation and immortality only resides with God.

Luther on Genesis: "Adam possessed a natural and movable body, a body which generated, ate and labored. These exertions are considered to produce decay or at least some kind of change, by which at length man is naturally worn out and destroyed. But by this appointment of nature, "the tree of life," God provided a remedy, by the use of which man might have a long and sound life, without any diminution of his powers and in perpetual youth."

A little earlier Luther speaks of the translation of the corporeal life that needs to be sustained by food (and the tree of life if one is to live on without diminishment or death) into a spiritual life where God's life now rises from within: "Paul moreover here teaches us that Adam, even if he had not sinned, would yet have lived a corporeal life; a life which would have needed meat, drink and rest; a life which would have grown, increased and generated, etc., until God should have translated him to that spiritual life, in which he would have lived without natural animality, if I may so express it; namely, a life from within, derived from God alone; and not a life from without as before, sustained by herbs and fruits. And yet he would have been a man with body and bones, etc.,"

Manage

2d

Erik Herrmann Andy, these are good questions. There are some interesting points about death that relate more to the nature of biology as it was and is created. For example, what about micro organisms, bacterial growth and death (e.g gut bacteria that makes digestion possible), whales and krill and most of ocean life, birds and insects, etc.? Do the Scriptures really exclude death in such an absolute sense from the original creation? But more



interesting is the theological and exegetical question here. Theologians like Irenaeus, Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther all believed that humans were created mortal by nature. Immortality was a special gift given to humans and even if they had not sinned they would eventually need to be clothed with immortality. Thus mortality seems to be a property of creation and immortality only resides with God.

Luther on Genesis: "Adam possessed a natural and movable body, a body which generated, ate and labored. These exertions are considered to produce decay or at least some kind of change, by which at length man is naturally worn out and destroyed. But by this appointment of nature, "the tree of life," God provided a remedy, by the use of which man might have a long and sound life, without any diminution of his powers and in perpetual youth."

A little earlier Luther speaks of the translation of the corporeal life that needs to be sustained by food (and the tree of life if one is to live on without diminishment or death) into a spiritual life where God's life now rises from within: "Paul moreover here teaches us that Adam, even if he had not sinned, would yet have lived a corporeal life; a life which would have needed meat, drink and rest; a life which would have grown, increased and generated, etc., until God should have translated him to that spiritual life, in which he would have lived without natural animality, if I may so express it; namely, a life from within, derived from God alone; and not a life from without as before, sustained by herbs and fruits. And yet he would have been a man with body and bones, etc.,"



**Erik Herrmann** James Uglum I know from one who was present that many of the pastors in Wisconsin hadn't even read the article. There was no discussion, the resolution was already written, and a call for a unanimous vote was made. The whole process lasted 10 minutes.

2

[Manage](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2d



**Erik Herrmann** As for the Seminary being contacted beforehand I don't think anyone did. We received very little correspondence. Most of the negative feedback was conducted on social media.



**James Uglum** Erik Herrmann wow that is atrocious

2

Manage

Like · Reply · 2d

**Billy Schultz** People keep using the 452 number as a sign of how concerned people are about this issue. That number not only assumes perfect attendance by every pastor rostered in WY and SWD (including candidates and emeriti), but that every single one of them voted yes on the resolutions. Given what I've seen when it comes to conference business and participation in it and what Dr. Herrmann heard, can we stop using this number as if it has any real bearing?

3

Manage

Like · Reply · 2d



**Jack Gilbert** Dr. Herrmann will you please ask the "one who was present" to share what was witnessed firsthand rather than passing it along yourself to others as one who was not present? If not, will you please get permission share this person's name or delete this comment?

2

Manage

Like · Reply · 2d



**Erik Herrmann** Jack Gilbert why? Pastoral conferences aren't private affairs. You are free to inquire of others who were also present. But speaking about 400 pastors all reaching some consensus about an article as if the condemnation has the magical authority of the LXX is pretty misleading.

1

Manage

Like · Reply · 2d



**Jack Gilbert** Dr. Herrmann, I thought I would ask because you're not giving a firsthand account. That's something I personally avoid doing, but you are certainly free to do it. I wasn't at either conference, so I'm not sure how everything went.

It should be known that the overture passed at the SWD conference does not mention the article at all, so the consensus you speak of was neither needed nor reached.

2

[Manage](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2d



[Andy Wrasman](#) [James Uglum](#), thanks for the reply. I typically agree with all you post.

I admitted that I didn't read the whole thing. I'll read it all sometime over the next week, maybe even during this day. ...[See More](#)

1

[Manage](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2d



[Mark Preus](#) [Jack](#), I am hopeful that they will eventually see the love that we have shown to them.

2

[Manage](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2d



[Erik Herrmann](#) [Jack Gilbert](#) exactly, Jack. The Wisconsin resolution, generally speaking, is "apple pie." Who is going to vote against that? But the intent and use of the resolution by those who drafted it and sent it to the seminary was clearly aimed at the article.

[Manage](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2d



[Andy Wrasman](#) [Mark Preus](#), who is they that you are a part of? Thanks.

[Manage](#)



Like · Reply · 2d



**Andy Wrasman** Erik Herrmann, thanks for sharing.

Manage

Like · Reply · 2d



**Erik Herrmann** And just so this is all abundantly clear--the President of the South Wisconsin district is also on our Board of Regents. The bylaws that I posted above clearly direct a member of the board to address such concerns in a very different manner, directing complainants to a face to face meeting.

4

Manage

Like · Reply · 2d



**Joshua Scheer** Erik Herrmann perhaps you should take that up with him rather than commenting about it here.

1

Manage

Like · Reply · 2d



**Joshua Scheer** Andy Wrasman Mark Preus is a member of the Wyoming District.

1

Manage

Like · Reply · 2d



**Mark Preus** Brothers, everything we have done has been brotherly and loving without guile or malice or slander. We have obeyed both the 2nd and 8th commandments. We should focus on correcting the error that was published and being of one mind, as Christ wants us to be. If we agree on this, then God will help us



to make our agreement clear.

[Manage](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2d



[Erik Herrmann](#) [Mark Preus](#) I do not doubt your sincerity in any way.

3

[Manage](#)

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2d



[Jack Gilbert](#) Thank you for sharing your thoughts Dr. [Herrmann](#). I hope the overture is accepted as a resolution and passed as easily as you think it will be. The article in question, which I have read, points out the need for such a resolution to be adopted. Looks like we're on the right track! God's blessings on your celebration of our Savior's birth

