



# CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

800 North Columbia Avenue  
Seward, Nebraska 68434

January 6, 2018

Dear President Snow:

In response to an article I wrote for the *Concordia Journal*, Winter 2017, entitled *The Age of the Earth and Confessional Lutheranism*, you asked me to prepare a confession of my personal faith and beliefs as regards Holy Scripture and LCMS doctrine, especially as it pertains to the Creation narrative in Gen 1 & 2. As my article was intended as a survey of resolutions and statements regarding the Creation narrative from various Christian denominations, especially the LCMS, my personal confession seemed less relevant. Here, I gladly provide it.

First, I would like to provide a note regarding my teaching at Concordia. I do not promote Old Earth Creationism in my classes. I do *explain* Old earth Creationism, among other perspectives on Creation held by some Christians, as is appropriate for a university education. I hold and teach that a Young Earth Creation perspective with six normal days is taught throughout the clear Word of God. Accordingly, I direct students interested in Young Earth Creation to current research in the area, especially select articles from the *Creation Science Research Quarterly* that I have found particularly insightful. I have a personal subscription to that journal and donate back issues to the Concordia University, Nebraska Library for the benefit of our students. Although I appreciate and admire the work that my fellow scientists are doing in Young Earth Creation research and pray for their success, my faith rests on the clear Word of God.

In my doctrinal position, I cling to the Bible, God's own book, as the clear, inspired, inerrant Word of God able to make us wise unto salvation in Christ Jesus. With St. Paul, I confess that "all Scripture is inspired by God and is 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" (II Tim 3:16-17). I believe in the three Symbols of the Holy Christian Church and hold that the Lutheran Confessions are the true interpretation of God's Word.

I also hold to *A Brief Statement* as adopted by the LCMS at the 1932 Synodical Convention and all subsequent LCMS resolutions adopted by Synod regarding God's work of Creation and appreciate the several excellent CTCR documents adopted or received by Synod regarding the same. In particular, I consider the 5<sup>th</sup> article of *A Brief Statement* an excellent exposition of our LCMS Doctrine of Creation. It has served as a model for every resolution, statement, and CTCR document related to the LCMS Doctrine of Creation adopted by Synod for the past eighty-five years. As declared in *A Brief Statement*, I believe that *God* created the heavens and the earth by His almighty creative Word, and in six days.

I did not mean to imply in my article that pastors and teachers should promote an extended duration for the days of creation. Beyond exegetical difficulties with such an interpretation, several *theological* difficulties arise. I attempted to highlight two of them in my article when I wrote that "speaking the truth in love requires that pastors and teachers go beyond providing a comfortable approach and present as complete a representation of Old Earth Creation as possible." Two theological difficulties were presented in the article, namely the mortality of animals before the Fall and the extent of the Noachian flood, the latter of which is sometimes interpreted as a spectacular regional rather than planet-spanning deluge. These are serious difficulties with an Old-Earth Creation perspective. I did not intend to minimize nor endorse them.

Another issue I did not endorse in my article was biological evolution, Theistic or otherwise. *A Brief Statement* and our Lutheran interpretation of Scripture holds that *God* created the various kinds of life, commanding the earth to “put forth vegetation” and the waters to “bring forth swarms of living creatures.” *A Brief Statement* is clear that evolution denies or limits God’s work of Creation as taught in the Scriptures. I neither teach nor endorse biological evolution.

Ultimately, the point I sought to make in my article is that members struggling to understand God’s creative work require careful teaching from the clear Word of God and our patient understanding as they wrestle with this article of faith. I understand and accept the Synodical position on Creation from *A Brief Statement* that any reliable account of Creation must come from God’s own account in the Bible. I was in error to imply that the LCMS has acknowledged Day-Age theory as an acceptable exegesis of the Creation account of Genesis 1 & 2.

I apologize and seek forgiveness for any confusion I might have caused and will ask the Concordia Journal to withdraw the article due to the lack of clarity and concerns raised.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John C. Jurchen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

John Jurchen