

The Gulf-Great Lakes Presbytery, of the RPCNA
To Rev. Adam Kuehner, Clerk of Presbytery

A PERSONAL TESTIMONY
BEARING UPON THE CONSIDERATION OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS
OF REV. MICHAEL LEFEVBRE.

Gordon J. Keddie

I would first express my appreciation of the soundness and usefulness of so much of Michael’s ministry and his previous published works – to me personally and in particular, and, I believe, to the Reformed Presbyterian Church in general. Recent revelation of his publication (and therefore teaching) of certain opinions questioning precise history of Adam and Eve as the progenitors of the human race (in his book “*The Liturgy of Creation*” and a number of papers apparently under the aegis of an association with the controversial - and arguably subversive of the Church - organization *Biologos*) have raised the specter of a potentially disciplinary action in the courts of our Church (The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America) in 2020.

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE
2002 REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD

I should first explain that I have served pastorates in the Reformed Presbyterian Church over the 40 years since my ordination in Pittsburgh in June 1974, the last ten years of which were in the Southside Indianapolis congregation. I retired over five years ago (June 30, 2014) from this ministry. I am a Zoology graduate of the University of Aberdeen in my native Scotland, BSc(Hons), 1967; was a Member of the Institute of Biology in the UK (MIBiol) and have served as Education Director and then Committee member of the Biblical Creation Society of the U.K. before and during my pastoral relationship with the Wishaw (Scotland) R.P. Church of Scotland in 1982-86. I also hold a Diploma of Education (Dip. Ed) from the University of Edinburgh (1968).

I want to say a few things about the scope and intent of the Report to the 2002 Synod to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America that responded to a request by Mid-West Presbytery.¹

With specific reference to the Synod 2002 action, I noticed that in footnote 4 in his latest book, Michael refers to a past action of Synod 2002, allegedly permitting him the freedom to argue along the line, in his previous articles and his “Communication”, that in the end leads to an historical Adam who is not the *progenitor* of the human race, but was an individual who was “created” into a population of what have long been called “pre-Adamites”, that apparently had been evolving for some time.² This argument, in Michael’s recently published scheme of things, insists that Adam as specially created is merely the progenitor of that God-defined fallen-ness of humanity there-after, which fallen-ness is somehow extended and attributed to all human(oid?)s who lived before Adam ever did (the pre-Adamites). They are regarded as (spiritually) “in Adam.” I noted that Eve is, in this scheme of things, not historically “the mother of all living”, but is somehow only spiritually the mother of us all.

¹ *Minutes of Synod 2002* (Pittsburgh, RPCNA: 2003): 136-139. (see also *Minutes of Synod 2001*: 10, 185; 250-258. [Nominations and Midwest Request])

² The existence of so-called “pre-Adamites” has been controverted (and rejected by the orthodox) for many centuries, and is not new in the spectrum of theological speculation over against the historical certainties of revealed truth.

But back to Synod’s reply to the Midwest RP Presbytery’s request at Parkville, Mo, in 2001. The Midwest paper cited no pre-existing “exceptions” as such, even if it mentioned the language of the Confession and Testimony as indicating a young earth and six literal day creation and argued for both of these positions. We have clearly, along with all orthodox ecclesiastical bodies in history, denied any proposed pre-Adamite ancestry for the human race. I would note the following about the 2002 Report:

(1) *I wrote and presented the 2002 report* in the absence of the Chairman, Jonathan Watt, who asked me to handle the whole business as he was to be in Israel at that time (with a Geneva group I believe

(2) *My sole concern* – and that of the Committee as a whole – was to avoid a lengthy debate (and Synod decision) on the age of the earth.³ In other words, my judgment was *simpliciter* not to take up the Midwest request for a tightening of the Confessional position, but to understand that the Confession did in reality take the tighter view. So-called “exceptions” never came up and were never either cited or discussed but allowed for the already existing practices of the Presbyteries to continue as before. Our report never established anything of the nature of an “exception” of the kind that is evidently assumed by Michael in his footnote, *viz.* to justify his stated exegetical exceptions and theological speculations. In 2002, I frankly felt we should have no debate and a non-decision *re* this and related issues and that it *was* not timely. We felt *the* Synod had more than enough controversy – those present will recall, for instance, that we had a paper on women deacons - to eliminate our permissive position on the subject, and indeed the Testimony statement itself

As it happened, we did, during the Creation debate, had a statement by David Willson, an elder from Beaver Falls and teacher at Geneva College, asserting that the Midwest proposal to tighten subscription on the six days of Creation threatened some Geneva College faculty. In no uncertain terms, he suggested that he and others would have to leave the denomination if this tightening of subscription on that point were agreed upon! My Committee Report was accepted, although many dissents favorable to the Midwest Presbytery were subsequent minuted – many by men who are active in Synod today.⁴

(3) I do not believe that declining to entertain a paper (and taking no action except declining to entertain anything it requests) constitutes the establishment of an exception. I would challenge ML and his supporters to show that either Midwest Presbytery or Synod as a whole had previously *acted* to create, or to recognize, a stated exception as he suggests it (and is arguably agreed to by implication by Messrs. Holdeman and McCullough in their respective approvals of Michael’s book.). In fact our Report *declined* any action of Synod. ML cannot hide his considerable modification of Adam’s historicity as progenitor of humanity, and our classic affirmation that there were no pre-Adamite humans before Adam, behind the assertion that he is allowed to speculate by a prior exception.

ML refers four times to the 2002 Report on pp 7-8 as if they establish agreement and reaffirmation of the Synod’s long-standing “don’t ask: don’t tell” practice on the length of the creation days. I would point out that these quotes from the body of the report are only descriptive of past practice and the actual recommendation of the report was not to entertain consideration of the length of the days *at that time*. ML acknowledges that the Synod may “tighten our common testimony” on this question (The Committee agreed that the Synod could, if it so chooses, study and act on any subject at another time, but was *simpliciter* recommending doing nothing at that time).

³ Even though I am a young earth, scientifically trained supporter).

⁴ I do now believe that the time may well have come to close the Hodgian loop-hole on the days of Creation and the Chalmersian notion of the “gap-theory” which affects the age of the earth and geological time, and to affirm the straightforward view of the six days of Creation, as set forth in the language of the Confession of Faith, and then proposed through Midwest Presbytery. Have we silently tolerated dissent from the plain statement of the Confession for too long?

Presbytery should note that, while ML appears to assume this (*i.e.* longer creation days and the age of the earth) is principally about authorisation for his published views, the fact is that he is going much further than anything even touched on at that time, by making it a platform for his views about Adam and Eve and, indeed, passages like Romans 5:12ff. These views – which he has declared publically - are arguably *ultra vires* the Confession and Testimony. These are the principal, but not exclusive, concerns that the Presbytery, Synod and, one trusts, the RPTS Board, must examine at this time.

(4) I, as the author and presenter of the Synod declination, would suggest that ML's footnote 4 enshrines an *unwarranted conclusion* supposedly permitting him to overthrow the teaching of our Confession, and, much more importantly, spiritualize (theologize?) the plain teaching of Scripture. I believe this to be nothing more than a “fig-leaf” to deflect us from his actual contravention of Scripture and the Confession, thereby justifying his taking up the unscriptural ideas he teaches about Adam and Eve, the age of the earth, the existence of so-called otherwise non-existent (however anciently proposed) pre-Adamites, and the whole system of theological thought this engenders. ML (and those who share his views), ought to retreat from these opinions, repent and reaffirm Scriptural and Confessional commitments, or else unite with such a church body as will permit such broad and unscriptural speculations (As, incidentally, *Biologos* presently and subversively promotes).

I share these convictions as one whose present state of health prevents attendance and involvement at meetings of Presbytery and Synod, but whose interest in the health of the RPCNA is unabated and respectfully submit them to the brethren for their consideration.