

Report of the Committee to Review Communication 19-5

1. On 14 November 2019, the AIC of Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery approved the following action with regard to a Communication from Saint Lawrence Presbytery: A motion was made to appoint a committee of five men, with members to be determined by this year's Moderator of Presbytery to review Communication 19-5, determine how the Communication should be handled, and to return recommendations to Presbytery.
2. According to this motion, your Committee has a three-part mandate:
 - a. Review Communication 19-5,
 - b. Determine how the communication should be handled,
 - c. Return recommendations to Presbytery.
3. It should be clear that this mandate does not include an assessment of the documents mentioned in Communication 19-5. Your Committee is neither a Study Committee nor a Judicial Committee. The Committee's task is to review the Communication from St Lawrence Presbytery and make recommendations as to its disposition.
4. The Committee chairman contacted Barry York at RPTS concerning the response of the Seminary faculty to the LeFebvre writings listed in Communication 19-5. President York responded that the faculty passed the following motion in September.

Michael LeFebvre's book, *The Liturgy of Creation*, was discussed due to concerns raised with RPTS over its content. Therefore, it was moved, seconded, and passed that Barry York, C. J. Williams, and Jeff Stivason read and assess *The Liturgy of Creation*, for confessional subscription and hermeneutical legitimacy, with the aim to arrive at a Seminary position on Michael LeFebvre's book.

President York indicated that the results of their assessment would be made available to us in late December or early January.

5. At the suggestion of one of the committee members, the chairman contacted both the clerk and moderator of St Lawrence Presbytery concerning the timeline they hoped to follow. Their responses are as follows.

- a. Allan MacLoed, St Lawrence Moderator, sent the following note on Tuesday, 11-26-2019: "Apologies for delay in reply. I have contacted Brian and told him that what he has sent you reads fine and presents the mind of the St. Lawrence Presbytery on this matter."

- b. Brian Coombs, St Lawrence Clerk, relayed the following message the same day:

Our timetable-hope was that we would hear [a] reply from the GLG Presbytery before our spring Presbytery meeting in mid-April. This would mean that the GLG Presbytery complete whatever review they do re the orthodoxy and implications of Rev. LeFebvre's writings, and have their response to us preferably by the end of March, so that we have time to review their conclusions in preparation of our spring Presbytery meeting.

The GLG Presbytery Committee could likely fulfill this in view of their consideration now (Oct - Dec), and even after hearing from the seminary faculty committee (Dec - Jan).

Our Presbytery would probably appreciate the matter going from their committee back to their AIC (between Jan - March), lest if it goes to their spring Presbytery, it would thwart our ability to know whether or not we need possibly bring the matter to Synod (if necessary and appropriate) until the following year (2021). I gather that there might be some element of further discussion between our Presbyteries (GLG - SL) about their conclusions between Jan-Mar 2020.

6. After some discussion, your committee determined that the best course of action is for our Presbytery to do its work irrespective of the timeline and desires of the St Lawrence Presbytery without rushing to action but allowing time for Presbytery and a proposed Study Committee to perform the work necessary. Your Committee carried out its work exclusively by email. The email chains reflecting committee discussion are available upon request.

7. Because a book and papers of the AIC Moderator are the subject of the Study Committee proposed by this Committee, and because other Ruling Elders serving on the AIC work closely with the Moderator on the same Session involved in his oversight, in order to avoid even a perceived conflict of interest, your Committee holds that it is best that the current AIC not act on its report or its recommendation to Presbytery. Your committee makes this judgement not to impugn the integrity or fidelity of the AIC members, but to recommend what it believes to be the best path forward for Presbytery.

8. Your Committee makes the following recommendation:

In response to Communication 19-5, that Presbytery, meeting at Elkhart Reformed Presbyterian Church, 5-7 March 2020, appoint a three-man Study Committee: (1) to read the Rev. Dr. Michael LeFebvre's book *The Liturgy of Creation: Understanding Calendars in Old Testament Context*, his article "Adam Reigns in Eden," and his Biologos post, "Cracking the Code of Cadence: The Genre of Genesis"; (2) to review the report of the RPTS faculty committee assigned to evaluate *The Liturgy of Creation* for confessional subscription and hermeneutical legitimacy; (3) to evaluate the LeFebvre writings and make a judgment as to confessional subscription and hermeneutical legitimacy; and (4) to report the committee's assessment and judgment to Presbytery along with any relevant recommendations.

9. Finally, we recommend that this committee be dismissed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken De Jong
Joel Hart
Jon Hughes
Denny Prutow, Chairman
Ian Wise