
SOUTHFIELD REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Where Christ is the center of it all

February 17, 2020

Dear Fathers and Brethren,

On 10/25/19, the St. Lawrence Presbytery (SL-P) sent our presbytery a unanimous request to appraise the recent writings of Dr. Michael LeFebvre on the subject of creation in order “to ascertain whether or not these writings are consistent with the subordinate standards of the RPCNA” (Comm. 19-5). On 12/19/19, the committee appointed to review this communication (hereafter: *19-5 Committee*) submitted its report, which included the following recommendation.

In response to Communication 19-4, 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.

On 2/6/20, Dr. LeFebvre submitted a letter to this presbytery (Comm. 20-01) clarifying certain aspects of the overall background, purpose, and content of his recent writings. “I have pursued all of my writing projects in good faith and with a clear conscience,” he writes, “believing each of these endeavors to be consistent with my ordination vows. Nevertheless, there are apparently some who think otherwise.” Dr. LeFebvre then notes that “clouds of suspicion concerning my work seem to be mounting yet no one is offering this court any concrete allegations to address” (20-10, 2).

On 2/10/20, the 19-5 Committee issued a request (on behalf of the AIC) to RPTS President Barry York, asking for a copy of the review paper authored by RPTS faculty members (York, Stivason, Williams) in appraisal of Dr. LeFebvre’s recent writings. This request was promptly refused on account of President York’s hesitancy to interfere with our presbytery’s internal process in response to Communication 19-5. It is as yet unclear exactly what this review paper contains and what role it might play in terms of specifying any *concrete allegations* against Dr. LeFebvre’s writings.¹

All things considered, we agree with Dr. LeFebvre’s assessment of the situation. It is undeniable that ominous clouds of suspicion have arisen against his reputation in recent months. It is equally undeniable that, from an internal standpoint, our presbytery has neither received nor produced a list of *concrete allegations*.

One could argue that the proper remedy is simply for this court to appoint the three-man study committee recommended above. To some extent, this is true. However, it is curious that we would take such a major investigative step without first outlining a brief list of the specific concerns which have prompted the investigation. To be clear, this is not a criticism of the 19-5 Committee. They are fulfilling their mandate and we support their recommendation wholeheartedly. However, we also believe that Dr. LeFebvre’s desire to see a list of *concrete allegations* is entirely understandable. To that end, we are submitting this letter in order to outline a brief list of *concrete concerns* (albeit not formal “allegations”) stemming from our brother’s recent writings. It is our hope and recommendation that, should the proposed three-man study committee be appointed, our letter could then be referred to that committee as a resource to aid them in their work.²

The structure of this paper is very simple. In Part One, we will summarize five doctrinal concerns; in Part Two, we will summarize four ecclesiastical concerns; and in Part Three, we will list eight judicial questions.³

PART ONE — FIVE DOCTRINAL CONCERNS

Communication 19-5 is essentially urging us, as a court, to read over Dr. LeFebvre’s writings and then “to ascertain whether or not these writings are consistent with the subordinate standards of the RPCNA.” Presumably, this means that several our

¹ No member of our session has read the seminary professors’ review paper or enjoyed access to its contents in any way, shape, or form.

² Optimally, this three-man committee would see fit to answer the list of questions we have outlined in Part Three, but we do not wish to complicate matters by adding to their workload.

³ This paper is not intended to function as a scholarly review, comprehensive summary, or exegetical analysis of Dr. LeFebvre’s writings.

1 brethren in the SL-P have *already* examined these writings and uncovered doctrinal content which they feel might
2 potentially violate our standards. As a session,⁴ we felt it our duty to familiarize ourselves with Dr. LeFebvre’s writings
3 (including his recent letter to the presbytery on 2/6/20) in order to see if we could identify any of these potential doctrinal
4 errors. This inquiry has yielded the following areas of concern.

6 **1. Dr. LeFebvre openly, admittedly, and rather adamantly disagrees with RPT 4.4.**

7 RPT 4.4 states, “We deny that man evolved from any lower form of life” (Gen. 2:7, 21-22). In 2002, the RPCNA Synod
8 officially ruled that “The Confession and the Testimony (Chapter 4) both reject ‘the theory of evolution’ commonly taught,
9 including macro-evolution.”⁵

10 In Communication 20-01, Dr. LeFebvre freely states his exception to RPT 4.4, and acknowledges that, in this respect, “my
11 writings represent an actual contradiction to our Testimony” (20-01, 7). In *The Liturgy of Creation* (TLC),⁶ he discusses the
12 debate between creation and evolution as it relates to the relationship between faith and science. In his estimation, the
13 modern-day scientific theory of evolution — which includes the belief that man evolved from lower forms of life (i.e. macro-
14 evolution) — “happens to be one of the most profound scientific insights of the modern world” (TLC, 202). Elsewhere, he
15 cites nineteenth century theologian A.A. Hodge in an attempt to distinguish between evolution as a scientific hypothesis of
16 human origins and evolution as a philosophy of life (20-01, 7). According to RPCNA theologian J.G. Vos, however, the events
17 of the twentieth century have militated against such a distinction. Writing in his *Commentary on the Westminster Larger*
18 *Catechism (V-LC)*,⁷ Vos seeks to answer the question ‘What should we think of the theory of human evolution?’

19 **(a)** Even from the scientific viewpoint it is only a theory, and lacks conclusive proof of its validity. **(b)** It is clearly
20 contrary to the teaching of the Bible, which unquestionably represents mankind as a special creation of God, wholly
21 apart from the brutes. **(c)** It is true that the acceptance of evolution as truth often, if not always, leads to a gradual
22 deadening of the conscience and weakening of the sense of moral responsibility. It is entirely true that World War II
23 was, in the deepest sense, a result of widespread acceptance of the doctrine of human evolution as the truth,
24 accompanied by a gradual but very real rejection of the Bible, by highly educated people, as their standard of faith and
25 life. The logic involved in this moral decline is unavoidable when once the assumption of the truth of human evolution
26 has been made. If we were not created by God, then we are not responsible to God for our beliefs and actions. If we are
27 not responsible to God for our beliefs and actions, then we are responsible only to our fellow man and to ourselves. In
28 that case there is no absolute, permanent moral standard; what is right and wrong changes with the times and the
29 circumstances. From this position it is but a step to the ideology of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. **The apparently**
30 **innocent theory of evolution has wrought tremendous havoc in human life. We should always realize**
31 **that evolution is not merely a biological theory; it is also a philosophy of life held by many** (V-LC, 42-43).

32 In his commentary on Genesis, Vos unpacks further reasons which serve to buttress the RPCNA’s historic rejection of human
33 evolution, distinguishing it from genetic variation within created kinds (RPT 4.3),⁸ and explaining how it contradicts
34 Genesis and subverts the essential tenets of Biblical theism.

⁴ Please note that, due to his ongoing service to the court as a parliamentarian and member of the five-man *19-5 Committee*, **Elder Jon Hughes voluntarily recused himself from the entire process (“start to finish”) of proposing, composing and approving this paper.** It does not necessarily reflect his own personal views on this matter, as he seeks to maintain an appropriate level of objectivity in his service to the court.

⁵ Minutes of Synod, 136-139. Although the Midwest Presbytery’s attempt to tighten the denomination’s confessional language on six-day creation failed, the synod did address the meaning of our subordinate standards as originally intended. According to the synod, “Current studies on the ‘original intent’ of the Confession on the creation days support the view that ‘days of ordinary length’ are meant in the expression ‘in the space of six days.’” While recognizing a measure of diversity within the denomination, synod stated “We are persuaded that the Midwest Presbytery declaration does express what was almost certainly the original intent of the Confession of Faith” and “We suspect that this view of the WCF ‘original intent’ is widely held across the RPCNA.” The synod concludes by explaining that “the best answer to this situation is for us to resolve, in the Confession’s own language, to let ‘the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture’ be the supreme judge of any controversy in this matter, in the context of ongoing ministry that seeks to be biblically and confessionally faithful before the Lord.”

⁶ Michael LeFebvre, *The Liturgy of Creation: Understanding Calendars in Old Testament Context* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2019).

⁷ J.G. Vos, *Commentary on the Westminster Larger Catechism* Ed., G.I. Williamson (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2002)

⁸ In Communication 20-01, Dr. LeFebvre attempts to interpret RPT 4.3 as referring to a form of evolution: “Note that later in the very same paragraph, we actually affirm that some processes of evolutionary change do occur “within [the] genetic limitations provided [by God] at creation.” Since the very same paragraph acknowledges some forms of evolutionary processes in nature, the earlier statement cannot be read as a blanket characterization of all theories of evolution. It must serve to qualify those particular theories of evolution which are reprehensible: namely, those theories of evolution which deny the active sovereignty of God” (20-01, 6).

1 **All theories of evolution that deserve to be called evolution are ruled out by the Creation account of**
2 **Genesis. Some people, it is true, have used the term evolution in an improper sense, as meaning the**
3 **development of varieties within a single natural species, such as the many breeds and varieties of**
4 **pigeons that have been produced from the original wild pigeon. This, however, is not properly called**
5 **evolution.** Real evolution involves the crossing of the boundary lines between species. It implies that there are no
6 absolute, hard and fast lines between species, but that one species can gradually, in the course of time, develop into
7 another. For example, birds are said to have developed from reptiles, and reptiles in turn from still more primitive
8 organisms. This theory of development cannot be reconciled with the repeated statement of Genesis 1: God create
9 distinct living organisms, each “after its kind.” These “kinds” spoken of in Genesis 1 are the true natural species. There
10 may be great development within any one kind, but one kind can never develop into another kind... The words “after
11 its kind” imply that there is a God-ordained barrier between true natural species. Each of the kinds was specially
12 created by God. **Consistent evolution is atheistic;** it does not take God into account. It holds that living forms
13 developed of themselves, themselves, without divine plan or control. **There is, however, a theory known as**
14 **theistic evolution, which holds that evolution was God’s method of creating living things. This is really**
15 **a contradiction in terms, for “theistic” means “connected with belief in God,” while “evolution”**
16 **means “developing of itself without outside control.” This idea of theistic evolution is not consistent,**
17 **and it has been held chiefly by religious scholars who were embarrassed by the claims of unbelieving**
18 **scientists. Really, theistic evolution is ruled out by the Genesis account just as truly as atheistic**
19 **evolution.** Those who talk about “creation by evolution” do not understand the real meaning of the terms “creation”
20 and “evolution.” **Creation is by definition supernatural; evolution is by definition a natural process. To**
21 **speak of “creation by evolution” is like speaking of an honest thief or a truthful liar.⁹**

22 Dr. LeFebvre, by contrast, accuses those who portray the theory of evolution as inconsistent with the God of the Bible of
23 “accepting the atheist’s premise” and making “a huge concession that actually undermines evangelism” (TLC, 204). He
24 criticizes creation science advocate Ken Ham for asserting that “There is a ‘deep incompatibility’ with evolution... and God’s
25 Word” (TLC, 204). In his estimation, those who pit the Bible against evolutionary science are not only “to blame when young
26 people ‘lose their faith’ during college” (TLC, 208); they also serve to negatively impact society in other spheres, “such as
27 mental illness, vaccinations, diet and nutrition, treatment for addictions, climate change, various medical therapies and
28 branches of medicine, and a host of alternative therapies” (TLC, 209)

29 Operating on the assumption that Christian parents who refuse vaccines on religious grounds do not *also* have “medical
30 reasons” for their decision, Dr. LeFebvre asserts that “evolution-stoked suspicions of science are having an indirect but
31 significant impact on the health of our children” (TLC, 210). Next, citing a work by Jay E. Adams, he accuses anti-evolutionist
32 Christians of negatively impacting “addiction treatment and mental health care, where ‘biblical counseling’ movements
33 often deny the validity of mental illness and express distrust of psychiatric research because of its ‘evolutionary basis’” (210).

34 Perhaps most troubling of all, Dr. LeFebvre asserts that **“the uncritical acceptance of the atheistic claim that**
35 **Genesis is incompatible with evolution must be rejected”** (TLC, 205). To say the least, this statement is a bit
36 startling, given that RPT 4.4 states, “We deny that man evolved from any lower form of life” (Proof-texts: Genesis 2:7, 21-
37 22). Has the RP Testimony embraced an “atheistic claim”? Does RPT 4.4 express a teaching that “must be rejected”? Did
38 J.G. Vos undermine Christian evangelism and endanger the health of our children simply because he maintained, in accord
39 with our standards, that human evolution is “ruled out by the Creation account of Genesis”?

40 Dr. LeFebvre’s published writings on this point raise serious questions about the constitutionality of both his thesis and his
41 uncharacteristically aggressive style of rhetoric.¹⁰

42 43 **2. Dr. LeFebvre openly denies that the Scriptures “actually require that Adam was the sole progenitor of** 44 **all subsequent human beings.”¹¹**

45 In accordance with Scripture, the Westminster Standards present Adam and Eve as “our first parents” (WCF 6.1) and “the
46 root of all mankind” (WCF 6.3). They were the first human beings created by God, such that Adam’s “posterity” includes “all

⁹ J.G. Vos, *Genesis* (Pittsburgh: Crown and Covenant, 2006) Ch. 3, Section 7

¹⁰ Our Directory for Church Government (D-2) plainly states that “No one should be admitted” to communicant membership “who assumes an attitude **antagonistic** to the principles set forth in the standards of the Church.” Our ninth ordination query requires church officers to promise that they will “engage to follow no **divisive** courses from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted” (G-3). Has Dr. LeFebvre been faithful to abide by these stipulations? This is just one of the many questions that must be answered.

¹¹ Michael LeFebvre, “Adam Reigns in Eden: Genesis and the Origins of Kingship” *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology* Vol. 5.2 (Oct, 2018) 27

1 mankind descending from him by ordinary generation” (WLC 22).¹² As J.G. Vos observes, our standards do not *merely*
2 present Adam as humanity’s federal or covenantal head in the covenant of works; they *also* present him the sole progenitor
3 of the human race.

4 **Besides being our representative in the covenant of works, what other relationship did Adam have to**
5 **us?** Besides the federal or covenant relationship, which came to an end when he committed his first sin, Adam also
6 had a natural relationship to us as our first ancestor. This natural relationship continued through his life. (V-LC, 62)

7 **What have we received from Adam by reason of his natural relationship to us?** We have derived our
8 physical or bodily life from Adam through our parents and more remote ancestors, who descended from him. (62)

9 In his article, *Adam Reigns in Eden* (ARE), Dr. LeFebvre veers off into an entirely different direction. He grants that
10 Christians have traditionally regarded Adam as the sole progenitor of the human race, such that all of humanity descends
11 from one set of parents: Adam and Eve. At the same time, he maintains that “the human race embodies remarkable genetic
12 diversity that, according to the operations of genetics, cannot be explained by a single set of parents. As a result, new doubts
13 have been raised about the historical viability of the Genesis narrative concerning Adam” since “It is now regarded as
14 genetically improbable—some insist, impossible—for the human race to have arisen from a single couple” (ARE, 25).

15 In order to retain the notion of a historical Adam without contradicting modern genetic theory, Dr. LeFebvre proposes an
16 *alternative* to the “traditional dogma” of Adam as the sole progenitor of the human race. “In this paper,” he explains, “I will
17 argue that... Adam is introduced as humanity’s first father, not in his reproductive capacity but in his royal appointment”
18 (ARE, 26). In his view, since the Scriptural “narrative is an etiology [origin-story] of kingship with only tangential relevance
19 at best to the question of humankind’s biological origins,” it “does not actually require that Adam was the sole progenitor of
20 all subsequent human beings” (ARE, 26-27). That is, “Genesis 2:4-4:26 is silent regarding the family tree of human biology”
21 and “The Bible offers neither reason to dispute nor to affirm the findings of modern genetics” (ARE, 55).¹³

22 On one level, Dr. LeFebvre claims to leave room for the possibility that “Adam may also have been the first human being
23 and progenitor of the whole human race.” At the same time, he insists Genesis narrative “is an etiology of kingship, not
24 human biological origins” (ARE 27). As the article unfolds, it becomes increasingly evident that he is seeking to marshal
25 Scripture evidence *against* the notion that the Bible presents Adam as the first human being. For instance, he observes that
26 while Melchizedek’s genealogy is notably absent from the Genesis narrative, the Priest-King of Salem “did have biological
27 parents”, whose names are left out in order to emphasize Melchizedek’s “direct ordination by heaven”. Dr. LeFebvre then
28 draws a direct comparison between Melchizedek and Adam, asserting that “Adam’s exaltation ‘from the dust’ without human
29 genealogy likely serves this same purpose.” In other words, Adam’s biological parents were “likely” left out of the Genesis
30 narrative in order to emphasize him as being “chosen by heaven and a ‘son of God’” (ARE, 33).¹⁴

31 Speaking of Cain’s banishment “east of Eden”, Dr. LeFebvre observes,

32 Remarkably, **the narrative presupposes the presence of other populations** already dwelling to the east of
33 Eden! **Up to this point in the narrative, it is possible to regard Adam as the first king and also**
34 **humanity’s first progenitor.** It is only as the narrative follows Cain away from Eden into “the land of wandering”
35 that we realize **the author’s worldview includes other populations already present...** A broader population
36 is **assumed** throughout the Eden narrative, although it is **clearest** when Cain is banished to the lands of the east,
37 where he fears attack, finds a wife, and founds a city (ARE, 43-44).

38 According to Dr. LeFebvre, the origin of mankind recorded in Genesis 1:26-27 is fundamentally “different story” from the
39 formation of Adam and Eve as recorded in Genesis 2. “The origin of all humanity,” he writes, “is the burden of a passage in
40 the previous chapter: Genesis 1:26-27. That text reports that God created humankind in the categories of “male and female”
41 by his command. But the Eden narrative tells a different story” (ARE, 45). Elsewhere, concerning the original creation of
42 mankind in Genesis 1:26-27, he explains,

¹² Adam is also included in the physical genealogy of our Lord, albeit by the extraordinary generation of the virgin birth (Lk. 1:35; 3:38).

¹³ This raises questions regarding Dr. LeFebvre’s perspective on the universal flood narrative recorded in Genesis 6-9, since a literal reading of the text would indicate that every human alive today descends from a single couple: Noah and his wife.

¹⁴ Here is the entire excerpt: “There is one other king in Genesis who is introduced without human genealogy: Melchizedek (14:18). Presumably, Melchizedek did have biological parents. However, the New Testament author of Hebrews interprets the absence of genealogy as indicating his direct ordination by heaven: ‘he is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God’ (Heb. 7:3). Adam’s exaltation ‘from the dust’ without human genealogy likely serves this same purpose, presenting him as chosen by heaven and a ‘son of God’ (Lk. 4:38; cf., Gen. 1:26-27; 1Chr. 1:1).” (ARE, 33)

1 That **previous creation narrative** introduces the purpose of all humanity as one of dominion over the world to
2 foster its fruitfulness (1:26-30) as regents of God. It is not a coincidence that the Eden account follows by describing
3 the world's need for cultivation and the inauguration of one particular king, Adam, to lead his offspring (2:18, 21-24;
4 4:1-2) in that duty (ARE, 34).

5 It is Dr. LeFebvre's contention that the account of mankind's origin in Genesis 1:26-27 is *not the same* as the account of
6 Adam and Eve in Genesis 2; rather, it records a "*previous creation narrative*". If this is correct, then the notion of Adam as
7 the *first human being* and *sole progenitor of the human race* is not merely improbable or unlikely; it is impossible! For this
8 reason, we find Dr. LeFebvre's repeated attempts to portray his thesis as somehow allowing for the possibility that "Adam
9 might be regarded as the physical father of the entire human race" (20-01, 12) as entirely unpersuasive. If the account of
10 mankind's origin in Genesis 1:26-27 records a "different story" that predates the "new dynasty" of Adam and Eve, then Adam
11 *cannot* be regarded as the sole progenitor of the human race.¹⁵

12 By contrast, our doctrinal standards speak of Adam and Eve as "our first parents" (WCF 6.1) and "the root of all mankind"
13 (WCF 6.3). Recognizing this fact, Dr. LeFebvre attempts to reinterpret these phrases along legal/covenantal lines rather
14 than physical/genealogical ones. "It is my understanding," he remarks, "that phrases like 'root of all mankind' and 'first
15 parents' are used in WCF 6.3 — and throughout the Westminster Standards — to identify Adam's federal office, which is
16 precisely what my work affirms" (20-01, 9-10).

17 Quite strikingly, Dr. LeFebvre does not attempt to cite even one standard Reformed theologian or well-respected
18 confessional commentator to justify his *non-genealogical* interpretation of the phrases "our first parents" (WCF 6.1) and
19 "the root of all mankind" (WCF 6.3). Instead, he appeals to a series of confusing observations regarding covenant theology
20 and cites two ambiguous quotations from John Calvin on original sin. We will have opportunity to address this material
21 below under Concern #3. For now, it is enough to simply observe that Dr. LeFebvre has provided no direct historical
22 precedent for his interpretation of the confession.

23 A.A. Hodge, in seeking to expound several relevant portions of our standards (WCF 6.1, 6.3; WLC 17, WSC 10), explains
24 that "God created one human pair, from whom the entire human race has descended by generation."¹⁶ If time would permit,
25 we could cite other well-respected Reformed theologians to confirm that this is the common (if not exclusive) interpretation
26 of the phrases "our first parents" (WCF 6.1) and "the root of all mankind" (WCF 6.3). Historically speaking, we are not aware
27 of any major intramural debates within the confessional Reformed community regarding the straightforward genealogical
28 interpretation of these phrases. The phrases "our first parents" and "the root of all mankind" are not the only portions of the
29 standards which appear to be in direct conflict with Dr. LeFebvre's position. As we have already seen, our brother regards
30 the origin of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 as a historical event *subsequent* to the *original* creation of a population of image-
31 bearing humans (male and female) in Genesis 1:26-27. For this reason, he suggests Adam "likely" had biological parents
32 (just like Melchizedek), and that the existence of either pre-Adamic or extra-Adamic humans provides a plausible
33 explanation for the violent population of wanderers east of Eden. In other words, he entertains the notion that, in accord
34 with the latest theories of modern geneticists, there *have* been (and *continue* to be) many human beings throughout the
35 world who do not descend physically from Adam, and that no teaching in the Bible precludes this possibility. But is his
36 allowance for this possibility consistent with the official teaching of the RPCNA? Can the hypothesis that Adam's physical
37 descendants are merely a *subset* of humanity be reconciled with the teaching of the Westminster Standards? From what we
38 can tell, the answer to this question would appear to be "No." Allow us to explain.

39 WLC Q. 22 asks, "Did all mankind fall in that first transgression?" The answer is as follows: "**The covenant being made
40 with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him
41 by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.**"

42 Notice that WLC 22 does *not* define Adam's covenantal constituency *merely* in terms of a legal/ covenantal status, but as a
43 physical "posterity." When Adam sinned, the legal/covenantal constituency that "sinned in him and fell with him" is
44 explicitly identified as "all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation." According to Dr. LeFebvre himself, this
45 phrase "ordinary generation" refers to ordinary *physical* generation as distinguished from the unique virgin birth of Christ,
46 thereby serving to "highlight the one exception to humanity's shared guilt from original sin" (20-01, 12-13). But if this is
47 correct, then WLC 22 is plainly asserting that every human being represented by Adam in the covenant of works descended
48 from him by ordinary *physical* generation. That is, Adam's covenantal "posterity" consisted in *his ordinary physical
49 descendants*. Therefore, to entertain the possibility that only a subset of humanity descends from Adam by ordinary
50 generation is to entertain the possibility that Adam represented only a subset of humanity when he sinned and fell in his

¹⁵ Incidentally, Dr. LeFebvre does not address our Lord's use of Genesis 1:27 in tandem with Genesis 2:24 in Matthew 19:4-5, which would seem to imply that Genesis 2 is simply providing additional details regarding the creation of man as recorded in Genesis 1:26-27.

¹⁶ A.A. Hodge, *The Westminster Confession: A Commentary* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2002) 85

1 first transgression. For this reason, Dr. LeFebvre’s thesis concerning the possibility of pre-Adamite and extra-Adamite
2 human beings would appear to undercut the very foundation of Reformed covenant theology as defined by our subordinate
3 standards, which consistently affirm both the universal *and* hereditary character of Adam’s covenantal posterity.

4
5 **3. Dr. LeFebvre reduces the confessional teaching that God “formed the body of the man of the dust of the
6 ground” to a mere “maybe” (WLC 17).**

7 According to WLC 17, “After God had made all other creatures, **he created man male and female; formed the body
8 of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man**, endued them with living, reasonable,
9 and immortal souls; made them after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; having the law of God
10 written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it, and dominion over the creatures; yet subject to fall.” Commenting on this
11 section, J.G. Vos writes,

12 **What is the importance of the fact that Adam’s body was made out of the dust of the ground?** This
13 shows the truth that our physical bodies are composed of the same chemical elements as the ground, a fact which can
14 be demonstrated by chemical analysis. (V-LC, 41)

15 **Why did God make Eve from a rib of Adam, instead of making her of the dust from the ground as he
16 had made Adam?** It was necessary for the organic unity of the human race that Eve’s body be derived from that of
17 Adam, not created separately from the lifeless elements. Otherwise it would not be true that God had made of one
18 blood (Acts 17:26) all nations of men. According to God’s place, the human race must have one single origin, not two.
19 (V-LC, 41)

20 As we have seen above, Dr. LeFebvre suggests that, in all likelihood, both Adam and Eve had ordinary biological parents
21 and grandparents dating back to the “previous creation narrative” described in Genesis 1:26-27. By contrast, WLC 17
22 presupposes the traditional Reformed exegesis of Genesis 2 as a more detailed explanation of the events described in Genesis
23 1:26-27. Immediately after asserting that God “created man **male and female**” (citing Genesis 1:26-27), the catechism adds
24 that He “formed the body of **the man** of the dust of the ground, and **the woman** of the rib of the man” (citing Genesis 2:7,
25 22), and then speaks of their being created “after his own image”. In other words, the allusion to Genesis 2:7, 22 (the special
26 creation of Adam and Eve) is sandwiched in between two allusions to Genesis 1:26-27 (creation of male and female, made
27 in God’s image). Notice also that the catechism refers to our first parents as “the man” and “the woman” (rather than “Adam
28 and Eve”), thereby emphasizing that “the man” and “the woman” specially formed in Genesis 2:7, 22 correspond to the
29 “male” and “female” created in Genesis 1:26-27. There is absolutely nothing in either the grammar or the context of WLC 17
30 to suggest that the Westminster Assembly intended this reference to Adam’s special creation “from the dust of the ground”
31 to mean anything other than a literal, historical fact.

32 Nevertheless, Dr. LeFebvre appears to be heading in a far different direction.

33 Walter Brueggemann¹⁷ has shown that the idiom “from the dust” is used in the Hebrew Scriptures as a metaphor of
34 royal election. For example, God described his enthronement of King Baasha in these terms: “I exalted you out of the
35 dust and made you a leader over my people Israel” (1 Kgs. 16:2). More particularly, the Song of Hannah treats this
36 “from the dust” imagery as a stock descriptor of all Israel’s princes: “He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the
37 needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes” (1Sam. 2:8; cf., Psa. 113:7-8). Brueggemann concludes, “To
38 be taken ‘from the dust’ means to be elevated from obscurity to royal office... Adam, in Genesis 2, is really being
39 crowned king over the garden with all the power and authority which it implies.” All humankind are regarded as being
40 “dust” (e.g., Job 10:9; Psa. 103:14), but it is kings who are lifted “from the dust.” In the cases of David and Baasha, the
41 phrase “from the dust” is a metaphor. Nothing is said about Adam’s biological lineage apart from his fashioning from
42 the dust (2:7), leading many to conclude it is not a metaphor in Adam’s case. **Maybe Adam was literally formed
43 out of dust.** Regardless of the literal or metaphorical intent of Adam’s calling from the dust, the use of this idiom
44 without reference to lineage may have a further significance. (ARE, 26)

45 WLC 17 presents God’s formation of Adam from the dust of the ground as a literal historical event, which (along with the
46 formation of Eve from his rib) is described *generally* in Genesis 1:26-27 and *specifically* in Genesis 2:7. At best, Dr. LeFebvre
47 regards this literal historical event as a “maybe”. More could be said regarding the exegetical gymnastics employed here, but
48 from a purely confessional standpoint, his position is difficult to reconcile with a straightforward reading of WLC 17.

¹⁷ For those unfamiliar with Dr. Walter Brueggemann and his approach to Scripture, you may enjoy reading the following interview:
<https://theotherjournal.com/2004/10/10/the-gospel-vs-scripture-biblical-theology-and-the-debate-about-rites-of-blessing-an-interview-with-walter-brueggemann/>

1 **4. Dr. LeFebvre openly affirms that “Original sin is transmitted to all humankind by imputation due to**
2 **Adam’s covenantal office (not by impartation through generational descent).”**

3 “Admittedly,” writes Dr. LeFebvre, the attempt “to isolate Adam’s royal precedence from issues of human biological origins
4 raises other questions.” For instance, how can one believe “the traditional dogma that Adam’s sin brought guilt upon the
5 whole world resulting in the curse of death and separation from God” and yet also maintain the occurrence of “pre-fall evils
6 and deaths” (ARE, 55)? This truly is a pertinent question! According to Dr. LeFebvre, “Psalm 104:20-23... acknowledges
7 some degree of natural violence as part of the creation order” (ARE, 55). Presumably, he is referring to verse 21, which states
8 that “The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their food from God.” His implicit assumption appears to be that
9 everything described in Ps. 104 was present in God’s creation prior to the fall. However, the final verse of the Psalm (104:35)
10 demonstrates this to be a faulty assumption: “May sinners be consumed from the earth, and the wicked be no more.”

11 According to WLC 28, one of “the punishments of sin in this world” is “the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes.”
12 The catechism cites Romans 8:20-21, which states that “the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of
13 Him who subjected it in hope because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the
14 glorious liberty of the children of God.” This word “corruption” is consistently employed by Paul to speak of death (1 Cor.
15 15:42; Gal. 6:8) and, therefore, serves to indicate that creaturely death is the result of man’s fall into sin. For this reason, it
16 would appear that Dr. LeFebvre’s hypothesis places him at odds with a Biblical and confessional understanding of the fall
17 and its creaturely implications. Additionally, by calling into question the hereditary character of Adam’s covenantal
18 constituency (as outlined in Concern #2 Above), he has essentially backed himself into a theological corner with respect to
19 the confessional doctrine of original sin.

20 Before addressing Dr. LeFebvre’s comments on original sin, it may prove beneficial to provide some background.
21 Theologians tend to speak of original sin in both a **broad sense** (i.e., the guilt of Adam’s first sin and the sinful corruption
22 of human nature) and a **narrow sense** (i.e., the sinful corruption of human nature alone).¹⁸ When addressing the question
23 of how the guilt of Adam’s first sin is transferred to his posterity, the confessional Reformed tradition unanimously answers
24 that it is ‘by imputation’. When answering the question of how the sinful corruption of human nature (often simply called
25 “original sin” in the narrower sense) is conveyed to his posterity, the consistent answer is ‘by natural generation’. Hence, we
26 read in WCF 6.3, “[Adam and Eve] being the root of all mankind, **the guilt of this sin was imputed**; and the **same**
27 **death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary**
28 **generation**.” It is notable that when reiterating this same truth in WLC 25-26, the phrase “corrupted nature” (Q. 26) is
29 replaced with the phrase “original sin” (that is, in its narrower sense). Our standards are crystal clear in articulating this
30 historic distinction between the conveyance of Adam’s guilt (by legal imputation) and the conveyance of his sinful corruption
31 (by natural generation).

32 **WLC Q. 25**, “Wherein consisteth the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?”

33 **A.** The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original
34 righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled,
35 and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is
36 commonly called *original sin*, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions. (Rm. 5:12, 19; 3:10-19; 5:6; 8:7-
37 8; Gen. 6:5; Jm. 1:14-15; Matt. 15:19)

38 **WLC Q. 26**, “How is original sin conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity?”

39 **A.** Original sin is **conveyed** from our first parents unto their posterity **by natural generation**, so as all that proceed
40 from them **in that way** are conceived and born in sin. (Ps. 51:5; Job 14:4)

41 The teaching that original sin (in its narrow sense of sinful corruption) is conveyed by natural generation is consistently
42 reflected within the Reformed creedal tradition.¹⁹ According to the French Confession (1559), “all the offspring of Adam are
43 infected with the contagion of original sin, which is ever hereditary to us by propagation” (RC-V2, 144). The Belgic
44 Confession (1561) calls original sin “a hereditary disease” (RC-V2, 433). The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England
45 (1563) speak of it as “birth-sin” which “naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam” (RC-V2, 757). According to the
46 Canons of Dort (1619),

¹⁸ Cf. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, Vol. 1. Ed. James T. Dennison (Phillipsburg: P&R: 1992) 629-630. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 227. Wilhelmus a Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1992) 382.

¹⁹ Each of the ensuing citations appears in: *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation*, Ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008-2014). Abbreviation: RC-V#.

1 Man after the fall **begat** children in his own likeness. A corrupt stock **produced** a corrupt offspring. Hence all the
2 **posterity** of Adam, Christ only excepted, have **derived corruption from their original parent**, not by imitation,
3 as the Pelagians of old asserted, but **by the propagation of a vicious nature**, in consequence of the just judgment
4 of God (RC-V4, 135).

5 In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*,²⁰ John Calvin repeatedly and explicitly asserts the conveyance of original sin by
6 natural generation. Here are some examples.

7 Therefore all of us, who have descended from impure seed, are born infected with the contagion of sin... But we will
8 not find the beginning of this pollution unless we go back to the first parent of all, its source. (ICR-V1, 248)

9 We must surely hold that Adam was not only the progenitor but, as it were, the root of human nature; and therefore
10 in his corruption mankind deserved to be vitiated. (ICR-V1, 248)

11 There is nothing absurd, then, in supposing that, when Adam was despoiled, human nature was left naked and
12 destitute, or that when he was infected with sin, contagion crept into human nature. **Hence, rotten branches came
13 forth from a rotten root, which transmitted their rottenness to the other twigs sprouting from them.
14 For, thus were the children corrupted in the parent, so that they brought disease upon their children's
15 children. That is, the beginning of corruption in Adam was such that it was conveyed in a perpetual
16 stream from the ancestors into their descendants.** For the contagion does not take its origin from the
17 substance of the flesh or soul, but because it had been so ordained by God that the first man should at one and the
18 same time have and lose, both for himself and for his descendants, the rights that God had bestowed upon them. But
19 it is easy to refute **the quibble of the Pelagians, who hold it is unlikely that children should derive
20 corruption from godly parents**, inasmuch as the offspring ought rather to be sanctified from their parents' purity.
21 **For they descend not from their parents' spiritual regeneration but from their carnal generation...**
22 Original sin, therefore, seems to be a **hereditary depravity** and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of
23 the soul, which first makes us liable to God's wrath, then also brings forth in us those works which Scripture calls
24 "works of the flesh" (ICR-V1, 250-1).

25 According to Calvin, it was a "quibble of the Pelagians" to hold that "it is unlikely that children should derive corruption
26 from godly parents." Furthermore, in affirming the conveyance of original sin by natural generation, Calvin makes it clear
27 that he is not advocating a traducianist perspective on the transmission of the soul by natural generation. He is a staunch
28 creationist in this respect, holding that the soul is immediately infused by God into the human body at conception.
29 Nevertheless, this does not prevent him from teaching that original sin is conveyed by natural generation "in a perpetual
30 stream from the ancestors into their descendants." Indeed, in his commentary on Psalm 51:5, he argues that "It was therefore
31 a gross error in Pelagius to deny that sin was hereditary, descending in the human family by contagion."²¹

32 Calvin is not the only creationist to affirm the conveyance of original sin by natural generation. In the first volume of his
33 classic work, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*,²² Francis Turretin begins his discussion of original sin by inquiring "Whether
34 any original sin or inherent stain and depravity may be granted, propagated to us by generation," to which he responds, "We
35 affirm against the Pelagians" (IET-V1, 629). Turretin, a passionate creationist and critic of traducianism, then outlines the
36 three major questions which Reformed theologians typically address with respect to original sin. In brackets, we have linked
37 each question to its corresponding treatment in the WLC.

38 There are three questions in reference to [original sin]: **(1)** as to its existence or whether it is [WLC 22] **(2)** as to its
39 nature or what it is [WLC 25]; **(3)** as to its propagation or how it passes over to us [WLC 26]." (IET-V1, 630)

40 Turretin proceeds to defend the confessional Reformed doctrine of original sin, repeatedly affirming its conveyance by
41 natural generation, and entering into an extended discussion as to why this teaching is consistent with a creationist (as
42 opposed to a traducianist) view of the soul (IET-V1, 640-643). In his view, mankind is "naturally corrupt by generation"

²⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 1. Ed. John T. McNeill (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960)

²¹ Note also Calvin's comments on Genesis 5:3: "In saying that Seth begat a son after his own image, he refers in part to the first origin of our nature: **at the same time its corruption and pollution is to be noticed, which having been contracted by Adam through the fall, has flowed down to all his posterity.** If he had remained upright, he would have **transmitted to all his children** what he had received: but now we read that Seth, as well as the rest, was defiled; because Adam, who had fallen from his original state, **could beget none but such as were like himself.** If any one should object that Seth with his family had been elected by the special grace of God: the answer is easy and obvious; namely, that a supernatural remedy does not prevent **carnal generation from participating in the corruption of sin.** Therefore, according to the flesh, Seth was born a sinner; but afterwards he was renewed by the grace of the Spirit."

²² Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, Vol. 1. Ed. James T. Dennison (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1992).

1 (634) such that original sin “passes over to posterity by generation” (IET-V1, 637). Numerous quotations could be provided
2 to demonstrate Turretin’s thoroughly creationist outlook on the conveyance of original sin.²³

3 Concerning “The Propagation of Sin”, Turretin asks, “How is original sin propagated from parents to their children?” (IET-
4 V1, 640). Note the similarities between this question and WLC 26, which asks “How is original sin conveyed from our first
5 parents unto their posterity?” The Westminster Assembly is echoing the historic Reformed approach to this doctrine. Hence,
6 the assembly’s *answer* — “Original sin is conveyed by our first parents to their posterity by natural generation” — is also
7 very similar to that of Turretin, who writes,

8 First, generally, the mode of this propagation is the impure generation by which we are born corrupt and sinners from
9 those who are corrupt and sinners. For as a man begets a man and a leper a leper, it ought not to seem strange for a
10 sinner to beget a sinner also like himself. Thus both the nature and condition of all those generating demands (who
11 beget a species similar to themselves, as to the substance and accidents of the species and the law of generation
12 established by God, no less than after the fall than before it) requires. As therefore before the fall God willed an upright
13 nature to be propagated, so after the fall he willed a corrupt nature as the punishment of sin.” (IET-V1, 640)

14 Thus sin is properly propagated neither in the soul nor in the body taken separately, but in the man because neither
15 the soul nor the body apart, but man in Adam sinned so far as there was power in him (in the body with regard to
16 substance, in the soul with regard to subsistence). Nor is it an objection that natural generation does not seem to be
17 able to propagate what is moral. For that hereditary taint is so moral objectively that it does not cease to be natural
18 originally because it is an inseparable attendant of the corrupt nature; just as original righteousness, which was moral,
19 yet would have been propagated by natural generation, if man had persisted in integrity.” (IET-V1, 640-641)

20 In order therefore to explain this mode in the best way possible, we hold three degrees of that propagation: (1) in the
21 conception of the body from an unclean seed; (2) in the creation of the rational soul with the want of original
22 righteousness; (3) in the constitution of the whole compound by the union of the soul with the body.” (IET-V1, 641)

23 Calvin and Turretin are not the only creationists to affirm the conveyance of original sin by natural generation. In his
24 monumental work, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service* (CRS), Reformed creationist Wilhelmus a Brakel, writes,

25 How is original sin transmitted from Adam to his descendants?” The manner in which guilt is imputed we have already
26 demonstrated earlier so that the only question remaining is to show how man’s natural corruption is inherited... **Thus**
27 **one human being generates another human being of like passions, and one sinner another sinner; in**
28 **like manner the sin of Adam is transmitted to his descendants.**” (CRS-V1, 394)

29 Writing in the 19th century, creationist Charles Hodge also affirms this teaching in the second volume of his *Systematic*
30 *Theology*. Expounding John 3:6 (“Whatever is born of flesh is flesh.”), he remarks, “This clearly means that, That which is
31 born of corrupt parents is itself corrupt; and is **corrupt in virtue of its descent or derivation.**”²⁴ Writing in the 20th
32 century, Louis Berkhof outlines *both* the hereditary and covenantal aspects of original sin, carefully distinguishing between
33 the conveyance of sinful corruption by natural generation, on the one hand, and the imputation of guilt, on the other.

34 [Adam’s first] sin carried permanent pollution with it, and a pollution which, because of the solidarity of the human
35 race, would affect not only Adam but all his descendants as well. As a result of the fall the father of the race could only
36 pass on a depraved human nature to his offspring. From that unholy source sin flows on as an impure stream to all
37 the generations of men, polluting everyone and everything with which it comes in contact. It is exactly this state of
38 things that made the question of Job so pertinent, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” Job 14:4.
39 But even this is not all. Adam sinned not only as the father of the human race, but also as the representative head of
40 all his descendants; and therefore the guilt of his sin is placed to their account, so that they are all liable to the
41 punishment of death.²⁵

42 In similar fashion, J.G. Vos maintains that “Our first parents being sinful, their posterity must be sinful too” such that
43 “Natural generation produces only sinful human nature.” He continues, “We have derived our physical or bodily life from

²³ “The common law that everything begotten is like the begetter; as much as to species as with regard to the accidents belonging to the species. Generation is the communication not only of essence, but also of the qualities and accidents belonging to the species (as therefore a man generates a man, so a sinner can generate no other than a sinner).” (IET-V1, 634) “In the propagation of sin, an accident does not pass over from subject to subject. The immediate subject of sin is not the person, but human nature vitiated by the actual transgression of the person which, being communicated to posterity, this inherent corruption in it is also communicated. Therefore as in Adam, the person corrupted the nature; so in his posterity, the nature corrupts the person” (IET-V1, 636). “Although the mode of the propagation of sin is obscure and difficult to explain, the propagation itself (which Scripture so clearly asserts and experience confirms) is not on that account to be denied. However what is to be thought of the mode of propagation will be discussed in a special question” (IET-V1, 636).

²⁴ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 242

²⁵ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (London: Banner of Truth, 2003) 220

1 Adam through our parents and more remote ancestors, who descended from him.” Moreover, “because of the broken
2 covenant of works, every human being comes into existence morally and spiritually dead, because deprived of the life-giving
3 operations of the Holy Spirit.” At the same time, Vos warns against interpreting the hereditary transmission of original sin
4 in a *purely physical, bodily, or biological* fashion. While we are “born with a sinful nature because of our connection with
5 Adam, our first ancestor,” this does **not** “mean that we inherit a sinful nature as we might inherit blonde hair or a tall
6 stature”. After all, “Sin is a spiritual fact, not a bodily property or characteristic.” As such, “the Bible does not warrant a belief
7 that a sinful nature is transmitted by the mechanism of *biological* heredity as a *physical* characteristic” such that original sin
8 is “transmitted from parent to child by *biological* heredity.” Otherwise, if original sin were conveyed by means of a purely
9 *physical* or *biological* mechanism, “we would receive it from our immediate parents rather than from Adam.” Rather, “our
10 sinful nature comes to us by reason of our natural birth as descendants of Adam,” albeit “not as a person might ‘inherit’ blue
11 eyes or brown hair from his parents” (V-LC, 62-64).

12 Additional quotations could be multiplied to demonstrate that trusted Reformed theologians on both sides of the
13 creationist/traducianist debate consistently affirm the conveyance of original sin (in its narrower sense) by natural
14 generation, not by imputation. Nevertheless, we think it sufficient to add one additional testimony: an excerpt from the
15 *Westminster Annotations*, a comprehensive Bible commentary authored by eleven English Puritans around the time of the
16 Westminster Assembly. Six of these men were members of the assembly itself. Commenting on Genesis 5:3, they maintain
17 a delicate, confessional balance between a hereditary view of original sin and a creationist view of the soul.

18 God by creation made man in his image, but **man by procreation begets one not in God’s, but in his own**
19 **image; that is, not only like him in condition as a man, but in his corruption as a sinner**, Job 14:14. For
20 generation in the flesh, and regeneration in the Spirit, proceed from different principles, that being human, this divine;
21 **nor so in his own likeness, as that soul was begotten by Adam as well as his body, for as at first the**
22 **soul had a different Original from that of the body, which was not deduced out of the matter of which**
23 **it consisted, but infused into the body afterward**; so hath it been in the generation ever since: wherefore the
24 fathers of our flesh, and the fathers of our spirit, are expressly distinguished, Heb. 12:9.

25 Returning to Dr. LeFebvre, it is clear that our brother is seeking to maintain (1) that Adam’s *physical* posterity is merely a
26 subset of humanity, and (2) that Adam’s *covenantal* constituency is universal, including all of humanity (Christ excepted).
27 Logically speaking, in order to maintain both of these positions, he would need to deny the confessional Reformed teaching
28 that original sin is conveyed by natural generation. Not surprisingly, this is precisely what he does in Communication 20-
29 01, asserting that “Original sin is transmitted to all humankind **by imputation** due to Adam’s covenantal office (**not by**
30 **impertation through generational descent**), just as justification is transmitted by imputation due to Christ’s
31 covenantal office (not by impartation through the sacraments)” (20-01, 12).

32 In defense of this view, Dr. LeFebvre attempts to enlist the Protestant Reformers, claiming that “Prior to the Reformation,
33 the dominant view in the Western Church was that original sin was transmitted from Adam through physical reproduction”
34 and that “The reformers generally renounced the older notion that sin is transferred from Adam through physical lineage,
35 thereby raising the stature of Adam’s titles as statements of his federal office and removing the sense that physical progeny
36 plays an instrumental role in the transmission of sin” (20-01, 10). “The reformers,” he maintains, “held that original sin is
37 communicated due to Adam’s office, not through the mechanism of physical generation” (20-01, 10). **We have already**
38 **seen above that this claim is historically inaccurate.**

39 According to Dr. LeFebvre, one major reason for the abandonment of natural generation as the mode by which original sin
40 is conveyed lies in the “debate about traducianism,” which holds that the soul itself is transmitted from parents to children
41 through natural generation. Most of the Reformers, of course, held to a *creationist* perspective, teaching that the soul is
42 immediately infused into the body by God at conception. Therefore, he argues that the Reformers, due to their rejection of
43 traducianism (the transmission of the soul from parents to children), also came to reject the transmission of original sin
44 from parents to children (20-01, 10).²⁶ **Once again, based upon our survey of Reformed confessions and**
45 **theologians, we can easily see that this claim is equally inaccurate.**

²⁶ Dr. LeFebvre: “One of the particularly testy debates that surrounded these views in the Early to Reformation Church was the debate about traducianism. Traducianism asserts that, in order to posit the spread of original sin to all humanity, it is necessary to hold that every human receives, not only his or her physical body from Adam, but that the soul is also formed through the reproductive process and descends from Adam generationally. However, the clear development of a covenant framework for theology in the Reformation period facilitated a general rejection of these mechanistic theories of sin’s transmission and of the human soul’s origin. Instead, the transmission of original sin is due to Adam’s office as our covenant head (under the Covenant of Works). One of the impacts of this theological development was the general rejection of traducianism among the reformed churches in preference for creationism (a term used, in this context, to posit the view that God creates each human soul new at the point of conception). Louis Berkhof offers this summary: “In the Western Church the theory of Traducianism gradually gained ground... It seemed to fit best with the doctrine of the transmission of sin that was current in those circles [i.e., in the Western Church]... Ever since the days of the Reformation [however,] this [i.e., creationism] has been the common view in Reformed circles.” At least with respect to the human soul, this development resulted in the widespread repudiation of any necessity

1 In further support of his outlook on original sin, Dr. LeFebvre cites two quotations from Calvin's commentaries: one from
2 Genesis 3:6²⁷ and another from John 3:6.²⁸ With all due respect to Dr. LeFebvre's scholarship, we find it odd that he chose
3 to cut and paste two tiny fragments from Calvin's commentaries, while making no reference whatsoever to Calvin's robust
4 treatment of original sin (including its conveyance by natural generation) in his Institutes. In fact, the former quotation (on
5 Genesis 3:6), is immediately preceded by a word of caution from Calvin himself that "**A fuller proof of this matter, and
6 a more ample definition of original sin, may be found in the INSTITUTES.**" Calvin then asserts that the fact that
7 we are "lost and condemned, and subjected to death, is both our hereditary condition, and, at the same time, a just
8 punishment, which God, in the person of Adam, has inflicted on the human race." That is, he reiterates the confessional
9 Reformed outlook that original sin is both hereditary and legal. His additional comments, which Dr. LeFebvre claims reject
10 the hereditary conveyance of original sin, do nothing of the sort. They are simply intended to show that heredity *alone* (apart
11 from God's judicial appointment) is not a sufficient explanation for the conveyance of original sin. Calvin's point is not to
12 deny the hereditary character of original sin (which he had just affirmed) but to refute those whose traducianist
13 understanding of the soul had perhaps tempted them to deny the corresponding legal foundation of original sin.

14 In the second quotation (on John 3:6, "whatever is born of flesh is flesh"), Calvin again combats traducianists, who "imagine
15 that not only our bodies, but also our souls also, descend to us from our parents." Such traducianists, he says, think it "absurd
16 that original sin, which has its peculiar habitation in the soul, should be conveyed from one man to all his posterity, unless
17 all souls proceeded from his soul as their source." In other words, the *traducianists* are criticizing Calvin and the creationists
18 for holding (1) that original sin is transmitted by natural generation, and (2) that the soul is not transmitted by natural
19 generation. At no point in his response to this objection does Calvin deny the conveyance of original sin by natural
20 generation. He is simply drawing some very fine distinctions in order to demonstrate that this teaching does not necessarily
21 lead to a traducianist view of the soul. Those familiar with 16th and 17th century polemics on this topic (Cf. Brakel, Turretin)
22 will immediately recognize what Calvin is doing here and interpret his more obscure and fragmented comments in light of
23 his more clear, thorough, and decisive teaching in the Institutes. **Hence, we do not believe that the teachings of
24 Calvin lend support to Dr. LeFebvre's position that original sin is conveyed solely by imputation and not
25 by natural generation, as WLC 26 explicitly teaches.**

27 **5. Dr. LeFebvre appears to affirm the existence of real (as opposed to merely *apparent*) contradictions 28 within the historical narratives of Scripture.**

29 According to WLC 4, "The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the **Word of God**, by their majesty and **purity**; by the
30 **consent of all the parts**, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince
31 and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation: but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the
32 Scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the **very word of God.**"

33 When we speak of the *purity* of the Scriptures, we mean that they are unmixed with error. When we speak of the *consent of*
34 *all the parts* of Scripture, we mean that Scripture is a single, unified body of revealed truth with no contradictions (whether
35 intentional or unintentional). In other words, it is the perfect *Word of God*. For this reason, WCF 1.5 reminds us that we
36 ought to have a "full persuasion and assurance of the **infallible truth** and **divine authority**" of Scripture. To speak of
37 God's Word as "infallible truth" is to go a step beyond inerrancy. God's infallible word not only *contains* no errors or
38 contradictions; it is *incapable* of errors or contradictions. When it speaks, we hear the voice of our eternally self-consistent
39 God who is Truth itself.

40 Scripture's inerrancy, infallibility, and self-consistency are of particular importance in relation to the historical narratives
41 of the Bible. When Scripture presents us with a historical record, we are to regard the events and details described in that

for regarding the soul as descending physically from Adam. This development is arguably much more profound than our modern questions about bodily descent from Adam, since it is the soul and not the body that is generally held as the primary locus of the individual's motivations to sin." (20-01, 10-13)

²⁷ Calvin: "That we are ... lost and condemned, and subjected to death, is both our hereditary condition, and, at the same time, a just punishment, which God, in the person of Adam, has inflicted on the human race... Nor is it necessary to resort to that ancient figment of certain writers, that souls are derived by descent from our first parents. For the human race has not naturally derived corruption through its descent from Adam; but that result is rather to be traced to the appointment of God..."

²⁸ Calvin: "This [biblical language] led many persons to imagine that not only our bodies, but our souls also, descend to us from our parents; for they thought it absurd that original sin, which has its peculiar habitation in the soul, should be conveyed from one man to all his posterity, unless all our souls proceeded from his soul as their source. And certainly, at first sight, the words of Christ appear to convey the idea, that we are flesh, because we are born of flesh. I answer, so far as relates to the words of Christ, they mean nothing else than that we are all carnal when we are born... for the corruption of all mankind in the person of Adam alone did not proceed from generation, but from the appointment of God, who in one man had adorned us all, and who has in him also deprived us of his gifts. Instead of saying, therefore, that each of us draws vice and corruption from his parents, it would be more correct to say that we are all alike corrupted in Adam alone [i.e., every human's guilt is received immediately from Adam, not through the mediation of intervening generations], because immediately after his revolt God took away from human nature what He had bestowed upon it."

1 record as having occurred precisely as recorded. This is made plain by the Apostle Paul in his epistles. It is important to
2 remember that the Apostle Paul not only authored a large portion of the inspired New Testament; he was regarded as one
3 of the greatest Hebrew scholars of his day, and stands alone as the greatest Hebrew scholar in the history of the Christian
4 church. Surely if anyone has the academic and spiritual credentials to instruct us on how to interpret the narratives of
5 Biblical history, it is the Apostle Paul. Now, it just so happens that in 1 Corinthians 10:1-22, we find Paul expounding the
6 narrative of Israel's exodus and subsequent wilderness wandering, as recorded in Pentateuch (his specialty). Ultimately,
7 Paul's goal is to draw from this narrative an exhortation to "flee from idolatry" (v. 14). However, he begins by recounting the
8 literal history as recorded by Moses, emphasizing all that the Corinthians had in common with their spiritual "forefathers"
9 in the wilderness. The passage is filled with doctrine, typology, ethical teaching, and liturgical instruction, all flowing from
10 the historical details of the Pentateuch (including the *chronological* and *numerical* details in verse 8!). Nevertheless, the
11 most striking statement of all (at least for our purposes) comes in verse 11, where Paul summarizes his fundamental
12 approach to interpreting Biblical narratives: "**Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were**
13 **written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.**" According to Paul, we should approach
14 Biblical narratives with three basic assumptions.

- 15 1. **These things happened.** That is, "these things" (the events and details recorded in the text) actually happened;
16 and they happened precisely as recorded in the inspired narrative.
- 17 2. **These things happened to them.** That is, these literal, historical events were experienced firsthand by the Bible
18 characters who are said to have witnessed them.²⁹
- 19 3. **These things happened to them as examples.** That is, in the providence of God, the exemplary, didactic,
20 and/or typological features of the recorded events are, in their totality, *embedded in the literal historical events and*
21 *circumstances themselves as they actually happened.*
- 22 4. **These things happened as examples and they were written.** That is, these historical events were accurately
23 recorded under divine inspiration precisely *as they happened*, such that the full theological and practical usefulness
24 of the event itself is likewise embedded within the inspired Scriptural narrative.
- 25 5. **These things happened as examples and were written for our admonition.** That is, Paul's role as an
26 inspired author handling previously inspired texts (such as the Pentateuch) is not to revise those texts in order to
27 *insert* exemplary, didactic, or typological material *into* the text, but to *draw* these implications *out* of the text,
28 recognizing its full sufficiency *as written* to address the intellectual, spiritual, practical, and pastoral needs of God's
29 people (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- 30 6. **These things happened as examples and were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of**
31 **the ages have come.** The narratives of the Pentateuch (and of the Bible as a whole) were inspired by the God who
32 has decreed the end from the beginning, and who designed even the *earliest* portions of recorded Biblical history
33 *not primarily* for a pre-scientific, Mesopotamian "original audience", but *chiefly* for New Testament believers
34 throughout this entire age (including the modern scientific era), as we seek to advance His kingdom through the
35 Great Commission.

36 Having outlined what we believe to be a thoroughly confessional and biblical approach to inerrancy, we must express great
37 concern regarding certain aspects of Dr. LeFebvre's book, *The Liturgy of Creation*. Some of what he has written appears to
38 be in conflict with a confessional view of the inerrant self-consistency of God's Word. Allow us to cite two main examples.

39 In *The Liturgy of Creation*, Dr. LeFebvre essentially proposes a *Liturgical Framework Hypothesis* by which the historical
40 chronologies of the Pentateuch (including the creation account in Genesis 1) are to be reinterpreted. He explains,

41 "It is my thesis that dates are added to certain events for their liturgical remembrance, not as journalistic details. Dates
42 link a historical memory to the specific festivals that **later Israel** observed. The dates of the festivals are set by the
43 heavenly lights and the naturally occurring seasons and harvests of Canaan (as we saw in chapters one through three).
44 The timing of the festivals are not based on the historical events they commemorate. Rather, the reverse is the case.
45 The historical events are ascribed with the dates of Israel's festivals in order to associate those memories with **later**
46 **Israel's** progress through each year's calendar" (TLC, 60)

47 Applying his hypothesis to the creation narrative of Genesis 1, Dr. LeFebvre asserts,

48 I have shown that the Pentateuch regularly employs narratives for law-instruction purposes, and when dates are
49 added, they often serve as calendar narratives... In this chapter, I want to show that the creation week is another of

²⁹ As regards the six-day creation week, that "Bible character" is the Triune God Himself, who bears eyewitness testimony of these events on multiple occasions throughout the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 1:1-2:4; Job 38:4-13; Prov. 8:22-31).

1 the Torah's calendar narratives. Genesis 1:1-2:3 provides a narration of creation events, but the timing and details of
2 its telling are transparently "re-mapped" to the cadence and themes of Israel's weekly sabbath festival. The purpose
3 of the narrative is not simply to teach the people what happened but to teach them how to remember God's work and
4 God's rest through their own weekly labors and worship. This is, in fact, what the fourth commandment identifies as
5 the creation narrative's function: *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all*
6 *your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your*
7 *son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within*
8 *your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the*
9 *seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.* (Ex. 20-8-11). (TLC, 113-14)

10 Dr. LeFebvre's Liturgical Framework Hypothesis may, therefore, be summarized in the following manner.

- 11 1. The Old Testament festivals (including the weekly Sabbath) were not instituted by divine revelation around the time of
12 the historical events in the Pentateuch which they commemorate, but were instead grounded in various cosmic and
13 agricultural cycles (i.e. sun, moon, seedtime/harvest) observed by "later Israel" *after* its conquest and settlement of the
14 land of Canaan (that is, long after the deaths of Moses and Joshua).³⁰
- 15 2. Following the settlement of Canaan, an inspired Biblical author "attached" these already-existing natural festivals to key
16 events in Israel's history (i.e. Creation, Flood, Exodus, Wilderness, etc.) by revising and restructuring the Pentateuch
17 narratives around the OBSERVANCE DATES of "later Israel's" agricultural festival seasons in the land of Canaan,³¹ in
18 the same way that the observers of Christmas might *attach* the historical event of Christ's birth to the *naturally-*
19 *occurring* winter solstice and then assert that "Jesus was born on December 25."³²
- 20 3. The twenty-one dates recorded within the Pentateuch (including the six days of creation in Genesis 1) reflect the
21 OBSERVANCE DATES of "later Israel's" agricultural festivals in Canaan rather than the original OCCURRENCE DATES
22 of the events which those festivals later served to commemorate.³³
- 23 4. The six ordinary days of creation in Genesis 1 were never intended to record the literal, chronological, historical event
24 of creation precisely as it *actually* occurred, but simply to provide a religious calendar that would enrich "later Israel's"
25 existing seven-day agricultural cycle in the land of Canaan by linking it to a joyful celebration of God's work of creation.³⁴

³⁰ "In ancient Israel, the nation's calendar and clock were literally 'in the skies.' The three main divisions of the calendar—day, month, and year—were directly governed by the sun and the moon. The Hebrew calendar also included 'complete' groupings of these divisions: particularly groups of seven days (the week), the seven festival months, and sevens of years (the sabbath and jubilee years)" (TLC, 36). "God brought Israel into "the land of milk and honey" to bless them there, and the calendar on display in the heavens provided Israel with the cadence to steward their land in harmony with his provision of seasons and rain to make them fruitful in it" (TLC, 37). "In addition to the seven harvest-timed festivals, Israel also celebrated the weekly sabbath (possibly coordinated with the phases of the moon), new moon days (at the sighting of the first crescent moon on the first day of each month), and New Year's Day (being the first day of the month of the spring equinox). Altogether, these cosmic and agricultural cadences constituted the calendar of Israel" (TLC, 52-3).

³¹ "The events of the exodus were therefore attached to Israel's festival calendar, providing a historical (rather than mythical) redemption narrative for the nation's worship and labor through their seasonal harvests" (TLC, 14). "The Pentateuch provided Israel with these narratives in order to instruct them on how to keep the festival" (TLC, 66).

³² "This method of assigning dates would be like telling the Christmas story and stating that 'Mary laid her baby in a manger on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month.' That was not the date on which Jesus was actually born, but the date would associate that memory with the timing of its annual observance (December 25). For certain, modern historical conventions would regard such a saying as inaccurate... But the problem lies not in inaccurate texts but rather our anachronistic expectations about the purpose for an author's giving a date to an event" (TLC, 61). "Christmas commemorates the day Jesus was born, yet its assignment to December 25 is based on the winter solstice rather than any evidence that Jesus was actually born that day" (TLC, 81)."

³³ "When all of the Pentateuch's twenty-one dates are compiled and plotted over Israel's festival calendar, the congruences are striking (see the calendar at the end of this chapter). Seventeen of the twenty-one fall directly on festival dates. Only four of the Pentateuch's dated events fall outside of festivals, and those four dates are all grouped within the same two-week window at the end of the second month. Furthermore, all the Pentateuch's dated events occur as part of two major narrative sequences... It is my thesis that dates are added to certain events for their liturgical remembrance, not as journalistic details. Dates link a historical memory to the specific festivals that later Israel observed. The dates of the festivals are set by the heavenly lights and the naturally occurring seasons and harvests of Canaan (as we saw in chapters one through three). The timing of the festivals are not based on the historical events they commemorate. Rather, the reverse is the case. The historical events are ascribed with the dates of Israel's festivals in order to associate those memories with later Israel's progress through each year's calendar (TLC, 59-60). "Neither the flood nor the exodus would likely have occurred within a single year in their actual happening. Nevertheless, in their retelling in the Pentateuch, both the flood deliverance (from the deluge judgment to Noah's altar) and the exodus deliverance (from the angel of death to Moses's tabernacle) are ascribed with dates that fit each redemption story to a single year in Israel's calendar" (TLC, 60-61). "The text ascribes the [Exodus from Egypt] as complete ("within that same day") in order to memorialize the entire event in the single, overnight Passover festival, not to suggest that several million slaves were actually gone before sunrise" (TLC, 90).

³⁴ "The Pentateuch provided Israel with these narratives in order to instruct them on how to keep the festivals" (TLC, 66). "We should no more use the creation week narrative to determine how long God spent creating the world than use dates in the book of Exodus to calculate the duration of Israel's journey from Egypt to Sinai, or other dates in the Pentateuch to calculate the time it took to build the tabernacle. The Torah was not written to preserve

1 Dr. LeFebvre's hypothesis necessarily implies that the dates of the Pentateuch must have been revised (albeit under
2 inspiration) by a post-conquest editor living in the land of Canaan. These revisions served to replace the *occurrence* dates
3 of the actual historical events with *observance* dates corresponding to "later Israel's" liturgical/agricultural festal calendar.
4 Hence, the twenty-one dates listed in the narratives of the Pentateuch are to be understood not as *chronological facts*, but
5 as *liturgical links* to "later Israel's" festal calendar, designed to aid God's people in their ongoing celebration of these past
6 events throughout the year (TLC, 80-93). Included among these revised Pentateuch dates is, of course, the six-day creation
7 account recorded in Genesis 1 and alluded to in Exodus 20:11 and 31:17. Therefore, according to this view, the chronological
8 content and structure of *these* passages was supplied by an inspired revisionist for the purpose of linking the historical event
9 of creation to "later Israel's" pre-existing seven-day agricultural cycle in the land of Canaan.

10 As noted above, Dr. LeFebvre suggests that the seven-day week is likely grounded in nature ("possibly the cycles of the
11 moon") rather than in the literal example/appointment of God at the time of creation, or in the original utterance of the
12 fourth commandment at Sinai (TLC, 26-28). That is, "later Israel's" seven-day week in the land of Canaan existed *prior*
13 to the final composition of the revised six-day creation account in Genesis 1, and *prior* to the final composition of the fourth
14 commandment as reportedly spoken by God in Exodus 20:11 and 31:17. Therefore, Dr. LeFebvre's thesis requires that each
15 of these references to six-day creation *must* have been *added* to these Pentateuch narratives by an inspired post-conquest
16 revisionist many years *after the fact*.

17 A major problem with this theory, however, is that it implies a direct contradiction in the Word of God. To say that the six-
18 day structure of creation originated *after* Israel's conquest of Canaan is to flatly contradict the clear teaching of the
19 Pentateuch itself. According to Exodus 20:1, *every word* of the Ten Commandments was spoken *audibly* by God to Moses
20 and the Israelites at Mount Sinai long before Israel conquered Canaan (Cf. Ex. 19:9; 20:22; Dt. 4:36; Heb. 12:25). Included
21 among these spoken words is the chief reason annexed to the fourth commandment (WLC 120), which declares, "For in six
22 days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the
23 LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." Not only does the text assert that God uttered "all these words" at Sinai,
24 but the words "blessed" and "hallowed" clearly allude back to God's original Sabbath institution in Genesis 2:3 ("Then God
25 blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."). This
26 implies that the six-day creation account (including its pre-fall Sabbath institution) was likely already known to God's people
27 from ancient times, as Calvin himself declares.³⁵ In any case, Exodus 20 does not present itself as merely the *descriptive*
28 *historical account* of an anonymous narrator which might be revised later. It asserts a bold historical and factual claim
29 regarding a miraculous redemptive-historical event: *God has spoken with an audible voice from heaven, and **this** is what*
30 *He has said*. Notice how the text reads:

31 And **God spoke all these words, saying...** Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor
32 and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor
33 your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who
34 is within your gates. **For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in**
35 **them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.**
36 (Exodus 20:1, 8-11) ... Then the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'You have seen that
37 **I have talked with you from heaven.**'" (Exodus 20:1, 8-11, 22)

38 According to the inspired words of Exodus 20, God spoke these precise words to His people at Mount Sinai *prior to Israel's*
39 *forty-year wilderness wandering*. By contrast, Dr. LeFebvre's thesis regards these words as the product of a post-conquest
40 revisionist. Apparently the Holy Spirit inspired a man living long after the death of Moses and Joshua to *revise* the text of
41 Exodus 20 (in conformity to his own *restructured* six-day account of Genesis 1) and yet to *leave intact* the claim that "God
42 spoke all these words, saying..." If Dr. LeFebvre's thesis is correct, then, in point of fact, God did *not* "speak all these words"

those chronologies nor to answer many other questions that modern-day historians and scientists like to ask, interesting and worthy as those questions may be. The Torah was compiled to instruct the faith of God's people within the cadences of the sabbaths and festivals of farming and worship" (TLC, 120-1).

³⁵ "Now it is true that Moses did not belong to that time, but we know the people of Israel knew about their origin. Each generation of the holy fathers always taught the succeeding generation what was necessary for their salvation. We have Abraham, who has the testimony that he will instruct his family in every true teaching [Gen. 18:19]. It is true that after the death of Abraham, the Jews, except for Isaac and Jacob and the holy patriarchs, were not always as diligent as they should have been... but the fact remains that what Noah had declared was not forgotten. So what Noah knew about God had also been passed on. As is said concerning Seth's lineage, the worship of God was restored and the people began to invoke him. Consequently, the memory of what Adam and Abel had known was not lost (cf. Gen. 4:26). Although Cain's lineage infected the world with many errors, God preserves some seed so that he will be known in the world. **In a word, we understand that the creation of the world was handed down from father to son until God determined that it be recorded in the law and entrusted to the charge of his servant Moses.**" John Calvin, *Sermons on Genesis 1-11* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2009) 2-3.

1 audibly from heaven, but they are instead the words of an inspired editor.³⁶ As noted above, this implies a direct
2 contradiction in the Word of God.

3 Dr. LeFebvre's thesis is confronted with precisely the same problem in relation to Exodus 31:12-18, in which Moses records
4 God's direct oral speech to him on Mount Sinai, long before the settlement of Canaan.

5 And **the LORD spoke to Moses, saying**, "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you
6 shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD
7 who sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely
8 be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. Work shall be
9 done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath
10 day, he shall surely be put to death. Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath
11 throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; **for**
12 **in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was**
13 **refreshed.**' And when He had made an end of **speaking with him on Mount Sinai**, He gave Moses two tablets
14 of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

15 All of this raises the unavoidable question as to whether or not God *actually* spoke to Moses using the words recorded in
16 the text. If we say *no*, then we have denied the inerrancy of the passage, which claims that God *did* speak these words to
17 Moses. If we say *yes*, then we must acknowledge that the six-day creation account existed among the Israelites *long before*
18 the settlement of Canaan, thereby undermining Dr. LeFebvre's entire thesis. Simply put, Dr. LeFebvre's theory that the six-
19 day creation framework was tacked on by an *inspired post-conquest revisionist* appears increasingly difficult to reconcile
20 with the inspiration, inerrancy, and infallible self-consistency of Scripture as taught in our standards.

21 A second major instance of our concern regarding inerrancy appears in the Introduction to *The Liturgy of Creation*, where
22 Dr. LeFebvre illustrates his approach to *Pentateuch* chronology by applying it to the *Gospels*. In particular, he focuses upon
23 what evangelical commentators have long identified as an *apparent* discrepancy between the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew,
24 Mark, and Luke) and John's Gospel with respect to the timing of our Lord's crucifixion. In the Synoptics, Jesus is said to
25 institute the Lord's Supper in connection with the Passover meal, implying that his crucifixion occurs *subsequent* to the
26 Passover. In John's Gospel however, at least three passages seem to conflict with this chronology: **(1)** The phrase "before
27 the Feast of the Passover" in John 13:1, just before the washing of the disciples' feet;³⁷ **(2)** The refusal of the religious leaders
28 in John 18:28 to enter Pilate's Praetorium on the morning *after* the Last Supper "lest they should be defiled, but that they
29 might eat the Passover";³⁸ and **(3)** The assertion in John 19:14 that Jesus was crucified on the "Preparation Day of the
30 Passover", which some regard as the daylight hours just prior to Passover evening.³⁹ Adhering to the inerrancy and infallible
31 self-consistency of Scripture, evangelical commentators have tended to offer reasonable explanations for these difficulties,
32 demonstrating this to be an *apparent* contradiction rather than a *real* one.

³⁶ Moses' later rehearsal of the Decalogue (Dt. 5:1-22) appears to offer a more general synopsis of God's spoken law to the next generation, *based upon*
"all these words" recorded in Exodus 20. It is also possible that God spoke *everything* contained in *both* accounts, and that the passages may be
harmonized to provide the full record. Either way, God spoke the words of Exodus 20:11 to Moses at Sinai.

³⁷ **Reasonable Explanation:** (1) In John 13:1, the phrase "before the Feast of the Passover" simply describes the preparatory period "when Jesus knew
that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father." John is stressing our Lord's willingness *prior to the Passover* to proceed
forward *to the Passover* because "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." It does *not* require that all the events recorded
in John 13 happened before the Passover. (2) Other commentators have supposed that the initial events of John 13 took place at the pre-Passover
dinner part in Bethany, as recorded in Matthew 26:2. (3) It is possible that there is another explanation of which we are yet unaware.

³⁸ **Reasonable Explanation:** The phrase "eat the Passover" does not refer exclusively to the *proper* Passover meal eaten on Passover evening, as
described in Exodus 12. During the *week-long* Feast of Unleavened Bread (before and after Passover evening), the Jews would partake of peace
offerings at the temple, which, in keeping with the language of Scripture (2 Chron. 35:6-13), they called "Passover offerings". Hence, the religious
leaders' hesitancy to defile themselves in Pilate's Praetorium could just as easily have been motivated by a desire to maintain their eligibility to "eat the
Passover" offerings at the temple throughout the remainder of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

³⁹ **Reasonable Explanation:** While John 19:14 speaks of "the Preparation Day of the Passover," surrounding context seems to emphasize preparation
for the Sabbath, not the Passover. In other words, the phrase "Preparation Day" indicates the day before the Sabbath, or a *Sabbath-Preparation Day*.
For this reason, Mark 15:42 speaks of "the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath" (Cf. Lk. 23:54). The additional phrase "of the Passover"
simply means that this particular Sabbath-Preparation Day happened to fall within the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the highlight of which is the Passover.
Hence, the phrase "Preparation Day of the Passover" is equivalent to the phrase "Sabbath-Preparation Day during Passover Week". The point is that
the Jews were not preparing for the Passover meal (which had concluded the previous night); they were preparing for the Sabbath day. Hence, we read
in v. 31, "Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high
day) [i.e. a Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread], the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."

1 Dr. LeFebvre takes an entirely different approach to this apparent chronological discrepancy, between John and the
2 Synoptics. He maintains that John’s Gospel actually *does* present a *different* chronology than the one found in the Synoptics.
3 He explains,

4 All three Synoptics identify the Last Supper as a Passover meal on Passover night, and all three date the crucifixion to
5 the morning after the Passover meal. **John, however, tells the same events with a different chronology that**
6 **adds significant insight into the meaning of Christ’s death**—and that introduces something fascinating about
7 calendars in the Bible... Thus John’s Gospel presents the crucifixion as taking place *before* the Passover meal, while
8 the Synoptics report that the crucifixion occurred on the day *after* the Passover meal... Under the conventions of
9 modern historical narrative, these differences in date and time seem “contradictory,” as though someone got their
10 facts wrong. Many attempts have been made to “reconcile” the chronology of the Synoptics and that of John.
11 **However, the best explanation is found not by resolving or smoothing over these differences but by**
12 **listening to them.** These crucifixion accounts were not so poorly compiled as to overlook such obvious timing
13 differences. These divergent timelines give a harmonious witness that Jesus is our Passover Lamb, but they do so by
14 **differently aligning the crucifixion events** with their shadows in the Jewish Passover rituals.

15 According to Dr. LeFebvre, the Gospel writers did not simply record the chronological details of Jesus’ life based upon the
16 historical events as they occurred. Rather, they intentionally *manipulated* the chronological details in their narratives in
17 order to *align* them with Old Testament types and shadows, and to provide a basis for New Testament liturgical ordinances,
18 such as the Lord’s Supper (or Eucharist). Therefore, in some instances, he argues, one Gospel writer will present
19 chronological details which directly contradict the chronological details of another Gospel writer. Rather than seeking to
20 reconcile these contradicting assertions, Dr. LeFebvre simply urges us to appreciate their laudable objective of aligning the
21 life of Christ with Old Testament shadows.⁴⁰ It should be noted that he is not simply acknowledging a variety within the
22 *literary sequencing* of the Gospel narratives (i.e. one writer arranging certain miracles and parables together in topical order
23 rather than chronologically, or vice versa). He is asserting that the Gospels contain chronological assertions about the life of
24 Christ which directly contradict one another. Of course, Dr. LeFebvre reassures us that this was not due to any ignorance on
25 their part. Rather, the Gospel writers *intentionally* realigned the chronology as part of a broader typological, didactic, and
26 liturgical agenda. That is, they were seeking to embellish Christ’s fulfillment of the Old Testament and provide a more
27 thorough basis for Christian doctrine and worship. It seems, from his perspective, that Biblical contradictions are *only* a
28 problem if they are *unintentional*. As long as the Biblical author *intended* to contradict other parts of Scripture for didactic
29 purposes, we should not be alarmed. This does not appear to be a confessional understanding of inerrancy. Once again, Dr.
30 LeFebvre writes,

31 Notably, the Synoptics, which describe the Last Supper as a Passover meal, also describe that meal as the setting for
32 the Eucharist (Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:15-20). John has many other things to say about Jesus’ final meal
33 with his disciples, but he does not include the Eucharist in his description. The Synoptics **align** Jesus’ Last Supper
34 with the Passover meal because it is this meal and its message of peace with God through sacrifice that provides the
35 basis for the New Testament Communion table. In the Eucharist, Christians celebrate our peace with God through the
36 final Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7-8). The crucifixion timeline in the Synoptic Gospels shows us that Jesus is the Passover
37 Lamb by aligning the Communion table with the Passover meal. John also shows us that Jesus is our Passover Lamb,
38 but he does so by a **different alignment of events**. In John’s narrative, the Last Supper takes place on the night
39 “before the Feast of Passover” (Jn 13:1), and he says nothing about the institution of the Eucharist at that dinner.
40 Instead, John dates the crucifixion to the afternoon before the Passover meal, at the time when the people were
41 bringing their lambs for slaughter. John shows that Jesus is our Passover Lamb by aligning his crucifixion with the
42 time when lambs were being gathered for the festival slaughter. Thus, all four Gospel authors relate the timing of the
43 crucifixion to Passover, but they do so, using different chronological scenarios. **These details teach us about the**
44 **nature of Christ’s crucifixion.** They also open a window into a different world of calendars than our own. **The**
45 **Gospel writers introduce Passover into their narratives almost like one of the characters of the story,**
46 **whose point of coming and going can be interpreted differently depending on the narrated**
47 **perspective taken on the event.** A modern historian would not have that latitude, because we view calendars (and
48 time) differently in the present day.

49 Not surprisingly, Dr. LeFebvre is critical of attempts to harmonize the historical details of the Gospels, given that these
50 details were never intended to be taken as historically factual. The Biblical authors, after all, were not modern-day
51 journalists.

52 **Harmonization efforts have generally been regarded as unpersuasive.** We should not base the
53 trustworthiness of the Gospels on our ability to harmonize, for example, their **different chronologies for the**

⁴⁰ To this we simply respond, in the immortal words of the Apostle John himself, that “no lie is of the truth” (1 John 2:21).

1 **crucifixion.** It is better to face the **differences** and consider why the authors used their **descriptive latitude** to
2 record events as they did. The journalistic way we expect timestamps to function today is not a reliable standard by
3 which to assess timestamps in the Bible. Furthermore, imposing anachronistic expectations about calendars could
4 hinder our full appreciation of a biblical author’s reason for drawing out particular date alignments.

5 Dr. LeFebvre speaks of the “trustworthiness of the gospels,” but just what exactly does he mean by this phrase? Historically
6 speaking, the Reformed and confessional view of inerrancy has understood the *trustworthiness* of Scripture to include
7 historical accuracy and self-consistency (i.e. the absence of real contradictions). By contrast, Dr. LeFebvre suggests that the
8 *chronological* details of the Gospels do not necessarily align with each other or with what actually happened in history.
9 These details, he contends, have been changed to suit the doctrinal and liturgical agenda of the authors.

10 But if Dr. LeFebvre’s thesis is correct, how can we trust that *any* of the details recorded in the Gospels aligns with historical
11 fact? How do we know for certain that the Gospel writers’ “descriptive latitude” was limited to *chronological* details? Indeed,
12 how do we know that the *entire* Gospel record is not riddled with unhistorical details, having been molded and shaped by
13 the Gospel writers’ pre-existing religious agenda? If the Gospel writers manipulated the *timeline* of our Lord’s crucifixion,
14 perhaps they manipulated other things as well. Perhaps he was not *really* crucified outside the city of Jerusalem around the
15 time of Passover. Perhaps the soldiers did not *really* gamble for his garments or pierce his hands and feet. Perhaps he did
16 not *actually* sweat drops of blood, wear a crown of thorns, carry his cross, and utter the seven words from the cross. Perhaps
17 Jesus’ encounter with the “dying thief” was simply Luke’s way of illustrating the hope of salvation, and the blood and water
18 flowing from Jesus’ side was John’s way of *aligning* his death with the rituals of the tabernacle. Perhaps Jesus’ resurrection
19 on the first day of the week was inserted later to justify the Christian Sabbath, or the resurrection itself is merely intended
20 to *align* Jesus’ messianic claims with the prophecy of Ps. 16:9-11. Perhaps all these historical and chronological details were
21 fabricated by the Gospel writers (under inspiration) to present Jesus as the messianic fulfillment of the Old Testament, and
22 as a basis for early church doctrine and liturgy.

23 The logical trajectory of Dr. LeFebvre’s outlook on Biblical history is highly disturbing. It appears to be a theory that simply
24 cannot be contained. Indeed, according to Dr. LeFebvre himself, “the Gospels are careful to give us a date for the resurrection
25 just as they were in relating the crucifixion to Passover” (TLC, 7). But if the date of the crucifixion was doctored for
26 theological purposes, how can we be certain that the date of the resurrection was not doctored in order to justify the liturgical
27 practices of the Christian sabbath? Dr. LeFebvre is quick to point out that their “testimony concerning the date of [Christ’s]
28 resurrection is unanimous,” but what would prevent the Gospel writers from *unanimously* exercising their right to revise
29 the chronology for liturgical purposes? In Dr. LeFebvre’s view, inspired writers have been using their “descriptive latitude”
30 to revise Biblical narratives from the very outset of redemptive history, even from the opening chapters of Genesis.
31 Therefore, what would prevent the Gospel writers from recording a *first-day* resurrection merely to suit their own
32 theological and liturgical agenda? Indeed, after reading Dr. LeFebvre’s analysis of the resurrection chronology (particularly
33 in light of his overall thesis), it is not difficult to see where his hermeneutic is ultimately leading us. He writes,

34 The Gospel writers used the Passover date to align Christ’s sacrifice with the fulfillment of the old covenant festival of
35 Passover. They similarly used a “first day” date to align Christ’s resurrection with the inauguration of weekly first-day
36 worship in the new covenant church. Each of the Gospel writers identify the resurrection day as a day when Jesus
37 called his disciples to gather to him (Mt 28:7; Mk 16:7; Lk 24:33-34; Jn 20:17), and two of the Gospels provide
38 extended descriptions of original “first day” worship services similar to those in which later Christians would share
39 (Lk 24:13-53; Jn 20:19-23). These “first day” references further illustrate the usefulness of dates in biblical narratives
40 to align divine events with the calendar days on which his people remembered and participated in those events
41 through worship” (TLC, 7).

42 Applied consistently, we fail to see how Dr. LeFebvre’s hypothesis would not totally undermine the trustworthiness of an
43 inerrant, infallible, and self-consistent Bible, as taught in our standards.

44 45 **PART TWO — FOUR ECCLESIASTICAL CONCERNS**

46 Communication 19-5 is essentially urging us, as a court, to read over Dr. LeFebvre’s writings and then “to ascertain whether
47 or not these writings are consistent with the subordinate standards of the RPCNA.” Having examined these writings in
48 comparison with our doctrinal standards and constitution, we can see at least four areas of possible ecclesiastical concern.
49 Please understand that these are only concerns; they are not charges. We are not asserting that Dr. LeFebvre is guilty of
50 anything at this point. We are simply outlining some possible areas of ecclesiastical concern.

51 1. **Our Directory for Church Government (D-2) forbids sessions from receiving into communicant**
52 **membership anyone “who assumes an attitude antagonistic to the principles set forth in the standards**
53 **of the church.”** In his book, *The Liturgy of Creation*, Dr. LeFebvre issues a number of statements (detailed above, p.
54 4) which not only contradict RPT 4.4, but which could be interpreted as “antagonistic to the principles set forth in the

standards of the church”. One example would be his statement that “the uncritical acceptance of the atheistic claim that Genesis is incompatible with evolution must be rejected.”

2. **The RPCNA requires teaching elders to inform their PRESBYTERY of any new exceptions to our standards which they may develop subsequent to ordination.** In 2003, the RPCNA Synod passed the following judicial recommendation: “That Synod remind all officers of the church that if they find themselves **out of accord with the Confessional Standards of the church**, their beliefs and commitments have changed, it is their duty to **declare their scruples and differences with the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, or the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to their Presbytery if a Teaching Elder**, or to their Session if a Ruling Elder or Deacon.”

After citing an excerpt from this ruling in his recent letter, Dr. LeFebvre states, “In keeping with that instruction, I want to assure you that I would certainly report to this presbytery if my studies were ever to bring me to convictions **inconsistent with my ordination vows**. To date, I have not found reason to do so” (20-01, 3). In a footnote, he adds an additional interpretive gloss, asserting that “The instruction of synod does not call for elders and ministers to declare every minor (i.e., non-systemic) exception, but specifically those exceptions ‘on which an officer is... not in accord with his ordination vow’ (Minutes of Synod 2003, 86).” This quotation is drawn from a statement by the judicial committee explaining their own personal rationale for making the recommendation. The statement was never adopted by synod and has no ecclesiastical authority whatsoever. Moreover, Dr. LeFebvre’s interpretation of the statement would imply that the judicial committee was proposing to leave it in the hands of the *man taking the exception* to determine whether his exception is major or minor, systemic or non-systemic, consistent or inconsistent with his ordination vows. This is self-evidently absurd and would serve to undercut the very nature and purpose of the ruling itself. Quite clearly, the Synod is requiring presbyters to declare *any* and *all* exceptions to their presbytery, so that the *presbytery* (not the exception-taker) can weigh the evidence and make a determination.

Dr. LeFebvre recognizes this fact in a paper he submitted to presbytery (18-06) for discussion in March 2018. In Paper 18-06, he opposes a “comity agreement” proposed by Dr. Knodel which would classify all exceptions to the RP Testimony stemming from one’s adherence to the original Westminster Standards as allowable under the RPCNA’s ordination vows. For better or worse, Dr. Knodel’s proposal was grounded in the fact that our sister RP denominations (e.g. in Scotland, Ireland, etc.) affirm the original Westminster Standards. In seeking to oppose this proposal, Dr. LeFebvre notes that “**some of us voted against Mr. Ketcham’s theology exam last spring because he took exception to a key tenet of the RP witness on civil government (RPT 23.18)—a position deemed important enough by the church to reject a statement in the WCF (a portion of WCF 23.3).**” In other words, Dr. LeFebvre held that, even though Mr. Ketcham may have *personally* classified his exceptions as non-systemic, it was the duty and prerogative of the *presbytery* (not Mr. Ketcham) to rule otherwise. Therefore, given that Dr. LeFebvre’s writings “represent an actual contradiction to our Testimony” (20-01, 7), why did he not immediately notify the presbytery, so that (as in the case of Mr. Ketcham) it could determine the seriousness of his exception to the standards?⁴¹ Incidentally, it was also “Beginning in March of 2018” (seven months prior to the publication of *Adam Reigns in Eden*) that Dr. LeFebvre first shared his own controversial views with his local session (20-01, 3), eventually informing the session on **8/25/18** that,

Some time back, I informed you of recent writing in which I was engaged, wherein **I draw conclusions inconsistent with at least one point in our denominational Testimony**. I do not believe that these exceptions are of such a nature as to violate my vows of ordination; nevertheless, I want to be transparent about these matters. In particular, I believe it important that I submit my own assessment (i.e., that these positions do not violate my ordination vows) for your review and oversight. If, contrary to my assessment, you determine that

⁴¹ The following year, Dr. LeFebvre submitted yet *another* presbytery paper on the issue of subscription (Paper 19-04), in which he seems to affirm the more conventional understanding of the 2003 Synod Decision as requiring teaching elders to declare *every* “scruple” or “exception” to the presbytery and leave it up to the presbytery itself to determine whether it is systemic or non-systemic. In fact, he notes that he had traditionally regarded an exception to the female diaconate as non-systemic and, therefore, consistent our ordination vows. But according to his *more recent* (20-01, 3) interpretation of the 2003 Synod ruling, this would imply that elders who disagree with the female diaconate have no obligation to declare their exception, since it is non-systemic. Surely that is not what Dr. LeFebvre is intending to say, but it is the logical implication of his view. In Paper 19-04, he writes, “**It has been the practice of this and other presbyteries to grant exceptions for officers who scruple against the church’s two-office view or the dual-gender diaconate... Thus, personal disagreements with any of these three particulars have historically been regarded as below the “system of doctrine” thresh hold established in Ordination Query 4... I had previously regarded exceptions to that point of the Testimony, where requested, as allowable. Indeed, on several occasions I have voted to sustain men who took exception to the dual-gender diaconate, in particular. But synod’s decision leads me to conclude that it is now my duty to vote against any candidate for ministry who denies the dual-gender diaconate or who believes in a three-office view, as well as those open to (even if not promoting) the possibility of women elders. Evidently, such ‘second-level’ facets of our presbyterian polity are now regarded as part of our system of doctrine under Query 4. Personally, I do not think the church should hold these matters as systemic.**” Dr. LeFebvre’s view of subscription outlined in Communication 20-01 seems difficult to reconcile with his previous papers on the subject.

1 these writings actually do bring me into conflict with my ordination vows, I would want to follow proper steps for
2 the welfare of the church” (20-01, 3).

3 Dr. LeFebvre adds that “Out of an abundance of caution, my elders in turn sought the counsel of several other ministers
4 in the presbytery who further reviewed pre-publication drafts of my work” and that “I also discussed my work and
5 provided early drafts and selections to various other ordained officers throughout the church” (20-01, 4). Nevertheless,
6 at no point do we find evidence that Dr. LeFebvre, his session, or these “several other ministers in the presbytery”
7 followed Synod’s plain directive that all teaching elders “declare their **scruples** and **differences** with the Westminster
8 Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, or the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church **to**
9 **their Presbytery**”.

10 The fact is that Dr. LeFebvre waited until 2/6/20 (almost *two years* after speaking with his session) to inform the
11 presbytery of his exception to RPT 4.4. During that time, he published *Adam Reigns in Eden* (August 2018) and *The*
12 *Liturgy of Creation* (August 2019), both of which contradict RPT 4.4. Moreover, during this two-year period, Dr.
13 LeFebvre served as a member of our Candidates and Credentials Committee (helping to enforce our subscription
14 policies on *others* while withholding his *own* exception from the court) and as chairman of our seminary board (helping
15 to govern our seminary professors). As evidenced by the Marion session’s recent communication to the Ad Interim
16 Commission, this preventable controversy has already served to destabilize the church in a variety of ways. If the
17 presbytery does not act quickly to investigate and address Dr. LeFebvre’s conduct in this matter, we fear that additional
18 damage to the body of Christ is inevitable.

19 3. **Query 4 of the RPCNA ordination vows requires ministers to “believe in and accept the system of**
20 **doctrine... set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and**
21 **the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as being agreeable to, and founded upon, the**
22 **Scriptures.”** In Communication 20-01, Dr. LeFebvre has openly declared an exception to RPT 4.4 on account of its
23 rejection of human evolution as unbiblical. In addition, it could be argued that some (if not all) of the five doctrinal
24 concerns listed above constitute exceptions to the teaching of our standards. This forces us to ask the question as to
25 whether Dr. LeFebvre’s exception(s) would fall within the RPCNA’s “system of doctrine” or not. If not, he would stand
26 in violation of Query 4 of his ordination vows.

27 4. **Query 9 of the RPCNA ordination vows requires ministers to promise to “engage to follow no divisive**
28 **courses from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted.”** Dr.
29 LeFebvre’s published writings openly contradict RPT 4.4 and possibly several other portions of our doctrinal standards
30 (as detailed in Part One). It should be noted that these are not merely his own privately held convictions; he has taught
31 and defended these views openly in his book, his article, and his blogpost.⁴² Does this activity constitute public teaching
32 that is contrary to the standards of the church? In other words, has Dr. LeFebvre thereby followed a “divisive course”
33 against RPCNA doctrine? If so, he would stand in violation of Query 9 of his ordination vows.⁴³

35 PART THREE – EIGHT JUDICIAL QUESTIONS

36 The four ecclesiastical concerns outlined in Part Two serve to raise a number of important judicial questions. Once again,
37 please note that we are not bringing charges at this time, nor are we requesting the formation of a judicial committee to
38 investigate charges. We simply believe that it will be helpful for the three-man committee recommended by our 19-5
39 Committee (if it is appointed) to keep in mind the possible judicial implications of their findings. After carefully pursuing
40 due process, it may come to light that the correct answer to *every one* of these questions is a resounding “no”. Even if this is
41 the eventual outcome, we believe that the presbytery (and the three-man committee, if it is appointed) will still be well-
42 served in taking the time to work through this list of questions.

43 1. Does Dr. LeFebvre, in his published writings, “assume an attitude antagonistic to the principles set forth in the standards
44 of the Church” (DCG, D-2); and if so, how ought his local session and/or this presbytery to address this matter?

⁴² As a caveat, it seems unclear to us whether Dr. LeFebvre has publicly defended *the transmission of original sin by imputation* in his published writings, or if this idea simply appears in Communication 20-01 as a further explanation of his perspective.

⁴³ In a letter to the Midwest Presbytery on 3/2/18, our presbytery listed several reasons why a certain former RPCNA minister remains “unqualified for ministry in our denomination”, including the fact that he “has publicly written and spoken against the RPCNA and her doctrinal positions in books, on the internet, and in sermons posted online”.

2. Was it proper for Dr. LeFebvre — the chairman of our denominational seminary and a member of our Candidates and Credentials Committee — to wait until February 6, 2020 to inform this court of his exception to RPT 4.4; and if not, how ought our presbytery to address this matter?
3. Does Dr. LeFebvre’s stated exception to RPT 4.4 place him in violation of Query 4 of his ordination vows, wherein he professed to “believe in and accept the system of doctrine... set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as being agreeable to, and founded upon, the Scriptures”?
4. Does Dr. LeFebvre’s denial that the Scriptures “actually require that Adam was the sole progenitor of all subsequent human beings” **(a)** constitute an exception to the teachings of WCF 6.1, 3 and WLC 22-26; and, if so, does this exception **(b)** place him in violation of Query 4 of his ordination vows, wherein he professed to “believe in and accept the system of doctrine... set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as being agreeable to, and founded upon, the Scriptures”?
5. Do Dr. LeFebvre’s views on the confessional teaching that God “formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground” **(a)** constitute an exception to WLC 17; and if so, does this exception **(b)** place him in violation of Query 4 of his ordination vows, wherein he professed to “believe in and accept the system of doctrine... set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as being agreeable to, and founded upon, the Scriptures”?
6. Does Dr. Dr. LeFebvre’s belief that “Original sin is transmitted to all humankind by imputation due to Adam’s covenantal office (not by impartation through generational descent)” **(a)** constitute an exception to WLC 26; and if so, does this exception **(b)** place him in violation of Query 4 of his ordination vows, wherein he professed to “believe in and accept the system of doctrine... set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as being agreeable to, and founded upon, the Scriptures”?
7. Do Dr. LeFebvre’s views of Biblical chronology in the narratives of the Pentateuch and Gospels **(a)** constitute an exception to the confessional doctrine of inerrancy; and if so, does this exception **(b)** place him in violation of Query 4 of his ordination vows, wherein he professed to “believe in and accept the system of doctrine... set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, as being agreeable to, and founded upon, the Scriptures”?
8. Do Dr. LeFebvre’s published writings on any of the following subjects **(a)** constitute public teaching contrary to the standards of the church; and if so, does this public teaching **(b)** place him in violation of Query 9 of his ordination vows, wherein he promised to “engage to follow no divisive courses from the doctrine and order which the church has solemnly recognized and adopted”?
 1. Human Evolution and the Bible contra. RPT 4.4 (Concern #1 Above)
 2. Adam and Eve as Our First Parents (Concern #2 Above)
 3. Adam’s Special Creation “from the dust of the ground” (Concern #3 Above)
 4. The Transmission of Original Sin by Imputation (Concern #4 Above)
 5. Biblical Chronology and Inerrancy (Concern #5 Above)

RECOMMENDATION: That presbytery refer this letter (without presbytery’s endorsement) to the three-man committee recommended by the 19-5 Committee, as a resource to assist them in their work.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Southfield RP Session

John Kim

Adam Kuehner

[Jon Hughes: Voluntary Recusal]