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Volume LXXI Number 11

The Antithesis: Its Basis

In the previous articles on the antithesis we defined its meaning, pointed out its manifestation in the world and especially within the church, and showed that the cross of Christ preached is its source.

We now turn to the basis of the antithesis. How do we know what the thesis and the antithesis are? How can we know how to live the antithesis?

The answer is found in Paul's instruction to the young minister Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2–4: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Paul speaks of the preaching of the word. This is the preaching of the word of God in Christ by the church through the office of the ministry. It is the word of salvation and eternal life in Christ, as that word is recorded by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. It is the true, complete, and authoritative rule of all doctrine and life, containing all that is necessary to believe unto eternal life.

The content of the word is doctrine (v. 2), sound doctrine (v. 3), and the truth (v. 4). The idea is that the content of doctrine is the whole truth and the only truth. But what is doctrine?

Serious misconceptions about the meaning of doctrine abound today in the general sphere of the church, and to a certain extent exist also in the Protestant Reformed Churches. Doctrine is considered to

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be dry and dull; it is sterile, having no application to everyday life; it is difficult to understand and meant only for the learned. Churches that preach doctrine, including our own, have a bad reputation. Ministers who preach doctrine are often unpopular. All of us have probably heard it said, "Reverend X is so doctrinal, but Rev. Y is so practical." The implication is that Rev. Y is a better minister than Rev. X. I am not sure of the source of this kind of reasoning. Perhaps it is due to the fact that we are often lazy; we do not want to put forth the effort to think; we want to be spoon-fed easy preaching. Whatever the cause, this thinking is often used to justify opposition to so-called doctrinal preaching. It is also used to create an erroneous dichotomy between doctrine and life and between doctrinal and practical preaching, so that the two are seen to be mutually exclusive. The emphasis of the preaching is either practical or doctrinal, and it is only reasonable to want the practical variety.

This, young people, is wrong thinking, and it has no place in our attitude toward the preaching. We can understand this if we have the correct idea of what the Scriptures means by doctrine. The word translated in the KJV as "doctrine" is in the original simply "a teaching." Teaching can take different forms: long, short, easy, or hard. It can apply either directly or indirectly to our lives. It is never dry, dull, or sterile exactly because it applies to us. If you say that is does not, then you say that the Scriptures, which are full of teaching, do not apply to us. Nor is there any opposition between doctrine and practice. Often it is said that doctrine is the basis for practice. This is not strictly true. Doctrine (teaching) *is* practice. This is also true regarding the preaching. If the preaching is practical, then it must be doctrinal, because it teaches us. For example, the book of Romans is usually considered to be doctrinal. In it Paul sets forth, among other truths, the doctrine of sin in many of its aspects. Some of what he writes is difficult to grasp. Even the apostle Peter says that in Paul's writings there are some things that are hard to understand. Yet, simply put, Paul writes teachings regarding sin, with application to our lives as sinners. An example of an easy teaching is the sixth commandment, which says very simply, "You may not murder your neighbor." There cannot possibly be any misunderstanding of this teaching. With application to the subject at hand, Scripture teaches everywhere the truth of the antithesis, and instructs us that we are to stand for the thesis and oppose the antithesis. Every page is full of teachings that are at the same time doctrinal and practical. Such is the positive idea of the word of doctrine; it is the thesis, the positive truth that Scripture teaches.

Why is it necessary to place such emphasis on preaching and maintaining "sound teaching" and "the truth" antithetically?

Negatively, the reason is a dislike of doctrine. The time will come, says Paul, when they will not endure sound doctrine. When he speaks of "they," he is not referring to the world or to men in general; they never like sound teaching. Rather, he refers to the church. He assumes the thesis—that sound doctrine is preached in the church. But some cannot endure it; they do not want it, and they cannot stand it. Therefore they apostatize and fall away from sound teaching. They do this by heaping to themselves teachers (the same root word used for "doctrine"), substituting them for the teachers who preach the sound word of the truth and who tell them what they want to hear, which is the doctrine of man. Paul describes this by the down-to-earth figure of scratching an itch. Their ears itch for false doctrine, and they scratch the itch by obtaining false teachers. Nor are they satisfied with one or a few such teachers. Rather, they heap a multitude to themselves. If one does not scratch their itch, they go looking for another who will.

They do this according to their own lusts, that is, their sinful desires. They want to be told what they like to hear; they want to be praised as good people; they want to be able to do what their sinful hearts desire without being forbidden or rebuked; they want to have their desires satisfied. The teachers who do this are popular and successful because people like to be told how good they are, not how sinful they are. The result is that they are turned to fables. They hear fairy tales from the pulpit, the myths and lies of the devil.

Thus the antithesis shows itself with regard to the preaching of the word. The thesis, the truth, the word of sound teaching comes through the preaching. That teaching is not according to man's lust and does not consist of fables. Instead of telling us what we want to hear, the word of truth boxes our ears soundly, telling us that we are sinners redeemed by grace alone. Many, even most do not want to hear any of this. Instead, they substitute the word of man and seek to destroy the thesis, to blur the sharp line

of the antithesis, and to water down the word of God.

The time for this will come, says Paul. Undoubtedly he is referring not to his day, but to the last days in which we live. Scripture refers to these days as being characterized by a great falling away or apostasy from the truth, which is taking place right before us, if only we have eyes to see. Thus there is here a word of warning for us. All around us we see deterioration in the sphere of the church. Even those churches that have been historically conservative and faithfully Reformed are compromising fundamental truths of sound teaching. Until now we as churches have been preserved in the path of faithfulness by the grace of God. We still hear the word of doctrine preached from our pulpits, and we have no significant itches that need scratching. This word of warning comes especially to you, young people, because you are the church of tomorrow. Upon your shoulders as members and leaders of the church rests the burden of maintaining the faithful preaching of the word of doctrine and holding to the antithesis. Do not become lazy and think that we are immune to itching ear syndrome. History says otherwise.

Positively, the necessity of preaching the word of doctrine is necessary for faithfulness in the truth. This is stated negatively in verse 3: some do not want sound doctrine. The implication is that such preaching is necessary. The content of this preaching is described as "sound" doctrine. The word means "healthy." It produces health in the spiritual sense. It is nourishing spiritual food, the opposite of spiritual junk food. According to our sinful natures we may not like this healthful teaching any more than a child likes his spinach, but God knows what is best for us, as parents do with a child.

Doctrine is necessary because it gives the knowledge of salvation. It teaches us what we must know and how we must live. This is why catechism is so important in the lives of you young people. Ignorance has results for all of life, for if we do not know what the truth is, how can we live according to it? The word of doctrine not only gives the knowledge of salvation, but also maintains and increases that knowledge. We need constant reminding of and further instruction in the doctrines of Scripture. Only in this way do we know how to walk in the way of sanctification and how to walk antithetically as God's people in the world. This is essential. Most, if not all of life's problems are rooted either in ignorance of what the Scriptures teach or in a refusal to obey what they teach. True doctrine produces a proper, Godly walk of life, while false doctrine produces a sinful walk of life. The compromise or loss of the antithesis, whether in doctrine or in life, means that almost any heresy or wrong practice is tolerated. In contrast, the strengthening of our faith is worked and maintained by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of sound teaching, so that we are able to stand for the thesis and against the antithesis.

How must the word be preached? By reproving, rebuking, and exhorting, according to verse 2.

Reproving is to call someone to account by testifying against sin. Rebuking is to convince of sin unto repentance. Reproving and rebuking are similar ideas. Together they are the word of doctrine that steps on our toes when we do wrong. Exhort, their positive counterpart, is to admonish and encourage, to urge us to obey the word of doctrine. We need all three of these because we are weak sinners. Constantly the word must reprove and rebuke us because we are so inclined to do what is wrong; we need to have our toes stepped on, sometimes very hard. We must also be encouraged and taught to walk in the path of sanctification.

The word must be preached constantly—in season and out of season, with all longsuffering, that is, time and time again, patiently, without giving up. And we must constantly hear that word and obey it, applying it to our lives. For this is the only way to maintain the antithesis; it is the only way to keep purity of doctrine and of life; it is the only way of obedience and submission to the word of Christ; and it is the only way of salvation for us as God's people.

Hold fast, therefore, to the antithetical word of sound doctrine, remembering the words of 2 Timothy 3:16–17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

Schuyler, n. A scholar.

Editor's Notes

Mark H. Hoeksema

Several items are noteworthy this month.

First, due to the press of other responsibilities, Joe Holstege has resigned from the *Beacon Lights* staff. Thanks for your service, Joe, and blessings in your future endeavors. Replacing Joe and joining Matt Kortus as Contributing Editor Correspondent is Monica Koole. Monica works for Kleyn Electric and is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Walker, Michigan. Welcome, Monica! Please contact either Matt or Monica with comments, suggestions, and most of all, with publication submissions. Their contact information appears in the masthead.

Second, due to a quirk in scheduling, two articles on the subject of evolutionism appear in this issue. They are both similar and dissimilar. Complementary is probably a better description. Read and learn from both of them.

Third, we have been receiving a good deal of feedback on the *Choosing a Vocation* rubric. The comments have been universally positive. We would like to continue this series, but in order to do so, we need more articles. If you are willing to write about your vocation, or if you know someone who is, please contact Matt or Monica. The articles we have already received clearly indicate that there must be more interesting stories out there; we just don't know the specifics. So please put pen to paper for the benefit of our young people.

Fourth, Christmas is almost here. Are you looking for an inexpensive but worthwhile gift for a special someone? Please consider a gift subscription to *Beacon Lights*. It's packed with all sorts of good stuff, and the cost is only $15 per year. Order through the business office or online at www.beaconlights.org.

Choosing a Vocation

Pam Dykstra

Nursing—The Art of Caring

Do you love caring for people? Are you interested in science and health care? Do you want a rewarding and flexible vocation choice? Nursing may be right for you. Nursing is the fastest-growing occupation in the United States. Nurses make up the majority of the healthcare industry, and that number is going up, with 581,500 more nursing jobs by 2018. Why? There are a lot of reasons, including an aging population and a shrinking nursing workforce.[1]

Recently I asked some fellow nurses from church what inspired them to become nurses. One nurse told me that she always wanted to be a nurse and decided on Pediatrics during nursing school. Another, as a result of caring for her older brother with special needs as she was growing up, was motivated to become a nurse. Yet another received a serious foot injury at age 8 and wanted to be just like the wonderful nurses who cared for her at that time. Nursing jobs attract natural caretakers and those looking for rewards beyond salary.[2]

For as long as I can remember I, too, always wanted to become a nurse. My Mom had been a nurse at Butterworth Hospital when I was small and worked in the Pediatric Department. I wanted to be a nurse just like her. During my high school years I worked as a nurse's aide at Brookcrest Nursing Home, which gave me valuable insight and experi-

1 http://www.discovernursing.com/why-be-a-nurse#.UAmRe7QV15s. Johnson and Johnson, 2012. Web. 6 July 2012.

2 http://www.happynews.com/living/business-life/people-choose-nursing-career.htm. N.p., 2008. Web. 6 July 2012.

ence in caring for others as I served the elderly in this setting. After high school I chose to pursue my Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) because at the time I had no marriage plans in my immediate future. During this time I then spent some years as a home health aide in college. Much of this time was spent caring for terminally ill patients in their homes or those who had no one else to provide care for them in their later life. When I became a student nurse in college and worked in the Obstetrics and Pediatrics area of the hospital the decision was made, and I chose Pediatrics as my area of specialty. I had always loved babies and children, so Pediatrics was a perfect fit.

Since then I have worked in general pediatrics, pediatric surgical care and most recently in the area of Pediatric Hematology and Oncology. One of the many lessons I have learned on this newest floor is that in spite of a diagnosis of cancer and all the fears that go along with it the thing that these children need the most is to play and smile and do the normal things that all kids do. In spite of frightening technology, chemotherapy, radiation and generally feeling crummy, a smile and a kind word can change the course of a day. What a lesson this can be for all of us. Patients face daily battles head on and their strength and spirit is amazing. They are a constant source of inspiration to us who care for them!

If you think you may want to be a nurse, volunteering at your local hospital, outpatient facility, or doctor's offices is a great way to see what it's like. As you face the question of whether nursing is the vocation for you, it is important to be aware of the classes you can take in high school. Taking these classes will give you a head start on your nursing prerequisites for college:

- English: 4 years
- Math: 3–4 years (including algebra and geometry)
- Science: 2–4 years (including biology and chemistry; physics and computer science are recommended)
- Social Studies: 3–4 years
- Foreign Language: 2 years (recommended, but not required)

College requirements for nursing can vary from a 2 year to 4 year program. An ADN (Associate's Degree in Nursing) is a 2 year degree offered at community colleges and occasionally a hospital based school. A BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) is a 4 year degree offered at colleges and universities. The current trend in area hospitals is a preference for nurses who have obtained their BSN. A Masters degree in Nursing (MSN) requires 2 additional years of training above the BSN. Many masters-prepared nurses go on to pursue leadership and management positions as well as PhD degrees in order to teach and instruct new incoming nurses. These degrees add to the opportunities available to a nurse even if he/she is no longer able to deal with the stress and strain of bedside nursing. More highly educated Nurse Practitioners are increasingly seen in the medical field as well. NPs can serve as a patient's primary health care provider, and see patients of all ages depending on their specialty (family, pediatrics, geriatrics, etc.).

Practical benefits of a vocation in Nursing

There are many practical benefits to one who holds a nursing degree. The job of a nurse can be performed in any state across the country. Nurses are needed worldwide and wherever the Lord may lead you in your adult life you should be able to find employment in the field of nursing. The flexibility of hours worked and scheduling is another benefit. Nursing is a vocation that requires employees to work 24 hours of the day, and because of this there are many options available to choose from. The areas in which to specialize as a nurse are too many to list here. Whatever area interests you the most can be pursued. Some choose to specialize in adult nursing, intensive care nursing, emergency medicine, care of the elderly, care of children. Still others may choose to work outside of a hospital setting. About 60% of nurses are employed in hospitals but other settings include nursing homes, medical offices, ambulatory care centers, community health centers, schools, clinics, camps, prisons, tourist destinations, disaster areas, and sporting events.[3] For the nurse, each day offers new opportunities and challenges. If you are the type of person who does not like to do the same thing day after day you will be challenged even hourly in your vocation. The job is never the same each day. The job can be fast paced and change minute by minute.

Nurses are privileged to accumulate vast

3 http://www.nursingworld.org/Content/EspeciallyForYou/StudentNurses/RNsAPNs.html. American Nurses Association, 2012. Web. 6 July 2012.

amounts of medical knowledge for use later on in life. For example, you can use your knowledge when your own children become ill, in educating others who ask for medical advice, when someone is injured at your son's ball game, or when someone falls ill while you are relaxing at the beach. The knowledge that you will gain will prepare you for a lifetime of helping and being of service to others.

Responsibilities in Nursing

The job of a nurse includes many aspects of physical support. Nurses interpret patient information and make critical decisions about needed actions. Nurses are responsible for administering medications and taking vital signs, changing dressings and treating wounds, charting and communicating with other medical personnel. These things are all part of your job as a nurse. But there is also an important emotional aspect for a nurse to be concerned with. Providing proper emotional care and support for your patients but also to their families who are in a time of need is a vital aspect of the job of "being a nurse". Serving others must be in the heart of a nurse. Compassion for others…caring and empathy. Doing this to the best of your ability and the performing of your duties with God's glory in mind can be very rewarding. In times of illness and crisis the opportunity to pray with a patient and family, to speak of your Lord and Savior, and to share Scripture can be welcomed openly and eagerly. I have had many such opportunities over the years to minister to families and patients during difficult times. Speaking of Christ, whether in a brief word, a Bible passage or a short prayer can be a very powerful and moving witness to others in times of fear, sadness or anger, and even at the time of impending death of a loved one. During such a time your witness of Christ may bring solace and comfort to a hurting family or individual. Your witness can make a difference!

If you enjoy teaching others, patient education is also a large part of the role of a nurse. There are many opportunities for teaching—teaching about medication dosages and side effects, demonstrating procedures to be performed in the home, educating persons regarding disease processes and the follow-up care at home.

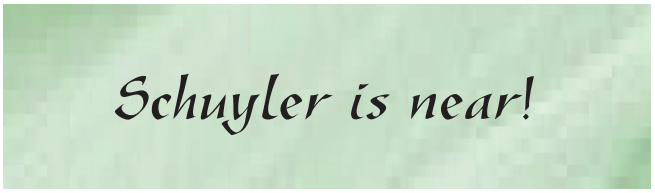
Nurses also have a great ethical responsibility to uphold. Nurses are called to treat each patient with compassion and respect regardless of the way they choose to treat you and regardless of the reason they are being treated. Nurses are called to maintain patient privacy and the confidentiality of patient medical records at all times.

Some positive aspects of a vocation in nursing include flexible hours, the accumulation of medical knowledge, invaluable life skills for a mother or a father, and the opportunities for personal witnessing to others in time of need. Due to the flexibility of scheduling for nurses, those of us who are mothers are able to keep up our nursing license year after year and use this vocation in many ways over the course of a lifetime.

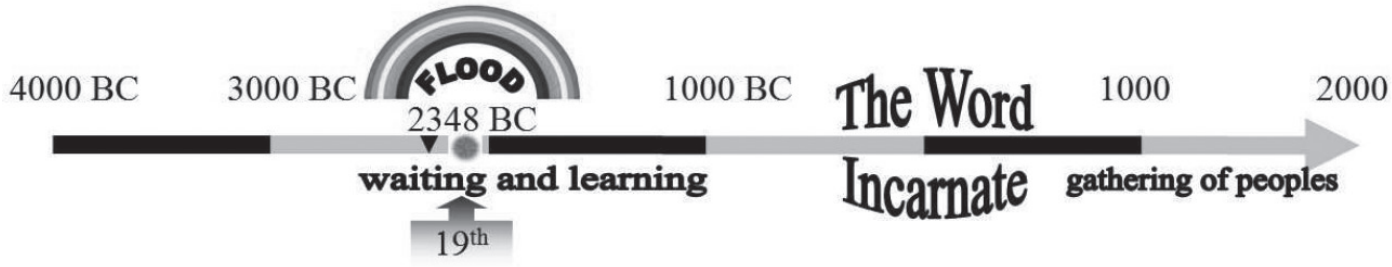
Yet nursing requires sacrifice as well, and some would tend to think of this as a negative aspect of the vocation. It is not a job you can leave on the desk to finish up tomorrow morning! Care of patients may require you to stay well past the time your shift has ended. And the day may not even end there. So many times you take home the memory of what you encountered that day. The impact of human suffering and distress creates an emotional burden which must be dealt with each and every day by a nurse. Lives are entrusted to your care. People are depending on you to do the right thing and to provide the best possible care available. And a hospital never closes. People need to be cared for on weekends, holidays and all night long. There must be a commitment on the part of a nurse to work those night shifts and miss out on Thanksgiving dinners because of the vocation which he/she has chosen to perform.

A nursing vocation can bring the satisfaction at the end of the day that you have been busy in the work of serving and helping others. Nursing is an emotionally fulfilling and rewarding vocation. Nursing provides that chance to help others in time of need, to promote their welfare and bring smiles to their lives in a time when they may need it the most. If you have a heart for nursing I would strongly encourage you to choose this field for your vocation.

Pam is a nurse at Helen DeVos children's Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and a member of Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison, Michigan.



The Nineteenth Century of His-Story:
Japheth Enlarged



Genesis 10 and 11 cover about 300 years of history after the flood. In these chapters God, as it were, paints the background and sketches the general outline of the coming history. God gives his church a glimpse and a taste of the glorious and wonderful portrait of Christ and his plan for the church. After these chapters a veil is pulled over the picture, and the full portrait of Christ is not fully revealed until God reveals him to the apostle John on the island of Patmos, who writes what he sees in the book of Revelation. Until then, God leaves the broader picture, and directs his people to the fine details of salvation in the history of Abraham, Israel, and finally the birth of Christ.

In these two chapters, God gives us the names of the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. With these names and a prophecy of the role of these families in the overall plan, he gives us a hint of a great plan and purpose in his great masterpiece. Through details that appear to us to be obscure and insignificant, we are made to understand that everything—absolutely everything—is a carefully designed part of a glorious whole.

Having seen something of the power and majesty of God in the flood and previous history, the church waits with eager anticipation, excitement, and baited breath to see what God will do next. The promise of salvation in the seed of the woman was clearly far more glorious than man had ever dared to imagine. Today we know so much more, and yet we are told that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9). Paul, who had been given to see so much of this plan, rejoices in the work God has given as he says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:8–9). Such a wonder is this plan of salvation that even "the angels desire to look into" these things (1 Pet. 1:12).

In the last article we discussed the matter of Nimrod and Babel. We saw how God used Nimrod's sinful rebellion to serve his purposes in the divisions of the nations from which a diverse church will be gathered. The families continue to grow and spread into the world, but this growth is not left to chance and random development. Rather, the diversity from which God gathers his church belongs to a well-orchestrated plan directed by the providence of God. We see something of this plan when God inspires Noah to speak prophetically concerning his sons: "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant" (Gen. 9:27). In this article we will follow the families of Japheth as they populated regions into what is today Europe, Russia, and India. In the next article we plan to follow the families of Ham and discuss how Noah's prophesy on Ham's son Canaan is fulfilled.

The Bible does not give very many details about the descendants of Japheth and the nations arising from them because the focus of all history is upon Christ, who will be born from the line of Shem. After Christ ascends into heaven, the attention is turned again to the descendants of Japheth. The majority of the world's growing population is not addressed again until Pentecost and the New Testament church is commanded "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). With this preaching, God has gathered a church "and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9). The church is described as a beautiful building and as a body with many different parts. Beauty and diversity of members is an essential part of the church, and it is in these verses of Genesis 10 that we learn how God begins to fashion these parts long before he gathers his elect people from their generations.

We read at the beginning of Genesis 10, "The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations" (Gen. 10:2–5). Gomer settled first to the north of the Black sea, and as with most of the families who wandered out into the new world after Babel, competition for the best places drove them from place to place.[1] Eventually most of them settled in the areas of Lydia and Cappadocia. Some went farther into areas that now are France and Spain, and later into the British Isles. According to the ancient historian Josephus, a branch returned to the area of Asia Minor and came to be known as the Galatians. Because of the restless and warlike nature of the descendants of Gomer, they left their mark on much of Europe. Gomer's son Ashkenaz, gave rise to the earliest settlers of Germany and Scandinavia, and may also be the early ancestor of the Saxons. It is possible that the name "Europe" has been derived from that of Gomer's second son "Riphath." The people of Togarmah are mentioned twice by Ezekiel in 27:14 and 38:6 as traders who brought horses from the north. The people of Armenia claim to be descended from Targom.

Little is known for certain about the descendants of Magog, but the fragments available suggest that the population of Russia may have descended from him. The ancient traveler Marco Polo surmised that the word "Mongol" was originally attached to Gog and Magog. Ezekiel in chapter 38:2ff mentions Gog as the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. The Russians derived their name from the Hebrew word translated as "chief prince." In its earlier history, the Russians were known as the Muscovi.

Scholars are more certain about the descendants of Madai and Javan. Four sons of Javan are named in Genesis 10, and scholars are pretty well agreed that the Persians, Italians, and Greeks are descended from these sons. Ezekiel says in chapter 27:7 that blue and purple stuffs were brought to Tyre from the "isles" or coasts of Elishah. The shells from which this purple dye is made are found in abundance along the coast of southern Greece.

We see then that the decedents of Japheth were enlarged geographically. They became the dominant population in all the regions of what is now Europe and Asia. They scattered into the different regions of the earth, and established nations and diversities of people and language that God would be pleased to gather into a church when the fullness of time came. These are the people who at the time of Christ became united within the Roman Empire and the objects of the New Testament church's missionary work. In this way they begin to "dwell in the tents of Shem" because they are gathered into the church, the body of Christ that God began in the line of Shem. This work of gathering people from every tribe tongue and nation continues today as God's word goes out to all the nooks and crannies of the world. At the same time, God gathers his people in the way of covenant homes.

Noah had three sons, and each son was given a particular place and role in the work of God as he gathers a church unto himself. Dr. Custance proposes that the enlargement of Japheth came in the way of exploiting the pioneering service of the descendants of Ham. He finds evidence in archeology that the descendants of Ham were always the first to explore and settle new regions, but that the Japhethites followed and took over what Ham had

1 Most of my information for this article and the next comes from the first volume of Dr. Arthur Custance's work, *The Doorway Papers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975). Custance was a biblical scholar who studied language and anthropology and published his work in a series of 60 papers.

established. A more modern example of this pattern is the life that the native Americans had established in the new world and how the European explorers and settlers depended upon the resources that they had established for life in America before taking over the country for themselves. Dr. Custance gives numerous examples of how the descendants of Ham demonstrated exceptional skills and ingenuity for survival in new and unsettled regions of the world and how their foothold prepared the way for the descendants of Japheth. History has demonstrated that the descendants of Japheth lacked these skills and would have been unable to survive in the wilderness on their own. Instead of survival skills, they were given the skills of managing, developing, building upon, and exploiting the service of other people.

Dr. Custance develops this idea extensively and demonstrates how the characteristics of each of the three sons of Noah were used by God to carry out his plan of salvation. The Hebrew language and strong religious conviction of the descendants of Shem were employed by God for revelation to Abraham and the writing of the Old Testament. The reflective and philosophical nature of descendants of Japheth is displayed in the Greeks, whose language is used by God for further revelation in the New Testament. The descendants of Ham demonstrate a more concrete and practical view of things necessary for survival and life on this earth, and their role of service becomes a pattern for all of us as members of the body of Christ as we serve Christ by serving one another.

As God unfolds his plan, he brings up from time to time a trilogy of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Dr. Custance points out five examples. 1) Abraham had three wives who were descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth respectively: Sarah, Hagar, and Keturah. 2) The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke suggest this pattern as well. Matthew begins with the genealogy traced back to David and Abraham and is full of references to the Old Testament. Mark portrays our Lord as a servant and does not include a genealogy. It is a gospel of doing and activity. Luke was a Greek and the genealogy he records goes back to Adam. His gospel narrative was written for the Gentiles. 3) Three delegations of people came looking for the Lord: the shepherds, the wise men, and "certain Greeks" (John 12:20). 4) In the book of Acts, we read that the gospel was preached first to the Jews (2:22). The gospel also went out to Cornelius (10:24), a descendant of Japheth, but between these two, Philip brings the gospel to an Ethiopian (8:35). 5) At the cross, Dr. Custance writes, "The moral responsibility was accepted by Israel (Matt. 27:25); the physical burden of carrying the Cross was placed upon a Cyrenian, a child of Ham (Luke 23:26); the responsibility for execution was assumed by Japheth, who in the soldiers completed the sentence which only the Roman authorities could perform (Matt. 27:26)."

I find this theory about how God used the various characteristics of the three sons of Noah to prepare for the gathering of a diverse people into the church to be intriguing and thought-provoking. Apart from the direction of God's word, we are inclined to think in evolutionary terms of survival of the fittest and superiority of races, but in the light of God's word we see instead an interrelation between the strengths and weaknesses of people whom God used to populate the earth and bring the gospel to every region. Each of the three sons were specially prepared with unique qualities to serve in the plan of God to gather his church. What God says in 1 Corinthians 12:22-25 about individual people in the church can also be said about nations: "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." Instead of national or racial pride, we need to understand that each of us is dependent on others so that no one can boast that he is more important. Each is prepared to fill a particular place in the body of Christ.

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Schuyler: Next Month?

Watching Daily At My Gates

December 9 ***Read Job 13***

Job continues with his speech in reply to Zophar. Most of this part of his discourse is directed at God. Job vacillates between one who trusts in God and one who blames him for his problems. Notice his strong word of faith in verse 15. Even if God would cause him to die, Job avows that he will still trust in God. Is our trust that strong? Could we go through such a trial, as Job did, and remain steadfast in God? In our own strength we could not, but by faith we can hold to him who cares for us in all things. Sing Psalter 203.

December 10 ***Read Job 14***

As Job continues in his address to God, he turns to the frailty of man's condition. Through his trials he has seen that man is like the tender flower. It grows, it withers, and it dies. He knows that man is no different. But Job has also seen from creation the tree that grows and dies, and out of its root comes forth a new sprout. He knows that for the child of God there is hope after death. This is his comfort, though it is hard for him to lay hold on during these trials. May we see that death is the passageway to eternal life for those whom God has chosen from eternity. May this be our comfort and our hope. Sing Psalter 281.

December 11 ***Read Job 15***

Once again Job's three friends begin a cycle of speeches against him. Eliphaz once more says that Job must have sinned greatly, and that Job needs to confess his sin. As we read through this chapter, we see much from which we can take instruction. We need to apply the truths of this chapter to our lives. We do so in the confidence that Christ has died upon the cross for our sins. Sing Psalter 83.

December 12 ***Read Job 16***

As Job continues down this path on which God is leading him, he bursts out with the words of verse 1 against his friends. But then he goes in the right direction. He turns to God and pleads for him to help him in his distress. But his pleadings must be tempered and turned into prayers to reach God's ears. We, too, need this help. This help only comes through the intercession of Christ, who sits at God's right hand. We should read these words of Job when in distress; then we should turn in humble prayer to our God through Christ for deliverance. Sing Psalter 167.

December 13 ***Read Job 17***

We once again are reminded of the depths of the trials to which God has brought Job. His whole body testified of this trial. Job at this point sees no way of escape other than death. He gives a description of death that is instructive for God's people. But death is not the answer; it is not the way of deliverance. Job will be brought to his deliverer just as we must be. Our deliverer is Christ who saved us from our sins on the cross. May we look at death as only the way to be united with him in heaven. Sing Psalter 219.

December 14 ***Read Job 18***

Now it is Bildad's turn to speak again. In our words today, we might say that Bildad pulls no punches. He lays out all the ways that a wicked man is oppressed by God. He then makes the point that that is exactly the way God is treating Job. Therefore Job must be wicked. He also says that Job has not been listening to him and his friends as they try to show to him his troubles. Once again we see true words, but words misapplied. This is not Job, as we will see in the next chapter. This is a man without Christ. Sing Psalter 201.

December 15 ***Read Job 19***

In this chapter Job first gives a thorough description of his afflictions in the body and the results of them. Some might easily say that a person afflicted like this should take his own life. Not Job, as we will see. Then Job complains that his friends are persecuting him and not comforting him. We can clearly see this in verse 22. Then Job bursts out in the beautiful confession of faith in verses 23–27. Job knows that he has a redeemer, one who will buy him out of all this trouble. It will take some time before Job sees all, but we have the beginnings of his spiritual healing here. May we take this confession of faith on our lips when we fall into trials and temptations. Sing Psalter 31.

December 16 ***Read Job 20***

Zophar jumps ahead of Eliphaz with an answer to Job's beautiful confession. It was as if the confession was not even heard or at least considered. Zophar accuses Job of not listening to them. He goes on to say that God always punishes the wicked, and since Job is being severely punished, he must be wicked. We must not make the same mistake. God brings upon his people chastisements and trials to strengthen their faith. As we read this book we must always consider the first two chapters as we comment upon it. True, Job and his friends did not have those chapters, but they did know the goodness of God for his people. Sing Psalter 386.

December 17 ***Read Job 21***

While Job has not yet understood God's intent in his trials, he begins to think and speak more clearly about God's ways. God is leading him on this path to instruct not only Job, but also his friends. In this passage we have excellent instruction in God's ways leading to the final judgement. All men have a way in this life ordered by God. Some live a life of ease and others of hardship. All die and go to the grave. Then Job states a truth that is often ignored. There is a day of judgment for all, even for the wicked. Job knows that he is not one of these, and he castigates his friends for picturing him as one of the wicked. Sing Psalter 29.

December 18 ***Read Job 22***

For the last time it is Eliphaz's turn to castigate Job for his supposed misdemeanors. He starts out by saying that Job is charging God with evil. He then charges Job with the evils for which God is punishing him. Eliphaz is making these charges based only on the evidence of Job's afflictions. "What else could it be?" was his conclusion. Eliphaz ignored Job's commentary on God's providence in which these kinds of things come upon both the good and evil by God's pleasure. The final part of his speech is a plea for Job to go to God and repent. It was good advice if Job had committed the sins with which Eliphaz charged him. But he did not. Sing Psalter 140.

December 19 ***Read Job 23***

Job does not answer Eliphaz's charges. Rather, he responds to the call for repentance. The words of this chapter are a beautiful description of God and his attributes toward his people. Even though he is not finding God, Job knows that God knows him and knows his actions. Job begs God to show himself so that Job can be healed from the afflictions placed upon him. Notice verses 14 and 16. Here Job confesses—differently from many men—that these afflictions are completely in God's hand. May this be our confession when faced with affliction in this life. Sing Psalter 329.

December 20 ***Read Job 24***

Job takes up the age-old argument that we find not only in life, but also in Scripture. It is the argument of Asaph in the Psalms. The argument is simple. The wicked do many abominable things in this life. These wicked things are deserving of great judgment. The wicked quite often seem to prosper while the righteous suffer. Job draws the conclusion that these wicked men are punished secretly in this life but more openly in the judgment to come. We should read through the list of sins, make sure we are not walking in them, and repent of those sins of which we are guilty. Then we will find the peace of trusting in the blood of Christ. Sing Psalter 202.

December 21 ***Read Job 25***

Bildad seems to tire of the argument, as he makes no reference to it. Instead he charges Job with thinking too much of himself in relation to God. Bildad has a point that we do well to heed. How do we treat God? How do we consider God and his mighty ways? Do we really mean it when we pray, "Our Father who art in heaven," or "Our dear heavenly Father"? Sing Psalter 278.

December 22 ***Read Job 26***

Job is becoming exasperated with his friends and their supposed comfort. He retorts in reply to Bildad that he too knows about God. He knows that God is great. He understands God's infinity and his lowliness. We can learn much from Job's description of our great God. We do well to consider this often as we go through life. We see that Job did know God. He may not have understood his lot at this time, but he knew and confessed the greatness of Jehovah. Sing Psalter 157.

December 23 ***Read Job 27***

It seems that Job stopped his discourse in the previous chapter to see if his friends would answer him. When they do not, he continues his parable. The word parable here is not used as Jesus did in the New Testament, but rather means a hard saying or argument. Job's argument is the one that he has been following all along. He says that his friends are wrong. He is not wicked, but he has hope that God will heal him. The wicked, says Job, do not have this hope. Do we have this hope when we are afflicted? Do we pray for the confidence to know that God will remove our burden from us? This we must do. Sing Psalter 206.

December 24 ***Read Job 28***

Job understands that there are things that are hidden from man in God's counsel. Man may strive industriously to seek the treasures hidden in the deepest part of the earth, but he must not seek to know the hidden wisdom of God. Job goes on to say that God's wisdom is more precious than any of those minerals hidden in the ground. He concludes with the beautiful words of the last verse. Like Solomon, Job confesses that the fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom. After that commodity we must seek. We must use our time and talents to seek to know the fear of Jehovah. One of the ways that we do that is to turn from evil and follow in God's paths. Sing Psalter 191.

December 25 ***Read Job 29***

Once again Job seems to pause and wait for the others. When they do not speak, Job continues this long discourse. He now wishes that he were back in the days before the calamities came upon him. He recounts how he was physically wealthy and looked up to by all who were in the land around him. He also demonstrates his ability in protecting the downtrodden. In verse 5 he even states that God was with him. Has God left him? No, but that is Job's perception. Is that our perception in times of trouble? Job will find out that the Almighty has not left him. We too can and will have that experience. Sing Psalter 212.

December 26 ***Read Job 30***

From the heights of yesterday's chapter, we go to the depths in this chapter. Job recounts all the adversity that has come upon him. He attributes it to God, but it seems that he does it in a complaining manner. The word why? seems to jump out at us as we read this tale of despair. There are moments when we know Job has not lost his faith (verse 24), but the why? soon returns. Do we ask why? of God? Do we not know the answer? That answer is, "For his own glory." May we seek the glory of God in all that we do and say. Sing Psalter 213.

December 27 ***Read Job 31***

Job finishes his defense to his friends by enumerating several areas of life, both private and public, in which he has not transgressed. As we read through this chapter we see examples of how we must live. When God has blessed us with material wealth, there are many temptations for us to live as the world does. We must flee from such temptations and walk in a way pleasing to our God. This is not the way to our salvation; this is the way because of our salvation. Let us walk in a sanctified way throughout all of our lives. Sing Psalter 24.

December 28 ***Read Job 32***

In this chapter a new voice is heard. Elihu has been sitting by, listening to the argument that had been raging. After Job and his three friends had exhausted themselves with their words, he asked for a turn. He has not spoken before because, as he said, it was not his place because of his youth. He first of all rebukes Job for justifying himself rather than God. He then rebukes the three men for accusing Job of many sins without evidence of those sins. What can we learn from this? We must learn that God uses men of all ages to lead his church. As Paul told Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth." Our youth must prepare themselves to take their places among the ministers, elders, and deacons of the churches. Sing Psalter 325.

December 29 ***Read Job 33***

After rebuking the other three friends of Job, Elihu now turns his attention to Job himself. Here too we find a word of rebuke. Elihu charges that Job has said to God that his afflictions were not fair, and God was not fair in placing them upon him. Basically Elihu charges Job with justifying his actions rather than God. In doing so Elihu speaks to Job and to us about God's sovereignty. As is said in Psalm 100, "It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves." In doing this Elihu wants Job to consider what he has said and see that he has been foolish. Do we acknowledge the sovereignty of God in all that we say and in all that we do? Sing Psalter 268.

December 30 ***Read Job 34***

It appears that Elihu has paused and has given Job time to answer the charges from the previous chapter. It also appears that Job remains silent, probably because he sees his sin and his conscience is accusing him as well as his friend. After that time of silence Elihu again takes up his discourse. From verse 10 to near the end of the chapter, Elihu points out many of God's attributes and how because of those attributes God is just in doing what he has done. Then he gives Job advice that we should all heed. He encourages Job to seek repentance for his sin, and to seek God's love. This is what we must do throughout all of our lives. As Paul says, "We all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Repentance is the only remedy, and in repenting we seek the balm afforded us by Christ's death on the cross. Sing Psalter 109.

December 31 ***Read Job 35***

Once again after pausing, Elihu reprimands Job and his friends for their unholy speeches against God. In this short chapter he focuses on how to treat God especially in the way of worship. How do we worship

God? Do we seek to be fed, or do we worship to glorify ourselves? Worship is a beautiful act that God has given to us to glorify him. Through a right manner of worship, we will find rest for our souls. Let us seek to make our worship only God-glorifying as we approach his throne each sabbath. Sing Psalter 278.

January 1 *Read Job 36*

Elihu's speech can be broken up into four parts. We now come to the final part. In the first three parts he has shown that Job and his three friends have been wrong in their determination of why Job was suffering these things. He looks at the negative aspects of the whole trial. When Job and his friends remain silent, he turns to the positive aspect. That positive aspect is that God is God and all that he does is good. By his providence upon his people he cares for them and leads them in a good way. He warns Job, his three friends, and us that to justify man rather than God is not the way to look at the works of God. Then he shows through nature that God is sovereign, just, and right. May we heed God's word to us both in Scripture and in his creation. Sing Psalter 287.

January 2 *Read Job 37*

In this chapter Elihu finishes the discourse started in the previous one. He continues to show how God has given to us much instruction concerning his being in the creation. When we hear the thunder and see the lightning, do we think of God's power and justice? Are we content to say it is raining or snowing, or do we consciously think that God is raining and snowing upon us. Elihu makes many applications from the creation that we would do well to consider. When we consider that God is creator of all things in the manner which he ordained, we will understand more of what he has in store for us. When we take away the greatness of God in creation, we take away the greatness of God in our salvation. This is Elihu's message because it is God's message. We do well to take heed to it all of our lives. Sing Psalter 375.

January 3 *Read Job 38*

After Elihu completes his speeches, leaving Job and the other three men quiet, God appears before them. He addresses Job only as the one who is the object of the lesson begun back in chapter 1. God appears as judge, and the charge is laid out in verse 2. After presenting the charge, God shows by much unanswerable evidence that Job is guilty. The method used is a serious of rhetorical questions about God and his work. He begins at creation and continues through various aspect of the creation. Let us read this for our instruction, but also to know that God is the sovereign God, maker of heaven and earth. Sing Psalter 285.

January 4 *Read Job 39*

In this segment of God's explanation of his dealings with man and Job in particular, God turns to the world of creatures. The creatures are kept by the providence of God in all of their ways. Throughout this chapter we are led to see that the way of creatures is a good way ordained by God. Solomon saw that good way, and he instructed his son and us to consider the ways of the minutest animal and see that God cares for it. We too should observe creation and see God's dealings with it and how those dealing show us how our loving God cares for us. Sing Psalter 286.

January 5 *Read Job 40*

In the last chapter God asked of Job many questions concerning creation. Now God pauses to ask Job to answer. Job knows that he has no answer against God and holds his speech as it is nothing in comparison to God. God then goes on and gives Job a chance to compare himself to the Almighty. As Job knows that he must be quiet, God goes on and shows Job yet another example from creation. Men are not sure what the "behemoth" is, but it is a powerful beast known to Job. God was its creator, and therefore God is even more powerful. None of us can stand up to God, and none of us should try in our lives. Sing Psalter 405.

January 6 *Read Job 41*

God closes his case with another example from his wonderful creation. Like the behemoth of the last chapter, we are not altogether sure of the identity of the "leviathan" of this chapter. It obviously was a large and fierce creature that was difficult if not impossible for man to tame. In considering this beast, Job and we must conclude that we can not tame God and use him for our benefit. God is God, that is, he is the sovereign one. He is king; of that there is no doubt. Sing Psalter 266.

January 7 *Read Job 42*

This is not an "all's well that ends well" chapter. Nor is it a "they all lived happily ever after" ending to a fairy tale. Here we have God's working out his counsel in the lives of men and especially in the lives of his people. Job confesses his sins, and his friends are rebuked and told that they too must seek repentance. In the end God blesses Job and restores to him his possessions and gives to him more sons and daughters. May we consider the patience of Job, as James instructs us to do, and be edified. May we seek God in all that we do, ever confessing his sovereignty in all things. May he alone be glorified in our lives. Sing Psalter 204.

God in His Mighty Power Created No Possibility for Evolutionism

(2) A Clear Understanding

What is science? In light of present day evolutionism, one finds the term difficult to define. Those who deny creation and stand for evolutionism do so in the name of science. The French zoologist Pierre Grasse said the following regarding the disorder of modern science in regard to evolution:

> The probability of dust carried by the wind reproducing Dürer's "Melancholia" [a famous copper engraving, RJK] is less infinitesimal than the probability of copy errors in the DNA molecules leading to the formation of the eye; besides, these errors had no relationship whatsoever with the function that the eye would have to perform or was starting to perform. There is no law against daydreaming, but science must not indulge in it.[1]

Before we go farther, we need to define some terms. First, evolution is descent with modification. Evolution is a very broad term that touches many ideas. We need to realize that evolution does occur on a small scale *within populations*. *Micro evolution* is what occurs when the flu virus changes constantly. There is therefore the need for a new flu vaccine every year. *Macro evolution* is what occurred after the flood. The created kinds of Genesis 8:19 spread over the earth after the flood and diversified into the amazing amounts of assortment of animals we see today. The term macro evolution is also used in a way that contradicts the biblical time frame and also the very heart of science, which is knowledge of our world gained through observation and experimentation. Macro evolution is applied by many to describe evolution over millions of years. This is basic "particles to people" evolution. This we deny on the basis of the biblical time frame.

Second, evolutionism takes the broad term *evolution* and uses it to explain origins. Evolutionism is today's main-stream evolution, also known as "Neo-Darwinism," or "new" Darwinism. Evolutionism is what many people—including myself until I studied it more—are referring to when they use the term *evolution*. For the sake of clarity, we will distinguish between the two terms throughout the series. We will also use the terms "evolutionism" and "Neo-Darwinism" interchangeably.

Evolutionism is the bitter fruit of two interwoven presuppositions. They are the ideas of naturalism and uniformitarianism.

First, evolutionism stems from the philosophy of naturalism. Naturalism is the idea that all things are "traceable through the methods of the empirical sciences."[2] That is, in order for something to be considered fact, it must be observed and/or experimented with. Naturalism maintains that this natural world is all there is, individuals do not have souls, and there is no afterlife. Nothing supernatural can exist. Naturalism goes even further and says "physical processes alone produce the illusion of design."[3] Naturalists here are basically saying that we are being tricked into thinking God created and is sovereign over all.

1 Grasse, Pierre. *Evolution of Living Organisms: Evidence for a New Theory of Transformation*. (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 104.

2 Jacobs, Jon. "Naturalism." In *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Article published August 26, 2002. http://www.iep.utm.edu/naturali/.

3 Alex Rosenberg, "Why I Am a Naturalist," The Stone (blog), *New York Times*, September 17, 2011, http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/09/17/why-i-am-a-naturalist/.

Second, evolutionism assumes uniformitarianism. Uniformitarianism is the assumption that all things today occur at the same rate they always have throughout the history of the universe. Uniformitarianism theorizes that all the laws of nature in place today are constant and have never changed. There was no disruption of these laws in the history of the universe. Uniformitarianism, like naturalism, denies the supernatural, that is, God's hand in six-day creation, the flood, and the second coming of Christ and the final judgment that will ensue. Uniformitarianism contradicts biblical catastrophism. The Apostle Peter was prophetic when it comes to this issue and addresses it very specifically. The larger context of the passage must be examined in order to encompass the idea of God's prevailing hand—disrupting the natural laws he established at creation—in the flood and the final judgment.

> Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.
>
> The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up (2 Peter 3:3–10).

Not only does uniformitarianism contradict the biblical record of creation and the flood, but also evolution's own explanation of the origin of the universe in the big bang. We will examine this contradiction in a later article.

In the next article in this series, we will take a look at two possible worldviews and the middle ground one can stand on when talking origins.

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Where We Stand — Dr. Nathan Lanning

The Historic, Reformed Stance on Creation

Readers of the *Beacon Lights* are sinner saints living in a fallen world. As such, we constantly encounter philosophies and ideas that are contrary to the truths revealed to us in Scripture. And as saints who have consciously aligned ourselves with a church that confesses historic, Reformed Christianity, we must be aware of these worldviews that inform and influence both religious and secular thought. We must have a firm grasp of the truth that has been revealed to us in the word of God, and we must use this truth to test continually the concepts and thinking that we encounter through the media, our co-workers, and college textbooks and instructors. In this way we will be discerning saints who intentionally and carefully ensure that our thinking is not improperly influenced by un-Scriptural notions.

One worldview that currently enjoys considerable influence within the spheres of both secular and religious thought is that of evolutionism. While the term *evolutionism* is not used by secular institu-

tions or media outlets, those of us within the ranks of conservative Christianity understand this term to denote a materialistic, naturalistic, secular worldview that teaches that all physical existence and history can be correctly understood in the absence of supernatural or spiritual explanations. This is a worldview that is directly antithetical to our biblical, Reformed worldview. Closely related to evolutionism, and one of the driving forces behind this worldview, is the theory of evolution. There are many ideas and definitions that are contained within the term *evolution*. Reformed believers can agree with some of these aspects, such as the fact that the genetic information in living creatures can change in their generations as they adapt to their environment, and that these changes in their genetic information can result in changes to their physical appearance (all of this sovereignly controlled by the Creator, of course). There are also aspects contained within the term evolution with which the Reformed believer cannot agree, such as the belief that all life on earth developed from one common ancestor over vast periods of time (more than 3.5 billion years). This aspect of evolution (the earth's having existed for immense amounts of time) permeates the curricula of most college science courses and is well-known to most individuals, whether they have taken these college courses or not. This notion is not new to our modern society, but has been proposed and accepted within human culture for thousands of years. Further, many Christians have accepted this view of a very old earth by incorporating varying schemes of theistic evolution into their understanding of the creation history in Genesis.

There are several resources that our Father has graciously provided to us, which we may and should use in our efforts to maintain the truth of Scripture as we interact with the various aspects of the theory of evolution. These include the preaching that we receive from week to week, as well as advice from parents, pastors, elders, and fellow saints in our churches. All of these individuals have likely had to interact with the theory of evolution at some point in their lives and so are able to offer valuable insight to us. Other resources that we should not ignore are the Reformers of centuries past, whom God used to re-establish an orthodox understanding of his word, as well as the creeds and confessions that they and their spiritual descendants formulated and that we confess to be accurate reflections of Scriptural truths.

The canon of Scripture was closed and the early church fathers died almost two thousand years before Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, the book which unified and popularized evolutionary theory. The Reformers lived and the Reformed confessions were formulated hundreds of years before Charles Darwin's writings took hold first of academic society, and then society as a whole. Yet Scripture, the early church, the Reformers, and the confessions all have much to say about how and when this world and all that it contains came into existence. This article can be viewed as a resource for *Beacon Lights* readers who are interested in understanding the stance of Scripture, the creeds, the Reformers, and the Reformed confessions (the historic, Reformed stance!) as they relate to different aspects of the theory of evolution, and specifically the aspect of an earth that is billions of years old.

A note to the reader regarding citations in this article: All citations are freely available via the internet at the websites listed at the end of the article. Take time to read some (or all!) of these citations—it warms the heart to interact with saints of old through their own writings.

Scripture: Scripture is filled with truths that instruct us as to the historical beginnings of the earth and life on earth. Genesis 1 and 2 contain the full historical account of the creation of all things, and the remainder of Genesis contains a multitude of references to the historical events that took place during those six 24-hour days. Scripture explicitly refers to God as the creator of the heavens and earth and all that they contain in over 300 verses from at least 35 books of the Bible.[1] In some of these books, such as the Psalms and Isaiah, one can hardly read more than a page or two without being stared in the face by a reference to God as the creator. Often these passages of Scripture not only instruct us that God is creator, but command us to recognize and worship him as such (Psalm 8:3, Psalm 95:6, Ecclesiastes 12:1, 7, Colossians 1:16, and many others). In addition to the history recorded in Genesis 1 and 2, other passages teach a literal week as the time in which God created all things (for example, Exodus 20:9–11, Exodus 31:15, Exodus 31:17). This witness from Scripture will not allow us to accept the billions of years of evolution that are taught to be necessary

1 http://www.gospelway.com/creation/creation_list.php

for the development of life that we observe today. Even a casual perusal of this list of Scriptures leaves us without a doubt that God created the earth and all of the life that it contains. However, it is a valuable exercise indeed to make a serious study of the list cited below.

Creeds and Church Fathers: Recognizing these Scriptures and flowing out of them, both the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed reflect the fact that Christians in the early centuries after Christ's life on earth were of one mind in their confession of God as the creator of the heaven and the earth.[2] The early church fathers agreed with these creeds, and believed in a creation history which occurred less than 6,000 years from the time in which they lived (see Basil,[3] Ambrose,[4] and Augustine,[5] for example).

Reformers of the 16th Century: The doctrine of creation was not a major issue driving the Protestant Reformation of the 1500s. However, the Reformers of this time had a passion for the entire word of God, and therefore did produce a significant amount of literature on this subject, specifically on the historical, literal nature of the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2. The following is a summary of the creation views of two of the most well-known Reformers.

Martin Luther: While Martin Luther never studied evolutionary theory as we know it today, he was familiar with the theories of the origin of life that leading secular philosophers had promoted through the ages. In his commentary on Genesis, Luther discusses the views of Aristotle and Plato, who both maintained an eternal universe. Luther explicitly states that these views cannot be true because Moses instructs us that the world did not exist 6,000 years ago.[6] Luther recognized the inadequacy of the human mind to comprehend fully the wonders that God spoke during the creation week, yet he argued that the events recorded in Genesis chapter 1 were "the most important," and were to be read as a literal, historical account of the origins of the universe that took place during a stretch of six 24-hour days.[7]

John Calvin: Calvin followed the example of many psalms in that he places considerable emphasis on the wisdom, power, and majesty of our Creator that we can see in the creation around us and how our response to this must be to worship and praise the Creator. Calvin warns those who remove God from the creation by not acknowledging him as creator or giving him due praise when enjoying the creation that they will one day "feel the force of the expression" contained in Acts 14:17, when God says that he has not left himself without witness.[8] Like Luther, Calvin was also familiar with the secular theories and philosophies that contradicted a literal reading of Genesis 1 and 2 by promoting long ages of the earth. He calls the view of an immeasurably old earth "folly" and "a common fable among heathens". He even reprimands a Christian contemporary of his who held this view by calling it "absurd" and a "gross error."[9] Against these errors, Calvin writes that the creation account is "history on which the faith of the Church might lean without seeking any other God than Him whom Moses sets forth as the Creator and Architect of the world"[10] It is clear that Calvin firmly believed that God created the heavens and the earth in the space of six literal 24-hour days.[11, 12] Often people who maintain this literal reading of Genesis 1 and 2 are accused of being anti-science. Calvin would have disputed this suggestion. He acknowledged that the science of his day had proved that Saturn was greater in size

2 *The Confessions and the Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches*. 2005. Protestant Reformed Churches in America. p. 8–11.

3 Basil, *Hexameron*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* Series II, Volume 8. Phillip Schaff, Henry Wace editors. Hendrickson Publishers, 1994. p. 51–107.

4 Ambrose, *Hexameron*, in *Amberose, Hexameron, Paradise and Cain and Abel*. Translated by John J. Savage. Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1961. p. 3–283.

5 Augustine, *City of God*, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series I, Volume 2. Phillip Schaff, editor. Hendrickson Publishers, 1994. p. 232.

6 Martin Luther, *The Creation: A Commentary on The First Five Chapters of the Book of Genesis*. Translated by Henry Cole. T & T Clark, 1858. p. 24.

7 Ibid. p. 23–26.

8 John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*. Translated by John King. 1847. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. p. 24–25.

9 Ibid. p. 34.

10 John Calvin, *Institutes of The Christian Religion*. Translated by Henry Beveridge. WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1994. p. 141.

11 John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*. Translated by John King. 1847. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. p. 40–45.

12 John Calvin, *Institutes of The Christian Religion*. Translated by Henry Beveridge. WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1994. p. 142.

than the moon, and yet still maintained the truth of Genesis 1:16, which indicates that the sun and the moon are the greatest of the lights in the heavens. He taught that the language of Genesis was written so that "things which without instruction, all ordinary persons, endued with common sense, are able to understand."[13] He went on to say that science is not to be "reprobated" or "condemned," but that the discipline of science is "not only pleasant, but also very useful to be known" because it "unfolds the admirable wisdom of God."

It is undeniably clear that Luther and Calvin, two of the great leaders of the Protestant Reformation, both stood firm on the issue of Genesis 1 and 2 as a historic account of creation. Along with Luther and Calvin, the consensus of other Reformers, such as Theodore Beza, Zacharias Ursinus, and Philipp Melancthon, was a literal interpretation of Genesis. Those men who followed the Reformers took the same stance. The Westminster Divines, who are sometimes said to have left the matter up to each individual's interpretation, clearly advocated a literal interpretation, as did the other British Puritans of this time. The views of all of these men are compiled in the book, Coming to Grips with Genesis, Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth.[14] This is an excellent resource for identifying what these men believed. It contains many citations of primary literature and is well worth reading for all interested in this topic. These Reformers withstood teachings that were contrary to Genesis, were aware of the perceived difficulties of reading Genesis literally (such as the sun being created after plants), and yet stood unanimously firm in their faith that Genesis 1 and 2 are historic accounts of origins. Thus they should remain a valuable resource for us as we face similar teachings today.

Reformed Confessions: Like the teachings of the men who led the Protestant Reformation and those who followed them, the confessions of the Reformed churches are full of support for a literal interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2 as real history. The following is a list of references where the Three Forms of Unity clearly use the creation account as real history.[15]

Belgic Confession: Articles 2, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 23.

Heidelberg Catechism: Questions and Answers 6, 7, 9, 19, 20, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 54, 92, 103.

Canons of Dordrecht: Head 1, Articles 1, 7, and Rejection of Errors 5, 8; Head 2, Article 9, and Rejection of Error 5; Heads 3/4, Articles 1, 2, 12, and Rejection of Errors 1, 2.

In addition to these references from the Three Forms of Unity, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms include numerous references to the creation as recorded in Genesis 1 and 2 as being a literal, historical event. Clearly, the saints who fashioned these beloved documents were taking heed to the warning from Scripture and contained in Article 7 of the Belgic Confession, where we are reminded that it is forbidden "to add unto or take away anything from the Word of God".

What can we learn from all of these resources? The testimony of Scripture demands the acknowledgement of God as creator of the heavens, the earth, and all that they contain. This can clearly be found throughout the pages of the Bible. The word of God also testifies to the length of time in which all things were created, that of six literal days. The early church fathers recognized this, and taught that earth was not yet 6,000 years old during their time on earth. For those of us who would take on the name "Reformed," we must take heed to the teachings of the Reformers and the Reformed confessions regarding the doctrine of creation. The Reformers were unanimous in their belief that Genesis 1 and 2 record the literal history of the creation of all things, and that this history occurred within the space of six 24-hour days. They clearly teach this in their writings. From these writings we find that they leave no room for incorporating billions of years into schemes of theistic evolution. The beliefs of the Reformers were also clearly maintained by the men who formulated the Reformed Confessions (both the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards), and these beliefs are reflected in these confessions, which we confess to be accurate expressions of the truths contained in Scripture. Therefore, this stance must

13 John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*. Translated by John King. 1847. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. p. 47.

14 James R. Mook, David W. Hall, in *Coming to Grips with Genesis, Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, Editors. Master Books, 2008. p. 23-78.

15 *The Confessions and the Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches*. 2005. Protestant Reformed Churches in America.

also be the confession of all who claim to maintain historic, Reformed Christianity.

Websites for references

References 2, 15: http://www.prca.org/PRC_Confessions_and_Church_Order.pdf

Reference 3: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf208.pdf

Reference 4: http://ia600301.us.archive.org/11/items/fathersofthechur027571mbp/fathersofthechur027571mbp.pdf

Reference 5: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf102.pdf

References 6, 7: http://ia600301.us.archive.org/11/items/creationcommenta00luth/creationcommenta00luth.pdf

References 8, 9, 11, 13: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom01.pdf

References 10, 12: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.pdf

Reference 14: http://books.google.com/books?id=VvvJPTvvDJcC

Dr. Lanning is a cancer biologist at Van Andel Research Institute in Grand Rapids, Michigan and is a member of Trinity Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.

Book Review — Jackie Mulder

Book Review: Lady Jane Grey

Lady Jane Grey, Reformed Heritage Publications, $14.

Our Christian heritage is a precious heritage. It is a heritage of suffering and sacrifice of God's elect children to bring about his glory and his purpose. This heritage is not well known either by us or by our children. Good Christian literature is very hard to find, especially literature that brings to life those who have gone before us as examples of God's grace in their lives during tempestuous and trying times. Thankfully, there are books coming out with this exact purpose, such as *Christian Biographies for Young Readers* by Simonetta Carr. Simonetta has written books in this series so far on John Calvin, Augustine of Hippo, John Owen, Athanasius and her most recent, Lady Jane Grey.

The story of Lady Jane Grey is of a young girl forced to take a crown she does not think she has a right to take. She reigns for nine days until Mary and her armies claim the crown. Held in the tower for treason, she is given a chance for freedom if she will recant her Protestant faith and become Roman Catholic. By God's grace she is given the strength and courage to die a martyr.

The storyline takes place during the beginnings of the Reformation in England. Roman Catholicism is beginning to be rejected, as the true preaching of the gospel brought by the protestant Reformation is starting to be embraced. These are fragile times of confusion, intrigue, plotting, and persecution. We are introduced to King Henry VIII and his son King Edward VI. We meet Catherine Parr and Thomas Seymour, who had much influence in Jane's life. Also we are introduced to Henry Bullinger and Thomas Cramner, who try to bring about reform, as well as many other interesting characters.

The books in this series are written for elementary children. The author is careful to be historically factual and yet interesting. The story line is enhanced with many beautiful drawings and illustrations, keeping even the youngest child interested. Our four-year-old daughter loved the story of Lady Jane Grey, actually sitting still and listening and looking at the pictures.

Jackie is a member of First Protestant Reformed Church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard;

Consider her ways, and be wise:

Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

Provideth her meat in the summer,

And gathereth her food in the harvest.

—Proverbs 6:6–8

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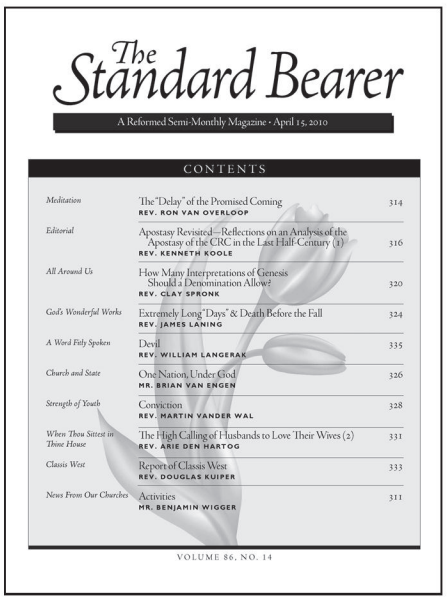
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BAPTISMS

"For the promise is unto you and to your children…." Acts 2:39

The sacrament of holy baptism was administered to:

Amelia Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jeff VanTil—Byron Center, MI
Elliot Yiu Hei and Josiah Chi Him, sons of Mr. & Mrs. David Baldwin—Byron Center, MI
Avery Ann, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Todd M. Van Baren—Crete, IL
Charlie Allan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Lee Wiltjer—Crete, IL
Aisha Lian, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Justin Koole—Faith, MI
Natalie Lynne, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Steve Griffioen—Faith, MI
Brendan Thomas, son of Mr. & Mrs. Darren Vink—First, MI
Harrison Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy Monsma—First, MI
Samuel Ryan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Roth—First, MI
Justin Timothy, son of Mr. & Mrs. Tom Spriensma—Georgetown, MI
Jayden Ron, son of Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Koole—Grace, MI
Brady Daniel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Chad Nienhuis—Hudsonville, MI
Kason Dean, son of Mr. & Mrs. Craig VanBriesen—Hull, IA
Trevor Jonathan, son of Mr. & Mrs. Jon Rutgers—Hope, MI
Kylie Jan, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Rodney Wierenga—Immanuel, Lacombe, CAN
Eli Caleb, son of Mr. & Mrs. BJ Mowery—Loveland, CO
Sophia Faith, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Seth Griess—Loveland, CO
Emery Paige, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Justin Griess—Loveland, CO
Evaline Kate, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Derek Griess—Loveland, CO
Justin Lee, son of Mr. & Mrs. Timothy denHartog—Redlands, CA

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." I Timothy 6:13

Public confession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was made by:

Tommy Duncan—Ballymena, N Ireland
Dylan Hoekstra, Tayler Hoekstra, Justin Kooima, Kelsey Kooima, Erin VanRavensway and Jenna Van Ravenswaay—Calvary, IA
Courtney Huisenga, Alyssa Haak, Alexander Lubbers—Crete, IL
Matt VanBeek, Chelsey Teunissen—Doon, IA
Luke Tolsma—Edmonton, CAN
Taylor Engelmsa, Jessica Holstege, Whitney Schut—Georgetown, MI
Erica Moelker, Susan Kleyn—Grace, MI
Zach Kuiper, Andrew Peterson, Kyle Rowe, Chad Rutgers, Danae Overweg, Jordan Scholten, and Kaley Zwak—Hudsonville, MI
Kalista Heynen, Justin Zandstra—Hull, IA
Alyssa Bleyenberg—Redlands, CA
Jerome Breslin—Spokane, WA

MARRIAGES

"For this God is our God forever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." Psalm 48:14

United in the bond of holy matrimony were:

Mr. Tim Ondersma and Miss Jessica Spriensma—Byron Center, MI
Mr. Ben Peterson and Miss Becky Herrold—Grace, MI
Mr. Daniel Langerak and Miss Annie Zuverink—Hudsonville, MI
Mr. Ben Timmerman and Miss Nicole Decker—Hudsonville, MI
Mr. Kyle VanDenTop and Miss Kara Kroese—Hull, IA

NOTICE

Nearly one thousand people have already ordered a copy of the *2012 Denominational Directory*. There are still some left. If you would like a copy, call Laura Huizinga at (616) 453-6858, or send a $12.00 check, made out to Hope Young People's Society, to the following address:

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Tell us your name and your church and we will get the directory to you as soon as possible.

Connie Meyer

The Gift
that cannot be refused

There is a gift
that you possess—
you cannot take or leave.

Though some will say
they may refuse
such gold on them to cleave.

What?
Refuse this gift?
How can that be?
This gift is one God gives!

In each His own
dear child He breathes
a bond that joins and lives.

This gift is faith,
infused in both
the will and act of man.

No,
with faith worked in
us in this way,
refuse—we never can.

C. L. Meyer

"LITTLE LIGHTS"
... let it shine!

In the puzzle, find all the words quoted below from the 3rd and 4th Heads of the Canons of Dordt, Article 14. Some two-letter words may have more than one possibility:

"Faith is therefore to be considered as the gift of God, not on account of it being offered by God to man, to be accepted or rejected at his pleasure; but because it is in reality conferred, breathed, and infused into him;…because he who works in man both to will and to do, and indeed all things in all, produces both the will to believe, and the act of believing also."

Canons III/IV, Article 14

G	O	D	C	F	M	G	O	D	F	O	T	N	I
A	L	S	O	A	B	B	I	N	D	E	E	D	G
B	S	G	N	I	V	E	I	L	E	B	F	N	F
A	G	I	F	T	H	I	S	D	R	L	O	O	L
L	N	T	E	H	W	N	P	E	E	C	L	T	W
L	I	D	R	O	R	G	R	R	D	B	M	I	H
Y	H	O	R	A	E	T	O	E	I	E	L	V	W
D	T	K	E	N	J	F	D	F	S	L	B	T	H
E	S	I	D	D	E	S	U	F	N	I	N	E	O
T	N	Y	L	R	C	O	C	O	O	E	T	S	T
P	B	R	E	A	T	H	E	D	C	V	D	U	H
E	O	H	P	L	E	A	S	U	R	E	N	A	E
C	T	C	A	L	D	R	W	V	M	T	A	C	E
C	H	E	H	T	U	B	E	C	A	U	S	E	H
A	C	C	O	U	N	T	O	A	N	D	F	B	T

Connie is a member of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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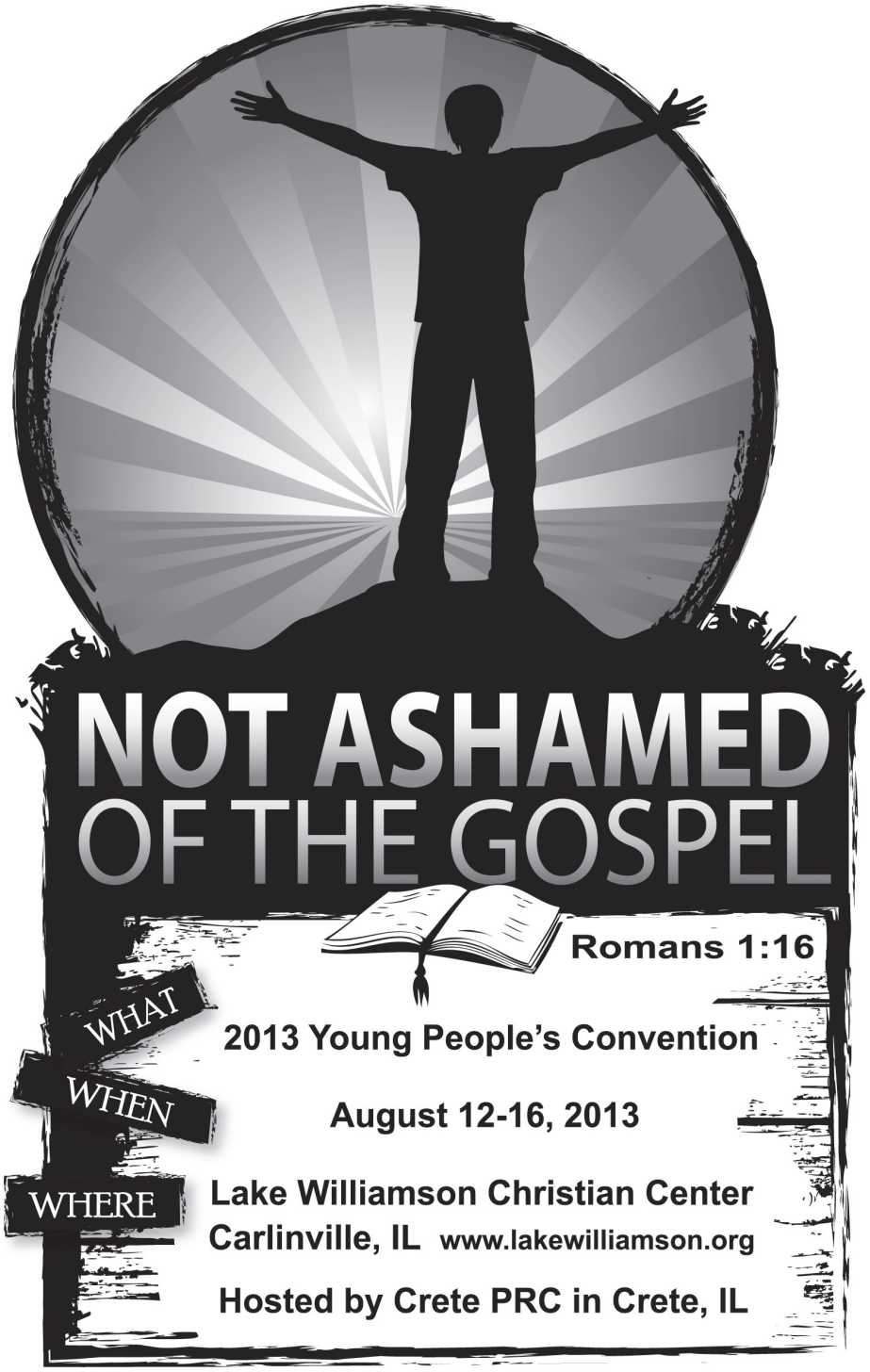
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