

# An “Elephant” Standing Between Secularists And their Receptivity to the Good News of Christ

*“We put no obstacle in anyone’s way.” (2 Corinthians 6:4)*

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Inspired by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations study, *“The Natural Knowledge of God in Christian Confession and Christian Witness.”* (The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 2013).

*“The so-called “war between science and religion” need not be prolonged unnecessarily since there can be but one truth. You’ve raised some very important points in your essay, Gary, which ought to spark serious discussion in our church -- and far beyond. You made very clear the fact that belief in an older earth does not necessarily carry with it belief in organic evolution.”*

(Dr. Paul Maier, recent LCMS 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President, author, and retired Professor of Ancient History at Western Michigan University)

## FOREWORD

I am very optimistic at the possibility of Christian revival in today’s highly secular age, but only under the two conditions that first, biblical reformation (see below, and p. 7-8) lead the way through our confusion and consequent timidity as Christ’s witnesses, and second, that the same vision which captured the early church (Matthew 28:19,20 and Acts 1:8, as reflected in Acts 17:6) would be embraced by us as well. Limiting our mission field to the recovery of lapsed Missouri Synod Lutherans is NOT consistent with those passages. Contrary to my intentions, readers may sense a spirit of pessimism across these pages. But I plead innocent! Both the scientific and the historical evidence that have bearing on the Bible very strongly favor the truth of the biblical claims. The only buttress that is propping up the other side consists almost entirely of *sleight of hand* tactics. We are allowing the huge opportunity that is laid before us, to *effectively* challenge secularism’s empty arguments, to instead pass us by. So my tone is at times hard-hitting for the reasons that the stakes are so high, even as the resistance by Christians to engage our culture is so entrenched. Should we wisely walk away from that posture, I do not underestimate the intensions of the devil to find ever *new* ways to hinder the proclamation of the Gospel. And I am not suggesting that the theme addressed here is the *only* consequential obstacle to the Gospel. But that doesn’t mean we should allow the existing “elephant” to remain standing in the way of Christ’s proclamation in the present day.

I do not challenge the motives of those with whom I disagree within these pages. Nor do I challenge their status as children of God in Christ. What I am compelled to highlight are the consequences which follow from the posture they are choosing which hinders the receptivity of our culture to the Gospel. I obligate myself to the authority of the Bible in the spirit of Luther’s Reformation. Our Synod is likewise so obligated. We cannot afford to perpetuate our traditions apart from the resolve to measure them against the authority of Scripture. *“The fields are white for the harvest”* (John 4:35). The opportunities are ours. And the current tragic situation can turn around if...

There is virtually an entire segment of our society that is alienated from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That sector includes both the “scientific” community in the strict sense of the term, and people in general whose default understanding of the world is founded on insights gained from the scientific *study* of the natural order. I am NOT suggesting every such person is resistant to belief in some sort of “higher power.” Nor am I assuming all are *hostile* (there are notable exceptions) to the vague notion of a *creator* kind of god. They are instead alienated from the specific God who is directly associated with the Holy Bible. It is of course true, in light of Colossians 1:21, that by our *common* sin (Romans 5:12) every single human being, apart from the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, is alienated from the Gospel. This paper, however, addresses an altogether different kind of alienation that is sourced not within hardened “sinners,” but in impressions left from the commission of serious errors in judgment by certain gate-keeping “evangelists.” It is they who are placing unnecessary obstacles in the way of the Good News by falsely representing the Bible. While it is certainly true that the central message of the Gospel, “*Christ crucified*,” must never be compromised (1 Corinthians 1:23), it is NOT our privilege as its ambassadors to distort and exaggerate the *nature* of that challenge which human pride already calls “folly” (1 Cor. 1:23). Indeed we must neither place obstacles in the way of seekers, nor roadblock the entry of prospective converts by exacting requirements of a kind the Bible itself never demands or even suggests.<sup>1</sup>

One positive aspect of the proclamation of the Gospel that was prominent in the New Testament tends in our *own* day to be **neglected**. In the first sermon in the Book of Acts (2:14-36), the Apostle Peter at Pentecost proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus as a matter of *fact* that was both *known publically* and *acknowledged* as true by the Jewish crowd (“...*as you yourselves know...*,” and “*and of [Jesus’ resurrection] we are witnesses*” -- Acts 2:22,32). In addition, extensive quotes from fulfilled Bible prophecies opened and closed his sermon. Supporting details concerning Jesus’ resurrection did not lie at the periphery as an afterthought, but were woven throughout the entire sermon. Ramifications were then laid out to follow from these truths at his *conclusion* (Acts 2:37,8).

In a similar fashion, the Apostle John *opened* his first epistle (1:1-3) by establishing the *fact* of Jesus' incarnational existence (first identified in John 1:14: "*And the Word became flesh*"). Challenging the Gnostic<sup>2</sup> cult in its assertion that Jesus was a mere "phantom," John made it clear that Jesus' "incarnation" fully embodied the claim behind that very word by His having been seen, heard, and touched (1 John 1:1-3), as was necessary for the efficacy of His redemptive act for sinners (1 John 1:7, 2 John 7-10).

Concerning the Apostle Paul's missionary approach to Jews (recorded in the Book of Acts), he consistently appealed to three key themes. First he recited God's promises in the Old Testament of one day sending to Israel a Deliverer called the Messiah. Second, he identified the arrival of Jesus as the ultimate fulfillment of those promises. And third, he pointed to the fact that following Jesus' death on the cross at the hands of the Jewish leaders, He was raised from the dead as proof that He indeed was, and is, God's promised Messiah (13:30-31).

As for Paul's approach *to* the Gentiles, it is significant to the main point of this paper that at the town of Lystra, referenced in Acts 14:9-18, he gave attention to the "witness" from nature, of the "*living God who made heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them*" (Acts 14:15,16). Later at Athens (Acts 17:16-33) Paul again engaged with his hearers about God's creation of the heavens and the earth. Most striking about that encounter with the Athenian pagans was his method of appealing to them on the basis of what they already knew from their experience of the testimony of nature (see Romans 1:18-20), as made clear from quotations cited from two of their own famous authors (Acts 17:28).

By contrast, today it is common in Christian proclamation to instead appeal to audiences almost exclusively on the basis of the *pragmatic* benefits the Bible offers. Now it is undeniable that biblical authors and figures, including Jesus Himself, address people by appealing to the blessings that are found in knowing God (Psalm 19: 7-10, Psalm 34:8, Matthew 11:28,29, John 4:10, John 6:35, John 7:37,8, John 10:10, Philippians 4:4-7, etc). It is for the very reason that the biblical evangelists believed the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is indeed Lord of Heaven and Earth *in actual truth*, that invitations were issued in strikingly bold

confidence that hearers *must* come to Him in faith. They argued *from* the foundation of truth *to* the implications, that is, the blessing that follows from our response in faith. Truth, and not pragmatism, stood absolutely central to the apostolic proclamation of the Gospel. Following then the leading of the Apostles Peter, John, and Paul, we notice their *common* theme of emphasizing truth as the foundational aspect of their message. When we focus in on Paul's message, specifically to the Gentiles (pagans), we notice two additional things. First, far from denying legitimacy to their own daily experience of the world, he instead established connection with his audiences on the basis of what they already knew about nature *from* their experience. In sum, he dignified both the natural world and our knowledge of it. While he acknowledged the Gospel to be "foolishness" within the minds of fallen Gentiles in particular, he did not heighten their resistance by making it even more difficult for them to believe. Instead, in the spirit of *Gospel*-inspired outreach, his endeavor was to "*become all things to all people that I [Paul] might by all means save some*" (1 Corinthians 9:22,23).

When these three Apostles argued the truth of their messages, they did not resort to bald assertions. Nor did they "piously" separate faith from reason or disparage "truth" as a concept alien to the Gospel. Neither did they appeal to a specifically "religious" view of truth by separating "Christian truth" from the classical (Aristotelian) view of truth. They instead carefully laid out their cases in a manner entirely consistent with the *common* rules of logic,<sup>3</sup> and in implicit approval of reason itself. One fundamental rule of logic is the *law of non-contradiction*,<sup>4</sup> which is regarded as a philosophical *first-principle*.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, when Christians claim that the Bible is to be true in matters of the creation of the heavens and the earth, the classical *correspondence* view of truth means that the biblical account of creation in *actuality* correlates with the record of nature (I am convinced that that state of affairs is indeed so, as will become clear later). Therefore, should it happen that a contradiction be demonstrated to exist between the Bible and the record of nature, under the rules of logic one of the two sides of the formula *must* give way.<sup>6</sup> Under such circumstances, logic does not allow for Christians to claim that the Bible is the final authority on the state of things in nature (should the evidence not agree) and call that truth *on authorita-*

rian grounds.<sup>7</sup> In summary, the claim that the Bible is true on matters of creation cannot rest on pious decree alone. Truth is neither *created* nor *enforced* by *decree*; it can only be *acknowledged* as an *actuality*. Here lies the challenge for proclaiming the Gospel to a culture which values truth that is *capable* of being verified only when it is *demonstrated* to be true. While the Bible argues from higher, *revealed*, truths that are not subject to direct verification, it is surely irrational for some Christians to announce to skeptical audiences such “truths” in conjunction with claims about the natural world that are demonstrably false. If we Christians can’t make the convincing case that the Bible is in **fact** true to the entire range of existence it professes to address, then audiences will continue in their excuses to shun the notion of biblical authority, and turn deaf ears to Christ.

Whenever scientists engage in *scientific* investigation, they are committing themselves to the rules of the scientific method. This *method* of studying the natural world, by definition, excludes the concept of revelation.<sup>8</sup> This is indeed proper. I hasten to add that this does not mean scientists are rationally obligated to refuse biblical revelation as authoritative over the *entirety* of their lives.<sup>9</sup> To the contrary! But when they *scientifically*<sup>10</sup> investigate the natural world, their authoritative standard for legitimate scientific data allows only what is perceivable and measurable by *sensory*<sup>11</sup> means. This manner of understanding nature is what informs a large sector of people in our society that the age of the universe is over thirteen billion years,<sup>12</sup> that Earth does not lie at it’s the “geographical” center of the cosmos, and that the Sun existed before the Earth. Out-spoken voices from certain leading evangelical churches, including the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, on the other hand, are insisting the Bible pronounces both that the age of the cosmos is between 6 and 10 thousand years, and that the Earth existed before the creation of either the Sun or the entire starry heavens (now estimated at over a hundred billion galaxies). Furthermore, they claim as *biblical* teaching, that the final authority of the opening chapters of Genesis (interpreted by their hermeneutic),<sup>13</sup> extends even to matters of science. This is the harmful roadblock that is thrust in the way of receptivity to the Gospel for multitudes of people. The binding tenets of young-earth creationists (**YEC**), so named, effectively call for the entire surrender of the intellectual foundation of

multitudes of people before they can even seriously *consider* the claims of Jesus Christ and come to believe in Him.

Science and religion properly understood are not in conflict with each other. They each, in their own fashion, are of equal value in their pursuit of the kind of truths they each seek to answer. We Christians believe the Bible to be truth in the form of *revelation*.<sup>14</sup> Science, on the other hand, seeks after truth (about the physical world) through empirical, *hands-on*, investigation.<sup>15</sup> To an imaginary question posed at a dinner table, “*What accounts for this delicious cake that has been placed before us?*,”<sup>16</sup> one guest’s *revelatory* manner of answering might be, “... *because Aunt Matilda lovingly baked it for us.*” On the other hand, a professional chef seated next to him might, employing *empirical* language, list the required ingredients, explain the chemical processes, and then throw in the temperature and baking time that is required in order to make a perfect dessert. Clearly it isn’t the *purpose* of the former to describe cake-making according to the laws of physics. Nor is it the *purview* of the latter’s answer to address “why” and “what for” kinds of questions. This is not to deny that Matilda’s nephew might reveal a few “secret” *details* behind the cake’s perfect texture. Nor is it to deny the chef a few words of praise for the aunt! Taking both voices together, their attempt to offer insightful answers to the same question may take on several legitimate forms. It is wrong for either one to charge the other with either fibbing (unless they actually did!) or wasting everyone else’s time.

But now to the specific agenda of this essay: concerning the question of the relationship between science and religion, it may be granted that certain self-appointed “scientific” spokespersons have tended to “*hog the lectern*” when addressing the biggest of life’s questions. My charge to such people is that they are failing to recognize the proper limits (and benefits) of their own *scientific* domain. But I now turn my attention elsewhere. My main purpose is to instead challenge the ongoing, prevailing, expression of a specific sin from within the Christian church, out of my motive to assist the advancement of the Gospel so that the (*scientifically*-informed) lost be saved rather than excluded by default.

These concerns are obviously uncomfortable for many evangelical Christians, in particular, to discuss. For that reason alone, silence tends to prevail in these matters. It has been suggested directly to me more than once that my attempts to challenge our Synod's traditional position on creation is a distraction that effectively diverts our energy away from the most important of all Christian tasks: to see people come to faith in Jesus Christ. Well, I closed the previous paragraph by urging the removal of a major roadblock, precisely for the purpose of achieving exactly that same goal! For the sake of representing and advancing truth<sup>17</sup>, for the sake of Christ, and most germane to my goal, for the sake of the lost who live all around us, we can no longer ignore the controversy surrounding matters (and also the *manner*) of creation.

In answer to the prevailing (though officially unofficial)<sup>18</sup> resistance of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to re-think these issues, perpetuated by their repeated assertion that the question of the length of the creation "days" of Genesis is a settled and therefore a closed matter, my reply is that they have NEVER opened the discussion in the first place. My essay, "*The Biblical Demand to Take Another Look: Ten 'Compelling' Reasons the Days of Creation are Non-24-Hour,*"<sup>19</sup> is a direct challenge to the posted LCMS statement that, "*Unless there is compelling reason on the basis of the biblical texts themselves...we are to believe God created the world in six 24-hour days.*"<sup>20</sup> Despite my repeated attempts to seriously engage with others over that essay with LCMS seminary professors and other high level officials, I have been met almost entirely with resistance, arrogance, or obfuscation, and sometimes with all three. Rarely have I been greeted with a reciprocal desire to engage. This position paper, inspired as it was by Luther's convictions expressed at the Diet of Worms, stands solid as a serious biblical case for the "day-age" interpretation of the creation days of Genesis.

In addition to affirming my own position, my essay also challenges the common arguments that are advanced in favor of the 24-hour-day position. However, while I argue that the evidence strongly validates my interpretation, it is not necessary to the thesis of this paper that my position be proven conclusively. It is enough to remove the certitude of the YEC position which effectively hinders secularists from consideration of the claims of the Gospel of Christ. For this

reason, YECs are morally obligated to face the exegetical challenges of the first chapters of Genesis in the original (Hebrew) language,<sup>21</sup> and revisit the question of its' interpretation with an open mind. Far from forbidding this reassessment, Scripture demands it (2 Timothy 2:15).

Yet young-earth creationists argue more than just that the *text* of Genesis favors 24-hour creation days. They claim further that the Bible trumps scientific knowledge in matters of authority even in matters of, say, physics, that can be repeatedly tested *scientifically*. One of their major spokespersons pointedly argues contrary to mainstream science, that the sun was made on Day Four a few thousand years ago just "*because the Bible says so.*"<sup>22</sup> My judgment is that this practice of wresting *scientific* authority on *scientific* matters away from *scientists* (who investigate according to the *scientific* method their proper object (nature), by means of the proper *scientific* tools) is grounded on wrong-headed pietistic attempts to protect the Bible as the Word of God in an unbiblical manner.

The urging of that posture cannot be found within the Scriptures themselves. The Bible itself never claims authority over nature in ways that call for the denial of scientific<sup>23</sup> observation. Indeed, the single passage in Scripture that explicitly does address that question condemns all attempts to suppress the testimony of nature. Instead it commands us to directly heed the witness of the heavens and the earth, and thereby to draw reasonable conclusions about God from the very evidence which nature conveys (Romans 1:18,19).<sup>24</sup> The prevailing insistence of our Synod that, on biblical grounds, the "days" of Genesis 1 *must* be 24-hour, therefore has neither biblical warrant nor biblical authority. Furthermore, its determination to bind consciences in ways that effectively exclude multitudes from considering as true the Bible's claims about Jesus Christ, out of an ill-considered position (born out of willful neglect) on hermeneutical practice with respect to the first chapter of Genesis, is to commit grave sin.

In addition to the strong *biblical* case that the day-age interpretation of creation is consistent with the findings of modern science, the *scientific* case for a cosmic beginning that harmonizes with the opening verse of the Bible is also very strong. The recent discovery, from 20<sup>th</sup> Century scientific investigation, of an



absolute beginning of the entire universe, that is, all of space, time, matter, and energy out of nothing, in a manner consistent with the bold declaration of Genesis 1:1, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,*” is both unassailable and inescapable. In contrast to Darwinian evolution, fraught as it is with missing links across the entire fossil record, together with an utter lack of unambiguous empirical evidence in its favor, Big Bang cosmology, at every turn, is verifiable by *observational*<sup>25</sup> data on a whole host of grounds.<sup>26</sup> I briefly lay out the relevant facts in my booklet, The Prints are Everywhere: The convergence of Science, History, and Experience, with Biblical Revelation.<sup>27</sup> The roster of the observational data supporting the creation of the universe by God includes the cosmic pattern that 1) all galaxies are flying apart from one another, 2) that they are measurably farther apart now than in the past, 3) and that this cosmic expansion has been slowing down, 4) even as the temperature of the universe is cooling off. 5) We can also observe the back-ground radiation from the “blast” (it was highly controlled, see below) at its initial creation, 6) which reveals (with increasing visual detail as instruments improve) the disconformity in the radiation at the level required in order for stars to form. Were this unfolding development reversed like rewinding a movie, that same pattern would eventually take all of existence back to the singularity, the Big Bang, which was the absolute beginning of all things material.<sup>28</sup> Thus, though science bears witness to this beginning, the *existence* of the universe cannot be accounted for by science itself, but only as a miracle by the God of the Bible who transcends (stands outside) nature.

In addition, scientists also recognize there to have been an array of highly unlikely mathematical factors (called cosmic “fine-tuning,”<sup>29</sup>) that were set (as on a dial) from the moment of creation. Each one was required to be set as precisely as it was (some to within a billionth of a percent) in order to yield the kind of universe capable of hosting life of *any* kind, let alone, advanced life. These finely-tuned factors include the physical constants within the atom (both the strong and the weak nuclear forces), the power of electromagnetism, the strength of gravity, the total amount of mass in the universe, and the rate of expansion following out from the initial blast of the great singularity.<sup>30</sup> Though scientists have detected the existence of these required exacting characteristics, present as they were

from the very moment of creation, they too, like the moment *of* creation, point to a Cause lying outside of nature, God who is not only *Creator*, but also the cosmic<sup>31</sup> *Designer* of all things (Romans 1:18f).

It is bewildering that we should fail to employ such *positive* evidence in support of God's existence in the face of the growing skepticism. It is equally mystifying that we should fail to use this same evidence in the way St. Paul also did in Romans 3:19, 20, as *law* (*nomos* Gk), which, when plainly highlighted, convicts sinful humans of the *true* folly of imagining our cosmos to have been self-made, and our very selves to be self-defined. Receptivity to the Gospel of Christ is invariably accompanied by the conviction of sin (Matthew 9:12) that is convincingly highlighted by the revelation of God's law (1 John 1:7). That light is manifest in the Bible (Psalm 119:11, Rom. 2:17-24), and also in both His external creation (Rom. 1:18-2:16) and within our consciences (Rom. 2:1-16). And yet, as things now stand, we are denying ourselves half the "tools" that Paul employed.

The creation event brought to light by the findings of mainstream science stands in contradiction both to the interpretation of the days of Genesis 1 as six 24-hour periods, and to the professed age of the cosmos as less than ten thousand years. That people, with compelling scientific evidence affirming their view of the natural world, and in the face of an utter absence of compelling *scientific* evidence against it, should, in the name of Christ, nevertheless be called on to renounce such a properly attained view of nature *before* they can come to Him, must be regarded as scandalous foolishness. I for one am certain God is not pleased with obstacles so unnecessarily placed in the way of people who might otherwise come to faith in His Son.

I sense a spirit of discouragement about the future of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (consistent with most mainstream denominations) because of declining attendance figures. Recently a spokesperson for our Synod publically stated that current trends are moving us toward the closing of our doors within a few decades. What is to be done about this? Must we imagine that our unique witness to the truth of the Gospel will have its final day before long? Doubtless many will turn away from the proposal of this essay by regarding it as volatile, if

not indeed explosive. It must be said in reply that there must be some flame in order for the light of Christ to spread at all. However, why not think of the Gospel as volatile in the *positive* sense, as on the day of Pentecost. It was that very day which began the spread of the Gospel across the entire Roman world. Why not, then, think of the volatility of the Gospel as a rapidly burning flame fanned by the truth on which we most solidly stand? I for one directly connect that sense of gloom with a lack of awareness and a shortage of confidence that we Christians stand on the intellectual high ground in light of the testimony of nature (which ALL people can accept) and its harmonious contribution to the special revelation of the Holy Bible. I do not agree with the pessimistic notion that our best days must be behind us. Far from fleeing from our calling to engage the world with the message of Christ, we have every reason to shout it from the housetops (Matthew 10:27).

Instead of bewailing the challenges before us, how much more constructive it can be when we who are Christians avail ourselves of the evidential case for the existence of the God of the Bible, which the findings from mainstream science increasingly undergird. Far from the call to flee from “ungodly” science, Scripture invites us to an opposite approach to nature. It instead calls people to heed it as an aspect of God’s (left-handed)<sup>32</sup> revelatory gift. This is consistent with the approach the Apostle Paul not only advocated (Romans 1:18f), but also directly employed when preaching to the pagans in Athens (Acts 17:16-34). Since Paul embraced such methods, then why not we too? What indeed, in the name of Christ and of Holy Scripture, stands in our way except our own prejudices?

#### Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The central theme behind the Jerusalem Conference described in Acts 15.

<sup>2</sup> The ancient Roman cult, “Gnosticism,” denied the incarnation of Jesus because of a pagan view of reality which denigrated the material order.

<sup>3</sup> Due credit of course belongs to Aristotle for his *assembly* of the rules of legitimate argumentation in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. However, he did not invent these principles, but instead collated, sharpened, and clarified them. Logic as a concept inter-weaves the thinking of all people groups of all time and place, though it is also true that humans everywhere violate these standards. Like everyone else, Israel too both kept and broke these principles. The prophet Isaiah, for example, highlighted the illogic of artisans fashioning objects of metal and wood for idolatrous worship of them and, in the case of the tree, burning a portion in a fire over which to cook a meal (Isaiah 44:9-20).

<sup>4</sup> That law states that a proposition cannot be both true and not true at the same time when considered in the same context.

<sup>5</sup> A “first principle” is not subject to proof by the standards of logic. It is instead an un-provable *a priori* (*prior*) law, or standard, for legitimate thinking, *by* which the validity of all other propositions are judged.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Luther praised astronomy as a worthy field of knowledge (Jaroslav Pelikan, ed. “*Lectures on Ecclesiastes*.” *Luther’s Works*, v. 15. (Concordia, 1972), p.18). \*\* He also deferred to astronomers, not theologians as the authorities in matters of the stars. (Jaroslav Pelikan, ed. *Luther’s Works: Genesis*. v.1. (Concordia, 1958), p.44).

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<sup>7</sup> LCMS scientist, Dr. John Klotz wrote that our faith “cannot go contrary to science and reason and observation... There must be a basic unity between [scientific] facts and truth as it is given to us in revelation.” (*Modern Science and the Christian Life*, (Concordia, 1962), 79, 137f.

<sup>8</sup> By “revelation” is meant receiving insight that is communicated by an intelligent agent (for Christians, God), as opposed insight attained by hands-on *empirical* investigation. By contrast, “empirical” knowledge is defined as “[relying] on experience or observation alone without due regard for system and theory.” (*Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1983).

It is significant that the *scientific* focus on objective truth in one important aspect, places scientists and Christians on the same side. Neither believes “truth” is invented out of whole cloth. Both have stakes in the existence of objective truth that confronts us as a challenge calling for reconciliation with the rest of objective reality.

<sup>9</sup> It is indeed entirely rational for scientists to submit their lives to the authority of the Bible as God’s *revealed* word. Scientists may even logically conclude, as I do, the Bible to be *non-scientific revelation* about areas that they explore *scientifically*.

<sup>10</sup> That is, by *empirical* methods.

<sup>11</sup> Learned through the five senses of sight, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching. \*\* See also the Commission on Theology and Church Relations study, *The Natural Knowledge of God in Christian Confession and Christian Witness*, (The LCMS, 2013), p.46f.

<sup>12</sup> Though young-earth astronomer Jason Lisle challenges the standard age of the cosmos on the basis of his interpretation of the creation days of Genesis, even he concedes that the measured vast light-year distances across the galaxies are scientifically testable and therefore true, and also free from the taint of evolutionary assumptions. He dismisses the common assertion that God might have created the very light beams in travel ([www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab.does-starlight-prove](http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab.does-starlight-prove)).

<sup>13</sup> “Hermeneutics,” named after the Greek messenger of the gods, Hermes, involves the principles for the *valid* interpretation of a given text.

<sup>14</sup> As God’s *revealed* Word (2 Timothy 3:16).

<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, Luther writes, “But it is not an evil thing to investigate the nature and qualities of things. Besides, the causes of the objects of this world are the most evident of all, far from difficult to know.” (Op.cit. (5), (*Lectures on Ecclesiastes*), p.18).

<sup>16</sup> As created literarily by mathematician and philosophy of science professor, Dr. John C. Lennox in his book, *Gods’ Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (Lion Hudson, 2009), p.207f.

<sup>17</sup> The majority of the holders of power and influence in our society, including most especially (for the purpose of this essay) university professors and public school teachers, have significant influence in the thinking of their students. Lacking as many (not all) do, both a biblical foundation and an allegiance to the Gospel, they will invariably instill in their students secular values based on a non-biblical world-view.

<sup>18</sup> Responding to my inquiry concerning an LCMS “Q & A” column on the age of the earth, in a personal letter to me on official letterhead, the Executive Director of the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations, Dr. Joel Lehenbauer, assured me that such statements “do not as such constitute the official position of the Synod.”

<sup>19</sup> Found at my website, [www.christianityontheoffense.com](http://www.christianityontheoffense.com).

<sup>20</sup> [www.lcms.hughes-stl.com/pages/internal.asp?NavID=2210](http://www.lcms.hughes-stl.com/pages/internal.asp?NavID=2210).

<sup>21</sup> In endnote 7 of “*The Biblical Demand*,” (Op.cit. 19), Luther highlights the importance of studying the biblical texts in the original languages. Note 5 lists **ten** consequential instances in the biblical creation texts where the English Standard Version mistranslates the Hebrew grammar.

<sup>22</sup> Ken Ham, founder of “Answers in Genesis” in a broadcast on AM 820 radio, Seattle, WA, on September 20, 2006.

<sup>23</sup> The biblical writers weren’t acquainted with the term “scientist.” It originated in 1833 when William Wordsworth suggested that a group of bone collectors not be called “natural philosophers” because they investigate reality not from armchairs, but out in the field in nature. Hence the coining of the new term, “scientist.” See <http://symbioticism.blogspot.com/2013/04/the-history-of-science-when-was-word.html>.

<sup>24</sup> See also “*The Biblical Demand*,” at Op.cit. (19), p.7.

<sup>25</sup> *Natural Knowledge*. Op.cit. (11), p.59.

<sup>26</sup> Both the breadth and the nature of the supporting evidence virtually guarantees Big Bang cosmology is not about to be overthrown in favor of a newer paradigm. Consider such accessible supporting works as Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, (NavPress, 1995), \*\* Hugh Ross, *Why the Universe is the Way it Is*, Reasons to Believe, 2008), \*\* and Fred Heeren, *Show Me God*, (Daystar, 2000), \*\* <http://www.reasons.org>.

<sup>27</sup> Op.cit. (19), p.2.

<sup>28</sup> Op.cit. (19 and 26).

<sup>29</sup> Martin Rees. *Just Six Numbers*. (Basic, 2000).

<sup>30</sup> Op.cit. (26).

<sup>31</sup> “Cosmos” (*kosmos* Gk) in the Greek language means “orderly arrangement.” Hence the similarity of the words “cosmology,” which is the study of the universe, and “cosmetology,” which addresses the beautification of women.

<sup>32</sup> *Natural Knowledge*. Op.cit. (11), p.4.

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