

Views Acceptable in the PCA

(excerpted from the PCA position paper)

A. The Calendar-Day Interpretation

The Bible teaches that God created of nothing all things in six days, by which Moses meant six calendar days. The view is often called the literal view, the traditional view, or the twenty-four-hour view.

B. The 'Day-Age' interpretation

The 'Day-Age' interpretation of the creative days in Genesis 1 has taken various forms in its contemporary expressions, and those which have been held within conservative Reformed circles are outlined below and contain certain common features.

The 'six days' are understood in the same sense as *in that day* of Isaiah 11:10-11 -that is, as periods of indefinite length and not necessarily of 24 hours duration. There are other similar uses of the Hebrew word for *day* (yôm) in Scripture to support this view of periods longer than 24 hours including that in the very context of Genesis 2:4. Another argument for this approach is that the seventh day in Genesis 1 is not concluded with the boundary phrase, *and there was evening, and there was morning* as with the other days, and therefore it continues, as indicated by Hebrews 4:1-11's quotation of Psalm 95:11.

The six days are taken as sequential, but as overlapping and merging into one another, much as an expression like *the day of the Protestant Reformation* might have only a proximate meaning and might overlap with *the day of the Renaissance*. While exponents of this view might be willing to concede a rough parallel between day one and day four, day two and day five, day three and day six, they would tend to deny that this is an intended parallel by Moses as author, as is commonly claimed in the Framework interpretation.

The Day-Age interpretation claims that the narrative of Genesis 1 is from the point of view of the earth as being prepared for the habitation of man. In this context, the explanation of day four is often that the sun only became visible on that day, as atmospheric conditions allowed the previous alternation of light and darkness to be perceived from the earth to have its source from the position of the previously created sun and other heavenly bodies. However day four is understood, the point is made that only on that day is the diurnal cycle of days governed by the sun begun, so that it is difficult to know the nature of the first three days.

C. The Framework Interpretation

There are a number of versions of the Framework interpretation. Here we discuss the position which has arguably influenced the PCA most, that of Meredith G. Kline and Mark D. Futato. In Genesis 1:1-2:3: Exegesis indicates that the scheme of the creation week itself is a poetic figure and that the several pictures of creation history are set within the six work-day frames not chronologically but topically. In distinguishing simple description and poetic figure from what is definitively conceptual the only ultimate guide, here as always, is comparison with the rest of Scripture.

In other words, the distinctive feature of the Framework interpretation is its understanding of the week (not the days as such) as a metaphor. Moses used the metaphor of a week to narrate God's acts of creation. Thus God's supernatural creative words or fiats are real and historical, but the exact timing is left unspecified.

Why the week then? Moses intended to show Israel God's call to Adam to imitate Him in work, with the promise of entering His Sabbath rest. God's week is a model, analogous to Israel's week. The events are grouped in two

triads of days. Days 1-3 (creation's kingdoms) are paralleled by Days 4-6 (creation's kings). Adam is king of the earth and God is King of Creation.

D. The Analogical Days Interpretation

The *days* are God's work-days, which are analogous, and not necessarily identical, to our work days, structured for the purpose of setting a pattern for our own rhythm of rest and work.

The six *days* represent periods of God's historical supernatural activity in preparing and populating the earth as a place for humans to live, love, work, and worship.

These days are *broadly consecutive*: that is, they are taken as successive periods of unspecified length, but one allows for the possibility that parts of the days may overlap, or that there might be logical rather than chronological criteria for grouping some events in a particular *day*.

Genesis 1:1-2 are background, representing an unknown length of time prior to the beginning of the first *day*: verse 1 is the creatio ex nihilo event, while verse 2 describes the conditions of the earth as the first day commenced.

Length of time, either for the creation week, or before it or since it, is irrelevant to the communicative purpose of the account.