

This is ^{most of} a letter which I wrote to Rev. Dan Vander Lugt in June 1991, replying to a letter which he wrote to me. He was experiencing some pressure from some of his colleagues who were wanting to promote young-earth doctrine.

D. Wonderly

Since the creationism leaders are now making bolder claims than ever to the effect that their doctrine of a young earth is so secure that it can no longer be challenged by either scientific data or by theology, I should perhaps list a few reasons why we know this to be merely a delusion which they have brought on themselves by strictly limiting their own scientific studies. You no doubt know that Dr. James Kennedy and other important Christian leaders have, in recent years, done great damage to their ministries by accepting the claim (a) that the earth and universe are very young, and (b) that this supposed youth is a very important part of the proclaiming of the gospel message. We sincerely hope that the Radio Bible Class and similar organizations will never fall into such a trap as this. A few reasons why no Christian organization needs to feel obligated to accept young-earth creationism are these:

1. We are still unable to discover or hear of even one scientifically supported type of evidence for a young earth. And why should there be such evidence, since the earth is full of non-evolutionary evidences of great age; and God does not contradict himself, even in his works? (Many of the simple but profoundly meaningful evidences for great age are listed and explained in my two books, which you have.)
2. I have regularly read the ICR's monthly Acts & Facts publication for the past several years, hoping each year that I would find that they would finally realize that the really important fallacy we should fight is evolutionism. We honestly thought that they would finally see that their denials of the scientific data indicating great age have greatly reduced the opportunity of evangelicals to help scientists and public educators--and also enhanced the progress of the anti-creationism movement. And we supposed that they would consequently reduce their emphasis on the age of the earth. But exactly the opposite has taken place. When they finally saw that they have very little opportunity left in scientific and public education circles, they stopped making appreciable efforts in that direction and began to concentrate on the non-science-oriented, conservative evangelicals, who are not so likely to torment them regarding their errors concerning ancient geology and paleontology. This change of their audience has involved the development of the ICR's many "Back to Genesis" conferences (called seminars usually, I think), with their increased emphasis on young-earth doctrine. We of course need to be going "back to Genesis" and emphasizing the validity of its account of special creation, but that fact gives nobody a license to declare that what Genesis teaches is at odds with the truly immense amounts of non-evolutionary data which to any logical mind demand great age. It seems that the primary problem here is that, even though some of the "creation scientists" have logical minds, they have always

flatly refused to actually study an appreciable amount of the data with any view to finding out what that data indicate. (Dr. Whitcomb and other top leaders in the young-earth creationism movement have always strongly maintained that a Christian should not--or must not--spend time studying the nature of the earth's crust with any thought or expectation of finding evidence for great age. Such limiting of one's investigations is of course the opposite of a scientific outlook.) So the main young-earth creationist movements are keeping their followers in ignorance by cult-like methods, and they make no apology for doing so. This limiting of a Christian's investigations is totally unnecessary; nowhere in the Bible is such a policy taught. With clear evidences of great age so evident in every direction we look, as we stand in many places on God's created earth, why would God want to tell us that it is against his will to study them?

3. One needs to remember that the amount of carefully collected, published, non-evolutionary, geologic evidence for great age is now many times greater--at least 30 times greater--than at the time Whitcomb & Morris published The Genesis Flood. My saying this is not at all based on the fact that newly learned principles and data are usually published repeatedly. I am referring to 30 or more times as many known, non-evolutionary, principles and sets of data indicating great age.)

What actually happened was that by 1960, just before the great expansion of research in sedimentary geology and oceanography, Whitcomb & Morris (using Seventh-Day Adventist writings as their guide) decided that they should not and would not examine any more scientific data with a view to finding evidences for great age. (While I was still teaching at Grace College, I spent many, many hours trying to show and convince Dr. Whitcomb that the geologic data were worthy of his attention, but he was completely unresponsive.)

4. On the basis of this same belief regarding the supposed advisability of avoiding the data, the ICR now has increased its emphasis on denying the significance of that data, and is producing large quantities of new video tapes, audio-tapes, and written programs emphasizing their hypotheses of a young earth. We had hoped that John D. Morris, Henry Morris' son, would realize the non-defendability and non-importance of the young-earth hypotheses, but he seems to recommend them at least as strongly as his father. He received a Ph. D. degree in geological engineering, but geological engineering does not involve many studies that demonstrate age--and completely omits the many aspects of geology which analyze the formation and lithification processes of types of limestone and other kinds of sedimentary rocks. (Engineering geology studies rock layers primarily for testing and predicting their safety at the sites where bridges, dams, retaining walls, etc. are built.)

Any time that John Morris or any other of the creationism leaders state that they have studied the geologic and oceanographic evidences for an old earth and have found them unconvincing, one must remember two important factors: (1) It is a very rare occasion when any young-earth creationist leader takes time to read enough of a research report to find out what was actually discovered; (2) Practically all of--or probably all of--these leaders are committed not to study geologic or other data with a view to finding evidence for great age. Just like many cult followers in other fields, they are incapable of making accurate evaluation of evidences on particular subjects against which they have "galvanized" themselves. This limitation of their thought processes and studies prevents them from studying the now-fairly-well-understood methods by which deposits of sediment are lithified, and thus the methods by which the great, ancient bodies of limestone, evaporites, and other sedimentary rocks were produced.

5. Practically all geologic research which the "scientific creationists" do now is on the newly-formed sedimentary deposits such as those which are rapidly produced by volcanoes, local floods, and recent sediment accumulations on or near the continental slopes. They then publish reports, video tapes, films, etc. of these recent processes with the implication that all of the immensely thick, older accumulations of sedimentary rock on the continents could have been formed by such rapid processes, in rapid

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succession--mostly during the year of the Flood. (This in spite of the fact that the geologic research reports describing the older rock types and the ways in which they were deposited and lithified are highly informative and accurate, and are mainly non-evolutionary.)

Well, I must stop, knowing that some of the above items are similar to what I have written you before. But others of them are based on methods of creationism which have recently become more obvious to me.

Thank you for the three booklets which you enclosed. They are very helpful, and I am glad that you were able to work on them. I had earlier ordered and received extra copies of the one on Satan.

Yours in Christ,



Daniel E. Wonderly

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