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## Creation Answers

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### Who does this newsletter?

This newsletter is produced by Wayne Spencer on a Quarterly basis. Its purpose is to bring creation research within the reach of Christians and provide up-to-date reliable information on creation issues. Wayne Spencer is a creation author and former teacher who has presented papers at the International Conference on Creationism and has published in various creation publications, such as the Creation Research Society Quarterly, Creation Ex Nihilo, TJ, and Origins (from the Biblical Creation Society, UK).

This newsletter is meant to help people plug into creation resources and get informed about creation and evolution. It is provided free of charge on request. Using the free Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary for viewing the newsletter. There are no restrictions in copying this newsletter or passing it on to others. To request to be placed on the e-mail list, send a request to Wayne at [wayne@creationanswers.net](mailto:wayne@creationanswers.net).

More information on Wayne Spencer's education and publications can be found on the [creationanswers.net](http://creationanswers.net) web site. You'll also find many other resources. <http://creationanswers.net>

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### A Personal Note from Wayne Spencer

As this newsletter reaches you I hope you and your family are having a good holiday season. This newsletter is a bit late because I recently came down with the flu.

This issue goes into some detail about views often known as Old Age Creationism. This is mainly in the interest of helping Christians correctly understand and not misunderstand these views. I explain how I define the term "creationist." There are some interesting quotes from well known Christian scholars of the early Church showing the young age view has been the historic Christian perspective for a long time. However, today, many Christian leaders mistakenly go along with evolutionary and old age ideas. You may know Christians who should read this article. For more on why the age issue matters to Christians see my article on the Relevance of Recent Creation in the June 2006 newsletter:

[http://creationanswers.net/newsletters/crans\\_v7.2.0606.pdf](http://creationanswers.net/newsletters/crans_v7.2.0606.pdf)

These days I am busy with a number of research and writing projects that will undoubtedly keep me busy in 2007. An article called *Planet Definitions and the Creator* was recently published on <http://creationontheweb.org> for Creation Ministries International. It explains the new definition of the term "planet" and tells about some interesting and unusual objects in the solar system. It continues to challenge man's science to know how to classify all the varied objects that God created.

Wayne Spencer, M.S., Physics

## ***Old Age Creationism***

by Wayne Spencer

What is a creationist? Among some scientific circles, the words “creationism” and “creationist” are used rather loosely to refer to anyone who acknowledges the possibility of a supernatural creation in any sense. So, for instance, some believe God designed life and the universe but that he used processes including the Big Bang and biological evolution to create. To some strict atheists, they would say that if you are going to allow for God designing the universe, you may as well believe in creation in six days. Strict atheists would not want to allow for any possibility of divine involvement at all. So, this loose way of taking the term “creationist” allows for divine involvement in some way, but not necessarily according to a literal reading of Genesis chapter one.

But, I do not use the term “creationist” to refer to someone unless they clearly reject biological macroevolution. Thus, as I would define “creationist,” an individual must believe not only that natural processes alone are not sufficient to explain how biological evolution could work, they must believe that the large-scale changes of evolution could not happen. What’s the difference in these two perspectives? The Intelligent Design (I.D.) Movement proponents take the first perspective, that natural processes are not sufficient in and of themselves to explain the origins of living things. But this does not mean that they really reject evolution as a possibility. They actually do not address all the questions about how it happened but they argue that somehow there was an intelligence involved in arranging things so life could succeed. Though the Intelligent Design Movement includes people from a variety of religious backgrounds, the majority of them do not totally reject evolution, rather they add the

concept of an Intelligent Designer. When they do this, they add a Designer with no commitment to any particular view of the Bible. So, the people in the I.D. movement may be Catholics, Christians, Jews, Muslims, or even Unitarians. Many of the I.D. proponents would be what I would call Theistic Evolutionists, because they somehow mix belief in God with belief in evolution. Note that there is much good from the I.D. movement that I would agree with, but all this is to point out that most of them are evolutionists, not creationists, as I would use the terms.

Thus we come to the term “Old Age Creationism.” I would define this as referring to someone who rejects biological macroevolution, but they do not hold to the young age view for either the Earth or the Universe. Old Age Creationists realize many of the problems with biological evolution and reject it as not possible. They would usually believe in some sort of supernatural creation of living things, perhaps in some manner that follows the days of Genesis 1. But Old Age Creationists consider evidence from either geology or astronomy or both to irrefutably point to an old age.

Some Old Age Creationists would hold that the Earth is young (i.e. 6,000 to 8,000) but the universe is old (12 to 14 Billion). These individuals would acknowledge evidence for a young Earth from young Earth creationists. These people may also agree with young Earth creationists that there is evidence for a global Flood. However people of this perspective will often bring up questions from astronomy such as why are we able to see stars that are billions of light-years distant if the universe is only 6,000 or so years old? Or they may argue that the great number of craters on the Moon and other solar system bodies point to long periods of time.

Other Old Age Creationists disagree with young age creationists about both geology and astronomy. These people vary on how they deal with questions about fossils and the Biblical Noahic Flood. They

generally would not take the Genesis Flood as global. These people would tend to argue that Genesis chapter 1 either allows for long periods of time in some way or they may argue that it does not specify the age of the universe, leaving us free to determine that on our own. People of this perspective would tend to be critical of all young age arguments from young Earth creationists. Old Age Creationists of this perspective also tend to agree with many criticisms of young age arguments that come from theistic evolutionists. Hugh Ross for instance is a well-known theistic evolutionist. He has often spoken out against young age arguments and a literal view of Genesis.

Old Age Creationists in my experience are usually Christians who agree with some of the points made by young age creationists. They often accept that the days of Genesis chapter 1 are literal days. Some of them are careful not to try and fit the formation of fossils into Genesis 1 so that they will not have death before the sin of Adam and Eve. This avoids a potential theological problem that would undermine the basis for Christ's death for our sins. Usually Old Age Creationists hold to what I would call variations of the Gap Theory, regarding Genesis 1.

### ***Old Age Views and Genesis***

For instance, a view called the Pre-Creation Chaos Theory (or Re-Creation View) says that there was a long gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. This is argued for on the basis of their view of the Fall of Satan. People holding to the Re-Creation View reject evolution and do not wish to put fossils and evolution in this time gap. But, yet it allows for both an old Earth and an old universe.

An individual by the name of Gorman Gray takes a unique view that says that Genesis 1 leaves the age of the universe undefined (which means we rely on science that points to an old age). But

Gray holds that there are no fossils laid down in Genesis 1 (no death before sin) and that life has a recent supernatural origin. So Gray goes along with certain points from young Earth creationism, such as there being a global world-wide Flood in Earth history and that life originated about 6,000 to 8,000 years ago. Gray would actually lean toward an old Earth but he holds to the origin of life as recent, to follow Genesis. For more information, Gray's website is <http://ageoftheuniverse.com>.

These are examples of Old Age Creationist viewpoints. We should be careful as we discuss these questions with fellow Christians. It is easy to misunderstand or misjudge our brothers and sisters in Christ. We need to guard against hastily lumping someone into a category that they do not belong in. But we should take time to listen and look into the details of their viewpoint so we understand them correctly. Only then can we effectively communicate or persuade them of anything. Old Age Creationist views do avoid some of the errors that theistic evolution is guilty of, but I would say these are not acceptable views for Christians to hold to.

It turns out that many well known Bible teachers and Christian leaders today hold to either Theistic Evolution or Old Age Creationism. Theistic Evolution is more common among Christian scholars. Among well known Bible teachers that are known from Christian radio, very few hold to a literal view of Genesis and a young age. One who does is John MacArthur. Often in their writings they reference the published comments of others like them, so there is a sense in which they are going along with the crowd. An example is J. P. Moreland. J. P. Moreland is an excellent scholar and I would recommend much of his writings. He has qualifications in philosophy, science, and theology, but he unfortunately supports the Day-Age ideas from Dr. Hugh Ross. There are serious problems with this interpretation of Genesis 1, which I have written about in other articles. It's not my purpose here to

address many details about Genesis, but Moreland errs in his view of Genesis and goes along with a popular opinion when he should stand against it. He does not seem to understand the error. Others, such as Norman Geisler for example, are at least aware of the arguments for a literal Genesis and a young age but he does not hold to that point of view. Geisler allows for an old age. Again, I would highly recommend much of Geisler's work, but on interpreting Genesis I cannot agree with him.

### **Church History and the Age Issue**

Some old age proponents have said that the young age literal Genesis viewpoint is a relatively recent development historically. They argue that early Church Fathers sometimes held to an old age viewpoint and so this justifies accepting an old age viewpoint. Now, if there were important Church leaders in the first few centuries of Christianity who believed an old age this would be significant. But, it just doesn't seem to be true. Even in the time of the Greeks, before the birth of Christ, there were concepts among Greek scholars that were similar to evolutionary concepts. Some of them included ideas of an old Earth or that the Earth always existed. But, among well known Christian scholars the prevailing view was that the Earth was less than 6,000 years old (at that time). Thus it is not that old age concepts were totally unheard of in the first century.

Indeed, there are examples from the early centuries of Christianity where well educated Greeks, turned away from evolutionary ideas to a literal six day young age viewpoint. Examples would include a man named Theophilus, who became bishop of Antioch in 169 A.D. Justin Martyr would be another example, being a Greek philosopher who turned to faith in Christ. To read more about what Theophilus and other Early Church Fathers believed about creation see the excellent article on the Early Church by Louis Lavalée:

<http://www.icr.org/article/264/>

Other well known Christian teachers and scholars of the past were very clearly of the young age literal six day viewpoint. Origen and Augustine have been claimed by some to be examples of Christian scholars of an old age perspective. Let us begin with Origen, who lived from A.D. 185 to A.D. 254. Origen produced many writings that were of great influence in the Church long after his death. One of his works was something called *Contra Celsum*, which was refuting the teachings of someone named Celsus. In it Origen says, **“Celsus, from a secret desire to cast discredit upon the Mosaic account of the creation, which teaches that the world is not yet ten thousand years old, but very much under that . . . .”**

Then regarding Augustine, who lived from A.D. 354 to A.D. 430. Augustine is known for a certain allegorical view of Genesis 1 which said that the six days were a literary device and God actually created everything instantaneously. Because he did not take the days of Genesis as literal, some mistakenly use him to argue that we do not have to take the creation days as literal 24 hour periods. But, what he was doing is the opposite of what modern scholars attempt to do. Today scholars try to lengthen the time and insert time into the Bible whereas Augustine thought that six days was too long! But, regardless of this problem, Augustine clearly believed in a young Earth. He wrote the following.

**“Let us, then, omit the conjectures of men who know not what they say, when they speak of the nature and origin of the human race. For some hold the same opinion regarding men that they hold regarding the world itself, that they have always been... They are deceived, too, by those highly mendacious documents which profess to give the history of many thousand years, though, reckoning by the sacred writings, we find that not 6000 years have yet passed.”** (Augustine, *Of the Falseness of the History Which Allots Many*

Thousand Years to the World's Past, *The City of God*, Book 12: Chapt. 10 [AD 419]).”

This is not to mention any of the Reformers. Luther and Calvin both wrote clearly about their creation point of view. Luther believed the creation account was six literal days and that the Earth was no more than 6,000 years old. For a good article on this regarding Luther, see <http://creationontheweb.com/content/view/1113> Calvin also clearly accepted six literal days and a young Earth. For more information on Calvin's perspective, go to this webpage: <http://creationontheweb.com/content/view/236>

Thus, an old age view of the world is a concept foreign to Scripture that has been added to the Christian mindset in the 1800's. The old ages concept started mainly with some geologists who wanted to believe evolutionary ideas. Later, as science advanced, areas such as chemistry, physics, and astronomy became involved mainly because of Radioisotope Dating methods, such as Carbon Dating. The concept of the geological column gave geologists a framework for understanding Earth's allegedly long history. This and the influence of Charles Darwin and other evolutionist scientists such as Thomas Huxley, strongly influenced the opinion of many both in and out of the church toward accepting evolution. Some who promoted the long geological ages were also Christians and so theologians, who were perhaps intimidated some by the scientists, gave in to old age concepts.

But there have always been Christians who resisted the trend to follow the old age crowd. Why should we resist the pressure to go along with an old age? The age issue does matter because it has a lot to do with the historicity of the Bible. If the dates and events in Genesis 1-11 are not historical, how can we trust the rest of

the Bible? The early chapters of Genesis provide the basis for the rest of the Bible.

Also we must choose who we will treat with more authority, science or Scripture? Christians when asked will say that Scripture has more authority than science but many believers will treat evolutionary science as more authoritative in origins matters. This is especially true on the age question. It comes down to a choice each person must make. We should allow our thinking to come in line with scripture first. Then we can address scientific issues to find answers. But we should not reinterpret or modify scripture to make it easy to avoid a conflict with science. If science happens to disagree with something scripture is clear about, then science should be corrected. It is not scripture that is the problem.

Old age proponents tend to fall into one of several errors. They do not interpret scripture properly, they do not consider the best and most recent evidence for a young age, and they do not critically examine the assumptions of old age arguments. Young Age Creationists have written many articles, technical papers, and web pages answering questions and challenges from old agers. Exodus 20:11 is also worth mentioning. It clearly puts the origin of the heavens, the Earth, and the sea all in the creation week.

I think it is fair to say that there is more evidence for a young age for the Earth than for the universe, or even for the solar system. But, I think this is mainly because there has been far more work on the issues by more people in creationist geology than in study of the solar system or astronomy. However, progress is being made in astronomy. There are new answers to questions that many of the critics never find out about. Somehow it tends to be only the more out of date or poorer arguments that gravitate toward becoming targets of the skeptics. The better arguments are seldom addressed. I would grant that at times young age creationists, including myself, have made mistakes in making young age

arguments. Creationists have occasionally had to stop using some arguments because new information comes to light.

Creationists publish a lot of material that is peer-reviewed on a technical scholarly level. I believe much progress continues to be made to answer technical age questions from geology, radioisotope dating, and astronomy. If someone really wants to find the truth, it is out there. But, the real issue is being open to it.

We need not feel confused or bewildered by the varied views that people take on Genesis and origins. We can trust the Word of God. Study of the issues should increase our conviction and confidence about the historicity and reliability of the Bible. Understanding these views from Old Age Creationists can help us communicate with people we meet.

### ***Evolution and Hobbits: Why are there little people?***

In October of 2004, the scientific journal *Nature* reported discovery of a small skeleton of a previously unreported human species. The skeleton was small, with the individuals being about three feet in height and with a particularly small brain case size of only about 400 cm<sup>3</sup>. Their small size led some to nickname them "Hobbits," after the fictional characters in J.R.R. Tolkiens stories about Middle Earth. (Often a minimum cranium capacity to be considered a modern human would be 600 to 800 cm<sup>3</sup>.) Tools were known to accompany these skeletons and so their human status is clear. However, much debate ensued among evolutionists regarding their implications for human evolution. Evolutionists like to find evidence of extinct forms of apes or humans that would seem to show some sort of change leading up to modern humans. This would be considered an evolutionary dead end human variety, a branch of humans that did not make it in the "survival of the fittest" game of competition. The question is, is this really

a newly discovered species, and not just a branch of modern humans? The fossils were named *Homo floresiensis*, after the island of Flores in Indonesia where they were found.

Evidence seems to be mounting now, however, that these specimens were normal though small humans but they had a disorder known as microcephaly. This is a disorder in which the brain fails to develop to its full size.

This raises the question of why are their little people? The condition known as dwarfism is a disorder in which a deficiency of growth hormone from the pituitary gland leads to limited growth. But small size and stature are not always a disorder. There have always been some groups of small humans, such as pygmies and others. The flores specimens fit within the range of what is possible from normal genetic variation of humans. Small size does not mean inferior in any way. In fact, smaller brain size may not necessarily mean less intelligent either. The Flores specimens have a smaller brain size than some modern apes! God created us so that an amazing amount of variation is possible among humans. But there are also some nutritional deficiencies or genetic disorders that can cause smaller than normal size. We live in a fallen world in which such things can happen. But discovery of small humans is not an evidence of evolution and such people were just as valuable as anyone else today. In fact, in Tolkien's stories, Hobbits were the heroes!

### ***Darwin vs. Design Conference, 4/13/07***

There will be a significant conference on Intelligent Design on the campus of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas on April 13, 2007. This will include a Friday evening lecture from Lee Strobel, who wrote the excellent book, "Not by Chance" critiquing mechanisms of biological evolution. There will also be Saturday lectures by Michael Behe, Stephen Meyer, and Jay Richards. Cost is \$55 for individuals. See Events on <http://www.discovery.org>.