

IS AiG HELPING OR HINDERING? – PART 1

Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: The following is an article written by Dr. Walt Brown, who is the author of the Hydroplate Theory explanation of the biblical flood of Noah. Dr. Brown sends this article to those who contact him asking why AiG and ICR have discouraged their supporters from embracing his Hydroplate Theory as a viable explanation of the flood. I have reproduced Dr. Brown's article below with permission. It is posted here because Dr. Brown makes reference to my face-to-face and written attempts (documented in ["Is AiG Helping or Hindering? – Part 2"](#)) to minimize the differences between these organizations.

Scientific Differences between Answers in Genesis (AiG) and the Center for Scientific Creation (CSC)

Sometimes people write or call to ask for my response to a sincere and credible person or organization that publicly disagrees with me. Instead of interacting with that third party, I try to go to the person who disagrees and let the third party observe. Doing so saves time, minimizes misunderstandings, helps me learn, and allows the third party to identify any error or fault.

I consider Ken Ham and his organization, Answers in Genesis (AiG), both sincere and credible. Although I am aware of no biblical differences we have, there are some scientific differences. More and more people are asking me about those differences, and Ken Ham and his organization are increasingly spreading their version of our differences in large forums where I cannot respond directly. They have never approached me to discuss these differences, but I have always sought to deal directly with them as described above.

Here are three examples. You will see some common elements, and may surmise what lies behind these differences.

1. In 1994, I received a letter from Ron Hillestad, President of Master Books, originally the marketing arm for books and videos of the Institute for Creation Research (ICR). He said he had heard good things about our book *In the Beginning: Compelling Evidence for Creation and the Flood* (5th Edition, 1989) and he was considering adding it to their catalog. He asked for, and we sent him, a review copy.

Two months later, Ron wrote back and said that he had asked Ken Ham to review the book. Ken recommended that Master Books not carry the book, because it contained one paragraph on the "moon-dust argument" which Ken said had been discredited. Therefore, Ron said Master Books would not carry *In the Beginning*. (Previously, many creationists had asked for our reaction to AiG's and ICR's rejection of the "moon-dust argument." We always answered the inquiries as best we could without criticizing either group.)

I gave little thought to Ron Hillestad's rejection until shortly after the 6th edition was published

in 1995. During a series of speaking engagements in Colorado Springs, then the home of Master Books, I took the new 6th edition to Ron's office. I showed him the expanded section on the moon-dust issue and explained in detail three errors Ken Ham and AiG were making—each of which invalidates their position. (The 7th edition describes a fourth error. See page 309.) Ron seemed to understand the errors.

I then offered to telephone Ken Ham from Ron's office and discuss the matter with Ken so Ron could hear Ken's answers directly. I predicted that Ken Ham could not even discuss the matter, because he was relying on others who had made these errors. Ron said a phone call would not be necessary, because he knew Ken well enough to know what I was saying was correct. (I sent this story to Ken Ham about two years ago. He had no comment.)

2. AiG has published several articles on the frozen mammoths of Siberia and Alaska, none of which address the many questions that have perplexed laymen and scientists alike for over a century. After each article, we receive calls and letters from people wanting our response. Again, we try to respond without criticizing AiG. One inquiry came from an astute reader of both what I have written and articles AiG has published by Michael Oard. This reader, Pastor Kevin Lea, called Michael and was surprised that he had not read what I had written. Pastor Lea then sent a copy of *In the Beginning* (6th edition) to Michael. A month later, Michael was kind enough to email Pastor Lea his disagreements with me concerning the frozen mammoths. I responded to all points in writing, sent it to both men, and, to clarify matters further, offered to participate in a 3-way phone call with Michael Oard and Pastor Lea. Pastor Lea set up the conference call.

What surprised me during that 80-minute conversation was that I needed to say very little. Lea, who had a scientific background before becoming a pastor, tore into the false logic, poor science, and basic questions Michael had ignored—questions the Hydroplate Theory answers clearly and simply. If Michael wasn't embarrassed, he should have been. So should AiG.

In September 1999, after seeing AiG's hostility toward CSC, Pastor Lea flew from Seattle to Denver simply to talk directly to Ken Ham. Pastor Lea wrote the following:

*I wanted to appeal to Ken to at least read Walt's book. I gave Ken a copy of **In the Beginning**. In our meeting, Ken was hostile and arrogant toward Walt personally and toward the hydroplate theory. Ken didn't provide any technical arguments and admitted that he had never read Walt's theory. I left the material with Ken and encouraged him to read it with an open mind.*

The following May (2000), Ken was a guest speaker at our pastors' conference. Following his presentation, I asked Ken if he had read the materials I gave him the previous September. Ken said he had not. What was shocking to me was Ken still refused to read Walt's book, even though the hydroplate theory is the only flood theory which explains many aspects of the flood and answers the questions of where the water came from and where it went.

I contacted other prominent AiG and ICR detractors of Walt's theory trying to learn their technical reasons for disagreement. Not one responded with any kind of technical argument, written or oral. What continued to shock me, was that none had read the

book. One detractor, Russ Humphreys of ICR, agreed to make a technical response if I would send him a free copy of the book. Six weeks later, he told me that he still had not read the book, did not intend to, and would not make any kind of technical response, since he knew the catastrophic plate tectonics was correct and therefore the hydroplate theory had to be wrong.

After years of seeing this hostility, I have concluded that the root cause of this problem is spiritual. The Biblically and scientifically sound hydroplate theory could be a “silver bullet” in the wicked heart of the evolution lie. As such, Satan is using the fleshly pride and empire building of some Christians to create confusion and division, otherwise, they would at least read the book and be willing to debate its arguments.

Pastor Lea has written an expanded version of his conversation with Ken Ham that is attached as ([“Is AiG Helping or Hinderin? - Part 2”](#)). Others have told me of similar comments they have heard from Ken Ham.

Note from Pastor Kevin – I encourage the reader to go to this Part 2 before reading the rest of this article by Dr. Walt Brown.

3. In this last example, Andrew Snelling had been spreading false information concerning the Hydroplate Theory for several years while working at AiG. Others were repeating it in various forums. The attached emails (**can be obtained by writing Walt Brown at “walt@creationscience.com”**) include my answers to Andrew. I first sent copies of this exchange to everyone I mentioned in the letter. Andrew had no response.

The only response was from a person very close to AiG and ICR. He sent a letter apologizing for having criticized me publicly for more than a decade. He said he had stopped doing so and had dissociated himself from Andrew Snelling’s criticisms and other named individuals who were doing it. (I deeply appreciated his letter and agree with his statements that “minor quibbles” over particular flood and cosmology theories pale in comparison to our agreement on a young earth, a worldwide flood, and other essentials from Scripture. We may differ on many topics, but we are brothers.)

Other examples could be given. Notice the common elements: AiG accepting a few poorly researched scientific conclusions then spreading them to a vast Christian audience for many years, people increasingly asking me about these errors, and my attempts to deal with the source of these errors in front of these third parties. What these examples don’t show is AiG’s position hardening, and AiG spreading their distorted versions of our differences through their far-reaching forums along with some name calling. (Ken Ham often calls me as “a loner.” I frequently interact with people, including scientists, throughout the world. Many letters and phone calls arrive daily; visitors arrive weekly. What Ken may mean is that I do not look to AiG or ICR for approval or direction.)

CSC is getting more and more inquiries about scientific differences with AiG. For several years, AiG distributed its standard version of why I am misguided (**can be obtained by writing Walt Brown at “walt@creationscience.com”**). Until now, I have not responded. It has now reached a point where this is misleading and confusing many others, thereby diluting creation

science's impact. Therefore, I am offering to explore all of these differences *with Ken Ham—and any he wishes to have join him—in a large, neutral forum.*

Several principles should guide our exchange.

1. *Ad hominem* remarks should not be allowed. As Christians and creationists, we have much in common. We should be able to discuss our differences rationally, calmly, and based on evidence. While we may still disagree on some issues, we will both benefit from explaining our positions to a wide audience.
2. Each side should be allowed the same number of words in the exchange and should presume that the audience has read what we each have already published, including at our respective web sites. A neutral editor can resolve other details.
3. Each side can discuss any scientific difference they have. The biggest subject, by far, will be the flood. AiG has promoted the Catastrophic Plate Tectonic Theory and has criticized the Hydroplate Theory.

While I am convinced that neither Ken Ham nor his few associates criticizing the Hydroplate Theory have tried to understand it, they do understand the Bible. The Catastrophic Plate Tectonic Theory contradicts the biblical description of the flood in numerous ways, while many have observed that the Hydroplate Theory corresponds to the Bible in every detail. For example, two days ago, I received the following letter from a scientist at the University of Texas.

Dear Dr. Brown,

I have no doubt you were inspired by the Bible in your research. Nobody can make mistakes with that book as a source. The source of inspiration [for the Hydroplate Theory] becomes clear to the reader in later chapters of your book, after most of the material evidence is presented. When I came across your web site (www.creationscience.com) and started reading the book, I couldn't stop; eventually I bought a few hard copies to save my eyesight and give to others to read. The rhetorical question I kept asking myself was "where did he get the idea?". Once again, it looks like from the Bible. Nobody can logically undermine the evidence you presented.

Some neutral party will need to moderate this exchange. Four possibilities come to mind. There could be others. It could be a web site specifically for this purpose. It could be restricted to creationists only and/or a fee could be charged. Secondly, the exchange could be attached to a series of newsletters of some creationist organization. Those exchanges could later be bundled and sold as a small book or placed at anyone's website. As a third possibility, the written exchange could precede some creation conference. Then Ken and I could have an oral exchange at the conference and attendees could be given the more detailed written exchange. A fourth possibility would be for AiG's *Technical Journal* to devote twenty pages in each of four consecutive issues to the scientific differences we have as of this date. AiG and CSC would each be allowed ten unedited pages, half of which would be devoted to comparing the Hydroplate Theory with the Catastrophic Plate Tectonic Theory and half to our remaining scientific differences. To aid the reader, a neutral editor would arrange our opposing evidence and arguments as close to each other as possible. Probably the most difficult step will be

getting Ken Ham to participate, but *he could get others to join him if he wishes*.

AiG has published articles and hosted a recent conference featuring the Catastrophic Plate Tectonic Theory. AiG may not realize that the authors of that theory will not defend it publicly against someone knowledgeable (**can be obtained by writing Walt Brown at "walt@creationscience.com"**). Creationists are increasingly learning its flaws, publishing its deficiencies, and explaining them in local meetings.

The most frequent question I get concerning the Hydroplate Theory is, "Why haven't I heard about this before?" Actually more than forty-three million people have seen a five-minute animation of it, and about a hundred thousand people, both scientists and laymen, have heard a two-hour presentation on it and have been able to question me at length. Perhaps another hundred thousand have read about it in *In the Beginning*. (In addition, the web version of the book receives more than 3 million hits a month. It has been on the internet since 1995.) Responses to all have been about 99+% favorable. Creationists who are surprised they have not heard about it may have primarily looked to ICR and/or AiG for their information.

In 1976, after explaining the theory to ICR's Henry Morris, Duane Gish, and Harold Slusher for most of one day, Henry Morris asked if I would write a technical monograph on the theory for ICR to publish. I declined for two reasons. First, my job as an Air Force colonel was very demanding, and second, there were so many aspects of theory that had to be studied in depth. I retired at the earliest opportunity from the Air Force (1980) so I could do this. Only then was I able to do enough intensive research and thereby gain sufficient confidence in the theory to begin disseminating it. (The subject of the flood was much broader and the event was more catastrophic than any of us had imagined. Also my scientific training (PhD, MIT) and many technical assignments have taught me to consider all aspects of a problem and not be confined to one or a few academic disciplines.)

Objections AiG gives to the Hydroplate Theory have no scientific substance and simply show that they haven't read it. Those objections are: (1) Walt Brown is not a geologist, (2) creationist geologists (meaning, the two or three working for ICR and AiG) have not accepted the theory, (3) the theory is speculative, and (4) Walt Brown is a loner. For several years, AiG has sent a standard response (**can be obtained by writing Walt Brown at "walt@creationscience.com"**) to people inquiring about *In the Beginning* or the Hydroplate Theory. The points made—without exception—lack specifics, do not reflect what I have written, or, if they touch on science, are incorrect.

It is unreasonable to expect creationists to agree on every scientific detail or even on theories about the flood. Such differences are to be expected. I never try to persuade a person to agree with me unless they raise the subject or ask me for an explanation. I welcome reasoned disagreement. What concerns me are vague objections from those with "large megaphones," who show that they have not read what they criticize, who make *ad hominem* comments, who will not deal directly with you, and who do not put their opposing views to the same scrutiny. This misleads many Christians—a serious matter.

To resolve a scientific controversy requires a direct exchange on a level playing field. If anyone wants specific details on any points of scientific disagreement between AiG and CSC, they should encourage Ken Ham to accept my offer. I hear more criticism of the Hydroplate Theory

by AiG and ICR than by all evolutionists combined—all of it behind my back and in forums where I cannot respond directly. Creationists should insist that this wasteful activity cease and we address our differences directly and forthrightly. Yes, I may be wrong. Let's see. Having an audience observe our exchange will help both of us see beyond our biases and address what the other person is saying.

Earlier I asked you to identify what lies behind these differences between AiG and CSC. Certainly they do not involve biblical interpretation. I am also confident that scientific matters are not the root cause, although that is the visible, surface issue on which we must engage in a public exchange. Does AiG—a growing, donation-based organization—view itself as the rightful leader of the creation movement, the organization that should set creationist policy, that clearly sees what needs to be done? If so, my actions could be viewed, not as an attempt to get at the scientific truth of an event such as the flood, but as a challenge to AiG.

A bedrock principle in law is that a person can face his accuser before a group of peers. This principle is indispensable for quickly getting at the truth—a need in science as well as law. It also puts an accuser on notice; he better have his facts straight. This minimizes the number of poorly researched accusations and reduces disharmony.

It is imperative that we come together to lay our differences before others—all in the spirit of seeking the truth and helping thousands of fellow Christians and who want to see a clear contrasting of our positions on large, critical scientific issues. I am ready. To Ken Ham: *please don't dissemble, delay, or tell me to go publish an article somewhere.* (The Hydroplate Theory alone, 160 pages, is far too lengthy for an article.) If Ken Ham refuses to participate in an exchange of scientific views, that would be unfortunate. But at a minimum, the backbiting must stop. If it does not, matters could escalate.

On 10-13 February 2000, Ken Ham was a few miles from my office in Phoenix, Arizona. I tried to set up a meeting to discuss our differences. He wrote,

“If you wanted to personally discuss what we are doing at AiG and what is happening in the creation ministry worldwide, I am certainly willing to try to fit it in with our busy schedule in Phoenix. It would probably have to be in between speaking engagements in a side room or somewhere. However, I really am not prepared at all to discuss a model of the flood.”

I then invited Ken to come to my office where we would have no interruptions. He declined. (Today, I have again invited Ken to visit my office during his visit to Phoenix in two weeks.)

For now, this letter is going primarily to those who inquire or have heard about differences between AiG and CSC. It will be sent to AiG first.

Walt Brown
September 24, 2001

P.S. Ken Ham never responded to my invitation of September 24, 2001.