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IT'S A YOUNG WORLD AFTER ALL:

EASILY UNDERSTOOD EVIDENCE

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In another paper at this conference, the present author outlined three approaches to issues of doubt and the relationship of each to the question of the age of the physical universe. The first of these was the method of inquiry known as the scientific method involving a cycle of observation, hypothesis formulation, experimentation and theory construction conducted within the domain of natural phenomena that are repeatably observable, testable and falsifiable.(1) (2) It was argued that the problem of cosmic antiquity is not properly a scientific question, because the development of the present universe is a one-time historical unfolding that cannot be repeated and tested and whose time frame, on anyone's analysis, lies beyond the range of scientist-lifespans and thus the scope of observation. The residual evidence of the world's historical development does exist in the present and is available for careful study and analysis. On the basis of this research into presently existing data, creationist researchers are discovering that a wealth of evidence exists which points to the conclusion of a recent cosmic origin. However, this conclusion cannot be put to direct scientific experimentation in the manner of a polio vaccine or airplane design, for instance, and so recent-creationism remains, in a strict sense, beyond the scope of science. To test the concept, as well as contending points of view, one must weigh the various arguments and render judgment regarding the relative merits of each contender. The results of such a judgment process--the second approach discussed in the previous paper--are inevitably more equivocal than those obtained with questions within the proper and narrow domain of the scientific method.

WEIGHING THE EVIDENCE

Although less certain than the results obtained in true scientific research, it is nevertheless true that conclusions warranting a high level of confidence can often be obtained by a judgment process. In jury trials, for instance, which constitute the most commonly recognized formal application of a judgment approach, verdicts are often reached which fulfill the stringent decision criterion of "beyond a reasonable doubt." This writer contends that it is increasingly clear that the universe is obviously quite young, and that any open-minded individual weighing the evidence pro-and-con will concur with that conclusion.

POUR ME A ROCK: EVIDENCE BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT

As an example of the kind of hard evidence recent-creationists have been discovering in support of a young cosmos, consider the following work by Harold Slusher and his students at the University of Texas at El Paso. The research deals with the viscosity of lunar rocks and is reported along with many other exciting evidences in this author's new book, IT'S A YOUNG WORLD AFTER ALL: EXCITING EVIDENCES FOR RECENT CREATION.(3) The evidence begins with the surprising but little known fact that the distinction between solids and liquids becomes blurred when long periods of time are involved. We all learned as children that liquids flow and solids retain their shape, but, if enough time is involved, solids are found to flow just like liquids.

Consider trying to make a sculpture out of water. You would pour it into a mold, and it would assume the desired shape. As soon as the mold was removed, however, the water would run down into a puddle on the table. A sculpture made of honey would last a little longer, but not much. These facts are well known, because people have a great deal of experience with these common liquids.

What is not realized is that a sculpture of glass is doing the same thing as the honey and water, but much more slowly. Given enough time, a glass figurine would also flow down into a puddle. The flow of glass is exceedingly slow, of course, but it is fast enough that in

the span of a hundred years the bottom edge of a window pane will measurably and noticeably thicken.

Granite is one of the hardest and slowest flowing materials on earth, but even its rate of flow has been measured by scientists. Long slender bars of granite were cut and hung horizontally with attachments at both ends. Over a period of years the long bars bent down in the middle as gravity caused their rock material to flow. Flow deformations of tombstones and other rock monuments are frequently observed.

ROCK FLOW AND THE AGE OF THE MOON

What does this fact, that rock flows, have to do with the age of things? An obvious feature of the moon is that in the past it has been battered by numerous collisions with large meteors. These impacts have left the lunar surface heavily scarred. Evolutionists believe that most of these craters were formed early in the moon's history when the solar system was young and before life got established on earth. The reason for this view is in part that if the moon was similarly bombarded, then the earth must also have been. The scars are not apparent on the earth because of erosion factors that are absent on the moon. It is believed these erosion effects on earth erased the evidence of early violence.

In addition, large scale bombardment must surely have ceased before life got started, or else it would have been wiped out. (A current evolutionist conjecture regarding dinosaur extinction is that it resulted from the impact of an asteroid.)

Recent-creationists also believe the impact craters were formed early in the moon's existence, but they believe that that was only a few thousand years ago. Thus, evolutionists believe the craters to be at least three billion years old, while recent-creationists believe them to be only a few thousand. Is there any evidence that can be considered to determine which view is more plausible?

Geophysicist Harold Slusher of the University of Texas at El Paso, along with Glenn Morton and Richard Mandock, have worked on this problem, and their work has yielded some amazing results. Their research began with a consideration of the flow rates (viscosity) of the lunar rock material which forms the moon's craters.(4) If the moon were covered with water, impact craters would last only a few seconds. If it were made of honey, craters would last just a bit longer. Since the moon is covered with rock, impact craters last a very long time, but how long depends upon the kind of rock and its viscosity or rate of flow.

The rocks brought back from the moon by our Apollo astronauts have been carefully studied and found to be virtually identical with a kind of earth rock called basalt. The discovery that the moon's surface is made up of basalt type rock appears to rule out the possibility that lunar craters are more than a few thousand years old! The viscosity or flow rate is on the order of a hundred million times too high for the craters to last three or four billion years. In fact, the viscosity data indicate that the craters must be only a few thousand years old. To quote the research report of Morton, Slusher and Mandock:

As can be seen, the lunar craters can not last longer than a few million years for any reasonable value of the viscosity. If the viscosity of granite is the upper limit for the viscosity of basalt, then lunar craters can not be more than a few thousand years old....The evidence presented here demonstrates that the lunar surface and the craters on it are relatively young structures.(5)

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