

Geological Data, the Age of the Earth and the Theological Implications (Young Earth Perspective)

This talk will describe an approach to geological investigation that accepts a recent creation and global flood as historical events. It will propose a methodology by which insights derived from the Bible can contribute in practical ways to geological discovery and interpretation, and will illustrate this with specific case studies. Of course, this approach also presents challenges. Great perseverance and hard work are involved in developing new ways to understand the geological data. Some evidence continues to point to an old earth and attempts to find alternative explanations have so far not been successful. But there is also evidence that challenges conventional thinking on the earth's age and the progress that has been made in some areas of study suggests that future research will yield dividends in others.

Paul Garner is a full-time researcher and lecturer for Biblical Creation Ministries in the UK. He has a masters degree in geoscience from University College London, where he specialised in palaeobiology. His thesis was on dinosaur diversification rates. For several years he has been part of a research team investigating the depositional environment of the Coconino Sandstone (Permian) of central and northern Arizona. He is a Fellow of the Geological Society of London and also a member of the Geological Society of America, the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology and the Palaeontological Association. His first book, *The New Creationism: Building Scientific Theories on a Biblical Foundation*, was published by Evangelical Press in 2009.

I. Three models for the relationship between science and religion

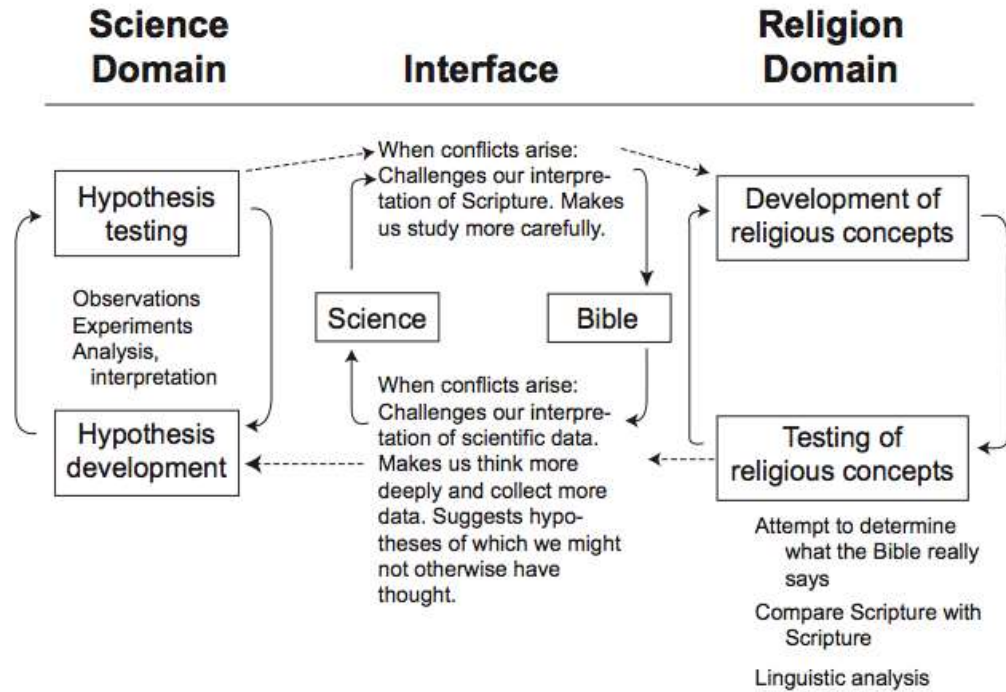
- A. Separate domains

- B. Parallel but separate

- C. Interaction, with God having priority in our thinking

II. Interaction model for integrating science and religion

- A. Brand's model (2006)



B. Potential pitfalls

1. Bias
2. Making our faith vulnerable to disproof

III. Case studies

- A. Catastrophic plate tectonics (Austin et al. 1994)
- B. Fossil whales of the Pisco Formation of Peru (Brand et al. 2004)
- C. Depositional environment of the Coconino Sandstone (Whitmore et al. 2014)

IV. Challenges

A. For young-age models

1. Radiometric dating
2. Fossil succession
3. Formations requiring long time scales

B. For old-age models

1. Geological data challenging long time scales
2. Theological problems (Lloyd 2009)
 - a. No global flood
 - b. Necessity of agony-before-Adam

Suggested readings

Austin, S.A. and 5 others. 1994. Catastrophic plate tectonics. In: Walsh, R.E. (ed). Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Creationism. Creation Science Fellowship: 609-621.

Brand, L.R. 2006. A biblical perspective on the philosophy of science. Origins 59: 6-42.
grisda.org/origins/59006.pdf

Brand, L.R. and 4 others. 2004. Fossil whale preservation implies high diatom accumulation rate in the Miocene–Pliocene Pisco Formation of Peru. Geology 32: 165-168.

Brand, L. 2009. Faith, Reason, and Earth History. Second Edition. Andrews University Press.

Lloyd, S. 2009. Christian theology and neo-darwinism are incompatible: an argument from the resurrection. In: Finlay, G. and 4 others. Debating Darwin. Paternoster: 1-29

Whitmore, J.H. and 3 others. 2014. The petrology of the Coconino Sandstone (Permian), Arizona, USA. Answers Research Journal 7: 499-532. answersingenesis.org/geology/rock-layers/petrology-of-the-coconino-sandstone/