

This is an actual interchange with a university professor in the LCMS. I have changed his name in accordance with the policy of the university where he is a professor.

Hello Dr. Williams,

I am an LCMS pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Snohomish, Washington. Would you be interested in debating me at the upcoming [young-earth] creation conference in Morristown? I embrace an old-earth creation position grounded on Big Bang cosmology. I would like to engage you in two questions: First, which position on the creation days of Genesis is most faithful to the original Hebrew text, and therefore is more God-honoring? And second, which position most fully harmonizes the "truth" of the Bible with the "truth" of nature in light of the challenge of Romans 1:18f. I consider the ramifications flowing from these two questions to be enormous in light of the Great Commission.

You may wish to peruse my blogsite at www.offensivechristianity.blogspot.com.

In the name of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ,

Gary Jensen, Pastor
Zion Lutheran Church
Snohomish, Washington

© May 18, 2013

From Dr. Williams

Hello, Gary,

Thanks for writing. The debate format is not a methodology I have ever practiced nor one that I am comfortable with, so thanks for the offer. In any case, the entire program is set for the conference. So, on two counts, no thank you. But I might be able to find someone who is willing to debate you on that topic, if debating is the issue for you.

Cordially in Christ,

Dr. Williams

May 28, 2013

Dear Dr. Williams,

I am very disappointed with the spirit behind your rejection of my request for a debate. Truth, not debating, is my "issue." I do not pursue debate in search of "trophies." I seek debate in the pursuit of, I repeat, truth itself. And I am motivated by the charge of the Great Commission to proclaim the Gospel for the purpose of saving the lost and making disciples of Jesus Christ. I have a track record (referenced

by a “paper trail” of extensive correspondence) of submitting my own positional papers to the “authorities” of our synod in order that my arguments might be weighed against the authority of the inerrant Word of God. With the exception of the CTCR, which actually affirmed the legitimacy of my position (without necessarily agreeing with it), **not one party of official stature within our denomination** has bothered to either critique or rebut my paper, *“The Biblical Demand to Take Another Look at Genesis 1: Ten ‘Compelling’ Exegetical Reasons the Days of Creation are Non 24-Hour.”* My overtures have extended to the two most recent national Denominational Presidents (Dr. Harrison’s office declined for the reason that my concern didn’t merit their time), and also to the Old Testament faculty of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Dr. Reed Lessing declined my request by pointing me to the department head, Dr. David Adams. Dr. Adams in turn urged me to watch his video presentation on the creation days of Genesis, which I did. Even so, he arrogantly and rudely dismissed my own paper out of hand without so much as reading the very first page. That incident (illustrative of the larger problem) cannot be judged to represent serious scholarship, but is merely a willful entrenchment behind tired arguments that can never be expected to stand up under actual scrutiny.

When Dr. Joel Lehenbauer of the CTCR replied to my request he also encouraged me to share my thoughts with my peers. However, when I distributed my paper at our circuit meeting, it was met with such disapproval that I was hardly even able to begin my presentation, let alone, complete it.

The point of Martin Luther’s Reformation centered on the urgent need to return to the Holy Scriptures. I fear however that much of the LCMS leadership today appeals to Luther largely for the **opposite** purpose of avoiding this very obligation on the dubious assumption that the entire challenge of the Scriptures has already been fully resolved by the Reformers and Company (by the way the Book of Concord never once mentions the interpretation of Genesis 1). Yet it was Luther himself who said at the outset of his Genesis lectures (American Edition v.1, p.3) that the text of Genesis 1 is *“difficult to understand.”* On the one hand St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans is clear. But Luther did not say the same about Genesis 1. Neither did he there judge his fellow Christians who interpreted the passage differently. Neither, by the way, did he decisively overthrow their positions. Then by what authority does the LCMS persist in sidelining Christians today over an interpretation of that “difficult” chapter?

I think I have made it clear that I accept my own obligation to account for my position on creation in general, and the days of creation in particular, under the standard of Scripture and reason (1 Peter 3:15). Will you not accept the same obligation for yourself? And will you not concede that the time is now for the leadership of the Missouri Synod to receive this challenge with open arms, in the name of Jesus Christ, on account of the authority of the Word of God, and for the advancement of His Kingdom?

I am enclosing a copy of my essay referenced above, “The Biblical Demand to Take Another Look.” I stand behind what I wrote. Where you are demonstrably able to show me to be wrong, I am open to correction for the sake of truth and the glory of God. Are you open to the same scrutiny? You certainly received none at the recent interview I heard on “Issues, etc.” They altogether denied my request to be interviewed. I had hoped to receive a tough grilling! For the sake of truth listeners should expect the same thorough analysis of each of our positions.

In the name of Jesus Christ,
Gary Jensen, Pastor

May 29

Thanks, Gary. I'm writing this from home and will take a look at what you have written next week.

David

June 11

Dear Gary,

I have read your paper and written a response, which I attach. Thanks for sending it. I know that many hold to the great age of the earth, and some of them are friends of mine. In my opinion, they either haven't looked at the young earth indicators seriously, or they have too high an opinion of the consensus or majority view of scientists, or they trust people who have strong reputations, or they have too low an opinion of the authority of the Word of God, or some other reason I haven't thought of yet. While well-meaning, and I'm sure you are in this category, I think that they have not given a fair hearing to the evidence on the other side. If nothing else, your paper will be improved if you read my comments and act on at least some of them.

By the way, in your email you say that your ten arguments are the ones double-underlined. That is fine, but you need to say that in your paper. To talk about ten arguments and then to have a list of eleven items, the last of which I took to be a conclusion, or an add-on to your ten arguments, is to mislead the reader. I know that's not your intent, but it was the initial effect on me. That's how I understood it and wrote my response in the assumption, which I now see to be wrong, that your ten arguments were the first ten of your eleven points. But having spent a lot of time reading and writing a critique, I do not wish to spend additional time to rewrite it to reflect your double-underlining comment. And I give you a lot of credit for seriously grappling with a lot of the issues.

Grace and Peace,
David Williams

Critique of Jensen Paper on Genesis 1

Your Point 2: Having commented already on item number 1, I'll move on to number 2. Most of that section is fine, but the problem is that it doesn't address the sub-title of your paper, which is "Ten 'Compelling' Exegetical Reasons the Days of Creation are Non-24-Hour." Just as the first point is not exegetical, so also the second one, while touching on Gen. 1:1, does not address the length of the days in Genesis 1.

There is a lot I agree with in this point, such as the affirmation of an absolute beginning rather than setting up Gen. 1:1 as allowing for the material universe prior to the events of Gen. 1:1. All of the points A, B, C, and D are good. But I agree and believe that the days are 24-hour days, so this point does not live up to its billing as giving reasons that the days of creation are non-24-hour days.

You do not mention any of the problems of the Big Bang theory, so here are a couple. The cosmic microwave background of the universe shows a uniform temperature. This contradicts the prediction of the Big Bang theory, which expects a variety of temperatures all around the universe. Here's another one—the law of angular momentum says that all of the spinning planets and moons should spin the same way, but this is not the case with the planets and moons in our solar system and there are even galaxies that spin “the wrong way.”

Your Point 3

This point is fine. I agree entirely. The problem is that, once again, it doesn't address the sub-title of your paper.

Your Point 4: Here we finally get to a point that addresses the sub-title of your paper, but it has fundamental problems. The Hebrew does not allow “wide usage” of the word “day.” It means 24 hours in almost every case, and some argue that it means that in every case. In Gen. 2:4, it is used in a preposition phrase to mean “when.” Some conclude that this means that in Gen. 2:4, the word “day” can mean “week.” I don't agree, since it is used in an adverbial sense rather than to refer to a period of time, but, even granting the point, a week is a far cry from hundreds of millions, or billions, of years. There are lots of other words in the Hebrew for long periods of time that could and should have been used if that were the intent. I believe that you are importing the modern English usage of the word “day” from phrases such as, “Grandfather said that in his day, things were different.” That word in English means a span of time probably equal to years or even decades, maybe even longer. That doesn't mean that the Hebrew carries the same meaning.

I disagree with B, C, D, E, and F. On F, for example, since the preceding days had an evening and morning, it is just as easy to conclude that the seventh day had that also. To argue otherwise is to argue from silence. The related passages in Hebrews 3 and 4 do not prove that the seventh day is continuing, even if Hugh Ross thinks so. Hebrews does not say that the seventh day of creation continues to the present; it only says that God's *rest* continues. On D, all of the events of day six could have been completed in a few hours. Adam did not have to name every species; he could have called one type of animal a dog, this one a cat, that one an elephant, and the like. We are not told the level of creaturely taxonomy he named. I also don't think that much, if any, speciation had taken place at that time, so the various species probably arose later. But we will never know this side of eternity.

Also on F, it is true that the order of the words “evening ... morning” is not the way a Jewish day starts. That does not change the fact that it is a twenty-four period that is characterized by one evening and one morning, so the phrase serves well to describe a normal day. Since the words *evening* and *morning* are not used in a figurative sense in Scripture, we need to take these words in their normal sense. And in every instance where both words appear in the same context, a 24-hour day is described.

You seem to skip that point. Reversing the word order changes nothing of the meaning, nor does the specifying of the duration, or the idea that it is human rather than divine activity.

It is true that the definite article is not used with the Hebrew numeral, so why is it that most English translations translate those days as definite? I think that your argument is weak, certainly unsubstantiated, especially in context.

Your Point 5

You are exegetical here, but not compelling. You use one verse to suggest that the word “day” can mean something other than 24-hours. It is true that it can, but six days do not come anywhere close to a few years or thousands of years or millions of years.

Your Point 6: This isn’t exegetical or compelling. It certainly doesn’t give me reason to believe that the days of Genesis 1 are millions or billions of years in length. Again, it fails to live up to the promise of your sub-title.

Your Point 7: I agree that the age of the universe, even in the Darwinian or Old Earth scenario, is “vastly too short for even the simplest living cell to appear naturalistically.” This point attacks Darwinian evolution, not a natural reading of the days of Genesis 1. It does not address your sub-title either.

Your Point 8

The word in Hebrew for “appear” shows up in Gen. 1:9. It is the Niphal of the verb “to see,” *ra’ah*. Had the author intended that for Day Four, why did he not use an unambiguous word in v. 14? The opposite of being is non-being, so to say “let there be” is the same as saying “God created.” I would also be careful about your argument on the Hebrew verb *’asah*. The word *’asah* means “make” throughout [Genesis 1](#), and it is even sometimes used interchangeably with “create” (*bara’*), as in [Genesis 1:26–27](#). It is a desperate move, IMHO, to apply a *different meaning* to the *same word* in the *same grammatical construction* in the *same passage*, in order to fit in with the standard Big Bang explanation. Of twenty mainstream translations checked, all of them state that the sun, moon and stars were *made* on the fourth day; they did not appear. But here the preconception of Old Earth Creationism has forced a new meaning on v. 14. That’s eisegesis rather than exegesis.

To say that the terms *day*, *evening*, and *morning* in Days 1-3 “cannot be taken in their ‘normal’ usage without the existence of the Sun” is to set up a false alternative. Physicists believe that light can exist without the Sun, and in eternity after the Second Coming there will be light but no sun.

The idea that Genesis 1 was intended to challenge the mythologies of Israel’s neighbors is based on a late date for the writing of Genesis 1. I wholeheartedly disagree with that position, instead taking Genesis 1 to be the first written document in all of human history, preceding all mythologies. It reacts to no mythologies.

Your Point 9

Since Moses compares the creation week with our work week, the correspondence between the two indicates that both weeks are seven twenty-four-hour days. But I'm sure you have already thought about this and rejected it. Nevertheless, that is the natural reading of the text and the most likely. One must have preconceptions in a different direction to conclude otherwise. You are correct that there are times where non-equivalent comparisons are made. The question is whether or not you have shown that this is the case in Genesis 1 and Exodus 20 and 31. I think not.

On Rom. 5:12, Paul is writing to the Romans, so he has a focus on the human application of the problem of death. Your interpretation could be correct, but I think you are forced into that position because of the need to explain death prior the fall of Adam and Eve. I believe that the groaning of "the whole creation" (Rom. 8:22) refers to the consequences of the Fall, which would mean earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, but also the disruption of nature, including animal death (which, by the way, happens during earthquakes, tornadoes, and hurricanes). Paul does not say that *human* death applied to "all men," but that death, period, applied to "all men." I think he introduces the concept of death in general rather than human death. But this is not fully certain in this context, just likely.

I agree that harmonizing Scripture with science is fine. The question is whether "demonstrated scientific facts" are actually true, or whether "scientific consensus" (a phrase you use in point 7) is true. Much of science is dominated by people who have an ulterior motive, i.e. to avoid the condemnation of the Law. By the way, did you know that 90% of the dating methods point to a young earth? The remaining ten percent are variously debated, and cogent arguments appear on both sides, but the 90% clearly point to a young earth. See Don Batten here: <http://creation.com/age-of-the-earth>.

Just for the record your sentence "... Christians at first resisted Galileo's discovery that the Earth revolves around the Sun" should state "... *some Christians and some scientists especially* resisted Galileo's discovery that the Earth revolves around the Sun." Of course, some Christians resisted that idea. Some Christians are on the wrong side of every idea, but not all of them all the time and not always most of them. And because a Christian is wrong about an issue does not mean that the issue is wrong; it may only mean that this Christian does not fully understand this issue.

I agree that no new matter is being created, that the cosmos operates under fixed laws, that the universe is expanding, that the total number of stars is almost innumerable, that stars differ from each other, that time began at creation, and that the universe is running down. Those are not arguments for a non-24-hour view of the days of creation.

Your Point 10

No one I know of, least of all myself, says that we should reject the witness of nature. I believe that science, per se, of objective, but I also believe that scientists are not. How is this an argument against 24-hour days?

Your Point 11

I do not refuse to wrestle with scientific evidence or recognize only data that suits my purposes. Nor does any creationist that I know. Have you read the results of the RATE project? Those are powerful scientific studies for the young age of the earth, which are only a part of what Don Batten writes about. No one, and I mean no one, has an even slightly reasonable response to John Baumgardner's work on Carbon-14 dating.

And yes, I have heard the argument that buying an Old Earth scenario for the age of the earth makes for more effective evangelism. I don't agree. Some scientists of the atheistic and agnostic persuasion think that the Old Earth people are avoiding the natural meaning of the text of Genesis 1, and they demean that position. So it cuts both ways. For me, the question is "Which understanding of Genesis 1 is the most likely, the most accurate, the most true to the text, the context in Genesis, and the context of all of Scripture?"

I think that you should rewrite the paper and especially rewrite the sub-title. You give some alternate explanations to a young earth perspective. None of them are compelling, in my humble opinion, many of them have nothing to do with the length of the days, and some of them are only tangential to the question of the length of the days. By the way, are you familiar with the finding of T-Rex remains at Hell Creek, Montana, by an evolutionist who cannot be accused of fudging the evidence? Evolutionist (not a young earth creationist) Dr. Mary Schweitzer found blood cells, flexible tissue, and even a cadaverous odor in T-Rex remains that are supposed to be at least sixty-five million years old. Those cells could not possibly have lasted that long. Those remains must be much younger than sixty-five million years old.

Jensen Paper on Genesis 1

*The following document includes first of all Dr. Williams' critique of my paper. **It also includes my replies** to his critique **red italics**. **These comments of mine** immediately follow their respective statements.*

First of all I really do want to thank you for taking your time to critique my paper. I read it with profit and actually did rework a few of my sections. I altered my subtitle and I substantially rewrote my first point from the section that you label point 4. I appreciate the directness of your disapproval while at the same time writing with a level of respect that I endeavor to maintain as my own standard. You have done a kind thing.

Your Point 2

Having commented already on item number 1, I'll move on to number 2. Most of that section is fine, but the problem is that it doesn't address the sub-title of your paper, which is "Ten 'Compelling' Exegetical Reasons the Days of Creation are Non-24-Hour." Just as the first point is not exegetical, so also the second one, while touching on Gen. 1:1, does not address the length of the days in Genesis 1.

There is a lot I agree with in this point, such as the affirmation of an absolute beginning rather than setting up Gen. 1:1 as allowing for the material universe prior to the events of Gen. 1:1. All of the points A, B, C, and D are good. But I agree and believe that the days are 24-hour days, so this point does not live up to its billing as giving reasons that the days of creation are non-24-hour days.

You do not mention any of the problems of the Big Bang theory, so here are a couple. The cosmic microwave background of the universe shows a uniform temperature.

*This is **NOT correct** information for the reason that it is outdated by two decades. It is true that at first this radiation was perceived as completely smooth...which at that time was regarded as problematic for the formation of stars and planets. However, as scientists continued their analysis of the radiation by means of more sophisticated instruments, the increased resolution brought into view, in 1992, ripples all across the sky.*

It should also be stated that, while the apparent smoothness (now resolved) was problematic only for the formation of material objects, it was not a problem for the Big Bang model itself which, to the contrary, became further confirmed.

This contradicts the prediction of the Big Bang theory, which expects a variety of temperatures all around the universe. Here's another one—the law of angular momentum says that all of the spinning planets and moons should spin the same way, but this is not the case with the planets and moons in our solar system and there are even galaxies that spin “the wrong way.”

Scientific paradigms (hypotheses) are not overthrown on the basis of a few idiosyncrasies when that model, as a whole is demonstrated to be far superior to competing models.

Your Point 3

This point is fine. I agree entirely. The problem is that, once again, it doesn't address the sub-title of your paper.

Your Point 4

Here we finally get to a point that addresses the sub-title of your paper, but it has fundamental problems. The Hebrew does not allow “wide usage” of the word “day.” It means 24 hours in almost every case, and some argue that it means that in every case. In Gen. 2:4, it is used in a preposition phrase to mean “when.” Some conclude that this means that in Gen. 2:4, the word “day” can mean “week.” I don't agree, since it is used in an adverbial sense rather than to refer to a period of time, but, even granting the point, a week is a far cry from hundreds of millions, or billions, of years.

My paper is a challenge to those who insist on 24-hour-days. My position is that the creation days are indefinite. I make no claim about their specific length.

There are lots of other words in the Hebrew for long periods of time that could and should have been used if that were the intent. I believe that you are importing the modern English usage of the word

“day” from phrases such as, “Grandfather said that in his day, things were different.” That word in English means a span of time probably equal to years or even decades, maybe even longer. That doesn’t mean that the Hebrew carries the same meaning.

The question is whether the Hebrew does at times carry that meaning. I give examples where it does.

I disagree with B, C, D, E, and F.

Such a blanket statement, dismissive of my actual arguments, hardly constitutes a challenge of my position.

On F, for example, since the preceding days had an evening and morning, it is just as easy to conclude that the seventh day had that also.

I have never heard that argument before. Where is your evidence?

To argue otherwise is to argue from silence. The related passages in Hebrews 3 and 4 do not prove that the seventh day is continuing, even if Hugh Ross thinks so. Hebrews does not say that the seventh day of creation continues to the present; it only says that God’s *rest* continues. On D, all of the events of day six could have been completed in a few hours.

There are indications, which you overlook, within the text (2:5, 23) that suggest the events took a long time.

Adam did not have to name every species; he could have called one type of animal a dog, this one a cat, that one an elephant, and the like. We are not told the level of creaturely taxonomy he named. I also don’t think that much, if any, speciation had taken place at that time, so the various species probably arose later. But we will never know this side of eternity.

Also on F, it is true that the order of the words “evening ... morning” is not the way a Jewish day starts. That does not change the fact that it is a twenty-four period that is characterized by one evening and one morning, so the phrase serves well to describe a normal day. Since the words *evening* and *morning* are not used in a figurative sense in Scripture, we need to take these words in their normal sense. And in every instance where both words appear in the same context, a 24-hour day is described. You seem to skip that point. Reversing the word order changes nothing of the meaning, nor does the specifying of the duration, or the idea that it is human rather than divine activity.

I respectfully disagree with everything you just stated.

It is true that the definite article is not used with the Hebrew numeral, so why is it that most English translations translate those days as definite? I think that your argument is weak, certainly unsubstantiated, especially in context.

My point from the first paragraph of my paper is that English translations often overlook to relevant cues in the Hebrew language. I decry the reality that you just described, and I think the burden of proof is on

the shoulders of those who pass over the existence of the article. The highlights the importance of Luther's assignment of importance to the original languages.

Your Point 5

You are exegetical here, but not compelling. You use one verse to suggest that the word "day" can mean something other than 24-hours. It is true that it can, but six days do not come anywhere close to a few years or thousands of years or millions of years.

The argument you assert does not work in favor of your position.

Your Point 6

This isn't exegetical or compelling. It certainly doesn't give me reason to believe that the days of Genesis 1 are millions or billions of years in length. Again, it fails to live up to the promise of your sub-title.

Your Point 7

I agree that the age of the universe, even in the Darwinian or Old Earth scenario, is "vastly too short for even the simplest living cell to appear naturalistically." This point attacks Darwinian evolution, not a natural reading of the days of Genesis 1. It does not address your sub-title either.

Your Point 8

The word in Hebrew for "appear" shows up in Gen. 1:9. It is the Nihal of the verb "to see," *ra'ah*. Had the author intended that for Day Four, why did he not use an unambiguous word in v. 14? The opposite of being is non-being, so to say "let there be" is the same as saying "God created."

Your assertion that the sun was created on Day Four appears to contradict your affirmation of my four points regarding Genesis 1:1, which argued that the heavens and the earth were created on day one. I once heard Tod Wilken state that initially the "sky" would have effectively been a "blank screen." I repeat my point that 1:1 said "the heavens and the earth." I made the point that "heavens" grammatically preceded "the earth." And the text did not say "blank screen."

I will concede that after I sent you my paper I continued to rework it at certain points drawing on insights from John Sailhamer. Most especially matters on day four.

I would also be careful about your argument on the Hebrew verb *'asah*. The word *'asah* means "make" throughout [Genesis 1](#), and it is even sometimes used interchangeably with "create" (*bara'*), as in [Genesis 1:26–27](#). It is a desperate move, IMHO, to apply a *different meaning* to the *same word* in the *same grammatical construction* in the *same passage*, in order to fit in with the standard Big Bang explanation. *Take note of John Sailhamer's treatment of this passage in my revised paper, which I am including as an attachment.* Of twenty mainstream translations checked, all of them state that the sun, moon and stars were *made* on the fourth day; they did not appear. But here the preconception of Old Earth Creationism has forced a new meaning on v. 14. That's eisegesis rather than exegesis.

This is not eisegesis since Genesis 1:1 makes the matter clear that the sun was created on Day 1.

To say that the terms *day*, *evening*, and *morning* in Days 1-3 “cannot be taken in their ‘normal’ usage without the existence of the Sun” is to set up a false alternative. Physicists believe that light can exist without the Sun, and in eternity after the Second Coming there will be light but no sun.

Dr. Williams, you did not answer my basic point at all, which is that we are speaking about “day” in its normal usage.

The idea that Genesis 1 was intended to challenge the mythologies of Israel’s neighbors is based on a late date for the writing of Genesis 1. I wholeheartedly disagree with that position, instead taking Genesis 1 to be the first written document in all of human history, preceding all mythologies. It reacts to no mythologies.

Your Point 9

Since Moses compares the creation week with our work week, the correspondence between the two indicates that both weeks are seven twenty-four-hour days. But I’m sure you have already thought about this and rejected it. Nevertheless, that is the natural reading of the text and the most likely. One must have preconceptions in a different direction to conclude otherwise. You are correct that there are times where non-equivalent comparisons are made. The question is whether or not you have shown that this is the case in Genesis 1 and Exodus 20 and 31. I think not.

Let’s let readers decide.

On Rom. 5:12, Paul is writing to the Romans, so he has a focus on the human application of the problem of death. Your interpretation could be correct, but I think you are forced into that position because of the need to explain death prior the fall of Adam and Eve. I believe that the groaning of “the whole creation” (Rom. 8:22) refers to the consequences of the Fall, which would mean earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, but also the disruption of nature, including animal death (which, by the way, happens during earthquakes, tornadoes, and hurricanes). Paul does not say that *human* death applied to “all men,” but that death, period, applied to “all men.” I think he introduces the concept of death in general rather than human death. But this is not fully certain in this context, just likely.

My serious work on this matter remains standing.

I agree that harmonizing Scripture with science is fine. The question is whether “demonstrated scientific facts” are actually true, or whether “scientific consensus” (a phrase you use in point 7) is true. Much of science is dominated by people who have an ulterior motive, i.e. to avoid the condemnation of the Law. By the way, did you know that 90% of the dating methods point to a young earth? The remaining ten percent are variously debated, and cogent arguments appear on both sides, but the 90% clearly point to a young earth. See Don Batten here: <http://creation.com/age-of-the-earth>.

Just for the record your sentence “... Christians at first resisted Galileo’s discovery that the Earth revolves around the Sun” should state “... *some* Christians *and some* scientists especially resisted

Galileo's discovery that the Earth revolves around the Sun." Of course, some Christians resisted that idea. Some Christians are on the wrong side of every idea, but not all of them all the time and not always most of them. And because a Christian is wrong about an issue does not mean that the issue is wrong; it may only mean that this Christian does not fully understand this issue.

I agree that no new matter is being created, that the cosmos operates under fixed laws, that the universe is expanding, that the total number of stars is almost innumerable, that stars differ from each other, that time began at creation, and that the universe is running down. Those are not arguments for a non-24-hour view of the days of creation.

Your Point 10

No one I know of, least of all myself, says that we should reject the witness of nature. I believe that science, per se, is objective, but I also believe that scientists are not. How is this an argument against 24-hour days?

Your Point 11

I do not refuse to wrestle with scientific evidence or recognize only data that suits my purposes. Nor does any creationist that I know.

To the contrary, you are ambivalent with respect to this relationship. While you affirm with me at one point that the universe had an absolute beginning, you reject significant aspects of the roster of scientific facts that actually affirm that very beginning. I opened my paper by boldly declaring that the Big Bang points demonstrably to the existence of the God of the Bible. I also built on the implications later in my paper by stating that in order to make truth claims about Genesis, Genesis must reconcile with scientific truth in reality. No reconciliation, then one side or the other must give. I cite John Klotz on this matter in note 35. I do not think my position on this matter dishonors God, or the Bible. I take Scripture seriously, utterly. This is why I disagree with your assertion that I bring the Bible into disrepute. As I state in my opening paragraph, I think it goes entirely the other way.

Have you read the results of the RATE project? Those are powerful scientific studies for the young age of the earth, which are only a part of what Don Batten writes about. No one, and I mean no one, has an even slightly reasonable response to John Baumgardner's work on Carbon-14 dating.

And yes, I have heard the argument that buying an Old Earth scenario for the age of the earth makes for more effective evangelism. I don't agree. Some scientists of the atheistic and agnostic persuasion think that the Old Earth people are avoiding the natural meaning of the text of Genesis 1, and they demean that position. So it cuts both ways. For me, the question is "Which understanding of Genesis 1 is the most likely, the most accurate, the most true to the text, the context in Genesis, and the context of all of Scripture?"

I argue that the correlation between science and Scripture must be resolved defacto.

I think that you should rewrite the paper and especially rewrite the sub-title. You give some alternate explanations to a young earth perspective. None of them are compelling, in my humble opinion, many of them have nothing to do with the length of the days, and some of them are only tangential to the question of the length of the days. By the way, are you familiar with the finding of T-Rex remains at Hell Creek, Montana, by an evolutionist who cannot be accused of fudging the evidence? Evolutionist (not a young earth creationist) Dr. Mary Schweitzer found blood cells, flexible tissue, and even a cadaverous odor in T-Rex remains that are supposed to be at least sixty-five million years old. Those cells could not possibly have lasted that long. Those remains must be much younger than sixty-five million years old.

June 24

Dear Gary,

I have browsed through your comments, which comment on my comments. To say "Fine, post them" would be to give you permission to post something to which I have not had a chance to reply. There is much that could be stated in reply to your comments, so I prefer not to leave those remarks hanging in a blog or website. Consequently, as to permission to post, I think not.

As to the Sailhamer comment, he seems to miss the fact that the phrase in Gen. 1:14, "Let there be..." is joined with the conjunction "and" to the phrase "let them serve as signs." The text joins them with "and," but it does not conflate. I think that Sailhamer's attempt, at least as it appears in your footnote (I don't have Sailhamer's book, so this is an opinion from what I have seen in your footnote), is an attempt to force the text to agree with his idea.

You should take another look at your own argumentation. You criticize me for not taking the time, though much time was already spent, in offering specific reasons for saying, "I disagree with B, C, D, E, and F."

Then you state, "*Such a blanket statement, dismissive of my actual arguments, hardly constitutes a challenge of my position.*"

Then later, you don't like my comment that Adam didn't have to name every existing species of animal, and some other points, with the words "*I respectfully disagree with everything you just stated.*"

You are doing what I did. So if I am to be criticized for the disagreement earlier, then you should be for your similar comment. If your comment of disagreement is fine as stated, then mine should be also. You can't have it both ways. Either both of us can make blanket statements or neither of us can.

But perhaps we must simply disagree. At least, I hope, we can do so in charity. And, I hope, that continued reading and study, in respect for the Word of God, will lead us to agreement in the future.

Grace and Peace,

Dr. Williams

June 25

Dear Gary,

Having read your paper with interest, there was one point you made that started me. It was new to me, at least your point. That was where you stated (my text in black, yours in red):

You do not mention any of the problems of the Big Bang theory, so here are a couple. The cosmic microwave background of the universe shows a uniform temperature.

*This is **NOT correct** information for the reason that it is outdated by two decades. It is true that at first this radiation was perceived as completely smooth...which at that time was regarded as problematic for the formation of stars and planets. However, as scientists continued their analysis of the radiation by means of more sophisticated instruments, the increased resolution brought into view, in 1992, ripples all across the sky.*

It should also be stated that, while the apparent smoothness (now resolved) was problematic only for the formation of material objects, it was not a problem for the Big Bang model itself which, to the contrary, became further confirmed.

So I submitted a question to a scientist I know, a Ph.D. in chemistry with knowledge about the creation-evolution debate. Here is what he wrote to me:

Right, the problem here is that the high degree of uniformity in the CMB (one part in 10^5) is a problem for the big bang. To achieve uniformity from an initially chaotic temperature distribution, heat must have been transferred from hot regions to cooler ones. The fastest this could happen is the speed of light. That the regions of uniformity are far larger in light years than the years available. This is called the Horizon Problem, explained in <http://creation.com/light-travel-time-a-problem-for-the-big-bang> The "ripples" don't affect this point, since they are irrelevant to the high degree of uniform temperature observed. So your opponent has missed the point.

I don't think that you should make a claim that appears to answer a problem, when, in fact, it doesn't. However, if you have more relevant data, I would be happy to learn about it.

Cordially,

Dr. Williams

Jun 26,

Dear Joel, I was responding to your specific statement about the smoothness of the background radiation. In light of the actual history of scientific discovery on that matter, my answer to you was correct and honest in its initial context. As I read Jason Lisle's

article I am prepared to concede I don't fully grasp the technical arguments. As a lay person on this matter I endeavor to read a whole range of opinions on the issues at hand. On the other hand I am able to ask what specifically are you seeking to challenge by your reference? Is it the problem of light travel? Or is it the initial explosion in a Big Bang? You appear to treat ever anomaly as, in principle, equally problematic. I do not. Scientific hypotheses are generally overthrown when they prove utterly incapable of explaining a broad range of evidence. They are not overthrown on the basis of a few challenges. Your most recent e-mail comes across as sarcastic. Though your signature used the word "cordially," that is not the spirit that you convey. If I in turn actually come across as sarcastic to you, please do tell me. I am not perfect. Enthusiasm sometimes overtakes my better judgment, including charity. But I try to rise above that.

Obviously I believe my position is correct...as I expect you to of your own position. But I am seeking a spirit of freedom within the LCMS, not domination by only one position on Genesis. I can still call you my brother in Christ. By what authority from the Scriptures themselves, or even our Confessional documents, are people of differing opinions to be silenced or disenfranchised? As I cited at the beginning of my paper, Luther himself conceded that the first chapter of Genesis is "difficult."

In Christ Jesus our Lord,
Gary Jensen

June 26

Dear Dr. Williams, I don't want to be guilty of magnifying issues or making unfair charges. I retract my comment about the spirit of your last e-mail. I apologize. I also get your irritation with my dismissing at one point everything you just wrote on a specific matter. I do think, however, that I was disagreeing with you over what I consider matters of opinion or judgment, while my list of points contained matters of fact, whether or not they are judge in the end to be correct. It was that kind of critique that I had been seeking.

In Christ,
Gary

p.s. I know you are busy. I am prepared to continue the correspondence if you are willing. But if you choose not to, let me know.