

CHAPTER 5

GENESIS: CONCORDIST INTERPRETATIONS

YOUNG EARTH CREATIONIST VIEWS ON CONTINENTAL DRIFT AND RADIOACTIVE DATING

Attempting to refute scientific data that indicates an old earth, young earth creationists have developed alternative models. Here are two examples, along with some of the problems faced by each.

Versus Continental Drift

In response to the accumulating evidence for continental drift that supports an old earth, some young earth creationists have proposed that continents like Africa and South America moved apart quickly during Noah's flood, rather than slowly drifting apart for millions of years. This could explain the shapes of the continents and the locations of some mountain ranges, rock types, and fossils. The problem is that the flood model does not explain all, or even most, of the available data. If the flood was so catastrophic that it could move continents that quickly, the waters would have been much too turbulent to lay down several thin layers of rock and fossils that match up on the edges of different continents. Nor could a flood explain many features of the Atlantic Ocean sea floor, such as the alternating direction of magnetization seen in rocks along the central ridge, which are explained very well by slow continental drift over millions of years.

Versus Radiometric Dating

In response to radiometric dating evidence, some young earth creationists have proposed that the half-lives of radioactive isotopes were much shorter during the six days of creation and during the flood than they are now. If true, this would mean that the rocks are actually much younger than the ages found by radiometric dating. Again, this alternative model explains some data but causes other problems. If the radioactive decay rates were so rapid during those times, the heat produced by the decays would have been substantial, but we find no evidence of such extensive heating. Also, radioactive decay rates depend upon the fundamental laws of nature, and geologists and astronomers have a great deal of additional evidence that the fundamental laws of nature have not changed in the past.