

# **The History and Impact of the Book, *The Genesis Flood* (Part 1)**

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My highly-esteemed and long-time friend, Henry M. Morris, co-author of *The Genesis Flood*, joins me in giving praise to God for His merciful providence in allowing our 550-page book to be published and distributed around the world in four languages. Unable to travel now, especially because of severe health problems his wife Mary Louise is experiencing, he has kindly sent me his perspective on the impact of our book. I quote: “The publication of *The Genesis Flood* in 1961 did make a tremendous difference in my own life, culminating in a change from engineering to full-time concentration on creationism and Christian evidences. But first there were numerous speaking requests, then the formation of the Creation Research Society (1963), then eventually the Institute for Creation Research (1970) and extensive seminars, conferences, debates, etc., all over the world. Many have attributed the global revival of scientific Biblical creationism to the catalytic effect of *The Genesis Flood*.”

(Note, for example, a book entitled, *The Creationists* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992] authored by Ronald L. Numbers, professor of the history of science and medicine at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, especially the final chapter, entitled, "Creation Science Floods the World." Dr. Morris agrees with me that this is a remarkably objective study by one who claims to be an agnostic on the subject of ultimate origins [p. xvi]).

It was in 1961 that our book was published by a very small company, P & R Publishing. The current president, Bryce H. Craig, comments: “Though hard to measure, it is easy to see the immense impact that the book *The Genesis Flood* has had on the Biblical creation movement in the United States of America and beyond. *The Genesis Flood* has sold over 264,000 copies in English, plus editions in German, Spanish and Korean, and the book that gave an answer to the secular thinking at that time and started the Biblical creation

movement is still going strong today. Forty-five years ago, when I was 12 years old, I accompanied my father (Charles Craig) when he visited Dr. Whitcomb and Dr. Morris (at Winona Lake, Ind., in July, 1960) during the editorial stage of the book's development. My mother designed its original cover; I packed it for shipment as a part-time packer, and I have sold it through all these years as a full-time employee with P&R Publishing. I have always enjoyed the partnership with Drs. Whitcomb and Morris. It brought joy and pleasure to my late father to publish and distribute this seminal and God-honoring book."

The story of how God brought this book into existence is truly amazing. I was a total evolutionist at Princeton University, taking courses in historical geology and paleontology in 1942 and 1943, when Donald B. Fullerton, a former missionary to India and Afghanistan, confronted me with the gospel of Jesus Christ in my dormitory room in Pyne Hall in February of 1943. He had graduated from the university in 1913, and for 50 years, after returning from the mission field in poor health in 1931, the university amazingly allowed him to teach the Bible on Sunday afternoons at the student center (see my dedication to him in *The World That Perished* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988]).

Two months later I was drafted into the Army and, in God's mercy, survived the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium. Returning to Princeton in 1946, I was taught by Dr. Fullerton to believe the entire written Word of God. He believed that the days of creation were 24-hour days but, in harmony with the evangelical consensus of those years, he allowed vast periods of time between the first two verses of Genesis. When I began to teach the Old Testament at Grace Theological Seminary in 1951, I presented this popular gap theory to my students. Some were skeptical of this approach and I myself had certain reservations, having previously read Dr. Henry Morris's defense of a recent creation, *That You Might Believe*.

Then, in His merciful providence, God sent Henry Morris to our campus in September of 1953 to present a paper to the American Scientific Affiliation meeting there, entitled, "Biblical Evidence for a Recent Creation and Universal Deluge." This revolutionized my

entire approach to ultimate origins and God motivated me to spend four years writing a 450-page doctoral dissertation entitled, "The Genesis Flood: An Investigation of its Geographical Extent, Geological Effects and Chronological Setting" (Winona Lake, Ind.: Grace Theological Seminary, 1957) with special focus on Genesis 6 to 9; Job 38:8-11; Ps. 29:10; Ps. 104:6-9; Isa. 54:9, 10; Jer. 5:22; Matt. 24:36-39; Luke 17:26, 27; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:18-20; and 2 Pet. 3:3-7. All of my reasons for abandoning the gap theory have been spelled out in the final chapter of my book, *The Early Earth*.

It was in December of 1957 that Henry Morris agreed to coauthor *The Genesis Flood*. This was also in God's providence, for both he and I agreed that a project of such magnitude, dealing with stupendous scientific and theological issues, needed the perspectives of a trained and experienced scientist as well as a theologian. Dr. Morris tells the story of his own abandonment of theistic evolutionism and his discovery of flood geology, especially during his graduate studies at the University of Minnesota in 1946 to 1950, where he majored in hydraulics and minored in geology and mathematics. He shares these details in his excellent volume, *History of Modern Creationism*, rev. ed. (Institute for Creation Research, 1993).

(See also the DVD, *ICR Presents Fireside Chats*, with Drs. Whitcomb and Morris. This hour-long discussion of the history of the relationship of these two authors was made in 2003.)

During the years 1953 to 1961, while teaching full-time in graduate schools and raising our families, Dr. Henry Morris and I managed to exchange nearly 200 letters (which are still on file), hammering out the many issues that were important for our forthcoming volume. As Dr. Morris explained in the above-mentioned history, "Even though we worked on distinctly separate portions of the book (John wrote the first four chapters and two appendices, and I wrote the introduction and the last three chapters), each of us continually reviewed the other's contributions, and each made a number of contributions to the other's sections so that the joint authorship format was genuine" (pp. 169-70). In this enormously time-consuming process, 21 scientists, nine theologians and two

grammarians were asked to review all or part of the manuscript (see “Acknowledgments,” pp. xxx-xxxii). In addition, Dr. Morris and I met for two days at a hotel in Pittsburgh in June of 1959 to work out many details and to ask the Lord for His continued blessing and direction. In retrospect, it seems significant to us that 1959 was also the year of the great Darwinian Centennial celebration in Chicago, at which Sir Julian Huxley and other atheistic evolutionists announced that creationism was essentially dead. As we have already seen, however, this “graveside service” was premature!

The following year, in July of 1960, the Morris family came to our home at Winona Lake, Ind., to meet with Charles Craig, our publisher, and to put the finishing touches on our book, which was published in a hardback edition in 1961.

### **Negative responses to *The Genesis Flood***

In the late 1980s, about 25 years after the publication of our book, two significant counter-movements began to appear. Both of these movements were totally opposed to naturalistic Darwinism but, at the same time, were opposed to Biblical and scientific creationism.

From a Biblical perspective, this was sadly predictable. The apostle Paul, for example, confronted the church at Corinth with these words: “For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you” (1 Cor. 11:19). On the one hand, this can be, in God's mysterious providence, a healthy process. God's people must not adopt a view on origins just because of a human authority figure, however brilliant or eloquent. Each of us needs to “(search) the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). On the other hand, large numbers of Christians have been deceived into abandoning Biblical creationism, thus re-enacting what happened in early 19th century England, even before Darwin (see Terry Mortenson, *The Great Turning Point: The Church's Catastrophic Mistake on Geology – Before Darwin* [Green Forest, AR: Master Books, Inc., 2004]).

The first of these movements is called progressive creationism, represented especially by Dr. Hugh Ross, a Christian astrophysicist whose ministry is entitled *Reasons to Believe*. He believes that creation began many billions of years ago with a so-called "Big Bang;" that animals were supernaturally and periodically created (not evolved) through millions of years; that Adam's rebellion against God did not cause death in the animal kingdom; and that the flood was local in extent. He believes that the Bible is fully inspired, but that it needs to be re-interpreted in the light of a 67th book which God has now provided for us, namely modern science. (See Mark D. Rasche, "The 67th Book of the Bible? The Slippery Slope of Progressive Creationism" [*Acts and Facts*, Vol. 32, No. 6 (ICR, June, 2003)].)

For more than 40 years following the publication of *The Genesis Flood*, Henry Morris has written a number of books and articles in response to those who rejected the basic theses of our co-authored volume. My own effort to do so was entitled *The World That Perished*, 2nd edit. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), in which I offered answers to 23 leading critics of our Biblical and scientific evidences for a universal flood.

As Dr. Morris explains: "Whatever may have been the impact of *The Genesis Flood* upon the Christian and non-Christian communities as a whole, it certainly changed the lives of its authors. Never again would there be time available for the intensive library research that had preceded its publication. This is the reason why we have never managed to revise and update the book for a new edition, despite many good intentions to do so at various times during the intervening years" (*History of Modern Creationism*, p. 177).

How our families, with six children each, have been impacted by all of this is another story of God's amazing grace. All of them gladly accepted the basic tenets of Biblical creationism, and my wife Norma has been motivated to reach children with her beautiful book, *Those Mysterious Dinosaurs* (Whitcomb Ministries, Inc., 1991), which is now in 11 languages.

*Note: This article is based on Dr. Whitcomb's presentation at the Answers in Genesis*

*2005 Creation Mega-Conference, which was held in July of 2005  
at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. It is reprinted with permission.*

*This presentation is also available on DVD from Answers in Genesis.*

*For more information, visit [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org).*

*This message was given prior to the death of Dr. Henry Morris on Feb. 25, 2006.*

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