

# Harmony between the Bible and Precambrian geology—too favourable to naturalism

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In a recent article, Dickens and Snelling<sup>1</sup> presented their vision for joining the naturalist Precambrian geologic column (*sans* deep time) to the biblical outline of Earth history. They mimicked the standard uniformitarian ‘just so’ stories conveying the succession of Precambrian eras and eons and then suggested how each of these rock layers would correspond to ‘Bible events’. Figures taken from naturalist geologic textbooks showed the Precambrian shields across each of the continents. Then readers are told that these exposures of basement rocks (composed of igneous and metamorphic strata) could be correlated to specific Creation Day events and the eventual formation of the Rodinian Supercontinent—which also happens to correspond to the pre-Flood Earth. What is the basis for us to accept and support this naturalist-biased view of Earth history? Radiometric dating! In our present state of creation science, I unfortunately find this proposal a significant step backward.<sup>2</sup>

To suggest that young-earth creationists can simply join biblical Earth history with the naturalist interpretation shows a complete nescience of the philosophical underpinnings of the biblical and naturalist worldviews. They are mutually *exclusive*. The proposed Precambrian harmony is so obviously weighted toward naturalism that any real biblical perspective is unnecessary—just add key Bible verses. Is this the way biblical Earth history should be defined? I think not!

With these concepts in mind, I offer a series of questions for the authors:

1. If radiometric age-dates are acceptable as ‘relative’ and not absolute, then how are age-dates that are completely out of sequence to be dealt with? Examples include the completely inappropriate ‘Precambrian’ radiometric age given by the Rb–Sr method for the recent lava flows of western Grand Canyon<sup>3,4</sup> as well as the overall failure of several other radiometric age-dating techniques used on the Proterozoic Brahma amphibolite.<sup>5</sup> How are these radiometric ‘anomalies’ to be handled?
2. Which of the currently used radiometric age-dating techniques are acceptable for young-earth creationists? Uniformitarians acknowledge that many of the older radiometric age-dating methods are no longer reliable and therefore should not be used to determine the appropriate age of Precambrian basement rocks.<sup>6</sup> This will likely result in the re-examination for much of the

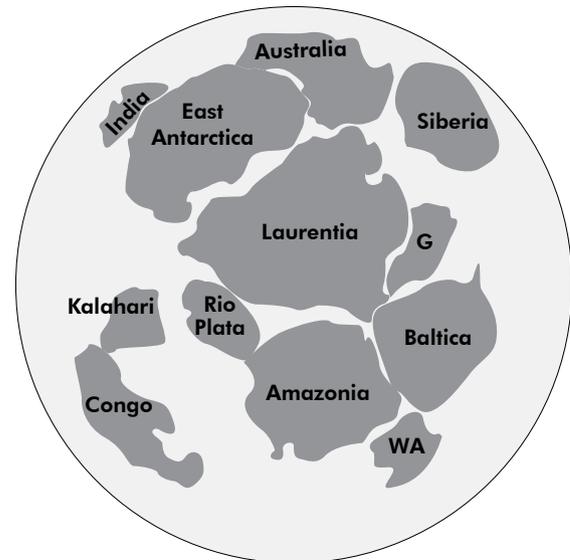
Proterozoic rock record in an attempt to apply newer, more appropriate and acceptable radiometric dating methods. Which techniques should be accepted? How should the older and no longer acceptable ‘relative’ age-dates be dealt with?

3. Just how much of the naturalist worldview should young-earth creationists accept in defining biblical history? From this proposal, it appears that not only the naturalist chronology must be adopted (*sans* deep time), but also plate tectonic movements and polar wandering paths that are also based on radiometric dating. Are young-earth creationists now only drawing the line of acceptability with the concept of deep time? This approach has serious ramifications once leaving the Proterozoic and moving up into the Phanerozoic.
4. It appears there is some confusion regarding which supercontinent existed prior to the onset of the Flood. In the ‘Antediluvian period’ section, the antediluvian rivers are said to correspond to several suture zones across the Pangaeon supercontinent.<sup>7</sup> However, Pangaea was a Phanerozoic supercontinent and not a Proterozoic supercontinent. The statement is made in the following section titled ‘Early Noahic Flood’ that the rifting of the Rodinian supercontinent probably marks the onset of the Flood.<sup>8</sup> So, which supercontinent was the pre-Flood continent?<sup>9</sup>
5. In defining the antediluvian period using the radiometrically age-dating of basement rocks, are you suggesting that the pre-Flood Earth was simply exposed shield with little to no sedimentary strata across the Rodinian supercontinent? How should the Earth’s pre-Flood continental crust be viewed?

For the record, I view this ‘Precambrian harmony’ as too favourable to naturalism. There is no apparent advantage in defining biblical history using the naturalist worldview and young-earth creationist work has been produced that opposes this approach.<sup>10,11</sup> Several years ago a few young-earth creationists investigated the Precambrian banded iron formations in northern Arizona and we interpreted them in a manner completely different from what naturalists had previously proposed.<sup>12</sup> From this study, the uniformitarian assumptions were found to be unnecessary and the resulting catastrophic interpretation actually resolved a number of issues viewed as enigmatic by the naturalists.



**Pangaeian supercontinent**



**Rodinian supercontinent**

Within the multi-billion-year framework of Earth history, Pangaea is not the only supercontinent said to have existed in the past. Before that there was Rodina, but Vaalbara is said to have been the first.

Despite my total opposition to blindly following the naturalist interpretation of Earth history, Dickens and Snelling are encouraged to further develop their proposal, especially if it can successfully demonstrate that radiometric dating can be accepted in a relative manner that would be consistent with Scripture and also allow the naturalist worldview of Earth history to be adopted—sans deep time. Perhaps another article addressing the naturalist/biblical interpretation for a specific location might put a more positive light on defining the Proterozoic rock record in this manner.

### References

1. Dickens, H. and Snelling, A.A., Precambrian geology and the Bible: a harmony, *Journal of Creation* **22**(1):65–72, 2008.
2. This proposal to follow the ‘relative age’ defined by radiometric age-dating methods runs counter to recent young-Earth creationist publications which clearly state otherwise, 1) Vardiman, L., Snelling, A.A., and Chaffin, E.F. (Eds), *Radioisotopes and the age of the Earth*, Volume II., Institute for Creation Research, El Cajon, CA, 2005, and 2) Woodmorappe, J., *The mythology of modern dating methods*, Institute for Creation Research, El Cajon, CA, 1999.
3. Austin, S.A., *Excessively old ‘ages’ for Grand Canyon lava flows*, Impact No. 224, Institute for Creation Research, 1992.
4. Austin, S.A., Are Grand Canyon rocks one billion years old? in: Austin, S.A. (Ed.), *Grand Canyon: monument to catastrophe*, Institute for Creation Research, Santee, CA, pp. 111–131, 1994.
5. Snelling, A.A., *Radiometric dating of Grand Canyon rocks: another devastating failure for long-age geology*, Impact No. 376, Institute for Creation Research, CA, 2004.
6. Gradstein, F.M., Ogg, J.G. and Smith, A.G., (Eds.), *A geological time scale 2004*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2004.
7. Dickens and Snelling, ref. 1, p. 70.
8. Dickens and Snelling, ref. 1, p. 71.
9. The confusion regarding the identification of the appropriate uniformitarian supercontinent for the pre-Flood Earth has previously been raised, but has not been answered by folks such as Dickens and Snelling. It is interesting that these individuals continue to publish their own ideas while they never address work critical of their ideas. This shows either willful ignorance or willful omission—either way reflecting poorly on the individuals who continually overlook the relevant work of others. This is not the way creation science should advance. See Reed, J.K. and Froede Jr, C.R., Chaotic Chronology of Catastrophic Plate Tectonics, *Creation Research Society Quarterly* **39**:149–159, 2002.
10. Reed, J.K. and Froede Jr, C.R., The uniformitarian stratigraphic column—shortcut or pitfall for creation geology? *Creation Research Society Quarterly* **40**:90–98, 2003.
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