

Response by Hill Roberts To The *Open Letter* of King, et al.

-- Final Version --

(please note: a draft version was posted prematurely by a reviewer, please replace it with this final version)

“Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him.” Proverbs 26:4

Heeding good advice, ordinarily I would not respond to such a letter. Such attacks bring me no harm. However, because I am being used as a means by which to attack and attempt to bring real harm on others, I must now respond. I offer these blunt comments in hopes of exposing and defeating this weak and ungodly attack on Florida College staff and other godly men who are busy preaching the Word.

“Answer a fool as his folly deserves, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.” Proverbs 26:5

Miracles are instantaneous, therefore — *the miracle of creation spanned six days!*

False.

Aside from the folly of this obvious self-contradiction, consider these examples. The parting of the Red Sea was a miracle. It was not instantaneous. It was produced by forces of nature acting in accord with God’s fiat over a span of six hours (Exodus 14:21). How many other examples do you want? How about a flood rain of forty days? How about God giving the ten commandments over forty days, leading Hebrews in the wilderness 38 years just to kill them, marching them around Jericho for seven days, God conquering Canaan over many years under Joshua. How about waiting 100+ years to bring His servant Cyrus into reality after He had already spoken it? How about waiting *three* days to raise Jesus from the dead after He had already decided it? How about using all of time to bring to pass His eternal purpose? How about God taking any amount of time to do anything? **How about God taking six days to create, instead of doing it instantaneously.** *Never* in the Bible does God argue for His nature on the basis of *how fast* He created or does anything. The Biblical argument is that God demonstrates His divinity *because* He created — period.

Since this idea (all miracles are instantaneous) is demonstrably a false teaching, that would make the ones advocating it false teachers, with whom we must, by their own standards, break fellowship (even though I’ve never had any fellowship with them in the first place). Of course I believe such standards for defining a “false teacher” and such tests for universal church “fellowship” are likewise errant. Therefore *I do not hold* that one who advocates such a mistaken position is a “false teacher,” nor do I break fellowship (which I don’t have) with them. I do think they are guilty of obsessing over these matters to the point of proverbial folly. Yet, with some difficulty, I have determined to love these brothers in spite of their misguided efforts. However, I have not determined that unscriptural propaganda be allowed to dictate doctrine. I would argue that those who bring such unscriptural arguments forward have made a statement about their Bible scholarship which should be duly noted.

Marriage was “from the beginning,” therefore — *the days of creation are 24 hours long!*

False.

Clearly Jesus was speaking of the beginning of the institution of marriage both in Matthew and Mark. If Jesus meant marriage occurred at the beginning instant of creation He got it wrong according to His own Genesis. “Marriage” did not occur until at least day six in Genesis—the *very end* of the creation period. Any direct allusion to marriage is not until the end of chapter two of Genesis—which is the text Jesus references. Therefore, the statement “from the beginning” has no bearing on the span of time that preceded the events relating to the marriage of Adam and Eve. The argument is a classic *non sequitur*. The proponent of such an unscriptural argument is guilty merely of gross illogic, not sin. This and the previous argument are often framed in terms of the power of God, as though one who does not believe that God created “instantaneously” lacks faith in God. No doubt, God has the power to bring the earth to its present state instantaneously—that is, in zero time, but scripture states creation took place in six days, not instantaneously. Six days is just as complete a contradiction of “instantaneous” as fifteen billion years.

A Believer who accepts that stars change is a “Theistic Stellar Evolutionist.”

False

... in the sense of the “ordinary straight-forward meaning” of the term *theistic evolutionist*. It could be taken at face value, but only in the sense that one who accepts a human body changes over a lifetime is a “Theistic Physiological Evolutionist.” *Change* does not equal *Theistic Evolution*. I could paint every signer of *Open Letter* as a “Theistic Evolutionist” (meaning a theistic micro evolutionist). But that would be morally wrong. The persistent use of such prejudicial labeling is an attempt to get readers to pass judgment without considering the arguments on both sides, and it is a certain sign that those who practice it do not have much confidence in the position stated in their *Open Letter*. This “Theistic Stellar Evolutionist” label is the weakest form of attack by propaganda, at best. It seems a ruse to allow the authors of *Open Letter* to insert the word “evolution” as often as possible. I believe and teach unmistakably that God CREATED the inanimate world as surely as He CREATED the animate world.

The easiest refutation of any idea is simply to avoid looking at the evidence. If one cannot believe stars change over their lifetimes, one should avoid ever looking through a telescope, or even looking at the noonday sun. A “Big Bang” interpretation of the stellar data may or may not ultimately prove correct. If it is (as the accumulation of evidence strongly indicates) it DOES NOT replace creation, *it assumes creation!* That is why the expansion data is such a threat to the naturalistic world view: *it demands a created beginning!* Ask Eddington, Gamow, Einstein, Ross – all of whom converted from atheism solely due to the force of His physical data, just as God tells us in Romans 1:19-20. Anyone who has actually attended a “*Lord, I Believe*” seminar could not miss this point unless they slept through it. (Which would be especially hard during that portion of the seminar – attendees will understand.)

Hill Roberts doesn’t accept the “literal” meaning of Genesis 1.

False

I believe I probably take the Genesis 1 text more literally than my *Open Letter* critics. For example, I *insist* on a literal meaning for *all* of Genesis 1:1. I *insist* on a differentiation in the literal meaning of the different Hebrew words *barah*, *assah*, and *hayah*. I *insist* on the literal events of verse 1 occurring *before* the literal events in verse 14.

Answer this question, “Did God create the plants?” If you answer “yes,” you do not take the text of Genesis 1 literally. Be clear: I believe “yes” is the correct answer. However, the text of Genesis 1 literally says *the earth* produced the plants. Nowhere does the Genesis 1 text state that God *created* plants. Are you or they willing to be *that* literal?

Let us be honest for the spectators. By “non-literal” the authors of *Open Letter* mean “any view other than *our* interpretation.” It is the same dishonest pejorative propaganda tactic as is being used with the label “Theistic Evolutionist.” These are the tactics they will use *on you* when it becomes convenient in some future battle.

The hermeneutic issue is not “literal” or “non-literal.” The issue is not “is *day* to be understood literally.” I believe *day* in the expression “evening and morning, one day” means a calendar day. In the expression “day and night” it has a different, but literal meaning. In the Genesis 2:4 expression “... in the day the Lord God made the earth and heavens” it has a third literal meaning. The hermeneutic at issue is not literal or non-literal, but “what is the intended meaning?” Think this is easy? Try to give the literal meaning for the phrase “the day” and “death” in Genesis 2:17. Be consistent! Be sure to use only the “ordinary meaning” of the words as Adam/Eve would have understood them.

Hill Roberts taught the Ancient Earth at the Florida College Lectures in 1999, breaking his assurances to the FC Administration not to do so.

False.

I taught four classes. During none of them did I promote any age of the earth, or mention the days of creation. I was invited to speak on how I use multimedia in apologetics with skeptics. Accordingly I suggested any of the four topics below, all of which were selected by FC. I also informed them of plans to provide my CD free of charge to the audience, display some bibliographical selections useful in working with skeptics, and provide written outlines

for the lectures. Subsequent to outside inquiries, FC asked me if my talks would focus on Genesis days and the age of the earth. They did not limit me in any way. I assured them that such matters were not a part of any planned presentations. Such is not my main focus during LIB seminars either. The four lectures were as follows:

- 1) *Reaching out to Skeptics* - the age of the earth was not taught, nor was any view of days of creation. As a matter of introductory background on myself, I did note for the audience that I am not a “creation scientist” as that term is popularly used, since I do not pursue apologetics from a young earth perspective. I said this specifically to preclude the possibility of any later charges that I was in any way misrepresenting myself to the audience.
- 2) *Intelligent Design* - the age of the earth was not taught, mentioned, or alluded to. The audience seemed to appreciate such arguments, even though they did come from science’s revelations about God’s natural world. [Might not the *Open Letter* authors have a consistency problem using *any* natural evidence of design? On the one hand they applaud science when it is convenient to their dogma, while decrying science when the data produced by the same methods becomes inconvenient? The exact same science that helps us appreciate the detail of the intelligent design of the sun (fusion counterbalancing gravity) also reveals the most probable age of the sun. The exact same science that helps us understand the intricate chemical designs in minerals also reveals the most probable age of the minerals. The exact same science that helps us understand the magnetic design of the earth, also reveals the most probable age of the earth’s crust. If one is willing to “cherry pick” one’s evidence from God’s natural revelation, might one not also be suspected of “cherry picking” one’s doctrines from God’s written revelation? Or at least picking which ones are “fellowship worthy” at any given time?]
- 3) *Using Multimedia Presentations to Reach Skeptics* - the age of the earth was not taught, mentioned or alluded to. The LIB CD-ROM was made available because it contains the PowerPoint presentations I was demonstrating during the lectures. I made the CD available free of charge to anyone who attended this lecture. This was a \$1000 gift from private resources to the audience, which they willingly received. I noted that the CD also contained many articles by many different authors representing many different positions in which those interested in apologetics should be well versed (as is clearly noted in the CD information files as well). The free CD was offered as an aid to that end. There is no view on the CD in any article that could not be found in either the FC bookstore or in its library. This is as it should be at an accredited educational institution for higher learning with a course on Bible apologetics, which is why Florida College is worth the price of such an education for our young people.
- 4) *The Origin of Life* - the age of the earth was not taught. It was shown by mathematical analysis that no age is adequate to account for a-biogenesis of basic organic molecules such as enzymes, proteins and DNA, much less complex living cells.

All these lesson materials can be found at the <http://LordiBelieve.org> web site.

My CD articles referenced as containing the offensive material are five layers down in the CD file structure. One must go looking for it to find it. In so doing, one must overlook several articles by men who support counter views, such as Don Patton’s articles on my CD. This provides CD users with alternative critical viewpoints. (Since 1999, my CD has been routinely amended to include even more articles directly critical of myself and “*Lord, I Believe*” seminars. Authors of those articles include Steve Rudd, Wayne Wells, Chris, Steve and Bill Reeves, Larry Fain, Mark Mayberry, Harry Osborne, Dan King, as well as the *Open Letter*. All of their articles are included on my CD in whole form without any additional commentary or alteration of any kind.) In locating the offending CD articles, one must also overlook a wealth of other materials which provide the balance necessary in any study of such complex issues as encountered in apologetics. The offending CD article is clearly noted as a 1993/6 *Draft* essay for review and comment *to the author*. It specifically states under the section *A Personal Plea*, “This discussion is meant to be studied as a whole. To dissect it and extract statements from their context could be highly detrimental to the spirit of this study. The motive behind this study is to set down as concisely as possible my study and thinking at this point in an ongoing process of apologetics. This forms a means of sharing with others who may be able to provide additional considerations as a basis for further growth.” This indicates an ongoing process of study. This is an essay of nearly 100 pages. The article’s critics in *Open Letter* cited less than 0.1% of the article.

Ferrell Jenkins sat in every one of my 1999 lectures and heard every word presented. He testified to an audience at the Florida College Lectures in 2000 that Hill Roberts did not teach on the age of the earth or days of creation at all during the 1999 Lectures. Either Ferrell Jenkins is a liar or stupid, *or* those attempting to bring such charges are ignorant or dishonest. I know Ferrell, and I know he is not lying, and certainly he is competent in regard to whether or not I was teaching on the age of the earth or the days of creation. Which leaves me only the other alternatives. I prefer to think these critics of FC are seriously misinformed or misguided.

It is not just Ferrell's word one has on this matter. The taped lectures were attended by over 90 people each day. What do *they* say? Faced with the reality of such evidence, the *Open Letter* authors must resort to claiming I was promoting aberrant ideas during my lectures because of an obscure working draft later "discovered" on a CD given away for free to all of one hundred people, out of the thousands at Lectures. The offending article itself represents 4/10,000^{ths} of the total CD content. Since the 1999 Lectures, my critics have done far more to publish and distribute this material than I could ever have done. As a gesture of my continuing good will for their efforts, all unwanted CDs may be returned at no charge.

Footnote to the Previous Point

I do not know most of the signers to the letter. With a few exceptions they have never heard me teach on any thing ever. Recently, one of the signers of the letter was holding a nearby meeting. I went and introduced myself to him. He did not recognize who I was after the introduction until he was reminded of the letter he had just signed denouncing me by name. I asked him if he had ever attended a LIB seminar. Answer: no. I asked if he had attended any of my FC lectures. Answer: no. I asked if he had one of the LIB CDs. Answer: no. I asked if he had read the article referenced in the *Open Letter* he signed. Answer: no. I asked if he had a copy of the article referenced in the *Open Letter*. Answer: no. I asked if he had ever visited my web site to view any of the materials available there. Answer: no. He offered that he had learned about me by email from other preachers and from what is said in the *Open Letter* itself. He also offered that he did not *need* to read what I had written to know I was wrong. As evidence, he proceeded to tell me he knows I interpret the days in Genesis as long ages, which is not what I believe at all. Furthermore, this man did not seem the least bit embarrassed by any such actions. Hopefully, this is an isolated case. Sadly, I know it is not.

For example, prior to *Open Letter* I have never had any communication from or with Dan King, its lead author, in any form whatsoever. It is interesting to read King's own paper published in *WatchmanMagazine*, April 1999 (Vol. 2, No. 4, Ed. Harry Osborne), and mirrored on my LordiBelieve.org web site. Speaking of William Henry Green's classic 1890 essay on *Primaeval Chronology*, King observes,

"His [Green's] paper closes with the following statement: "On these various grounds we conclude that the Scriptures furnish no data for a chronological computation prior to the life of Abraham; and that the Mosaic records do not fix and were not intended to fix the precise date either of the Flood or of the Creation of the world."

King goes on to vouch concerning Whitcomb, Morris and himself,

"Noted proponents of a recent creation, such as John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris, have felt the strength of Green's arguments and the evidence from archaeology, revising the date of creation back to around 10,000 BC or so. This writer [King] is also convinced of the rectitude of Dr. Green's careful research. It is not without good reason that his work is considered by conservative Biblical scholars as the "final word" on the matter."

Based on the *Open Letter*, apparently Green's advise was *not* the final word for King, *et al*.

King concluded his *Watchman* article by insinuating that the ones under review in that *Watchman* issue, including myself, insert millions of years into the genealogical gaps to promote evolution. ***I do not***. I, *along with science and the Bible*, place the age of *H. sapiens* – man – in the range of thousands, not millions, of years. I reject entirely the general theory of organic evolution. I reject *theistic* evolution. Those who have attended a LIB seminar, or even read the offending CD article, would know this.

"He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him." Proverbs 18:13

Hill Roberts Won't Debate Us on This Issue.

True - sort of.

The above points should make the reasons why I won't debate such men abundantly obvious.

There *are* honorable men who disagree with me with whom I have discussed and debated the topic over extended periods of time. I will discuss my views with any brother demonstrating a spirit in accord with 1 Peter 3:15. However, brothers who introduce themselves to me with the verbal equivalent of “Put ‘em up” will be disappointed. As was well documented at the 2000 FC lectures by Jenkins and Wolfgang, sufficient and significant public discussion has already occurred *among brethren* over the past 200 years. This continues today. We frequently have gentle-spirited and brotherly discussions on this topic during “*Lord, I Believe*” workshops in the open discussion period. I presented in 1995 to an audience of about 15 preachers, by their invitation, my reasons for accepting the probability of an ancient creation. Many of these continue to ask the same questions I answered then, and they fail to address *any* of the physical evidence offered by me at that time. Recently, I presented my views before an audience of sixty preachers and elders in March, and then I answered their questions for over an hour. A follow-up study from the counter-view was provided by Wayne Wells. The audience included Harry Osborne, the secondary author of the *Open Letter*, who trivializes all such events in *Open Letter*. I have published my views in the public domain at the LordiBelieve.org web site. I have video tapes of our seminars available at cost. As already noted, the LIB CD contains my views on these matters. I have publicly discussed/debated these matters on Allan Turner’s web site and all of the “sixty seven” could have taken advantage of that forum openly and without any significant constraints. *None of them chose to do so.* However, I will not debate any advocate of such demonstrable falsehood as is represented in *Open Letter*. Enough has already been said, written and published since Ussher’s day for *anyone* seeking answers to formulate their own understanding of the truth of such matters. I do not believe further debate such as suggested in the *Open Letter* could be profitable. Others may choose to engage in such and achieve some measure of profit. I do not anticipate it will be me. My opinion of nearly all debating, be it legal, religious, or academic, is that it is more about who can put together the winning rhetoric in some artificially constrained format before an audience who is mostly there to “cheer for their side.” (And unfortunately, thus it will be even with this and other responses to the *Open Letter*.) Debates are seldom about arriving at truth. Study of the only infallible Book and other books such as in all our libraries are much more efficient for that purpose. I see no value in such debate exercises as proposed in *Open Letter* to warrant the time and effort involved. Furthermore, I do not have the luxury of unlimited church-funded hours to devote to such things, for which I see absolutely no benefit for the cause of Christ. Maybe some church would be willing to fund me for a year to organize a similar campaign to counter *Open Letter*? No, surely not. Make no mistake brethren, such behavior as exemplified in the *Open Letter* will rip your churches apart, like a Solomonic baby.

“*The beginning of strife is [like] letting out water, So abandon the quarrel before it breaks out.*” Proverbs 17:14

“*When there are many words, transgression is unavoidable, But he who restrains his lips is wise.*” Proverbs 10:1

“*Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, But any fool will quarrel.*” Proverbs 20:3

“*There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, A false witness [who] utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.*” Proverbs 6:16-19

A matter of courtesy ...

The *Open Letter* states,

“An advance copy of this article has been provided to brethren Colly Caldwell, Ferrell Jenkins and Shane Scott of Florida College as well as to brother Hill Roberts of the “Lord I Believe” seminars. No such courtesy was provided on their part before engaging in their efforts described below.”

I do not know what lack of courtesy on my part they indict. The only actions “described below” concerning me are 1) teaching LIB seminars, 2) teaching at FC lectures, 3) distributing the LIB CD. Are we to understand that before one can teach in other churches he must submit his material for approval to the *Sixty Seven*? Are we to understand that before FC can set its Lectures, they must obtain pre-approval from the this self-appointed *Council*? Are we to understand that before one can publish religious literature, it must bear the seal of approval of *King, et al.*? Now – *where* is that verse authorizing such a council over us Christians in the other churches?

Just for the record I did submit my response to review by three or four others, but I accept full responsibility for its content. Unfortunately, though I had planned to send an advance copy to King, a draft version was prematurely posted by one of my reviewers due to confusion between us on the state of readiness. However, a hard copy is being provided on the day of that posting to King. My apologies for this confusion.

Warning

There are other errors in the *Open Letter*, but exposing these is sufficient to my purposes here.

The men who authored the *Open Letter* and their advocates appear to be trying to turn the commandments of men into a doctrine of God. The Bible nowhere makes the *age* of the earth or the *timing* of Genesis days a matter of any doctrinal significance at all, and especially so in the gospel of Christ.* If it did, these men would simply produce the scripture that gives the *age* of the earth or the *timing* of the Genesis days as elements of the gospel. Then this disagreement would be over. They cannot because we all know such does not exist. Men who attempt to make their own doctrines into the doctrines of God will be judged severely, not by me, but by God, as were the Pharisees of old. Beware the leaven of the Pharisees!

May God correct and forgive me if I have been too blunt, but it is long past time someone said the obvious: *Open Letter* and all such behavior is just wrong. If you realize you have been misled by *Open Letter*, now is a good time to “just walk away.”

“Leave the presence of a fool, Or you will not discern words of knowledge.” Proverbs 14:7

“Surely I am more stupid than any man, And I do not have the understanding of a man.” Proverbs 30:2

... but I have spoken my heart and mind. May you dwell in God’s grace.

Hill Roberts

* Showing that “God is the Creator” is a central part of Christ’s gospel message is *not* the same thing as the *age* of creation, or the *timing* of Genesis days. For example, see Romans 1:19-20, John 1:1ff. There is no disagreement over the fact of creation, that God is Creator, and certainly not over the inspiration of Scripture, 1 Timothy 3:16-17.