

## The RATE Project

The **R**adioisotopes and the **A**ge of **T**he **E**arth (**RATE**) project was initiated in 1997 by seven Ph.D. scientists from the USA-based Institute for Creation Research (ICR)<sup>1</sup>; its goal being to determine the age of the earth. The project's discoveries, released last year<sup>2</sup>, significantly challenge the modern evolution-biased assumption that the earth is billions of years old.

There were four major findings of the **RATE** project, as follows. First, conventional dating methods are inconsistent and unreliable – different radioisotope dating methods for the same rock layer will often yield different ages. (Specifically, isotopes which decay by alpha, rather than beta, particle emission, as well as heavier isotopes, tend to give older dates; these trends should not exist if radioisotopes have constant half-lives and accurately measure the age of rocks, as conventionally assumed.) Second, carbon 14 (i.e. C-14, which has a half-life of “only” 5,730 years and is therefore normally used to date materials that are deemed only thousands of years old, as compared to other dating methods such as potassium-argon, etc.) should no longer exist within “ancient” fossils, or coal, but the project carried out the first scientifically documented C-14 testing on diamonds and found measurable levels of C-14 in every case for coal and diamond deposits, findings which strongly support a recent creation. Third, zircon samples (tiny crystals often found in granite) with a conventional radioisotope age of 1.5 billion years showed the presence of helium atoms (resulting from the decay of internal uranium atoms) which at today's measured rate should have long ago escaped; the high concentrations of helium still present within the zircon crystals, when compared with a theoretical model for the expected rate of uranium decay, yields an age for the earth of only about six thousand years. Fourth, the team interpreted data re radiohalos (tiny spherical defects in rocks) caused by the decay of uranium and polonium as strongly suggesting a rapid decay rate, not gradual decay over billions of years.

The **RATE** team has concluded that their findings provide powerful evidence that the earth is young, and that conventional old-age radioisotope dating methods are misleading, due to highly accelerated nuclear decay in the past. One of their suggestions is that such accelerated nuclear decay occurred during the year of Noah's flood (Genesis 7) with its waters covering and cooling the resultant high nuclear-decay-induced heat in the rocks. (N.B. Liberal interpreters of scripture have argued that Noah's flood was only a local, not a global phenomenon, but such a worldwide cataclysm would account for the fossil record, which shows plants and animals preserved through quick burial.) The **RATE** project team also speculates that accelerated decay occurred during the creation week of Genesis 1, which would explain why specimens from meteorites coming to us from outer space are also dated as billions of years old by current radioisotope methods. This writer favours another solution – that the speed of light, which also governs the decay speed, was far higher in the past and has been decreasing over time, an idea that has recently been given credence in mainstream scientific circles - check the website of Christian Australian scientist Barry Setterfield<sup>3</sup>.

If the earth and the universe are both young and were created by God at roughly the same time (as measured by a clock on the earth's surface), which a literal reading of Genesis chapter 1 indicates, then why does the universe appear to be much older than the earth (about 15 billion years and 5 billion years respectively by conventional dating methods), and would not star-light, from the creation of the stars, take millions of years to reach the earth anyway? These riddles can be answered by making two assumptions: first that the earth is at or near the center of the universe, a notion which is strongly supported by the evidence of universe cosmic background radiation which is the same wherever and whenever we look<sup>4</sup>, and second that the universe was (spatially) rapidly stretched out after its initial creation (an idea with support from both modern science and scripture, which speaks several times of God spreading or stretching out the heavens, i.e. in Job 9:8, 37:18; Psalms 104:2; Isaiah 40:22, 42:5, 44:24, 45:12, 51:13; Jeremiah 10:12, 51:15; and Zech 12:1). If both assumptions are valid, then, as pointed out by noted ICR physicist Dr. Russell Humphreys, application of Einstein's general theory of relativity (which holds, as confirmed by experiments, that gravity affects time clocks) would paint a scenario where millions of years out in a cosmos being stretched would equate to just a day on earth.<sup>5</sup>

The **RATE** project aside, documented scientific reasons for believing in a young earth includes the measured rates of change for: the earth's atmospheric helium, its magnetic field, its rate of rotation, its meteoritic dust deposits, population, river deltas, oil/gas deposits, stalactites & stalagmites, topsoil, coral reefs, peat bogs, chemical effluents from rivers to oceans, moon rocks, the moon's recession, comets, solar system dust, the escape of high velocity stars from clusters and the rate at which the sun is shrinking.<sup>6</sup>

In summary, there is strong scientific evidence to support the idea that the earth is only thousands, not billions, of years old. If this is so, then evolution is truly even more of a fantasy than it already appears to be (where are all those missing transitional fossils?). A young earth also implies that oil deposits were quickly created during Noah's worldwide flood, which means that there may be a similar quick way of manufacturing oil in the lab from waste carbon-based products. A new method of duplicating and commercialising that oil-generation process should be researched; it would certainly be highly **RATE**-d.

**Dr. Philip Corbin**

### References

1. [www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org)
2. *Thousands Not Billions*, Master Books (2005), by Dr. Don De Young
3. [www.setterfield.org](http://www.setterfield.org)
4. *A Brief History of Time*, 1988 book by Professor Stephen Hawkins, chapter 3, p41; [http://newton.physics.metu.edu.tr/~fizikt/html/hawking/A\\_Brief\\_History\\_in\\_Time.html](http://newton.physics.metu.edu.tr/~fizikt/html/hawking/A_Brief_History_in_Time.html)
5. *Starlight and Time*, book by Dr. D. Russell Humphreys, Solving the Puzzle of Distant Starlight in a Young Universe.
6. *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, Baker, 1985 book by Dr. Henry Morris (former ICR President), pp 477-480

**P.S.**

The above was an article for The Power People Magazine, a publication of the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited, written February 2006.

The RATE project suggestion that conventional old-age radioisotope dating methods are misleading due to highly accelerated nuclear decay in the past leads to the problem of the resultant high nuclear-decay-induced heat in the rocks. The article above mentioned the idea that this decay occurred during the year of Noah's flood (Genesis 7) with its waters covering and cooling the resultant high nuclear-decay-induced heat in the rocks. A better suggestion was put forward by leading Creation Scientist researcher Dr. Russell Humphreys in the official RATE project notes published in 2000; he remarked that the rapid expansion of space which both scripture and science indicate could have occurred during creation "would cause the large amounts of heat generated by rapid nuclear decay to *disappear* from rocks deep within the earth", and has indicated that he will pursue this idea in his ongoing research.

PC