

# Acts & Facts



Institute for Creation Research  
www.icr.org

# Facts Facts Facts

Vol. 33 No. 11 November 2004

## MOUNT ST. HELENS GROUP RETURNS JUST IN TIME

News of an impending eruption didn't dampen the enthusiasm of 120 ICR adventurers who journeyed to Mount St. Helens August 21–28 although record rainfall covered the mountain in clouds permitting only a few glimpses of the crater at the top. Thankfully all were safely back home by the time the mountain started showing activity in earnest on October 1.

Seventy adventurous guests met in Portland, Oregon, for the eight-day tour, and about 50 local guests joined us for two days of planned hiking to Spirit Lake, Loowit Falls, Independence Pass, and Bear Meadows. Drs. Steven Austin, Larry

Vardiman, Henry Morris III, Mr. Bill Hoesch, Mrs. Cindy Gabay of ICR, and Dr. Keith Swensen (President of the Design Science Association of Portland, Oregon) comprised the staff for the first ICR tour to Mount St. Helens in five years. Almost all participants hiked to Spirit Lake in the driving wind and rain on the first day, but the three hikes on the mountain the next day were cancelled because of inclement weather and dangerous conditions on the mountain. An alternative hike was conducted through Ape Cave, a mile-long lava tube on the south side of the mountain. Many said that Ape Cave,



Group photo at  
Palouse Falls!

which provided shelter from the elements outside, was a great alternative. It was easy to imagine the lava from a previous eruption flowing from the crater in liquid streams 20 feet or more in diameter.

Professional guides hired to assist ICR on the tour were surprised that so many people braved the rainy conditions to Spirit Lake on the first day. They couldn't understand why we were so excited to see a bunch of logs floating on Spirit Lake. The logs remaining on the top of the Lake 24 years after the eruption are just the remnants of those which have sunk to the bottom, producing a forest-like formation on the floor of the lake. It isn't just the eruption of Mount St. Helens which is so dramatic, but the implications for even more catastrophic conditions during the Genesis Flood. The orientation at the start of the tour and the three evening lectures during the week placed the observations at Mount St. Helens in context.

Dr. Vardiman spoke on "The Big Freeze: A Biblical Ice Age," Dr. Swensen spoke on "Biological Recovery on Mount St. Helens," and Dr. Austin spoke on "Catastrophism at Mount St. Helens and the Scablands of Eastern Washington."

The tour ended back in Portland after three sunny days viewing the effects of the Missoula Lake Flood on eastern Washington. Fifty-mile-long channels carved rapidly by flowing water through solid rock 400 feet deep and over a mile wide in less than two days were viewed. Large plunge pools, giant boulders, and massive gravel bars were seen to be the result of large quantities of moving water. Just imagine what the effects would have been of even larger quantities of moving water during the Genesis Flood!

The next two ICR tours will be to the Galapagos Islands on May 13–23, 2005, and the other to England on September 19–October 1, 2005. To find more information go online to <http://www.icr.org/> tours. Make plans now to join us on one of these exciting creation tours! 



## President's Column

by John Morris

Usually this column is reserved for relevant creation issues, but this month it includes a "Tribute" to the late Ronald Reagan. ICR, being in California, has had a number of contacts with his former staff. All of them relate his Christian and creationist commitments and how he openly lived out his Christian testimony.

Several years ago, ICR colleague Mr. Paul Thompson wrote four youth-oriented adventure stories about prominent creationists affiliated with ICR. The last book featured ICR Board member Dr. Ben Aaron, the surgeon who removed the assassin's bullet from Reagan's chest. The intense operating room drama became a gripping Christian adventure tale in *Operation Rawhide*. The memories of his interviews with Reagan becomes a "Tribute" to a dear Christian, creationist man—

### RONALD REAGAN 41ST PRESIDENT: A TRIBUTE

Fifteen years ago I called John Morris at ICR asking for a lead on a high-profile, godly man who had experienced an exciting event that could serve as the nucleus for a youth creation story. He suggested Dr. Ben Aaron. A few days later our

## Acts & Facts



PUBLISHED BY

**INSTITUTE FOR CREATION RESEARCH**  
P.O. Box 2667, EL CAJON, CA 92021  
619/448-0900 WEBSITE: [www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org)

To disseminate articles and information of current interest dealing with creation, evolution, and related topics. Sent free upon request.

Editor: John D. Morris

Co-Editor: Henry M. Morris

Managing Editor: Donald H. Rohrer

Assistant Editor: Kelly Griffin

No articles may be reprinted in whole or in part without obtaining permission from **ICR**.

11-year-old son Bobby and I were at George Washington University Hospital gowning up to enter the operating room where the surgery had taken place. For two hours Dr. Aaron held Bobby and me transfixed as details of the procedure rolled out . . . his pre-op banter with the President including the quote from the President that drew laughter and set everyone at ease, “I sure hope all you doctors are Republicans!” How, after opening the chest, he prayed to locate the bullet that was lodged at the bottom of the lung which, with an inadvertent nudge, could be sent into the heart causing instant fatality. How his prayer was answered with an idea of inserting a catheter through the bullet hole, the slender tube transversing the trail of the bullet through broken lung tissue until it delicately tapped the shell; how his fingers following the catheter carefully parted lung tissue until he felt the bullet and with steady hand removed it, then “Eureka!”

In my research and conversations with the President, I discovered a man firmly fixed in his belief in a personal Creator Savior and one who had a special heartbeat for our youth, having pushed hard for Christian prayer in public schools, along with a conviction of a recently created universe against the “insidiousness” of evolution. He gave us his code name “Rawhide” which led to the book title *Operation Rawhide*. Upon leaving the presidency, he sent us an invitation to meet with him at his California office. His exuberant, heartfelt conversation with our sons Bobby and Thor, and our 8-year-old daughter Paula, were precious joys, fleeting moments that will always be held dear by my wife Julie and me. And as we were leaving, he pulled our Marine son Thor aside mentioning to him, “I have a special place in my heart for our military, especially after losing 248 of your fellow Marines to a suicide bomber in Beirut. Nancy and I pray every evening for their families left behind.” When he learned that Thor was going to Kuwait



*President Reagan and Ben Aaron.*

under Desert Shield, the President cocked his head and asked, “How does it feel to be potentially the first soldier to roll up your chute in downtown Baghdad?” I heard the response, duty—honor—country—God—giving one’s life for friends back home. The President gripped our Marine by the shoulders, with tears welling in his blue eyes, said “If only more of our American youth had your conviction and faith, I know our country wouldn’t be in the mess we’re in today.” Then with his arm around his shoulder, they walked out of the office.

Several years later Dr. Aaron and I met the President for our last time, presenting him with the original oil painting cover of *Operation Rawhide*. The ravages of oncoming Alzheimer’s Disease were evident when he pointed to his portrait on the cover, smiled at his likeness, and then slid his finger down to the men lying on the ground that were shot during the assassination attempt. His countenance perceptively dropped and sensing our awkwardness, the President regained his composure and moved to his desk. Soon with a homey joke, a rye smile, and a burst of laughter, he had once more put all at ease.

Our son Thor went on to serve in Desert Storm. Paula graduated from West Point and is serving in Korea with imminent deployment to Iraq. Our son Bobby, along with the President, is home with the Lord—I like to think the two of them are regaling on with great stories, praising God, no more tears, and lots of laughter. 🙏



## ZIRCONS: WHAT ARE THEY?

by Larry Vardiman, Ph.D.

Several of the major results of the RATE project (Radioisotopes and the Age of The Earth) involve the collection and analysis of small crystals called zircons. But, what are they and why are they so important? Mark Armitage, an ICR associate who has photographed zircons with his scanning electron microscope for RATE (figure 1), recently published an



**Figure 1:** Scanning electron microscope photograph of a zircon. Photo: Mark Armitage.

article in the July issue of *American Laboratory*, Volume 36, Number 14, in which he displayed several of his pictures and discussed these and other questions. We will extract from his article here.

Zirconium silicate ( $ZrSiO_4$ ), or zircons, are microscopic, stubby, prismatic crystals characterized by high hardness, density, and melting point. They are found in large numbers within the biotites of granites and granite-like rocks. Though their size can range from less than a micron up to a few centimeters, the ones we are most interested in are 30 to 100 microns in length and from 5 to 30 microns in width. It is within these zircons

that radioactive elements like uranium and thorium localize and concentrate as they crystallize from the liquid magma. These radioactive zircons in turn become embedded within other crystalline materials such as mica or biotite, which form around the zircons.

The decay of radioactive elements within the zircons produces lead and helium. Helium, being a gas, easily diffuses (or leaks out) of confined spaces. Helium is a very lightweight atom, and is also chemically “slippery,” not attaching itself to other atoms. The rate of diffusion of helium from zircons and from other minerals such as biotite had not been extensively studied until 2002. Recent reports, including one by D. Russell Humphreys in the *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Creationism* in 2003, agree that diffusion rates for helium atoms from zircons is very fast, and even greater at higher temperatures. The measured rates are too fast to retain helium in zircons for more than a few thousand years at the temperatures they experienced underground.

Yet, observed measurements of helium atoms are about 100,000 times greater than expected from old earth models. Since diffusion rates increase strongly with higher temperatures, it is unclear why there would be any helium in these zircons at all, much less the large amounts observed. Could it be that something in the recent past drastically accelerated the decay rates of long half-life nuclei, producing excessive helium, with little time since then for it to escape? ☛



[www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org)

find all this and more!

- Previous *Acts & Facts* and *Days of Praise*
- List of creation scientists
- Online store for your purchases
- Research articles

## Meeting Highlights

### Blacksburg, Virginia

Sometimes you *can* go home. Dr. John Morris had such a blessing on August 27–29 when he spoke at a series of meetings for Harvest Baptist Church, his boyhood church home.

Dr. Henry Morris had been one of the founders of the church in 1962, and all of his family of six kids were intimately associated with its ministry. Events included the dedication of a new auditorium building, long a need for this vibrant, growing work in a university community. The existing building was rededicated as the “Henry Morris Education Building.”

The church, under the leadership of Pastor Ernie Baker, maintains a strong creationist emphasis, and has continued ICR on its missionary budget. The faithfulness exhibited in the church’s small beginnings persists into the present, and God has blessed (Matthew 25:21).

### Manitou Springs, Colorado

Dr. Duane Gish presented three creation science lectures at each of two sessions of the 2004 Summer Christian Leadership Seminars of Summit Ministries, Manitou Springs, Colorado. There were over 180 in attendance, mainly high school students at each of the eight, two-week sessions held during May 16–September 3. Dr. David Noebel is the president of Summit Ministries and is assisted by 20 visiting scholars. Summit Ministries has had outstanding success in equipping young people with a Christian worldview.

### Appleton, Wisconsin

ICR zoologist Frank Sherwin was privileged to spend several days speaking in the Dairy State in September. He spoke at the Calvary Chapel Prophecy Conference in Appleton that also featured David

Hocking, Chuck Missler, and music by Richie Furay. Following these well-attended sessions, Frank spoke at Kenosha Bible Church covering topics such as “Evidence for Creation” and “Dinosaurs and the Flood.” The success of the sessions was due in part to the efforts of Pastor Rick Roberts, a Ph.D. in molecular biology.

### San Juan Capistrano, California

For three Sundays in August, ICR’s Frank Sherwin spoke to several hundred members of the South Coast Christian Assembly (John Meadows, Pastor) in beautiful San Juan Capistrano, California. Frank discussed the basic controversy surrounding evolutionism and creation science, followed by the fossil evidence, and ending with creation and the laws of science. A number of members said that the three presentations were an eye-opener, revealing the religious nature of the molecules-to-man idea of evolution. The theme of the meetings was that if all truth is God’s truth, then all science is creation science. 

## CORRECTION

The July *Acts & Facts* cover letter contained a quote attributed to Sir Arthur Keith. It read, “Evolution is unproven and unprovable. We believe it because the only alternative is special creation, and that is unthinkable.”

The quote, however, may be bogus. It has appeared in other publications but we are unable to locate an original reference. Perhaps someone can provide the reference, but meanwhile, it should not be used.

A similar quote by D.M.S. Watson which appeared in *Nature*, vol. 124, (August 10, 1929), pp. 231–234 reflects the same thought, and may be the source of the other. “. . . the theory of evolution itself, a theory universally accepted not because it can be proved by logically coherent evidence to be true but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible.” 



## THE GOSPEL IN THE CONTEXT OF EVIDENCE:

*“believe the works: that ye may know, and believe . . .”* (John 10:38).

The “sophisticated” world of Jesus’ day was little different from our skeptical world. The *PAX ROMANA* was in force and the Greek intellectual dazzle of Aristotle and Socrates dominated educated society. Jesus and His followers often used evidential arguments and logic in their presentations.

## THE MESSAGE BEGINS AT THE POINT OF UNBELIEF

Throughout the New Testament, those who witnessed (including the Lord Jesus) began their presentations at the hearer’s point of need—dictated by their culture and background. Nicodemus (John 3) was a genuine “seeker” with a scholar’s working knowledge of the Old Testament. The woman at the well (John 4) was a Samaritan with cultic error in her heart. The Pharisees were religious legalists dominated by hypocritical sophistry (John 9 and 10). Mary and Martha were dear, believing friends who simply needed comfort in their faith (John 11). Paul dealt with pagans, sorcerers, demon-worshipping Jews, Greek philosophers, ignorant savages, and believers in every walk of life and stage of maturity.

## THE GOSPEL NEVER CHANGES; THE EVIDENCE VARIES

Whether Jesus pointed to His miracles as evidence, or Paul pointed to the wonders of the created universe, the use of evidence has always been *merely* a tool to bring attention to the “*glorious gospel*” (I Timothy 1:11). The evidence does not save, the gospel “*is the power of God unto salvation*” (Romans 1:16). We are commanded to be ready to “*give an answer*” (I Peter 3:15), but that *apologia* is to provide a “*reason of the hope*” that we have in Christ.

## THE BATTLE OF OUR DAY CENTERS AROUND CREATION

Before one can come to God, he or she must believe that God “*is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*” (Hebrews 11:6). All of atheistic naturalism attempts to write God out of the message. ICR is in the forefront of the battle to demonstrate the evidence of God’s creative power. The ICR faculty and staff prays for the salvation of those who read, hear, and use our material. Please “hold up our hands” (Exodus 17:11–13) and enable us to prevail against the Lord’s enemies.



Dr. Henry Morris III, ICR Executive Vice President for Strategic Ministries.  
P.O. Box 2667, El Cajon, CA 92021; Phone 619/448-0900; E-mail: hmorrisiii@icr.org  
Donations can be made online at [www.icr.org/contribute.html](http://www.icr.org/contribute.html)