

## Creation Science Evangelism Rebuttal Carbon Dating



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One of the featured articles in the geology section of Kent Hovind's website, Creation Science Evangelism, asks the question "Does Carbon Dating Prove the Earth is Millions of Years Old?"<sup>1</sup> This article is written by Hovind. He starts out with an explanation of what carbon dating is, which proves to be adequate for this discussion. The only notable exception is that he says carbon dating is only good for objects less than 40,000 years old. This date has been changed to about 62,000 years. As technologies advance, so does our ability to detect the amount of C-14 in a sample.

Therefore, the basic question which Hovind is answering is no. Carbon dating cannot prove that something is millions of years old. However, geologists know this, and would never try to prove that something is millions of years old based on carbon dating.

The major mistake Hovind makes in this article relates to his claim of equilibrium. He states that since the earth as a system would eventually equalize, then a freshly created earth would require about 30,000 years to reach this equilibrium (assuming the earth at its creation contained no C-14). The earth has not reached equilibrium, according to Hovind, so that proves it is less than 30,000 years old. This is illustrated as a barrel with holes in it. As you pour water in (C-14), some water leaks out the holes. At some point, the amount being poured in, and the amount leaking out, will be the same, thus the water level will remain constant.

The original claim about this process originated with Dr. Henry Morris (he got his ideas from previous research). However, this claim forgets one important point. The rate at which the water is poured into the barrel (C-14 production) is not constant. It varies because of the earth's magnetic field. Sometimes, it is near zero, other times it is greatly increased. Therefore over time, we could have reached equilibrium many times. We have no way of measuring for this.

Since the rate of C-14 production is far from constant, the theory that the earth is less than 30,000 years old based on equilibrium is unreliable.

Hovind goes on to claim "This also means that plants and animals that lived in the past had less C-14 in them than do plants and animals today. Just this one fact totally upsets data obtained by C-14 dating." A study of plants of the past, using tree-rings, confirms a direct correlation between C-14 levels and the earth's magnetic field, over the last 8,000 years. It does not "upset" data obtained by C-14 dating...it confirms C-14 dating!

Hovind goes on to show that he knows absolutely nothing about the science of Carbon Dating. He says "Although this technique looks good at first, carbon-14 dating rests on two simple assumptions. They are, obviously, assuming the amount of carbon-14 in the atmosphere has always been constant, and its rate of decay has always been constant." Remember the tree-ring data...it tells us how much carbon-14 was in the atmosphere at a given time. Scientists take this, and produce calibration curves, which are applied to the carbon dating process. This removes the first assumption...that the amount of C-14 is thought to be constant. Scientists know that it is not, and correct for this. Second, the

decay rate has proven to be constant. There is no data to indicate otherwise, and Hovind presents none. He does give an illustration of a candle burning, saying it would be like assuming the candle always burned at the same rate. However, a "candle" can hardly be compared to "radioactive decay." These are merely empty words meant to impress his gullible readers...he gives no real scientific evidence.

He says "Present testing shows the amount of C-14 in the atmosphere has been increasing since it was first measured in the 1950's." True, but we also know, based on the tree ring data, that it has not always been increasing. There are many periods of decreasing C-14, which disproves his theory that the earth is young based on C-14 equilibrium.

For More Reading

[How Good are those Young Earth Arguments: Carbon Dating](#)

<sup>1</sup> Does Carbon Dating Prove the Earth is Millions of Years Old, by Kent Hovind. Posted on the Creation Science Evangelism website at [drdino.com/articles.php?spec=73](http://drdino.com/articles.php?spec=73)