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Revised June 13, 2010 to fix broken link for Professor Heaton article on page 5.

Executive Summary

If one googles on {creation evolution flood}, the most popular hit of the resulting 218,000 weblinks is consistently the book and website by Dr. Walt Brown, *In the Beginning: Compelling Evidence for Creation and the Flood* (2008, 8th Edition). It contains a clear and detailed chapter on the Grand Canyon's origin, plus more than 400 additional pages on the flood of Noah and hundreds of other topics.

The origin of the Grand Canyon is of great interest to all of us in the creation movement and people everywhere. Accordingly, if one googles on {origin "Grand Canyon"}, one complete explanation will jump out; despite being on the internet for only 3 years, Dr. Brown's explanation for the Grand Canyon is currently ranked in popularity as 2nd out of 430,000 weblinks. That explanation is the subject of this letter.

On March 14, 2008, I sent the original version of this letter to Answers in Genesis (AiG), the Institute for Creation Research (ICR), and those named in the text. AiG and ICR refused to respond to, or act upon, the documented concerns associated with Dr. Steven A. Austin's plagiarism and bad science now being featured in the AiG museum and the related DVD and video which are marketed by AiG. A slightly clarified version of the same letter was then sent to nearly two hundred creation organizations on April 9, 2008, so they could be aware of the detrimental effect this was having on the creation science movement. A creation museum that presents poor science and incomplete explanations — without the supporting evidence — only sets students up for ridicule in classrooms. A clear and scientifically accurate explanation would give these same students a powerful "battering ram."

The second mailing generated several streams of correspondence between various parties. This July 2009 version of the same letter has been expanded to incorporate the additional insights gained from those responses. Also, a minor error that I made in the first two letters is identified and corrected.

None of this correspondence has lessened my conviction that the record clearly shows that Dr. Austin, in 1989-1992, plagiarized key discoveries that Dr. Walt Brown made and published pertaining to the Grand Lake, breached-dam explanation for the formation of the Grand Canyon. In fact, the additional insights gained have only further exposed the depth Dr. Austin was willing to go to plagiarize Dr. Brown's work and then try to cover it up, all resulting in an atrocious disservice to those seeking a scientifically sound explanation for the origin of the Grand Canyon. It is the effect that Austin's plagiarism has had (including bad science featured in AiG's museum), not who gets credit for a discovery, that is the concern of this letter.

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD! Psalm 150:6

Dr. Brown's unique discoveries and explanation for the Origin of the Grand Canyon stand alone in explaining at least 24 enigmas that have plagued Canyon researchers for centuries. In various unprofessional and unethical ways, for decades, Dr. Austin, AiG, and ICR have hindered Dr. Brown's explanation from being heard in the creationist/secular community. The growing awareness of Dr. Brown's explanation, which has been afforded by the internet, has caused the false statements and intransigence of Dr. Austin, ICR, and AiG to become very clear.

There is no doubt in my mind that the day is coming when Dr. Brown's discoveries will be embraced by Christians and secularists alike as the best complete explanation for the Grand Canyon's origin. Even the National Park Service will be giving Dr. Brown's Grand Lake explanation to those visiting the Canyon.

A preliminary copy of this current letter was sent to AiG, ICR, Dr. Austin, Dr. Whitmore, and Dr. Holroyd two weeks prior to posting. Their comments were again requested. Future changes may be made if clarifications or corrections are needed.

Some will say that the unprofessional and unethical lapses of Dr. Austin, AiG, ICR, and others, that are documented in this posting, should not be made public. To those people, I can only say that they are part of the problem that has hindered creation science for entirely too long. These men and organizations need to make truth a virtue they strive to achieve, even if it hurts.

**Pastor Kevin Lea
Calvary Church of Port Orchard**

Original version – March 14, 2008

Mr. Mike Matthews,
Editor, Answers Magazine
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Subj: Plagiarized Material in AiG Museum

Dear Mike,

Thank you again for taking the time to talk with me on February 19, 2008, about my concerns that AiG is using plagiarized material in its museum.

In our conversation, you told me that you were unaware of prior accusations that Steve Austin had plagiarized information pertaining to Grand Lake that Dr. Walt Brown had discovered, presented, and published from his year-long study and field work (in 1987-1988) on the origin of the Grand Canyon. You asked me to summarize my concerns and send them to you for you to forward to AiG's legal department for review. This letter, the associated links, and the attachment are intended to fulfill your request.

During the last few weeks, I (and others) have carefully read most of the letters exchanged during 1993 and 1994 between Walt Brown and ICR's Henry Morris II and Steve Austin. Based on this record, we are convinced that Dr. Brown does indeed have priority on the Grand Lake explanation for the formation of the Grand Canyon. We are not alone.

The first to realize what Austin was doing were some who attended Austin's presentations. For more than three years, a few people familiar with Brown's work had told Brown that Austin was using Brown's material without proper attribution and was accusing *him* (Brown) of plagiarizing Austin! Only when this falsehood threatened to have a large financial impact on a major video production of another creationist (Dr. Robert V. Gentry), did Brown feel he had to act.

On June 21, 1994, a Christian mediation panel of three attorneys and one retired federal judge reviewed the facts of the debate between Dr. Brown and Dr. Austin on this issue. The lead mediator, Peter Robinson, Associate Director and Assistant Professor of Law at Pepperdine University, wrote in a [September 21, 1994 letter](#) to Austin that Austin was to stop using the name "Canyonlands Lake" when referring to the Grand Lake explanation for the formation of the Grand Canyon. Instead, Austin was directed to use "Grand Lake," the name given by Brown, as "a symbol of his commitment to reconcile with Dr. Brown and also as one way to acknowledge Dr. Brown's contributions regarding this body of water." [Click here and go to Robinson's determination that Austin should call it Grand Lake since Brown discovered it.](#)

Also, in 2001, Julia Mulfinger Orozco reviewed much of the same material when conducting research for her book, which included one-chapter biographies of both Henry Morris and Walt Brown. In this book, *Christian Men of Science: Eleven Men Who Changed the World*, she wrote:

"For over a hundred years, geologists have known that if a large lake begins to erode a point on its rim, canyons can be carved in days. Another geologist [Austin] had similar ideas. He published Dr. Brown's data on the elevation, name, location and breach point of Grand Lake without proper crediting and then backdated his publication to a year before Dr. Brown's publication. This geologist also claimed that an even earlier, obscure publication of his contained this explanation for the Grand Canyon. It does not contain this explanation. The claims of this geologist have caused confusion as to who first published the data and who set forth this explanation for the formation of the Grand Canyon. Careful examination of the evidence indicates that Dr. Brown was the first." [*Christian Men of Science: Eleven Men Who Changed the World*, pg. 305, footnote 11.]

I have viewed your DVD titled *Flood Geology* and noticed that AiG is using the name Canyonlands Lake and giving credit to Austin as the Grand Canyon expert, thereby implying he was the discoverer and source of the explanation.

The DVD, and I assume your displays, are entirely silent on Dr. Brown's discovery of this lake (properly named Grand Lake) and, most importantly, the confirming details and mechanisms showing how and when it breached its rim to form the Grand Canyon in weeks. I am assuming that the errors in your DVD result from Steve Austin's failure to inform you of Dr. Brown's priority and discovery of Grand Lake and how it formed the Grand Canyon.

Austin must have also failed to tell you that after Brown brought his concerns of Austin plagiarizing his work to Austin's attention (ultimately leading to Christian mediation), that he (Austin) tried to claim priority by referring to a small guidebook of his in which the copyright date had been falsified (pre-dated by one year). The publication was a field study tour guidebook to the Grand Canyon, which Austin published annually. Brown caught this deception by noticing that the dates of other materials referenced in the "1988" copyright publication were published in 1989. When Brown confronted Austin with this fact, Austin then said he *accidentally* put a title page with a 1988 copyright from the previous year's publication into the 1989

publication (after originally claiming the 1988 copyright gave Austin priority). [See April 8, 1989, Grand Canyon Field Study Tour Guidebook with the Title Page containing a false 1988 copyright](#). Then read: (1) [Austin's letter to Brown saying that the 1988 copyright proved his priority](#), then (2) [Pages 6-8 of Brown's July 6, 1993 "Setting the Record Straight" letter to Austin pointing out the false copyright](#). This is a very important read for those who want to get a grasp of the amount of deception Austin was willing to use to cover up his plagiarism and bad science.

Also for the first time in the 1989 edition of Austin's guidebook (link above) was a map/figure of a lake (see page 54). It was drawn by Dr. Edmond W. Holroyd and given to Austin for his use in 1986, two years before Brown's fieldwork, discoveries, and lectures on the Grand Canyon in 1988. Holroyd's map/figure showed a single unnamed lake that encompasses both Grand and Hopi Lakes.

Holroyd was not studying the origin of the Grand Canyon, but was trying to explain the absence of rock debris at the base of cliffs. This led him to postulate one huge lake at the 5,577 foot level, situated east of the Kaibab Plateau (which is at an elevation greater than 8,000 feet.) For Holroyd's or any lake to breach and carve the Grand Canyon, there has to be an explanation for how the water flowed 2,000 feet vertically up to traverse the Kaibab Plateau or how it penetrated a thirty-mile wide dam of limestone that is less porous than concrete. (Today, concrete dams only a couple hundred yards wide hold back deeper lakes.)

Although Holroyd provided the sketch to Austin in 1986, Austin did not use it in his guidebook until the 1989 edition. Instead, in 1988 (the year Brown is lecturing and giving radio interviews about his discoveries of *how* Grand Lake breached at Marble Canyon and then carved the Grand Canyon), Austin's writings only muse about what *if* a torrent of water carved the canyon (see excerpt from the actual [1988 Guidebook](#)). However, he also mentions in the same guidebook several of the problems that had to be overcome by any breaching explanation, but provides no solutions, answers, or evidence that can overcome these problems. To this day, only Dr. Brown's discoveries and theory solve them.

However, in 1989, a year *after* Dr. Brown had begun lecturing and speaking on the radio about his detailed discoveries, Austin now inserts the previously-ignored figure by Holroyd, but without revising his musings about the problems associated with a breaching explanation. He also adds into the caption under the figure that the lake's elevation was 5,700 feet (exactly the same as Brown's elevation used in lectures on how the Grand Canyon formed), not Holroyd's elevation of 5,577 feet (1,700 meters). Also inserted by Austin into the caption is the statement, "ancient lake which breached its dam to form Grand Canyon." How did Austin's uncertainty in the preceding pages of the same guidebook, which does not even mention the lake, suddenly disappear? The evidence seems to suggest that the figure was inserted at the last minute before publication and there was no time to revise other related narratives. Then Austin "*accidentally*" inserts the 1988 copyright page into the 1989 Guidebook. Even though Austin's caption now states with certainty that this ancient lake breached its dam to form the Grand Canyon, he says nothing in the guidebook about the lake and, therefore, did not provide a scientifically acceptable explanation of how the lake penetrated or flowed up and over the high and wide Kaibab Plateau – nor has he to this day.

When Austin purchased the 1989 edition of Brown's book, *In the Beginning*, a few weeks after it was published (finally admitted in writing by Austin), he was then able to learn a few of Brown's critical details ([Dr. Brown's Grand Canyon information from the 5th Edition](#)). Later, when Austin published the [1990 Guidebook with the Grand Lake Map](#), he had completely revised the discussion in this section. Not only did Austin show Holroyd's map (page 68 – still mistakenly showing just one lake), he now also included Brown's map without attribution (page 76) with Grand and Hopi Lake labeled (also without attribution to Brown pertaining to Grand Lake). It should be noted that for more than three years, Austin continued to use Brown's chosen name (Grand Lake) and its elevation of 5,700 feet (instead of Holroyd's 5,577 feet) until challenged by Brown.

Only then did Austin change the name of the lake to Canyonlands Lake and then try to make a case for a new elevation (5,800 feet) [Austin's published Note 62](#). Please note in this link that Austin states his lake at 5,800 feet is more accurate than Brown's at 5,700 feet, and that Austin's name for the lake (Canyonlands Lake at 5,800 feet) is therefore preferred over Brown's (Grand Lake at 5,700 feet). For details of how deceptive Austin is being when he makes this claim, please go to the detailed discussion in Attachment 1 (under "Austin's published Note 62").

Austin's deceptions in [Note 62](#) are exposed by Austin himself when he published an article in the July, 2008, issue of ICR's *Acts and Facts* titled, "Red Rock Pass: Spillway of the Bonneville Flood." In reference 8 of that Article, Austin states:

"Early in 1987, I used topographic data [obtained from Dr. Holroyd] to show that if Grand Canyon were blocked today by a giant man-made dam with 5,700 feet elevation [Brown's number, not Holroyd's, who used 5,577 in the map he gave Austin], the lake formed would rise behind the dam to a maximum of 5,620 feet elevation and would extend into four states. The overflow location out of that lake at 5,620 feet would be 20 miles east of Kanab, Utah, at Telegraph Flat."

So now (2008) Austin is back to 5,700 feet (Brown's number), when in 1994 he said in his book's [Note 62](#) that the reason his lake was better than Brown's and deserved a new name (Canyonlands Lake instead of Grand Lake) was because it was at the 5,800 foot level. People who don't tell the truth have a hard time being consistent with their stories until ultimately it becomes impossible. Those who do tell the truth don't have to keep track of what they said in the past.

While Austin's original use (for years) of Brown's 5,700-foot level for the elevation of Grand Lake, instead of Holroyd's 5,577 feet level, may seem trivial, it shows the origin of what Austin was using; that is, Brown's work—without attribution. Mapmakers routinely insert a unique detail, such as an intentional error, on their maps to catch anyone who plagiarizes or infringes on the mapmaker's copyright.

Attachment 2 documents and exposes Austin's other attempts to cover his plagiarism.

If you have not already done so, I strongly urge you to read Dr. Brown's explanation (including the evidence, mechanisms, forces, and energy involved in creating this wonder of the world) from his 8th edition book or at his website www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/GrandCanyon.html. After doing so, you will see how limited and unsatisfying Austin's explanation is, as Dr. Timothy Heaton, professor of Earth Sciences at the University of South Dakota, documents in his critique of Austin's book when he wrote:

"For the most part Austin's research is rigorous and deserves praise, but in the end his logic fails on a count that is typical in creationist literature: he never presents a comprehensive theory of how the Flood took place, where the water came from, or how or from where it moved sediment to form the rocks of the Grand Canyon. In fact, most of these vital issues are never even mentioned! A single diagram is given showing inundation and supposed zones of sedimentation (suspiciously similar to a classic marine transgression but presumably occurring much faster), but this raises far more questions than it answers. Without a comprehensive theory of the Flood there is no way to make a scientific comparison of any kind, so pointing out esoteric problems in the classic theory **is trivial and very** [bold mine - italics in original] **misleading.**" (online at <http://people.usd.edu/~theaton/creation/grandcyn.html>, fifth hit on Google search on {Origin "Grand Canyon"}). View PDF version [here](#).)

Those who have read Austin's July 2008, "Red Rock Pass: Spillway of the Bonneville Flood" article, know that it provides only **trivial and very misleading musings** about how Grand Canyon could have been formed

by a breached dam (as Dr. Heaton observed about Austin's 1994 book). Austin's articles (and your museum if you don't change your display), will be just as trivial 20 years from now because Austin could only plagiarize the name, elevation and breach point of Dr. Brown's discovery, not the explanation that answers critical details for HOW it carved the Grand Canyon.

To summarize the main point I am trying to make, the seemingly minor details of a lake's name, location, elevation, breach point, or **who is credited** with the discovery **are not important in themselves**. However, these items clearly identify Austin's plagiarisms which have resulted in a grave disservice to all creationists and those deceived by the evolution lie (but who are looking for answers from creationists). Austin did not, has not, and cannot provide people with scientifically sound evidence or a logical explanation for **HOW** Grand and Hopi Lake breached the Kaibab upwarp. Brown's thirty-eight-page explanation is scientifically sound and does explain how, where, and in what sequence the lakes breached and formed the Grand Canyon. AiG and ICR have for many years ignored and slanderously marginalized Brown's contribution to the creation science field, thus trying to establish the image (false image) that AiG and ICR are the go-to guys for the best and most complete information about all creation, flood, and young earth topics. AiG's popularization of Austin's incomplete Grand Canyon story at their museum contributes to this deception and has the effect of hiding Austin's plagiarism and the dozens of items of Brown's evidence that Austin cannot add to his book without further obvious plagiarism. AiG and ICR are acting like a VW Bug dealer telling their customers not to bother going to the Porsche dealer because Porsche cars are laughable in their design and performance. Some of us have driven the Porsche and we know the VW salesmen are lying. Soon everyone will know, the deception will be over, and the God of the Bible will be pleased that it is, since He hates lying (Proverbs 6).

With Brown's discovery that Grand Lake was separate from Hopi Lake (and not connected as Holroyd had thought) key questions could finally be answered. Furthermore, with Brown's information about where to look, the breach point is clearly seen on the ground and from the air—a key piece of spectacular evidence. But still, with Austin not understanding the engineering mechanisms and forces at work on the Colorado and Kaibab Plateau, he cannot explain the major events that lifted the Rocky Mountains in hours, and elevated the Colorado Plateau by more than a mile. He also does not explain the filling and breaching of Grand Lake, the formation of the Kaibab Plateau, the carving of the Grand Canyon, and finally what produced spectacular features (otherwise unexplained) within a few hundred miles of the Grand Canyon. These mechanisms are only understood in the context of Brown's Hydroplate Theory explanation of the flood of Noah, which AiG and ICR have shown no interest in understanding.

Now, 16 years after Brown first confronted Austin about his plagiarism, the confusion caused by Dr. Austin's failure to set the record straight is increasing, and AiG's displays, videos and DVDs are tarnished because of his actions. It is time to clear this up once and for all in order to present the clearest, most accurate explanation to sincere seekers looking for honest answers about the flood of Noah and its consequences, including formation of the Grand Canyon.

Those who have read Dr. Brown's works are wondering why Grand Lake is misnamed Canyonlands Lake by Austin and AiG's museum. How can we Christians effectively defend the biblical record and battle the evolutionist enemy if we can't even function with truth and integrity within our own camp?

In light of the: (1) decades-long mistreatment of Dr. Brown by ICR, (2) the incredible patience Dr. Brown has shown them in return, (3) even with all the damage that ICR (and AiG) have done to his work since 1984, and now (4) with Austin's deceptions now prominently displayed in the AiG museum, I feel something more must be done. It is time to let the church and secular laymen and scientists who are interested in the Grand Canyon read about this debate and determine the truth for themselves.

To this end, I have prepared this third version of my letter to you with the intent that it will post at our website in the near future. Doing so will provide people with access to a detailed historical account of this far-reaching controversy. Our web page will include links to related communications between Austin, Brown, and Morris as well as the Mediation Panel. I would be happy to provide the links to these postings now if you wish. Until now, the record shows that AiG has chosen to ignore or remain ignorant of Austin's actions. I hope a positive change in your posture will allow me to update this posting with the fact that AiG did what was right based on the facts of this matter. May I suggest that you take the following actions (which were first proposed in March of 2008):

1. Place an errata sheet in all remaining copies of your current edition of the *Flood Geology* DVD that states that the actual name of "Canyonlands" Lake is Grand Lake, the name given to it by its discoverer, creation scientist, Dr. Walt Brown, who in 1987-88 made several key discoveries that support his theory that the Grand Canyon was carved in a few weeks, as a result of the breaching of Grand Lake a few centuries after the flood.
2. Starting immediately, make the above announcement to all audiences who watch this video at the museum and/or correct the audio portion of the user-activated displays to ensure those visiting the museum do not leave with misinformation.
3. Expedite corrections to the in-house audio/visual displays of this information. I suggest you work with Dr. Walt Brown in this.
4. Before the next production run of your DVD, remove all misinformation, visual and audio, as you did with the in-house displays.
5. Inform the authors of all books sold by AiG that if their books contain false information about the discoverer of the Grand Lake explanation for the formation of Grand Canyon, and the naming of the lake, that you will stop selling them until an errata sheet is inserted to correct the errors. (I suggest you refer them to our posting of the documents exposing Austin's refusal to comply with the Mediation Panel's resolution on this matter.)

Some may wonder why a pastor of a young-earth-creation, Jesus-is-the-only-way-to-be-saved, Bible-believing church would take the effort to post something that may be detrimental to the creation message. The answer is simple: (1) More damage is being done by the lack of ethics and integrity among those who claim to love Jesus than will be done by exposing these lies and, (2) This letter and our church's internet posting may help to restore this needed ethics and integrity. Yes, this information will quickly move beyond the creationist community, but I think Dr. Timothy Heaton (mentioned above) deserves to know the truth too, don't you?

Austin, and to some extent ICR and AiG, have shown little regard for accuracy and the truth. Austin's and Morris' actions over a period of many years have caused this waste of precious time (mine and everyone involved). But the time will be well spent if it results in correction. I pray that this letter will be a catalyst that will help the creation movement clean up its act, now.

In conclusion, I realize that even after the dozens of hours carefully reading and pondering the documents pertaining to this issue, I may have missed something and erred as a result. Therefore, I welcome you (AiG) and those I am sending a copy to – ICR, Peter Robinson (head mediator), Rob Yardley (who went with me in my face-to-face meeting with ICR in June of 2006), Steve Austin, John Whitmore, Edmond W. Holroyd, Mark Rasche, Bruce Wood (mentioned in the attachment below) — to please inform me of any errors of fact contained in this letter so that I can correct them before posting.

Attachment 1 provides a summary of, and links to, some of the key correspondence. This version of Attachment 1 has been extensively expanded from the original to more clearly document Austin's deceptions.

Attachment 2 contains various additional facts consistent with my assertions of Dr. Austin's ethical lapses. These facts were contained in the main body of my original letter to you on March 14, 2008, but have been further clarified and documented based on the responses to my April 9 letter.

Thank you for carefully considering this matter.



Kevin Lea
Pastor, Calvary Church of Port Orchard

Attachments:

1. Summary of Selected Correspondence, with Links
2. Additional Facts Associated with Austin's Ethical Lapses

Copies to: Institute for Creation Research: John Morris, Henry Morris III, Lawrence Ford; Steve Austin, and Mark Rasche, Peter Robinson, Associate Director and Assistant Professor of Law at Pepperdine University; Rob Yardley, Edmond W. Holroyd, John H. Whitmore, and Ken Ham (AiG)