

An Essay and Review

David Presutta

The Biblical Cosmos versus Modern Cosmology: Why the Bible is not the Word of God

Coral Springs, FL: Llumina, 2007

AND

Alex Williams and John Hartnett, Ph.D.

Dismantling the Big Bang: God's Universe Rediscovered

Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2005.

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Evangelical Christianity, especially evangelical scientists as well as most theologians and missiologists, is still so often bound by Modernity. It is a syncretism so subtle that few actually realize it. There is very little “epistemological self-consciousness” among evangelicals, it seems, to use a phrase pioneered by C.A. Van Til.¹ Exactly the same syncretism is true of anti-evangelical science and religion writers. They are bound to Modernity yet also have little awareness of their own implicit syncretistic foundation upon the creationist-providential view of their now almost post-Christian cultures. These two volumes illustrate this contention.

This devastating syncretism is hindering our evangelical task to disciple all people-groups of the earth, “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you [i.e., the witnesses of the Great Commission].” These are our marching orders. To neglect them is treacherous unfaithfulness to our covenant Lord and worthy of His strong yet kind discipline (see e.g., Rom 11:22-24). It is my opinion, that we must break out of this syncretism, return to a solidly biblical worldview and burst the bubble of the present modernity-evangelical coalition. When the materialist completely becomes aware of his or her syncretism and completely casts off the Christian element, their science and attempts to construct culture will self-destruct.²

Both books I am reviewing are examples of the creationist – anti-creationist battle going on for the soul of the English speaking world. Both books deal with cosmology. Both attempt to be antithetical to one another. The first is by a well-researched layman, David Presutta, who rarely cites the sources of his ideas, which are rather widespread and have been for many decades.³ The second volume is by much published Australian creationist, Prof. John Hartnett (Ph.D. Astro-physics) and his co-author Alex Williams. Both make heavy points (Hartnett is by far superior), but neither totally rejects the modernity bound arena in which the struggle is being waged. Hartnett and Williams, however, do make an excellent and valiant attempt to escape Modernity but ultimately fail to even discuss that one key operational paradigm of Modernity may be false. More on this later.

I have a major problem with the fact that the evangelical world is still so enthralled with and bound by Modernity (again capitalization is deliberate). For Christians to be fighting lions in the Coliseum is a set-up, designed to destroy Christians as has been happening ever since at least Lyell and most likely going back to Galileo—contrary to what most Evangelical apologists wish for us to believe. Modernity is the contemporary Coliseum. Only when Christians fight a spiritual war outside the humanists’ set-up-arena from the high ground of a consistently biblical

worldview and the Spirit's power can we believers engage world cultures and begin to make an impact on the secularist and anti-theistic worldview of materialist scientism.

The Christian worldview is neither pre-scientific, by which modernists and postmodernists mean a pre-Enlightenment, non-materialist worldview, nor is it modern nor post-modern. All three of these syncretistic worldviews found in Western history (i.e., pre-modern, modern, or postmodern) are implicitly or explicitly dualist. This Herman Dooyeweerd's works demonstrate beyond a shadow of a doubt (among many other things).⁴ Dualism postulates a basic nature-grace, science-religion, secular-sacred, and unity-diversity dialectic. The biblical worldview is, on the other hand, Trinitarian, beginning with the "equal ultimacy" of unity and diversity instead of complete opposition (or dialectic) between the two. In other words, both unity and diversity are good in the creation because they are found in everlasting existence, harmony, and balance within the Creator. The Christian worldview, instead, is also founded on a creational, redemptive-historical approach to analyzing history (i.e., creation-fall-redemption-consummation), and must stand explicitly upon a consistent inerrancy view of Scripture.⁵

Furthermore, the biblical worldview does not believe in the evolution of mind out of eternal, chaotic matter (Steady State theory) nor even out of an absolute primitive "singularity" in which all laws of probability and physics collapse (Big Bang theory). Both cosmic theories believe as a foundational unprovable presupposition that unifying mind is a much higher stage of evolution from the chaotic diversity of matter. To this both the materialist, David Presutta,⁶ and recent universe creationists, Williams and Hartnett, agree. (Interestingly enough, Modernity is an unstable dualist-like wedding of two monist philosophies—materialist monism and spiritualist monism, such as is found in Neo-Platonists like Plotinus and modern holists such as British Imperial Field Marshall and former South African Prime Minister, the Hon. Jan Smuts, the one who coined the word, holism).⁷

This essay is the latest installment in the series of book reviews I have begun with Global Missiology. The late Ralph Winter challenged evangelical missiologists to reach the scientific world. I have previously written that I believe the way to do this is to have a consistent biblical worldview that is not syncretistic.⁸ For this we evangelicals must be brutally honest with what the Scriptures actually teach, taking into account genre, accommodation, and other relevant concerns. Cosmology is one of the areas, which materialist evolutionist scholars have consistently claimed as solid ground upon which to stake their claim that the Scriptural cosmogony and worldview is false, thereby falsifying all truth-claims for the biblical faith. Presutta echoes these claims:

If the Bible is not the word of God, it must then be a collection of myths, folklore, superstitious assumptions and speculations, and embellished histories from another age and from an archaic society. As such, it gives a false view of both ourselves and our place in nature. In that case, using the Bible as an authoritative guide to determine what is valid today in science, government, and social policy, as well as using it to determine how we should look at the world, could result in dire, even devastating consequences. (Presutta 2007, 22)

I want to first clarify a few things. David Presutta presupposes from the beginning that the dualist worldview of modernity-bound Scientism (I capitalize deliberately) is a singular, universally valid account of the true state of affairs in the universe.⁹ He also assumes—by faith I might add—that the many hidden and often forgotten assumptions that Modernity founds their description of the universe upon does indeed provide humanity with an accurate portrayal of the universe as it is in itself.¹⁰ Presutta's lack of epistemological humility causes him to ignore

and/or to be ignorant of a critical realist perspective. Instead he approaches Scripture and science with an arrogant, naïve realist-empiricist or positivist perspective (see Hiebert 1999).¹¹ Second, he presupposes from the start that the Scripture is not the Word of God. His charges are nothing new but have been the standard stock in trade of higher critical and biblio-skeptical scholarship for a couple of centuries since the dawn of the Enlightenment. Ever since Galileo is alleged to have written “The Bible does not teach how the heavens go, but how to go to heaven,” such explicit dualism has won the day. We are not yet free from it.

What this means in effect is that Presutta’s discussions of the biblical cosmology are at points helpful and necessary. Yet at other points, he makes use of the most jaundiced interpretation of the biblical data as possible to establish his agenda—the “Bible is not the Word of God” or that the “biblical Jesus . . . has any special revelatory knowledge” (Presutta 2007, title page, 185). This we can see from the title but is also found in the warp and woof of the whole volume as we shall see. Be that as it may, in general Presutta contrasts what he believes the Scripture teaches with what he believes is the present worldview of scientism in such a way that Scripture loses every time. It is a classic case of the invalid logical argument called begging the question (or *petitio principii*, “presupposing the point to be proved”). It is also based on faith in an unprovable *a priori*: Science has proven that the Big Bang evolutionary and the present Special Relativity based worldview is factually correct in all respects. Hartnett, in turn, gives a devastating critique of the Big Bang but doesn’t go to the root, Einstein’s Special and General Relativity, which he also presupposes.

This then is not a battle of faith versus science but a battle of two faiths. Certainly, it is not a battle between neutral and presuppositionless science versus the *a priori* of faith. Instead, it is a battle between two foundational worldviews founded on foundational axioms, both dualist and syncretistic. No worldview, and especially not post-modernism, exists without foundational presuppositions. The issue, then, is which presuppositions are true because not even the issue of truth is escapable. Whenever we deny that truth exists, we make a truth-claim! Presutta, illogically for his worldview, makes truth claims. How can swirling and random matter-energy based physics develop truth—a meta-physical concept?

Presutta’s Charges

What then does Presutta charge the Scripture with? Two examples of helpful aspects of Presutta’s volume are first his demonstration that Genesis and the Pentateuch do indeed teach that God created the world in six solar days a few thousand years ago. Hartnett and Williams strongly agree. (So far, so good, in my opinion). Second, he claims to show that the Genesis account and the rest of Scripture presuppose and indeed teach a geostatic, spinning (cosmodynamic) universe. Here, Hartnett and Williams disagree without discussion. However, I am impressed with what Presutta alleges because I have been challenged for a few decades with the strong biblical statement that Joshua commanded the sun and moon to cease moving and that they ceased moving (Jos 10).¹² Joshua did not command the earth to cease revolving. Can these words be a mere accommodation to scientific error, as many evangelical teach? Or are they merely phenomenological, as the overwhelming consensus of evangelical scholarship presuppose?

Shockingly, Presutta laments, there are actually people in contemporary America who really do still “think that the sun goes around the earth and are unaware of the fact that the earth actually orbits the sun in one year or that the stars are other suns” (Presutta 2007, 29).¹³ Science teaches the opposite, he states, and science is correct, he believes. The earth rotates; it orbits the

sun every year; the sun is a star similar to other stars we see at night; and the sun and earth are on the edge of one of the spiral arms of the “huge, rotating, spiral-armed formation called the Milky Way Galaxy,” which is so large “that it takes 250 million years for it to rotate once” (Presutta 2007, 29). In addition, there are at least 200 billion maybe 400 billion galaxies each with billions of stars (Presutta 2007, 30). Williams and Hartnett (2004), so far, would agree but would disagree that the Scripture teaches a spinning universe though they agree that the classical perspective is still used by “meteorological offices, maritime service organizations, and the world’s time-keeping authorities”—and planetariums and maritime navigation, I would add—as a pragmatically useful model.¹⁴

Presutta further charges that Scripture teaches that God created the heavens and earth out of a pre-existing “great deep” because “when God began to create the heavens and earth,” by calling light into existence, the “deep [already] existed before God began the creative process” (Presutta 2007, 66, 67). “Without form and void” thus means that the earth was not in existence. The only thing existing at that time was the primeval “tehowm” (“the deep” of Gen 1:2) – a word derived, he claims, from the mythological Babylonian goddess of chaos, Tiamat (Presutta 2007, 67).¹⁵

In addition, he believes that the Bible sees the whole creation as a geocentric universe in which the sun, moon, and stars literally move across a solid, possibly metal firmament just above the flight of the birds (see e.g., Job 37:18 NIV).¹⁶ “The earth is fixed in place and unmoved” (Presutta 2007, 137), to be shaken out of place only in the last judgment (see Is 13:13; Pss 93:1, 96:10, 104:5).¹⁷ Third, the sun, moon, and stars are not the real source of the light reaching the earth but an un-named light is that source, which God created on the first day (before the sun and moon on the fourth day).¹⁸ The “sun, moon, and stars are [hence always] subordinate to the earth,” which is in a “favored position in the universe” (Presutta 2007, 169). Fourth, the earth is flat, shaped like a circle (or “flat disk” [Presutta 2007, 101])¹⁹ with a solid dome or vault above it²⁰ that “God physically made [i.e., hammered out]” (Presutta 2007, 108). In the solid dome or “raqiya” are windows through which the waters of the flood came. (He forgot to mention the “water jars” up there as well, out of which proceed the down pouring of rain – see Job 38:37). The disk-circle of the earth, under which is the “great deep” or “cosmic ocean” (132), is held up by solid pillars “that go into the depths of the waters beneath the earth” (Presutta 2007, 133)²¹ and prevent the earth from falling into the Abyss under the earth.

Fifth, the flat earth is suspended either over or above “nothing” (Job 26:7), implying that “the earth has an upper side and an under side, for those prepositions imply directionality” (Presutta 2007, 150). Sixth, the universe has a top and bottom, an up and down, with a three tier universe: under earth, earth, heaven above (Presutta 2007, 150).²² Under the earth is the Abyss or bottomless pit of Sheol, which Presutta labors long to identify with the “deep” (tehowm) and the place of Satan’s reign and death. (This attempt is far-fetched in my opinion, see chapter 11, “The Pit of Sheol”).

The following is his pictorial representation of what he believes is the biblical cosmology, a picture similar to that which I have seen in other sources (Presutta 2007, 190).

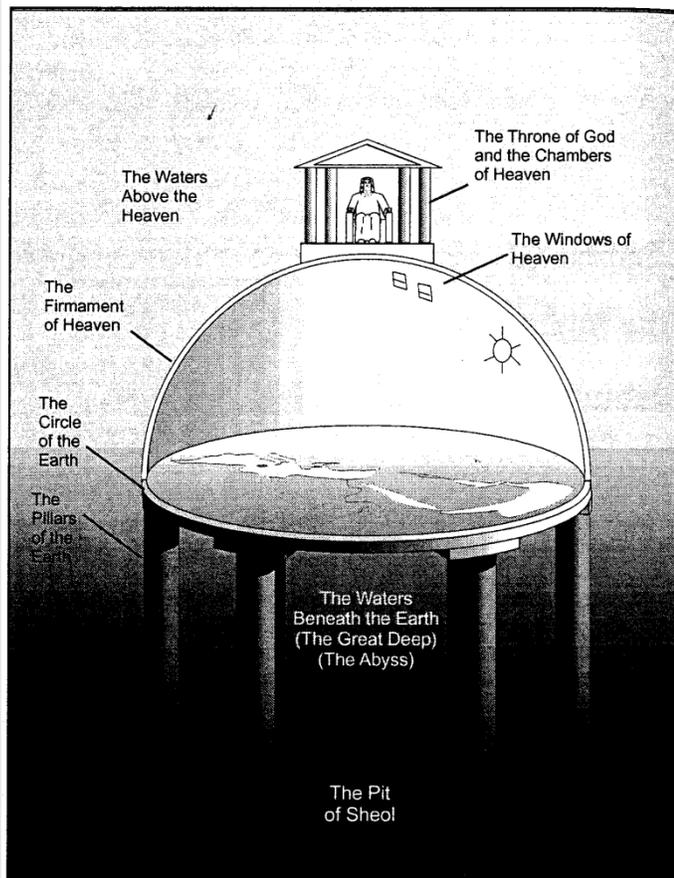


Figure 5. The Biblical Cosmos

Last, Presutta believes that the universe ends with a fiery conflagration, which destroys the heavens and earth.²³

Why would the God of the Bible create a vast universe such as that which science has uncovered, yet subordinate its very existence to an insignificant speck of dust such as is the earth? And why would [he] . . . create such a universe . . . only ultimately to destroy it all when the events of the Last Days play out here on the earth? (Presutta 2007, 189)

Here is how he introduces and summarizes: “Is the Bible, like much of the literature of the other cultures of ancient times, a collection of myths, folklore, embellished histories, and superstitious assumptions and speculations” (Presutta 2007, 9)? “The cosmos that science has revealed is totally at odds with the cosmos that the Bible describes—the cosmos created by Yahweh, the tribal god of the ancient Hebrews” (Presutta 2007, 189).

Presutta, second, presupposes that the higher critical perspective is correct from the beginning and ridicules those who search for a contextual meaning that both satisfies the meaning

of the actual text yet is also not out of accord with the actual perceived data of science (i.e., not necessarily the theories to which the data are put to use to explain the data). Presutta is a firm believer that data is a brute fact that is not interpreted in any way by theory, presuppositions or preunderstandings. In this sense he is a naïve empiricist of the sort that Modernity produces. He ignores the works of Thomas Kuhn and others dealing with the philosophy of science and its paradigm boundedness.

Notice how forthrightly Presutta states his worldview within the arena of modernity:

The cosmos that is revealed in the Bible is a fundamental aspect of the biblical worldview, just as the cosmos that science has revealed is a fundamental aspect of the modern worldview. The biblical cosmos is, in fact, an integral part of the narrative that unfolds in the Bible. In the Bible . . . God creates heaven and earth to provide a stage upon which to play out the drama of his program of salvation for mankind—a program that begins with the creation of the cosmos and has its completion in the portended future annihilation of the cosmos.

According to the Bible, then, as culminated in the New Testament, the origin and the fate of the cosmos are tied to events here on the earth and to God's salvation program for mankind. In that aspect, the Bible presents a geocentric view of the cosmos that is obviously and significantly different from the modern view. In the modern view of the cosmos there is nothing special about the earth; it is only one planet among an uncountable number of planets that must exist in the universe, and the earth's sun is only one star among an equally uncountable number of stars. The explicit reality of the modern view is that the earth is but an insignificant mote of no particular relevance to the rest of the cosmos.

Consequently, from his perspective the erroneous biblical worldview is in major conflict with the liberating worldview of scientific naturalism. It desires to exercise complete dominion over American cultural, political, and educational life, destroying all of the advances of the last 200 years that came on the back of evolutionary—and I must add—atheist materialism.

The following quote (from the back cover) says it all:

Such an outlook goes far beyond private belief, for many highly influential individuals use the Bible as an authoritative guide to determine what is valid today in science, government, and social policy, and numerous well-funded Bible-based groups are seeking to impose their beliefs on society, even to the point of turning this country into a repressive theocracy. Determining the answer to that question thus gains particular relevance. As it turns out, the answer can literally be found in the cosmos, for the cosmos that is revealed in the Bible is a fundamental aspect of the biblical worldview, just as the cosmos that science has revealed is a fundamental aspect of the modern worldview. In fact, the cosmos that is revealed in the Bible is an integral part of the narrative that unfolds in the Bible, so much so that the credibility of the Bible is dependent upon the validity of its cosmology. This book analyzes what the Bible has to say about the cosmos and shows how the biblical view of the cosmos compares to the modern view of the cosmos as defined by the findings of science. For those who are open to the evidence, this in-depth analysis of the biblical cosmos will provide a basis for arriving at a reasoned answer to the question of whether or not the Bible is the word of God. (Presutta 2007, back cover)

The battle, then, is a battle of worldviews and a battle of two missions. Presutta is very blunt, “objective reality” and “direct observation,” he claims, are on the side of the “modern worldview” (Presutta 2007, 4). He elaborates:

These differences between the biblical view of the cosmos and the modern view are so fundamental with respect to the natural order of things that they should give one pause to wonder whether they can be reconciled. Did the God of the Bible create the incredibly vast and multi-faceted universe that science has uncovered just so he could destroy it all in the . . . judgment. . . ? Or, on the other hand, does that modern view of such a vast universe negate and render meaningless the cosmological descriptions of the divine judgment that are put forth in the Bible?

These questions cannot be lightly brushed aside, for—unless one totally rejects the objective reality of the cosmos that science has uncovered—they would certainly play a part in determining the credibility of the Bible. And, of course, the credibility of the Bible is crucial in any attempt to answer the question: Is the Bible the word of God?

.....
If the Bible is the word of God, then the future of mankind, as well as that of the earth and of the cosmos . . . is laid out. . . , and an acceptance of the Bible as a supernaturalistic revelation from God is a prerequisite for achieving the personal salvation it holds forth as a divine promise.

.....
The cosmos that is revealed in the Bible is an integral part of the biblical worldview; in fact, it is so integrated with the biblical worldview that the credibility of the Bible is dependent upon the validity of its cosmology. (Presutta 2007, 2-4)

Presutta then concludes his chapter on the “Consequences of Belief in the Bible” with these words about our Lord’s mission:

If the Bible is not the word of God and if belief in the Bible is therefore a delusion, such religious impositions could very well undermine the future of mankind.

Coupled with the fact that a great many Bible believers feel compelled to convert the whole world to their belief and are effectively using modern communications technology for that end, all of this should constrain one to be deeply concerned and to seek the answer to the question of whether the Bible can, in fact, be considered the word of God. (Presutta 2007, 26)

David Presutta (who incidentally seems to be an ex-evangelical, though I could be wrong) believes that “science has revealed” another and truly accurate perspective than that which the Bible states (Presutta 2007, 29). In other words, he believes that evolutionary naturalism with the Big Bang is a foundational fact not a theory. This is a battle, then, between two “revelations”: scripture and Science, writ large.

Hartnett and Williams

Hartnett and Williams, on the other hand, accept six-day recent earth creation. For that they must be commended because this is the ancient faith of the whole church up till about 200 years ago. It is the clear teaching of the text of Genesis One and intertexts such as Exodus (see,

e.g., 20:11, 31:17) and the statements of our Lord (e.g., Mk 10:6; Mt 19:4). Second, they do an excellent job explaining a presuppositional philosophy of science, which the readers of *Global Missiology* may recognize as my position (see chapter two, “Science, Worldviews, and Cosmological Models). They show the devastating weaknesses of the Big Bang theory and the many contradictions and just so, *ad hoc* explanations it is built upon. Third, they give a good, brief summary of the idea that “chance is probably one of the most abused concepts in all of cosmology (and origins science generally)” (Williams and Hartnett 2005, 82). Especially their fourth “common abuse of chance” is outstanding. They correctly claim that “chance can only be applied to events that can happen—chance cannot magically make things happen that are physically impossible. . . . Chance cannot accomplish anything independently of the laws of physics” (Williams and Hartnett 2005, 86) – like the Big Bang, I might add! How can an explosion produce order and design? How can an absolute singularity – actually nothingness – produce diversity and unity, physics and metaphysics? How can something come from nothing?

Even though they correctly teach these excellent foundational concepts, however, the two authors don’t realize how bound they remain to Modernity’s cosmological paradigm. This is clearly seen in “CHAPTER 1 — FROM THE BACKYARD TO THE BIG BANG — A BREF HISTORY OF COSMOLOGY.” This chapter illustrates brilliantly that all human knowledge is paradigm bound and that most people don’t actually realize their own interpretative paradigms. In other words, Hartnett and Williams teach, most people lack “epistemological self-consciousness” (though they don’t use those actual words). Actually, however, there is no such thing as a brute self-interpreting fact, they would claim.

This idea, then, of interpreting data through the eye-glasses of worldview axioms, Hartnett and Williams admirably illustrate. For example, their chapter 2 (mentioned above) is indeed an excellent introduction to this concept. Yet when speaking about certain factual discoveries about cosmology, they blindly rush to the conclusion that those observed and confirm data points actually prove certain theories (like Special Relativity) are factual. For example, in the section “How far are the Stars” (Williams and Hartnett 2005, 38ff), the diagram on page 39 presupposes that the Galilean geodynamic and not the Tychonian cosmodynamic model of the universe is correct.²⁴ Yet if we change the paradigm, then the stars are much closer than what Modernity now believes. I say this to challenge our modern feeling of certitude that “we now know.” We don’t “know” Galileo and Kepler were correct. Their paradigm is almost universally believed—I use this word deliberately. Their theory seems to be a simpler mathematical formula but simple math doesn’t make reality. A more complex equation may turn out to be closer to the data. The point: Hold science lightly as a theory, but don’t doubt God’s word.

Also in that same sub-section the authors claim that Hubble proved in 1924 that Andromeda had one star that speaks unequivocally to use claiming that it is indeed a “sun” a “star” like our sun. However, nothing and no one except God speaks with self-interpreting facts. All human knowledge is paradigm and theory bound. In other words, again, we can’t know meaning of perceived data without a theory/paradigm within which to find that meaning. Hubble deduced his data through a theoretical lens which led him to proclaim that he found certainty. It was a feeling possibly of certitude but not surely an epistemological certainty.

I am stating this to illustrate once again the hubris of Modernity. So, then, when we change the theory, the previously understood “fact” changes meaning. Williams and Hartnett write:

In 1924, he [Hubble] found what he was looking for – a pinpoint of light that became brighter, then faded, then became brighter again. He had found a Cepheid variable star! Like a beacon, flashing across the unimaginable immenseness of space, Hubble *read the message* – ‘I’m a star . . . I’m a star . . . I’m a star.’ If there was one star in Andromeda, then the ‘nebulousity’ probably represented billions more of the same – all of them so far away that he could barely see them. (Williams and Hartnett 2005, 42, my emphasis)

Second, they write that the earth is in a galaxy called the Milky Way (“a large, flat, spiral disk about 100, 000 light years across”) and that earth and “our solar system is nowhere near the center – indeed we now know that life would be impossible if we were too near the center” (Williams and Hartnett 2005, 40). Yet this is once again knowledge based upon interpretation of data through the lens of theory. Change the basic presuppositions and the place and position of the earth changes. Yet, contrary to Modernity, we don’t know but we think we know, since so often we evangelicals and certainly evolutionary materialists see the data through the eye-glasses of an anti-biblical paradigm. My plea: We must think God’s thoughts after him or have no truth at all.

In my opinion, then, a key weakness of Williams and Hartnett is that they accept the current modernity-bound, consensual paradigm of Einstein’s General and Special Relativity. They claim that Einstein “has been experimentally confirmed many times” (Williams and Hartnett 2005, 44). This type of reasoning, however, is fatally flawed. As Gordon Clark demonstrates in his volume, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*, 2nd ed. (Clark 1988)²⁵ an infinite set of mathematical models exist to explain data points. Merely because Einstein’s complicated theory explains or even can predict a few experimental observations does not mean that it is “experimentally confirmed.” Another paradigmatic bound theory can come along, which explains the data much better. It has happened many times in the history of science as Thomas Kuhn observes. The hubris of Modernity as the “course of the age” (Eph 2:1-2) blinds.

Williams and Hartnett know better. They ably destroy the Big Bang certitude of evolutionary naturalism and demonstrate that there are several other theories out there that may explain the data better (see APPENDIX A: SOME OTHER COSMOLOGICAL MODELS). They have an excellent brief section on the “Principles of Biblical Interpretation” that specifically rejects dualism and positively teaches that Scripture must reign over scientific theory (Williams and Hartnett 2005, 207ff). Third, they have an excellent section concerning the false concept that God created age in the light beams reaching earth, making them look like the information in them is billions of years old. That is if our interpretation of such things as what we now call supernova explosions are indeed star explosions, then they look like they are billions of years ago according to present theory! (Again “theory” is the crucial word).

No one has advanced any reasons to explain why God might have created the ‘appearance of explosions’ in light beams that have no basis in the real history of the stars they represent. Because it involves the creation of ‘phony history,’ it lays God open to a charge of deception in a manner unlike the creation of Adam as a mature adult. A significant challenge for a creationist cosmology is therefore to explain events like the supernovae of 1054 and 1987a.

There are many other exceptional points the author’s make that I don’t have space to discuss. However, so much is still bound to Modernity’s presuppositions.

Further Problems in Williams and Hartnett's perspective

Contrary to Modernity's popular propaganda, Einstein's theories are loaded with mathematical and observational *ad hoc*, counter-intuitive explanations and outright contradictions so much so that it is virtually incomprehensible, in my opinion. Williams and Hartnett accept General and Special Relativity (GRT and SRT) as established fact and Hartnett bases his theory of how to explain the seeming ancient age of light reaching a recently created earth upon it.

Yet both GRT and SRT are founded on the rejection of a fundamental algebraic syllogism. Specifically, why is light such a special phenomenon in modern and post-modern relativity theory that it violates basic mathematical laws applicable everywhere else? Second, why is light the only physical phenomenon that is not subject to the Second Law of Thermodynamics? The speed of light should be deteriorating since the instant that God created light in Genesis 1:3. However, according to the accepted axiom no matter where and how one measures the speed of light it will always remain the same speed. These are huge anomalies that must not be overlooked.

Relativity's assumption of the constant speed of "c", then, is counterintuitive as far as I can tell as a theologian of mission. Hartnett states: "This sounds weird but it has been experimentally confirmed many times" (Williams and Hartnett 2005, 44). Yet, they must explain in a way that is mathematically consistent why only the speed of light violates mathematics. Let me illustrate: If the earth is moving in its orbit away from a star, then the rays of light from that star ought mathematically to possess an impact speed of v (velocity of the earth) – the speed of light c [$v - c =$ impact speed of light]. If the earth is moving toward a star, then the impact speed of light ought mathematically to be written $v + c$. The observation of scientists upon the earth has always been that "c" comes to the earth with the same speed no matter from which direction it arrives. Einstein postulated an *ad hoc* "weird" explanation with the theory of Special Relativity: time and space are relative but not light. Both speed and gravity distort time, according to the theory. In other words, time and space can be warped but light stays the same. However, could a key reason for this constant observation of the uniformity of the speed of light as it is measured on the earth be that no one has ever bothered to measure the speed of light outside of the earth in a satellite that we know is moving? Those who are adept can do the math: $(c + v) = c = (c - v)$. Mathematically, there exists only one valid solution to this equation. V (the velocity of the earth) is 0. However, light alone of all substances, Albert Einstein postulates, violates God's created mathematical law, which is his universal manner of providential dealing.

I believe that Einstein can also be disproved theologically. Time is not warped. For example, if universe time began at the same moment throughout the creation, then the Fall occurs at the same moment throughout the cosmos, having comprehensive effects at the same moment throughout the whole universe. Certainly then the Redemption and Consummation occur at their same moments in time throughout the total universe. This casts grave theological doubt, then, upon the veracity of STR and GTR. (For an outstanding discussion of these issues see Philip Stott's *Vital Questions*).²⁶

Conclusion: A Theology of Suspicion of Modernity's Science

Presutta thus is correct in his accusations against evangelicals in some areas but not in others. Williams and Hartnett, on the other hand, demonstrate the huge problems with the Big Bang theory. Yet both the skeptic and the creationist are blind to the problem of syncretism with Modernity. Presutta is correct in stating that Scripture teaches that the whole heavens and earth are indeed subordinated to the earth and events on the earth. The earth is at least the center of

attention of the God of the Bible if not the actual center of the universe in fact. The Bible and especially Genesis One are geocentric in perspective. Evangelicals must revisit this idea again, in my opinion. Is biblical language merely the language of phenomena or does the Bible actually teach that the universe spins with the earth as the center of attention and center in fact? Clearly, also, the whole universe is subordinated to the singular redemption of King Jesus upon the cross and to his final consummation that will “lay bare” the whole universe and all of mankind’s works at the same time (2 Pet 3:9ff NIV).

Theologically, then, evangelicals must possess a theology of suspicion with respect to Einstein’s “weird” theory and with respect to other of Modernity’s weird, counter-intuitive theories. I doubt thus that both time and space are relative. Indeed it seems clear that time is not relative to speed in Scripture. Time is the same throughout the universe. This is the paradigmatic framework within which we must do cosmology, not the Einsteinian relativity paradigm, which Williams and Hartnett accept by faith in an unstable syncretism, I believe. I doubt also that light is not subject to entropy as is everything else.

More research needs to be done, of course, yet it seems clear that Scripture teaches that universe’s time and space are absolute and each microsecond is the same throughout the universe because each is in the hands of the Triune, omniscient God, who is working everything according to the counsel of his singular will to his pre-determined goal. This is something which Presutta correctly discerns as a clear teaching of Scripture. Yet, at the same time he rejects it as being disproven by science. Either the biblical cosmology is true (certainly not Presutta’s jaundiced interpretation of it!) or evolutionary naturalism is true. Presutta takes the second option, basing his faith on the always-changing certitude of modernity-bound Scientism. I believe which must take the antithetical opposite as Paul says we should (read 1 Cor 3:18-21).

After reading both sides,²⁷ I doubt the certitude of this present modernity-bound consensus concerning cosmogony and cosmology, STR/GTR and (even quantum mechanics, but that is another story).²⁸ As I have looked into the topic, I note that the forefathers of modern evangelicalism have not always been full of the certitude that modern Christians feel. It was only about 150 years after Copernicus that the standard evangelical apologetic for the biblical data about the position and status of the earth in the universe became the consensus. That consensus states that the Scripture uses “phenomenal” language in the key passages²⁹ that Presutta and others cite concerning the position and movement of the earth in the universe (e.g., Jos 10;³⁰ Hab 3:11;³¹ Eccl 1:11;³² Ps 19³³ – cited in order of strength). In other words, the apologetic consensus claims, it only appears that the sun come up and goes down but the Bible does not teach that this is an actual state of affairs. Presutta and a host of other critics abjure this explanation with scorn. I believe there is weight to their objections and we must answer them.

However, “we now know,” the evangelical consensus would say, that the sun does not actually rise or set because the earth, not the sun is moving, so therefore we must read Scripture in that light. However, is that not having a scientific theory dictate the understanding of Scripture and not visa versa? Is this not what the recent universe creationists abjure on their part? I want to ask probing questions about how and why evangelical theology and missiology is bound to modernity. The standard answer has been that this syncretism began with Darwin. Others are now showing that the syncretism about the age of the earth actually began two generations earlier as Terry Mortenson shows in *The Great Turning Point: The Church's Catastrophic Mistake on Geology--Before Darwin*.³⁴ Could it be that the syncretism began with the debate between Tycho Brahe and Galileo (there are very interesting tomes that discuss this issue)? Was the real issue a spiritual and metaphysical one – turning away from the God of the Bible and its complete

inerrancy? There are some who are making exactly this charge. It is time, in my opinion, to re-visit this issue because nothing is sacrosanct outside of the clear words of Scripture.

Now, I must hasten to add, that I certainly agree that the sun and the moon actually do appear as if they are moving, when one watches the sunrise or sunset -- or for that matter the moonrise and moonset -- at sea. However, why do we have to take the first as only an appearance and the second not? What rules of hermeneutics help us distinguish between one being reality and the other merely an illusion? The Scripture speaks about both in equivalent terms (read Jos 10). Why should we not then hold the heliocentric idea as merely a theory and hold open the fact that the scientific consensus could be wrong? Let's re-visit every possible universe view by holding Scripture always certain and observational data and the theories that interpret them lightly. They so often change as Thomas Kuhn has written (indeed about this very issue).³⁵

The language of appearance and of figurative language is indeed a good apologetic for many biblical statements such as the "eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth" (2 Chr 16:9). Indeed phenomenal language probably does explain why Scripture speaks of the circle of the earth (Job 26:10; Prv 8:27; Is 40:22). The Hebrews did not have a word for "sphere" -- contrary to Presutta and others' use of Is 22:18 (see n. 17). The sky over the earth does look like a dome. But note that from these two observational facts -- the same wherever one looks on earth -- are the basis for a sound deduction that the actual shape of the earth is a sphere (see n. 17).

However, this type of reasoning must be used with genre and context based care. Remember also that if we hold to inerrancy, we believe that Scripture teaches that behind the human author is the inspiring Breath of an always-truthful God (2 Tim 3:16-17). Some statements in Scripture, then, that Presutta claims reflect a primitive, non-factual worldview could very well be factual statements even when made in the poetic genre. Poetry can be used to make factual statements! Instead of a mere metaphor, could the "pillars of the land" (see e.g., Job 9:6; 1 Sam 2:8) be actual stabilizing pillars under the land which hold up the outer crust against collapsing into the layer of water under the crust, which Scripture indicates is there? I think we need to be open to this (though I think 1 Sam 2:8, contra Presutta is possibly metaphorical and not necessarily a reflection of a primitive, underlying cosmology). Many hold to this theory that the "pillars" are literal (e.g., Walter Brown). Could there indeed be waters above the solar system such as the Scripture also claim exists (Gen 1:3ff; Ps 104:3, 148:4; Job 37:18)? Many such as John Hartnett, Russell Humphrys, and Philip Stott³⁶ hold this perspective. On the other hand, some of the proposed primitive aspects are certainly poetic descriptions. For example, Presutta puts great emphasis upon Job 38:12-13, which he claims teaches that the earth is flat because it speaks about the "ends of the earth" and the earth is like a carpet that the dawn can shake out! "Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, And caused the dawn to know its place, That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, And the wicked be shaken out of it?" Clearly this is beautiful and brilliant poetic language!

Last, some statements concerning what we now call cosmology are so general and equivocal that it is not possible to claim they must support the primitive worldview of surrounding peoples. Presutta and many others claim that the *raqiya'* must be a hard shell because the Scripture uses its verbal cognate *raqa'* to mean "to pound out and cover something with metal" (e.g., covering the altar of incense with bronze in Num 16:39, see also Ex 39:3). But the abstract noun, *raqiya'*, signifies the end product of a spreading out or expanding process as the clearly metaphorical use of *raqa'* in 2 Sam 22:41-43 would indicate if *raqiya'* had been used in the context:

You have also made my enemies turn their backs to me, And I destroyed those who hated me. They looked, but there was none to save; Even to the LORD, but He did not answer them. Then I pulverized them as the dust of the earth; I crushed and stamped [raqa'] them as the mire of the streets. (2 Sam 22:41-43)

In other words, David's enemies became a *raqiya'* (a scattered out and crushed mire or dust in the street).

One proposed apologetic answer should not be used. Presutta rightly ridicules it. God did not accommodate his wisdom to a naïve, *erroneous* pre-scientific viewpoint. J. P. Holding states the following in his refutation of Paul Seely, a self-proclaimed evangelical, who – like Presutta -- also claims that the Bible teaches that the earth is surrounded by a solid dome. Holding writes: “[Seely] confuses adaptation to human finitude with accommodation to human error—the former does not entail the latter” (Holding 1999). For more than a century and a half, evangelical accommodationists such as Seely, and atheists such as Aldous Huxley, Bertrand Russell, Berthold Brecht (and now Presutta) have used and are using the allegations that the Bible teaches a primitive, pre-scientific worldview as a club with chilling effect upon our culture's faith. (Presutta's charges are hardly new but are warmed over and virtually-plagiarized from previous atheists and biblio-skeptics).

Last, Protestant luminaries John Calvin,³⁷ Martin Luther,³⁸ Matthew Henry,³⁹ and many others rejected a rotating earth viewpoint on Scriptural grounds and even some upon the scientific observations of Tycho Brahe (not Ptolemy as often alleged) for at least 150 years after Copernicus.⁴⁰ They believed Scripture taught a geo-static, spinning universe perspective. Modern Einsteinian scholars (almost post-modern in perspective and all of whom presuppose heliocentricity) are agnostic about the actual state of affairs of the universe because they teach that all perspectives are equal and no one can know which is correct because the universe is without center (acentric) and without boundaries. For example, Sir Fred Hoyle, a chief proponent of steady state, non-Big Bang theory of the universe, compares the sun versus earth centered theories. Writing in his textbook, *Astronomy and Cosmology*, he states: “We know that the difference between a [modern] heliocentric theory and a geocentric theory is one of relative motion only, and that such a difference has no physical significance” (Hoyle 1975, 416).⁴¹ Thomas Kuhn agrees, “geometrically the Tyconic and Copernican systems were identical” (Kuhn 1957, 2005). He wrote earlier in the same work, the following:

Omitting minor epicycles and eccentrics, which have no bearing on the harmonies of Copernicus' system, the Tyconic system is transformed to the Copernican system simply by holding the sun fixed instead of the earth. The relative motions of the planets are the same in both systems, and the harmonies are therefore pre-served. Mathematically the only possible difference between the motions in the two systems is a parallactic motion of the stars, and that motion was eliminated at the start by expanding the stellar sphere until parallax was imperceptible. (Kuhn 1957, 2004)⁴²

Kuhn points out that Brahe's original system had some problems and, in his opinion, is not as mathematically symmetrical or simple as was the Copernican system. In all honesty, Tycho Brahe did not convert even his own disciple Johannes Kepler possibly because Kepler was drawn philosophically to the Neo-Platonic symmetry of the Copernican system. Yet it did,

Thomas Kuhn states, “convert most technically proficient non-Copernican astronomers of the day . . . [because] it retained the mathematical advantages of Copernicus’ system without the physical, cosmological, and theological drawbacks” (Kuhn 1957, 205). That last phrase was crucial in an age that still had a remnant of respect for biblical authority, unlike ours. However, mathematical symmetry and philosophical harmony do not determine truth. Only the Creator does. He alone made the universe and presently upholds it. If Scripture can be unmistakably demonstrated to be supportive of a spinning earth or a spinning universe—or for that matter to be entirely neutral as most believe—we are obligated to hold one of these three alternatives. If neutrality can be ruled out exegetically, we are obligated to hold one of the two remaining explanations.

My conclusion: Let’s hold the macro-theories of science with respect to cosmogony and cosmology lightly but treat the Scripture’s perspectives with utmost respect. We must proclaim to the world of ethnies that Jesus is Lord, His truth is supreme, and His world and life view is healing and redemptive for all of life. If not, then we reject the fullness of the Gospel. Why then do we need to engage evolutionary naturalism on their presuppositional ground? God’s creation as it is interpreted by Scripture is the only common ground we can engage atheism with. Last, since the alleged static earth, spinning universe perspective of Scripture remains a major ground of ridicule in the polemic for atheism and against Scripture and its Gospel – as Presutta does, should we not revisit this issue? I have read several fairly recent books, which have caused me to re-open this issue in my thinking. I would urge you to find them and begin to read as well.

For those who are interested in these topics, I would urge you to read the book by Williams and Hartnett. It is not by any means the last word on the topic. But it is a good introduction into present theory and evangelical interaction with it. Presutta’s book, on the other hand, is informative and fairly comprehensive account of biblio-skeptical perspectives on biblical cosmology. If you are interested, I would urge you to interact with it and the many sources I have referenced in the endnotes and the appendix. Some of my questions may be shocking but I believe they are the necessary concomitant of a solid apologetic. If we don’t ask these questions we can’t find again our way in our lost culture, which has virtually banished us to the death arena.

Appendix One

See the article by Holding (below) for an excellent (though not perfect) refutation of the misconceptions that *raqiya'* must mean a solid dome and that the earth must a flat circle floating on a circular sea.⁴³ He is responding to evangelical Paul Seely's similar accusation that the word means a solid dome because of the etymology, cross references, and because of the common ancient worldview of people's surrounding Israel. He makes three logical and semantic errors, (1) word meanings are determined by context not etymology, and (2) the Hebrew prophets spoke the God of truth's words, not man's words. Seely in effect is a conservative Barthian, with a dualist concept of truth, separating between science and religion). (3) Seely believes that the prophets and our Lord accommodated to errors of science while still inspiring Scripture (this is the old error of limited infallibility warmed over). However, this is not the same as to accommodate a concept truthfully to the thought world of a "child" in this case humankind, a concept that Calvin often used (and Seely tries to appeal to). In conclusion, Holding's main point is that the term is ambiguous and is not tied to the concept of metallic hardness as Presutta and Seely claim. It can be used metaphorically or figuratively as the examples below shows, hence it could be used for an expanded out surface such as the heavens are as seen from the earth. In fact, Genesis 1:8 and Ps 19:1 makes the "heavens" and the "*raqiya'*" synonymous, a fact which Presutta tries to claim teaches that the heavens were a hard dome. This is a case of reading your presuppositions into the text instead of exegesis of the text.

James Patrick Holding. 1999. Is the *raqiya'* ('firmament') a solid dome? Equivocal language in the cosmology of Genesis 1 and the Old Testament: a response to Paul H. Seely. *Journal of Creation* 13/2 (Aug):44–51 (<http://creation.com/is-the-raqiya-firmament-a-solid-dome>).

Compare first TWOT, sv. **רָקַע**, et al with the BDB sv. **רָקַע**:

2217.0 **רָקַע** **stamp, spread out, stretch.**

(2217a) **רָקִיעַ** **firmament.**

(2217b) **רָקַע** **expansion (Num 17:3).**

The basic concept in is stamping, as with the foot, and what results, i.e. a spreading out or stretching forth. In the OT the foot-stamping connotation of may be understood literally, indicating either a malicious glee (Ezek 25:6) or a threatening excitement (Ezek 6:11). It may be used figuratively to describe beaten and crushed enemies (2Sam 22:43). In the Piel and Pual stems, the verb acquires the sense of beating out precious metals, and of the spreading that results, e.g. to spread over (ASV, "overlay"" an image (Isa 40:19). For the gold of Exo 39:3 *riqqa'*, "hammer out" (RSV), is rendered "beat thin"; for the silver in Jer 10:9, "spread into plates"; and for the bronze in Num 16:39 [H 17.4], "make broad" (plates). then comes to denote God's spreading forth the tangible earth (Isa 42:5; Isa 44:24), stretching out its land above the water (Psa 136:6), or spreading out the intangible sky (Job 37:18).

. Firmament. (NASB renders more correctly as “expanse”; cf. (Num 16:38 [H 17.3]), literally “an expansion of plates, “ i.e. broad plates, beaten out (BDB, p. 956). may refer to a limited space, such as that of the canopy over the cherubim, under the throne in Ezekiel's vision (Ezek 1:22, 26). Or it may refer to the broad “expanse of heaven” (Dan 12:3, NASB), as it does in thirteen of its seventeen occurrences.

is the most important derivative of . It identifies God's heavenly expanse. The Mosaic account of creation uses interchangeably for the “open expanse of the heavens” in which birds fly (Gen 1:20 NASB), i.e. the atmosphere (H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, 1, p. 59), and that farther expanse of sky in which God placed “the lights... for signs and for seasons” (vv. 14,17, referring apparently to their becoming visible through the cloud cover; the stars, sun, and moon presumably having been created already in v. 3), i.e. empty space (ISBE, I, p. 315), over which, as Job said, “He stretches out the north” (Job 26:7). The former receives greater emphasis, particularly during that period before the second day, when the earth cooled sufficiently (?) to permit surface waters, separated from what must still have been a massive cloud-bank above, by the atmospheric expanse (Gen 1:6-8). Such circumstances serve to explain the OT'S poetic references to “doors” or “windows” for the phenomenon of rainfall, e.g., “He commanded the clouds above, and opened the doors of heaven” (Psa 78:23). That the Hebrews knew rain came from clouds is clear from Isa 5:6, etc.

In pre-Christian Egypt confusion was introduced into biblical cosmology when the LXX, perhaps under the influence of Alexandrian theories of a “stone vault” of heaven, rendered by δ , suggesting some firm, solid structure. This Greek concept was then reflected by the Latin , hence KJV “firmament.” To this day negative criticism speaks of the “vault, or 'firmament, ' regarded by Hebrews as solid, and supporting 'waters' above it” (BDB, p. 956); cf. the rendering of Job 37:18, “The skies, strong () as a molten mirror (cf Psa 150:1, their “mighty expanse”), changed by the RSV to read, “the skies, hard.” Babylonian mythology recounts how Marduk used half of Tiamat's carcass to form the heavens () held in place by a crossbar (!). In the OT, however, Isaiah insists that God “stretches out the heavens [lit.] like gauze (doq, Isa 40:22); and even Ezekiel's limited canopy () is “as the [lit.] eye of awesome ice” (Ezek 1:22), i.e. transparent, “shining like crystal” (RSV), though so dazzling as to be terrifying (KD; cf. Dan 12:3 “brightness”).

Bibliography: Brockington, L. H., “Height, “ in RTWB, pp. 105-106. Leupold, H.C., Exposition of Genesis, vol. 1, Baker, 1950, pp. 59-61. Lorizyner, H., “The Firmament and the Clouds, “ Studia Theologia 1:188-96. Skinner, J., Genesis, ICC, pp. 41-50. Harris, R. L., “The Bible and Cosmology” JETS 5:11-17. J.B.P.

Brown, Driver, and Briggs Lexicon (BDB) (with clear, higher critical bias):

9298 רָקִיעַ (page 956) (Strong 7549)

רָקִיעַ **n.m.**:Gn 1, 6 extended surface, (solid) expanse (as if *beaten out*; cf. Jb 37:18); — abs. רָ Ez 1:22 +, cstr. רָ Gn 1:14 +; — LXX στερέωμα, Vulgate *firmamentum*, cf. Syr. sub *supr.*; — **1.** (flat) *expanse* (as if of ice, cf. רָקִיעַ הַקָּרָה, as base, support (Wkl:Altor. Forsch. iv. 347) Ez 1:22; 1:23; 1:25 (gloss ? cf. Co Toy), v:26 (supporting 's throne). Hence (Co:Ez 1, 22) **2.** the vault of heaven, or ‘firmament,’ regarded by Hebrews as solid, and supporting ‘waters’ above it, Gn 1:6;

1:7; 1:7; 1:7; 1:8 (called שְׁמַיִם; all P), Psalm 19:2 (||הַשְּׁמַיִם), זֶהר הָרַר Dn 12:3; also הַשְּׁמַיִם רַ Gn 1:14; 1:15; 1:17, עַל־פְּנֵי רֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם v:20 (all P)

¹ Definition: “epistemological self-consciousness.” Used often by C.A. van Til: An increasing self-awareness over time as to what one’s own worldview is and the basic presuppositions upon which that worldview is based. It also implies an increasing implementation of these presuppositions into every area of one’s life (and into the life of a culture sharing the same worldview presuppositions).

² The best book I have read on this (though I don’t agree with everything) is by post-theonomist, Gary North (Gary North. 1987. *Dominion and Common Grace: The Biblical Basis for Progress*. Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics).

³ For example, see Paul Seely’s neo-Barthian version of evangelicalism in his exposition of and justification for several of the central ideas that Presutta discusses. Then see Patrick Holding’s able but not perfect refutation of two of his articles and books (referenced later in this essay (n. 38) and in the appendix): (1) Seely, Paul H. 1997. The geographical meaning of ‘Earth’ and ‘Seas’ in Genesis 1:10. *Westminster Theological Journal* 59/2:231-256. (2) Seely, Paul H. 1991. The Firmament and the Water Above, Part 1: The Meaning of raqia’ in Genesis 1:6-8. *Westminster Theological Journal* 53:2 (Fall):227-240. (3) Seely, Paul H. The three-storied universe. *Cosmology. Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 21.1 3/69 18-21. (4) Seely, Paul H. 1992. The Firmament and the Water Above, Part 2: The Meaning of ‘The Water Above the Firmament’ in Genesis 1:6-8. *Westminster Theological Journal* 54:1 (Spring):31-46. (5) Seely, Paul H. 1997. The Geographical Meaning of ‘Earth’ and ‘Seas’ in Genesis 1:10,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 59:2 (Fall):231-256. (6) Seely, Paul H. 1997b. The Bible and Science: The First Four Days of Genesis in Concordist Theory and in Biblical Context. *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 49 (June): 85-95. Seely, Paul H. 1989. *Inerrant Wisdom: Science and Scripture in Biblical Perspective*. Portland, OR: Evangelical Reform.

I appreciate Presutta’s contentions above Seely’s. If Scripture teaches what he and Seely claim it teaches, it destroys the credibility of Scripture as truth (truth must be defined in a dualist Barthian fashion), the God of Scripture is completely disingenuous to mix error with his truth, and the Jesus is thus certainly not the Truth nor the world’s Redeemer.

⁴The most accessible of his works on this is Herman Dooyeweerd. 1979. *Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options*. Translated by John Kraay. Edited by Mark Vander Vennen and Bernard Zylstra. Toronto: Wedge Publishing Foundation.

⁵See Mark R. Kreitzer. 2007. Towards a Biblical Philosophy of Science. *Christianity and Society: The Biannual Journal of the Kuyper Foundation*. 17/2 (Winter 2007). (www.kuyper.org)

⁶“About the Author: David Presutta grew up in a small New England town and enlisted in the Air Force after graduating from high school. While in the Service, he began taking college courses and eventually earned a degree in English. When he retired from the Air Force after 21 years, he worked as a technical writer and editor for 22 years” (Presutta 2007, back cover).

⁷ Smuts (1870 – 1950) was one of the pioneers behind the League of Nations and the United Nations, the only person to sign both charters. Originally published in 1926. See a recent edition: Jan Christiaan Smuts. 2010. *Holism and Evolution: the Original Source of the Holistic Approach to Life*. Unabridged edition. N.p.: Sierra Sunrise Publishing.

⁸ See my essay on this topic in *Global Missiology English*, Vol 3, No 8 (2011) found at the GM site: <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/587/1487>. See also Ralph Winter, ed. 2003. The Religion of Science: The Largest Remaining Frontier [title of issue], *International Journal of Frontier Mission* (Winter) 20/4.

⁹“Unlike the use of the scientific method as only one mode of reaching knowledge, scientism claims that science alone can render truth about the world and reality. Scientism’s single-minded adherence to only the empirical, or testable, makes it a strictly scientific worldview, in much the same way that a Protestant fundamentalism that rejects science can be seen as a strictly religious worldview. Scientism sees it necessary to do away with most, if not all, metaphysical, philosophical, and religious claims, as the truths they proclaim cannot be apprehended by the scientific method. In essence, scientism sees science as the absolute and only justifiable access to the truth.” <http://www.pbs.org/faithandreason/gen gloss/sciism-body.html>, accessed 1/27/2012.

¹⁰ Though I don’t agree with his rejection of a recent creation, Ray Clouser. 2005. *The Myth of Religious Neutrality*. Revised ed. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press remains an excellent introduction to this topic.

¹¹ See Paul Hiebert. 1999. *The Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts. Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press. My perspective is a more biblically consequent, Trinitarian Creationist epistemology: Mark R. Kreitzer. 2007. Towards a Biblical Philosophy of Science. *Christian and Society: The Biannual Journal of the Kuyper Foundation*. 17/2 (Winter 2007):6-19. See also an earlier version: Mark R. Kreitzer. 2005. Studying Missiology with a Presuppositional Methodology. *Global Missiology* (Ap./Contemporary Practice), <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/viewFile/80/233>.

¹² Joshua 10:12-13 : “He said in the sight of Israel, ‘O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon.’ So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.” This seems unequivocal language to me, as Matthew Henry (see his unabridged commentary), Luther, and Calvin on these verses agree.

¹³ In a fairly recent Gallup poll (1999), <http://www.gallup.com/poll/3742/new-poll-gauges-americans-general-knowledge-levels.aspx> 18% of Americans, 16% of Germans, and 19% of the citizens of the UK claimed the sun revolves around the earth. This, of course, is indeed astonishing in our modern world in which the scientific consensus is against this conclusion.

¹⁴ “The earliest cosmologies therefore represented the earth as the center of the universe, with the sun, moon, and stars turning in circles around it. Despite our sophisticated modern knowledge, this model still works perfectly well in everyday life. Scientific bodies such as meteorological offices, maritime service organizations, and the world’s time-keeping authorities all refer to ‘sunrise’ and ‘sunset’ times and ‘moonrise’ and ‘moonset’ times, and they predict tides and moon phases and other phenomena associated with the heavens from the point of view of a stationary earth and a moving sky” (Williams and Hartnett 2004, 21).

¹⁵ There is no linguistic similarity between the words except the beginning sound. In other words, Presutta believes that there was no creation *ex nihilo*., because, he claims, the first biblical line should be translated, “in the beginning when God created . . . the earth was . . . waters of the great deep.” This can be easily refuted. The KJV, NASB, NIV and all the ancient versions agree that “in the beginning” is not a Hebrew construct form but a Hebrew absolute state (“in the beginning,” [absolute] vs. “when God created” [construct]) (see Victor Hamilton. 2005. *Handbook on the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic [Hamilton 2005, 31 ff]). Thus, the standard translation makes “in the beginning God created . . .” (1:1) the main clause, while 1:2 possesses three subordinate, descriptive clauses providing further information about the creation. Gen 1:3 commences the narrative historical prose process of separation and diversification in the universe. “Beginning” hence refers to the beginning of the creation not of God because God always lives (<http://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Genesis+1>, accessed 1/20/2012).

¹⁶ “The biblical earth is a flat disk fixed firmly in place upon its pillars. Because that arrangement prohibits the earth from moving, one would have to conclude that it must be the sun that moves in the biblical cosmos” (Presutta 2007, 139; citing Eccl 1:5; Ps 19:1-6, 104:19; Am 8:9; Jos 10:12-13; Hab 3:11; Job 9:7: “God’s direct ‘command’ to the sun not to rise shows again that . . . it is the sun that moves, rather than the earth” [Presutta 2007, 173]). He cites several contemporary organizations that hold to a geocentric universe: Genesis Institute, Association for Biblical Astronomy, Cercle Scientifique et Historique and the Fair Education Foundation and associates them as being a laughable as the Flat Earth Society (Presutta 2007, 146).

¹⁷ Presutta correctly rebukes Henry Morris for claiming the Bible teaches that the earth rotates from Job 38:14 in the KJV: “It is turned as clay to the seal.” The word “turned” means “turned into, changed in shape.” Thus the seal pressed into the clay causes ridges and depressions. This is a poetic description of how God formed the earth. (See Presutta’s discussion 2007, 137: “The Bible gives absolutely no inkling anywhere that the earth is actually rotating on its axis and orbiting the sun,” 136). This I believe is accurate.

¹⁸ Presutta 2007, 69, see also 140: “The light of the daytime sky is not derived from the sun, but is an entity unto itself in the biblical cosmos” – nonsensical statement in the light of Ps 19, which he quotes to show a moving sun that shines, in the passage, upon the earth. He cites Gen 1:3; Dan 12:3; Eccl 12:2; Ps 74:16; Job 38:12, 19-20 as demonstrating that the light is independent of the sun. Again, a jaundiced view of the evidence. He states that this is not “poetry” as “some biblical apologists might argue” but literal words of God, who is “so far out of touch with reality as to be so ludicrous.” He claims that his interpretation is the “author’s intention” (Presutta 2007, 143).

¹⁹ See his discussion in chapter 9: “The circle of the earth” and concerning the flatness of the earth on pages 111ff. This springs from his efforts to show that “the ends of the earth” mean that the earth, therefore, must be flat.

²⁰ The solid dome or vault idea comes from his combining of three types of evidence: 1) Scripture speaks of the earth, the horizon, and separation of light and darkness as being a circle (Is 40:22; Prv 8:27; Job 26:10, cf. 22:14 [circle of heaven]). This, of course, is observationally true as Presutta admits: “After all, if one stands on the top of

a moderately high mountain and turns around while looking in the distance, the horizon will appear to be a great circle at the apparent limits of the earth—a great circle where the rim of the perceived flat disk of the earth appears to meet the vault of the sky” (Presutta 2007, 100). Of course, contrary to Presutta, from this fact alone an astute observer could easily deduce that the earth is a sphere because this observation is true no matter where a person is on the earth or sea. (This could be deduced as well by the simple observations of an eclipse, and ships coming slowly into view at sea) Presutta quotes Henry Morris, who says circle means sphere and ridicules this idea. However, the Hebrews do not have a word for sphere in the whole of the Scripture despite Presutta’s attempt to claim that Is 22:18 (dûr, דִּיר) means “ball.” This word to the contrary, means “circled up” like a pile of wheat on the ground (seen from the base), by extension this may mean a fist or a person in a fetal position as it seems to mean in Is 22:18: “And roll you tightly like a ball, To be cast into a vast country” (NASB). If we grant this, could not “circle” of the earth possibly mean by extension a sphere? It is possible, it seems to me but perhaps not probable.

Next, if Presutta could deduce that “circle” means a “dome” or “upside down bowl” or even “vault” then the Hebrews could have deduced from the term “circle” in the context, that the earth was a sphere.

See Appendix One for discussions that the word for “firmament” or “expanse” (רָקִיעַ, rāqîaʿ) implies a solid dome. It doesn’t. In fact, Genesis 1:8 says that God names the rāqîaʿ “heavens.” Young’s Literal Translation of Gen 1:20 translates: “God saith, ‘Let the waters teem with the teeming living creature, and fowl let fly on [עַל, ʿal] the earth on [עַל, ʿal] the face of the expanse of the heavens.’” עַל, ʿal means first, “above” and second, “toward.”

²¹ See Pss 24:1-2, 75:3, 136:6; 1 Sam 2:8; Mic 6:2; Job 9:6, 38:4-6; Ps 82:5; Jer 31:37. 2 Sam 22:8: “The vault of the heaven is placed rim to rim with the disk of the earth, the pillars under the rim of the earth’s disk also provide support for the vault of heaven. Thus, when the pillars of the earth shake, the pillars of heaven also shake” (Presutta 2007, 135). My comments: These are poetry and figurative language. (Dr. Walter Brown, Ph.D. [mechanical engineering from MIT] sees “the pillars” as literal. The waters under the land of the globe were contained in great pools of superheated water, held up by pillars. Thus, when these “pillars” collapsed, the earth’s crust split, causing the foundations of the great deep to erupt as one of the causes of the flood. It is a very interesting and comprehensive theory. See, Walter Brown. 2008. *In the Beginning: Compelling for the Creation and the Flood*. 8th ed. Phoenix, AZ: Center for Scientific Creation. <http://www.creation-science.com/onlinebook/>)

1 Sam 2:8 in context is dealing in metaphor with the human rulers, but Presutta claims “even if that were so, the metaphor uses the structure of the cosmos, as the ancient Hebrews saw it, as its basis” (317). This is a case of circular reasoning. Presutta first assumes the ancient Hebrew worldview is that of a disk shaped earth and then finds a figurative statement to prove it. A person can make a metaphorical statement comparing two things to one another to evoke a mental image without it being reality. For example, Song of Solomon 4:2: “Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes Which have come up from their washing, All of which bear twins, And not one among them has lost her young.” In non-prosaic terms, you have all your teeth and they are clean. In 1 Samuel, the prophet says that the land of Israel belongs to the Lord as well as those human magistrates, which he uses as His servants to give it stability like pillars of a palace (cf. Rom 13:1-7).

²² “In the modern view, the earth does not have an upper side and an under side, and the cosmos does not have an inherent top-to-bottom directional arrangement.” He concludes: “The description of the earth in Job 26:7 is not compatible with the modern view of the earth in space” (Presutta 2007, 150). This is accurate and true to the biblical cosmos in which “up” or “above” is always toward the heavens and “down” or “under” is under the earth.

²³ Presutta does not understand the probable original text of 2 Pet 3:10-13, which he cites as his source of the idea that God will burn up and totally annihilate the present cosmos. “Burned up” (κατακαήσεται) in the TR is most likely originally “laid bare, discovered” (εὑρεθήσεται) (see NIV). In other words, the fire of judgment will wipe away everything, as the waters of the Flood did, not built on Christ (cf. 2 Pet 3:10ff with 1 Cor 3:12-13) by laying bare (2 Pet 3:10) or revealing (1 Cor 3:13) the source of the works, either from God or from the flesh.

²⁴ For those willing to listen to another paradigm: See, (1) Philip Stott. 2002. *Vital Questions*. Fellsmere, FL: Reformation Christian Ministries. (2) Walter Van der Kamp, 1988. *De Labore Solis: Airy’s Failure Reconsidered*. Pitt Meadows, B.C.: By the author. (Can be found on the internet)

²⁵ Gordon H Clark. 1988. *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*, 2nd ed. Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation.

²⁶ Philip Stott. 2002. *Vital Questions*. Fellsmere, FL: Reformation Christian Ministries. Stott goes through the history of explaining the constant speed of light and the attempts to demonstrate the movement of the earth. See also Walter Van der Kamp, 1988. *De Labore Solis: Airy’s Failure Reconsidered*. Pitt Meadows, B.C. for a summary of this research and their searching conclusions.

²⁷ See the following as two examples of paradigm busters that should be read even though you may not agree: (1) Philip Stott. 2002. *Vital Questions*. Fellsmere, FL: Reformation Christian Ministries. (2) John Byl. 2002. *God and Cosmos: A Christian View of Time, Space, and the Universe*. Edinburgh, UK: Banner of Truth. See also the following website by Creationist physicists: <http://www.commonssencescience.org>. See especially [/contradictions.html](http://www.commonssencescience.org/contradictions.html).

²⁸ See Commonsensescience.org and the <http://commonsensescience.org/contradictions.html>: “Contradictions in Modern Physics.”

²⁹ Herman Bavinck clearly sees this: “Scripture indeed always speaks geocentrically and also explains the origin of things from a geocentric viewpoint, but in this matter it uses the same language of ordinary daily experience as that in which we still speak today, even though we have a very different picture of the movement of the heavenly bodies from that which generally prevailed in the time when the Bible books were written” (Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 1999, I:107)

³⁰ Joshua commands the sun and moon – not the earth -- to cease moving and they cease. Presutta says that the account is obviously scientifically impossible because the sun and moon could not be so close together, and that there are not accounts of this in ancient literature. The second charge has been answered with documentation from ancient literature, something which Presutta mentions but blithely passes over.

³¹ Last, it is interesting to note the commentary upon the Joshua incident in the book of Habbakuk 3:11: “Sun and moon stood in their places; They went away at the light of Your arrows, At the radiance of Your gleaming spear. In indignation You marched through the earth; In anger You trampled the nations.” A more clear translation, suggested by Calvin’s translator, John Owen, is “The sun! the moon!—it stood [masculine thus the moon, which is always masculine], —she remained stationary [feminine thus the sun, which is sometime feminine].” Here again, the language could be that of appearance but it clearly states that the sun remained stationary and the moon stood [still] that is both did not move. Calvin’s comments on this passage demonstrate again that he believed that it was the sun, which ceased moving.

³² In the context of the wearisome cycles of life, Ecclesiastes 1:5 states : “Also, the sun rises and the sun sets; And hastening to its place it rises there again.”

³³ Psalm 19:5-6 seems also to indicate that the sun moves: “Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.”

³⁴ Terry Mortenson . 2004. *The Great Turning Point: The Church's Catastrophic Mistake on Geology-- Before Darwin*. Green Forest, AR: Master.

³⁵ Thomas J. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1957).

³⁶ (1) D. Russell Humphreys. 1994. *Starlight and Time: Solving the Puzzle of Distant Starlight in a Young Universe*. Green Forest, AR: Master. (2) John Hartnett. 2007. *Starlight, Time and the New Physics*. Powder Springs, GA: Creation Book.

³⁷ Earlier on Jos 10:12, Calvin writes: “As in kindness to the human race he divides the day from the night by the daily course of the sun, and constantly whirls the immense orb with indefatigable swiftness, so he was pleased that it should halt for a short time till the enemies of Israel were destroyed” (Calvin 1996, 153).

³⁸ See, e.g., Donald H. Kobe, Luther and Science: <http://www.leaderu.com/science/kobe.html#>, accessed July 16, 2007.

³⁹ See his unabridged commentary on Joshua 10.

⁴⁰ See pro-heliocentric volume by Kenneth J. Howell. 2003. *God's Two Books: Copernical Cosmology and Biblical Interpretation in Early Modern Science*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press

⁴¹ Fred Hoyle, *Astronomy and Cosmology* (San Francisco, CA: Freeman, 1975)

⁴² Thomas J. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1957),

⁴³ (1) James Patrick Holding. 1999. Is the raqiya‘ (‘firmament’) a solid dome? Equivocal language in the cosmology of Genesis 1 and the Old Testament: a response to Paul H. Seely. *Journal of Creation* 13/2 (Aug):44–51 (<http://creation.com/is-the-raqiya-firmament-a-solid-dome>). (2) James Patrick Holding. 2000. Is the `erets (earth) flat? Equivocal language in the geography of Genesis 1 and the Old Testament: A Response to Paul H. Seely, *Journal of Creation* 14/3(Dec):51–54, www.creation.com/is-the-earth-flat, accessed 1/29/2012.