

34. I first proposed the hydroplate theory in 1972. In the fall of 1988, I described, in lectures and radio broadcasts on more than a hundred different stations, the location of the former—now extinct—Grand Lake and how I believe its breaching formed the Grand Canyon. After a year of study and field work in Arizona, Utah, and Colorado, I located the lake's boundaries using geological and topological features. This explanation for the Grand Canyon was published for the first time in July 1989. [See Walt Brown, *In the Beginning*, 5th edition (Phoenix: The Center for Scientific Creation, 1989), pp. 75–76, 83.] Another extinct lake, Hopi Lake, had been described earlier. [See R. B. Scarborough, "Cenozoic Erosion and Sedimentation in Arizona," *Arizona Bureau of Geology and Mineral Technology*, 16 November 1984.]

Dr. Steven A. Austin of the Institute for Creation Research (ICR), as he eventually admitted in writing, purchased the 5th edition of *In the Beginning* "in August 1989, a few weeks after it had been published." [Steven Austin, personal correspondence, 29 August 1994.] In early 1990, Austin published, as if they were his, some key ideas of mine concerning Grand Lake and the formation of the Grand Canyon. I learned this on 7 May 1990, but said nothing to anyone about it for three years. On 4 November 1990, two people told me that Austin, on the previous day, had publicly said I had taken those key ideas *from him*. Again, I kept silent.

By mid-June 1993, I realized that Austin's false allegations against me were spreading and starting to hurt others. (Austin was also the unnamed geologist mentioned in Endnote 146 on page 268.) For example, in September 1992, Dr. Robert V. Gentry filmed me at the Grand Canyon presenting the Grand Lake explanation, as part of a professional and very expensive video production. Then, on 10 June 1993, Gentry told me that Dr. D. Russell Humphreys (who had worked closely with Austin and is now at ICR) was reporting that I had plagiarized ideas of Austin's. (Humphreys later wrote that he did not use the word "plagiarize," but Gentry insists that was the intended meaning.) Gentry told Humphreys that he did not believe that was true, but Gentry was naturally concerned about the consequences of those allegations for his production, so he appealed for me to help. ***I then realized that the issue had to be addressed.***

By way of background, geologists have known since at least 1861 that canyons can be carved by the breaching of a lake. [See Newberry, Endnote 23.] The discoveries of J Harlen Bretz in 1923 have shown generations of undergraduate geology students how a breaching lake can produce canyons in weeks. [See Endnote 25.]

In the early 1980s, Austin and many others saw that a small lake on Mount St. Helens had breached and that the escaping water had quickly carved a small canyon. In 1985, John H. Whitmore, a student of Austin's, wondered in a term paper if Hopi Lake, the extinct but previously discovered lake directly east of the Grand Canyon, could have breached the Kaibab Plateau and carved the Grand Canyon. That would have been highly unlikely, because (1) the

Kaibab Plateau is about 2,000 feet higher than the lake could have been, (2) the water would have had to penetrate through 30 miles of hard rock that was denser than concrete, and (3) any spillage down such a gradual slope to the west would erode little. In 1986, Dr. Edmond W. Holroyd told Austin that if a dam were built across the Colorado River near Grand Canyon Village, a very large lake would form. (Its area would have included and been larger than the combination of both Hopi Lake and what I later identified as Grand Lake.) Holroyd drew his big lake on a map and noted that some thought that if a very long east-west fault had then developed between what are now the north and south rims of the Grand Canyon, the lake's escaping waters might have carved the Grand Canyon. However, such an east-west fault has never been found, and faults in the Grand Canyon region typically run perpendicular to the canyon, not parallel. Furthermore, a canyon that eroded along a fault would not bend or meander, as the Grand Canyon does.

The work of Newberry and Bretz and the ideas of Whitmore and Holroyd led Austin to wonder in a very tentative way (as his writings show) if the breaching of Hopi Lake, directly east of the Grand Canyon, had carved the Grand Canyon. Any proposal suggesting that the Grand Canyon was carved when Hopi Lake breached would contain serious flaws (such as those mentioned above), which Austin knew. He did not realize that a much larger ***and separate*** lake was once north of Hopi Lake. (Austin was never able to produce any spoken or written record showing that he knew, before 1989, anything about Grand Lake, yet in 1990, he published a map—remarkably similar to the one I had published in 1989—showing, as he labeled it, "Grand Lake.") In 1988, I had discovered not only the boundaries of that extinct lake, but also its breach point. I had named the lake *Grand Lake*.

When Grand Lake breached, the escaping torrent of water quickly brought about the breaching of the western end of Hopi Lake as well. Both breach points are easily seen at the extreme north and south ends of Marble Canyon. I call the northern breach point (where Grand Lake spilled) *the funnel*. It is shown on pages 196–198. The southern breach point (where Hopi Lake spilled) is marked by the unique terrain where the Little Colorado River enters the Colorado River. After both lakes breached, the escaping waters and ensuing events formed the Grand Canyon in weeks and upbuckled (upwarped) the Kaibab Plateau. This chapter presents two dozen other evidences, which I gathered over a year's time (1988–1989), that support the Grand Lake explanation.

The chapter "**The Hydroplate Theory: An Overview**" on pages 107–144 and the chapters on liquefaction (pages 175–187) and limestone (pages 229–235) fit together other necessary pieces of the

puzzle—What produced all the sediments? What layered the strata and sorted the fossils? What cemented the rocks so uniformly? Why does the Grand Canyon expose so much limestone? And what were the forces, energies, and mechanisms that lifted the Rocky Mountains and raised the Colorado Plateau so high? *Today's Grand Canyon would not exist if the Colorado Plateau had not first risen more than a mile above sea level.* If the Grand Canyon is a consequence of a global flood, where did all the water come from, and where did it go afterwards? Any attempt to explain the Grand Canyon without answering these broader questions is shallow at best. And, of course, any explanation that is not accompanied by definite predictions is hollow.

After pondering Bob Gentry's appeal for me to respond to Humphreys' allegation, I realized that I had to go to the source and address Austin's spreading accusations. (*If I had simply been seeking priority over a lake's name, as some have implied, I would have done so years earlier.*) So, on 18 June 1993, I wrote Austin explaining the seriousness of the matter and asked if these stories I had heard were true. That same day, I also wrote ICR's then-Director, Dr. Henry M. Morris (now deceased), to inform him of this issue.

In all, Morris, Austin, and I exchanged six letters during the summer of 1993. Austin always denied that he had accused me of plagiarism, although I explained how he could contact the witnesses who heard him and were shocked by what he had said. He never contacted those witnesses. He also denied taking any ideas of mine, even though some of the new details he had published were so specific that they obviously had come from my work. (Mapmakers usually place on their maps tiny, unique details—even intentional errors—so that anyone who copies the map will be clearly shown to be guilty of copyright infringement.) Austin tried in several deceptive ways to show that he had come up with the Grand Lake explanation first. All were easily shown to be false—as a reading of our correspondence clearly shows. (All relevant correspondence is posted at [www.calvarypo.org](http://www.calvarypo.org). Also available there is a booklet published by Pastors Kevin Lea and Diego Rodriguez, which analyzes and dissects all the correspondence, other documents, and events pertaining to this dispute.)

By 19 August 1993, it was clear that we would not be able to resolve the issue ourselves, so I proposed in a letter to Morris and Austin that we put the messy matter into the hands of an independent Christian arbitrator to thoroughly study and resolve. Morris and Austin flatly refused. Denials and “bobbing and weaving” continued. Finally, after we had exchanged thirteen more letters, I told Morris and Austin that if they did not allow this matter to be arbitrated so it would not create further dissension and confusion, and so that behind-the-scenes accusations against me and my associates would cease, I would make the issue public. They reluctantly agreed, but, in various ways, Morris and Austin thwarted all efforts to seek arbitration. For example, after consulting with their lawyer, and only four days before the arbitration was to take place, they backed out of their written agreement to arbitrate and announced that they would participate only in *nonbinding*

*mediation.* (Arbitration is binding.) After months of effort, and having finally reached agreement on the time, place, and arbitrator, I felt betrayed. With plane reservations made and all preparations in place, I decided to proceed anyway, hoping mediation would produce an agreement. This mediation took place on 21 June 1994.

***However, by 28 September 1994, Austin had clearly broken even the agreement we signed at the mediation, as a reading of our correspondence will show. I also wrote everyone involved that Austin had broken the agreement. As of this writing (2008), misinformation is still coming out of ICR. Therefore, to answer questions from those now hearing this misinformation, the entire matter will be placed on the table for anyone to examine. People can reach their own conclusions.***

(Notice that I have followed the procedure laid out in Matthew 18:15-17. First, privately speak to the party you believe acted wrongly. Second, if he denies the allegations, present one or two witnesses to verify those allegations. Third, if that does not produce change, tell the church. I am now telling the church—the body of believers. Anyone wishing to receive a free CD-ROM containing all pertinent correspondence and writings can simply mail a stamped, self-addressed CD mailer containing a blank CD-ROM and case to: CSC, 5612 N. 20th Place, Phoenix, AZ 85016.)

Some may wonder why Austin and I have never worked together.

- ❖ My first attempt toward that end was in the summer of 1976. I flew to ICR in San Diego, in part to meet a “Stuart E. Nevins.” At the time, I did not know that Austin had been writing under that fictitious name to conceal his identity as a creationist. At lunch with Henry Morris, I said that I would like to meet “Stuart Nevins.” Morris, hiding the true situation, simply said that “Nevins” was out of town.
- ❖ In 1980, I flew to ICR for a series of meetings with its leadership. In an informal gathering, a person asked me to explain the hydroplate theory to those standing around. I declined, saying that I could not explain it in the brief time available. The group urged me to do so anyway; I again declined. Austin then walked in and also urged me to explain it, saying that he knew all the ideas about the flood and would quickly recognize what I had in mind. I began, but had completed only a few sentences when Austin interrupted to tell the group a related story. A minute or two later, he stopped talking and excused himself to catch his ride home. Our gathering dispersed.
- ❖ In March 1981, an acquaintance of Austin's had just attended a full-day seminar I had conducted in Chicago. Afterward, he called Austin and urged him to learn about the hydroplate theory. Austin's response was simply, “I wish these nongeologists would stay out of our business.” Later, on two occasions, I related this to Austin, but heard no denial or retraction—only silence.
- ❖ Since 1984, false comments, derogatory letters, and negative innuendos about me have periodically come from ICR. Most recently, ICR has written that the hydroplate theory is “laughable.” The specifics of these comments show that the writers have not read the hydroplate theory.

On several occasions, I have offered to debate the scientific merits of our respective understandings of the flood, but ICR always declines. One simple, quick format is explained in **“What Is the Recorded and Transcribed Telephone Debate Offer?”** on page 431. Another format would have a panel of independent experts (from a variety of relevant

fields) examine the hydroplate theory and the two flood theories that ICR has advanced: the canopy theory since 1972, and catastrophic plate tectonic theory since 1994. Each expert’s 1–2-page conclusion could then be published in one of several journals. Again, ICR declines. My debate offer still stands.