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Writing in *The New York Times* magazine (November 25, 2007), Hannah Rosin cast a bemused eye over a group of young-earth creationist geologists, assembled for the First Conference on Creation Geology, held in July 2007 in Cedarville, Ohio. "Creationist geologists are now numerous enough to fill a large meeting room and well educated enough to know that in rejecting the geologic timeline they are also essentially taking on the central tenets of the field," Rosin [wrote](#) [4]. "Any 'evidence' presented at the conference pointing to a young earth would be no more convincing than voodoo or alchemy to mainstream geologists, who have used various radiometric-dating methods to establish that the earth is 4.6 billion years old."

Despite the continued popularity of young-earth creationism -- as exemplified by the recent opening of Answers in Genesis's lavish Creation Museum, which expounds a version of young-earth creationism -- Rosen writes, "The new creationists are not likely to make much of a dent among secular scientists, who often just roll their eyes at the mention of flood geology," adding, "But they have become a burden to many geologists at Christian colleges around the country." Stephen Moshier, the chair of the geology department of Wheaton College, is quoted as saying, "Geology at Wheaton is presented and practiced much the same way as at secular universities ... Many of us at Christian colleges really grieve at what a problem this young-earth creationism makes for the Christian witness."

Rosin poignantly recounts the religious crisis faced by Kurt Wise, the creationist paleontologist who studied at Harvard University under Stephen Jay Gould: "He was already an avid fossil collector who dreamed 'an unattainable dream' of going to Harvard to study paleontology and then to teach at a big university. But as he told a friend, he couldn't reconcile the geologic ages with what he read in his Bible. ... In the end, he kept his Bible and achieved his unattainable dream. But it left him in a strange, vulnerable place. 'If all the evidence in the universe turned against creationism, I would be the first to

admit it, but I would still be a creationist because that is what the Word of God seems to indicate. Here I must stand."

It was a path not taken by paleontologist Kirk Johnson. Interviewed on NPR's "All Things Considered" (November 24, 2007), Johnson [commented](#) [5], "early on in my life, I sort of confronted the fact that fossils existed and that there was a deep history to the planet. Meanwhile, at Saturdays at church, I'd be hearing the planet is 6,000 years old, and when I was 15 years old, I found an outcrop on the side of the road, which had lake varves, little layers of the lake, and I counted a few inches of those and did the multiplication. And right there on the side of the road in British Columbia, there was 30,000 years of time. And I was, like, oh, something's not right there, so I -- and I think just being exposed to it in the negative way made me look at it in the positive way."

Johnson, vice president and chief curator at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, suggested that there is a certain irony about how evolution is presented in creationist families such as his: "I think that American kids, the ones that hear most about evolution are the ones that grew up in creationist families because they're told over and over about how evolution is wrong. They're also told about other things they shouldn't do, and most of them do the things they're not supposed to do." Johnson was on "All Things Considered" along with the artist Ray Troll (a member of NCSE) to discuss their new book, [Cruisin' the Fossil Freeway](#) [6] (Fulcrum Publishing, 2007), which (in the publisher's words) "follows the zany travels of a paleontologist and an artist as they drive across the American West in search of fossils."

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