

**Book Review - Refuting Compromise
Chapter 3 – The History of Interpretation
of Genesis 1-11**



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When you look at the explanations given by Dr. Sarfati, he appears to blast holes in all of Dr. Ross' explanations of church fathers who believed in an old earth. In fact, both sides of the creation debate take liberties in order to prove their point. Let's look at the section about Augustine (pages 118-119).

On pages 118-119 Sarfati quotes Augustine's *City of God*, note 29 is from book 12, chapter 10. When you read the context of the quote you find out that Augustine is speaking not about the age of the earth, but about the history of mankind. Note 31 is also from book 12, but is chapter 11, the very beginning of chapter 12, and a portion of chapter 13 (note the triple periods at the end of the paragraphs, indicating there is other text in between, showing that Sarfati has compiled the text that is most desirable to reach his own conclusions and omitted the rest). The problem again is that Augustine is speaking about the history of mankind, not the age of the earth. Sarfati stops his quotes before this would become obvious. Here is a more extensive quote (not the same translation):

As to those who are always asking why man was not created during these countless ages of the infinitely extended past, and came into being so lately that, according to Scripture, less than 6000 years have elapsed since He began to be, I would reply to them regarding the creation of man, just as I replied regarding the origin of the world to those who will not believe that it is not eternal, but had a beginning, which even Plato himself most plainly declares, though some think his statement was not consistent with his real opinion. If it offends them that the time that has elapsed since the creation of man is so short, and his years so few according to our authorities, let them take this into consideration, that nothing that has a limit is long, and that all the ages of time being finite, are very little, or indeed nothing at all, when compared to the interminable eternity. Consequently, if there had elapsed since the creation of man, I do not say five or six, but even sixty or six hundred thousand years, or sixty times as many, or six hundred or six hundred thousand times as many, or this sum multiplied until it could no longer be expressed in numbers, the same question could still be put, Why was he not made before? For the past and boundless eternity during which God abstained from creating man is so great, that, compare it with what vast and untold number of ages you please, so long as there is a definite conclusion of this term of time, it is not even as if you compared the minutest drop of water with the ocean that everywhere flows around the globe.

The only quote I am aware of where Augustine does speak about the age of the earth seems open to Ross's progressive creation view, or even more, Collin's analogical view. Here is the full text of City of God , book 11, chapter 6 (the last line says it all):

THAT THE WORLD AND TIME HAD BOTH ONE BEGINNING, AND THE ONE DID NOT ANTICIPATE THE OTHER. *For if eternity and time are rightly distinguished by this, that time does not exist without some movement and transition, while in eternity there is no change, who does not see that there could have been no time had not some creature been made, which by some motion could give birth to change, — the various parts of which motion and change, as they cannot be simultaneous, succeed one another, — and thus, in these shorter or longer intervals of duration, time would begin? Since then, God, in whose eternity is no change at all, is the Creator and Ordainer of time, I do not see how He can be said to have created the world after spaces of time had elapsed, unless it be said that prior to the world there was some creature by whose movement time could pass. And if the sacred and infallible Scriptures say that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, in order that it may be understood that He had made nothing previously, — for if He had made anything before the rest, this thing would rather be said to have been made “in the beginning,” — then assuredly the world was made, not in time, but simultaneously with time. For that which is made in time is made both after and before some time, — after that which is past, before that which is future. But none could then be past, for there was no creature by whose movements its duration could be measured. But simultaneously with time the world was made, if in the world's creation change and motion were created, as seems evident from the order of the first six or seven days. For in these days the morning and evening are counted, until, on the sixth day, all things which God then made were finished, and on the seventh the rest of God was mysteriously and sublimely signalized. **What kind of days these were it is extremely difficult, or perhaps impossible for us to conceive, and how much more to say!***

How many more liberties Sarfati took with the quotes of the church fathers is unclear. One thing is clear. When it comes to creation, you, the believer, have to make up your own mind. It doesn't matter what the Church Fathers of old have said (see my article [Church Fathers \(www.answersincreation.org/churchfathers.htm\)](http://www.answersincreation.org/churchfathers.htm)). With modern science, you know 100 times as much information as the Church Fathers did about the creation...you are in a much better position to decide than they were.