

A Talk with Andrew Snelling

By Don Green

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Don Green. Well, it's a very special time that we have together tonight to be able to hear directly and at length from Andrew Snelling, not just from the pulpit as we did on Sunday, but to be able to ask him a number of questions in what lies ahead in his life and in Kym's, and I'm very excited about that. And I do want to just emphasize and clarify something. When we made the presentation on Sunday, for those of you that were with us, there was kind of an element of looking back and thanking Andrew and Kym for all that they've done. Tonight's interview is a pivot and it's a matter of looking forward and not so much reflecting on the past and dwelling on that, but looking forward to what lies ahead and so I'm excited for Andrew to come up and join us now. Andrew, if you would. These beautiful chairs were done by David Lambert. The upholstery on them is just spectacular and that's what David does for a living and we have the benefit of it. So David, thank you even for this as well as the music that you lead us in. So how are you doing, mate?

Andrew Snelling. Stressed. Stretched.

Don. Stressed and stretched. Yeah, so where do things stand in the process now?

Andrew. Well, our house is sold, but we've had to divide things between what we can take and what we have to leave behind and what we have to pass on or whatever, and so because the moving company comes on Thursday to pack an inventory and upload into a 20-foot container and then leave, so we're very busy trying to sort that sorting process. As I've explained to a number of people, the Australian quarantine laws are so strict that if we packed it ourselves, they would go through it very meticulously and give us the bill for their time, whereas if we get professionals to pack it for us, which saves us problems, and they certify it going through quarantine, that makes the passage that much smoother. And Kym's cousin's husband works for the Australian Quarantine Service, so that helps checking how they view things. So yes, after Friday things will get a little bit easier to mop up things, so we're looking forward to just a little bit of pause in a sense before we head off on May 16. So we're here for two more Sundays and two more Tuesday nights, Lord willing.

Don. But it's been a very stressful and just very demanding stretch of weeks here.

Andrew. Yeah, but these are seasons in life that everybody has. You had to move from California after so many years there and, you know, you just have to learn to pace yourself and trust the Lord in the process. We had tremendous support and help and the way the Lord also provided a buyer for us so easily that it took a lot of stress off that process which is a blessing.

Don. This night is a typical representative of the kind of man that Andrew is. I gave him the opportunity, in fact encouraged him, said, Andrew, with everything going on, let's change this. We don't have to do an interview. I can preach. And he said, "Oh, no, no, no. This is what we said we would do. I want to do it." And so thank you for extending yourself.

Andrew. It's more about everyone has expectations rather than me wanting to project myself.

Don. Let's talk about the transition to Australia. I think a lot of people know, but maybe not everyone, about the family that you've got waiting for you. You've got a whole crew of a welcoming committee that's just waiting for you to get there.

Andrew. Well, actually, it will be a very small committee to start with because we've got two sons and a daughter. And Philip, our eldest, who visited last June, July, he's in Sydney, which, of course, is on the East Coast, and it's a temperate climate. But that's where I grew up. But Peter, who's our second son and married with five, and they were here at Christmas, visited at Christmas, they live in Brisbane. And Rachel, our daughter, who's on her own, she lives just 40-45 minutes south of Peter in a satellite area called the Gold Coast. It's all subtropical, golden beaches, surf and retirement area, etc. And so we moved to Brisbane at the end of 1983, and it was from Brisbane that we left and Rachel was born in Brisbane, so Brisbane is their home. Peter settled there as well. And so that's where we're heading for, not because we're going to neglect our Sydney family, it's just that Rachel's on her own and we want to support her. She's so excited about us coming back and understandably, and give Peter support and Tracy support with their five children, which we want to have input into them.

So when we left Brisbane, we sold our home there because we didn't want to have renters and put the pressure on our kids to keep an eye on the property. So we've got to buy back into the market. So Rachel will be the only one there in Brisbane to meet us when we arrive. We actually fly through Sydney because it worked out best with the airline's arrangements. Fly through Sydney, go up to Brisbane, she'll meet us. We're leaving here on Thursday because it will be Saturday morning for her, which is easier for her work to come and pick us up. But Peter is away at the moment. He's away on an extended vacation with his family, so his house is vacant. So Rachel's going to take us there and he's got a spare car, so we'll have that to begin with for about six weeks, which will give us the opportunity to purchase, line up a vehicle for ourselves, start to get established, you know, phone numbers and all these sorts of things.

Don. You're really starting over from...

Andrew. Well yeah, the problem is you guys don't follow the standard that others follow. I mean, we have two 40-volt outlets and we have three pins and we actually have a switch where you switch the power socket on or off, you see, and you've got to retrain your brain because in Australia, down is "on" and up is "off." So we'll be retraining everything. But then we've got, Rachel's got spare space so we can gravitate between the two homes until we find a place of our own. So we'll be looking and the good thing, in one sense, is that the moving company says it will be taking between 100 and 156 days for our shipment to get to Australia and so that gives us the time to sort things out and perhaps get a delivery address for them to bring things to when they come.

Don. So three to six months for your things to arrive in Australia.

Andrew. That's right, which means we're having to pack what we need in our airport luggage, what we need for three to five months.

Don. And I assume you won't be packing any perishable items like bananas or anything in there, right?

Andrew. No, no, no. You can't do that. In fact, you know, there was poor Kym last night, she's so devoted to making sure she complies. You know, she wanted to take a few gardening tools back. Well, any soil is not kosher. It'll get confiscated. So you've got to meticulously clean everything because Australia being an island continent, that's how they protect from pests and bugs coming into the country.

Don. Invasive species and all of that, yeah. Yeah, so you mentioned your grandchildren. Talk about them just a little bit and if you don't mind, just talk a little bit about what happened with Denali almost 10 years ago.

Andrew. Yeah, Denali is our eldest.

Don. You nearly lost him.

Andrew. Yeah, we nearly lost him. When we left Australia, Philip and Miriam, well, long story short, is we were seeing them off and they were going to head off the next day to Taiwan for mission service, and we had come back from Israel, from conducting a tour in Israel for Answers in Genesis. And my father called up. He was having a heart attack and it was the onset of acute myeloid leukemia. So we had to put our plans on hold for six months in coming over here while we cared for him. That was 2010, end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011. And so we were commuting between Sydney and Brisbane, which is 10 to 12 hours driving, checking on our home back there and also taking care of my dad. But he passed away and we had to work through the estate issues before we came over here.

But Denali and his sister Noemi were born before they went to Taiwan, and Denali had a lot of learning difficulties and socialization and in the Taiwanese culture it was very

difficult for him to cope, and halfway through their first term, they were advised that it might be best if they returned to Australia so as to get Denali socialized and grown a little bit. And they were devastated. They were devastated. And they went back to Sydney and Philip has gone into campus ministry, but they were living in Sydney and, because they were still figuring out, still upset with what's happening, and then September, the first September after they were back, a few months after they were back, Denali started to break out in a rash on his skin and the doctors thought, oh, you know, it's just, just, you know, ended up thinking it might be foot and mouth that children get. And then it got worse. And that was Friday, Saturday. By Sunday morning, all his skin was starting to peel off. And Philip contacted his brother, Peter, and said, get into the emergency straight away. Well, they happened to be close to the largest children's hospital in Australia and the triage nurse knew exactly what it was. She took photographs and sent it to the dermatologist, but he was immediately admitted. It was what they call Stevens-Johnson syndrome, where the immune system attacks the skin. And so he was three weeks, he was wrapped up like a mummy, like a burns victim, put on morphine and antibiotics. He was in intensive care. And we were here in the US. We couldn't leave because we were in the process of applying for our green card.

Don. And what year was this?

Andrew. That was 2014.

Don. So this was early on in the life of our church that this came up.

Andrew. 2014, yes. No, it was 2013, 2014, 2013. Anyhow, he had surgical teams on standby. Every time they wanted to change his dressing, he went into surgery, and it was touch and go. We couldn't leave the country, but they said, well, you can't do anything from coming over. Miriam, our daughter-in-law, has got her parents there and her brother there, and they had that support. But he pulled through miraculously. And so Kym and I, we've always been fond of Denali, not that we try to make anyone special, but he had a difficult time, but he's a very, very caring, caring boy. He's now 14, going on 15. He will write notes for his schoolmates of encouragement and put them in their mailboxes at school. But we really think that the Lord has something special for him. He's really got a heart for people.

Don. And Andrew, if they had gone to Taiwan...

Andrew. Well, that's right. That's what they realized. They immediately realized if they'd been in Taiwan, because that hospital only has about six cases a year. It's one in a million odds for having that syndrome, something like that. And they were told, don't look up on the internet, because the prognosis wasn't good. And so, yeah, they realized if he'd been in Taiwan, they probably would have lost him. And so, yeah. But they still have a heart for going back to Taiwan. In fact, Philip has got his long service leave, like Peter has now. It's like a sabbatical to save up with your employer. They're planning to visit Taiwan and Japan in the middle of the year to retrace some of their steps.

But we grew close to Denali and Noemi because we went to Taiwan from here, once, Kym went twice, I went once with Kym, and we looked after them in their apartment, their really small apartment, no language ability whatsoever, you know, these toddlers, while Philip and Miriam had a break and we grew a bond. And then since that, when they've been home, in some sense, the advantages of visiting from here is that when we go, we've gone over the Christmas New Year period when it's school holidays and everything, it's summer vacation, we live in with the family. Well, we've looked after Denali and Noemi a few times on their own while their parents have been away. So there is a really good bond there and we want to build that with the other ones, the younger ones.

Don. Yeah, one of the things that I'm just so happy for you about is to be able to go back and still have a few years before Denali's going off to college and all that, because he's the oldest of the grandchildren, right?

Andrew. That's right.

Don. And so there's a window of time here.

Andrew. That's right. But in Australia, it's not usual, unless you live in the rural areas where you have to come to the city, the city families, normally the young people commute, as I did, to university. And I love that because I had Mum and Dad's support at home, and also your church family supports you and it's very important that crossroads in a young person's life.

Don. Yeah, now we have a number of grandparents in the congregation of Truth Community and maybe you could just give a word of encouragement to us, because I'm a grandparent also, just get some perspective on the role of grandparents and what the opportunity is there.

Andrew. Yeah, well, for us, I've said this and it's tangential in a sense, but I've said this repeatedly, it's ironic that us being over here has been an advantage to us in building our relationships with our daughter-in-laws because if we were living nearby, they're the sort of young ladies that would have resented in-laws getting too involved, but because we've built the relationship, we're very welcome. In fact, Tracy said, you can stay in our home for as long as you like when we go back to Brisbane. And so we're building that relationship with the children and so I'd encourage grandparents, just be faithful in praying and looking for the opportunities. Be aware of the spouse of your son or daughter to not cross boundaries, that's going to be very important, and build that relationship with your daughter or son-in-law first and that will give you a better entree into your grandchildren. And they'll grow to appreciate you when you're there for special occasions, when you can do things with the children that they can't, particularly if there's multiple siblings and they want some time out. Peter's kept a tally of all the times we looked after Denali and Emi for Philip, and he's got this tally. But Kym's got a formula, "Wait a minute, we've done that many days for Phil and Miriam with Denali and that's two, but you've got to divide by five because you've got five." So we have a bit of fun

like that. And of course, if you're in the home, obviously, you don't want to interfere with their running of the household and discipline in the kitchen even. You've got to establish those boundaries. I know most of the grandparents here understand that completely. They can probably give me a few lessons as well from their experiences. But it's a learning thing. You've got to be sensitive to one another just as we do in our own homes. When our children grow up and get established, we want to be lenient with them and give them room to develop.

Don. And grandparenting is one of those many things in life where you really have to take the long view and not just respond to what's happening in a period of time, in a few days or weeks. You've got to take the long view, where are we going to be 10, 15, 20 years from now? And that's the patience that you're describing lends toward that good long-term result.

Andrew. And you try and build a relationship with each one of the grandchildren individually and so that they know that you're available at any time. And, you know, Denali and Emi are like that with us; they'll talk to us and we're hoping to build that relationship with the younger ones as well.

Don. I can't quite remember what you and I have talked about privately in the past about Denali, but I seem to recall that he's taken an interest in your work.

Andrew. Yes, yes. In fact, he was telling everyone when they were coming over last year about it and he wanted to go back and tell everyone. Yes, he has an interest. He doesn't have necessarily a scientific bent, but interestingly, he asked his parents and they've been very good about extending him in different areas, he actually enrolled and got special permission to enroll in the church history course at the seminary where Philip and Mary met and did their training and met. And so he sat the classes and he just loved it and he's really interested. He's got a wicked sense of humor, but he's a great kid. And so, you know, the Lord's got something special for him, that's for sure.

Don. It will be exciting over the years to watch how the Lord works his plan out into Denali's life, as well as all the others.

Andrew. And they're old enough, so we saw them the other night on the FaceTime, and I sowed the seeds. I said, "Hey, look, by September, we may be in our own place. And hey, it's your September vacation time. You could come up and stay with us for two weeks." So they like that idea and I don't think their parents would complain because it gives them time off too.

Don. Andrew, one of the things that I'm all anxious for everyone to understand is that this is not retirement for you. You're going back to Australia, but this is not retirement from your ministry.

Andrew. No. Well, I don't see the word retirement in the Bible, do you?

Don. I haven't, no. You plan to keep working....

Andrew. I'm not laying down the law for you. Well, I grew up with the pastor that I grew up under, who I admired, and you remind me of him. He said, "I'd rather die with my boots on than rust out." And when he finished the pastorate in the inner city church where it was, and a lot of pressure, he actually went to country churches that were starved of in-depth teaching, which was lower key, and so he spent a number of years helping to build up those sorts of ministries. So yes, I'm going to scale back slightly. I was asked to hand over responsibilities, leadership responsibilities at AIG for looking after the research department and editing the online journal. I mean, I was quite happy to still do that remotely because I'd done it remotely before coming over here. But on the other hand, that's the way the Lord can lead to free my time up because there's research projects that I haven't finalized and written up. There's areas that I want to do research in. And I want to be able to write, because I say to people, research left in a filing cabinet doesn't do anyone any good. You need to get it out. And I work on laminizing things as well and there'll be magazine articles, web articles, that kind of thing. And I'm also looking at several books. I've probably got four or five in mind already.

Don. So tell us a little bit about those writing projects that, you know, maybe two or three of the most strategic ones that you have in mind because this, in some ways it seems to me that this upcoming chapter in your life could be one of the most strategic for the long-term impact.

Andrew. Yes, I've got a friend, geologist, creation geologist friend who we don't agree on every detail and there's a lot of controversy amongst a number of creation geologists, but we are very good buddies because we treat one another with grace. And so I've tried hard to always act with integrity and brotherly love and so now being a more senior guy, I see my role as helping to smooth out some of these controversies. And for geologists, they want to know, you're looking at the geological record, and I deal with this in the book, in the appendix, about where do we see the evidence of where the flood began in the rock layers, say in the Grand Canyon, and most geologists, creation geologists, accept that they're on the same page on that one, although there's a few that differ, but it's a question of where in the geological record do we see where the flood ended? And that debate gets rather bitter at times and so I'm already planning and starting a paper where I want to lay out both the sides of the argument and the pitfalls and the problems that I know. This is why I don't argue with my friend, because I know the position I hold has some weaknesses, as I know the position he holds has some weaknesses. So people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. And so I want to lay that out and say, "Look, we've got to work together to solve these issues." But ultimately, I take the view that some things we will never know this side of eternity and we have to live with that tension. We have to live with those tensions. And it says in Hebrews, by faith we understand the worlds. It's not by scientific evidence that we understand the worlds were created, it's ultimately by faith. And so, lots of issues we have to hang on to lightly because we don't have all the facts, we don't have all the insights, God alone does. Yes, we can ask for wisdom, but ultimately God sometimes hides details from us so that we do have to exercise faith. And then I remind people that ultimately when we get to glory, and I don't say this in any

wrong sense, when we see God in all his glory, all of our questions will become trivial and irrelevant because it will all be solved. It will be irrelevant as to those details.

Don. Yeah, and we'll be consumed with the surpassing glory of Christ.

Andrew. Correct, correct, and the magnificence of eternity laid out before us. It's just staggering.

Don. Yeah, now you mentioned the book, "Foundations in the Book of Genesis: A Geologist's Perspective," and you were talking about just now the issue about where the flood ended, if I said that properly, it reminds me of something that you say in the book is that there are different levels of dogmatism that we have to have on some of these issues based on how clearly something's revealed in Scripture and where we start drawing deductions. Talk about that issue because that is so critical.

Andrew. It is, and I've learnt that over the years because it's so easy for a scientist to get, dig his toes in with his pet ideas and we have to boil it down. What are your pet ideas based on? When the Scriptures make a clear statement, you know, God said, "Let there be light and there was light," that's a clear statement. You know, there were six literal days. And so there's things that there's no negotiation on because that's what God has said, but there are times where people will speculate and I dealt with this in one of the chapters in the book. So, for example, the issue of the waters above. On day two we read that God took some of the waters which were covering the earth on day one and separated them and put them above the expanse. And so, years ago the idea was that there was a water vapor canopy up there and so many people were dogmatic about it, but then they didn't read the text of Scripture clearly because they thought that the expanse was just the atmosphere and above that was the water vapor and beyond that was outer space, but you go back to the Scriptures and the Scriptures make it clear that the sun, moon and stars are in the expanse. In the Psalms, at the end of the Psalms, after the flood, it talks about the waters above. It's still there. They didn't fall down at the time of the flood because the idea was the water came down in a water vapor canopy to provide the 40 days and 40 nights of rain. So there are times where we infer from Scripture and that's fine, but we have to be careful that we don't put any inferences from Scripture that we figure out that that's on the same level as a clear statement by God, because we don't have all the information and often we have to make sure that we've understood Scripture clearly. And then there's the other level, the lesser level, where we're totally speculating and when we do that, we have to be exceedingly careful about being dogmatic at all. Those are the things that are very negotiable.

Don. Well, and it's not just a mental reservation, but it's incumbent upon teachers and scholars of integrity to say, "This is what we're doing."

Andrew. That's right.

Don. Because sometimes some of these men want to project greater authority than what they really have and want to dig in on certain pet positions and we need to know are we

dealing with speculation or clear statements that are proven for Scripture, something in between.

Andrew. And the danger is leading other people astray. If they go out and try to use that information to reach someone and they end up with egg on their face, it just discredits the Scriptures.

Don. Yeah, that's right. So going back to the writing that you plan to do, are these books that are going to come out or articles?

Andrew. Well, the books will primarily be laybooks. I want to do one on the flood, a lay version of my bigger book, "The Genesis Flood Revisited," in a sense. I want to do a book on the age of the Earth, a book on radiometric dating or radioisotope dating. I want to do a book on the research that I've done in the Grand Canyon, where I talk a little bit about the history of what happened and lay out the details so people can... Oh, and I've even thought about there, perish the thought, of writing some memoirs about all the adventures I've had over the years. They're absolutely staggering, the places I've been had the privilege of being, the people I've had the privilege of meeting. It's just amazing. You sign up for this and you never know where God's going to take you.

Don. Even going back to your secular career, some of the things that you did in worldwide conferences was just an amazing opportunity from the Lord.

Andrew. Well, I got this project that I did my PhD on, a uranium deposit in what is the Kakadu National Park. It's in the tropical north of Australia. It's remote. And the interesting thing was, I didn't know it at the time, but after I graduated and I was working in industry, and then when I went into creation ministry, the US Department of Energy, through the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, was wanting to know about the disposal of nuclear waste, how do we know what they're going to look like, what they do in the ground if we bury them? And so they wanted to look at a high-grade uranium deposit as an example of what it might be like and so because I was the geologist on this international project, I was dealing with Japanese, Korean, European, Australian, American scientists, physicists and chemists, and I was the geologist, and I was giving them all this advice, and the guys in Australia who were government agents who were responsible for heading up the project, only a few of them knew that I was a creationist. And I remember coming home from a Grand Canyon trip, coming into Sydney, and my parents brought a change of clothes to me at Sydney Airport. I gave them my luggage and I got back on the plane and flew to Darwin to meet this team to go out and take them to get samples for their research. So yeah, it's crazy when you look back and think about it.

Don. Yeah, the memoirs would be wonderful and there would be a ready audience for them here at Truth Community Church for however long the Lord gives this church ministry.

Andrew. Or if he comes in the meantime.

Don. I've often thought this, I've never said this to you, I don't know that I've said it to anyone including Nancy, but two things, let me preface it this way, I would encourage you all to appreciate this about the man that you're hearing speak today. The experiences that you've had and the level of sophisticated understanding that you have of geology, put aside creation, geology, the things that you did are just exceedingly advanced.

Andrew. Well, you know, I said on Sunday, you know, that's God's doing, not mine. And he, you know, if God gifts us, sorry.

Don. No, you're OK. You're OK. Go ahead.

Andrew. No, I'm saying I had to do a recording for a podcast this afternoon and they wanted me to give advice for young people. You know, if God gives you a passion, that's where he's probably gifted you but you don't get a big head about it. You know, you've got to develop that passion but remember that if God opens doors and you don't go through them and they close, well, God will find someone else to go through those doors. He alone raises people up and brings people down. It's his work, not ours. We're just to be obedient earthen vessels through whom he can use.

Don. Yeah, and one of the points that I wanted to make and just an expression of appreciation for you, and I know that I speak on behalf of the whole congregation when I say this, is that in the week-to-week interactions that we have had with you for the past 12 years, there's never been a time where you've lorded your expertise over anyone. And if someone just met you here at church on a week-to-week basis, they would have no idea of the expertise you have because you don't wear it on your sleeve.

Andrew. Yeah, but the other side of the coin is that, in a sense, as you begin to know more, you realize how much more you don't know. And so really, I challenge people in academia to recognize that there's a limit to our knowledge and we're still learning, and if you stop learning, you know, you should be learning all your life. So there's so much more to know. So there's no room for getting a swelled head because, you know, you don't know much at all compared to what God knows.

Don. You never really stopped to reflect on the fact that in almost any room you enter, you're the smartest guy in the room.

Andrew. I don't know about that. I know some smart guys.

Don. Well, I'm very excited. The book projects that you mentioned, if you can devote your time exclusively to them, how long does it take you to write, say, some of those laybooks? Is that a six-month project for you or longer?

Andrew. No, it could be six months. Okay. Just depending how I'm fitting in other things because a lot of details have already been fleshed out. I can pull together material that I've already had and add to it easily. So, yeah, it's really how far I want to go in each project.

Don. Talk just a little bit about the book, "The Genesis Flood Revisited," because that's a really significant book in the history of the church, given what led up to it. So talk about the origin of that book and bring us up to date.

Andrew. Yeah, well, it goes back into the late '50s when Henry Morris, Henry Morris II, or Senior, was a professor of hydraulic engineering at Virginia Polytechnic University in Blacksburg, Virginia. And he had come to the conviction that the Scriptures had to be followed and he was trying to defend the flood and he went to a conference, it was called the American Scientific Affiliation; it was a group of Christians that were trying to marry Scripture and science. And he went to defend the integrity of the Scriptures with a young earth and a global flood and he met John Whitcomb there, who was professor of Old Testament at Grace College Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana. And so the two of them agreed to team up on this project and it came out in 1961, "The Genesis Flood." That was a landmark book because it was the book that I read as a teenager. They're passionate about geology, trying to figure out the science and the scriptural details. It was that book that was pivotal for me and I know for many, many others and it really spawned the growth of more scientists wanting to defend the integrity of Genesis, more so than theologians and Old Testament scholars. And it's been the scientists that have been at the forefront, Christians, men and women of science. But that book was written in the '60s, published in 1961, and in the 1960s, there was a complete revolution in secular geological thinking. The beginning of the '60s, everyone believed the continents were fixed. By the end of the '60s, everyone believed the continents were moving around, the so-called plate tectonics that explains the earthquakes in California, for example.

And so that book became dated and I first went to the Institute for Creation Research, Ken Ham had gone over there to work for them, and they invited me over kindly to be involved in a Grand Canyon trip. It was the bus trip that year, 1990. And I subsequently got involved in more of their Grand Canyon trips and Henry Morris spoke to me on one of those occasions and said, "Look..."

Don. The original author of the 1961 book.

Andrew. Yes, the original author, 1961. He was retiring and he devoting himself to writing and his son John had taken over, and he said, "Look, I need someone to write a sequel, an update of that book because I don't have it in me to do it with all the new developments." You know, the whole radioactive dating issue had mushroomed; it was only in its infancy in the beginning of the 1960s. And so he'd asked Dr. Steve Austin at ICR, but he didn't take it on, and so I hemmed and hawed about it and I said I'd do it. And I tried to start tackling it, but it was very difficult in the '90s to do that until the Lord brought about a complete disruption in my life that at the time was catastrophic. We don't have time to go into details. I thought for a few days that my career was over, that's how catastrophic it was, but the Lord was directing my paths and it's actually the reason why I'm in this seat tonight is that the Lord changed the paths. And so I ended up working for ICR remotely from Australia and part of my responsibility was to keep working on that

book as well as teaching in their graduate school and running trips and everything. And that first section of the book,

Don. ...f this book.

Andrew. ...of this book was actually a sermon I preached for the first time at the worship service at the beginning of an ICR tour. And so I had a profitable time at ICR and by the time I left ICR, I had developed that book. And I chose to give it a different title. When we first published it, it was called "Earth's Catastrophic Past: Geology, Creation and the Flood," because I didn't want to compete with the original book.

Don. And you were showing deference to the original authors of that.

Andrew. Oh, absolutely, because that's a classic. God had used that mightily. And who was I as the young upstart to think that I could contribute something further? Well, the book has sold reasonably well, but then the publisher, "Answers in Genesis" took it over from ICR and the co-publisher decided that maybe it needed a bit of revamping, put it into one volume, enlarge the size of the book in terms of the page size to get it into one volume and rebrand it. So they rebranded it as "The Genesis Flood Revisited." It's the same book as the original; that's another project is to do an update, a second edition of that book.

Don. So it's now available in a one-volume format.

Andrew. Correct.

Don. "The Genesis Flood Revisited."

Andrew. Yes, and it's a biblical and scientific defense of both creation and the flood, particularly looking at the geological issues.

Don. So it's tied directly by title to the original work...

Andrew. Correct. Correct.

Don. ...which was lost in the way that it was titled the first time.

Andrew. Yes. Unfortunately, Dr Henry Morris passed away before it was published but John Whitcomb was around, and he was very effusive about it. He was really thrilled about it.

Don. There's so many different ways that we could talk about that, the technical aspects of it. So if someone has the two volumes, "Earth's Catastrophic Past," they don't need to go buy "The Genesis Flood Revisited."

Andrew. And you know, Don, it's good in a sense. The Lord, I don't often get feedback and I think that's good, you know, because I closet myself away a lot doing work, but occasionally the Lord gives you feedback of people who have been blessed by what you do. He doesn't allow you to get that too often because you could think you're smarter than what you are. But no, and it's been encouraging to know that there have been many who have been blessed by that book and are reading it and using it.

Don. Yeah, talk just a little bit about the, it had to be a daunting project for you, and really you alluded to it already, but such a landmark book to have the legacy of that book put into your hands to preserve and extend, just talk about what that meant to you in terms of the weight of responsibility and the opportunity.

Andrew. It was a weight of responsibility, but the Lord provided in the sense that I was working remotely from Australia and so because of the time zone differences, I'm asleep when, and this will be the same when we go back in Australia, I'll be asleep while all the email traffic comes in and that means when I can get up in the morning to work, I can just deal with those emails while I'm ready because everyone in the US is asleep, and then I can chart my day uninterrupted. Whereas here I get emails all through the day and people want this and that and it's very hard and that's one of the reasons why I've done a lot of my work from home because people, you know, they want your attention straight away which is fine but you've got to have mental space, as you know, to do the thinking and the preparation and, you know, poring over books, trying to piece together the information, making sure things are properly referenced, because this has got to stand up to scrutiny. And so it was an onerous task, but when you've got weeks and weeks where you meticulously can work like that, it really makes a difference. And I guess the Lord has given me the ability to focus like that. I can be very focused on a project and keep at it and not tire of working on it.

Don. It's hard for people like us to understand the exclusive attention that a major writing project takes.

Andrew. Well, yeah, and it's like this with the recent project I had in the Grand Canyon, which I'm just finishing now. When COVID came along, I mean, I had these microscope sections I wanted to study under the microscope, but when you have to go out to speak and this and that and the other, it's hard to have concentrated time. Well, COVID came along, everything was cancelled. I could spend four months in my basement, day after day, just looking down a microscope, looking at all these slides, and people think you're crazy, but that's the kind of effort, the intensive effort, because you've got to build the case very carefully to have all the information and the evidence that will refute the naysayers and give robustness to the results so that people in the pew can have confidence that the work is valid and can stand up to scrutiny.

Don. Yeah, one of the things that those who appreciate your work that we need to be mindful of, we need to be praying for the Lord to give you like at least another 10 years to be able to do all of the writing that is in your mind to do, right?

Andrew. That's correct, yes.

Don. Not just the life, but the strength and mental ability to continue it.

Andrew. On my list, of course, is to take care of one's health. It means regular exercise, etc., rest periods, etc., because that lengthens and I've worked furiously and traveled a lot, and now I need to be careful and cautious about these issues. You know, but our times are in the Lord's hands. Our days are numbered and we have to be prepared every day. Every morning I get up and I thank the Lord for another day because you can't take any day guaranteed. Even when you're a young person, you can't and that's a sober reminder that our days are numbered and God will call us home when it's his time. But in the meantime, we're to occupy and so we need to be busy in the Master's service. But we need to be wise about how we do it and so it's important to pace oneself for the long view with the Lord's help to accomplish what all that he's put in our hearts to do.

Don. Yeah, you know, some of the things you're saying there make me think of Iain Murray, the Christian biographer. He's in his 90s and he's still working on new books. It's just amazing.

Andrew. Yeah, well you knew he had a pastoral stint in Australia.

Don. That's right. Yeah, he's written, one of his lesser-known books is a book about the Christian history of Australia, which I have on my shelf waiting to be read.

Andrew. That was a church in Sydney.

Don. Andrew, do us a favor here, when it comes to some of these scientific issues, young earth, worldwide flood, who are some of the writers that you could recommend that either from the past or present-day writers that you respect that those who want to explore these issues could look to as reliable sources.

Andrew. Yeah, well, definitely Henry Morris and John Whitcomb, of course. But we've got Bill Barrick, who taught at the Master's Seminary for a number of years in Old Testament; he was in charge of postgraduate studies until he retired just recently. There are younger scholars that are coming up, but particularly the scientists. There is John Morris at ICR, Steve Austin at ICR, and I could go on with, the name escapes me at the moment, but there are a number of younger men that are coming up and are getting themselves established. You know, even Nathaniel Jeanson at AIG is an interesting character, but he's really digging into certain areas. Danny Faulkner with astronomy. You've got men at Bob Jones University who are right on board. John Whitmore at Cedarville University. Steve Gollmer at Cedarville University who's an atmospheric physicist. Larry Vardaman, who I worked with at ICR, is a great guy. And then you've got younger scholars, Matt McLain, who's at the Masters University. He's a graduate of Cedarville. He trained under John Whitmore. He went and got his PhD and now he's started a geology program out at the Masters.

Don. One of the things that stands out, and many of those names are not familiar to me, but it's encouraging just that off the top of your head you're able to list out a dozen names that are doing profitable work showing us that there is a broad foundation of older, established, and upcoming guys who are defending biblical authority in these issues of science, astronomy, and so forth.

Andrew. Another name I should mention is Dr Steven Boyd who also taught at the Masters for some years. He's an outstanding Hebraist. He was the first PhD graduate from Hebrew Union College, a Gentile graduate from Hebrew Union College here in Cincinnati, and Russ Fuller who was teaching at Southern Seminary was the second one. But Steve is incredible and the Lord is raising up a younger man that Steve is mentoring. He's just got his PhD now, he's probably 20 years younger, and so there are younger scholars coming up in the ranks and younger scientists.

Don. So are you optimistic about the future of creation research? Let me rephrase the question: what is your perspective on the future of young earth creation scholarship?

Andrew. Well, I have mixed feelings, if I can put it that way, simply because of some of the tensions in the movement, not just from a scientific point of view, but there's a little bit of tension between some of the lay popularizers and the scientists, because the lay popularizers don't always understand how scientists operate and vice versa. And the popularizers are the ones that appeal to the grassroots and therefore raise the money and, in a sense, control the cash flow that helps the scientists do their work. And so if the two aren't getting along together, then the cash flow eases off on the scientists so they can't do their work. And we need to heal those sorts of rifts. And the other aspect is that we need to have the opportunities for younger scientists because, you know, a younger scientist who's totally on board, he gets his PhD, maybe he has to go to a secular university to get his PhD, so he has to come out of the closet when he graduates. It's difficult for him to make the transition, and I often recommend that they need to have a few years in secular employment anyhow to get a little real-world experience before...

Don. Like with petroleum companies or something like that?

Andrew. Yeah, that's right, exactly. Exactly. But then there's got to be positions available to them and if Christian universities and colleges haven't got the positions, and creation ministries haven't got the positions, these young people haven't got the opportunities to devote themselves to creation research and writing. They've got to do it as a part-time thing in concert with secular employment and, of course, that can create tensions. You know, if you're a geologist and you're working in secular employment, you're going to create tensions. I'll just give you an example. Just out of the blue, literally out of the blue, a week ago I got contacted by a senior lecturer in geology at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa and he's coming out as a young earth creationist and so his academic position is on the line. And so these are younger men that need to be nurtured and helped.

Don. There's room, and I'm not saying this facetiously, there's certainly room for a Christian billionaire someplace to fund this to secure the long-term scholarly future of this movement.

Andrew. That's right, that's right. And yeah, that's right, definitely. And we've talked about that.

Don. So if any of you with a million dollars in here...

Andrew. Yeah, that's right.

Don. ...see Andrew after the service.

Andrew. Yeah, that's right. Well, actually, Thomas White, the president at Cedarville University, is a go-getter, and we talked to him about it and having a center of excellence at Cedarville University in creation astrology but, you know, it takes dollars and it takes time to do these things.

Don. Yeah, so there are innumerable challenges which should not discourage us but just cast our dependence upon the Lord.

Andrew. But I'm excited also because almost not a week goes by when I get contacted or am aware of, you know, a homeschooling kid who's got excited and wants to get involved and ask, you know, "How can I become a creation scientist?" And my paleontologist colleague has got a young man who's going to come this summer for an internship at AIG and work with her, and there's a young lady who contacted me just two days ago up in Clinton County, Ohio. She wants to study geology. She's passionate. And so we've got to be available to mentor these young people and guide them so that they understand what they're going to be up against, but also to guide them through it.

I always remember my friend and colleague, another scientist, Marcus Ross, who was teaching at Liberty University, he gave a good advice. He said to young people, I say it's very important that wherever you go, if you have to go away from home, make sure when you get to the university where you're at, make sure you get established in a good Christian fellowship where you've got people that are praying for you and supporting you, and you can go to for advice. And he followed that all through his career, and that's what helped get him through. He latched onto good Bible-believing churches with older Christians who could mentor him and keep him on track in the pressure cooker that he was in. And that's very important.

Don. You know, if we're going to do truly Christian scholarship, somewhere in there, the local church is going to have to be a part of that person's life, because that's central. This is one of the primary things of biblical truth, of Christianity, is being involved with a local church.

Andrew. A couple of other projects, if I can diverge for a sec, just flashed into my mind. Most people don't realize this, but in February, just when COVID was starting, I got asked to go to Jordan on a fact-finding trip. The Shepherds Seminary wanted to start a biblical archaeological program...

Don. ...in North Carolina.

Andrew. Yeah, in North Carolina and they've got an outpost in Wyoming, and they wanted to have a field area for excavations. but they wanted, they realized they needed to understand the geological context and so I went on this trip and COVID came along afterwards and so there's been a lot of shutdown. I also had the privilege of being in Israel several times, I've got a colleague there who works in a radiocarbon lab, his wife's an archaeologist, they're closet creationists. They don't live far from Gaza, so they're in their bomb shelter off and on, but issues of radiocarbon, the geological context, and we're looking at the time of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the time of Abraham, and so I could still well be involved in that kind of project; even if I'm not on the ground, I could be giving advice. But there's a lot of areas that need that kind of input in. And so all sorts of projects are going to crop up.

Don. Two things that I would say as we pivot toward the necessary conclusion of our time together.

Andrew. Is it that late already?

Don. Yeah, I know, the hour goes by fast. This is just my personal perspective on it and looking to what's best for the body of Christ universally, long-term, as much as we would keep you here at Truth Community Church, I'm glad and thankful that the Lord is moving you into a different chapter of life where these things of broader, even longer-term significance you'll be able to devote yourself to them, and we would not restrain you from that. And our prayers go with you as you go and embark on this, and many of us will be eagerly waiting to buy every book that comes out by Andrew A. Snelling.

Andrew. And of course, it's a pivotal time back in Australia with the churches in Australia.

Don. There's just, I'm sorry to interrupt you, it's so rude of me.

Andrew. No, you're fine.

Don. There's just, you know, it just strikes me in the moment that there's just so much more at stake than you going back to your family or we're losing an elder. There's just much, much more at stake in this transition and we get the privilege of sending you off with our blessing.

Andrew. Well yeah, and I'm indebted to you because it was your suggestion about this present book that made it possible, and it was the sermons and teaching that I was able to

give here at Truth Community Church. And I reflected on that this afternoon and thought again about the significance because...

Don. Yeah, talk about "Foundations in the Book of Genesis," for those on the camera here.

Andrew. It's not because I wrote it, it's because of the material that's in it that's important.

Don. Yeah, talk about why is this book so strategic.

Andrew. Well, it's strategic because it's important for Christians who are already established in their faith in God's word and the authority of Scripture to be shored up in that because there's so many attacks on the authority of Scripture and the moral decline in our culture that it's very easy for Christians to give in. But it's also important to reach out to the Christians that are lukewarm, that are struggling because of the moral decline and are going to face persecution. And it's going to happen more and more here. It's happening in Australia as people speak out. And, you know, the important thing is if you're going to speak out about the moral issues, the importance of that book is reminding people where the foundation is for the doctrines of God's standards for morality, God's laws. If you don't get Genesis right, you're going to be adrift the rest of Scripture and so, in a sense, it's calling lukewarm Christians back to the authority of Scripture and grounding them in why they can trust Genesis. And the important thing is that coming from a scientist gives it that little bit more punch in the sense that this is a guy who's been there and has been involved in these issues and the Lord has allowed that and can use that. But I think it's a very strategic book. I think it could have a lot of traction for good, including in Australia. So we're going to have to put a branch of Trust the Word press out in Australia.

Don. You'd help me do that, would you?

Andrew. I know the book distributors in Australia will have to try. There's a big Christian bookstore chain. I'll try and influence them, don't worry.

Don. As I read the book, Andrew, I just thought this is a book that pastors need to read because if you're not confident in the authority of Genesis, even if you don't speak on those issues, it will show in the way that you preach because there's always going to be those mental reservations in your mind, "I don't really believe this." And, you know, men like that have undermined the faith for centuries. Pastors need to read this.

Andrew. Yeah, if the trumpet make an uncertain sound.

Don. And young believers need to read this book, and the thing that I love about the book, especially the chapters where you're just expositing Scripture, this is accessible to young people in high school, even in middle school. This is a book that they can read profitably and follow the argument.

Andrew. There are a number of families here on Sunday bought copies for each of their children for that very reason.

Don. Yeah, and that's the way that it should be. Let me just kind of summarize the argument that you were just describing as you set it forth in this book. Genesis is a trustworthy authority and the reason that we know that is because of the authority of Christ. If you settle who Christ is, you know who Christ is and you see how he treated Genesis, that settles the whole issue. Ultimately, it's even more than the authority of Genesis that's at stake in all of these issues, it is the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Talk about that.

Andrew. And therefore the gospel. I mean, if Jesus isn't who he said he was, but he demonstrated, that's what we cover in the book. If he could, with a word, still a storm, what's the problem in Genesis chapter 1? If we understand who Christ was and is and what he demonstrated when he was walking amongst us, showing us "He that has seen me has seen the Father," then it helps us to get everything else right. We can trust Genesis. If God isn't trustworthy in Genesis, then nothing else follows. It doesn't make sense. We lose our proclamation of the gospel as hollow because it has no foundational basis. It's founded in Christ as the Creator and what happened in the beginning with man's rebellion against God and the need for a Redeemer and if we don't get that right, nothing else makes any sense.

Don. So the book is "Foundations in the Book of Genesis: A Geologist's Perspective." There's copies available after the service. It's now available on Amazon, including in a Kindle format. Thank you, Andrew. Two final things. You made a point of including the middle initial A. Andrew A. Snelling is the book, it's even on the spine. Talk about that.

Andrew. Yeah, well, I told you the story on Sunday morning. That's my father's name, Arthur.

Don. So Arthur is your middle name?

Andrew. Yeah, Arthur is my middle name.

Don. And your dad was not an educated man?

Andrew. No, it wasn't that he was unintelligent, he just didn't have the educational opportunities. But he was very astute. And as I said, on Sunday my mother, she had the possibility of completing a university education, but she nurtured my brother and I. Yeah, I grew more and more to respect and love my father, you know, as I look back and I see his life and how he interacted with people and how people responded to him. I didn't say it on Sunday, but he would have felt, Mum and Dad would have felt absolutely at home here at Truth Community Church and they were those kinds of people that wherever they went, people just loved them because of the way they interact, the interest they showed in people. And, you know, my dad, in honor to him, I include my middle initial.

Don. It's special. I need to say this even though there's part of me that doesn't want to because of the concluding finality of it, but let me just hand the floor over to you for final thoughts as you leave to go back to Australia, as you leave Truth Community Church, as you look forward to writing and research and the authority of Christ and Scripture, all those things. Just tell us whatever's on your heart here as we close.

Andrew. Oh, that's a difficult one. Well, I shared some of that on Sunday morning in that we need to nurture our children, just like we're going back to Australia to spend time with our grandchildren. We need to be intentional with our children and grandchildren in the congregation here, to nurture them and to raise them in the fear and admonition of the Lord. And our hearts are still here. Let's be honest. Kym and I have a heart for being here, a heart for being with you. We love you all dearly and so it's very hard to tear ourselves away but we know that that's what the Lord wants us to do. And yet we know that there are going to be challenges over there, meeting needs within the family, but also in the wider context of the Australian church and that, and whatever ministry the Lord gives us beyond that. And again, I always come back to the fact that when God calls you, he expects you to be faithful. It's his work. We're called to be faithful. He's the one who brings the success. It's by his Spirit. I often say to people, I can argue with lots of evidence to prove that there was a global flood but unless I introduce them to the Judge that sent that flood and the gospel, then they're going to be lost and so we should never divorce the presentation of the science from the presentation of the gospel. And so it's very, very important to train up the next generation, to nurture the children, and to see them grow up into full, mature faith in Christ and go on to carry the torch forward. That's exceedingly important. And, you know, it can be costly because, you know, it takes time and effort to mentor young people but it's worthwhile. And, you know, I keep on saying, we just have to be faithful, go through the doors that God opens, otherwise he'll shut them or let someone else go through those doors.

And so yeah, you caught me on the hop there. I wasn't expecting that question. But yes, that's some thoughts that I have as we depart. And please keep in touch. We want to keep praying for you all. We will be praying for you all. And yeah, keep in touch. And the whole thing with modern communications is it's very easy now to keep in touch, even visually. That's how we've kept in contact with our family back in Australia. We were able to go on the internet and FaceTime or Zoom or what have you and it's a very good way to keep in touch with one another. And Lord willing, we'll be able to do that with some of you as well. And please keep in touch and keep us updated. And we'd love to, we hope to still come back and visit from time to time. Next year's trip hasn't been planned yet, but it's in the works, perhaps, as the Lord leads. But we'll certainly, if we're in the area, we'll be dropping in to check up on you to see that you're behaving yourselves.

Don. Andrew, if you are able to make it back to Truth Community Church, bring sermon notes with you. We'll want you to preach.

Andrew. We'll be keeping an eye on you on the live stream as well.

Don. Yeah, and I haven't prepared anything to say here in closing, so I'll just kind of speak from my heart. I know that I speak for our church, for the other elders, in what I'm about to say and I'm just speaking facts, not waxing eloquent here. Andrew, for God to send you to our church these past 12 years and eight years as an elder, is a signature token of his blessing on Truth Community Church. We are profoundly blessed by your teaching of Scripture, your teaching and your writings and all that you've done. We have been profoundly blessed by your leadership as an elder. I don't know what the church will be like when you're not standing back there greeting people as they go out. And this goes for Kym as well, of course. But just to have been so, we are so profoundly, we're so profoundly grateful to God that we have had the benefit of knowing a man like you and we just give thanks to God for you and Truth Community Church will bear the imprint of your life and ministry for the rest of however long it's here.

Andrew. And it was God's timing, because then I told you about my father. If we'd come earlier, we might have established in another church. Our arrival here and the timing of it was just at the time that Truth Community Church began and so the Lord orchestrated that. So it's all about what he's done, not us.

Don. And therefore he gets all the glory, right?

Andrew. Absolutely, and so he should.

Don. Well, the normal protocol would be for me to pray and ask God's blessing on you as you go, but I'm going to reverse that and ask if you might close this time in prayer, pray for our church and whatever else is on your heart, then we'll have David come up and lead us in a final song and then Nathaniel will close our time at that.

Andrew. Well, let's pray.

Don. So let me suggest that we all stand, and thank you.

Andrew. Father, we stand in your presence tonight, humbled and awed by your majesty. Father, as we reflected tonight, we can see your hand in so many details of our lives. You know, we've recounted my pilgrimage, but it's not just my pilgrimage, it's everyone's pilgrimage here, Father. You're the one that chose us from the beginning. You knew us from time past. Father, you sent your Son to die for us and you called us. It's all about you, not about us and so the first thing we want to do, first and foremost, always, to thank you. We can't thank you enough, to give you the praise and honor that's due to your name, that you are worthy beyond all that we can ever say or do. And Father, all we can do is hand over our lives to you and say, "Do with us as you will." And you do, Father. You choose to do amazing things through those who you call and it's all your doing, not ours. And so, Father, we have a burden here for our young people, our young adults, our children that are coming up, and for parents who need to raise them in the fear and admonition and instruction of your word. Father, I would pray tonight that you would give a double measure of grace and wisdom and help to parents in the congregation, to grandparents who are reaching out to grandchildren and their children, and to everyone

in the congregation that needs to set examples when children come and ask questions. Father, I just pray that not one of the least of these little ones would go astray, that your word would be sown in their hearts by the faithful preaching and proclamation of your word, and that they, at a tender age, will come to know you and come to submit their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ and accept the salvation that he offers. It's all about you, Father, you call and we leave it in your hands. But we pray, Father, that you would raise up other men in this congregation who can take on the mantle of leadership. We thank you for Nathaniel coming on board. We're excited about his potential in the years ahead and what he's already contributing to this fellowship and we pray that you'll raise up other men to take on teaching and leadership responsibilities. Thank you for those who are serving; may those men increase in their number and in their fervor for serving in this church. And so, Father, we pray that your word will go out faithfully each week beyond these four walls and it will accomplish what you seek to accomplish so that it will not return unto you void as you promise it won't. And we pray that many will be blessed from what goes forth from this place. And indeed, Father, we pray that as we return to Australia that, Father, what we have experienced here, Kym and I, and what we've learnt we'll take back with us and we'll be able to impact those that we fellowship with in Australia, both in our family, with our children and grandchildren, and beyond that to churches in Australia that need to be solidly grounded in your word. Yes, there are those many faithful Christians there, but the light needs to shine brighter both there and in this country as the gospel goes forth. So Father, we thank you that we could reflect tonight on these issues and talk about the things that we have talked about but, Father, we want to close again by reminding ourselves that none of us is important. We're only here because of what you've done for us and, Father, we're so thankful and grateful and we look forward to that day when we can stand and kneel before your throne and sing your praises for eternity. What a great day that will be. Thank you that we have the hope of being with you in glory for eternity. May that help us and equip us today and for the rest of this week as we face challenges knowing that you are trustworthy, you are good, you are faithful and, Father, we just have to submit to your will, to your providence and see you sovereignly work things out as you always do. We can look back in our lives and see you do that. So we thank you for this time together, encourage us again in your word, in our like precious faith that we might stand tall and stand firmly on the authority of your word and proclaim the gospel to whoever we come to to meet day by day in all that we do. Thank you and thank you again we pray, as we say all this that your name may be honored and glorified and we pray this through the name of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

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