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by Karen Bartelt, Ph.D.

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I was eager to confront the facts, so I chose to explore on my own rather than join a tour. Except for our group of about 25 skeptics, the museum was nearly empty. I saw no sign prohibiting photography, so I took about 20 photos. No one told me to stop, but on two occasions, some staff people asked whether I "was ok." I assured them that I was just fine, and kept shooting pictures. More

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One enters the museum through the seven days of creation as described in Genesis 1, not Genesis 2. No mention is made as to why one creation sequence was chosen over the other. There are scale models of the Tower of Babel and the Ark. A painting of the Ark interior shows dinosaurs happily standing in stalls, and manure-free floors. I was most interested in the ICR's treatment of fossil humans, geology, and the Flood, however, so I concentrated my efforts in these areas.

I was drawn first to "Fossils and Post-Flood Man" exhibit. The various fossils of pre- and archaic humans are represented by bas-relief skulls only. Although the skull representations seemed accurate enough, one wonders why the complete skeletons are not shown. Could it possibly be that the addition of spinal columns, ribs, hands, and feet might make these creatures look a little more transitional? The information presented about each skull is a strange blend of reasonable accuracy mixed in with inaccurate statements and wild conjecture.

It is mentioned that over 200 *Homo erectus* individuals have been found. Although the orthodox evolutionary explanation is given (that *H. erectus* represents an evolutionary stage from a more primitive form), an "alternative" evolutionary explanation is also given -- that *H. erectus* is "true man", with "bi-pedal posture and cranial capacity within at least the lower range of modern man." I realize that the designation *Homo* is somewhat arbitrary, but I suspect that even the biggest "lumpers" in the world of paleontology would not consider *Homo erectus* to be "true man."

The creationist explanation is ambiguous: that *H. erectus* is "probably a true human being, ... although some so-called

Homo erectus fossils possibly represented extinct apes." No evidence supporting either the "true human" or "extinct ape" hypothesis is given. It is also stated that H. erectus fossils have been associated with stone tools, the controlled use of fire, evidence of burial and cremation, and the use of red ocher in art and burial. I have found evidence of only the first two attributes -- stone tools and fire -- associated with H. erectus. The burial and use of ocher has been, to the best of my knowledge, associated with Neanderthals, not H. erectus. Also, no mention is made that the stone tools associated with H. erectus are quite different from those associated with Neanderthals or modern humans. (Tattersall 1995, pp. 26-7)

Some reasonably accurate information is given regarding Neanderthals -- that about 300 individuals have been found, and most of the locations are in Europe. It is said that the relationship of Neanderthals to modern humans represents a current problem in anthropology -- did Neanderthals evolve into, intermarry with, or get killed off by modern humans? A look at the recent literature indicates that this is, indeed, an ongoing research problem.

The creationist interpretation of Neanderthals is that they were simply cold-adapted modern humans with bodies similar to those of Eskimos. While most paleontologists would agree that Eskimos have characteristics that are adaptations to cold (short, muscular stature, for instance), there are significant differences in the thickness of bones and skull structure that separate all extant humans -- Eskimos included -- from Neanderthals. There is, of course, no mention of molecular data, such as that from Paabo and Krings, that shows significant mitochondrial DNA differences between a Neanderthal and modern humans. (A 379 nucleotide sequence from a Neanderthal specimen averaged 27 differences from modern humans; modern humans would average eight differences from each other.) For this degree of difference, it has been estimated that Neanderthals and H. sapiens evolved separately for approximately 500,000 years (summarized in Kunzig 1998, pp. 32-33, but originally published in late 1996 or early 1997). Another recent article describes 200-300,000 year old Neanderthal precursors in Atapuerca, Spain (Rightmire 1997, pp. 917-918). Will the ICR adjust the display to reflect the new evidence? I doubt it!

The display also shows a skull of "Archaic Homo sapiens" -- "40 fossils" with cranial capacities larger than that of H. erectus that "do not fit into other categories." These are also passed off as examples of post-Flood genetic diversity, and no other information is given.

Finally, "Cave Men" are discussed. Perhaps these are Cro-Magnons, although all that is said about them is that they were "not subhuman transitions between apes and humans" but that they were "...weaker, probably degenerate, descendants of those migrating away from Babel. Placed in a harsh environment without time or ability to use technology, they led simple, crude lives. They were alive in Job's day (Job 30:1-8)." This may make even Biblical scholars blanch. Job 30 makes a reference to "those who are younger than I (30:1)" who make fun of Job. They seem to live at the edges of Job's society, but there is no reference in Job to them being primitive, but simply a "senseless, disreputable brood (30:8)" -- they sound more like Old Testament gang-bangers! No mention is made here of the wonderful cave paintings of Lascaux and Altamira, or the bone implements and artifacts made by "cave men" -- I guess that would make the "cave men" seem less degenerate!

The ICR display states that all of these fossils "probably represent Post-Flood ethnic and/or language groups, and demonstrate man's genetic diversity." It is further asserted that humans migrated to all parts of the globe during a post-Flood/post-Babel ice age: "During the 'Ice Age' so much water was frozen that sea level was lowered several hundred feet. Ice shelves covered much of the oceans poleward of 45 degrees. This made the continents accessible, thus allowing migration to occur. Furthermore, no competition for the uninhabited land was necessary, and since food was scarce, migration was encouraged. Human migration was enforced by the confusion of languages at Babel. The 'Table of Nations,' in Genesis 10, informs us of the basic migration patterns." Genesis 10 does not indicate place names beyond the Middle East: Egypt, Canaan, Assyria, Gaza, and Sheba are named; India, China, Australia, and other points north, south, and east are not.

Significant geologic details are left out of the display. For instance, no mention is made that H. erectus, Neanderthal, "archaic," and "cave man" fossils are uniformly found in sedimentary strata beneath humans associated with agriculture and urban centers. No mention is made as to why these "degenerate fossils" of humans -- H. erectus, Neanderthals, etc., have never been found in North or South America. Why not? It's a long way from the tower of Babel to Mexico City! Plenty of time for degeneration! And where are the pre-Flood fossils? One would think that there would be at least some

idea of what humankind looked like before the Flood!

The origin of languages is attributed solely to the account in Genesis 11:1-9: "The archaeological, genetic, and linguistic evidences are all compatible with the Biblical record of dispersion from the Tower of Babel," and "Evidence suggests a link between genetics and linguistics. One linguist, Luigi Cavalli-Sforza, suggested that genes and language diverged simultaneously into populations." Since the ICR chose to mention the geneticist Dr. Cavalli-Sforza, an expert in the field of genes, migrations, and languages, let's see what Cavalli-Sforza really has to say on the subject:

Cavalli-Sforza disagrees categorically with the ICR on the origin of humans: "Three hundred thousand and perhaps more years ago various types of archaic sapiens already peopled various parts of the world...Neanderthal appears in the Middle East about sixty thousand years ago, when there is no sign of modern humans in the area (Cavalli-Sforza 1995, p. 56), and "Genes, people, and languages have thus diverged in tandem, through a series of migrations that apparently began in Africa and spread through Asia to Europe, the New World, and the Pacific (Cavalli-Sforza 1991, p. 104).

The ICR asserts that "The observable data indicate that no period of prehistoric language development ever existed." It is unclear whether this is pre-Noah or pre-Babel or what. Just how would one accumulate "observable data" in a pre-literate society? Cavalli-Sforza also addresses the issue: "Languages have very scarce 'fossil' information, usually limited to situations in which writing was developed, taking us back at most 5000 years...Whether human languages had a single or multiple origins is considered by most linguists to be insoluble" (Cavalli-Sforza 1994, p. 96).

The ICR is obviously delighted with the relationship of genes and languages: "The close relation with language and genetics would be consistent with the creation model. The possibility of a single split-up time would be an added bonus for the creation theory." What they leave out is the evidence summarized by Cavalli-Sforza and consistent with evolutionary theory: "Human evolution is punctuated by the splitting of populations into parts, some of which settle elsewhere. Each fragment evolves linguistic and genetic patterns that bear the marks of shared branching points." (Cavalli-Sforza 1991 p. 109). "This [archaeological] record -- bones and stone implements for the most part -- shows that Africa was indeed the original homeland of hominids. From there migrations must have proceeded from Africa to Asia via the isthmus of Suez and, later, from Asia to Europe" (Cavalli-Sforza 1991, p. 107). "The most important difference in the human gene pool is that between Africans and non-Africans...This suggests that the split between Africans and non-Africans was the earliest in human evolutionary history...(Cavalli-Sforza 1994, p. 93).

I have seen many museum displays that treat the origin of humans. The Museum of Creation and Earth History is unique in that it is guilty of the sin of omission in its treatment of human fossils. Visitors have no opportunity to make real comparisons between fossil human forms, because almost no fossil evidence is depicted. Obvious details are left out, such as the gradual increase in skull size from *H. erectus* to Neanderthal and *H. sapiens*. Other basic geological data, such as the depth and relative age of the strata in which fossils are found, is not dealt with. Some data concerning *H. erectus* is simply wrong. Additionally, no positive evidence is presented to support the "creation model." At the very least I expected to see what pre-Flood humans looked like, what fossil evidence there was to support the existence of this population, and why, if it is proposed that *H. erectus* and Neanderthal were degenerate post-Flood "true men," this degeneration does not seem to have happened in the Americas.

I was distressed, but not surprised, to see the ideas of yet another orthodox scientist used -- out of context -- to support the ICR's ideas of dispersion from the Tower of Babel. I hope it has been made clear that nothing in the work of Cavalli-Sforza supports any ICR premise concerning the development of human populations and languages. There is no independent confirmation of the Tower of Babel or the migration of humans as described in the museum, and a lot of evidence to the contrary. And how did these "degenerate" people, migrating away from Babel "leading simple, crude lives" manage to be intelligent enough to speak complex languages anyway?

I had confronted "the facts!" Many of "the facts" were missing, and some of the "facts" were just plain wrong. However, I was ready for more facts! On to the creationist version of geology and especially, the Flood! (Part III)

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