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THE "GENOGRAPHIC PROJECT": WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

By Mark Stephens, MCS

The new Genographic Project came to my attention as I read the *USA TODAY*, Life section, April 13, 2005.¹ After reading the article describing it, I realized that this new project, analyzing DNA of humans to tell us where we came from, could be of significant interest to creation scientists as well as naturalistic evolution scientists. It could help to provide scientific evidences supporting the Genesis account of the origin of humans and their subsequent migration around the earth or simply provide another version of naturalistic evolution supposedly adding new scientific evidences for that view. As usual, it will be a matter of how new genetic information gained will be interpreted and communicated to the world.

It is important, I believe, that I attempt to provide some comment and assessments of this new project based on the creation science view, as the naturalistic evolutionary view will most likely continue to be espoused using this new project data. To keep up with findings of this project and since the public is invited to participate in the project, I actually signed up for the project by ordering a kit whereby I will provide anonymously my own DNA sample to purportedly trace my ancestors and their migration around the earth. (If you are interested in participating, you may wish to visit www.nationalgeographic.com and search for the Genographic Project whereby you may register.)

The Genographic Project will involve research that will attempt to map out migration patterns by genetic "markers" that people share with other people in other parts of the world—an indication of how their family tree has "evolved"¹, as would be explained by naturalistic evolutionists. As a creation scientist, I would say these markers could reveal "how the programmed variety" provided by God our Creator in created humans was expressed as they spread around the world after the Genesis flood and their dispersal after Babel (See Genesis, chapters 1-

11). To help to give you a creation science perspective on this new project, you may wish to review my April, 2004, TASC newsletter article titled, "Racism: Human 'Races' or 'One Blood'?" The article can be easily accessed on our new TASC web site, www.tasc-creationscience.org. Also, at the same web site, the August and September, 2004, TASC newsletter articles titled, "Could the Ice Age Have Been Caused by the Genesis Flood?", may help you understand from the creation science perspective some of the migration patterns of humans and animals that took place around the world after the worldwide flood recorded in Genesis.

Let us review further what the Genographic Project is and what it might mean. This new project, an offshoot of a book, *Journey of Man: A Genetic Odyssey*, and a *National Geographic* documentary by the same title—I have seen the documentary—is funded by the Waitt Family Foundation and supported by the National Geographic Society and the IBM Corporation. "The relevance of the work is we are all, in effect, cousins, separated by a few generations," says population geneticist Spencer Wells, the project's director, alluding to modern man's "origins in ancient Africa".¹ I might note that this allusion is the beginning of the evolutionary spin that this project begins to reflect and why it is necessary that we creation scientists balance the spin. We are aware of the conjecture and unsupported scientific evidences that have been presented to us heretofore by evolutionists about fossils and bones of our "so-called" human ancestors.² (I will outline this later on in this article.)

New TASC Web Site

www.tasc-creationscience.org

This is an exciting new web site with lots of creation science information. It will provide you easy access to current and previous articles from our newsletters plus useful links to other sources of material. You can also use it to contact us. We hope you will access it often!

We creation scientists concur with Spencer Wells' statement above that we humans are indeed cousins in that we came from created, "not evolved in the naturalistic evolution way", humans, Adam and Eve. By stating a more recent origin of humans and an origin from a single man, Wells' research thus far, as opposed to other paleontologists', anthropologists' and archeologists' accounts,^{3,4,5,6} does

align a little closer to creation scientists' discovery and assessments of human origin which are predicated on belief in a divine Creator and His inspired, truthful account provided to us in the book of Genesis of the Bible. However, creation scientists must assess the new information that comes to us from present day discoveries in population genetics and molecular biology, such as the information from the Genographic Project, to separate scientific fact from evolutionary conjecture.

Keep in mind that the mapping of the human genome completed in 2003 shows us from actual scientific observation and discovery that the DNA in the human genome contains three billion base pairs of information.²⁷ Evolutionists have pointed out that monkeys or apes share up to 97% of this genetic information with humans as evidence that we humans evolved from ape-like creatures. We creation scientists point out that 3 % of three billion is 90 million pieces of genetic information that make us humans quite different from apes and quite special as created humans in the image of God our Creator (Genesis 1: 26). It is not surprising to creation scientists that humans have some likenesses morphologically to other created kinds of mammals or apes and also share some common genetic information provided by a common intelligent designer used in our separate, individual designs.²

I believe that the fact remains, based on valid scientific assessments as stated in the last paragraph and the divinely inspired word of the Genesis account of the Bible, that animals are still separated into different kinds by the uniquely different genetic information provided by our Designer. The programmed variety provided within our human DNA accounts for our overall small human differences and ability to adapt to new environments, and does not indicate that we have evolved from some other creature. We remain humans because of our overall common human DNA, even though we have migrated all over the world as humans in a few thousand years, not because we evolved from ancestral apemen over 50 or more thousand years.

Some common mutations or genetic "markers" charted from this new Genographic Project that we may now be able to recognize in other humans around the world may help to trace our migration as humans but will not prove that our ancestry was an ape-man out of Africa. (God did command mankind to be fruitful and multiply, replenish the earth, and subdue it and did cause mankind to scatter around all the earth. Genesis 1: 28 and 11: 8, 9) Nor will this new Genographic Project prove conclusively that humans originated from Northeast Africa some 50 thousand years ago. However, the evolutionary conjecture placed on the findings from this project will most likely continue to attempt to do so. I expect that the results of the Genographic Project, if analyzed in a truly

objective, scientific way, can just as well provide evidence that we humans have been humans since our beginning around six thousand years ago in the Middle East, rather than providing more conjecture under the cloak of science that humans evolved over tens of thousands to over a million years ago out of Northeast Africa. Remember, Neandert(h)al Man was once proposed by evolutionary theory to be an ape-man and our ancestor but now has been shown to be fully human by objective scientific assessment.² Joao Zilhao, director-general of the Portuguese Institute of Archaeology, wrote a paper in 2000 about a fossil find in which he observed, "Neandertals were just people—perhaps a little funny-looking, but people nonetheless."⁸ In the article, conjectural statements are also made about Neandertals possibly not having been human.

Let us assess further the Genographic Project. It will be a five-year endeavor involving the collection and analyzing of more than 100,000 DNA samples. Spencer Wells' team hopes to uncover origins, migration routes and better explanations for diversity in humans. We creation scientists are interested in genetic science and discovery and will be interested in sorting out this information in an objective, scientific method as well. In addition to field research among hundreds of indigenous groups, the project will sell \$99 cheek-swabbing kits for anyone curious about their genes. Funds from the kits will finance further project work on human genetic history. The people who purchase these kits will be assigned an anonymous identification number to access their information on the Genographic Project internet web site. For example, an American might share genetic variants with people in a region of Spain, indicating an ancestral connection. By stringing together a map of these connections, the team expects to show how humanity has expanded "since having descended from a single man who lived in Africa around 60,000 years ago and then leaving Africa more than 50,000 years ago."¹⁶ Some would say that Wells is only about 45,000 years off from the young earth view that humans came out of the Garden of Eden somewhere in the Middle East some 6,000 years ago. In response to the older dates of human origin and human ancestral migration from other archeologists and paleontologists, Wells alludes that the Middle East may have been an extension of Northeast Africa (where a number of the so-called "human ancestral fossils" were found) 100-150 thousand years ago.⁵ Could Northeast Africa and the Middle East have been part of the same land mass at one time? According to a creation science assessment of the one-land-mass supercontinent of Pangea before the break-up of this large supercontinent into the current continents during the Genesis worldwide flood, the Middle East could have been part of what we now know as Northeast Africa.⁹ This could provide some correlation between Wells' assessments and creation science assessments, although one should

keep in mind that this potential correlation is still quite different and speculative.

There are two basic theories about the origin and migration of humans by researchers who essentially slant their findings and conjecture toward the naturalistic evolutionary theory. The one that has been around the longest is the multi-regional model. It proposes that an archaic form of humans left Africa between one and two million years ago and that modern humans evolved from them independently and simultaneously in pockets of Africa, Europe, and Asia.⁵ [Note how loosely dating is thrown around here with a million years difference with 100% variance. Most “so-called” ancestral human fossils were ascribed ages of 100,000 to two million years before we even had modern dating techniques, and the fact remains that our modern dating techniques are full of many assumptions with wide age ranges producing large percentages of inaccuracies as used in this theory.¹⁰ Recent research called Radioisotopes and the Age of The Earth (RATE) by the Institute for Creation Research scientists shows that rocks dated old by other radioisotope dating techniques are shown to be young by the RATE method. The RATE group of researchers has found strong experimental evidence for a young earth and episodes of rapid nuclear decay in the past.]¹¹ Many times the use of old-age dates by evolutionists boils down to them wishing an old age to fossils and bones to go along with the old-age theory to allow for the vast periods of time required to give any chance for the evolutionary theory.

The second theory about the origin and migration of humans involves Wells’ work and that of others which confirm the more recent and more widely accepted “Out of Africa” model. This model says that all modern humans evolved in Africa and then left in several waves of migration, ultimately replacing any earlier species. According to Wells, modern humans did not start their spread across the globe until around 60,000 years ago. Most archaeologists would say the exodus began 100,000 years ago—a 40,000-year discrepancy.⁵ (It is worth noting again here how ages are thrown around very freely with a large percent difference between these two theories. This is another reason creation scientists caution observers about the validity of the old age theories of fossils and earth history. Should not an observer rather give credence to young-age fossils, young earth, and a few-thousand-year-age of humans by creation scientists who are showing valid scientific research to support these assessments.) Wells’ take on the origins of modern humans and how they came to populate the rest of the planet is bound to be controversial. His work adds to an already crowded field of opposing hypotheses proposed by those who seek answers in “stones and bones”—archaeologists and paleoanthropologists—and

by those who seek them in our blood—population geneticists and molecular biologists.⁵

Keeping in mind past accounts of human origin by naturalistic evolutionists, caution is still in order in assessing the conclusions of the Genographic Project as we know much conjecture and false conclusions can be made by evolutionary bias under the cloak of science. The following evolutionary bias, conjecture, and false conclusions concerning “so-called” human ancestors (links) were outlined in a 2002 video from the Institute for Creation Research titled *The Origin of Humans, The “Riddle” of Origins Series*.²

Fossil / bone	What it turned out to be
Ramipithecus	Ape
Australopithecine (Lucy)	Extinct Ape/chimpanzee
Homo Erectus	Fully human (simply dated old to fit schema of evolution)
Java Man	Gibbon
Pittdown Man	Hoax
Nebraska Man	Pig’s tooth
Neandert(h)al Man	Fully human

What we have truly found with scientific integrity tracing human ancestry thus far is that apes were apes and humans were humans and still are.² We creation scientists believe God created apes as apes and humans as humans and the scientific evidences support this. Secularists still allow many of the false representations as outlined above to be presented to our children and to adults in the biology textbooks without balance of other scientific evidences on the origin of humans. There are ongoing efforts by creation scientists and others who espouse our democratic ideals and free speech to provide balance of the scientific evidences on human origin.

I believe efforts should continue to provide balance on human origin based on factual scientific observation and discovery, not just conjectural evolutionary biases espoused as science. Spencer Wells in some concluding remarks about the Genographic Project said, “We want this to be a very open project. We want to tell the public what it is we’re doing, the goals, the methods, and we want to explain the results. We’re not doing anything medically relevant, not patenting anything. We see this as information that’s part of the [common heritage] of our species. It’s going to be released into the public domain, and people can go back and reanalyze it and query it and learn about it. We’re hoping to create a virtual museum of human history.”⁶

Based on Wells’ statement above indicating that the Genographic Project will provide objective scientific endeavor with high integrity, we creation scientists will be observing to see if the Genographic Project provides

credible scientific information, not just more fuel for spinning naturalistic evolutionary theory as fact. Hopefully, true scientific knowledge will be gained from the Genographic Project that will be reported in an accurate, balanced way regarding the origin and migration of humans. ❧

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- ¹ Vergano, D. (2005) Genographic Project Aims to Tell Us Where We Came From, Research Will Attempt to Map Out Migration Patterns Through Genes. *USA TODAY*, Life Section, April 13, 7D
 - ² Riddle, M. (2002) Video: *The Origin of Humans, The "Riddle" of Origin Series*, Institute for Creation Research, El Cajon, CA
 - ³ Mapes, J. (2001) Discoveries Breathe New Life into Human Origins Debate. *National Geographic News*, Jan. 11, 1-4. Available online at <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2001/01/0111origins.html>
 - ⁴ Mayell, H. (2002) Our Species Mated With Other Human Species, Study Says. *National Geographic News*, March 6, 1-5. Available online at http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2002/03/0306_0306_outofafrica.html
 - ⁵ Mayell, H. (2003) Documentary Redraws Humans' Family Tree. *National Geographic News*, Jan. 21, 1-8. Available on line at http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2002/12/1212_021213_journeyofman.html
 - ⁶ Mayell, H. (2005) Global Gene Project to Trace Humanity's Migrations. *National Geographic News*, April 13, 1-6. Available online at http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2005/04/0413_050413_genographic.html
 - ⁷ Weise, E. (2003) Scientists Create a Virus That Reproduces. *USA TODAY*, Nov. 14
 - ⁸ Harder, B. (2001) Telltale Face Betrays Neandertals as Non-human. *National Geographic News*, Aug. 2, 3. Available on line at http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2001/08/0802_neandertal.html
 - ⁹ Baumgardner, J. (1996) Video: *In The Beginning, Catastrophic Plate Tectonics and the Genesis Flood*, Keziah, American Portrait Films, Cleveland, OH.
 - ¹⁰ Riddle, M. (2002) Video: *Dating Fossils and Rocks*, Institute for Creation Research, El Cajon, CA.
 - ¹¹ Vardiman, L. (2001) RATE Group Confirms Fast Diffusion of Helium in Rocks. *Acts and Facts*, 30 (10):1-3

TASC ADDS FOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

In April, TASC current Board of Directors elected four new members to the Board of Directors of TASC. They are the following: Phil Johnson, Master of Christian Education; Javier Valdivieso, BS, Mechanical Engineering; Everett Coates, BS, Geology; David Plaisted, PhD, Computer Science and Professor at UNC, Chapel Hill. We welcome these new board members and look forward to working with them to further the mission of TASC! They will join seven continuing board members

who are: Mark Stephens, MCS in biology, chemistry, and geology, Chairman; Dan Reynolds, PhD in organic chemistry, Vice-Chairman; Dale Ulmer, MSEE, Treasurer; Joe Spears, MSEE in electrical and computer engineering, Secretary; Fred Johnson, PhD in pathology, Editor of TASC newsletter, Gerald Van Dyke, PhD in botany and Professor at NC State, Jeff Gift, PhD in biochemistry, and Isaac Manly, M.D., Emeritus board member. Thanks to all the board members for their willingness to serve and glorify God, our Creator.

MEETING NEWS

At our May 12 meeting, Joe Spears, our speaker, provided our attendees a thorough report on fossils and whether they supported naturalistic evolution or creation. An examination of "so-called" evolution of horses and whales showed lack of fossil evidence. The Archaeopteryx fossil turned out to be a bird, not a transition from reptile to bird. Coelocanth was supposedly a fossil of an extinct, ancestral fish that lived millions of years ago. It turned up live, swimming in the Indian Ocean in 1938, and caught by fisherman there. Examination of many other fossils showed that there are no true links and that the fossils still say "no" to evolution. Evolutionists want to believe in evolution so badly that they will resort to deceiving their followers and anyone else they can control in the education system including professors, teachers, and students by making up data that does not exist.

Our thanks goes out to Joe for this very thorough and interesting presentation on the fossil record and pointing out what it truly represents, that plants and animal kinds appear as such in the fossil record and are now extinct or still continue as plants and animals of their respective kinds today. Man was man and apes were apes and continue so today.

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, June 9, 7:30 P.M., Providence Baptist Church, 6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh

Dan Reynolds, Ph.D., Starlight and Time - An Update. This talk will be based on an updated version of the video entitled *Starlight and Time*, portions of which will be presented. Physicist Russell Humphreys explains how starlight from distant galaxies could have traveled billions of light years by day four of creation week. Dr. Humphreys' "white hole cosmology" is based on scripture, general relativity, and observational evidence which overturns the underlying assumptions of the big bang model (homogeneity and isotropy).

Thursday, July 14, 7:30 P.M., Providence Baptist Church, 6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh

View and discuss video, *What Does The Scientific Evidence Say About A Creator?* Dr. Gerald Van Dyke, Professor of Botany at NC State, will lead this discussion. Discover astonishing new evidence for yourself. Best-selling author and former-atheist, Lee Strobel, takes you on a remarkable investigation into how the universe began and introduces you to the Intelligent Design Movement and the mind-stretching discoveries from several scientific fields that present astonishing evidence for a Creator including cosmology, cellular biology, DNA research, astronomy, and physics. Plan now to attend!

TASC WILL PRESENT TO YOUR GROUP

The following are presentations that TASC is able to present to your church, club, or school group. Just contact us for scheduling.

Evidences for Creation in Contrast to Evolution - C. Gerald Van Dyke, PhD

A slide presentation of the major areas of evidences for Creation, including fossils, geology, natural laws, The Flood, and more, comparing and contrasting the scientific evidences for Creation vs. evolution: an entertaining and informative presentation.

Origin of Life - C. Gerald Van Dyke, PhD

The real facts about the origin of life experiments, what are the possibilities that life originated from non-life? What are the Creation implications of life forming from God speaking as the Bible says? How can DNA be formed without proteins and how can proteins be formed without DNA? Time to bring your questions for an entertaining and informative presentation.

Evidences for the Worldwide Flood - C. Gerald Van Dyke, PhD

Evidences for Creation and Intelligent Design- Dan Reynolds, PhD

We will discuss the theology and science of creation. We will touch upon the duration of Creation Week in Genesis 1, abiogenesis, information in the biological world, micro- and macroevolution, rapid geologic processes, radiometric dating, evidences for a recent creation, and a creationist cosmology

Icons of Evolution - Dan Reynolds, PhD

This talk is based on the book *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth* by Jonathan Wells, Ph.D. (Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2000; ISBN: 0-89526-276-2). Dr. Wells (who holds a Ph.D. from UC at Berkeley in molecular and cell biology) clearly explains how many of the "proofs" (icons) of evolution being taught in current secondary school and college biology textbooks have been disproved, are

fraudulent, or are speculative at best. More disturbing is that many leading evolutionary scientists are fully aware of this but have done little to correct the situation. Indeed, some feel that introducing such "controversial" revelations into the classroom, though true, would only "confuse" students. The "icons" include the Miller-Urey experiment on the origin of life, Darwin's tree of life, homology of vertebrate limbs, Haeckel's embryos, Archaeopteryx, peppered moths, Darwin's finches, horse evolution, and human evolution. Additional related material is included.

Not by Chance - Dan Reynolds, PhD

This talk is based on the book *Not By Chance! Shattering the Modern Theory of Evolution* by Lee Spetner (The Judacia Press, Inc., 1998; ISBN 1-880582-24-4). Dr. Spetner persuasively shows through sound theoretical calculations, population genetics, biochemistry, and information theory that the proposed Neo Darwinian evolutionary mechanism for macroevolution of random mutations acted upon by natural selection does not work. He cites many documented examples of where changes in the phenotype were a function of gene activation/expression and not associated with a change in the genome. He concludes that much of the alleged fossil evidence for evolution may merely reflect an organism's genetically built-in ability to respond to environmental factors by selective gene activation/repression and not by generation of new genetic information.

Creation and Information -Dan Reynolds, PhD

The biological world is full of information at the molecular level, but how did it get there? Are the laws of chance, chemistry, and physics plus time adequate to generate the complex information found in the genetic code? Scientists have now developed a means to empirically detect the signature of intelligent design in biochemistry. When this "explanatory filter" is used to analyze DNA and proteins, design is detected and natural processes are ruled out! We will discuss information theory, complex specified information, and irreducible complexity as applied to the chemistry of life. This talk is based primarily upon the writings of William Dembski, Michael Behe, and Lee Spetner.

Creation and Astronomy - Dan Reynolds, PhD

There are many evidences for design and a recent creation in astronomy and physics. We will discuss these evidences as well as a "white hole" cosmology based on Genesis and relativity theory which explains how we can see stars billions of light years away from a young earth.

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