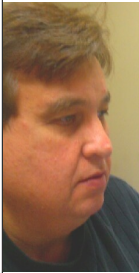




First Thoughts



Once again evolutionists say they have found the latest "missing-link" proving man and apes came from a common ancestor. In this case a creature they describe as lemur-like. In this issue we take a look at this "new" discovery and some of the controversy it is already creating, even among those

who favor the theory of evolution.

In light of this story, I think you will find this issue's "Culture Tracks" particularly interesting. The entire section contains statistical data from the Harris and Gallup Polls, concerning Americans' views on evolution and creation. Take note of how the data varies when broken down by age groups. The trends definitely indicate that as the next generation ages the willingness to consider evolution as true will increase.

Another story that continues to be part of the cultural discussion is the so-called Mayan Calendar Prophecy. Some are predicting, based on an ancient Mayan calendar, that the world will end on December 21, 2012. As we get closer to this date, expect more documentaries to be produced about it. A Hollywood motion picture is already in the works, so obviously, the marketing research indicates there is

significant interest in it. Several books and other resources are already being sold on the Internet and scores of websites have sprung up promoting this event.

In a future issue of *CrossingCurrents* we'll be taking a closer look at the claims being made. For a good general overview of the "prophecy" visit our website and view the story done by our local ABC affiliate. This includes interview segments with me.

Let me again thank those of you who are supporting Dan Malin's efforts in Afghanistan. I have now heard from a number of you who are sending boxes to the Table of Grace Ministry that Don has set up. You can get more information on our website.

Also, some of you have taken the time to let us know you were glad to hear about our new work in Europe. Your encouragement is most appreciated. One of our Romanian staff, Nelu Filip was in our office the end of last month and we began making, what I believe are, some exciting plans for the team there.

Truly, these are exciting days to serve. All of us at Crosswinds are grateful for your support. Please let us know if we can be of help to you.

Blessings,

Monkey Business: A Chip Off the Old Lemur by Bob Waldrep

The latest "missing link" has been found, studied, and cataloged. Officially it will be known as *Darwinius masillae*; however, it is being introduced to the general public by its nickname, *Ida* (after the six year-old daughter of Dr. Jorn Hurum, the paleontologist from Oslo University's National History Museum, who led the team that examined the fossil).

With a "cutesy" name in place to help us better relate to this fossil matter, (think of it like the family pet) what could be next for *Ida*? As with many of the numerous "missing links" that have been presented before her, next up is a clever marketing campaign, and in *Ida*'s case, a promotional tour. All of which will mean huge dividends for those who are selling it...I mean,

for the "advancement of science".

First, let's get the quick facts on "little *Ida*". At the heart of the discussion are the fossil remains of a small creature said to date back over 47 million years. Interestingly, the fossil remains are not a recent discovery but were found near Darmstadt, Germany in 1983 by an amateur fossil hunter. Some twenty years later it was sold to a German fossil dealer who brought it to Hurum's attention some two years ago.

Convinced that it was the real thing, Hurum bought the fossil on behalf of the Museum, for an undisclosed amount. Since then, he and a team of experts have been secretly studying it; not making their findings known until a press release was issued on May 19, 2009. continued p 2

Inside this issue:

<i>First Thoughts from our President</i>	1
<i>Monkey Business: A Chip Off the Old Lemur</i>	1
<i>Culture Tracks: Current Statistical Trends</i>	3
<i>In the News</i>	4

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Monkey... from page 1

Without question this roll out of the missing link has been carefully coordinated. As the curtain was pulled back on this "secret", we are informed that a book and film documentary about *Ida*, in addition to a cause-promoting website (revealingthelink.com), had been completed and were ready for release. Naturally, these promote, not only *Ida*, but foremost, the evolutionist cause. And, as is so often the case, the press releases and media reports are extolling the "scientific evidence" presented; as if the proof for evolution is a done deal - a fact of science and history - rather than a theory. But, is it?

The opening paragraph of the press release asserts such claims as: "...the fossil is twenty times older than most fossils that explain human evolution... [It] is a transitional species showing characteristics from the very primitive non-human evolutionary line...but she is more related to the human evolutionary line... [placing] *Ida* at the very root of anthropoid evolution when primates were first developing the features that would evolve into our own."

To read these statements one might conclude there is a tremendous amount of fossil evidence proving human evolution. Well, if the evidence is already in on humans evolving from lower primates, why all the concern to find a missing link?

A close reading of the claims being asserted indicate that to come to these conclusions, one would have to assume that there are, at least, two evolutionary lines. The first is the "very primitive non-human evolutionary line" - those that will never quite make it to human but branch off into something else that has some common traits, but is not human; and, the human evolutionary line - that line that somehow managed to divert from the non-human line to eventually become human.

So, basically, the claim is that *Ida* is "sort of" in the non-human line, but if we had to pick a line we would have to say she is more related to the human line. Are you following the logic here? Me neither.

Perhaps some of the expert quotes concerning *Ida* included in the press release will make things clearer. Following are a few to consider:

- "This is the first link to all humans...truly a fossil that links world heritage." Dr. Hurum
- "This fossil rewrites our understanding of the early evolution of primates." Dr. Jorg Habersetzer
- This little creature is going to show us our

connection with all the rest of the mammals." Sir David Attenborough

- "The link they would have said until now is missing...it is no longer missing." Attenborough

Consider the claims made here: It is the first link to all humans, rewrites our understanding of the early evolution of primates, and shows our connection with all other mammals...it is the missing link. Don't these seem as if they are trying to say it, both, is and isn't the link to humans?

In reporting on this story the *Guardian* put it this way, "The researchers believe it comes from the time when the primate lineage, that diversified into monkeys, apes and ultimately humans, split from a separate group that went on to become lemurs and other less well known species."¹

In their press release, the researchers refer to *Ida* as, "lemur-like". Commenting on this, Brian Richmond, a biological anthropologist at George Washington University, said, "This specimen looks like a really early fossil monkey that belongs to the group that includes us." He added, "But, there's a big gap in the fossil record from this time period..."[*Ida*] is one of the important branching points on the evolutionary tree, but it's not the only branching point."²



Again, not a very ringing endorsement that this is the missing link. I think it is safe to say that, while this may truly be a remarkable fossil find, as regards its preservation and presentation, it is being much overhyped. The way it has been brought to the public's attention reminds me of the "Lost Tomb of Jesus" spectacle in 2007.

In that case, experts had supposedly uncovered the ossuary that contained the bones of Jesus and his family. As with *Ida*, the research findings were released in conjunction with a documentary and much media hype. Also, as with *Ida*, when it was all said and done it was mostly about speculation, not hard facts or scientific evidence.

Even those who believe in, or accept, evolution have some concerns about the claims surrounding *Ida* and the conclusions drawn by the researchers. Under the caption, "Are there any doubts about the significance of the find?" Steve Connor, of the British paper, *The Independent* writes:

"But one of the slightly suspicious aspects of the story is how it has emerged in a blaze of publicity coordinated by the television documentary company that was given access to the scientists, along with the involvement of a publisher with a book to sell on the subject. Usually, new discoveries of this significance is first published in the peer-reviewed scientific literature where the claims are meticulously analyzed by teams of experts."³

Connor concludes, "[*Ida*] is not "the link" because there is never going to be one missing link between humans and their primate ancestors. Neither is *Ida* our direct ancestor. She belonged to a branch that evolved in parallel to the ancestral line of primates that eventually gave rise to humans.

Chris Beard, the curator of vertebrate paleontology at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, is another who questions the conclusions of Hurum and his team. Writing for *New Science Magazine*, he states, "The fact that she retains primitive features that commonly occurred among all early primates, such as simple incisors rather than a full-fledged toothcomb, indicates that *Ida* belongs somewhere closer to the base of the tree than living lemurs do. But this does not necessarily make *Ida* a close relative of anthropoids - the group of primates that includes monkeys, apes - and humans. In order to establish that connection, *Ida* would have to have anthropoid-like features that evolved after anthropoids split away from lemurs and other early primates. Here, alas, *Ida* fails miserably. So, *Ida* is not a "missing link" - at least not between anthropoids and more primitive primates...Instead, *Ida* is a remarkably complete specimen that promises to teach us a great deal about the biology of some of the earliest and least human-like of all known primates, the Eocene adapiforms."⁴

Part of the concern among evolutionists, comes from their disagreement on the family origin of any so-called missing link. Anthropologists who embrace the theory of evolution believe that the larger primates and man had a common precursor. One group holds to the theory it is, what's called



the tarsidae, believed to be the ancestor of the present-day tarsier, found in Asia. The other group believes it is, what is called, the adapidae, believed to be the ancestor of the present-day lemur (that's right as in the animal tribe in Dreamworks' animated feature film, *Madagascar*, which is where Lemurs are found).

Being "lemur-like", *Ida* falls into the latter theory and should be hailed by all who believe in the adapidae theory. However, those of the tarsidae theory, naturally, will reject her. But even some of those in the adapidae camp, while recognizing this is a great find because of the almost pristine preservation of the fossil record, reject it as the missing link.

Perhaps Christopher Beard, of Carnegie Museum of Natural History, sums it up best when he said, "I actually don't think it's terribly close to the common ancestral line of monkeys, apes and people, I would say it's about as far away as you can get from that line and still be a primate." Rather than a long-ago aunt, 'I would say it's more like a third cousin twice removed.'⁵

Creationists, or those who argue for intelligent design, are also weighing in on this story. Ken Ham, of Answers in Genesis, dismisses the claims about *Ida* and includes on his website several important observations about this, and the fossil record in general, including the following that are worth consideration:

- "The principles that inform creationists about *Ida* are some of the same that allow creationists to interpret fossil after fossil hailed as "transitional forms": Nothing about this fossil suggests it is anything other than an extinct, lemur-like creature. Its appearance is far from chimpanzee, let alone "apeman" or human.
- A fossil can never show evolution. Fossils are unchanging records of dead organisms. Evolution is an alleged process of change in live organisms. Fossils show "evolution" only if one presupposes evolution, then uses that presupposed belief to interpret the fossil.
- Similarities can never show evolution. If two organisms have similar structures, the only thing it proves is that the two have similar structures. One must presuppose evolution to say that the similarities are due to evolution rather than design. Furthermore, when it comes to "transitional forms," the slightest similarities often receive great attention while major differences are ignored.
- If evolution were true, there would be real

transitional forms. Instead, the best "missing links" evolutionists can come up with are strikingly similar to organisms we see today, usually with the exception of minor, controversial, and inferred anatomical differences.

• Evolutionists only open up about the lack of fossil missing links once a new one is found. Sky News reports, "Researchers say proof of this transitional species finally confirms Charles Darwin's theory of evolution," while Attenborough commented that the missing link "is no longer missing." So are they admitting the evidence was missing until now (supposedly)?"⁶

Those who argue for intelligent design, as well as many who are in the evolutionist camp, clearly disagree with the findings of Hurum's team and the significance of these findings as regards any so-called missing link. In fact - at the risk of being too simplistic about all this - it seems that when it is all said and done, what everyone does agree on concerning *Ida* is that:

1. A fossil was found and has been purchased by the University of Oslo
2. The fossil is in an excellent state of preservation, with amazing detail for study
3. The fossil is of a lemur-like creature

After this, the facts are pretty much left up to speculation and the findings to debate. If one comes from a frame of reference that believes evolution is true, then one might tend to interpret these facts in such a way that they see a human in them there lemur-

like bones. If one is coming from a creationist frame of reference then one will most likely see a lemur in the bones.

Concerning this find, David DeWitt of Creation Studies at Liberty University said, "They say 'we have proof' of the missing link. A few years later, they'll claim they have proof all over again. The important question is this: Where did the genetic information come from that produced that skeleton in the first place? It's not random chance."⁷

It seems to me that it requires much more faith to believe that man originated from some goo that crawled out of the water and eventually became a monkey and then a man; rather than to believe man was created by God. Almost 2,000 years ago the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans:

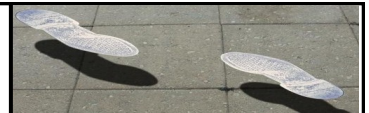
"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made (Rom 1:20 (NIV).

When we look at the world around us we would do well to recognize that everything in it cries out in support of intelligent design, a creator; rather than a world that came from mere happenstance. And I'm not "monkeying" around about that. 🙏

1. www.guardian.co.uk/science/2009/may/19/ida-fossil-missing-link
 2. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2009/05/090519-missing-link-found.html>
 3. www.independent.co.uk/news/science/the-big-question-is-ida-really-the-missing-link-between-humans-and-animals-1688477.html
 4. www.newscientist.com/article/dn17173-why-ida-fossil-is-not-the-missing-link.html
 5. www.miamiherald.com/509/story/1056685.html
 6. www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2009/05/19/ida-missing-link
 7. <http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/20/true-bridge-between-mankind-and-mammals/?page=2>

Culture Tracks

Statistical data reflecting the cultural footprints of Americans.



BELIEF TRENDS REGARDING EVOLUTION AND CREATION

- 64% agree human beings were created directly by God (creationism)
- 22% believe human beings evolved from earlier species (evolution)
- 10% believe human beings required a powerful force or intelligent being to help create them (intelligent design)
- 54% do not think human beings developed from earlier species (46% in 1994)
- 46% believe apes and man have a common ancestry
- 46% agree that Darwin's theory of evolution is proven by fossil discoveries

Source: Harris Poll, July 2005

BELIEF IN EVOLUTION BY AGE GROUP

- Ages 18 to 34 49% believe in evolution
- Ages 35 to 54 39% believe in evolution
- Ages 55 and older 31% believe in evolution

Source: Gallup Poll 02-11-09



In the News

Excerpts from articles reflecting trends in American spirituality (LINKS PROVIDE FULL TEXT)



PARENTS GATHER TO NURTURE NONBELIEF, Modesto Bee, May 21, 2009

On Sunday mornings, when many of their contemporaries are taking their seats in church pews, a group of young parents mingle in the living room of a suburban home while their children run around playing games. This congregation of Raleigh-Durham, N.C., residents has no creed or ceremony, just a desire to get together and offer each other support for rearing children without religion. Taking their cue from a primer of the same name, they call themselves Parenting Beyond Belief, and meet nearly every Sunday...according to two recent surveys [the] "unaffiliated" have doubled in the past 20 years and now account for 16 percent of the population. Increasingly, they are vocal about their nonbelief and eager to speak out about it.

Not everyone in the group is an atheist. Some prefer to call themselves "freethinkers" or "humanists," or "spiritual but not religious." Some are even believers. But they share a disdain for organized religion and a desire to rear their children with the tools to think for themselves. These parents know what it's like to fumble for the right answer to questions such as "Why don't we go to church?" and "Is God real?" and they want to share their responses with like-minded parents. For example, when 6-year-old Evan Spiering announced one day that "God created the world," his father, Todd Spiering, answered, Grandpa believes that. Some people believe other things....Only Minneapolis had a parenting group for nonbelievers when Dale McGowan, the Atlanta-based author of "Parenting Beyond Belief," set out to write his book three years ago. Today, there are at least 32 nationwide by his count.

www.modbee.com/24hour/family/story/712281.html

CHEERS, PROTESTS AT NOTRE DAME, Washington Post, May 18, 2009

Amid a scattering of angry protests over his support for abortion rights, President Obama addressed the issue head-on Sunday at the University of Notre Dame, calling for "open hearts, open minds, fair-minded words" in the pursuit of "common ground." Since becoming president, and before that for nearly two years on the campaign trail, Obama has sought to skirt the emotional anger that surrounds the debate over abortion. But his decision to speak to graduating Notre Dame students made that approach impossible Sunday. The invitation from one of America's best-known Catholic universities ignited a firestorm of discussion over whether an institution that adheres to the Roman Catholic Church's condemnation of abortion should confer an honorary law degree on a president who is committed to safeguarding abortion rights.

[Obama] pleaded for courtesy in the dialogue even as he acknowledged that "at some level, the views of the two camps are irreconcilable."

"Is it possible for us to join hands in common effort?" he said. "As citizens of a vibrant and varied democracy, how do we engage in vigorous debate? How does each of us remain firm in our principles, and fight for what we consider right, without demonizing those with just as strongly held convictions on the other side?" He added: "Let us work together to reduce the number of women seeking abortions. Let's reduce unintended pregnancies. Let's make adoption more available. . . . Let's honor the conscience of those who disagree with abortion, and draft a sensible conscience clause."

...A handful of graduates engaged in a silent protest, having taped a yellow cross and yellow images of baby feet to the top of their mortarboards....hundreds of antiabortion protesters gathered Sunday outside the front gate of the university... police arrested more than three dozen for trespassing, including Norma McCorvey, the woman at the center of the landmark Supreme Court abortion case *Roe v. Wade*, who

is now an antiabortion activist. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/17/AR2009051701622.html?hpid=topnews

MUSLIM PLAN FOR U.S. COLLEGE MOVES AHEAD, USA Today

A group of American Muslims, led by two prominent scholars, is moving closer to fulfilling a vision of founding the first four-year accredited Islamic college in the United States, what some are calling a "Muslim Georgetown." Advisers to the project have scheduled a June vote to decide whether the proposed Zaytuna College can open in the fall of next year, a major step toward developing the faith in America.

Imam Zaid Shakir and Sheik Hamza Yusuf of California have spent years planning the school, which will offer a liberal arts education and training in Islamic scholarship.... "As a faith community our needs aren't any different than the needs of any other faith community," Shakir told the Council for the Advancement of Muslim Professionals, as he sought donations at a recent conference near Princeton, N.J. "As Muslims, we need to develop institutions to allow us to perpetuate our values."

Others have tried to start Muslim colleges around New York and Chicago, but those schools remained obscure or quickly folded....A working motto for the school: "Where Islam Meets America." Zaytuna College will start with two majors: Arabic language, and Islamic legal and theological studies. It will not be a seminary, although some graduates could become prayer leaders, or imams. Most U.S. mosques are led by imams from overseas, considered an obstacle to Islam's development in America. Other students could go on to start American Muslim nonprofits, or become Islamic scholars through advanced study at other schools, said Hatem Bazian...But administrators aim to teach analytical skills, along with ethics and theology, that can prepare students for many professional careers. www.usatoday.com/news/religion/2009-05-18-islamic-college_N.htm



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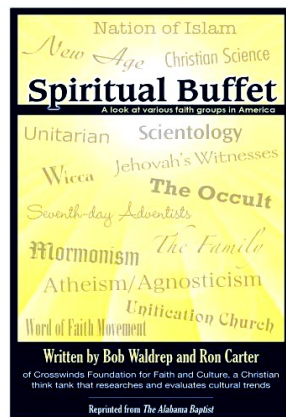
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