

HUMAN EVOLUTION AND THE “RECORD OF THE ROCKS”

Brad Harrub, Ph.D., Bert Thompson, Ph.D., and Eric Lyons, M.Min.

Homo sapiens, the genus and species classification for humans, means literally “wise man”—a designation that at times appears almost comical in light of evolutionists’ contentious claims that humans descended from ape-like ancestors. The pictures of our putative predecessors adorn the walls of science classrooms all over the world. Most of us, in fact, are familiar with the charts that show an ape at one end, a human at the other, and a whole host of ape-like intermediates in between. In an effort to bolster their theory of common descent for all living creatures, evolutionists have worked feverishly to demonstrate a convincing continuity between humans and our alleged ape-like ancestors. And, admittedly, at times they have done their job so well that the ape-like intermediates they depict attain such fame that children immediately recognize their names and can easily recite their traits. For instance, while many individuals may not recognize the name *Australopithecus afarensis*, they very likely have heard of “Lucy” (the creature’s popular name). Pictures of her fossilized remains have been paraded before us as an example of what is arguably the most famous, and the most widely known, of all the so-called “missing links.”

Using a mere handful of bone fragments, a piece of a skull, or a few teeth, evolutionary artists portray what they want us to believe these hairy, ape-like creatures must have looked like. Frequently, we see them carrying primitive clubs, living in caves, or huddled around a fire with others of their kind. And so, from a very young age, children deposit deep within the recesses of their minds the images of these creatures crawling down out of the trees in Africa, learning to walk uprightly, and eventually evolving larger brains,

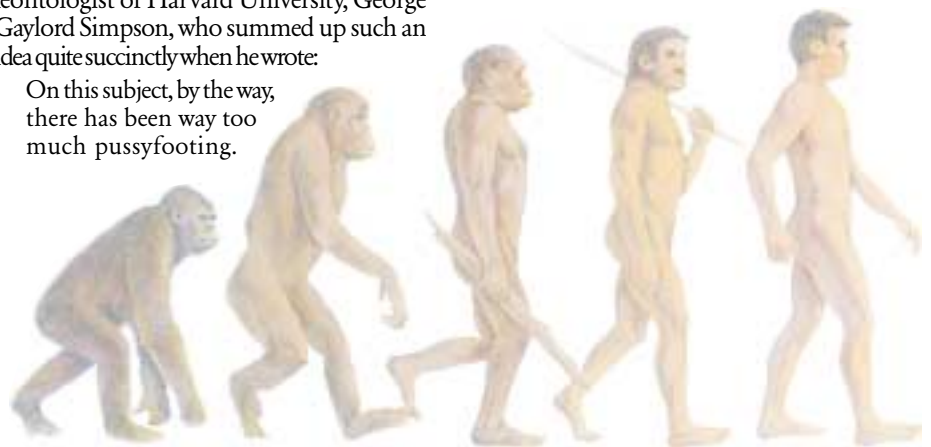
advanced intelligence, and language. While the editors of *Time* and *Newsweek* devote entire covers to our various alleged ancestors, the reconstructed images they portray are more fiction than fact—as we will document in this article, and as the evolutionists themselves have been willing to admit publicly. Paleontologist Douglas Palmer, for example, stated in the March 16, 2002 issue of *New Scientist*: “The trouble is we probably know more about the evolution of extinct trilobites than we do about human evolution” (173[2334]: 50). We would like to examine the actual evidence of human origins as found within the fossil record, and then offer an updated, “corrected” version of that evidence—one that presents what renowned American news commentator Paul Harvey might well call “the rest of the story.”

Evolutionists today, of course, do not contend that man descended from the apes. Instead, they contend that both men and apes descended from a **common ancestor**. We, however, agree with the late evolutionary paleontologist of Harvard University, George Gaylord Simpson, who summed up such an idea quite succinctly when he wrote:

On this subject, by the way, there has been way too much pussyfooting.

Apologetists emphasize that man cannot be the descendant of any **living** ape—a statement that is obvious to the verge of imbecility—and go on to state or imply that man is not really descended from an ape or monkey at all, but from an earlier common ancestor. In fact, that earlier ancestor would certainly be called an ape or monkey in popular speech by anyone who saw it. Since the terms **ape** and **monkey** are defined by popular usage, man’s ancestors were apes or monkeys (or successively both). It is pusillanimous [cowardly—BH/BT/EL] if not dishonest for an informed investigator to say otherwise (1964, p. 12, emp. in orig.).

Ironically, some evolutionists even have gone so far as to suggest—albeit incorrectly—that Charles Darwin himself never claimed that man evolved from the apes. Yet he most certainly did—in *The Descent of Man* (1870, pp. 519-520).



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Since the time of Darwin, evolutionists have struggled to invent plausible theories about why those ancient apes decided to leave the confines of the treetops in favor of bipedal locomotion on the plains. M.P. Schutzenberger illustrated the problem well when he mentioned a number of biological systems that distinguish humans from primates.

Bipedalism, with the concomitant modification of the pelvis, and, without a doubt, the cerebellum; a much more dexterous hand, with fingerprints conferring an especially fine tactile sense; the modifications of the pharynx which permits phonation; the modification of the central nervous system, notably at the level of the temporal lobes, permitting the specific recognition of speech. From the point of view of embryogenesis, these anatomical systems are completely different from one another. Each modification constitutes a gift, a bequest from a primate family to its descendants. **It is astonishing that these gifts should have developed simultaneously** (1996, pp. 17[2]: 15, emp. added).

It is indeed "astonishing" that these apes (or, to be more politically correct, "ape-like creatures") could have experienced the "simultaneous emergence of a number of biological systems" that brought them from apedom to humanity. It is equally "astonishing" to see how evolutionists have interpreted the evidence of the fossil record that they insist establishes such an event as having occurred. We invite you to join us on this fascinating journey while we investigate the "record of the rocks" as it applies to human evolution.

THE FOSSIL RECORD AND HUMAN EVOLUTION

The public generally has no idea just how scarce, and how fragmentary (literally!), the "evidence" for human evolution actually is. Harvard professor Richard Lewontin lamented this very fact when he stated:

When we consider the remote past, before the origin of the actual species *Homo sapiens*, we are faced with a fragmentary and disconnected fossil record. Despite the excited and optimistic claims that have been made by some paleontologists, **no fossil hominid species can be established as our direct ancestor....** (1995, p. 163, emp. added).

The evolutionary tree that has been presented to demonstrate the origin of humans has two main branches (and assorted twigs) within the primate family (hominidae). One consists of *Australopithecus*, while the other is composed of the genus *Homo*. The categories to which various fossils have been assigned may be more telling than we first thought,

for evidence now exists which demonstrates that all fossils in the *Australopithecus* group share a common trait—one buried deep within the ear—while all those in the genus *Homo* share a completely different physiology, likewise related to the ear. Richard Leakey commented:

At a meeting of anthropologists in April 1994, Fred Spoor, of the University of Liverpool, described the semicircular canals in humans and apes. The two vertical canals are significantly enlarged in humans compared with those in apes, a difference Spoor interprets as an adaptation to the extra demands of upright balance in a bipedal species. What of early human species? Spoor's observations are truly startling. In all species of the genus *Homo*, the inner ear structure is indistinguishable from that of modern humans. Similarly, in all species of *Australopithecus*, the semicircular canals look like those of apes... (1994, pp. 34-36).

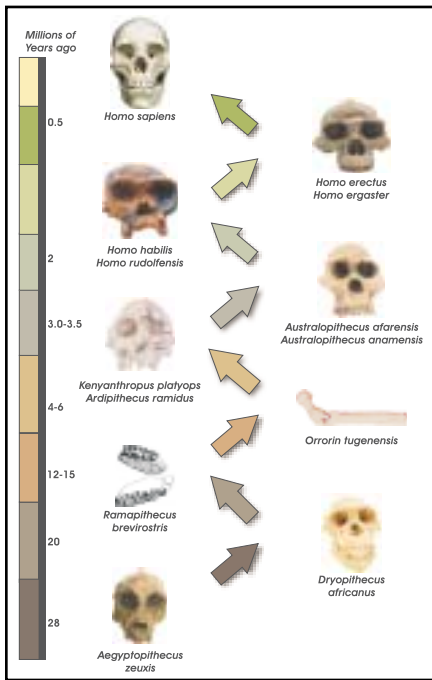
Thus it appears that, as creationists have contended, all fossils can be placed into one of two groups: apes or humans. Furthermore, it is practically impossible to determine which "family tree" one should accept. At an annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science some years ago, anthropologists from all over the world descended on New York City to view hominid fossils exhibited by the American Museum of Natural History. Reporting on this exhibit, *Science News* had this to say:

One sometimes wonders if orangutans, chimps and gorillas ever sit around the tree, contemplating which is the closest relative of man. (And would they want to be?) Maybe they even chuckle at human scientists' machinations as they race to draw the definitive map of evolution on earth. If placed on top of one another, all these competing versions of our evolutionary highways would make the Los Angeles freeway system look like County Road 41 in Elkhart, Indiana (see "Whose Ape Is It, Anyway?," 1984, 125:361, parenthetical comment in orig.).

How, in light of such admissions, can evolutionary scientists possibly defend the idea of ape/human evolution as a "scientifically proven fact"?

While it is impossible to present any scenario of human evolution upon which even the evolutionists themselves would agree, the schematic on the next page (gleaned from the latest scientific literature) represents the most up-to-date assessment available on the subject. [NOTE: We do not accept the evolution-based dates attached to the finds, but have left them intact for reference purposes.]





The alleged evolution of man based on the “evidence” from the fossil record

FOSSIL FRAGMENTS — MAN OR APE?

Of all the branches found on that infamous “evolutionary tree of life,” the one leading to man should be the best documented. After all, as the most recent evolutionary arrival, pre-human fossils supposedly would have been exposed to natural decay processes for the shortest length of time, and thus should be better preserved and easier to find than any others. But what does the “record of the rocks” reveal about human evolution? Here—starting with our oldest alleged ancestor—is that message.

Aegyptopithecus zeuxis



Aegyptopithecus zeuxis has been called by Richard Leakey “the first ape to emerge from the Old World’s monkey stock” (1978, p. 52), and is considered the first creature on the long road to man.

A 12-year-old, however, could look at this fossil and identify it as an ape. No controversy here; the animal is admittedly an ape.

Dryopithecus africanus

Dryopithecus africanus (once again, according to Richard Leakey) is considered to be “the stock from which all modern apes evolved” (1978, p. 56).



And, as evolutionists David Pilbeam and Elwyn Simons have pointed out, *Dryopithecus* already was “too committed to ape-dom” to be the progenitor of man (1971, 173:23). No controversy here; the animal is admittedly an ape.

Ramapithecus brevivrostris



What about *Ramapithecus*? In the past, numerous anthropologists considered this creature to be the first true hominid. But that no longer is the case. Thanks to additional work by Pilbeam, we now realize that *Ramapithecus* was not a hominid at all, but merely another ape (1982, 295:232). In fact, as Duane Gish noted: “He is no longer considered to have been a creature in the line leading to man” (1985, p. 140). No controversy here; the animal is admittedly an ape.

What, then, shall we say of these three “ancestors” that supposedly form the taproot of man’s family tree? We simply will say what the evolutionists themselves have admitted: all three were nothing but apes. Period.

Orrorin tugenensis

The 13 fossil fragments that form *Orrorin tugenensis* (broken femurs, several teeth, and bits of lower jaw) were found in the Tugen Hills of Kenya in the fall of 2000 by Brigitte Senut and Martin Pickford of France, and have been controversial ever since. If *Orrorin* were considered to be a human ancestor, it would predate other candidates by around 2 million years. Senut and Pickford (in an even more drastic scenario) have suggested that all the australopithecines—even those considered to be our direct ancestors—should be relegated to a dead-end side branch in favor of *Orrorin*. Yet paleontologist David Begun of the University of Toronto has admitted that scientists have been unable to determine whether *Orrorin* was, in fact, “on the line to humans, on the line to chimps, a common ancestor to both, or just an extinct side branch” (2001). Lots of controversy here—but no credible evidence of a creature on its way to becoming human.



Ardipithecus ramidus

In 1994, evolutionist Tim White and his coworkers described a new species known as *Australopithecus ramidus*, dated at 4.4 million years (White, et al., 371:306-312). The August 23, 1999 issue of *Time* magazine contained a feature story, “Up from the Apes,” about the

creature (Lemonick and Dorfman, 1999, 154 [8]:51-58). Morphologically speaking, this was the earliest, most ape-like australopithecine to date, and seemed to be a good candidate for the most distant common ancestor of the hominids. A year later, however, White completely reclassified the creature as *Ardipithecus ramidus* (1995, 375:88). And one year after that, Donald Johanson (the discoverer of “Lucy”—see next page) admitted in *National Geographic* that *A. ramidus* had “many chimp-like features” and that “its position on the human family tree is in question” (1996, 189[3]:117). A year later, Meave Leakey and colleagues described the 3.8-4.2 million-year-old *Australopithecus anamensis*, which bears striking similarities to both *Ardipithecus* (a chimp?) and *Pan* (the actual genus of the chimpanzees).



Time cover courtesy of TIMEPIX. Copyright © 2001. Used by permission.

The bright yellow and white wording on the front cover of the July 23, 2001 issue of *Time* (above) announced somewhat authoritatively, “How Apes Became Human,” and claimed that a new hominid discovery of a creature known as *Ardipithecus ramidus kadabba* (kadabba—from the Afar language—means “basal family ancestor”) tells “scientists about how our oldest ancestors stood on two legs and made an evolutionary leap.” Yet those empty cover-story words become almost secondary as readers find themselves captivated by the “ape-man” drawing that blankets the entire cover. Sadly, many readers may never make it to page 57, where staff writers Michael Lemonick and Andrea Dorfman admit that the discoverers of the fossils under discussion, Yohannes Haile-Selassie and his colleagues, “haven’t collected enough bones yet to reconstruct with great precision what *kadabba* looked like.” That seemingly insignificant fact, however, did not prevent

the magazine's editors from putting an intimidating, full-color "reconstruction" of this newest fossil find on the cover—an image, if we may kindly say so, that becomes somewhat less than forthright in light of the actual facts of the matter. A thorough investigation of this "scientific discovery" reveals that the creature was "reconstructed" from only a few bone fragments and a few teeth—of which, the only one that might provide the artist with any structural information of the head was a piece of the right mandible.

In their article, "One Giant Step for Mankind," Lemonick and Dorfman invited readers to meet their "newfound ancestor, a chimp-like forest creature that stood up and walked 5.8 million years ago" (2001, 158[3]:54). According to evolutionists, *Ardipithecus ramidus kadabba* lived between 5.2 and 5.8 million years ago, which beats the previous record holder by almost a million-and-a-half years and, according to evolutionists' estimates, places *A. kadabba* "very close to the time when humans and chimps first went their separate ways" (158[3]:56). Lemonick and Dorfman went on to comment:

...[N]o one has yet been able to say precisely when that first evolutionary step on the road to humanity happened, nor what might have triggered it. But a discovery reported last week [July 12—BH/BT/EL] in the journal *Nature* has brought paleontologists tantalizingly close to answering both these questions (158[3]:56; for the original *Nature* article, see Haile-Selassie, 2001).

That's a pretty bold statement, considering the fact that researchers had only the following bone fragments from which to glean all of this information: a fragment of the right mandible, one intermediate hand phalanx, the left humerus and ulna, a distal humerus, a proximal hand phalanx fragment, a left clavicle fragment, a proximal foot phalanx, and a few teeth. In addition, these bones were not laid out neatly in a typical skeletal arrangement, all grouped together and just waiting for researchers to dig them up. No indeed. These few bones took researchers 5 years to collect and came from 5 different locations! And so, from a fossilized toe, a piece of jawbone, a finger, arm bones, a clavicle, and a few teeth we have this incredible "ape-man" to prove how apes became human.

Prominently displayed in the center of page 59 of the *Time* article is a photograph of a toe bone, about which Lemonick and Dorfman wrote: "This toe bone proves the creature walked on two legs." **Amazing, is it not, what one can discern from a single toe bone?** The human foot contains 26 individual bones (see Netter, 1994, p. 492), yet evolutionary scientists claim that they can distinguish walking characteristics from an examination of just one? That bold caption

also fails to inform the reader that this toe bone was found in 1999, is "chronologically younger" than the other bone fragments, and was found in a separate location from the rest of the fossils. In fact, the bone fragments that make up this new specimen came from five localities of the Middle Awash in Ethiopia: Saitune Dora, Alaya, Asa Koma, Digiba Dora, and Amba East (Haile-Selassie, 2001, 412:181).

Lemonick and Dorfman admitted: "Exactly how this hominid walked is still something of a mystery, though with a different skeletal structure, its gait would have been unlike ours" (158:57). But that did not stop the authors from speculating that "*kadabba* almost certainly walked upright much of the time" and that "many of its behaviors undoubtedly resembled those of chimpanzees today" (158:57). Interesting speculation—especially in view of the fact that the ages of the fossilized bone fragments composing *kadabba* vary by hundreds of thousands of years according to the evolutionists' own dating schemes. What was it that convinced evolutionists that *A. kadabba* walked uprightly and was on the road to becoming man? A single toe bone!

Kenyanthropus platyops



In the March 22, 2001 issue of *Nature*, a completely new hominid genus from eastern Africa, *Kenyanthropus platyops*, was first described (Leakey, et al., 2001). Using the new specimen to rework humanity's pedigree, paleoanthropologist Meave Leakey (wife of famed paleontologist Richard Leakey) and her colleagues at the National Museums of Kenya in Nairobi argued that the small-brained creature was so unusual, it belongs not merely to a new species, but to an entirely new genus! This new find now is nestled firmly in the roots of the human family tree—at a time when scientists believed that only one ancestral species existed, leaving it unclear just which (if either!) was the direct forebear of modern humankind.

The authors named the creature *Kenyanthropus platyops*, which means flat-faced man of Kenya, "in recognition of Kenya's contribution to the understanding of human evolution through the many specimens recovered from its fossil sites" (410:433). However, an exhaustive study of the *Nature* article reveals a total of 36 cranio-dental fossils collected from 4 different locations over a period of 17 years, of which only 6 contain bone fragments. Only two of these specimens, the skull and a partial upper jaw, are sufficiently intact to be assigned to this new taxon. The authors described their new finds as "a well-preserved temporal bone, two partial max-

illae, isolated teeth, and most importantly a largely complete, although distorted, cranium" (410:433). Distorted indeed! Even an untrained eye can look at the figures provided in the article and see the extensive damage to this newly found fossil. The flat face of *platyops* adds another wrinkle in the evolutionary timeline—a wrinkle that is no small problem because creatures younger than *K. platyops* (and therefore closer to *Homo sapiens*) have much more pronounced, ape-like facial features. *K. platyops* was dated at 3.5 million years, and yet has a much flatter face than any other hominid that old. Thus, the evolutionary scenario seems to be moving in the wrong direction!

Australopithecus afarensis

Australopithecus afarensis was discovered in November 1974 by Donald Johanson at Hadar, Ethiopia. Dr. Johanson believes that this creature (known popularly as "Lucy") is the immediate ancestor of man (see Johanson and Edey, 1981). Certain evolutionists strongly disagree. Lord Solly Zuckerman, the famous British anatomist, published his views in his book, *Beyond the Ivory Tower*. He studied the australopithecines for more than 15 years, and concluded that if man descended from an apelike ancestor, he did so without leaving a single trace in the fossil record (1970, p. 64). Some might complain, "But Zuckerman's work was carried out before Lucy was even discovered." True, but that misses the point. Dr. Zuckerman's research—which established conclusively that the australopithecines were nothing but knuckle-walking apes—was performed on fossils that were younger (i.e., closer to man!) than Lucy.

Moreover, other evidence has come to light which suggests that Lucy is little more than a chimpanzee. Johanson and his co-workers admitted in an article in the March 31, 1994 issue of *Nature* that Lucy possessed chimp-proportioned arm bones (see Kimbel, et al., 1994) and that her alleged descendants (e.g., *A. africanus* and *H. habilis*) had ape-like limb proportions as well—which is a clear indication that she did not evolve into something "more human." In the September 9, 1994 issue of *Science*, Randall Susman reported that the chimp-like thumbs in *A. afarensis* were far better suited to tree climbing than tool making (Susman, 1994). Lucy also possessed a nonhuman gait, based on a ratio of leg size to foot size (see Oliwenstein, 1995, 16[1]:42). One researcher even went as far as to suggest that *A. afarensis* was little more than a failed experiment in ape bipedalism, and as such should be consigned to a side branch of the human evolutionary tree (as



reported by Shreeve, 1996, 272:654). To add insult to injury, the March 29, 2000 *San Diego Union Tribune* reported:

A chance discovery made by looking at a cast of the bones of “Lucy,” the most famous fossil of *Australopithecus afarensis*, shows her wrist is stiff, like a chimpanzee’s, Brian Richmond and David Strait of George Washington University in Washington, D.C., reported. This suggests that her ancestors walked on their knuckles (Fox, 2000).

Evolutionist Jeremy Cherfas noted: “Lucy, alias *Australopithecus afarensis*, had a skull very like a chimpanzee’s, and a brain to match” (1983, 93:172). Adrienne Zihlman observed: “Lucy’s fossil remains match up remarkably well with the bones of a pygmy chimp” (1984, 104:39). Charles Oxnard, while at the University of Chicago, reported his multivariate computer analysis, documenting that the australopithecines were nothing but knuckle-walking apes (1975, 285:389-395). Finally, in the March 1996 *National Geographic*, Donald Johanson himself admitted: “Lucy has recently been dethroned” (189[3]:117).

The Laetoli Footprints

Then, in the April 1979 issue of *National Geographic*, Mary Leakey reported finding fossil footprint trails at Laetoli, Tanzania. The strata above the footprints were dated at 3.6 million years, while the strata below them were dated at 3.8. As Lubenow noted: “These footprint trails rank as one of the great fossil discoveries of the twentieth century” (1992, p. 173). Why is this the case? Not only did Dr. Leakey discover three distinct trails containing sixty-nine prints, but **she also found footprints that depicted one individual actually walking in the steps of another!—something that only humans have the intelligence (or inclination) to do.** Thus, Dr. Leakey was forced to admit that the footprints were “remarkably similar to those of modern man” (1979, 155:446).

Most evolutionists, however, have ascribed the footprints to *A. afarensis*. The specialist who carried out the most extensive study to date of the Laetoli footprints (at the invitation of Mary Leakey herself) is Russell Tuttle of the University of Chicago. He noted in his research reports that the individuals who made the tracks were barefoot and probably walked habitually unshod. As part of his investigation, he observed 70 Machiguenga Indians in the rugged mountains of Peru—people who habitually walk unshod. After analyzing the Indians’ footprints and examining the available Laetoli fossilized toe bones, Tuttle concluded that the ape-like feet of *A. afarensis* simply could not have made the Laetoli tracks (see Bower, 1989, 135:251). In fact, in an article on the Laetoli footprints in the March 1990 issue of *Natural History*, Dr. Tuttle wrote: “In discernible features, the Laetoli G prints are indistinguishable from those of habitually barefoot *Homo sapiens*” (p. 64). He then went on to admit: **“If the G footprints were not known to be so old, we would readily conclude that they were made by a member of our genus, *Homo*”** (p. 64, emp. added).

Interestingly, Mary Leakey originally labeled the Laetoli footprints as “*Homo* indeterminate,” indicating that she was willing to place them in the genus of man, but was unable to decide upon a species designation. It is clear, of course, why she was unwilling to call them what they clearly are—*Homo sapiens*. Since the tracks are dated as being **older** than Lucy (3.6-3.8 million years), and if Lucy is supposed to have given rise to humans, how could humans have existed more than 500,000 years **prior to Lucy** in order to make such footprints? [See Lubenow, 1992, pp. 45-58 for a more detailed refutation of Lucy, and pp. 173-176 for a discussion of the Laetoli footprints.]

Homo habilis/Homo rudolfensis

But what of *Homo habilis*? J.T. Robinson and David Pilbeam have long argued that *H. habilis* is the same as *A. africanus*. Louis Leakey (Richard’s father) went so far as to state: “I submit that morphologically it is almost impossible to regard *Homo habilis* as representing a stage between *Australopithecus africanus* and *Homo erectus*” (1966, 209:1280-1281). Dr. Leakey later reported the contemporaneous existence of *Australopithecus*, *Homo habilis*, and *H. erectus* fossils at Olduvai Gorge (see M.D. Leakey, 1971, 3:272). Even more startling was Mary Leakey’s discovery of the remains of a circular stone hut at the bottom of Bed I at Olduvai Gorge—**beneath** fossils of *H. habilis*! Evolutionists have long attributed the deliberate manufacture of shelter only to *Homo sapiens*, yet Dr. Leakey discovered the australopithecines and *H. habilis* together, along with manufactured housing. As Duane Gish asked:



If *Australopithecus*, *Homo habilis*, and *Homo erectus* existed contemporaneously, how could one have been ancestral to another? And how could any of these creatures be ancestral to Man, when Man’s artifacts are found at a lower stratigraphic level, directly underneath, and thus earlier in time to these supposed ancestors of Man? (1995, p. 271).

Good question! In his book, *Evolution: The Fossils Still Say No!*, Gish remarked concerning *Homo habilis*:

No paleoanthropologist has succeeded in sorting out all the creatures that are put into the taxon *Homo habilis* by some and taken out by others. Some insist that *H. habilis* is a bona fide taxon, including creatures intermediate between the australopithecines, either *afarensis* or *africanus*, and *Homo erectus*. Others argue just as strenuously that those creatures classified as *H. habilis* are no more than variants of the australopithecines (1995, p. 265).

In fact, evolutionist Ian Tattersall wrote under the title of “The Many Faces of *Homo habilis*” in the journal *Evolutionary Anthropology*: “...[I]t is increasingly clear that ***Homo habilis* has become a wastebasket taxon**, little more than a convenient recipient for a motley assortment of hominid fossils from the latest Pliocene and earliest Pleistocene” (1[1]:34-36, emp. added). In speaking of *H. habilis*, geologist Trevor Major summarized the situation as follows:

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SPEAKING SCHEDULES

Dr. Bert Thompson		
May 10-12	Oliver Springs, TN	(865) 882-5778
May 17-19	Sanford, NC	(919) 774-8502
Dr. Brad Harrub		
May 5	Talladega, AL	(256) 362-9242
June 3-6	Redwater, TX	(903) 671-2515
Kyle Butt		
May 10-12	Hayneville, AL	(334) 548-2645
Eric Lyons		
May 6-17	Murmansk, Russia	

In fact, the whole issue of its place among *Homo* is highly contentious, and **the species has become a dumping ground for strange and out-of-place fossils.** Some paleontologists have tried to impose some order by reassigning australopithecine-like specimens to *Homo rudolfensis*, and the most modern-looking specimens to “early African *erectus*” or *Homo ergaster* (to which some would assign the Turkana boy). Apart from a small difference in brain size between australopithecines (less than 550 ml) and habilines (around 500-650 ml), there are no other compelling reasons to divide them between two genera (1996, 16:76, emp. added, parenthetical items in orig.).

Homo erectus/Homo ergaster



And what about *Homo erectus*? Until March 2002, most evolutionary anthropologists and paleontologists believed that **two** different creatures belonged in the *H. erectus* niche: *Homo*

ergaster and *Homo erectus*. *H. ergaster* was believed to have emerged in Africa and then spread to Europe. *H. erectus* was believed to have existed mainly in Asia. But an article in the March 21, 2002 issue of *Nature* has challenged the traditional thinking about these two species. Writing under the title, “Remains of *Homo erectus* from Bouri, Middle Awash, Ethiopia,” Berhane Asfaw (of the Rift Valley Research Service in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) and his coauthors discussed their discovery of a partial skull (referred to as a calvaria), which they labeled as *H. erectus*. The skull, discovered on December 27, 1997 in the Afar Rift of Ethiopia known as the Middle Awash, in a sedimentary section of the Bouri formation known as the Dakanihylo (“Daka”), has been dated at approximately 1 million years old (Asfaw, et al., 2002). The significance of what is now being called the Daka skull in the evolutionary debate is this:

The skull is almost identical to *Homo erectus* fossils found in Asia.... It is so similar, the team believes that it cannot possibly be that of another species. The Daka specimen suggests that *Homo erectus* was not limited to Asia, separated from its contemporary, *Homo ergaster*. *Homo erectus* instead was a robust, far-flung species that lived in Asia, Africa, and Europe (McKee, 2002).

Tim White, paleoanthropologist at the University of California at Berkeley and one of the coauthors of the *Nature* paper, put it this way:

This fossil is a crucial piece of evidence showing that the splitting of *Homo erectus* into two species is not justified.... What we are saying in this paper is that the anthropological splitting common today is giving the wrong impression about the biology of these early human ancestors. **The different names indicate an apparent diversity that is not real.** *Homo erectus* is a biologically successful organism, not a whole series of different human ancestors, all but one of which went extinct” (as quoted in “Ethiopian Fossil Skull...,” 2002, emp. added).

Asfaw, et al., wrote:

To recognize the basal fossils representing this apparently evolving lineage with the separate species name “*H. ergaster*” is therefore doubtfully necessary or useful. At most, the basal members of the *H. erectus* lineage should be recognized taxonomically as a chronosubspecies (*H. erectus ergaster*) [2002, 416: 318-319, parenthetical item in orig.].

The graduate student who actually found the skull (and who is a coauthor of the *Nature* paper), Henry Gilbert, probably put it best when he said: “One of the biggest impacts this calvaria will have on the field is in making *Homo erectus* look more like a single species again” (as quoted in “Ethiopian Fossil Skull,” 2002).

Now that evolutionists have wiped out one-half of the *Homo erectus* niche by eliminating *Homo ergaster*, what shall we say about the single remaining member of the *H. erectus* category? Examine a copy of the November 1985 issue of *National Geographic* and see if you can detect any differences between the drawings of *Homo erectus* and *Homo sapiens* (Weaver, 168:576-577). The fact is, there are no recognizable differences. Almost forty years ago, Ernst Mayr, the famed evolutionary taxonomist of Harvard, remarked: “The *Homo erectus* stage is characterized by a body skeleton which, so far as we know, does not differ from that of modern man in any essential point” (1965, p. 632). His statement is as true today as when he first made it. Furthermore, the skull of *H. erectus* shared many features with the Neanderthals, yet with flatter brow ridges and a less prominent mid-facial region. Some of the *H. erectus* skeletons were short and stocky (like the Neanderthals), but one specimen—a nine- to eleven-year-old boy from West Turkana, Kenya—was quite tall and slender (Andrews and Stringer, 1993, p. 242). Cranial volume varied from 850 to over 1100 milliliters (ml) for *H. erectus*, and 1250 to over 1740 ml for Neanderthals. The average for modern humans is 1350 ml, but we exhibit a broad range of 700 to 2200 ml (Lubenow, 1992, p. 138).

In general, such things as skeletal proportions, the angularity of the face, and the shape of the brain case vary considerably among human fossils. Yet such differences—which are every bit as dramatic—occur just as frequently among modern humans. A Watusi today could not fail to miss a Mbuti pygmy who strolled into his village, and an Inuit certainly would stand out at a gathering of Australian aborigines. Despite obvious facial features, both *H. erectus* and *H. sapiens neanderthalensis* appear to fit within a distinct human kind. Although some specimens do exhibit a mixture of traits, there is no clear lineage from, say, *H. erectus* to *H. sapiens*. In fact, the evidence of the fossil record suggests that the two not only were contemporaries, but also in some cases even neighbors (Stringer and Gamble, 1993, p. 137). Remarkable confirmation of that very scenario was presented in two different articles in the December 13, 1996 issue of *Science* (see Gibbons, 1996; Swisher, et al., 1996). Creationist Marvin Lubenow, in his classic text on the alleged fossil evidence for human evolution, *Bones of Contention*, summarized the imaginary *H. erectus* to *H. habilis* to *H. sapiens* lineage as follows:

...*Homo erectus* individuals have lived side by side with other categories of humans for the past two million years (according to evolutionist chronology). This fact eliminates the possibility that *Homo erectus* evolved into *Homo sapiens*. ...On the far end of the *Homo erectus* time continuum, *Homo erectus* is contemporary with *Homo habilis* for 500,000 years. In fact, *Homo erectus* overlaps the entire *Homo habilis* population.... Thus, the almost universally accepted view that *Homo habilis* evolved into *Homo erectus* becomes impossible.... *Homo habilis* could not be the evolutionary ancestor of *Homo erectus* because the two groups lived at the same time as contemporaries....

Although the most recent date usually given for the disappearance of *Homo erectus* is about 300,000 y.a. [years ago—BH/BT/EL], at least 106 fossil individuals having *Homo erectus* morphology are dated by evolutionists themselves as being **more recent** than 300,000 y.a. Of those 106 fossils individuals, at least sixty-two are dated **more recently than 12,000 y.a.** This incontrovertible fact of the fossil record effectively falsifies the concept that *Homo erectus* evolved into *Homo sapiens* and that *Homo erectus* is our evolutionary ancestor. In reality, it falsifies the entire concept of human evolution (1992, pp. 120,127,129, emp. and parenthetical item in orig.).

Lubenow suggests that **all** these forms should be included within a highly variable, created human kind (pp. 120-143). The fossil evidence for evolution (human or otherwise) simply is not there. Apes always have been apes, and humans always have been humans.

WHAT DOES THE RECORD SHOW?

Why is there so much confusion regarding human origins, and what does the fossil record actually show? We think Jeremy Rifkin summed it up accurately.

What the “record” shows is nearly a century of fudging and finagling by scientists attempting to force various fossil morsels and fragments to conform to Darwin’s notions, all to no avail. Today the millions of fossils stand as very visible, ever-present reminders of the paltriness of the arguments and the overall shabbiness of the theory that marches under the banner of evolution (1983, p. 125).

More than 6,000 hominid fossils now exist. Most such fossils can be placed into one of two groups: apes or humans. A few fossils do have odd characteristics or show abnormal bone structure. But does that mean humans evolved? No. It simply means that we have variations in bone structure—variations you can see all around you. Some heads are large; others are small. Some jawbones look angled; some look square. Some noses are pointed; some are flat. Does that indicate we still are “evolving”? Or does it mean that there are occasional differences in humans?

Remember this simple exercise the next time you see a picture of one of those ape-like creatures displayed prominently across the front cover of a reputable news magazine. Look at a skeleton (any one will do) and try to draw the person that used to exist with that bony framework. What color was the hair? Was it curly, or straight? Was the person a male or a female? Did he or she have chubby cheeks, or thin? These are difficult (if not impossible!) questions to answer when we are given only a few bones with which to work. The reconstructions you see as the end-product of an artist’s handiwork are not based **merely on the fossil evidence, but also on what evolutionists believe these creatures “should” have looked like.**

Additional hominid finds are under investigation as we complete this article, several of which have not even been classified taxonomically or made known to the public. You are sure to hear about them in the months ahead. Such fossil finds, however, never will diminish the fact that man always has been man; he did not “evolve” over millions of years. Rather, God, the Giver of life, created mankind on the sixth day of creation, just as the Bible states (Genesis 1:26-27).

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As most of our longtime readers know, when we began the work of Apologetics Press in 1979, we set forth certain “non-negotiable” goals and objectives. In fact, you will find those goals and objectives listed on the inside front cover of our new 2002 catalog in my annual “open letter” to our customers and friends. In my “Note from the Editor” this month, I would like to discuss how one of those goals can benefit you specifically.



But that’s not all. I also have a professional staff composed of some of the finest young men you could ever hope to find. They are dedicated. They are diligent. And they are determined. Plus, they are extremely knowledgeable in their respective fields. [I would not have hired them if they hadn’t been!] As each of them joined our work, I used this space to introduce them to you. So that is not my purpose here and now.

Rather, I simply would like to commend them to you as a valuable resource in their own right. While they always stand ready to help by answering your requests for written assistance, responding to your telephone inquiries, or corresponding with you (or with someone else on your behalf), those certainly are not all the tasks they are qualified to do.

From the very inception of our work, we wanted Apologetics Press to become a “clearinghouse” for people who needed answers to troubling questions, assistance with difficult or challenging problems, or materials they could use to help strengthen their own faith as a Christian or to convert their non-Christian friends. Our aim was to “be here when you needed us”—a goal that we not only have taken seriously through the years, but one, I think, at which we have succeeded admirably.



Each of these young men is well-trained in his particular area of expertise. Kyle (top picture), our Director of Biblical Research, and Eric Lyons (middle picture), our Director of Research, both have multiple earned degrees in Bible from Freed-Hardeman University. Kyle holds B.A. and M.A. degrees; Eric holds B.S. and M.Min degrees. Brad Harrub, our Director of Scientific Information, holds an earned Ph.D. in neurobiology and anatomy from the medical school at the University of Tennessee in Memphis.

Fortunately, after twenty-three years, we are in a far better position to offer such help than we were in 1979. For example, we now have twenty-two years of *Reason & Revelation* articles from which to draw. We have approximately a hundred tracts in print. We have nine different volumes available in our new “Scripture and Science” series. We have materials for children (like *Discovery*, our monthly magazine on Scripture and science), books for teenagers (like Kyle Butt’s volume, *Out With Doubt*, and the upcoming sequel, *A Matter of Fact*). We have produced a number of video tape sets (*Rock-Solid Faith: How to Build It*, *Science & Nature: Two Votes for God*, etc.). And we have established two wildly popular, information-rich Web sites (www.ApologeticsPress.org for adults, and www.DiscoveryMagazine.com for kids). And so on.



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