

Neanderthal Man: Pre-Adamite, Co-Adamite, or Adamite?

This article first appeared in a Protestant creationist journal,
Creation Research Society Quarterly, (Volume 29),
Creation Research Society, Kansas City, MO, March 1993.

There are currently two competing evolutionary theories concerning the origin of modern humans, called the Candelabra and Noah's Ark theories. I would like to examine in this paper if it is possible to accommodate either or both of these theories to the biblical account of Adam and Eve. Brian Fagan summarizes the Candelabra theory:

“The Candelabra model argues that *Homo erectus* populations, once having radiated out of Africa, evolved gradually and independently in different parts of the world into early, or archaic, *Homo sapiens*, then into anatomically modern humans, *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Modern humans emerged having very deep genetic roots, for they separated from one another at least 700,000 years ago, and probably earlier...

“Milford Wolpoff of the University of Michigan, one of the main Candelabra model proponents, believes...that there is a regional continuity in Europe, particularly as evidenced by the Neandertals - *Homo sapiens neandertalensis*. The Neandertals appeared on the scene before 100,000 years ago, and are on the direct ancestral line to modern humans according to the regionalists. “4

In the Candelabra Theory then there is no Adam and Eve, or rather thousands of them, from whom we are all descended. This is technically what is known as polygenism, many first parents, as opposed to monogenism, a single pair. It is impossible to accommodate this theory to Christian teaching, because it involves an implicit denial of original sin, which we all inherit from our common father, Adam. But many so-called theistic evolutionists have attempted an accommodation. One such, Fr. T. Kitahara-Frisch, S.J. of Sophia University in Tokyo, writes:

“In their study of Middle Pleistocene evidence from East Asia, Wolpoff, Wu Xin Zhi and Thorne regard ancestral populations within a dispersing genus *Homo* as ‘having had decreased genetic and morphological variability.’ This new evolutionary pattern was to endure and even to become better marked. The more we learn about human evolution from Middle Pleistocene times until present, the better we realize that humans evolved as a single species, interbreeding on a worldwide scale. As a matter of fact, ‘through the late Pleistocene we notice increasing amounts of gene flow from the more central areas, reflecting the late Pleistocene improvements in human adaptation and the consequent population expansion.’” 2

Father Frisch's theistic evolution is cautious, and he does not mention Adam and Eve or original sin. Not so his mentor, Fr. Teilhard de Chardin, who said: "Thus in the eyes of science, which in the long range can only see things in bulk, the 'first man' is and can only be a crowd, and his infancy is made up of thousands and thousands of years." 3 Another Teilhardian, Fr. Robert Faricy, S.J. presents his teaching on original sin:

“In Teilhard's theory original sin cannot be localized in a historical chain of events. Rather it is a global modality of evolution...The acceptance of his hypothesis would incidentally free us from the obligation heavier every day, of paradoxically making the whole human race derive from one couple. In Teilhard's theory Adam is ‘universalized.’ Strictly speaking there is no Adam...In Teilhard's view Adam is a symbol that all men are born fallen, that all are marked by original sin the instant they become members of mankind. But men are not born in sin because of some aboriginal sin of a primitive Adam. Men are born in original sin because this is the law of the universe, the cosmic condition of a world in evolution.”⁴

These ideas were condemned in 1950 by Pope Pius XII in the encyclical *Humani Generis*:

“There are other conjectures, about polygenism (as it is called), which leave the faithful no such freedom of choice. Christians cannot lend their support to a theory which involves the existence, after Adam's time, of some earthly race of men, truly so called, who were not descended from him, or else suppose that Adam was the name given to some group of our primordial ancestors. It does not appear how such views can be reconciled with the doctrine of original sin, as this is guaranteed to us by Scripture and tradition, and proposed to us by the Church. Original sin is the result of a sin committed, in actual historical fact, by an individual Adam, and it is a quality native to all of us, only because it has been handed down by descent from him (see Rom.5:12- 19).”⁵

The Candelabra Theory then, cannot be harmonized with the Scriptural account of Adam and Eve, but what about the rival Noah's Ark Theory? With its biblical terminology, "Noah's Ark," "mitochondrial Eve," etc., it would seem to be more promising. Brian Fagan summarizes this model:

“The Noah's Ark hypothesis (or "Garden of Eden" theory according to taste) argues that fully modern humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) evolved relatively recently from a primeval African population, and spread from Africa into all corners of the world quite late in the Ice Age. The superficial biological differences between different "races" of *Homo sapiens*, such as skin color, hair form, build, and so on, then developed as adaptations to different environments. Under this theory, modern geographic populations have shallow genetic roots that are derived from species formation relatively recently.”⁶

The Candelabra hypothesis is espoused by the majority of paleontologists, while the Noah's Ark model is upheld primarily by geneticists. It has been recently discovered by geneticists that the DNA in the mitochondria, a little organelle in the cytoplasm of the cell, is inherited exclusively from the mother. Fagan writes:

“Mitochondrial DNA...is inherited only from the mother. Some experts believe that this is because only the nucleus of the sperm makes its way into the egg during fertilization. As the egg contributes all the cytoplasm to a fertilized zygote, only the mother contributes mitochondrial DNA to the next generation. Thus, only the egg's mitochondrial DNA is

reproduced in the offspring, and mitochondrial DNA is immune to change by sexual recombination of genes from each parent.”⁷

Rebecca Cann of the University of California studied the mutation rate of the mitochondrial DNA in women from all over the world. She says:

Our major conclusion was that the human species, the group that gave rise to us whether we call them anatomically modern humans *Homo sapiens sapiens*, or whatever, that population contained a woman, an...Eve, if you want call her that, and she was in Africa. She belonged to a group which spread throughout all areas of the world and we're all descended from her.”⁸

Although Cann *et al.* are saying that we are all descended from one woman, they are not really espousing monogenism, since they maintain that there were true men before and after "mitochondrial Eve" who were not descended from her. Especially important in both the Candelabra and Noah's Ark theories is the position of Neandertal Man. In the Candelabra model he is hybridized by more modern appearing men such as Cro-Magnon Man, and in the Noah's Ark Theory he is simply replaced. Fr. Anthony Zimmerman, S.V.D. of the Japan Family Life Association in Tokyo attempts to accommodate the Noah's Ark Theory to the biblical story of our first parents. He claims that Neandertal Man was not truly human because he lacked the physical capacity for proper speech.

“This is not to deny that Neandertal Man and other hominids had some kind of speech ability. But they could not have had the rapid speaking ability which we have. If we tried to fit our speech organs into Neandertal Man, the larynx would be located in his chest, an impossible situation never observed among primates.¹ Lieberman mentions a speaking ability with perhaps one-tenth of the speed at which we speak, as attributable to the non-Homo sapiens supralaryngeal airway. Therefore only short sentences could be spoken. Anything longer would be lost to the short-term memory because the time lapse is too long.”²⁹

Father Zimmerman writes as if this were a proven scientific fact, but such is not the case according to M. Bowden:

“Constable admits that the Lieberman-Crelin hypothesis has been ‘vigorously disputed’ and ‘widely challenged,’ which is understandable, for to attempt to reconstruct a voice box, which has disappeared, by examining the adjacent bones, must clearly involve a large number of unprovable assumptions...

“These theories have been heavily criticized as there is little real supporting evidence which would allow them to become ‘proven facts.’ Unfortunately some hypotheses tend to become accepted as ‘facts’ after a time, and the speculative nature of the evidence makes them difficult to disprove.”¹⁰

One outstanding fact in the study of languages, namely, the more primitive the people, the more complex the language, presents a tremendous problem for evolutionary

theory concerning the origin of language. Even so doctrinaire an evolutionist as George Gaylord Simpson admits:

“Many other attempts have been made to determine the evolutionary origin of language, and all have failed...Even the people with the least complex cultures have highly sophisticated languages, with complex grammar and large vocabularies, capable of naming and discussing anything that occur in the sphere occupied by the speakers...The oldest language that can reasonably be reconstructed is already modern, sophisticated, complete from an evolutionary point of view.”¹¹

One of the most famous Neandertal sites is the Shanidar cave in northern Iraq, which was excavated in the 1950s by the American archaeologist, Ralph Solecki. This dig was described in some detail in a TV program in the *Nova* series entitled "Children of Eve":

“After several feet of painstaking work, they discovered a grave, many thousands of years old. In it were the bones of a Neandertal man. Around the bones the soil contained large amounts of pollen. It was pollen from the local flowers and it has been assumed that these had been buried along with his body, a gesture that transcends time and belies the image of Neandertals as brutal, primitive people.

“Many other Neandertal graves have been found throughout Europe and Western Asia. From this data, it is assumed that they buried their dead, something that earlier peoples appear not to have done.

“Other important information from this find is that the Shanidar male, who was about 40 years of age, old for those days, had been for years a walking text book of ailments...The implication is that he had been taken care of for many years...despite the fact that he was not very economically useful to a group of hunter gatherers.”¹²

The defense of the Bible against the pretensions of evolutionism has been carried on for the most part by Protestant creationists, who only recently have been joined in the fight by some of their Catholic counterparts. One of the Catholic pioneers in this effort was Fr. Patrick O'Connell, whose now classic, *Science of Today and the Problems of Genesis*, first appeared in 1959.

“The Neandertal Man is still represented in illustrations in books and statues in museums as having a short neck with the head bent forward. This idea, however, has long been abandoned by the experts. It is clear from the skeletons that the spinal column was perfectly normal, and the head fitted on it straight and not at an angle, as in the case of the apes.”¹³

In the June 8, 1991 issue of *Science News* there is a perfect illustration of Father O'Connell's complaint. The lead article by Bruce Bower, "Neandertal's Disappearing Act," is a very technical discussion of the hybridization or non-hybridization of Neandertal Man and so-called Archaic *Homo sapiens* found at sites in Israel. Yet the cover of this supposedly scientific magazine features the completely unscientific diorama by Charles Knight at the

American Museum of Natural History, representing Neandertal Man as the familiar stooped, brutal looking ape-man.

Neandertal Man has prominent brow ridges and a receding chin, and it is easy for an artist to make him appear ape-like. It is amusing to note that even some scientists have become brainwashed by these artistic creations. For example, Alexander Marshack of Harvard's Peabody Museum conducted an extensive microscopic analysis of an ox rib covered with symbolic engravings, which was dated by their questionable methods to 135,000 B.C., well before the appearance of Neandertal Man. Marshack concluded that it was a form of "pre-writing":

“What seems to be emerging from these studies is a view of early man's way of thinking as being exceedingly complex and surprisingly modern. In this culture of early Homo sapiens the real and symbolic worlds were intertwined, and there was a continuity and sequence in man's ritual and ceremonial relationship to that world. Art, image, and notation were means of expressing that complex reality, of recognizing and participating in it.

“These are all human actions that require intelligence and a use of language. Moreover, they are aspects of man's early life that cannot be deduced merely from stone tools, for they are what anthropologists refer to as cognitive - that is, they are a result of recognitions, abstractions, and solutions to problems, all of which take place in the brain.”¹⁴

On the cover of the October 1988 issue of *National Geographic* (long one of the leading promoters of evolutionism) there is a beautiful photograph of a small bust carved in ivory of a Neandertal Man. It had been found near Dolni Vestonice in Czechoslovakia, which is supposed to be a Cro-Magnon site, but is near Brno, a Neandertal site. Marshack's initial reaction was: "it was too good to be true!" As he examined the carving under a microscope, he expected to establish quickly that it was a fake. Some forger must have used a Neandertal skull from Brno as a model, he thought. His problem was that although the carving, even to a layman, was that of a classic Neandertaler with the high brow ridges, etc., it in no way looked ape-like, but was clearly that of a rugged, but handsome, completely human being.

Unsuccessful in his microscopic analysis in establishing fraud, Marshack then had the ancient ivory and the carving itself dated by Edward Zeller of the University of Kansas using the alpha-particle spectral analysis method.

“The scientists envision this Ice Age scenario: Sometime after a mammoth died, someone carved a piece of tusk. The carving became buried in sediment or sand, where it absorbed uranium, iron oxide, and fluoride from the groundwater. The calcium phosphate of the ivory absorbed the minerals, especially the uranium. At the same time, radioactive decay set in, leaving its by-products at levels that require thousands of years to build up to the present reading. If the head had been carved at any time in the past few centuries, the decay products on the surface would have been cut away. ‘Even Madam Curie couldn't fake that effect,’ Zeller said.”¹⁵

Edward Zeller claims that the carving is 26,000 years old, well within the Neandertal Era, according to the evolutionists, so Marshack is hoist on his own dating petard. But nowhere in the article is he scientist enough to admit that this is what Neandertal Man **might have looked like**, so much does it go against the evolutionary grain, but he refers to it throughout simply as an "Ice Age" carving.

The genetic theory proposes that descendants of mitochondrial Eve left Africa about 100,000 years ago and replaced Neandertal Man in Europe and the Near East, and the descendants of Java and Peking Man in Asia. Most paleontologists reject this theory, saying that the fossils tell a different story. An exception however, is the paleontologist, Christopher Stringer of the Natural History Museum in London. Stringer thinks that a new dating technique, thermoluminescence, has established that modern humans, "Proto-Cro-Magnon-Man," lived at Mount Carmel (Kebara) in Israel before Neandertal Man.

“The new dates also support the view of a minority of workers, including myself, who believe that Neandertals may have constituted a separate species (*H. neandertalensis*). Other evidence of clear biological separation of Neandertals and moderns is provided by the persistence of the two populations separate identities over a long period. The Kebara Neandertal may have lived 40,000 years after the two populations could have come into contact. Yet this specimen shows no sign of hybridization with modern humans - in fact, it is one of the most robust and characteristic of Neandertal skeletons. By the same token, early modern fossils from Israel and Lebanon dated to between 30,000 and 40,000 years ago show no features that might be ascribed to previous hybridization with Neandertals.”¹⁶

This view is rejected by Milford Wolpoff of the University of Michigan, a leading proponent of the Candelabra Theory, who believes in the hybridization of Neandertal Man rather than his replacement.

“I'm one of the many who conclude that modern humans originated in areas all over the world - after *Homo erectus* had populated that world and provided the basis for further evolution. And that basically modern Africans originated in Africa, modern Europeans in Europe. And this happened to some extent because all these populations were interconnected by a flow of genes. People were coming and going. Everywhere you get bigger brains, smaller teeth, all the peculiarities of modern people. How does this happen if there's not an exchange of genes all through human evolution?”

“...In the skulls of the early modern Europeans he was studying, Wolpoff saw no signs of African morphology; he saw instead evidence pointing to a link with the Neandertals. There was above all else the nose - ‘What a schnozzle,’ Dr. Wolpoff said. ‘We still see it in the Europeans of today.’”¹⁷

We have seen Fr. Anthony Zimmerman try to accommodate the Noah's Ark Theory to the story of Adam and Eve, while Father Frisch attempted to fit the Candelabra Theory into his Teilhardian version of theistic evolutionism. Father Zimmerman continues:

“Before Adam and Eve, then, humans may have existed in a condition of pre-adulthood as far as thinking and a sense of responsibility are concerned. When the fulness of time came, that is when Adam and Eve arrived at the threshold of true human maturity, then God took them apart from the others and introduced them into Eden.”¹⁸

Here is Father Frisch's summary of his position:

“Seen through the eyes of the paleontologist, human evolution departs from animal evolution as a whole principally by the way it switched from a polyphyletic and divergent type of evolution to monophyletic, convergent evolutionary pattern...

..the spiritual energy of civilization may be said to have become canalized in an ever narrower segment of the human race. Would not such a concentration, in fact run counter to the longing for universality found in the world's great religions? Among these Christianity, particularly bids us to see God' Spirit at work in all cultures and nations. Thus according to the Christian worldview, the streams of spiritual life, far from becoming constrained within an ever narrower channel, is seen to embrace progressively the entire universe.”¹⁹

Neandertal Man is the test, and simply put, in the Candelabra Theory he is what is sometimes called a Pre-Adamite, and in the Noah's Ark Theory, a Co-Adamite. These opinions have been around for a surprisingly long time. Pre-Adamism was first proposed in 1655 by the French Calvinist, Isaac Peyrere, who later abjured his error before Pope Alexander VII. In 1890 it was revised by Winchell, supposedly in more scientific form, in his *Pre-Adamites or a Demonstration of the Existence of Men Before Adam*.²⁰

Co-Adamism, that is that true men existed contemporaneously with Adam who were not descended from him, is a necessary corollary of polygenism. We have seen above, that Pope Pius XII condemned polygenism and at the same time Co-Adamism: "Christians cannot lend their support to a theory which involves the existence, after Adam's time of some earthly race of men, truly so called, who were not descended ultimately from him" (*Denzinger* 2328).

Neandertal Man is clearly *Homo sapiens sapiens*, not a separate species *Homo sapiens neandertalensis*. He is simply one of the many races of men, that is varieties within the species. Whether Neandertal race was hybridized or replaced by other races of men is beside the point. Father O'Connell speculates that he may have been from the race of Cain which perished in the Deluge,²¹ and that the disputed evidence of hybridization between Neandertals and Cro-Magnons in Israel, might be the result of intermarriages between the race of Seth and the race of Cain which is mentioned in Genesis 6:2.

The creationist movement began as a strictly Protestant, American struggle, but now others have entered the fray. There is for example, the *Cercle Scientifique et Historique* (CESHE), a creationist group based in Belgium which is predominantly Catholic and includes many distinguished scientists, among whom is Maciej Giertych, the Head of the

Genetics Department of the Polish Academy of Sciences' Institute of Dendrology. Concerning the origin of races such as the Neandertal race, Giertych writes:

“My primary objection as a geneticist was the claim that the formation of races, of microevolution as it is often referred to, is a small scale example of macroevolution - the origin of species. Race formation is of course very well documented. All it requires is isolation of a part of a population. After a few generations due to natural selection and genetic drift the isolated population will irreversibly lose some genes, and thus as long as the isolation continues, in some features it will be different from the population it arose from. In fact we do this ourselves with artificial selection and creating artificial barriers to generative mixing outside the domesticated conditions. The important thing to remember here is that a race is genetically impoverished relative to the whole population. It has fewer alleles (forms of genes). Some of them are arranged into special, interesting, rare combinations. This is particularly achieved by guided recombination of selected forms in breeding work. But these selected forms are less variable (less polymorphic). Thus what is referred to as microevolution represents natural or artificial reduction of the gene pool. You will not get evolution that way. Evolution means construction of new genes. It means an increase in the amount of genetic information and not a reduction of it. The evolutionary value of new races or selected forms should be demonstrable by natural selection. However if allowed to mix with the general breeding population new races will disappear. The select genes they have will disperse again, the domesticated forms will go wild. Thus there is no evidence for evolution here.”²²

I think it is wonderful of God to allow the geneticists by the study of DNA to scientifically demonstrate that we are all descended from a single woman. This, however, is not as claimed, a support for evolution, but rather a confirmation of the Bible, and should lead unbelievers of good will to God. Maciej Giertych, who is a geneticist, discusses recent studies in DNA:

“Currently there are new suggestions that molecular genetics provides evidence for evolution. Analyses of DNA sequences in various species should show similarities between related ones and big differences between systematically far removed species. They do exactly that. Molecular genetics generally confirms the accuracy of taxonomy. But at the same time it does not confirm postulated evolutionary sequences. There are no progressive changes say from fishes to amphibians to reptiles to mammals. Molecular genetics confirms systematics not phylogeny.

“No. Genetics has no proofs for evolution. It has trouble explaining it. The closer one looks at the evidence for evolution the less one finds of substance. In fact the theory keeps on postulating evidence, and failing to find it, moves on to other postulates (fossil missing links, natural selection of improved forms, positive mutations, molecular phylogenetic sequences, etc.). This is not science.”²³

We have seen Father Frisch and Father Zimmerman's unsuccessful attempts to harmonize the Candelabra and Noah's Ark theories with the book of Genesis, and have concluded that Neandertal Man is neither a Pre-Adamite or a Co-Adamite, but (to use a

word I never heard before) an Adamite. Since God is the Author of both nature and the supernatural, it is easy to harmonize true science and the Bible. But with a false scientific theory it is impossible. Giertych concludes:

“A whole age of scientific endeavor was wasted searching for a phantom. It is time we stopped and looked at the facts. Natural sciences failed to supply any evidence for evolution. Christian philosophy tried to accommodate this unproven postulate of materialist philosophies. Much time and intellectual effort went in vain leading only to negative moral consequences. It is time those working in the humanities were told the truth.”²⁴

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