Of Batons and Themes

R.W. Sanders

Center for Origins Research, Bryan College, Dayton, TN

Editor: J.W. Francis
Received July 5, 2012; Accepted July 5, 2012; Published August 17, 2012

This year has seen some important changes in both the CBS and my own professional work. The CBS began publishing the Journal of Creation Theology and Science. With the new publishing platform and format, there has been a concerted effort to develop thematic issues, increasing the number of papers published and encouraging greater member productivity. The first of such thematic issues is this one, dedicated to examining genomic variation in baramins—more about that below.

First, Batons: While this activity was developing, I received a request to take on new and expanded duties at Bryan College as the Director of the Bryan College Arboretum. This itself was an outgrowth of my work in the Center for Origins Research, which oversees the college’s natural history museum, the Willard Henning Museum of Natural History. While I was the professor primarily responsible in getting the trees of the manicured part of campus labeled and the campus itself designated as an arboretum, I would have been content to put the development of the more natural parts of the property on the back burner and plod along as I had time.

That was, until the college president provided a budget to move the development along and encouraged me to take the helm. That work has been rewarding as I see physical changes to the campus take shape. This also has meant that I have less time to devote to my former duties of promoting research through serving as executive editor for the CBS. Considering I had served as CBS executive editor for about 12 years starting with the first issue of the Occasional Papers of the Baraminology Study Group in 2002, the time seemed right to consider alternatives.

Also over the last couple of years, Tim Brophy, CBS’s very able treasurer who labored to put the CBS (then the BSG) on sound financial and legal footing, has found his time to devote to the CBS dwindling. Besides his responsibility for teaching college biology courses as a professor at Liberty University, he has taken on additional duties of pastoring a new congregation and developing his background in theology. He, too, was ready for a change.

Since the treasurer duties currently are generally are less time-consuming than editorial ones, the executive council decided to allow me to give up the editorship and take over the treasurer’s duties. This actually makes sense from two perspectives. 1) The CBS president and treasurer would both be at one institution, Bryan College, simplifying the logistics of paying bills and dealing with one state government. 2) Moving the editorship from the same institution where close CBS colleagues work removed potential conflicts of interest that might favor or be perceived to favor publication of their work.

One baton pass.

But where was the editorship to go?

Actually over the last few years, I had begun to lean more and more heavily on Associate Editor, Joe Francis, from The Master’s College to edit papers where potential for conflict of interest existed. He had proven to be highly capable, responsible, and resourceful. When he was approached about the possibility of taking on the greater demands of the executive editorship, he did not hesitate to agree. The executive council wisely confirmed him. I am looking forward to the fresh leadership Joe will provide and to the future of the Journal. I know it will flourish under Joe’s direction. Congratulations, Joe.

The second baton pass.

Now back to the themed issue—Genomic variation within baramins. Most baraminological studies have focused on determining the boundaries of particular baramins. Indeed that will be the theme of a future issue. However, the two articles in this issue explore the variation in the genomes of groups that have been proposed as baramins based on independent evidence. The significance of both these articles is pointing out the striking amounts of diversification within baramins since creation, much of it since the Noah’s Flood.

The first article by Karen Bedinger compiles the known karyotypic and chromosome number variation due to fissions and fusions in three holobaramins and six monobaramins (subtribe to family taxonomic level) of mammals. She found only two of the proposed baramins to be invariant and the rest had variable numbers. She concludes that either baraminic boundaries need to be readjusted to recognize smaller baramins with less variation or chromosomal rearrangements are controlled by a designed mechanism that allows rapid diversification. The implication of the latter is that the current creation models are inadequate to explain the extreme shuffling of chromatin and new models are needed.
In the second article, Todd Charles Wood analyzes sequences of mitochondrial DNA from a large sample of modern humans including a fossil modern human, a sample of Neandertals, and a two specimens of Denisovans. The results show that Neandertals are more similar to modern humans than are Denisovans, but the variation in both of the non-moderns does not overlap with the range of modern humans. The stratigraphic positions of these fossils places their death after the Flood, about 2000 years after creation. Hence, the implication is that there has been an accelerated rate of mutation and substitution in mitochondrial DNA sometime around the Flood. It is also likely that some of this variation pre-existed the Flood having been carried by one or more of the four women on the ark.

Both of these articles point to evidence of rapid change within baramins and needed work on creation models of diversification mechanisms. Hope you enjoy reading.