

影音使團對有關「方舟探索」重要發現的立場

對於近日關心方舟探索事工人士的聯署呼籲，我們有以下回應：

在近日的聯署名單中，我們看見一些熟悉的名字，部份更是曾與影音使團同行福音路的屬靈前輩。遺憾在是次聯署事件前，彼此間沒有作出適當的溝通與交流。我們為此深表遺憾，難過和無奈。對於連日來各界對方舟探索的回應，我們除了為此祈禱外，同時亦盼望是次回應能有助各界了解影音使團對過去八年來有關方舟探索的立場。謹此衷心感激多年來一直幫助及指教我們的教牧、信徒和學者專家，懇請大家繼續為影音使團守望及代禱。

在近代，方舟探索一直是個敏感和極具爭議性的話題，範疇包括文學釋經與歷史文化為本釋經、神話與歷史、年輕地球論與年老地球論、創造論與進化論、全球洪水及地區性洪水等等爭議，信徒與非信徒各有不同主張及見解。洪水與方舟的記載甚至關乎人類的源起與歷史演進。

在過去，許多國際級電視頻道以此話題作為重點的製作題目，在僅有的資料下，唯有以聯想推敲方式來研討挪亞方舟這個課題，而且也作出了挪亞方舟與洪水是神話及抄襲式故事的結論。然而，我們確信聖經創世記所記載的方舟與洪水是人類歷史的一部分，是上帝默示的歷史教訓及啟示。過去二十年來，上帝給我們的使命就是用影像媒體傳揚福音。因此，我們自知只是華人福音媒體，卻以單純的心默默禱告，求上帝賜下機會，能夠認真地以第一手資料作拍攝方舟為題的紀錄片，幫助人們正確認識聖經所記載的挪亞方舟的真實性。

因著上帝的帶領，我們開始了方舟探索，感恩專家學者對發現的認同帶來鼓舞

方舟探索緣起於我們獲邀參與香港挪亞方舟展館的工程，成為其中一個內容供應者。隨後更有機會遠赴土耳其，進行深入的資料搜集及多次拍攝製作。上帝奇妙的帶領讓我們得以認識當地的庫爾德族人、科學家，以及富經驗的方舟探索專家一直領路上山。於是我們由製作人變成探索者的身份，我們的任務是盡力嘗試尋找最大可能是方舟的遺骸，亦有責任將所發現的內容公佈。八年間，上帝一直開路保守，終於在 2009 年於亞拉臘山 4000 多米地段成功拍攝古木結構的影片。我們既知道探索方舟一直以來都別具爭議性，故此，我們以非常審慎的態度，在發現初期用了近兩年時間，走訪了美國，荷蘭，土耳其，亞美尼亞等國家的考古學家、地質學家、神學家、方舟探索專家等，諮詢他們的意見，將我們手上的證據向他們展示。他們各自運用其專業的知識，為木結構作出一個最合理的解釋，他們認為山上木結構「最大可能是挪亞方舟」。他們的討論已記錄於《挪亞方舟驚世啟示 2》電影中，更有部份專家學者表示願意登山作進一步詳細的實地考察，成為探索隊極大鼓舞。

在探索的每一個階段裡，影音使團諮詢了很多具相關知識及經驗的專家學者的意見。整個方舟探索過程極具難度及複雜性。同時，鑒於在 2010 年與土耳其的阿勒省政府簽訂了合作備忘錄，我們必須遵守有關協議下的專業義理，包括向政府引薦可合作的個人或科學團體。又由於這項探索工程相當複雜，不單關乎學術界，更涉及宗教、政治、軍事等敏感因素，我們惟有嚴謹地選出一些具有相關專業背景及認受性的學者專家。因而對所有關心方舟探索的學者及團體，亦只能透過分享會及網上向他們發放最新資訊，我們已儘量向公眾提供可以容許公開的資料。至於一些守密協定下的資料，在未取得有關部門確認同意前不能公開，例如方舟遺骸的地點，一方面為要尊重當地政府與合約精神，同時亦兼顧到保護木結構與內中文物的需要。還有多樣在現階段未能立即公開的證據，懇請各界人士見諒。

方舟探索第一階段現已完成，另一階段將由專家學者開展考證

在方舟探索的整個過程中，上帝豐盛的恩典超出我們的所想所求，讓探索隊能順利進入山上木結構，拍攝到方舟探索歷史上最不可能的影像證據，因而被當地的考古學家及政府官員稱為最嚴謹及最重要的發現。能有這樣的成果，全賴上帝預備各地信徒，按著聖靈的感動回應，以禱告及奉獻作出支持。由始至今，我們一直都有向支持方舟探索的奉獻者，定期交代資源的使用及探索的進度，有關帳目必須得到政府在法務上的嚴格審核和要求，已批核的報告亦可於公開渠道下載及索取；使團的年報也有資料作交待，盼望與奉獻者一同懷著喜樂的心，數算主恩。每位方舟探索支持者清楚他們所支持的是一項方舟探索工程，也認同其中的重要性，亦明白我們現正處於開展科學考證工作之前的最重要階段。再者，電影《挪亞方舟驚世啟示 2》亦交代了探索的始末。

方舟探索與考證是一項漫長的工程，當我們成功以探索方式拍攝木結構，並透過電影公開播放之後，現階段正邀請學者專家們對這重大發現進行科學考證。我們明白考證工作所需的時間、人力與物力均非常龐大，絕對不是使團可獨力承擔，絕對需要上帝帶領合適的專家團隊和資源供應者共同努力承擔此任務。懇請所有關注方舟探索的人士，為我們開展考證工作獻上最逼切的禱告。

或許外界曾對我們在選取及公佈資料的事宜上產生過疑問，但其實我們在整個過程，包括所有發放的證據及資料，並沒有任何隱瞞。我們願意展示不同的資料，包括提供原數據給科學家，以及土耳其的考古學家作分析之用。經過他們的查證及分析，他們均認為有部份數據根本不值得作為參考及公開之用。就以木樣本的碳 14 化驗數據而言，確實曾有幾個樣本的年測結果出現差異，我們也為此諮詢過有經驗的考古學家，他們向採集樣本的隊員查問取樣地點、方法和樣本體積之後，認為部分化驗結果毋須在報告上發表。祖克蘭克博士直言：「通常在考古學上，荒謬地年輕的驗測結果會被排除，因為反映了採集樣本的問題，而不是那遺址的年代。」

曾到亞拉臘山作現場考察的克蘭克博士更指出，橫跨數千年的化驗結果，正好跟現場環境及內裡所發現的文物，曾受到不同時期訪客的影響吻合。這更進一步確立地點的真確性，是非常有價值的考古發現。

有關歷史和考古的研究，碳 14 不是唯一的標準，在考古過程中只能成為其中的參考。在電影中亦提及現有的化驗報告只屬初步結果，故此我們同時使用了歷史比對及其它科學化的方法，包括科學的排除法，排除其他建築物的可能性。而要進一步作更全面的考證，則需要專家實地研究，以及使用不同的科學方法去驗證，例如器皿年代的鑒證。

客觀評價

今天，這個關於方舟探索的重大發現，引發了某些人士不同程度的討論。我們一直以尊重的態度與各界人士進行理性探討。過去多年來我們一直運用不同的管道作出陳述，及解答有關的疑問，期間亦有科學家、牧者、神學家主動撰文，協助分析解答，也於電視、錄像製作、雜誌及相關出版物中加入補充。事實上，我們還有許多不能言盡的心路歷程，故此我們就透過兩小時的電影《挪亞方舟驚世啟示 2》作更具體的呈現，好讓關心方舟事工的信徒及教牧們可以有一個較全面的瞭解，從而作出客觀的評價。

籲請各界同心代禱

對於近日教內部份牧者及信徒對方舟探索事件的關注，是值得我們反思的一個課題。在致力傳揚福音的同時，我們實在不希望外界誤會教內出現分裂的行動。方舟探索存在大量不同學科的研究價值，尚有待作進一步的發掘及驗證，這一切都不是使團可以獨自承擔的。因此，我們期待擁有共同異象及負擔的團體、專業人士及學者一同參與，在主內竭力保守合而為一的心，在末後的日子努力為上帝作美好見證。請眾聖徒及主內同道也為正要開展這大而奧秘的考證工程懇切禱告，因為我們原不是傳自己，乃是傳基督耶穌為主。我們會繼續緊隨上帝的帶領，在方舟事工上堅守本分。最後，如在方舟探索事工上有任何查詢，或有興趣與我們聯絡於貴教會及團契內作分享溝通，歡迎電郵致 info@media.org.hk。

二零一一年十二月三日

各國專家學者對方舟探索成果的評價

Professor Ashot Melkonyan

亞美尼亞國家科學院歷史研究所主管

Professor Ashot Melkonyan教授對歷史學的卓越貢獻，曾榮獲由亞美尼亞總統授予的 **Movses Khorenatsi**獎章(亞美尼亞最高級的文化榮譽)。他撰寫了6本書，約150篇科學論文，以不同語言在亞美尼亞、美國、英國、法國、格魯吉亞、黎巴嫩、埃及、伊朗、阿根廷等國發表。

“I am thrilled. I am excited. The unbelievable and exciting search that you have done...This is a complete proof to all of those scientists that what you have done is a true discovery...As you can see in 1960s when Armstrong first time landed on Moon, nobody believed. They always said that no photograph that they were made. It was done in Navada. But after a while, many these photographs were proven that people have reached Moon. You have done the similar discovery which is commendable. You are the...I don't want to say the lucky ones, but you are the ones who are blessed by the grace of God that have reached to this kind of discovery. God has really provided all kinds of grace to you.”

Professor Oktay Belli

土耳其首席考古學家

伊斯坦堡大學歐亞考古學院院長

Professor Oktay Belli 與他的團隊在亞拉臘山地區進行考古工作超過四十年，舉辦過三屆『亞拉臘山及挪亞方舟國際會議』。

「亞拉臘山 3500 米上從無人聚居痕跡，此次發現冰山上的木結構是(方舟探索)歷史上最重大。」

「過去許多人進行方舟探索，但這是最嚴謹的一次，探索隊的發現跟過往很不同，首支探索隊在亞拉臘山冰雪下發現木結構，這是未來研究的重要基礎。」

Dr. Joel Klenck

美國哈佛大學人類學及考古學博士

研習古典希伯來文

動物考古專家

過去二十年發表多份有關史前史與考古學的學術文章

「該遺跡對考古學家和從事古文物保育研究的學者而言，是極其重要的……尤其在古代樹木與植物保存研究，和古代建築與裝潢研究兩方面上。」

對於今次方舟發現，考古學界在有關消息的公布初期抱持質疑態度，克蘭克博士認為這現象是可以理解的，但他也同時相信，隨著越來越多的專家學者完成研究分析工作，並在科學期刊上發表有關報告，之前的質疑態度將會淡化。克蘭克博士補充：「現有的證據是廣泛的。此外，整個木結構被冰覆蓋和封鎖，現行可供檢測的只是一小部分...在這次辯論中所觸及的議題，涉及一個大型的全木結構，一個山洞，一批類同晚期後舊石器時代的古文物群，位於亞拉臘山高海拔的地段。」他的結論認為亞拉臘山上所發現的遺跡是異常特殊的，究其良好的保存狀態，與及能夠為史前歷史提供獨一無二的寶貴線索。（附頁1）

Dr. Michael Brown

美國紐約大學近東語言及文學博士

舊約聖經及希伯來文學者

多間神學院的客座教授，包括聖三一宣教神學院、丹佛神學院等等

「我知道，當中也有地質學相關的討論，以及其他，而我則專注於與聖經相關的問題。但當我看見在那山上的大數量木頭，我只感覺到上主的可畏.....真的曾經有大洪水！當然，如果我們相信聖經，都知道有大洪水，不過當我知道原來這是一個事實，就真的感到震驚.....從前我說我不知道，從前我會說，無論我們發現方舟與否都不要緊，是無關重要的，我相信聖經中所記載的——無論以任何形式演繹。但如今我眼所見的讓我震驚……這東西是迄今為止依我所見最有可能是方舟，絕對是！」

「這些籌募工作背後的意圖是極盡真誠的。這群人是用一個低預算幹著事。該紀錄片本身或整部片子，都不過是在述說一段自身的旅程和發現，明顯地是一個低預算製作。他們當中和我會晤過的人是真心真意地要榮耀耶穌。所以，就有關這事情及我所知道的一切，這當中存有極大的誠意，這些人真正希望榮耀耶穌，他們希望，藉著他們在這發現裡所相信的，讓看見的人也憑信心接受耶穌。」（附頁2）

Ted Wright

美國南方宣教神學院

聖經考古課程講師

北卡羅來納州門羅市三一浸信會主任牧師

新生命神學院兼職教授

南方神學院兼職教授

研究範圍包括：教學、古代史、近東考古學、神學、聖經研究、護教學、現代哲學、創造論、科學、美學、托馬斯主義

“The significance of the discovery in Eastern Turkey is if things bear up to be true will be one of the greatest archeological discoveries in the 21st Century. An extraordinary find, a treasure trove for science, for history, for paleontology, for geology, not just for Christianity, but also for Hebrew Bible, for Koran as well. The Koran also confirms the fact there was a global flood”

“I don't know anything else could be other than Noah's Ark. I really believe this is truly be the Ark of Noah.”

Philip Williams

《挪亞洪水的考古證據》作者

Philip E. Williams 廣泛涉獵科學哲學、思想史、聖經研究及人類歷史。1990 年開始進行考古學及古代史的資料搜集，並於長達二十年的研究之後撰寫出《挪亞洪水的考古證據》一書。他同時也致力推動基督徒群體促進貧窮國家及社群的基礎建設發展。

「我們必須承認，這項發現不同於死海古卷，人們對其價值的認知是需要一定時日方會逐漸提升。有關團隊已採取循序漸進和謹慎的步驟，把這個大規模的古舊人造木結構呈現出來。挪亞方舟國際事工也為該木結構進行了認真的分析：木結構有沒有可能只是一般普通的人類居所？抑或是修道院？教堂？某類型用來圈養動物的地方？還是軍事哨站？他們所得出的分析結果(以科學的排除法)明確地逐一排除了所有可供選擇的可能性。所以，就讓我們站穩腳步，保持著我們科學正確的態度，用浮誇的口吻問一問：『這究竟可能是甚麼東西？』」

「也許最令人吃驚的攻擊是來自主張年輕地球論及推行該運動的一群知名領袖，他們素來相信普世性大洪水，並以此信念作為教導。在有關方舟發現的報導初期，這群領袖似乎均以開放的心態對待，但有份於該運動的一些精明人士則觀察到該發現將會引起不安。試舉一例，放射性碳測試的結果與聖經記載的洪水發生時期一旦吻合，將可能拆毀他們一貫的主張：用放射性碳年測方法測試洪水前時代的文物是不可靠的。再者，若該山峰被鑑定為方舟停泊所在地的亞拉臘山亦對他們所秉持有關亞拉臘山脈是在洪水後形成的地質理論帶來直接挑戰。」（附頁3）

Gerrit Aalten

荷蘭著名方舟探索家

Gerrit Aalten 從事方舟研究達 35 年；他曾六次走訪亞美尼亞及在亞拉臘山留下不少足跡，訪問當地居民，從文化及歷史層面搜集資料。他盡可能收集所有目擊證據，並以方舟為題四出演講。他屢次在國際方舟會議上發表文章。

「這次發現的詳情與過往的文獻記載以及目擊者證詞，在眾多細節上都極為吻合，包括發現地點的海拔高度、稍微傾斜並穩固封存在冰川中、長木盒狀外型、表面是棕紅色木紋、木材質地堅硬等等……鑒於這個結構與以往眾多目擊者描述的完全吻合，我認為無庸置疑，這就是真正的挪亞方舟。」

New Support for Alleged Noah's Ark Discovery

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Archaeologist states there is scientific merit to recent discovery of site associated with the legendary ark of Noah.

Miami, FL -- (SBWIRE) -- 11/15/2011 -- In 2010, the Hong Kong organization Noah's Ark Ministries International or NAMI announced they had discovered the legendary vessel on Mount Ararat in eastern Turkey and were subsequently accused of perpetrating a hoax. Now, a professional archaeologist states there is significant merit to their discovery.

Harvard University educated archaeologist and director of the Paleontological Research Corporation, Dr. Joel Klenck, surveyed the site, analyzed the archaeological remains and completed a comparative study. "The site is remarkable", states Klenck, "and comprises a large all-wood structure with an archaeological assemblage that appears to be mostly from the Late Epipaleolithic Period." These assemblages at other sites in the Near East have calibrated radiocarbon dates between 13,100 and 9,600 B.C. Located at elevations above 4,200 meters on Mount Ararat and covered by layers of ice and stones, he states: "The site is wonderfully preserved, exhibits a wide array of plant materials including structures made of cypress and one room with a floor covered by chickpea seeds." Klenck additionally notes, "I was most impressed by the artifactual assemblage, particularly the basalt bowls, stone cores and debitage."

It also appears that the site was visited in later periods. Two small ceramic bowls from the Chalcolithic (5,800-3,000 B.C.) and Bronze Age (3,000-1,200 B.C.) periods were placed in one of the rooms of the structure. He adds, "These artifacts most likely represent brief later visits to the site since these bowls differ from the Epipaleolithic remains that comprise nearly all of the assemblage."

Klenck reports, "The surface scatter of the wood above the large structure is 121.1 meters in length and 23.8 meters in width. The construction is at least 5.2 meters deep and several measurements of the exterior walls exhibit angles moving inward toward the base of the edifice. Also, there are stair-like features that descend through the middle of the multi-storied structure and mortise-and-tenon construction." He remarks, "That this large wood structure is located on Mount Ararat, with what appears to be a mostly Epipaleolithic assemblage, is noteworthy."

"The site is no hoax," Klenck states, "and the size and excellent preservation of the edifice will enable it to be studied by numerous scholars." He notes, "The large wood structure is buried under tons of stones and ice and most of the edifice remains unexplored."

Regarding the initial carbon dating of the site at 4,800 B.C. by NAMI, Klenck states the initial discovery team comprised people with limited archaeological experience. He remarks, "Instead of obtaining samples from cores and unexposed locales and wrapping them in tin-foil, surface samples were retrieved with bare hands or cotton gloves. The date most likely reflects a sample that was contaminated by ancient visitors or modern explorers to the site. Most of the assemblage portrays a much

earlier period.” He notes that all future radiocarbon samples should be delivered to archaeology departments at Istanbul University that will date the artifacts or send the samples to archaeometry facilities at the University of Berlin.

He also notes that a nearby cave exhibits artifacts similar to those in the large wood structure. Klenck states the cave site possesses botanical remains of chickpea, flax fibers and rope, pieces of fabric, bone artifacts, and vessels made of an organic material. He adds, “In both the large wood structure and cave, most of the bowls are made of an organic material, perhaps animal stomachs, and the flaps are folded over wood or bone collars. Several of these bowls resemble early ceramic types from the subsequent Pottery Neolithic Period (6,400-5,800 B.C.).” Klenck opines, “These artifacts prompt questions if bowls made from organic materials influenced the first pottery styles.”

“These sites are extremely important for archaeologists and conservators,” states Klenck, “particularly with regard to the preservation of wood and plant materials and the examination of architectural features. He is emphatic that the Antiquities Authority of Turkey needs to protect the research area and allow only approved archaeologists and conservators to visit the sites. “These precautions must be completed”, remarks Klenck, “to prevent adventurers and local mountain guides from breaking off pieces of wood and removing artifacts from the research area.”

He states the initial skepticism of the archaeological community is understandable but will fade as more researchers and conservators complete their analyses and publish reports in scientific journals. Klenck adds, “Here, the evidence is wide ranging. Also, very little of the structure is surveyed and much of the site is inaccessible being covered or blocked by ice.”

The discoveries on Mount Ararat coincide with academic discussions on the transition between the Pleistocene and Holocene epochs during the Younger Dryas stadial (10,900-9,500 B.C.) and the beginning of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Period, around 9,600 B.C., where the first village communities in southeastern Turkey became associated with intensive agriculture and plant and animal domestication. Klenck states, “Some scholars see this transition period as cataclysmic with dramatic increases in sea-levels, flooding, animal extinctions, and decreases in human populations; others assert this phase was simply a cold, dry period evidenced by sparse vegetation.” “In the midst of this debate,” he notes, “there is a large all-wood structure and a cave, with artifacts resembling an Epipaleolithic assemblage, at a high elevation on Mount Ararat.” Klenck concludes: “The Ararat sites are very special because of their preservation and unique insight into the prehistoric past.”

Source: Paleontological Research Corporation

<http://www.sbwire.com/press-releases/sbwire-114562.html>

Dr. Michael Brown 在其網上電台《防火線》答覆一位華人牧師寄來關於「挪亞方舟國際事工」的信件

我這裡有一封信 — 涉及一些令人非常關注的事情，電郵是一位牧師寄來的，一位基督教的牧者，在芝加哥華人教會事奉的一名基督教牧師，名叫麥克(Mark)。另外一位華人弟兄也曾嘗試跟我聯絡，就讓我在此一併回應麥克和丹尼爾(Daniel)吧。

電郵寫著：「我寫信給你，為要查詢一個名為「挪亞方舟國際事工」(NAMI) 的香港團體最近發表的文章，聲稱在亞拉臘山上找到挪亞方舟的遺骸。文章提及你是他們諮詢過的近東學者的其中一人，按文所述，你支持他們的聲稱，並被邀請在他們新近製作的紀錄片中出鏡。」麥克還友善地向我提供一個網絡連結，到他們(NAMI)的網上通訊第 3 頁，在那兒我看見我被提及，不過最大的問題是，都是中文的，我無法讀。不過，我會告訴你我對挪亞方舟是真是偽這個問題所作出的考量。

對於我就 NAMI 聲稱發現挪亞方舟一事拉上關係，還有他們的紀錄片安排在教會播映這事上，這位華人牧師都深表關注。沒錯！就讓我讀出麥克牧師其他的問題，然後再作答。

(麥克牧師的其他的問題)「**這個議題現今在全球華人基督教圈子像雪球一般越滾越大。NAMI 也在全球華人教會進行數百萬美元計的籌募活動。對於此種毫無根據的聲稱與及濫用考古學名義之事，我們當中有些人感到十分關注，所以我寫信給你，懇請你幫助我們澄清一些問題：**

- 1. NAMI 可曾就有關 NAMI 的聲稱接觸過你嗎？**
- 2. 你是否支持他們關於發現挪亞方舟的聲稱？**
- 3. 你在這個議題上的立場是什麼？」**

(Michael Brown 的回應).....在這事上，我是夏洛特區被邀參與其中的一份子。開始的時候…好像是今年年初吧？或許應該是去年就開始了，那時候我們曾與他們團隊其中一名成員會面，是一個從事媒體工作的人，當時，她只不過告訴我們為什麼要去那地方。起初，他們並沒有打算要去探險，也始料不及事情會發展到如斯地步，她讓我們看一些錄像片段，我一看之下就驚呆了。我不是考古學家，我的博士學位是近東語言和文學方面的，但我不是考古學家，因此我主要的討論是與聖經相關的問題。我知道，當中也有地質學相關的討論，以及其他，而我則專注於與聖經相關的問題。但當我看見在那山上的大數量木頭，我只感覺到上主的可畏。哇，真的曾經有大洪水！當然，如果我們相信聖經，都知道有大洪水，不過當我知道原來這是一個事實，就真的感到震驚。哇！無論如何，它是真實的發生了。從前我說我不知道，從前我會說，無論我們發現方舟與否都不要緊，是無關重要的，我相信聖經中所記載的 — 無論以任何形式演繹。但如今我眼所見的讓我震驚。哇，這東西，真的有方舟，無論這東西是或不是，我不知道。所以我欣然同意接受 NAMI 的採訪，我曾說我仍然有很多

很多的問題，我們都要處理這些問題，究竟是方舟？抑或不是？許多問題要處理。然而，這是我迄今所見且認為是最有可能是方舟的東西。我不知道以這樣的高度和木頭數量，這東西如何可以上到那地方去。我知道有報導說發現有可能是造假，另外其他我認識的人也一概說這是個騙局。我只是透過我的非科學的考古眼睛看著這東西，說：我不知道這東西如何可以上到那地方去。而它是我第一次看見就感到驚異的東西：有可能真的是方舟嗎？就是這樣…就是這樣。這就是我確確實實的感受。當他們推出有關電影，說有機會向我們的會眾安排免費播放，我那時表示，就讓我們把握這機會吧。

麥克(Mark)牧師，與另一位教授，丹尼爾(Daniel)，兩位都是華人弟兄，提問關於 NAMI 的發現：(問)我是否曾公然地說：這肯定是方舟呢？(答)不！(問)我是否曾說：這可能是方舟嗎？(答)這東西是迄今為止依我所見最有可能是方舟，絕對是！我已經說過，我有很多問題要問。當然，有誰個沒問題要問？而他們(NAMI)會是第一個站出來說所有調查還未完成，他們正在不斷力邀其他人來參與其中。至於他們一直籌集的所有的錢，就從我觀察到的一切事上，我看見他們是非常真誠的人，也非常慎重與認真地要藉著這發現榮耀耶穌。另外，我的一位最有科學背景的友人，深信這就是方舟！好了，對於我來說，無論這東西最終是方舟與否，對我的影響不大，因為我被事實的真相重新感動了，事實的真相是曾經真的有洪水，那個時候真的有審判，我就是被這事實的真相重新感動了！好了，我意識到挪亞方舟一旦真的被發現，將會對整個社會帶來沖擊。這是一個驚天動地的現實！天啊，真的有洪水，這件事真的曾經發生了，這意味著審判是真實的！這一切，我可以告訴大家：這些籌募工作背後的意圖是極盡真誠的。這群人是用一個低預算幹著事。該紀錄片本身或整部片子，都不過是在述說一段自身的旅程和發現，明顯地是一個低預算製作。他們當中和我會晤過的人是真心真意地要榮耀耶穌。所以，就有關這事情及我所知道的一切，這當中存有極大的誠意，這些人真正希望榮耀耶穌，他們希望，藉著他們在這發現裡所相信的，讓看見的人也憑信心接受耶穌。況且，這東西可能恰好就是真的方舟！好了，話盡於此。

<http://www.voiceofrevolution.com>

Philip Williams 著作《挪亞洪水的考古證據》
The Archaeological Evidence of Noah's Flood and Ark

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Discovery on Mount Ararat

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What a wonderful report in the very year I was to publish this book! My friends wanted to celebrate. But even before we got to the restaurant, news reports began focusing on claims that the announcement was likely based on archeological fraud. My bubble of elation burst like a punctured balloon. The reports of fraud seemed themselves incredible, but if confirmed they would seriously damage interest in Noah's Ark and Flood. I could not allow my work of over twenty years to become associated with a hoax. We spent our evening of "celebration" in anguished reflection on how anyone could fabricate the evidence being reported.

I spent the next day tracing the reports of fraud to their sources. One came from Robert Cornuke, an Ark searcher whom I knew. A few years back, I had been unable to dissuade him from making a highly promoted announcement of the possible discovery of Ark remains on a mountain in Iran. Convinced he had seen Noah's Ark in those rocks, he could only see fraud in any competing evidence. The more widely reported and far more damaging source was from Randall Price. Dr. Price is an end-time theologian and popularizer of biblical archaeology in the interest of biblical prophecy, better known for his interest in another Ark, the same Ark of the Covenant sought by Indiana Jones, which Price supposes to be hidden beneath the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Some years before, I had reviewed his book on biblical archaeology, and was disappointed to find that it was only a survey of what others had written.

The astonishing thing was that he claimed to be the archaeologist on the Hong Kong team that made this discovery. He ended his associations with NAMI based on rumors from a rival mountain guide, whom he refused to name. Price asserted that NAMI's guide had fabricated the site on Mt. Ararat with timbers carried from the Black Sea coast. Though not accusing the members of NAMI of dishonesty, he was condescending of their judgments. He sent his claims of fraud in an email to the supporters of his rival search for Noah's Ark, but someone posted it on a website and it got leaked to the press. Though he had not meant them to be publicized, Price stood by his claims.

Documents that Price himself published on his website made it clear that rather than resigning from his brief association with the team, he had in fact been expelled by NAMI's guide, Mr. Ahmet Ertugrul, also known as Parachute (Parasut, in the local language). I found Parachute's concerns most understandable: Price's insistence on climbing the dangerous mountain in bad weather,²⁵⁹ and associating himself with a rival guide and climbing party at such a sensitive time in the new discovery. Price

²⁵⁹ Price's protest about climbing notwithstanding, the guide was not exaggerating the dangers from the precarious location of this discovery. As I write, I am reading reports that a climber may have lost his life attempting to visit precisely this site. Price's insistence on overruling the judgment of an experienced guide

misrepresented his original association, having himself requested to become part of NAMI's team following their original announcement. His mistrust of Parachute contrasts with the respect accorded him by Bruce Feiler in his best-selling *Walking the Bible*. Feiler called Parachute the most impressive person encountered in all his travels. The sincerity and credibility of Parachute's claim to have seen a timber on Mt. Ararat, even if he refused to reveal the location to Feiler, is vouched for by the notable Avner Goren, an Israeli archaeologist with long experience working in the Arab world. No biblical literalist, Goren would not be an easily impressed by such a report.

Unfortunately, the media and detractors on the Internet ignored the discoverers' account, preferring to report Price's charges, probably without examining the details of those charges. Otherwise they could not have missed the fact that they were based on an anonymous source. In truth, both the media and public were tiring of unfounded claims about the discovery of Noah's Ark and were looking for any excuse to ignore this report. Perhaps they were becoming so tired as to miss the fact that while the new report was backed by the appropriate archaeological authorities, the detractors were rival Ark searchers, responsible for hyped reports of their own.

When it came to professionalism, NAMI and their Turkish partners contrasted favorably even with the archaeologists at ASOR,²⁶⁰ one of the most prestigious organizations concerned with biblical archaeology. Sadly, a few archaeologists associated with this venerable organization responded to the report in swashbuckling fashion, as if promoting a new calling to police biblical archaeology. Most surprising was their charge that NAMI had not yet revealed the precise location of the discovery. Could they be unfamiliar with practices for protecting new archaeological discoveries? One ASOR archaeologist acknowledged that NAMI's announcement differed from previous claims by actually producing evidence. Why then his criticism?

Perhaps the most surprising opposition came from prominent leaders in the Young Earth Creationist movement, those who have long believed in and taught a worldwide Flood. Though initially seeming to treat the announcement with an open mind, astute thinkers in the movement could see the discovery as troubling. For instance, radiocarbon tests supporting the biblical date of the Flood could seem to demolish their theories concerning the unreliability of radiocarbon dating for the pre-Flood era. In addition, the identification of this particular peak as Mt. Ararat challenged their geological theory that it was formed in post-Flood times.

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After a few years of research and filming, trust and respect developed between the local villagers and the Hong Kong researchers, who were keenly interested in the villagers' traditions about Noah's Ark and their experience of living near the mountain of Noah. NAMI also developed a close working relationship with Parachute and other members of the Mt. Ararat rescue team. The villagers showed the Hong Kong film team how their ancestors used to climb the mountain. Visits had ceased following the earthquake of 1840 that broke the Ark into three sections, burying them under volcanic rock and ice as pieces of the Ark slid down the side of the mountain. Due to their relationship with the Turkish locals and because they were filming rather than searching for Noah's Ark, NAMI was able to obtain climbing permits that were being denied to American Ark searchers. The villagers shared with NAMI and Parachute, information that would eventually lead them to the wooden remains on Mount Ararat.

The group's first discovery was something that their scientific partners determined to be petrified wood. Reading about this on the NAMI website dampened my enthusiasm because wood from that era is unlikely to be petrified. Though seemingly unconnected with their later discovery of the actual remains, it served to generate

interest in the team's research. NAMI alerted the Turkish authorities, including Mr. E. Muhsin Bulut, Director of Cultural Ministry for Turkey's Agri Province. Information about the discoveries was also sent to Dr. Ahmet Özbek a geologist at Kahramanmaraş Sutcu Imam University in Turkey; Dr. Özlem Çevik, an archaeologist at Trakya University; Professor Otkay Belli, Director of the Institute of Eurasian Archaeology at the University of Istanbul; and Dr. Selim Pullu of Afyonkarahisar Kocatepe University. The Turkish and Hong Kong teams jointly developed a plan for exploration and investigation.

By the summer of 2008, Parachute's climbing team began uncovering and photographing the astonishing remains. Showing these photos to the NAMI team, Parachute explained the precarious location of the caves and the danger this posed to potential visitors. Because of the danger, the researchers invited Panda Lee, trained as a professional climber by the British Army, to verify Parachute's report. When he climbed the mountain soon after receiving this call, Panda became perhaps the first verifiable foreign visitor in modern times to see the remains of Noah's Ark. After exiting the caves where he observed the remains, Panda sent a brief text to the NAMI organization in Hong Kong: "Mission accomplished!" This led to a joint visit to the site by NAMI and the Turkish members of the expedition. The team made videos of the discovery on their second visit, a portion of which was published in conjunction with the announcement in late April, 2010.

Soon after this announcement, aiming to remain true to their mission as makers and publishers of documentary films about Noah's Ark, the NAMI team visited the United States to record initial reactions to their discovery. I invited the NAMI representatives to my hometown in Charlotte, North Carolina to present their information before a small delegation of biblical archaeologists, university professors, scientists, seminary officials, and interested individuals. This took place on June 7, 2010. Whatever doubts that NAMI had been guided to a recently fabricated site ended as those in attendance saw the video documenting the vast amount of wood, the various rooms, the obvious antiquity of the remains, and their similarity to the biblical description. On that day, it became clear to us that an important discovery had been made. We were no less impressed with the account of the discovery shared by Clara Wei: how she had conducted her research with the local villagers, and how that became the key to the discovery. We noted her refusal to rush to judgment concerning NAMI's discovery.

From this meeting and the resulting interviews came NAMI's invitation to address the National Conference on Christian Apologetics meeting in Charlotte on October 15-16, 2010. It would be their first opportunity to speak to a large audience of leaders in biblical and Christian apologetics. This conference was particularly appropriate



Figure 66
Panda Lee confirms the discovery



Figure 67
Beneath tons of glacier ice and volcanic rock

because it has refused to serve as a forum for any of the parties within the Creationist community, trying to get young earth and old earth partisans to discuss their differences in polite and open discussion.

Not everyone involved with the National Apologetics Conference was delighted that NAMI should appear in this venue. Those who protested claimed to be speaking for the interests of biblical archaeology, the Bible, or science. Although a great deal of pseudo-archaeology has been passed off as biblical archaeology, especially pertaining to Noah's Ark, this was perhaps the first time that pseudo-archaeologists have themselves taken the lead in expressing these concerns. In truth, the heat is on this new discovery precisely because it threatens the support if not the very existence of numerous schools of teaching about Genesis and the Bible, of skeptics and believers alike.

Some objected to NAMI's appearance at the conference by claiming that their conclusions were premature, ignoring the fact that NAMI believes a definite decision should await further scientific analysis. I suspect these objectors do not trust ordinary folks to look at the evidence and draw their conclusions before having the opportunity to spin the evidence in their party's light. Most disingenuous were suggestions that NAMI's discovery had no credibility unless supervised by Western scientists and archaeologists, the very organizations who have declared ancient Flood accounts myth, and who disdained to become involved in investigating the discovery themselves.

In fact what is on trial is neither NAMI, who do not claim to be a scientific organization but a ministry led to their discovery by prayer, nor the Turkish archaeologists who are in fact hard-nosed scientists, nor the discovery of this joint team. At stake is the credibility of the Western scientific institutions that have long claimed the mantle of authority for matters of science and history. Those who charge that the radiocarbon dating is suspect because performed in Iranian laboratories echo a new episode in the sad tradition of the ugly American. Turkey has yet to bring on line their planned radiocarbon laboratories, thus their archaeologists employ the services of the closest and most convenient laboratories: those in Iran. Likewise at stake is the credibility of evangelical organizations and leaders who have either distanced themselves from or opposed this discovery, some even suggesting that such a profound challenge to modern disbelief of the Bible is of little consequence for biblical faith! Such obliviousness to the impact of the scientific challenge to the Bible can only be attributed to judgment blinded by complacency and pride.

Despite a stellar panel of speakers, registrations to the National Conference on Christian Apologetics had been falling far below previous years. This was in part due to a planned boycott by the Young Earth Creationists in response to the appearance of a prominent old earth Creationist, defender of a local Flood. Following the last-minute announcement of NAMI's appearance, Young Earth Creationist leaders called off their boycott and registrations soared.

No one seemed more interested than the critics of the new discovery, especially Randall Price, the theologian who accused the NAMI guide of fraud. Price, who now holds a chair at a prominent evangelical university, had sympathizers among the highest level of evangelical leaders and apologists. Presumably owing to his concern for science, he peppered the conference host with calls, attempting to stop NAMI from presenting their discovery, but their appearance had already been announced. NAMI's Panda Lee and Parachute, the guide he accused of fraud, have invited Price to bring his



Figure 68
NAMI's Wing Chung Young (center)

concerns to an open discussion in the United States, reflecting the kind of forum that I advocate in Chapter 39. This would have been an excellent opportunity, but Price preferred that NAMI not be heard.

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Figure 69
Clara Wei addresses National Conference on Christian Apologetics

On the evening of October 16, the NAMI representatives gave the final address of the 2010 National Apologetics Conference. Many had decided to attend this year's conference precisely for this time, while others who learned of the presentation after arriving at the conference delayed their departure to witness the highly anticipated presentation. The atmosphere was electric as the packed audience waited patiently through a 45-minute technical delay. NAMI explained the circumstance of the discovery, showed a ten-minute video filmed in different compartments of the caves, and addressed possible explanations for what they had found. The conference ended with a standing ovation in honor of the guests from Hong Kong.

Following NAMI's appearance at the National Conference on Christian Apologetics, Randall Price increased his attack on the Mt. Ararat discovery, this time including NAMI and Clara Wei in his charges of fraud. The attack first appeared in the form of a special report, which he posted on his World of the Bible website. This report was supplemented by a video featuring a short plank of charred wood supposed to demonstrate how Ahmet Ertrugrul "built" NAMI's archaeological discovery. The report and video contained a picture of the anonymous informer, a mask covering his face due to what Price claimed were dangers to the informer's safety from Ertrugrul, or Parachute [pictured in yellow jacket on front row, Figure 72]. At the end of his special report, seemingly incidentally(!), Price mentions that he himself had likely located the Ark on Mt. Ararat at "17,800 [sic] elevation."

Price's co-author and "scientist" Don Patton, previously known for championing claims of finding human footprints among the dinosaur tracks along the Paluxy River

near Glen Rose, Texas, is not new to archaeological controversy and charges of fraud. It is perhaps not surprising that of the media, only Pat Robertson's CBN and the online newspaper World Net Daily, both located in the home state of Price's Liberty University, and one radio program on biblical prophecy elected to carry his sensational report. In these interviews, Price claimed that his own life was endangered by the influential and powerful leader of the Mt. Ararat rescue team.

While many had been paying too much attention to Price, some were not paying sufficient attention. I contacted both news organizations as well as the university and seminary where Price served as an adjunct professor. CBN removed the report from their website as the leaders of Price's university began investigating his activities and claims. The immediate results of this investigation and my expressed concern about Price's use of anonymous sources may have been the reason that a purported affidavit from two Turkish brothers, Davut and Ergun, soon appeared on Price's website. According to the Price's posted translation of this letter, the brothers worked for Parachute, helping him build movie sets. The letter explained that they were shocked when they learned that this movie set had been claimed as the remains of Noah's Ark. Unusual for an affidavit, the letter gave neither the last names nor addresses for those who wrote the letter.

Probably no one was more shocked than Randall Price when an angry Davut and Ergun Gimrin, claiming to be the only brothers in Turkey with their first names who were mountaineers and licensed guides, suddenly appeared on NAMI's website. Both brothers displayed their Turkish identification cards. They had never seen the letter posted on Price's website until notified by NAMI. They did in fact work with Parachute, but they trusted him as if he were a member of their own family. The brothers showed their signatures and compared them with the obviously forged names appearing in Price's letter. We may assume that Price immediately pulled the letter from his website, leaving a note declaring that the source of the letter was under further investigation. One might suppose that Dr. Price would have thoroughly investigated such serious charges before posting them. After a few weeks, the note disappeared, but the other anonymous charges remained. So long as charges remain anonymous it is impossible for innocent parties to address them, explaining why they violate journalistic, scientific, and especially biblical ethics.

In truth, there had long been reason to know that Price was also unsure of his original charges of fraud. As indicated by his quote of David Hume, he was open to being convinced by further evidence. If Price was uncertain of the charges, he was repeating gossip and in the process injuring the Turkish nationals, Clara Wei, and his brothers and sisters at the Hong Kong-based Christian ministry.

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As attorneys understand, there can be no more credible evidence in favor of a claim than that introduced by an opponent or hostile witness. Unwittingly, Price has confirmed the very moment of discovery and what was immediately reported concerning the find. He likewise documents the professional care practiced by NAMI and Parachute to protect the archaeological integrity of their discovery. He has given us powerful archaeological evidence that what NAMI and Parachute, using information provided by the Turkish natives, have discovered and announced to the world is indeed Noah's Ark.

Though I have demonstrated increasing interest in this new discovery, until this point I have not declared whether I believe these remains to be the very Ark that the Lord God instructed Noah to build some five thousand years ago. My scientific training and experience require me to thoroughly investigate and test things before stating conclusions. That was surely the case before I could accept that there was

in fact no archaeological evidence of Noah's Flood. Before I became convinced that current science had in fact made great mistakes, I had to understand the precise grounds and the objections that have caused scientists and modern scholars to reject the Flood. Before I rejected the Young Earth Creationist account of the Flood, I had to understand their account. I continue to follow the new trends and spins from both schools of modern thought.

As have members of NAMI, I have discussed this new discovery with both secular and biblical archaeologists and scholars, those whom I admire and respect and who are deservedly prominent in their particular fields. Due to the relatively modest coverage in the media and scholarly circles, and because so many who did cover the discovery carried only the hoax charges along with standard rebuttals of the Flood and Noah's Ark, I had first to bring their attention to the seriousness of the new discovery. Unaware of the scientific investigation being conducted by the group of scientists and the involvement of the Turkish cultural authority, a few scholars wisely suggested setting up the proper procedures for investigating the discovery. NAMI and their current scientific team will surely benefit from the addition of archaeologists and scholars, whom they have already sought to recruit: those with relevant expertise in the many and valuable new techniques now available to assist archaeology. All this requires planning, funding, and patience.

At the same time, we must recognize that this discovery is not like that of the Dead Sea Scrolls, whose great significance was only gradually appreciated. The team making this discovery has already completed the careful and gradual steps that revealed this massive, ancient artificial structure. NAMI has also conducted a careful analysis of whether this might be some more ordinary structure such as a human settlement, a monastery, a church, some type of animal pen, or military post. Their analysis clearly rules out each of these alternative possibilities.

Consider that the discovery location is more than a mile higher than Peru's Machu Picchu, long noted as a remarkable site for ancient peoples due to its great elevation. Ancient peoples could climb mountainous heights, but lacked the technology and resources to create buildings or settlements at such sites. Most importantly, this discovery is not only located on a high mountain, far above the tree line, but portions lie under ice and volcanic rock on a steeply inclined slope, dangerous even to climbers with modern equipment and training. Were people even able to access these heights, they would not have chosen to construct a building there. Not only is it geologically unstable, but the evidence points to it having long been so. In Chapter 21, I noted archaeological evidence indicating that these mountains and plains have been steadily rising over historical times. Notwithstanding what had to have been easier access in ancient times, no settlements have been found at the higher elevations of this mountain, the highest being signs of slight occupation in a few caves thousands of feet below the discovery. There are no signs of permanent buildings in these caves.

The curved walls of some parts of the structure and the tight construction produce an appearance remarkably like the hull of a ship, but there is no nearby body of unfrozen



Figure 70
The Ark's decaying remains



Figure 71

water. Neat rows of seven wooden pegs are found near the top of some compartments, as if for tying animals. Most compartments have the look of a barn or animal stable,



Figure 72
Discoverers of history's greatest archaeological find

and contain rope and straw. An offensive smell, strong in certain compartments, pervades the structure. Something besides straw and wood has also been long preserved upon these frozen heights. As I mentioned, the pottery found inside appears to be a clear prototype for the kind that archaeologists trace to these mountainous slopes, with no known antecedents. So steadying ourselves to maintain our scientifically correct attitude, we ask with pompous pretension: "What on earth can this possibly be?"

Was this discovery not made on the very mountain, probably the only mountain in the world that can match the description in the book of Genesis as the resting place for Noah's Ark? Is there any mountain more identified by tradition as the resting place of Noah's Ark? Was it not found at the same great heights suggested in the biblical account? Do not local traditions report ancient visits to the Ark resting on this very mountain? Have not peoples throughout the world traced their ancestors to the survivors of a world-destroying Flood, and has not this been the only type of worldwide disaster reported by the numerous peoples of the world? Have not many of them noted the preservation of their ancestors on some type of ship? Do not these accounts alone indicate a far more recent dispersion of mankind throughout the earth than currently believed?

The frozen remains of so large a ship so high on this famous mountain will long outlast the skeptics. But how do we explain our hesitation to draw the one simple conclusion that might make sense of this discovery? I have been astonished at the pious response of so many Christians: all this evidence is unimportant because they simply believe the Bible. If the Bible is myth, as so many claim today, it would not be important. In reality, the Bible is about history, about things that really happened. This

response is not unlike those who would believe in Jesus' resurrection, even if his tomb had not been empty. That is not a "faith" worth having. The Bible is significant because it truthfully reports what has happened, what is the case today, and what will someday happen.

Doesn't our reluctance reveal that we secretly hold a too-high opinion of the wisdom of the present world and a too-low opinion of the plain words of the Bible? Upon what basis have we determined the simple words of the Bible to be false, and the current scientific knowledge reliable? Do we even know? Or, is it because we fear man and love the present world more than we fear God and love the refuge he has provided? Do we hide our face from the one who is coming, or do we rush to receive him? If we are embarrassed by his promises and words, will he not be embarrassed by us? Shall we remain part of a world that is soon to be destroyed, or shall we look forward to new beginnings? The decision must soon be made and it shall certainly come from our hearts.