



First They Came for Darwin, Then They Came for Copernicus and Galileo

A recent mass mailing was sent to thousands of addresses in Southern California (and who knows where else) asking, “Have Scientists Been Wrong for 400 Years?” Two free books in one, *A Geocentricity Primer* and *The Geocentric Bible 3*, published by the Geocentric Bible Foundation, Inc., of Hugoton, Kansas, promise to reveal “what scientists haven’t been telling you for four centuries.” For example, “astronomers have deliberately ignored fundamental experimental results of the 1870s and 1880s that showed the earth to be standing still.” (Actually, a physicist named Einstein used those results to develop something called *relativity*.) “All phenomena—including the stationary satellite thousands of miles above the earth—are better explained by geocentricity.”

Actually, the biblically based lobby for geocentricity is not new. The Tychonian Society was founded in 1971, vigorously defending, in its *Bulletin of the Tychonian Society*, the idea of a stationary Earth. What’s new is the Association for Biblical Astronomy and its mass-mailing outreach, perhaps emboldened by the success of intelligent design in muddying science education with religion. Also new is the use of the Web to promote their essentially medieval worldview: see <http://tinyurl.com/yu6uxp> and www.geocentricbible.com. Summarizing their beliefs, the organization proclaims: “We believe that the creation was completed in six twenty-four hour days and that the world

Robert Sheaffer’s World Wide Web page for UFOs and other skeptical subjects is at www.debunker.com.

is not older than about six thousand years. We maintain that the Bible teaches us of an earth that neither rotates daily nor revolves yearly about the sun; that it is at rest with respect to the throne of him who called it into existence; and that hence it is absolutely at rest in the universe.” The key idea motivating the group is stated quite succinctly: “the only absolutely trustworthy information about the origin and purpose of all that exists and happens is given by God, our Creator and Redeemer, in his infallible, preserved word, the Holy Bible. All scientific endeavor which does not accept this revelation from on high without any reservations, literary, philosophical or whatever, we reject as already condemned in its unfounded first assumptions.”

In *A Geocentricity Primer*, author Gerardus D. Bouw scrutinizes Psalm 93:1:

... *the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.* The word “stablished” may sound strange to the modern ear, but it communicates a very subtle point which, though present in the Hebrew, is lacking in all modern versions which favor the word “establish,” instead. Stablish means to stabilize; establish means to set up. The rendering in the King James Bible reflects God’s continuing, stabilizing influence on this present world. This makes a lot of sense considering that the world is founded on waters. . . . Since Psalm 93:1 indicates that the world cannot be moved, it would follow that it is not now moving.

Other geocentric passages cited by Bouw include Psalm 96:10, “the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved,” and Psalm 104:5, which states

that God “laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.” Ultimately, he concludes “the earth is not moving; it has a place of its own. But at the great white throne judgment, the earth will be removed; it will flee away and move for the first time in its history.”

One might raise myriad objections to the ancient, Ptolemaic, Earth-centered system, but the biblical astronomers are sophisticated debaters and so have opted for the “modified Tychonic system,” named for the noted sixteenth-century Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe:

The model explains all observed phenomena. The sun is at the center of the circle representing the starry realm or the firmament. The shell [is] stylized, being actually billions of light years thick in the model. Irregularities in the distribution of stars in the firmament causes a one-year vibration of the entire universe so that the sun follows the circle running through it and centered on the earth. The planets orbit the sun, and the sun sees the earth as if it orbited it.

It’s a well-crafted compromise between heliocentrism and the strict Earth-centered geocentrism of antiquity and seems to almost makes sense, except for the utter lack of any possible natural mechanism that could possibly account for the bizarre and capricious motions of not just the sun but the entire universe, motions whose sole purpose seems to be to *mimic* the appearance of a moving Earth. I said “the entire universe” to indicate the depth of the problem that twenty-first-century geocentrists face. Every star we can see, whatever its line-of-sight

velocity toward or away from us, when observed spectroscopically, sometimes has that velocity increased by what heliocentrists calculate as Earth's orbital velocity about the sun, and, six months later, it is decreased by precisely the same amount. No problem, says the heliocentrist—it's caused by the orbital motion of Earth. The geocentrist, however, must argue that *all* of the stars are moving to create this effect—and not just stars but whole galaxies. The entire Virgo Supercluster, 200 million light-years across, behaves as if its galaxies were attached to our sun by invisible glass rods, dutifully approaching earth, then receding, as that star makes its yearly circuit around the stationary Earth, dragging the entire observable universe with it.

Then there is that pesky matter of the apparent daily rotation of the entire sky that heliocentrists astronomers attribute to Earth's rotation. For biblical geocentrists, the apparent rotation of everything around stationary Earth is exactly what it seems to be. So that faint quasar we see that is fourteen billion light-years distant *really* is rotating around Earth each day. Taking 2π times its distance, we see that the quasar is in fact moving almost eighty-eight billion light-years *every twenty-four hours* as it rotates around the stationary Earth at the phenomenal speed of approximately a gazillion times the speed of light. Einstein's universal speed limit of c is continually broken by the rotation of the universe itself, since even the nearest stars must move much faster than light to complete their circuit around the earth in just twenty-four hours.

A fundamentalist Catholic group, Catholic Apologetics International, is unrelated to the Association for Biblical Astronomy, but proclaims on its Web site, "*Galileo Was Wrong!*" (www.galileo.waswrong.com): "The earth revolves around the sun? Think again! . . . Can You Handle the Truth?" A CD containing over a thousand pages of "scientific evidence for geocentrism" is available for just twenty-three dollars. You can also buy "Galileo was wrong" T-shirts and coffee mugs, the perfect thing to take to the next Science Fair.

* * *

In the world of UFO abductions, the Betty Andreasson case ranks among the most prominent and most esteemed, often discussed in the same revered tones as the case of "abduction" pioneers Betty and Barney Hill. Back in 1967, Betty Andreasson was allegedly abducted by alien beings that floated in through closed doors and placed all the members of her family in a trance. The leader of these creatures was named Quazgaa, and gave Betty a little book of cosmic knowledge, which unfortunately "disappeared." He assured her that the aliens, like Betty, were Christians and were expecting Jesus's return. Weird occurrences and further abductions continued to plague Betty and some of her family members for years. She was placed under hypnosis to "recover" the memory of what had supposedly happened to her aboard the craft, resulting in a large (if dubious) body of UFOlogical data. The best-known account of this abduction story is in the 1979 book *The Andreasson Affair* by Raymond E. Fowler.

Now Betty's stepson, Robert J. Luca, has published several long diatribes on the Internet, in which he calls the entire incident a "hoax" and says his father, Robert A. Luca—Betty's husband—is a "pathological liar" (see <http://alienabductionaccounts.blogspot.com>, search for "Andreasson"; also www.luca65.com/page2.html). Robert Jr. claims his father "bugged his own phone to trick investigators, and also made weird noises on the line as if a alien were on the line and all sorts of weird things. It made that much more material for Betty to write about." Supposedly, Robert Sr. used the phone taps to fool Fowler and other investigators. "As for Betty, she is so hung up on her weird religious beliefs, she actually thinks she is a moderns day prophet and that god is contacting her through the UFO's and warning the world through her. . . . [She] has drawn pictures and wrote about UFO's every week without fail since they have been married in the late 70's."

Robert J. Luca is not skeptical about UFOs in general and suggests that well-known cases such as the Roswell crash may well have validity. However, he charges, "These two people [Robert Sr. and Betty] have used the UFO society for

years and only to gain book sales, money and own self-satisfaction of feeling as if they are in the public eye." [Robert Jr.'s quotes are presented as they originally appeared on the Web site.—Eds.]

On the other hand, another family member, Becky Andreasson (Betty's daughter), not only supports her mother's story completely but claims to share in her experiences (at www.beckyandreasson.com). Becky's Web site is filled with drawings of her extended encounters with UFO "Elders," Gray Watchers, a "floating blue ball," and a herd of mystical cats. As Becky's story illustrates, these days, one doesn't so much *sight* UFOs as *have a relationship* with them.

* * *

Finally, we cannot let this important anniversary pass unnoticed: June 24, 2007, marks the sixtieth birthday of the contemporary phenomenon of UFOs. It was on that date in 1947 that private pilot Kenneth Arnold reported seeing nine objects, allegedly flying at a high rate of speed, that "flew erratic, like a saucer if you skip it across the water." The anniversary is being marked with great festivities in Roswell, New Mexico, whose now-celebrated "UFO crash" started out as a momentary lapse of sober judgment in the immediate post-Arnold sighting frenzy and was justifiably forgotten for over thirty years (until dredged up and cleaned off by dedicated UFO enthusiasts). In the intervening sixty years, there have been many thousands of reported sightings of UFOs. However, in every single case, the alleged mysterious object managed to make its escape before the evidence of its existence became convincing.

One recent victim of UFO frustration is the editor of *UFO* magazine, Donald Ecker, who just announced his retirement from what he calls "the UFO fog" after twenty years. Once known as a fierce bulldog among UFO proponents, Ecker writes, "Most 'researchers' are ignorant of what has happened previously in the field of UFO research. They are ignorant of the claims made in the past, ignorant of past hoaxes perpetrated by 'players' in the field and are intolerant of views that conflict with their deep seated erroneous beliefs. Quite frankly,