

Geocentric Conference

I attended the first annual catholic conference on Geocentrism held Saturday Nov. 6, 2010 at Hilton Garden Inn, South Bend Indiana near the sprawling campus of the University of Notre Dame which was also my alma mater for a season in 1967-68 the year in which the Fighting Irish were football champions and neon signs of “We are # 1” were plastered all over the “then walk-able and manageable” ND campus. So my motivation was nostalgia, curiosity as well as mix of entertainment and educational value. The presenters were well credentialed. Mostly doctorate in astronomy, divinity, theoretical physics and juris prudence. The registration fee was affordable \$50/- including complimentary lunch. The handouts were sparse, but a lot of print and audio-visuals were on site for purchase. Their computer simulations were particularly enchanting and captivating.

Their main claim was that all scientific and biblical evidence supports the Geocentric model better than Heliocentric and that is why the tag line for the conference was “Galileo was Wrong : The Church was Right” also a compendium of over a thousand pages by the same title by Dr. Robert Sungenis and Dr. Robert Bennett. In delineating their position they relied heavily inter alia on relativity, their theological worldview, computer simulations, historical documents coated with their young earth six day literal creation biblical view. To be sure it is not the Kepler’s geocentrism based on Copernican revolution you and I were taught in school. Instead in their simulated version of the gencentrism all the planets are heliocentric except our “Earth” which does not move at all (neither rotary nor orbital) but the solar system and the rest of the universe orbits around the center of the mass of the universe which is earth or very near it.

The day and night are created by the solar system orbiting the stationary earth in one day. The four seasons are caused by the solar system N-S oscillations of 47 degrees in the ecliptic plane (23.5 above and 23.5 degrees below the equator) every year. (Thank you Dr. Robert Bennett for this corrected explanation) Query: If earth takes a year to orbit the Sun, then how come the solar system can orbit the earth in 24 hours. Is the speed 365 times greater or the distance of the orbit only $1/365^{\text{th}}$ or some other explanation?

The schedule was hectic. It was tiring from eight in the morning to midnight. There was not enough time for questions let alone challenging their model. In spite of that a few people managed to express their disagreement. One such a challenging question from the audience was, “What scientific evidence will convince you about the reality of Heliocentric solar system” if not the universe also. The reply was observations from a motionless platform, which is impossible to have since everything in our universe is moving. So it has to be beyond the edge of the universe, which the astronomers have not yet identified. Needless to say with this type of constraint, they felt safe from any challenge to the geocentric model.

Many people do not differentiate much between the flat earth and geocentrism as both are plagued by same mentality and absurdity of the littoral biblical world view etc. Geocentric believers like to distance themselves from Flat Earth Society. Yes, such an organization is still kicking and making noise and has chapter meetings - may be even one near you. Modern creation science organizations also like to distance themselves from both flat earth and geocentric viewpoints. Main stream science does not want to touch any of them (flat earth, geocentrism, creation science, intelligent design, dissidents etc.) with a ten foot pole as they lump all of them together, notwithstanding many creation science and intelligent design enthusiasts and dissident scientists have similar attitudes (if not same) as the main stream especially with respect to welcoming different viewpoints in their respective peer reviewed publications.

There was a talented and beautiful religion reporter “Manya Brachear” from Chicago Tribune, who was doing a story about the conference. Just before the close of the conference I made a special request to take a straw poll by “show of hands” how many minds, if any, were changed in either direction as a result of the conference. This was conveniently ignored, because the organizers suspected their worst fears may be realized. I don’t blame them because I too would not want to face the specter that no minds were changed. The proof is in the pudding for that we have to wait another year for the 2nd conference being planned for Nov. 2011 in Columbus, Ohio, to see what changes if any the organizers make. In the mean time I am glad I went, had a good time and made new friends.