

David Palm Peddles Alien Arguments Against Geocentrism

By Robert Sungenis

Palm: Geocentrists Peddle Alien Theology of Centrality; The Center ≠ You're Significant. The new geocentrists teach that you are significant. In this, they faithfully echo the teaching of the Catholic Church. But they claim that you are significant because the planet you inhabit – the Earth – is the physical center of the universe. They further claim that this theology is thoroughly Catholic, being well grounded and attested to in the teaching of the Church. While one can understand why geocentrists would find this view appealing (and certainly a good marketing tool to help promote geocentrism), the problem is that it's false.

R. Sungenis: What we will find instead is that David Palm is hammering the wrong nail, and as a result, his whole critique becomes another indication that his obsession against geocentrism has led him into arguments that are completely irrelevant.

Palm: The Catholic Church has never taught that the supposed centrality of our location in the cosmos is proof of our theological/existential significance.

R. Sungenis: And neither has Robert Sungenis or Rick Delano referred to it as “proof.” Palm's accusation is another in a series of strawmen that David Palm creates to try to win the debate on a new front since he has lost the debate on every other front.

Palm: This theology of centrality, if you will, is alien to the teaching of the Catholic Church. In fact, in Christendom, as we will see, the common view of the center of the universe has been quite the opposite of what the geocentrists propose. Here's how Rick DeLano frames the issue:

Delano: “That ancient world viewed Earth as the center of creation; Christendom overwhelmingly concurred. For the medievals, Earth had to be the center of the universe, since it was the place of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, of the Son of God, for the redemption of the lost descendants of Adam.”¹

Palm: Implicit in this narrative is the notion that the Earth must be the physical center of the universe precisely because it's the most important place. And if you're in the most important place in the universe well, then, that makes you significant. Conversely, if the Earth is not the center of the universe, then that makes you insignificant. This is bad science, which is troubling enough. But it's also abysmal theology with dangerous ramifications, which is much, much worse. According to Catholic theology, what makes us “significant” is that God created us in His image, has a particular and unique love for us, and wants to spend all eternity with us. The proof of that unique love and relationship is not a matter of natural, deductive reasoning such as the geocentrists assert, it is a matter of Divine Revelation culminating in the life, death and

¹ <http://www.theprinciplemovie.com/blog/message-principle-producerwriter-rick-delano-people-faith/>

resurrection of the God-man, Jesus Christ, Pentecost and the establishment of His Church for the eternal salvation of human souls.

R. Sungenis: Apparently, Mr. Palm's tactic is to make it appear that Rick Delano has placed divine revelation below the idea that the Earth is in the center for Incarnation.

Wrong.

If anything, Rick Delano realizes that the Earth's position at or near the center of the universe is implied by the divine revelation in Scripture that the Earth does not move. Likewise, it didn't take much intuition for the Fathers or medievals to figure out that since the Earth is the only body that isn't moving, then there just might be a connection between that unique status and the uniqueness of the Son of God. It is only people who have an agenda (like David Palm) who refuse to see the obvious connection between the two.

Palm: Interestingly, it seems that some geocentrists have finally begun to notice the dramatic lack of Catholic support for geocentrism, although they have yet to grasp the most logical and obvious reason for it.

R. Sungenis: First of all, we have made sufficient progress in convincing Catholics about geocentrism. All one need do is go to our website www.theprinciplemovie.com or our Facebook page and see by the number of "likes" that the Catholic numbers are increasing by leaps and bounds. Rick Delano acknowledges those stats as well.

What Rick is referring to when he says the Catholic numbers are weak is the hierarchy of the modern Catholic Church, not the parishioners. But that divide is not unusual. Many parishioners are light years ahead of their bishops on such matters, especially the cadre of modernist and liberal bishops that dominate the hierarchy in the US and Europe today.

Palm: For instance, in another venue, [DeLano rhetorically responds to a commenter](#) as to why a number of Protestants are getting on the geocentric bandwagon, including a couple of Protestant "bishops", while by and large Catholics aren't:

Delano: Why is it that the objectively heretical and schismatic [i.e. Protestants] are, thus far, more responsive, and dramatically more courageous in saying so, to the scientific evidence supporting the Catholic, Incarnational cosmos, centered upon the place of the Incarnation of the Son of God for the redemption of the descendants of Adam, than the objectively Catholic hierarchs are? "...that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed."

Palm: Note the twin claims here. The first is that there is a "Catholic, Incarnational cosmos" which must have the earth as its physical center. The logical implication, of course, is that any other cosmology isn't authentically Catholic.

R. Sungenis: First, we need to repeat here that no matter how many times Palm has been challenged, he has not provided one scientific proof that the Earth moves. Even his cohort,

Alec MacAndrew, who Palm depends upon for scientific analysis, hasn't provided any proof. So if Palm can't show us any proof that there is any other "authentically Catholic" cosmology, then his arguments aren't worth the paper they are written on.

Second, the reason the Big Bang and the Steady State models haven't become "authentic" is because they have fallen by the weight of their own contradictions. The Big Bang, for example, needs Inflation, Dark Matter and Dark Energy to operate, but none of these processes or entities have been discovered. In essence, the Big Bang is being propped up as "authentic" on only 4% of reality. The remaining 96% (Inflation, Dark Matter and Dark Energy) is fantasy. But that's the kind of "authenticity" David Palm and Alec MacAndrew like to follow.

Palm: And the second claim is common among the geocentrists: if you don't support geocentrism, you're cowardly – and this includes (or perhaps is particularly true) if you happen to be a Catholic bishop or pope.

R. Sungenis: Perhaps the only real coward here is David Palm. When Palm was asked to have an oral and public debate so that his accusations could be publically crossed-examined, he refused. He wanted to limit the debate to written form where he could easily do his two-step. But like a pest who won't go away no matter how many times you swat it, Palm continues to nit-pick on trivial matters, as he does in this paper.

Another coward is Mark Shea, who also refuses to debate the issue, but continues to make his malicious snips on his blog without allowing opponents to answer.

For the record, neither Rick Delano nor I have ever called a bishop or priest a "coward" for not accepting geocentrism. Most of them, if not all, are simply ignorant of the facts. Hence, this is just another of Palm's strawmen.

Palm: So, once again, we are faced with new geocentrists' claim that they alone are the true standard bearers of the "real" Catholic faith, as opposed to, oh, you know, every single successor to the Apostles and Vicar of Christ over the past few centuries – those faithless scoundrels who have been uniformly and utterly derelict in their duty to uphold the True Faith according to the gospel of geocentrism.

R. Sungenis: Let's uncover the game Palm is playing. Although there have been countless saints, theologians and parishioners in the history of the Catholic Church that God has used to help guide the hierarchy into truth or keep them on the truth (including David Palm's own attempt in his 2004 scathing critique of John Paul II in the Seattle Catholic, available at http://www.seattlecatholic.com/article_20040406.html), our attempt to show the modern prelature that they have been too hasty in siding with Galileo; and that a recognition that the Church was right can turn our modern society around as it restores the respect and authority of the Church in the eyes of the world, meets with utter disdain by the agenda-driven David Palm.

As for his reasoning, Palm says "every single successor to the Apostles and Vicar of Christ over the past few centuries." First of all, the reference to "past few centuries" means Palm is admitting that "every single successor to the Apostles and Vicar of Christ" in all the prior

centuries taught what Rick Delano and I are teaching. Those centuries are commonly called “the tradition of the Church” or the “ordinary magisterium.” Apparently, Palm feels no compunction when he throws it to the wayside. Palm just skips over this glaring anomaly in his apologetic as if it didn’t exist. Some scholarship.

Second, as for his phrase “few centuries,” what centuries does Palm have in mind? “Few” is more than two. But the only time the Church relaxed her position on Galileo was in 1820 when an imprimatur was given for a Catholic book on heliocentrism; and in 1835 when Galileo was taken off the Index. Other than that, there have been no official movements by the Church to either rescind or lessen the 1616 and 1633 judgments against Galileo and heliocentrism. Even in the 1820 case, however, Palm doesn’t tell his readers that the imprimatur was issued under false pretenses, since one of the cardinals in charge of the Index deliberately lied to Pius VII about why the imprimatur should be issued. Palm also fails to tell you that the cardinal who helped in this lie in 1820 then became pope in 1831 and had Galileo’s name removed from the Index in 1835. It was after the reign of this pope that all hell broke loose in the mid- and latter 1800s as the liberals and modernists stormed the Church. Pius IX was one of these modernists, but it got so bad in the mid-1800s that Pius IX forsook his modernistic tendencies and became a conservative.

Palm: Flipping Theology On Its Head. But, unsurprisingly, it isn’t the Magisterium that has gotten things wrong, it’s the geocentrists. In fact, just as they do with the science, the new geocentrists have managed to flip Catholic theology completely on its head.

R. Sungenis: Once again, Palm fails to tell us that the “magisterium” made no official decisions on the matter except for the two events noted above in 1820 and 1835 that were filled with ecclesiastical malfeasance.

Palm: Let’s consider this fundamental point, a point that the geocentrists have somehow completely missed: For sixteen centuries, Aristotelian/Ptolomaic cosmology held sway among Christian thinkers. That cosmology considered the Earth to be in the lowest, most degraded and least privileged place in the entire universe. Indeed, as one commentator has put it, “Before Copernicus the consensus among Western scientists and theologians was, in accordance with Aristotle, that the Earth was either at, or was, the anal aperture of the universe, literally.” (J. Goldberg, *The Tyranny of Cliches*; [link](#)).

R. Sungenis: So what? Aristotle was wrong on a lot of things. It was Thomas Aquinas who cleaned up a lot of Aristotle’s mistakes, including the idea that the Earth was the anus of the universe. The Fathers and Aquinas rejected Aristotle’s demotion of Earth and instead upheld Scripture’s elevation of Earth as the footstool of God’s throne (Isaiah 66:1) and where He reigns over mankind (Psalm 46). Aristotle didn’t believe in a personal God, and therefore he would have had no concept of a God who would be so intimate with Earth that He would use it as a footrest and daily send His angels, and lastly His own Son, to that very Earth.

Palm: The simple fact is this: The Catholic Church has never put forth the supposed physical centrality of the Earth in the universe as a matter of theological importance at all, let alone as proof of man’s existential/theological significance. There’s a reason why you will never see

specific references and quotes from the geocentrists to Fathers, Doctors, or Popes asserting that Catholics must believe the earth is the physical center of the universe because it's the most significant place in the universe.

R. Sungenis: The Catholic Church did not have to specify the centrality, but that is because the centrality was already implied by the fact that the Church upheld the Earth's motionlessness and said that the Sun, the planets, the stars and the moon moved around a fixed Earth – a fact that David Palm denies. It wasn't necessary for the Church to focus on centrality when non-motion was the more important fact. The very reason that the Earth can serve as God's footstool is because it is motionless, as our all footstools.

The immobility of the Earth is so important that Psalm 93 appeals to that scientific fact to use in an analogy of God's immutability. As the Earth cannot be moved, neither can God. Palm misses all this, of course, because he does his research based on an obsession to disprove it, not to find out the truth.

Palm: Surrendering to Their Opponents. You see, what has actually happened is that the new geocentrists have bought into the criticisms of their opponents, modern critics who propound what has been called the "Copernican Cliché" that with the advent of Copernicus man was "dethroned" or displaced from his privileged position at the very center of the universe. The problem is that this is a myth—it's based on a completely fallacious view of what ancient and medieval man believed. What the geocentrists should have done is challenge their opponents' fundamental premise—instead what they've done is accepted that erroneous premise and from there concocted a new-fangled philosophy and theology that's utterly alien to classical Western thought and Catholic tradition.

R. Sungenis: What has actually happened is that David Palm has made a fallacious connection between the Christian belief that the Earth is God's footstool (Matt 5:35) and the place where He reigns over men (Psalm 46) with the pagan notion from Aristotle that the Earth was the anus of the universe. As such, Palm fails to see that modern cosmologists have rejected Aristotle's conception and now understand the center of the universe as very unique. Hence, if anyone has surrendered to the opponents, it is David Palm, and has made himself an ass in the process. Conversely, Rick Delano and I are trying to wrest these pagan notions out of the hands of the atheists and restore the Earth to the glory God originally gave it.

Palm: Below, you will find a survey of a number of prominent scholars who have begun to put the lie to the "Copernican Cliché", this modern myth that somehow Copernicanism "demoted" man from a place of unique prominence and significance, based on the belief in the earth's position at the exact center of the universe. In a wonderful article that deserves reading in full, Professor Dennis Danielson aims a deadly salvo at the "Copernican Cliché", which has become as ubiquitous in modern society as the myth that the educated contemporaries of Columbus believed the earth was flat:

For most pre-Copernican philosophical and astronomical authorities, geocentrism did not in fact entail or even accompany claims about earth's or humankind's preeminent importance. ... There neither is, nor in the unfolding of Copernicanism has there ever

been, any necessary correlation between literal, geometric centrality and “centrality” in the figurative sense of “importance” or “prominence.” The affirmation of one does not entail an affirmation of the other, nor does the denial of one entail a denial of the other (Danielson, “[The Great Copernican Cliché](#)”, *American Journal of Physics*, 69 (10), October 2001, p. 1030).

R. Sungenis: Of course, these sources are pagan and or non-Christian. I suggest Mr. Palm do a study of the Church Fathers. He will find something quite different than what he finds in these secular sources. Come to think of it, Palm deliberately left out any references to the Fathers’ views of the Earth, yet their views dominated the Christian consensus. Some scholarship.

Palm: Danielson echoes C. S. Lewis’s observations about ancient and medieval cosmology actually seeing the earth in a disadvantaged position:

In most medieval interpretations of Aristotle’s and Ptolomy’s cosmology, earth’s position at the center of the universe was taken as evidence not of its importance but (to use a term still in circulation) its grossness....Pre-Copernican cosmology pointed not to the metaphysical or axiological “centrality” but rather to the sheer grossness of humankind and its abode. In this view, the earth appears as a universal pit, figuratively as well as literally the world’s [universe’s] low point. As C. S. Lewis puts it, the medieval model is in fact not anthropocentric but “anthropoperipheral.” (ibid., p. 1031.)

R. Sungenis: Again, Palm fails to distinguish the pagan belief from Christian belief regarding Earth and its position in the cosmos.

Palm: Historian Dr. Remy Brague, after undertaking a survey of medieval views on cosmology and the significance of man, concludes thus:

my thesis . . . can be summarized as follows: according to the pre-Copernican world-view, the central place of Earth is anything but a place of honor. Of course, the center is exactly that in the field of human societies. But this does not hold true in an astronomical context. In astronomy, the center is a humble place, even the humblest of all places (“Geocentrism as a Humiliation for Man”, in *Medieval Encounters* 3 (3), p.191).

R. Sungenis: Again, Palm fails to distinguish the pagan belief from Christian belief regarding Earth and its position in the cosmos.

Palm: Interestingly he finds only one medieval witness, a Jewish scholar, who conflated the notions of physical and existential centrality for man:

I know of only one mediaeval thinker who confused the two meanings of centrality and grounded an alleged greater worth of man on the fact that his home in the universe, namely the Earth, is located at the latter’s center. . . . He was the Jewish theologian and apologist (mutakallim) Saadia Gaon (882-942). He becomes

interesting for us because he is utterly out of tune with the rest of the mediaeval concert (ibid., 193).

R. Sungenis: But Gaon is not “out of tune” with the Catholic Church Fathers, Thomas Aquinas, or the whole Catholic medieval consensus. The only ones “out of tune” with that patristic and medieval consensus are David Palm and his “Jewish scholar.”

Palm: Brague quotes classicist A. H. Armstrong, who notes:

Geocentric cosmology did not lead the ancient astronomers and philosophers to a man-centered view of the universe, and exaggerated view of man’s importance in the scheme of things. It led them rather to stress his smallness, insignificance and lowly position in the cosmic order (ibid., 201).

R. Sungenis: Again, Palm fails to distinguish the pagan belief from Christian belief regarding Earth and its position in the cosmos.

Palm: Catholic theologian, Ernan McMullin critiques the common modern (including modern geocentrist) view:

that the proposed shift of the cosmic center from earth to sun effectively displaced humans from their exalted place at the center of the universe and thus had to be resisted by a Church that saw human beings as the center of God’s creation, as the privileged beings around whom the rest of the world circled (“The Church’s Ban On Copernicanism”, in *The Church and Galileo*, pp. 165f.)

R. Sungenis: This is the same strawman that Palm tried to use earlier. But here is the truth. It didn’t matter to the Church whether God placed the Earth in the center or not. God could do whatever He wished, and thus there was no philosophical necessity to put Earth in the center. But what both Palm and McMullen miss is the fact that the Church was adamant that whatever Scripture dictated as the physical movement or location of the Earth must, of necessity, be true because it came from divine revelation, not philosophy. The Church said that Scripture said the Sun moved around the Earth and that the Earth was fixed. Whatever one wants to glean from those two doctrinal stipulations he can do so, even if it is the logical conclusion that Earth is in the center. But, contrary to Palm’s strawman, that doesn’t mean that the Church demanded that the Earth be in the center because it made man special. That argument is putting the cart before the horse. Rather, the Church first stated as fact that the Earth didn’t move, and thus the logical conclusion was that the Earth was in the center; and since the Earth is God’s footstool, then being in the center must have some high significance, and thus the Church rejected Aristotle’s notion that the Earth was the universe’s anus.

Palm: And he then points out that this modern view simply won’t hold up to historical scrutiny:

But this will not do. It may well be what the enlightened modern would say should have been the Church’s reaction to this displacement of human beings from the center of the Creation they had occupied, unchallenged, until then. But in fact there

is hardly any reference at all to this consideration in the abundant criticisms of Copernicanism from the theologians of the immediate post-1633 period. . . .

What is more, the center was not, in fact, regarded by the theologians of that day as a particularly favorable location. The abode of the blessed was at the circumference, and Bellarmine was not alone in situating hell at the center of the universe—that is, at the center of the earth. In the Aristotelian view of the matter, the earth was the locus of change, of corruption, by contrast with the serenity of the celestial regions. It was true, of course, that in the Christian vision human beings, made in the image of God, were central to the work of Creation, for on them alone was bestowed the ability, at once fatal and ennobling, to choose freely.

But to go from this sort of “centrality” to the literal sort of centrality that these modern interpreters . . . have in mind is an inference that the theologians of 1616 would have been far less inclined to make than would the speculative interpreters of today (ibid.)

R. Sungenis: Once again, the Church doesn’t get its theology or philosophy from Aristotle, at least not until it passes through the rigorous grid of Thomas Aquinas. Hence, any appeals to Aristotle’s view of the Earth’s position in space without the Catholic commentary on it, is simply misplaced and misleading.

Palm: And philosopher Dr. Jim Slagle notes that the reality of ancient and medieval thought is exactly the opposite of what DeLano and the new geocentrists assert:

In the premodern cosmology, the closer one was to the center indicated one’s lack of significance and value, that one was less esteemed and privileged. Aristotle made a sharp distinction between the literal, geometrical center and the metaphorical, natural center, and his commentators followed suit....The center is the place within a sphere furthest removed from what is outside it. . . . This cosmology was expanded upon by Ptolemy, and Ptolemy’s model was accepted throughout the Middle Ages....Part of the difficulty is that we look at geocentrism and, very understandably, think of it in terms of “center.” However, for the premoderns, Earth was at the bottom of the universe....Therefore, the claim that the earth is not at the center of the universe was perceived as a huge promotion for humanity, not a demotion. Indeed it was the Copernican model that was anthropocentric.... The equation of the center with debasement and deterioration is not an idiosyncratic interpretation: it was the received view (“The Myth of Mortification: The Cosmic Insignificance of Humanity and the Rhetoric of “Copernican Revolutions,” in *Theology and Science*, 11:3, pp. 291ff.; emphases his.)

R. Sungenis: Once again, all this kind of thought is of pagan origin, not Christian. Mr. Palm fails to make the proper distinctions. Furthermore, even if one were to argue that Earth is the anus of the universe, there still won’t be any traction, for St. Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 12:22-24:

On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable we invest with the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part...

So Mr. Palm can side with Aristotle all he wants and call the Earth an anus. According to St. Paul, even an anus has a greater honor than other parts of the body.

The other important distinction that Palm leaves out is that the universe of the first millennium and at least three-quarters of the second millennium was hundreds of orders smaller than the universe of modern cosmology. Putting an object on the rim of a small and finite universe did not take it very far from everything else, and more or less gave it a higher position, since it would be considered “above” the center.

But that is not the case with modern cosmology’s universe where there is no “higher position” or a place “above” the center. Whether it is the Steady State or the Big Bang universe with a Multiverse, in the modern version space and time are infinite, and there is no low or high, no right or left, no up or down. Hence, the more vast the universe, the more special the center becomes since the center gives the only location and direction, whereas no other place in the modern universe can have such uniqueness. This is precisely why modern cosmologists want an infinite universe, since it will allow a universe of time and chance instead of one designed by God with a center.

Palm: C. S. Lewis noted the extent to which medieval thought did not equate physical position with significance:

Because, as Dante was to say more clearly than anyone else, the spatial order is the opposite of the spiritual, and the material cosmos mirrors, hence reverses, the reality, so that what is truly the rim seems to us the hub ... We watch ‘the spectacle of the celestial dance’ from its outskirts. Our highest privilege is to imitate it in such measure as we can. The medieval Model is, if we may use the word, anthropoperipheral. We are creatures of the Margin (Discarded Image, 58; cited by Slagle, 293).

R. Sungenis: Of course, the problem with Dante was always whether he was accurately depicting the Christian faith, and his devotion to it was always questioned. Benedict XV had mentioned Dante’s peculiar ideas in his April 30, 1921, encyclical titled, *In Praeclara Summorum*, although he exonerated Dante from being a pseudo-believer.

Palm: As Lewis puts it elsewhere,

[Ptolemy’s] astronomical system was universally accepted in the Dark and Middle Ages. The insignificance of Earth was as much a commonplace to Boethius, King Alfred, Dante, and Chaucer as it is to Mr. H.G. Wells or Professor Haldane. Statements to the contrary in modern books are due to ignorance . . . The spatial insignificance of Earth, [was] asserted by Christian philosophers, sung by Christian poets, and

commented on by Christian moralists for some fifteen centuries, without the slightest suspicion that it conflicted with their theology (Miracles: A Preliminary Study, 53; cited by Slagle, 294).

R. Sungenis: The one ignorant here is C. S. Lewis. I don't know of any Christians who thought the Earth was "spatially insignificant." I don't know of any who said that the Earth was in the center of the universe but was either the anus or a lower in status than the rest of the universe. Where are they, Mr. Palm?

Let's look at a few who said the Earth was in the center. Tell me if you see any remark from them that the Earth was also "insignificant" or an "anus" or in a place of demotion.

Athanasius: For the Sun is carried round along with, and is contained in, the whole heaven, and can never go beyond his own orbit, while the moon and other stars testify to the assistance given them by the Sun... But the earth is not supported upon itself, but is set upon the realm of the waters, while this again is kept in its place, being bound fast at the center of the universe.²

Athenagoras: To Him is for us to know who stretched out and vaulted the heavens, and fixed the earth in its place like a center.³

Augustine: Let not the philosophers, then, think to upset our faith with arguments from the weight of bodies; for I don't care to inquire why they cannot believe an earthly body can be in heaven, while the whole earth is suspended on nothing. For perhaps the world keeps its central place by the same law that attracts to its center all heavy bodies.⁴

Basil: In the midst of the covering and veil, where the priests were allowed to enter, was situated the altar of incense, the symbol of the earth placed in the middle of this universe; and from it came the fumes of incense.⁵

Chrysostom: "For they who are mad imagine that nothing stands still, yet this arises not from the objects that are seen, but from the eyes that see. Because they are unsteady and giddy, they think that the Earth turns round with them, which yet turns not, but stands firm. The derangement is of their own state, not from any affection of the element."⁶

And again, the earth is fixed, but the waters are continually in motion; and not the waters only, but the clouds, and the frequent and successive showers, which return at their proper season.⁷

² *Against the Heathen*, Part 1, No. 27.

³ *Why the Christians do not Offer Sacrifices*, Ch XIII.

⁴ *City of God*, Bk XIII, Ch 18.

⁵ *The Mystic Meaning of the Tabernacle*, Bk V, Ch VI; Clement of Rome, *Stromata*, Bk V.

⁶ *Homily on Titus*, III.

⁷ *Homilies to Antioch*, Homily XII.

Clement of Rome: the Creator, long-suffering, merciful, the sustainer, the benefactor, ordaining love of men, counseling purity, immortal and making immortal, incomparable, dwelling in the souls of the good, that cannot be contained and yet is contained, who has fixed the great world as a centre in space, who has spread out the heavens and solidified the earth.⁸

Cyril of Jerusalem: The earth, which bears the same proportion to the heaven as the center to the whole circumference of a wheel, for the earth is no more than this in comparison with the heaven: consider then that this first heaven which is seen is less than the second, and the second than the third, for so far Scripture has named them..."⁹

Gregory Nazianzus: There have been in the whole period of the duration of the world two conspicuous changes of men's lives, which are also called two Testaments, (a) or, on account of the wide fame of the matter, two Earthquakes; the one from idols to the Law, the other from the Law to the Gospel. And we are taught in the Gospel of a third earthquake, namely, from this Earth to that which cannot be shaken or moved.¹⁰

Gregory of Nyssa: "This is the book of the generation of heaven and earth," saith the Scripture, when all that is seen was finished, and each of the things that are betook itself to its own separate place, when the body of heaven compassed all things round, and those bodies which are heavy and of downward tendency, the earth and the water, holding each other in, took the middle place of the universe; ... for neither is the earth shifted from its own base, nor does the heaven ever relax in its vehemence, or slacken its motion.¹¹

Gregory of Nyssa: And how does earth below form the foundation of the whole, and what is it that keeps it firmly in its place? What is it that controls its downward tendency? If anyone should interrogate us on these and such-like points, will any of us be found so presumptuous as to promise an explanation of them? No! the only reply that can be given by men of sense is this: that He Who made all things in wisdom can alone furnish an account of His creation. For ourselves, "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God," as saith the Apostle.¹²

Gregory of Nyssa: "...the vault of heaven prolongs itself so uninterruptedly that it encircles all things with itself, and that the earth and its surroundings are poised in the middle, and that the motion of all the revolving bodies is round this fixed and solid center..."¹³

⁸ *Homily II, Ch XLV.*

⁹ *Catechetical Lectures, VI, 3.*

¹⁰ *Orations, 5, xxv.*

¹¹ *On the Making of Man, 30, 1, 1.*

¹² *Answer to Eunomius' Second Book.*

¹³ *On the Soul and Resurrection.*

So, Mr. Palm, tell us one place where either the Fathers or Scripture demotes the Earth because of its central or non-moving position. Rest assured, we are not looking for an exaltation of the Sun but of a specific demotion of the Earth. Where are they, Mr. Palm?

Suffice it to say, there aren't any, not a one. So now we see why Mr. Palm went to the Protestants and the pagans for his information.

Palm: What is more, this whole matter can actually be flipped on its head. For example, as physicist Arnold Sikkema writes:

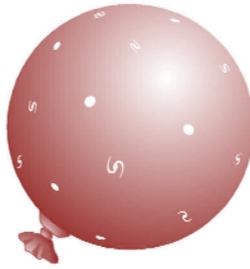
modern astronomy suggests that not only is the earth not at the center, but that there is no center, much like how there is no location on the surface of the earth which could rightfully claim such an honour; I consider this to be a superb poetical analogy of how once Jews claimed they had to worship in Jerusalem, but now God's people worship anywhere in spirit and truth (see John 4:20-24). (<http://reformedacademic.blogspot.com/2009/06/against-scientific-geocentrism.html>)

R. Sungenis: If you ever want to see a misplaced analogy and biased science, this paragraph by Sikkema is it. Of course, since Palm has no knowledge of cosmology, he isn't able to vet Sikkema's assertions nor able to provide the other side of the story. The truth is, the balloon universe that Sikkema alludes to was created by Edwin Hubble in 1929 to – guess what? – remove the Earth from the center of the universe that Hubble saw in his telescope when he observed all the galaxies with redshift. This is why Hubble says in his 1937 book, *The Observational Approach to Cosmology*:

“Such a condition would imply that we occupy a unique position in the universe, analogous, in a sense, to the ancient conception of a central earth. The hypothesis cannot be disproved but it is unwelcome and would be accepted only as a last resort in order to save the phenomena. Therefore, we disregard this possibility and consider the alternative, namely, a distribution which thins out with distance....The unwelcome supposition of a favored location must be avoided at all costs.”¹⁴

So, to keep Earth out of the center, Hubble had to come up with another explanation. The only way to do so, Hubble reasoned, was to eliminate a center altogether and put every galaxy, including the Milky Way in which the Earth resided, on the surface of a balloon-shaped universe that had no center. By analogy, if Hubble could make the universe into a balloon instead of a solid spherical ball, then the universe would have no center, only a surface. This could be accomplished, at least on paper, if they allowed themselves to dispense with Euclidean geometry and employ Riemann geometry, which deals in curves and two dimensions rather than straight lines and three dimensions.

¹⁴ *The Observational Approach to Cosmology*, 1937, pp. 50, 51.



In Hubble's new universe, the galaxies would be expanding away from each other as if they were dots on the surface of a balloon that was being inflated. Hubble explains how this universe would work and why he chose it on page 54 of his book:

...all observers, regardless of their location, will see the same general picture of the universe...if we see the nebulae all receding from our position in space, then every other observer, no matter where he may be located, will see the nebulae all receding from his position. However, the assumption is adopted. There must be no favored location in the universe, no center, no boundary; all must see the universe alike. And, in order to ensure this situation, the cosmologist postulates spatial isotropy and spatial homogeneity, which is his way of stating that the universe must be pretty much alike everywhere and in all directions.¹⁵

If David Palm had only been honest enough to reveal how Sikkema came to believe "that there is no centre, much like how there is no location on the surface of the earth which could rightfully claim such an honour," instead of hiding it from the audience (since Palm has been told the story of Edwin Hubble many times), he could have saved himself the embarrassment.

Palm: And not only is the center theologically an unfavorable location in pre-Copernican thought, as Fr. McMullin points out, but throughout divine revelation we see that God regularly chooses the lowly to shame the great, the insignificant to rise above the mighty, the weak to triumph over the strong. The heavens proclaim the glory of God, not the significance of man (see "[The Heavens Show Forth the Significance of Man?](#)"). Indeed, was Jesus Christ born in a place of great prominence like Rome? No! He was born in the humble village of Bethlehem in the relatively insignificant country of Israel. And he was not even raised in the most important city in Israel, Jerusalem, but rather, in the backwater town of Nazareth, about which His contemporary asked condescendingly, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46).

R. Sungenis: So we see what happens when one gets the basic premise wrong. He then begins to support it with misplaced analogies. Considering his utter obsession against anything geocentric, the real question here is: Can anything good come out of David Palm?

Palm: Given the humble realities of our Lord's own life, it's clear that there is no theological reason why mankind itself should not exist in a kind of cosmological backwater.

¹⁵ *The Observational Approach to Cosmology*, 1937, p. 54.

R. Sungenis: That is precisely where David Palm lives and thinks – in a cosmological backwater. This is the result of his twisting and misrepresenting the evidence, as we have plainly seen in this paper.

Palm: That is essentially exactly what the Christian ancients and medievals believed: mankind lives in the very “sump” of the universe and only after salvation history has run its course will be elevated to heavenly glory. Modern cosmological views that don’t place earth in the physical center of the universe don’t change that one iota.

R. Sungenis: Except for the fact that Mr. Palm didn’t give us evidence of even one Christian who believed that the Earth was the anus or “sump” of the universe. He also never mentioned that Scripture holds Earth as the place where God reigns over man (Psalm 46) and is his unmovable footstool (Isaiah 66:1). He never mentioned that Scripture holds the Earth’s immobility as the perfect analogy to God’s immutability (Psalm 93, 96, 75). The only thing Palm did was quote Aristotle, C. S. Lewis and a few other Protestant authors, but who also gave us no examples of either Scripture, Catholic Church Fathers, or medievals who said the Earth was a anus.

Conclusion: David Palm is a poor scholar and simply cannot be trusted to provide you with the truth.

Palm: Again, the careful reader will note that Sungenis, DeLano and company never actually cite any specific, authoritative sources in support of their assertion of this supposed significance of the physical centrality of the earth. Where are the official Church documents that insist the earth must be the physical center of the universe, else we are no longer “significant”? Where are the Fathers and Doctors of the Church who argue, as the new geocentrists do, that the Earth must be the physical center of the universe because it’s the most significant thing in God’s creation? The answer is simple: They don’t exist.

R. Sungenis: First, notice Palm appealing to “the Fathers and Doctors of the Church” when he thinks it is to his advantage, yet it was these very Fathers and Doctors from whom he failed to give us any quotes that said the Earth is an anus or a “sump.” The double-standard is alive and well.

Second, notice how Palm tries to shift the argument to “Where are the official Church documents that insist the earth must be the physical center of the universe” when that was never either our argument or the Church’s argument. Our argument, and the 1616 and 1633 Church’s argument, was that the Earth did not move, not that it was at the center. If the argument focuses on whether the Earth moved or not, there are plenty of references in the ecclesiastical records that show only Earth, among all the celestial bodies, has the unique status of non-motion. As for the “significance” of a non-moving Earth, the Church referenced the same passages I referenced regarding the Earth being the footstool of God; the place of his reign; and the perfect analogy for His immutability. Never did the Church regard the Earth as an anus or sump.

Palm: There is also a simple reason that the new geocentrists haven't found a single pope or Catholic bishop who supports their enterprise. And it's not because these popes and bishops don't know their faith, or because they're cowards, or because some grand conspiracy has hidden the True Faith according to the gospel of geocentrism from their eyes. The reason for their failure to find support from the Catholic hierarchy is simply because there is no official Catholic teaching supporting a "Catholic, incarnational cosmos" that necessitates the earth being at the physical center of the universe.

R. Sungenis: This is just another strawman. The idea that it is proper to have Earth in the center because it would be the preeminent location for the Son of God to be born has never been either a major theological argument or a scientific argument for geocentrism. It is an ancillary argument because it follows logically from the fact that the Earth is motionless in the center of the universe. But Palm wants to make it a main argument so that he can beat it up.

As for Catholic bishops and popes, they have not (so far), embraced geocentrism for the simple reason that they have been relentlessly bombarded by the secular media to accept only the popular ideas of modern science and never question the status quo. The Pontifical Academy of Science is a good example. Of its 100 members, it will not allow any creation scientists into its ranks, and it would probably laugh at the idea of allowing a geocentrist to enter. Why do you think Pope Francis has totally accepted Evolution? Simply because he has no one giving him the other side of the story.

Palm: When we [look behind the geocentric curtain](#), we discover yet another smoke and mirror show. The fact is that geocentric "theology of centrality" marketed by Rick DeLano is alien to the Catholic faith. And so, once again, the Catholic reader is faced with a familiar choice: follow the Catholic Church or follow the new geocentrists.

R. Sungenis: David Palm is very good at propping up strawman arguments. He desperately wants to make this a contest between the geocentrists and the Catholic Church. Why? Because he wants to you to dismiss the fact that it was the Catholic Church who believed in geocentrism and upheld it as a doctrine of both Scripture and Tradition for two millennia.

The real contest, I'm sorry to say, is between the traditional Catholic Church and the modern Catholic Church.

Or better yet, the real contest is between the official Catholic Church and the non-official Catholic Church, for the popular belief in Evolution, Relativity and Copernicanism among modern Catholics has never been officially taught as either truth or doctrine. The only thing the modern Catholic Church has is popular sentiment.

The official Catholic Church is composed of the Church Fathers in consensus (which all believed in geocentrism) and any official statement made by the Church's bishops in support of that consensus (which we find in many places in Church history, especially in the condemnation of Galileo and heliocentrism in 1616 and 1633).

The only possible reprieve Mr. Palm has is that in 1820 an imprimatur was given to a Catholic who wrote a book supporting heliocentrism, and Galileo's name was taken off the Index in

1835. These were the ONLY times the Church has ever officially spoken on the Galileo issue after 1633.

The sad fact is, however, just as there are many bad cardinals and bishops today that we hear about so often in the news, so there were bad bishops and cardinals when the 1820 imprimatur was issued – a fact which David Palm refuses to acknowledge.

Cardinal Olivieri and Father Anfossi were in a bitter battle about the 1820 imprimatur. Father Anfossi, as Master of the Sacred Palace, had the authority to refuse an imprimatur for any book, and he refused the imprimatur for Canon Settele's book on the basis that it went against the 1616 and 1633 decrees against Galileo and heliocentrism. Cardinal Olivieri, a liberal of that day, decided to go around Father Anfossi and went directly to Pius VII. Pius VII was very ill at that time besides having a weak personality, in addition to that fact that he had only recently been returned to the Vatican after having been incarcerated by Napoleon in Florence. In the midst of this weakness, Olivieri told Pius VII a pack of lies to persuade him to override Anfossi. Olivieri told Pius VII that the only reason the 1616 and 1633 Church condemned Galileo and heliocentrism was because: (a) Galileo didn't use Kepler's elliptical orbits for the planets, but kept them in perfect circles, and (b) that if the Earth moved, then the atmosphere would be blown away. These were bald-faced lies, since neither the 1600 nor 1633 Church ever mentioned such criteria, much less used them to condemn Galileo or heliocentrism.

The records from 1616 and 1633 (which Pius VII did not possess and thus could not consult in 1820 since Napoleon had confiscated all the Galileo records in 1809 and took them back to Paris, and were not returned to the Vatican until 1845) are very clear that Galileo was condemned for saying that the Earth went around the Sun instead of the Sun going around the Earth. It didn't matter whether Galileo said the Earth revolved in perfect circles or perfect triangles. The fact that Galileo said that the Earth moved around the Sun was sufficient to receive his condemnation.

I'm not the only one to discover and condemn the chicanery of Cardinal Olivieri:

...Father Grandi. Working in agreement with Olivieri and basing himself on his argumentation, he had tried to realize the objective of saving the good name of the Holy See, substantially by emphasizing the fact that the Copernican system, by then recognized even by Catholic authors, had been purified from errors and inconsistencies which made it unacceptable in its original form. This was equivalent to maintaining that the Church had not erred in 1616 by putting on the Index a work at that time so defective at the level of physics and that now the Church was legitimately authorized to approve it after its errors were corrected. And it was, as a matter of fact, this which 'was suggested' to poor Settele to make skillfully known in his work... That is, the Church had been right in condemning the latter from a scientific point of view, because Galileo had also upheld heliocentrism in its unsatisfactory Copernican form...¹⁶

¹⁶ Finocchiaro, *Retrying Galileo*, p. 520.

So now we know why there is a division between the traditional Catholic Church and the modern Catholic Church. The traditional Church made the official statements against Galileo, but someone in 1820 lied to make it appear as if the official status of Galileo had changed so that the modern Church could rub shoulders (at least unofficially) with modern science. And that is where we are today.

So your choice is not between “the new geocentrist and the Catholic Church,” but between the official statements made against heliocentrism and Galileo by the traditional Catholic Church, or the ecclesiastical chicanery and unofficial opinions of the modern Catholic Church.

Robert Sungenis

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