A Catholic Traditionalist Struggles with Geocentrism

R. Sungenis: A man who calls himself “Anthony” of the “Hubby and Homemaker” blog site posted a lengthy criticism of geocentrism at:

http://sweetheartsseekingsanctity.blogspot.com/2014/05/geocentrism-dangerous-pseudoscience.html

Unfortunately, Anthony does not give his last name so I don’t know who he is or his credentials. Nevertheless, as I read Anthony’s essay, he is the perfect example of a Catholic today who believes he knows what the truth is and wants to vigorously defend it, but in the end is thoroughly misinformed due to the falsehoods and misconceptions that are daily circulated in modern academia about cosmology, and specifically about geocentrism. In most cases, Anthony fulfills the saying, “damnant quod non intelligent.” It is my hope that Anthony will revisit his arguments after reading my rebuttal and garner a whole new perspective on the issue. Hence, I have taken the time to answer Anthony’s arguments, point-by-point.

Anthony: Geocentrism: A Dangerous Pseudoscience: Anthony here again. It’s not easy to be Catholic today, especially a Catholic of the "traditional" persuasion. As possibly the world’s most despised minority, we often find ourselves standing in opposition to what is accepted in areas ranging from religion to ethics to history. With all that we stand against, it is sometimes difficult to know where to draw the line, to stop categorically refusing to hear anything that comes from the modern world and to begin to understand that certain things held by modern experts in their fields are actually true. It is possible to reject and question too much. Doing so can be harmful to the Faith, as it gives rise to odd beliefs which turn traditional Catholicism into something that resembles a cult rather than the eternal Church. Geocentrism, the belief that the earth is at the exact center of the universe and the sun revolves around it, is one such odd and dangerous belief.

R. Sungenis: Modern Geocentrism does not teach that the Earth is at the exact center of the universe, although it does teach that the sun revolves around the Earth. For traditional Catholics (which “Anthony” says he is), the matter was already officially decided by the Church in 1616 and 1633 when it condemned heliocentrism as “formally heretical” and Galileo as “vehemently suspect” of that formal heresy. The Church has never rescinded those decrees, so they still stand as the last official statement the Church has made on the issue of Galileo and heliocentrism. The only possible contingency was an imprimatur issued to a Canon Settele in 1820 for his book on astronomy, but as we shall see later, the imprimatur was the product of a campaign of lies orchestrated by a Cardinal Olivieri.

Anthony: And it just keeps popping up, usually among sedevecantists but also among people who should be smarter than that.
**R. Sungenis:** As we move on in this critique of Anthony’s views, we will see who the “smarter” people turn out to be 😊

**Anthony:** Recently a group of geocentrists created a movie, The Principle, which has been making waves because they apparently duped the famous atheist Lawrence Krauss into being interviewed for it.

**R. Sungenis:** Perhaps Anthony is unaware, but Krauss eventually admitted that he did the interview (after he said he did not do the interview a few months prior), and that he signed a release form which stated that the movie was about the Copernican Principle and that it would examine alternative views to cosmology. Krauss was caught not being in command of the facts, but now that story is over.

**Anthony:** As funny as I find it that Krauss would unwittingly lend his likeness and voice to something so opposed to what he stands for, I am frustrated at the press this stunt is generating, for instance in this Popular Science article. Because every time these guys get on their soapbox they link geocentrism to Catholicism, particularly traditional Catholicism. And it makes us look crazy.

**R. Sungenis:** Could this perhaps be Anthony’s motivation – the desire not to be looked at with derision by the world?

**Anthony:** Probably the most famous proponent of geocentrism is Robert Sungenis, who advertises himself as a “noted Catholic apologist.” He wrote a two-volume book called Galileo was Wrong: The Church was Right in which he claims that geocentrism is Catholic teaching and is scientifically supportable.

**R. Sungenis:** Others have referred to me as a “noted Catholic apologist.”

**Anthony:** In fact, geocentrism is neither good science, nor is it supported by scriptural exegesis or patristics, nor is it Catholic doctrine. Rather, it is a dated scientific theory which no longer fits the appearances and which has no direct bearing upon Catholicism. I obtained a copy of Sungenis’ book. And I’m going to debunk it in this post.

**R. Sungenis:** All I can say to Anthony at this point is that he isn’t the first to come with the same “I’m going to blow your house down” approach, only to end up with their tails between their legs.

**Anthony:** Geocentrism is linked so closely to Catholicism because of a single historical event: the Galileo Affair. In 1632 Galileo published his Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems, which set forth a Copernican, or heliocentric, model of the cosmos, prompting a dispute with the Inquisition that resulted in Galileo being placed under house arrest and the condemnation of the Copernican system as “formally heretical.” This gives strong support indeed to the belief that geocentrism is a matter of Catholic doctrine, all the more so since the Galileo Affair has become a propaganda tool for anyone who wishes to attack religious faith and claim that it is in opposition to science. It is understandable that Robert Sungenis and his followers wish to exonerate the Church by claiming that the Inquisition was right all along and geocentrism is true. Unfortunately, this approach
backfires. The thesis of the modernist focus on Galileo is that the Church is an enemy of science. We should keep in mind that when modernists scoff at the Church's association with geocentrism they are really scoffing at the Church's worldview, its entire outlook, upholding the Inquisition's adherence to geocentrism as an example of the Church's incompatibility with science while ignoring the contributions to science (indeed, the very establishment of science) played by Catholic Scholastics in medieval times. In a lecture on medieval science, Dr. Michael Tkacz stated that the modernists' “ultimate target . . . [is] not simply the geocentric planetary system of the medieval Ptolemaists . . . but the unified metaphysical system, with its religious foundations, that underlay pre-modern science.”¹ The Inquisition’s mistake gave the modernists an ideal opening through which to accuse the Church of impeding science, an opening that is now the first line of attack whenever faith and science appear to conflict. It has become what Dr. William Carroll calls the “Galileo Legend,” the idea that Galileo faced the risk of torture and death by the anti-scientific Church for championing science over superstition. The Galileo Legend is precisely that: a legend, with very little historical accuracy. One example will serve to illustrate the ubiquity and disregard for history of the Legend: Senator Arlen Specter, criticizing those who condemned stem cell research on human embryos for religious reasons, stated, “Ideology has no place when it comes to medical science . . . Galileo was imprisoned because he followed Copernicus who said that the world was not flat [emphasis added].”² Senator Spector is showing his ignorance of history by associating Galileo with a mythical debate about the shape of the earth, but even so he is following the accepted tactic, using the Galileo Affair as an ideological tool in debate.

**R. Sungenis:** And why shouldn’t he? If the Church was wrong about Galileo after having put the full weight of her magisterium behind the condemnation of heliocentrism and Galileo – the very Church which claimed that the Holy Spirit would lead her into all truth – and in the process stated that the Galileo issue was a matter of faith because it directly determined the inerrancy of Scripture, why should we trust that Church to determine any other issue?

**Anthony:** If one looks at the Affair in its historical context, one sees that the Inquisition’s attack on Galileo was not an attack on science. That the Inquisition was not trying to trump science with unyielding scriptural interpretation is evidenced by the fact that Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, head of the Inquisition, told Galileo that the scriptural interpretation that supported geocentrism would have to change if proof of heliocentrism were found.

**R. Sungenis:** Anthony is creating his own legends. Yes, Bellarmine said he would interpret Scripture differently if science could prove heliocentrism. Augustine said the same about science and Scripture, so nothing has changed. But the fact is, Bellarmine and Pope Paul V condemned heliocentrism as heretical. How could they do so if they thought that someday science would prove heliocentrism? If Anthony would take the time to actually read the literature from esteemed Galileo historians, he would find that the consensus among them is that Bellarmine was merely being his polite self to Galileo, but underneath it all Bellarmine was resolute that heliocentrism was wrong scientifically and biblically. Why? Because Bellarmine was very familiar with the principle of relativity. Relativity says that whatever can be presented as heliocentric can also be presented as geocentric.
That is why today no proof of heliocentrism has been forthcoming from modern science, and never will be.

**Anthony:** This also tells us that the matter is not one of faith. Dr. William Carroll points out: “If Cardinal Bellarmino had thought that the immobility of the Earth were a matter of faith, he could not admit, as he did, the possibility of a demonstration to the contrary.”

**R. Sungenis:** This shows that neither Dr. Carroll nor Anthony know the history, since Bellarmine made it crystal clear both to Fr. Foscarini (whose book on heliocentrism was condemned in 1615) and Galileo, that geocentrism was a matter of faith, *ex parte decentis*. That is, it was a matter of faith because our knowledge that the Earth did not move and was circled by the sun and stars on a daily basis was recorded in Scripture as a historical fact. As Bellarmine put it to Foscarini, it was just as condemnable to say the Earth moved as it was to say that Jesus was not born of a Virgin. These facts and their sources are clearly stated in my book, so either Anthony hasn’t read them or he is ignoring them.

**Anthony:** Unfortunately, Galileo had no proof. He thought he could find proof of the earth’s motion in the tides, but we now know that the tides are caused by the moon’s gravitational pull and not by the spinning of the earth. And yet he had no proof that it moves. Galileo’s insistence on heliocentrism, despite his lack of proof, seemed to the Inquisition to be an attack upon scriptures (which had traditionally been interpreted in a geocentric fashion) at a time, not long after the Protestant revolt, when the question of scriptural interpretation, and who had the authority for scriptural interpretation, was very important.

**R. Sungenis:** I marvel at how Anthony glibly tells us that geocentrism had “traditionally been interpreted in a geocentric fashion” as if that fact were just some minor blip on the radar screen that we don’t need to consider. What Anthony leaves out is that the tradition of geocentrism is from none other than the Ordinary Magisterium of the Church that was formed by the absolute consensus of the Church Fathers, which consensus Cardinal Bellarmine used against Galileo due to the fact that the Council of Trent in 1563 stated that any doctrine that the Fathers held in consensus must be regarded as a necessary belief of the Church.

**Anthony:** It is therefore understandable, though regrettable, that the Inquisition acted as it did.

**R. Sungenis:** So now we see the key to Anthony’s “Galileo apologetic,” and it is nothing new. Anthony starts from the premise that modern science has proven heliocentrism, and apparently, Anthony believes modern science is infallible in that regard. He then takes that premise and determines that the Inquisition made a mistake in holding that Scripture teaches geocentrism and they also placed too much emphasis on the fact that the Church Fathers were in consensus on geocentrism. Note what is happening. Anthony has become the arbiter to tell us which of the two competing entities is the winner. Essentially, Anthony has become a Pope in his own right (or rite) and he will settle the issue for us. As such, he overrides the decisions of both Pope Paul V (1616) and Pope Urban VIII (1633) and he gives himself the ultimate authority to conclude that the Inquisition didn’t have a clue what it was doing. According to Anthony, the Inquisition was merely being too
sensitive about Scripture interpretation since it had already gone through a terrible time with “the Protestant revolt.” In essence, Anthony’s argument is that the Inquisition just over-reacted to Galileo. But this is just another of Anthony’s “legends” that he simply has no proof for.

**Anthony:** The answer to the Galileo Legend is not to defend the mistaken system which the Inquisition, for lack of proper data, defended, but to place the Galileo Affair in its historical context and dispel the oversimplifications and mythical additions to the tale.

**R. Sungenis:** So, to prop up his own legend, Anthony will accuse the Inquisition of “myths” and “oversimplifications.”

**Anthony:** There is no space in this article to go into the Galileo Affair in depth, but interested readers can find a wealth of information by reading the works of Dr. William Carroll, a professor of theology at Blackfriars College, Oxford and an expert in the Galileo Affair,

**R. Sungenis:** With all due respect to Dr. Carroll, since he didn’t know that Bellarmine told Galileo that geocentrism was a matter of faith ex parte decentis, then this discredits much of what he wrote on the subject. Dr. Carroll, like many Catholic historians who are not up to speed on the science, believed that modern academia has proven heliocentrism, and it is from that unalterable premise that they begin and end their Galileo apologetic.

**Anthony:** or by reading Jason Winschel’s article “Galileo: Victim or Villain?” in the October 2003 issue of The Angelus,

**R. Sungenis:** Notice Anthony does not direct you to the rebuttal that I wrote of Winschel’s article, or the fact that when the Angelus was asked, twice, to publish the rebuttal it refused. To level the playing field, I have included my rebuttal to Winshel toward the end of this rebuttal to Anthony.

**Anthony:** or by checking out Michael Flynn’s epic The Great Ptolemaic Smackdown. The conclusion to such examinations of the Affair is that the Inquisition made a well-intentioned but unfortunate mistake (which they could have avoided by better studying their Aquinas, but we’ll get into that in a bit).

**R. Sungenis:** Flynn’s work makes the same mistakes that both Carroll and Winshel make. But notice that both Flynn and Anthony have not the slightest embarrassment in turning the Inquisition into an inept institution that was not only wrong about Galileo, but was even wrong in thinking that it had the authority to judge the Galileo issue. Interestingly enough, it was Anthony who earlier claimed that “every time these guys get on their soapbox they link geocentrism to Catholicism, particularly traditional Catholicism. And it makes us look crazy.” Yet it was precisely the Inquisition, not to mention two faithful popes and their college of cardinals, who “linked geocentrism to Catholicism.” In other words, Anthony is embarrassed that the Church of the 1600s condemned Galileo, and to defend them would make Anthony “look crazy.”

**Anthony:** Ironically, Robert Sungenis and his followers accept almost the same interpretation of the Galileo Affair that the modernists do, but they approach it from the other side, saying the Inquisition
was right to condemn Galileo. The very title of Sungenis’ two volume work on geocentrism demonstrates his approach to the subject. Indeed, Sungenis claims that examining the Galileo Affair with the prior belief that the Inquisition was right about geocentrism gave him a whole new approach to the subject, and he was able to find truths that had eluded those who had studied the Affair from the viewpoint that the Inquisition had erred.

R. Sungenis: This is the first thing that Anthony has gotten correct.

Anthony: (Interestingly, Sungenis criticizes the 1981 commission set up by John Paul II to study the Galileo Affair for starting their studies with a prior belief in heliocentrism 4 — apparently Mr. Sungenis thinks bias is acceptable as long as it is his own.)

R. Sungenis: So, Anthony is trying to convince us that without any official statement from the Catholic Church that the 1616 and 1633 decrees against heliocentrism and Galileo were incorrect, there was absolutely no conflict of interest in a commission set up to study the Galileo affair that had already judged the 1616 and 1633 Church as being in error over Galileo. Right.

Anthony: In his book, Sungenis tries first to show that geocentrism is scientifically sound, and then to show that it is official Church teaching and tantamount to Catholic doctrine. We will examine both claims and show them to be false. The “Science” of Geocentrism. Because of its nature as springing from scriptural misinterpretation rather than scientific data, geocentric “science” exhibits the convoluted, overly-complex nature of a pseudo-science, in which data is made to fit the system instead of the opposite.

R. Sungenis: Notice that Anthony has no qualms accusing the Church of 1616-1633 and all exegesis of Scripture for the prior sixteen centuries of being a “misinterpretation.” Yet Anthony claims to be a “traditional Catholic” who should believe that the Holy Spirit guides the Church into all truth. Apparently, Anthony has an exception to John 16:14 when it comes to the Church’s belief in geocentrism. Why? Because modern heliocentric science is Anthony’s infallible authority. It is as simple as that.

Anthony: Phenomena that heliocentrism explains simply and easily require dozens of pages in Sungenis’ work, and are still not explained to any satisfaction.

R. Sungenis: Looks like the “damned if you do; damned if you don’t” game. If I had written just a few pages, Anthony would complain that the material was merely cursory. Anthony is also working on the myth that geocentrism is “complicated.” It isn’t. The problem, as we will see, is that Anthony doesn’t understand geocentrism and thus is creating another “legend” in his own mind.

Anthony: Essentially, heliocentrism explains the movement in the heavens with the simple law that a larger object exerts a gravitational force upon a smaller object (hence the earth and other planets being held in gravitational orbit around the sun). Geocentrism requires the earth to be held in place at the center of the universe by the rotation of the entire universe, which is transmitted through a super-dense, ultra-granular, yet somehow also frictionless and invisible fluid called the “ether.”
**R. Sungenis:** Let me see if I can help Anthony. First, geocentrism doesn’t deny that smaller bodies revolve around larger bodies. That’s why geocentrism accepts that the moon revolves around the Earth and Io revolves around Jupiter. Second, geocentrism does not say that the universe revolves around the Earth because it is “transmitted through a super-dense, ultra-granular, yet somehow also frictionless and invisible fluid called the ether,” whatever that means. Geocentrism says that, whether one uses Newtonian, Machian or Einsteinian physics, a universe that rotates around a fixed Earth is just as scientifically viable as a rotating Earth in a fixed universe. In Newtonian physics, the Earth would be the center of mass for the universe, and as such there would be no torque on it. The “ether” only becomes part of the discussion when it is necessary to understand the constitution of space, as well as answer the numerous experiments from the 1800 and 1900 that found evidence of such a substance. I will deal with that issue later in this rebuttal.

For the record, allow me to show where these three physics models have endorsed geocentrism:

1. **Newtonian physics:** “That the center of the system of the world is immovable: this is acknowledged by all, although some contend that the Earth, others that the sun, is fixed in that center.”

2. **Machian physics:** “Obviously it matters little if we think of the Earth as turning about on its axis, or if we view it at rest while the fixed stars revolve around it. Geometrically these are exactly the same case of a relative rotation of the Earth and the fixed stars with respect to one another.”

“All masses, all velocities, thus all forces are relative. There is no basis for us to decide between relative and absolute motion….If there are still modern authors who, through the Newtonian water bucket arguments, allow themselves to be misled into differentiating between relative and absolute motion, they fail to take into account that the world system has been given to us only once, but the Ptolemaic and Copernican views are only our interpretations, but both equally true.”

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1. Isaac Newton, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, Book 3: The System of the World, Proposition X, Hypothesis I. The Latin original is: Centrum systematis mundae quiescere. Hoc ab omnibus consensum est, dum aliqui terram, alii solem in centro systematis quiescere contendunt. Videamus quid inde sequatur.” In Proposition XI, Theorema XI, Newton adds: “That the common center of gravity of the Earth, the sun, and all the planets, is immovable. For that center either is at rest or moves uniformly forwards in a right line; but if that center moved, the center of the world would move also, against the Hypothesis.” Original Latin is: Commune centrum gravitates terrae, solis & planetarum omnium quiescere. Nam centrum illud (per legum corol. iv) vel quiescent vel progredietur uniformiter in directum. Sed centro illo semper progrediente centrum mundi quoque movebitur contra hypothesin.


3. **Einsteinian physics:** “The struggle, so violent in the early days of science, between the views of Ptolemy and Copernicus would then be quite meaningless. Either coordinate system could be used with equal justification. The two sentences: the sun is at rest and the Earth moves, or the sun moves and the Earth is at rest, would simply mean two different conventions concerning two different coordinate systems.”

“We need not necessarily trace the existence of these centrifugal forces back to an absolute movement of K' [Earth]; we can instead just as well trace them back to the rotational movement of the distant ponderable masses [stars] in relation to K' whereby we treat K' as ‘at rest.’…On the other hand, the following important argument speaks for the relativistic perspective. The centrifugal force that works on a body under given conditions is determined by precisely the same natural constants as the action of a gravitational field on the same body (i.e., its mass), in such a way that we have no means to differentiate a ‘centrifugal field’ from a gravitational field….This quite substantiates the view that we may regard the rotating system K' as at rest and the centrifugal field as a gravitational field….The kinematic equivalence of two coordinate systems, namely, is not restricted to the case in which the two systems, K [the universe] and K' [the Earth] are in uniform relative translational motion. The equivalence exists just as well from the kinematic standpoint when for example the two systems rotate relative to one another.”

If Anthony knows of any other physics he would like to use to discredit the above endorsements of geocentrism from mainstream science, I would definitely like to see them, and then I will recommend Anthony for the Nobel Prize.

**Anthony:** Furthermore, while the universe is centered on the earth, the stars are centered on the sun (in order to explain stellar parallax), while the sun itself moves up and down in its orbit around the earth (in order to explain the seasons), and so on. At some point we must invoke Occam’s razor: all else being equal, the simplest explanation is probably correct.

**R. Sungenis:** Again, Anthony is depending on one of his “legends.” He has no proof against geocentric parallax or a sun moving 23.5 degrees each season, but tries to invoke “Occam’s razor” to make it appear that geocentrism is complicated and unworkable. The only thing complicated here is Anthony’s treatment of the subject matter. As we will see, geocentrism is not complicated, at all.

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lassen, zwischen relativer und absoluter Bewegung zu unterscheiden, so bedenken sie nicht, daß das Weltsystem uns nur einmal gegeben, die ptolemäische oder kopernikanische Auffassung aber unsere Interpretationen, aber beide gleich wirklich sind” (Translated by Mario Derksen). NB: Although Mach forbids Copernican science from making any distinctions, he cannot forbid the same to geocentric science, for it is upon divine revelation that the distinction is made, that is, the Earth is motionless and is our absolute rest frame.


Anthony: Sungenis calls the invocation of Occam’s razor on the side of heliocentrism “pretentious” and says that geocentrism is no more complex than heliocentrism, and he attempts to support this assertion with a quote by Imre Lakatos comparing the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems 5 — both of which are no longer used. Copernicus’ heliocentric system was been refined by Kepler, and Ptolemy’s geocentric system was completely tossed out in favor of a modified version of Tycho Brahe’s geocentrism. Sungenis then claims that both heliocentrism and geocentrism are complex, and “no cosmological system should base its appeal on the simplicity of the system, for in the case of celestial motion, modern science has found that if the solution is too simple it is probably wrong, for it means that it isn’t taking everything into account.” 6 Thus Sungenis first claims that heliocentrism is more complex than geocentrism, and then adroitly flips the tables and tries to claim complexity as a virtue! Nevertheless, the fact remains the heliocentrism easily and naturally explains phenomena that geocentrism struggles to explain, as we will see in detail in a bit. But even beyond the complexity issue, geocentrism has inherent contradictions which rule it out as a viable cosmological system.

R. Sungenis: I can tell that Anthony has no idea how complex the movements of the planets are, and that he has no idea that Kepler’s system has not found the solution to it. There are about a dozen different motions a planet makes in its orbit. It’s not a matter of simply deciding whether the planet moves in a circle or an ellipse. Hence, I’m saying two things to Anthony: (1) don’t play the pretentious game of Occam’s razor, since it simply doesn’t prove anything one way or the other, and (2) geocentrism is not any more complex than heliocentrism. I can tell quite easily that Anthony has never studied planetary movements and doesn’t know the detailed history of it, but is just repeating the same old canards.

Allow me to elaborate by quoting Fred Hoyle:

The planetary orbits are not strictly ellipses, as we have so far taken them to be, because one planet disturbs the order of another through the gravitational force that it exerts....In all cases the orbits are nearly circles....It is curious that although the actual orbits do not differ in shape much from circles the errors of a circular model can nevertheless be quite large. Indeed, errors as large as this were quite unacceptable to Greek astronomers of the stature of Hipparchus and Ptolemy. It was this, rather than prejudice, which caused them to reject the simple heliocentric theory of Aristarchus....The Hipparchus theory grapples with the facts whereas the circular picture of Aristarchus fails to do so....The theory of Ptolemy, a few minor imperfections apart, worked correctly to the first order in explaining the planetary eccentricities. Copernicus with his heliocentric theory had to do at least as well as this, which meant that he had to produce something much better than the simple heliocentric picture of Aristarchus....Kepler achieved improvements, but not complete success, and always at the expense of increasing complexity. Kepler and his successors might well have gone on in this style for generations without arriving at a satisfactory final solution, for a reason we now understand clearly. There is no simple mathematical expression for the way in which the direction of a planet – its heliocentric longitude – changes with time. Even today we must express the longitude as an infinite series of terms
when we use time as the free variable. What Ptolemy, Copernicus, and Kepler, in his early long calculations, were trying to do was to discover by trial and error the terms of this series. Since the terms become more complicated as one goes to higher orders in the eccentricity, the task became successively harder and harder... 6

Professor of celestial mechanics at Columbia University, Charles Lane Poor, says much the same:

From the time of Newton, it has been known that Kepler’s laws are mere approximations, computer’s fictions, handy mathematical devices for finding the approximate place of a planet in the heavens. They apply with greater accuracy to some planets than to others. Jupiter and Saturn show the greatest deviations from strictly elliptical motion. The latter body is often nearly a degree away from the place it would have been had its motion about the sun been strictly in accord with Kepler’s laws. This is such a large discrepancy that it can be detected by the unaided eye. The moon is approximately half a degree in diameter, so that the discrepancy in the motion of Saturn is about twice the apparent diameter of the moon. In a single year, during the course of one revolution about the sun, the Earth may depart from the theoretical ellipse by an amount sufficient to appreciably change the apparent place of the sun in the heavens.7

Expanding on Hoyle and Poor’s argument, it is clear from the historical record that heliocentric cosmology has been built upon the myth of “simplicity,” or what is often referred to in science disciplines as “Occam’s razor,” that is, “the simplest solution is the best solution.”8 It was the same logic employed in Galileo’s time to promote the heliocentric system, with such clichés as: “natura simplicitatem amat” (nature loves simplicity); “natura semper quod potest per facilita, non agit per ambages difficiles” (nature always decides to go through the easy path; it does not seek difficult paths). But it is all hot air, and thus Anthony’s argument is specious, at best. But let me pile on. As Imre Lakatos admits:

The superior simplicity of the Copernican theory was just as much of a myth as its superior accuracy. The myth of superior simplicity was dispelled by the careful and professional work of modern historians. They reminded us that while Copernican theory solves certain problems in a simpler way than does the Ptolemaic one, the price of the simplification is unexpected complications in the solution of other problems. The Copernican system is certainly simpler since it dispenses with equants and some eccentrics; but each equant and

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6 Fred Hoyle, Nicolaus Copernicus: An Essay on his Life and Work, pp. 73, 8, 9, 53, 11-12, 13-14, in the order of ellipses.
7 Charles Lane Poor, Gravitation versus Relativity, p. 129. Owen Gingerich adds: “Naturally astronomy textbooks don’t show it this way, because they can’t make the point about ellipses unless they enormously exaggerate the eccentricity of the ellipse. So for centuries, beginning with Kepler himself, a false impression has been created about the elliptical shape of planetary orbits. The eccentricity of planetary orbits (that is, their off-centeredness) is quite noticeable — even Ptolemy had to cope with that — but the ellipticity (the degree the figure bows in at the sides) is very subtle indeed. Observations of Mars must be accurate to a few minutes of arc for this tiny ellipticity to reveal itself” (The Book that Nobody Read, p. 166).
8 From the writings of William of Occam (1300-1349) who stated: “Essentia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem.”
eccentric removed has to be replaced by new epicycles and epicyclets... he also has to put
the center of the universe not at the Sun, as he originally intended, but at an empty point
fairly near to it... I think it is fair to say that the ‘simplicity balance’ between Ptolemy’s and
Copernicus’ system is roughly even.9

In fact, considering how mathematically complex the motions of the celestial bodies really are (e.g.,
the complex motions of the sun and moon cited earlier; Newton’s “three-body” problem and the
“perturbations” of the planets, all requiring the use of complex differential and integral calculus to
chart their motions), no cosmological system should base its appeal on the simplicity of its system,
for in the case of celestial motion, modern science has actually found that if the solution is too simple
it is probably wrong, for it means that it isn’t taking everything into account.10

Even more revealing is the fact that, as modern science prides itself on having dispensed with
Ptolemy’s epicycles, conceptually speaking they are still very much in use, although they are labeled
with different names in order to conceal their identity. Charles Lane Poor revealed this secret back in
the 1920s:

The deviations from the “ideal” in the elements of a planet’s orbit are called
“perturbations” or “variations” .... In calculating the perturbations, the mathematician is
forced to adopt the old device of Hipparchus, the discredited and discarded epicycle. It is
true that the name, epicycle, is no longer used, and that one may hunt in vain through
astronomical text-books for the slightest hint of the present day use of this device, which in
the popular mind is connected with absurd and fantastic theories. The physicist and the
mathematician now speak of harmonic motion, of Fourier’s series, of the development of a
function into a series of sines and cosines. The name has been changed, but the essentials
of the device remain. And the essential, the fundamental point of the device, under

9 Imre Lakatos, The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes: Philosophical Papers, edited by J. Worrall
myth that the Copernican theory was simple [The Sleepwalkers, p. 476]; in fact, [quoting J. L. E. Dreyer, 1906,
chapter xiii] ‘the motion of the Earth had not done much to simplify the old theories, for though the objectionable
equants had disappeared, the system was still bristling with auxiliary circles’” (ibid., p. 33); “The Copernican
revolution was generally taken to be the paradigm of conventionalist historiography, and it is still so regarded in
many quarters. For instance Polanyi tells us that Copernicus’s ‘simpler picture’ had ‘striking beauty’ and ‘justly
carried great powers of conviction’ [M. Polanyi, The Logic of Liberty, 1951, p. 70]. But modern study of primary
sources, particularly by Kuhn [The Copernican Revolution, 1957], has dispelled this myth and presented a clear-cut
historiographical refutation of the conventionalist account. It is now agreed that the Copernican system was ‘at least
as complex as the Ptolemaic’ [I. Bernard Cohen, The Birth of a New Physics, p. 61]. But if this is so, then, if the
acceptance of Copernican theory was rational, it was not for its superlative objective simplicity” (Lakatos,
Methodology, p. 129).

10 Philosopher of science Mario Bunge has shown how presumptuous and naïve it is to assume that the scientifically
correct solution always turns out to be the least complex (The Myth of Simplicity, 1963). Regarding the three-body
problem, Lagrange offered a partial solution by assuming one of the three bodies had negligible mass. If a small
mass is placed at a Lagrangian Point, it will remain stationary in the rotating system. In 1912, K. F. Sundman
attempted a solution based on a converging infinite series, but it converges much too slowly to be of any practical
use. As it stands, no method has been developed to solve the equations of motion for a system with four or more
bodies.
whatever name it may be concealed, is the representation of an irregular motion as the combination of a number of simple, uniform circular motions.\textsuperscript{11}

In essence, Poor tells us that the introduction of the Fourier series, invented by Jean Baptiste Joseph Fourier (d. 1830),\textsuperscript{12} takes the veil off the Copernican system and re-establishes geocentrism to its rightful place. The Fourier series plainly shows that any cosmological system can be demonstrated within reasonable accuracy simply by introducing the proper number of cyclical modulations (or “circular arguments,” if you will, including, as we will see, the “curved space” of General Relativity). In other words, one can create any mathematical system and then “curve-fit” any deviations or discrepancies back into the system. In the end, Fourier inadvertently exposed the shaky foundations of modern cosmology by showing that there is simply no possibility of being certain about the coordinates of any rotating system, since the math and geometry can be manipulated to fit the observations. In fact, based on Fourier analysis one could design a universe that is constructed from the foundation of a flat Earth (as we see in a two-dimensional map) and make it mathematically indistinguishable from one based on a spherical Earth. Math works wonders, but it doesn’t provide us with the knowledge of how the actual physical system works. As Poor notes:

No more did Hipparchus believe that the bodies of the solar system were actually attached to the radial arms of his epicycles; his was a mere mathematical, or graphical device for representing irregular, complicated motions. While the graphical, or mechanical method is limited to a few terms, the trigonometrical, or analytical method is unlimited. It is possible to pile epicycle upon epicycle, the number being limited only by the patience of the mathematician and computer. The expressions for the disturbing action of one planet upon another, due to the attraction of gravitation, involve an unlimited number of such terms; or, as the mathematician puts it, the series is infinite.\textsuperscript{13}

**Anthony:** As we delve a little deeper into the science of geocentrism, we need first to understand where heliocentrism and geocentrism differ fundamentally. Heliocentrism states that the sun is the center of the solar system. It makes no claims at all about a center to the universe, which, according


\textsuperscript{12} Joseph B. J. Fourier, *Théorie analytique de la chaleur* [The Analytic Theory of Heat], 1822.

\textsuperscript{13} Charles Lane Poor, *Gravitation versus Relativity*, p. 139. In practical terms, Fourier analysis, or harmonic motion, allows one to use as many circles of motion as needed in order to create the path that coincides most accurately with the actual path of the planet. Astronomer George Abell adds another insight: “Quite likely, however, the spheres of Eudoxus and Callippus were intended as a mere mathematical representation of the motions of the planets. It was a scheme that ‘saved the phenomena’ better than ones before it, and in this respect it was successful. The epicycles of Ptolemy, developed later, may similarly be regarded as mathematical representations not intended to describe reality. Modern science does no more. The laws of nature ‘discovered’ by science are merely mathematical or mechanical models that describe how nature behaves, not why, nor what nature ‘actually’ is” (Exploration of the Universe, 1969, p. 16).
to modern cosmology, is a meaningless proposition due to the nature of space time and the laws of 
general relativity. Geocentrism, however, makes the claim that the earth is not only the center of the 
solar system but also the absolute center of the universe, around which everything else revolves. 
This is usually thought of in Ptolemaic terms, with the sun and planets revolving in circular orbits 
around the earth. But Sungenis subscribes to a modified Tychonian system, in which the earth is in 
the center and the sun revolves around it, while the planets and the stars revolve around the sun. 
The earth itself is absolutely stationary, neither orbiting nor rotating.

**R. Sungenis:** Again, I’ve never claimed that the Earth is “the absolute center of the universe.” Since 
Anthony doesn’t know what his opponent holds as true, he’s discrediting his own arguments.

**Anthony:** Not allowed to move! It is not the stars themselves that rotate, according to Sungenis, 
since this would violate the law that nothing can travel faster than light (for the distant stars to 
travel around the earth in twenty four hours they must be going far, far, far faster than light),

**R. Sungenis:** No, I do not state that the stars cannot revolve around the Earth due to a limit on the 
speed of light. I state that the so-called limit on the speed of light is a product of the Special 
Relativity theory, but which is contradicted by the General Relativity theory that allows light and 
material objects to go any speed. I further state that Special Relativity had to have a speed limit for 
light since it was trying to find some way to keep the Earth moving when, in fact, all the experimental 
evidence showed the Earth wasn’t moving. Third, I state that the whole universe revolves around the 
Earth and carries the stars with it. I further state that since General Relativity allows the universe to 
rotate around a fixed Earth, and allows it to do so far exceeding the speed of light, then according to 
modern science, geocentrism is a viable cosmology. But the problem is that Anthony either doesn’t 
know any of these facts of advanced physics or he is purposely avoiding them. As a result, he nit- 
picks through Galileo Was Wrong hoping to make geocentrism look complicated so he can win the 
“Occam’s razor” award without ever knowing how the system really works and what scientific facts 
support it.

**Anthony:** but the universe as a whole, much as modern cosmology posits a universe that expands 
farther than light though nothing in it moves faster than light.

**R. Sungenis:** Notice that Anthony has no problem in accepting the contradiction in modern 
cosmology which says that nothing can travel faster than the speed of light, but then tells us that 
space expands faster than the speed of light. At this point we are supposed to pretend we didn’t 
hear that blatant contradiction.

**Anthony:** Sungenis believes that there exists a mysterious space-filling substance called “ether” 
which transmits the combined gravitational forces of the universe, keeping the universe in rotation 
around, effectively, itself. If the universe rotates it must have a center of mass, a focal point of 
rotation. In this spot Sungenis places the earth, claiming that it is held there, stationary, by the 
gyroscopic effect of the universe’s rotation as transmitted through the ether. This rotation is also 
responsible for the effects on the earth generally held to be a result of its motion: the Coriolis effect, 
the Foucault pendulum, the equatorial bulge, and so on. Sungenis states:
"[T]he rotation of the universe around the earth creates the additional forces we understand as centrifugal, Coriolis, and Euler forces. These gravitational forces are transmitted (i.e., 'action-at-a-distance') through the universal ether, and we see its differing effects in the various forces we experience (e.g., inertial, centrifugal, etc.). Since the ether is dense and supergranular, it can transmit the forces very rapidly."7

A word about "ether." Ether, or aether, is simply a word for a medium, usually used before the actual mechanism and/or medium had been discovered. For instance, there was once thought to be an ether in biology, transmitting sensation. The word is still around, used in a general way to denote a medium or filler. It has been applied, for example, to the cosmic microwave background radiation (which experiments have shown is not rotating, much less exerting a force upon the earth).8

R. Sungenis: Let's give another word about "aether" – geocentrism doesn't need aether to make geocentrism work. All geocentrism needs is either Newtonian, Machian or Einsteinian physics. Apparently, Anthony missed that part of the book and chose, rather, to conflate the issue into one of aether so that he could build his strawman to knock down. Essentially, ether is added into geocentric models in order to answer the questions that neither Newtonian, Machian or Einsteinian physics can answer.

Anthony: The ether Sungenis believes in has its roots in the 19th century idea of a luminiferous ether. Luminiferous ether was supposed to be the propagation medium for light. But the concept of an ether became more and more complex and contradictory in an effort to keep up with new knowledge. For instance, in order to fill all of space it would seem to require the properties of a liquid, yet for light waves to pass cleanly through it would have to be more rigid than steel. The problems came to a peak when, in 1887, the Michelson-Morley experiment measured the motion of the earth in relation to a hypothetical ether by examining the speed of light shot in different directions to see if light traveled more slowly in one direction than another, as it should if it were shined from an earth moving through an ether. The experiment returned a null result. Sungenis often brings up this experiment to justify his belief that the earth does not move. But scientists recognized that the experiment actually meant that there is no ether against which to measure motion. And indeed, if Sungenis is correct a substantial motion should have been detected: the motion of the ether itself swirling around the earth.

R. Sungenis: Nice hatchet job, Anthony. What Anthony doesn't tell you is that the Michelson-Morley experiment actually found ether in space, but since it was only a fraction of what was needed if the Earth were truly revolving around the Sun, they dismissed the fraction as a "null result." But when Michelson tested for a 24-hour rotation in 1925 using the same experimental equipment, he found a 98% presence of ether, not the fraction he found in 1887. How could that be? Well, the 1887 experiment was testing for the revolution of the Earth around the Sun, and it didn't find any revolution. But the 1925 experiment tested for a 24-hour rotation and certainly found it. The geocentrist has no problem explaining the two different results, since its universe rotates around a fixed Earth in 24 hours. But the heliocentrist has a big problem, for he cannot have a rotation without
a revolution, since he must explain the seasons. In other words, the two Michelson experiments discredited heliocentrism. But you won't find that in any of Anthony's reporting.

To verify what I said above, below you will see the results of both the 1887 Michelson-Morley experiment and the 1925 Michelson-Gale experiment. For the 1887 experiment Michelson writes

“The actual displacement was certainly less than the twentieth part of this, and probably less than the fortieth part. But since the displacement is proportional to the square of the velocity, the relative velocity of the Earth and the ether is probably less than one-sixth the Earth’s orbital velocity, and certainly less than one-fourth.”

Notice that it was not a “null” result, but one-sixth of what they expected. The one-sixth is important, since it shows that there is at least some ether present but not in the direction of a revolution of the Earth around the sun.

For the 1925 experiment, here are Michelson’s results taken right from the Astrophysical Journal of April 1925. It states that he found 97.45% of what was expected of ether’s presence if there was a 24-hour rotation:

Twelve years earlier, in 1913, a French scientist by the name of Georges Sagnac did a similar experiment to Michelson’s and found the following results:

“In clear conception, it ought to be regarded as a direct manifestation of the luminiferous ether. In a system moving as a whole with respect to the ether, the elapsed time of propagation between any two points of the system should be altered as though the system

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were immobile and subject to the action of an ether wind which would blow away the light waves in the manner of atmospheric wind blowing away sound waves. The observation of the optical effect of such a relative wind of ether would constitute evidence for the ether, just as the observation of the influence of the relative wind of the atmosphere on the speed of sound in a system in motion would (in the absence of a better explanation) constitute evidence of the existence of the atmosphere around the system in movement.  

How important were these experiments? Enough to determine whether the Earth was revolving around the sun or not. As Einstein’s biographer put it:

In the United States Albert Michelson and Edward Morley had performed an experiment which confronted scientists with an appalling choice. Designed to show the existence of the ether, at that time considered essential, it had yielded a null result, leaving science with the alternatives of tossing aside the key which had helped to explain the phenomena of electricity, magnetism, and light or of deciding that the Earth was not in fact moving at all.  

The problem which now faced science was considerable. For there seemed to be only three alternatives. The first was that the Earth was standing still, which meant scuttling the whole Copernican theory and was unthinkable.  

They were also important for another reason. If Michelson detected ANY ether, even just a smidgen, then Special Relativity would be immediately falsified. This fact was admitted in a conversation Einstein had with Sir Herbert Samuel in Jerusalem. Einstein stated: “If Michelson-Morley is wrong, then Relativity is wrong.” In other words, if Michelson’s experiment was not “null” and ether existed, then Einstein’s theory of Special Relativity was categorically wrong. As we can see, everything hinged on the proper interpretation of Michelson’s experiment. Consequently, the critics were vociferous in pointing out that Einstein ignored the fact that Michelson’s experiments always yielded a small positive result, and thus his theory of Special Relativity was, indeed, wrong.

Anthony: Sungenis takes the attitude that modern science rejects the idea of ether because they wish to protect heliocentrism and relativity. He fails to see that he only believes in ether because he wishes to protect geocentrism. In this we see one of many examples of Sungenis doing what he accuses the modernists of doing: starting with a result which he wishes to hold and trying to find evidence to support it, rather than starting with the data and following it where it leads.

R. Sungenis: So we see that Anthony is not going to admit to what the experiments actually found (ether) even though the results of the experiments are meticulously recorded in my book. This  

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16 Einstein: The Life and Times, p. 57, emphasis added.
17 Ibid., pp. 109-110, emphasis added. In the opposite vein, senator James W. Fulbright once remarked: “We must care to think about the unthinkable things, because when things become unthinkable, thinking stops and action becomes mindless.”
Rhett Herman, a physics professor at Radford University in Virginia, supplies the following answer: “Compared to what?” Without a frame of reference, questions about motion cannot be completely answered. Consider the movement of the earth's surface with respect to the planet's center. The earth rotates once every 23 hours, 56 minutes and 4.09053 seconds, called the sidereal period, and its circumference is roughly 40,075 kilometers. Thus, the surface of the earth at the equator moves at a speed of 460 meters per second—or roughly 1,000 kilometers per hour. As schoolchildren, we learn that the earth is moving about our sun in a very nearly circular orbit. It covers this route at a speed of nearly 30 kilometers per second, or 67,000 miles per hour. In addition, our solar system--Earth and all--whirls around the center of our galaxy at some 220 kilometers per second, or 490,000 miles per hour. As we consider increasingly large size scales, the speeds involved become absolutely huge! The galaxies in our neighborhood are also rushing at a speed of nearly 1,000 kilometers per second towards a structure called the Great Attractor, a region of space roughly 150 million light-years (one light year is about six trillion miles) away from us. This Great Attractor, having a mass 100 quadrillion times greater than our sun and span of 500 million light-years, is made of both the visible matter that we can see along with the so-called dark matter that we cannot see. Each of the motions described above were given relative to some structure. Our motion about our sun was measured relative to our sun, while the motion of our local group of galaxies was described as toward the Great Attractor. The question arises: Is there some universal frame of reference relative to which we can define the motions of all things? The answer may have been provided by the Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) satellite. In 1989, the COBE satellite was placed in orbit about the earth (again, the earth is the frame of reference!) to measure the long-diluted radiation echo of the birth of our universe. This radiation, which remains from the immensely hot and dense primordial fireball that was our early universe, is known as the cosmic microwave background radiation (CBR). The CBR presently pervades all of space. It is the equivalent of the entire universe "glowing with heat." One of COBE's discoveries was that the earth was moving with respect to this CBR with a well-defined speed and direction. Because the CBR permeates all space, we can finally answer the original question fully, using the CBR as the frame of reference. The earth is moving with respect to the CBR at a speed of 390 kilometers per second. We can also specify the direction relative to the CBR. It is more fun, though, to look up into the night sky and find the constellation known as Leo (the Lion). The earth is moving toward Leo at the dizzying speed of 390 kilometers per second. It is fortunate that we won't hit anything out there during any of our lifetimes!

19 Rhett Herman, a physics professor at Radford University in Virginia, supplies the following answer:
(3) Kothari showed the a kinematic dipole does not match the presumed 371km/sec motion of the solar system, but is four times higher, at a 5 sigma level (arXiv:1307.1947v1).

(4) Likewise, D. Schwarz concluded he “can exclude that the estimated radio dipole is just due to our proper motion and amplitude bias at 99.6% CL” and agreed with Kothari that “all measurements so far point towards a higher radio dipole amplitude than expected” (July 2013 (http://arxiv.org/pdf/1301.5559.pdf)

Anthony: Ether was both contradictory and unverified by experimentation. Soon it became unnecessary: the discovery of light’s nature as electromagnetic radiation rendered the need for a propagation medium obsolete.

R. Sunegenis: That is a complete lie, and Anthony could not have read my book and have come to that conclusion unless he also wants to propagate that lie. Better yet, I challenged Anthony to show us any experiment that “ether was both contradictory and unverified by experimentation.” In fact, the evidence for the existence of ether was confirmed by over a dozen separate interferometer experiments between 1881 and 1930. But they were all called “null” results because they didn’t show enough ether drift to commensurate with an Earth going around the sun at 66,000mph. Since everyone “knew” the Earth was revolving around the sun, the small ether results were always discarded and called “null.” Einstein actually hired people to misreport the results of these experiments. See Chapters 4 and 5 of Galileo Was Wrong, Vol. 1.

Anthony: No propagation medium needed. Sunegenis’ not only holds to the idea of an ether, he also goes beyond the old ether theory and modifies it to try to make it fit his system. The result is the odd and contradictory idea of an ether made up of Planck particles that is at once a frictionless superfluid and yet ultra-dense and granular, through which matter passes as light passes through glass and yet which also exerts an influence on the earth when it is convenient for Sunegenis’ system.

R. Sunegenis: Again, Anthony hasn’t read GWW, or he has read it and has decided to skip over all the evidence from modern scientists that speak of the Planck dimensions. Let me just give you a few to show at least some of the evidence. Here is an article from the famous physicist Paul C. W. Davies. In an article for New Scientist titled “Liquid Space”:

Is space just space? Or is it filled with some sort of mysterious, intangible substance. The ancient Greeks believed so, and so did scientists in the 19th century. Yet by the early part of the 20th century, the idea had been discredited and seemed to have gone for good [by Einstein’s interpretation of the Michelson-Morley experiment]. Now, however, quantum physics is casting new light on this murky subject. Some of the ideas that fell from favor are creeping back into modern thought, giving rise to the notion of a quantum ether….

If so, we’ll have answered a question that has troubled philosophers and scientists for millennia. In the 5th century BC, Leucippus and Democritus concluded that the physical universe was made of tiny particles – atoms moving in a void. Impossible, countered the followers of Parmenides. A void implies nothingness, and if two atoms were separated by
nothing, then they would not be separated at all, they would be touching. So space cannot exist unless it is filled with something, a substance they called the plenum.

If the plenum exists, it must be quite unlike normal matter. For example, Isaac Newton's laws of motion state that a body moving through empty space with no forces acting on it will go on moving in the same way. So the plenum cannot exert a frictional drag – indeed, if it did, the Earth would slow down in its orbit and spiral in towards the Sun.

Nevertheless, Newton himself was convinced that space was some kind of substance. He noted that any body rotating in a vacuum – a planet spinning in space, for example – experiences a centrifugal force. The Earth bulges slightly at the equator as a result. But truly empty space has no landmarks against which to gauge rotation. So, thought Newton, there must be something invisible lurking there to provide a frame of reference. This something, reacting back on the rotating body, creates the centrifugal force.

The 17th century German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz disagreed. He believed that all motion is relative, so rotation can only be gauged by reference to distant matter in the Universe. We know the Earth is spinning because we see the stars go round. Take away the rest of the Universe, Leibniz said, and there would be no way to tell if the Earth was rotating, and hence no centrifugal force.

The belief that space is filled with some strange, tenuous stuff was bolstered in the 19th century. Michael Faraday and James Clerk Maxwell considered electric and magnetic fields to be stresses in some invisible material medium, which became known as the luminiferous ether. Maxwell believed electromagnetic waves such as light to be vibrations in the ether. And the idea that we are surrounded and interpenetrated by a sort of ghostly jelly appealed to the spiritualists of the day, who concocted the notion that we each have an etheric body as well as a material one.

But when Albert Michelson and Edward Morley tried to measure how fast the Earth is moving through the ether, by comparing the speed of light signals going in different directions, the answer they got was zero.

**R. Sugenis:** Let me interject here to point out that Davies is also under the impression the Michelson found “null” results as is everyone else in the scientific community who believes the Earth revolves around the sun. Notice below that Davies says the answer to the “null” result was for Einstein to claim there was no ether at all, which was false, since all the experiments showed at least some ether, but nothing close for an Earth revolving around the sun at 66,000 mph.

An explanation came from Albert Einstein: the ether simply doesn’t exist, and Earth's motion can be considered only relative to other material bodies, not to space itself. In fact, no experiment can determine a body’s speed through space, since uniform motion is purely relative, he said.
Sounds OK so far, but there was one complication: acceleration. If you are in an aeroplane flying steadily, you can't tell that you're moving relative to the ground unless you look out of the window, just as Einstein asserted. You can pour a drink and sip it as comfortably as if you were at rest in your living room. But if the plane surges ahead or slows suddenly, you notice at once because your drink slops about. So although uniform motion is relative, acceleration appears to be absolute: you can detect it without reference to other bodies.

Einstein wanted to explain this inertial effect – what we might commonly call g-forces – using the ideas of the Austrian philosopher Ernst Mach. Like Leibniz, Mach believed that all motion is relative, including acceleration. According to Mach, the slopping of your drink in the lurching aeroplane is attributable to the influence of all the matter in the Universe—an idea that became known as Mach’s principle. Einstein warmed to the idea that the gravitational field of the rest of the Universe might explain centrifugal and other inertial forces resulting from acceleration.

However, when in 1915 Einstein finished formulating his general theory of relativity—a theory of space, time and gravitation – he was disappointed to find that it did not incorporate Mach’s principle. Indeed, mathematician Kurt Gödel showed in 1948 that one solution to Einstein’s equations describes a universe in a state of absolute rotation—something that is impossible if rotation can only be relative to distant matter. So if acceleration is not defined as relative to distant matter, what is it relative to? Some new version of the ether?

In 1976 I began investigating what quantum mechanics might have to say. According to quantum field theory, the vacuum has some strange properties. Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle implies that even in empty space, subatomic particles such as electrons and photons are constantly popping into being from nowhere, then fading away again almost immediately. This means that the quantum vacuum is a seething frolic of evanescent “virtual particles.”

Although these particles lack the permanence of normal matter, they can still have a physical influence. For example, a pair of mirrors arranged facing one another extremely close together will feel a tiny force of attraction, even in a perfect vacuum, because of the way the set-up affects the behaviour of the virtual photons. This has been confirmed in many experiments.

So clearly the quantum vacuum resembles the ether, in the sense that there's more there than just nothing. But what exactly is the new version of the ether like? You might think that a real particle such as an electron moving in this sea of virtual particles would have to batter its way through, losing energy and slowing down as it goes. Not so. Like the ether of old, the quantum vacuum exerts no frictional drag on a particle with constant velocity.
But it’s a different story with acceleration. The quantum vacuum does affect accelerating particles. For example, an electron circling an atom is jostled by virtual photons from the vacuum, leading to a slight but measurable shift in its energy.\(^{20}\)

The only difference between geocentrism’s Planck dimensions and those of Davies or Krauss or Wheeler or any other quantum physicist today is that geocentrism’s Planck particle don’t pop in and out of existence. They are here to stay since they compose the very space that God created on the Second Day.

**Anthony:** Sungenis and the other geocentrists often term this ether the “firmament” to correspond with scriptural passages which use the term. Sungenis quotes another prominent geocentrist, Gerardus Bouw, who states, “Principle matter is totally unaware of the firmament’s existence. If it were not for Scripture, we would be equally unaware of it.”\(^{10}\) Yet he insists that the ether is able to exert a direct influence upon the earth — certainly classifiable as “principle matter” — to keep it stable.

**R. Sungenis:** I think the evidence from Quantum Mechanics is quite sufficient to answer Anthony’s doubt. If he doesn’t accept QM, then perhaps he can explain to us what is between the Earth and the Moon, since it certainly can’t be nothing.

**Anthony:** According to Sungenis, the earth is situated in the center of mass in the universe. It is not the earth that holds the universe in rotation around it, but the universe that holds the earth in position. Since it is placed in the exact center of the rotating universe, Sungenis claims, the universe exerts a gyroscopic effect upon the earth, locking it in an absolutely stationary position in which it neither orbits, nor rotates, nor moves at all.

**R. Sungenis:** I suggest Anthony make his argument against Newton, Mach and Einstein, since all of them saw and agreed with what Anthony rejects.

**Anthony:** An obvious contradiction comes when Sungenis tries to explain the equatorial bulge using his new system. The equatorial bulge is the slight increase in thickness and mass of the earth around the equator, caused by the centrifugal force of the earth’s spin. According to Sungenis, the bulge is not caused by the spinning earth but by the spinning universe, which pulls the earth outward at the center, around the plane of the spin.\(^{11}\) The immediate question is how the forces of the universe spinning around the earth with enough force to drag the mass of the planet outwards around the plane of spin can fail to spin the planet as well. What holds the earth in place as the universe swirls torrentially around it?

**R. Sungenis:** Centrifugal force is radial, it is not circular. A circular force is a torque, but a center of mass (which the Earth is for the universe in the geocentric system) has no torque. Note this explanation from Wikipedia:

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Anthony: Sungenis tries to explain this with a hypothetical experiment. He posits suspending a rotating ball or sphere in a fluid. The ball moves the fluid such that a rod placed in the fluid above the axis of the ball’s rotation will rotate in the same direction as the ball, whereas a rod placed in the fluid next to the ball’s equator will rotate in the opposite direction from the ball due to the force acting on the fluid at that point, much as interlocked gears rotate in opposite directions. Sungenis then hypothesizes that the particles of the ether from the rotating universe are acting in a similar fashion on the earth. Each particle of ether is not only transmitting the large-scale rotation of the universe to the earth, causing the equatorial bulge, the Coriolis effect, and the motion of the Foucault pendulum, but is also rotating itself. These rotating particles act in such a way that they hold the earth stable instead of spinning it, like billions of tiny gears pushing the earth in the opposite direction of the large scale rotation. Sungenis is here treating the ether as if it were a very heavy, dense liquid swirling around the earth, the individual particles of which exert powerful, gear-like torque that prevents the torrent of ether as a whole from spinning the earth along with it. And yet he has himself described the ether as “frictionless” and “invisible” to matter (so that the heavenly bodies can move through it without being affected or slowed down). Sungenis is trying to have his cake and eat it, too.

R. Sungenis: Anthony is trying to make it sound as if I thought this up by myself, but it is clear in my book that it comes from some of the most respected names in the physics establishment, namely, Thorne, Misner and Wheeler in the 1973 book Gravitation. This source is very clearly stated and footnoted in my book, but for some reason Anthony decided not to mention it. Why? Perhaps because apparently he wanted me to look like a quack who makes up his own ideas about physics. For the record, here is the section of my book that deals with this issue:
Fluid Dynamics and a Non-Rotating Earth

Another possibility occurs under fluid dynamics and the use of General Relativity. First, we must understand that space is not a “vacuum” but contains a discrete material substance, which we call ether. (As we noted in answer to Objection #17, modern science has discovered that space contains ether). This ether is carried with the universe as it rotates around the Earth. From what we know in modern physics, is it necessarily the case that the ether will drag the surface of the Earth and force the Earth to rotate? The answer is no. Using modern physics, Martin Selbrede explains it as follows:

It is often objected that if geocentricity were true, and the rotating heavens were dragging Foucault pendula and weather systems around, why doesn’t that force pull on the Earth itself and drag it along, causing it to eventually rotate in sync with the heavens? It appears that this straightforward application of torque to the Earth should cause it to rotate in turn, but this turns out to be an oversimplification. As the heavens rotate, and the firmament rotates on an axis through the Earth’s poles, each firmament particle…also rotates with the same angular velocity. Ironically, this is precisely the reason the Earth can’t be moved.21

Selbrede goes on to explain the validity of above proposition by appealing to an illustration of the same principle crafted by L. I. Schiff and reproduced by Misner, Thorne and Wheeler in the 1973 book Gravitation. The authors state:

The gyroscope is rotationally at rest relative to the inertial frames in its neighborhood. It and the local inertial frames rotate relative to the distant galaxies with the angular velocity Ω because the Earth’s rotation “drags” the local inertial frames along with it. Notice that near the north and south poles the local inertial frames rotate in the same direction as the Earth does (Ω parallel to J), but near the equator they rotate in the opposite direction (Ω antiparallel to J; compare Ω with the magnetic field of the Earth!).22

Misner, et al. offer an analogy that explains the relationship, along with adding that “This analogy can be made mathematically rigorous”:

Consider a rotating, solid sphere immersed in a viscous fluid. As it rotates, the sphere will drag the fluid along with it. At various points in the fluid, set down little rods, and watch how the fluid rotates them as it flows past. Near the poles the fluid will clearly rotate the rods in the same direction as the star [i.e., sphere] rotates. But near the equator, because the fluid is dragged more rapidly at small radii than at large, the end of a rod closest to the

21 Martin Selbrede, “Geocentricity’s Critics Refuse to Do Their Homework,” The Chalcedon Report, 1994, p. 11, emphasis added. In this 12-page rebuttal of Michael Martin Nieto of Los Alamos National Laboratory, who was hired by Gary North (a Reconstructionist-Theonomist) to attempt to refute geocentrism, Selbrede has written one of the best defenses of geocentrism, using the very principles of Relativity. See Appendix 2 for the full paper.

22 The formula to which Misner, et al. refer is stated on the same page (p. 1119), which is: \[ \Omega = -\frac{1}{2} \nabla \times g = \left( \frac{7}{8} \Delta_1 + \frac{1}{8} \Delta_2 \right) \frac{1}{r^3} \left[-J + \frac{3(y^2 - r^2)}{r^2} \right] \]
sphere is dragged by the fluid more rapidly than the far end of the rod. Consequently, the rod rotates in the direction opposite to the rotation of the sphere.\textsuperscript{23}

The description of the above phenomenon is illustrated in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2. In place of rods we have used corrugated rings. The sphere in the middle represents the Earth in counter-clockwise rotation. At the north and south pole the rings will rotate in the same counter-clockwise direction as the Earth. At the equatorial plane, however, the red rings will rotate in the clockwise direction. Fig. 2 shows the same rotations from the top-down viewpoint.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{fig1.png}
\caption{Earth is rotating counter-clockwise; rings at north and south poles are rotating counter-clockwise; rings at equator are rotating clockwise.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{fig2.png}
\caption{A top-down view of Fig. 1's motions}
\end{figure}

Following this model, Selbrede shows how it confirms the geocentric model:

Now reverse the situation. If we want to cause the sphere to rotate clockwise, we would need to turn the rods at the poles clockwise, and the ones at the equators counterclockwise. This picture is clear then: to turn the sphere, the rotation of the particles (MTW's “rods”) at the poles must be the opposite of that at the equator. However, in the case of a rotating firmament, all the particles are rotating in the same direction, with the angular velocity common to the entire firmament. The equatorial inertial drag is in the opposite direction as that acting near the poles. (See Fig. 3)

\textsuperscript{23} Misner, Thorne and Wheeler, \textit{Gravitation}, p. 1120. When the authors say “the fluid is dragged more rapidly at small radii than at large,” they are referring to a rod positioned perpendicular to the tangent of the sphere, wherein the part of the rod closest to the sphere's tangent is the “small radii” while that farther away is the large radii.
**Fig. 3:** Depicts the Geo-Lock Position. As opposed to Fig. 2, all of the red rings are rotating in the same clockwise direction, which represents the daily rotation of the universe around the Earth. The four outside red rings represent the universe's rotation around the Earth's equator, while the red ring in the center represents the universe's rotation around the Earth's north or south poles. The four red rings represent the universe's counter-clockwise force at the Earth's equator, but the red ring in the center represents the universe's clockwise force on the Earth's north and south poles. As Selbrede notes, “The opposing forces are situated within the on-axis body, the Earth, rather than in contra-rotating equatorial and polar frames.” The result is a neutralizing of forces to zero, namely, the Geo-Lock Position.

Using calculus, one integrates the effect from the center of the Earth outward in infinitesimal shells, showing that the Earth is in fact locked in place, the resulting inertial shear being distributed throughout the Earth’s internal volume. It could be demonstrated that were the Earth to be pushed out of its “station keeping” position, the uneven force distribution would return it to its equilibrium state.²⁴

Additionally, such a force would be more than enough to counter-balance any torque from the moon, the sun, or the planets as they revolve around the Earth.

Next time, Anthony, show the full story to the audience so they can make their own decision.

**Anthony:** Sungenis is also making a fallacious jump from his hypothetical ball influencing his hypothetical fluid to the liquid influencing the ball. Sungenis often makes this kind of jump, assuming that he can reverse a system and have it work the same way. But spinning the ball will not give the same effect to the liquid as spinning the liquid will give to the ball. To use an easier example, spinning a top on a table is not the same as spinning a table under a top. The top spinning on the table will be held stable by its own rotation, but the table spinning under the top will not keep the top stable; it will throw it off. Now imagine what that means for the question of whether the earth or the universe is rotating. It’s not as simple a reversal as Sungenis seems to think. If you spin the table and the top doesn't fall, it probably means you're still asleep.

**R. Sungenis:** Misleading example. The liquid and the ball touch each other all over the surface of the ball. The table only touches the top at the very small point of the top. Hence, the two systems have totally different contact and effects. Moreover, the table has nothing to do with the gyroscopic

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effect on the top. The table only serves as an anchor, not a transmitter of dynamic forces. The
dynamic forces on the top come from gravitational and inertial forces that surround both the top
and the table.

Anthony: That the equatorial bulge is caused not by the pull of the universe as transmitted through
ether but by the centrifugal force generated by the earth's spin

R. Sungenis: And thus Anthony has thrown out the leading physics system used today, which is
General Relativity. Arthur Eddington, a friend and supporter of Einstein said this:

Which is right?...Or are both the victims of illusion?...No one knows which is right. No one
will ever know, because we can never find out which, if either, is truly at rest in the
aether....The bulge of the Earth's equator may be attributed indifferently to the Earth's
rotation or to the outward pull of the centrifugal force introduced when the Earth is
regarded as non-rotating.\(^{25}\)

Einstein admitted the same:

We need not necessarily trace the existence of these centrifugal forces back to an absolute
movement of K' [Earth]; we can instead just as well trace them back to the rotational
movement of the distant ponderable masses [stars] in relation to K' whereby we treat K' as
‘at rest.’...On the other hand, the following important argument speaks for the relativistic
perspective. The centrifugal force that works on a body under given conditions is
determined by precisely the same natural constants as the action of a gravitational field on
the same body (i.e., its mass), in such a way that we have no means to differentiate a
‘centrifugal field’ from a gravitational field....This quite substantiates the view that we may
regard the rotating system K' as at rest and the centrifugal field as a gravitational
field....The kinematic equivalence of two coordinate systems, namely, is not restricted to
the case in which the two systems, K [the universe] and K' [the Earth] are in uniform
relative translational motion. The equivalence exists just as well from the kinematic
standpoint when for example the two systems rotate relative to one another.\(^{26}\)

Einstein admitted the same in a June 25, 1913 letter to Ernst Mach:

Your happy investigations on the foundations of mechanics, Planck's unjustified criticism
notwithstanding, will receive brilliant confirmation. For it necessarily turns out that inertia
originates in a kind of interaction between bodies, quite in the sense of your considerations
on Newton's pail experiment. The first consequence is on p. 6 of my paper. The following
additional points emerge: (1) If one accelerates a heavy shell of matter S, then a mass
enclosed by that shell experiences an accelerative force. (2) If one rotates the shell relative

“Some would cut the knot by denying the aether altogether. We do not consider that desirable” (ibid., p. 39).

\(^{26}\) Einstein’s October 1914 paper titled: “Die formale Grundlage der allgemeinen Relativitätstheorie,” trans. by Carl
Hoefer, in *Mach’s Principle: From Newton’s Bucket to Quantum Gravity*, eds. Julian Barbour and Herbert Pfister,
pp. 69, 71.
to the fixed stars about an axis going through its center, a Coriolis force arises in the interior of the shell, that is, the plane of a Foucault pendulum is dragged around.  

A modern physicist, Andre Assis puts it in more mathematical terms:

In the Ptolemaic system, the earth is considered to be at rest and without rotation in the center of the universe, while the sun, other planets and fixed stars rotate around the earth. In relational mechanics this rotation of distant matter yields the force (8.17) such that the equation of motion takes the form of equation (8.47). Now the gravitational attraction of the sun is balanced by a real gravitational centrifugal force due to the annual rotation of distant masses around the earth (with a component having a period of one year). In this way the earth can remain at rest and at an essentially constant distance from the sun. The diurnal rotation of distant masses around the earth (with a period of one day) yields a real gravitational centrifugal force flattening the earth at the poles. Foucault’s pendulum is explained by a real Coriolis force acting on moving masses over the earth’s surface in the form \( -2m g \bar{u}_{me} \times \omega e \) where \( \bar{u}_{me} \) is the velocity of the test body relative to the earth and \( \omega e \) is the angular rotation of the distant masses around the earth. The effect of this force will be to keep the plane of oscillation of the pendulum rotating together with the fixed stars.

Newton did not have an answer, except to say that the circumference of a rotating object wishes to travel in a straight line, and thus causes a bulge at the circumference due to a centrifugal “effect.” But in order to have even a centrifugal effect, Newton had to have an Absolute Space that would serve both as the mass against which the bulge occurred and a coordinate system through which it could be said that an object moved in a straight line instead of a curved line. The problem was that Newton had no evidence of an Absolute Space. It was merely a needed component to his system that had no empirical evidence of its existence. But the ironic thing is, if there was an Absolute Space then what effect would that Space have if it rotated against a fixed Earth? That question was answered by Mach and Einstein above. That is, it would produce the same centrifugal force as when the Earth spins in a fixed Space.

What I find very revealing is that Anthony said he read my book, Galileo Was Wrong, yet he failed to give even a single quote from the physicist cited in the book that give the alternatives to what he wishes to be true. This is clear evidence that Anthony is not in this for the truth, but to suppress anything that might give credibility to geocentrism.

\[ 1 \text{footnote text} \]

\[ 2^{27} \text{footnote text} \]

\[ 3^{28} \text{footnote text} \]

\[ 4^{29} \text{footnote text} \]

\[ 5^{30} \text{footnote text} \]
Earth: ...is evidenced by the fact that NASA launches rockets eastward, in the direction of the spin, to take advantage of the extra velocity in that direction, and they launch from as close to the equator as possible since that is where the force is greatest. In fact, the speed boost has been measured. NASA’s launch site in Florida achieves a 915 mile per hour boost, greatly reducing the amount of energy required to lift a rocket into orbit. That is greater than Russia’s 730 mile per hour boost at its launch site further north in Kazakhstan, but not as great a boost as the European Space Agency achieves from its launch site in French Borneo, very near the equator.13 There’s also the fact that spacecraft launched to distant parts of the solar system are launched at a time (a "launch window") that allows them to travel in the same direction as the earth’s orbit around the sun. This means that they start their journey with a boost from the earth’s 66,000 mile-per-hour orbital velocity, as well as a boost from the earth’s rotational velocity.

R. Sungenis: Anthony is apparently ignorant of the fact that the Tychonic geocentric system would provide the same parameters. I suggest that Anthony study coordinate transforms. NASA and the JPL use them frequently. They can switch back and forth from the Solar Barycentric Frame to the Earth Centered Inertial Frame, but prefer to use the ECIF because it is much simply. Trying to launch a rocket from the moving Earth frame is a nightmare of mathematical equations. The simple way is to launch from the frame of a fixed Earth, which is precisely what NASA does.

Anthony: Geocentrists try to explain this in terms of the centrifugal force of the universe’ spin acting on the rocket — that force is greatest at the equator, because it is there that the earth is being pulled outward by the universe’ spin, according to Sungenis. But there is one glaring problem with attributing the rocket’s boost to the spin of the universe: if the universe spins, it spin west. Because the earth is spinning west to east, we see the sun appear to travel from east to west in the sky. If the geocentrists are right and the sun (and the universe) travels around the earth, it is moving from east to west. Therefore, any satellite NASA launched eastward would not experience any boost, but would instead be forcing itself against the universe’s spin, and should actually be slowed down.

R. Sungenis: Again, Anthony shows his ignorance. Centrifugal force has nothing to do with rocket launches in either the helio or geo system. Centrifugal force is a radial force. Rocket launches require lateral force. Hence, the spinning of the universe, east to west in the geocentric system has no dynamic effect on rocket launches. The only lateral effect would be the Euler force, but that is only a brief and inconsequential force.

As for whether there is a boost in the helio system if a rocket is launched eastward, this is nothing but a myth. When NASA is asked to provide the math to substantiate such a “boost,” an answer never comes. The reality is this: In the heliocentric system that has a rotating Earth, before the rocket is launched eastward it is already traveling 1054 mph at the equator relative to outer space. When it is finally launched eastward it will not get any relative “boost” from the Earth’s rotation because the rocket will have to keep up with the ground that is still rotating beneath it at 1054 mph, which will require more thrust than if the Earth were not rotating. Of course, the real problem with this question is the misleading nature of the word “boost.” A boost relative to what? “Boost” implies that there is more ground covered for the same time, or less time flown for the same distance, or
less force/fuel needed to cover the same distance or same time. But in order to be an authentic boost, the boost must be measured against some other known and stable position in order to claim you got a boost away from it. In an attempt to answer this question, people often use an invalid analogy, namely, picturing themselves on a rotating merry-go-round from which they throw a stone tangent to the circumference of the merry-go-round. Now, for a second person who, say, is about a hundred feet away watching you throwing the stone from the merry-go-round, it looks to him as if the stone got a “boost” in its speed from the rotation of the merry-go-round. But that “boost” is only true if it is measured from a position outside the merry-go-round. If it is measured from the within or on the merry-go-round, there will be no boost because, relative to the merry-go-round, if the stone is given the same thrust whether the merry-go-round is rotating of standing still, it will travel at the same speed in either case. Translating this back to the rocket, if the person wants to say that launching the rocket eastward gives it a boost, he can only do so if he is measuring the “boost” from a position outside the Earth’s atmosphere. For example, if he were standing on the moon and watched the rocket take off eastward from the Earth, the rocket would appear to him to have gotten a boost, because he will see the rocket move away from him faster than if the rocket were launched westward. But this is not really a “boost” in the classic definition of the term; rather, it is an illusion of a boost. All in all, the correct answer, if you’re a heliocentrist, is that the rotation of the Earth would have no effect on the rocket. The rocket’s fuel is spent because the rocket must continue to keep up to the 1054 mph the Earth is rotating, and it must continue to fight against the Earth’s gravity, but gravity has the same force whether you travel eastward or westward, so there would be neither less use of fuel nor a “boost” if one were to launch a rocket eastward on Earth. Unfortunately, the idea that there is such a “boost” is a myth that has taken on a life of its own. The main reason the US space agency launches rockets from Florida is that, in case there is a mishap during the launch, the likelihood is that it will happen over the Atlantic Ocean and thus no harm will come to civilization.

**Anthony:** This is a classic example of the way Sungenis operates: by deluging his readers or listeners with dubious and nebulous information, relying on quantity to offset its lack of quality and clarity. When he examines an issue he puts forward only those things which he can make appear to support his system, and ignores the rest.

**R. Sungenis:** As we have seen so far, Anthony is accusing me of precisely what Anthony does. Anthony is simply misinformed on many issues, but since he hasn’t studied either the history or the science in any depth, he keeps issuing the same canards that everyone else issues.

**Anthony:** For instance, he claims that geosynchronous satellites like the GPS satellites employ a fixed-earth coordinate system 14 (which is true, and why they do should be obvious to everyone), but he completely neglects to mention the fact that NASA puts such satellites in orbit in the first place using calculations based upon the effect of a rotating earth.

**R. Sungenis:** I don’t “neglect” it at all. The fact is, it doesn’t matter whether NASA uses a fixed Earth or a rotating Earth. In a rotating Earth frame, the satellite must travel 7000 mph, west to east, in
order to keep up with the rotating Earth. In a fixed Earth frame, the satellite must travel 7000 mph, west to east, in order to resist the 7000 mph that space is rotating against it.

**Anthony:** The geocentric explanation for how geosynchronous satellites stay in orbit is also fundamentally flawed. Heliocentrists point out that a satellite that appears to be stationary from our perspective is in fact moving in order to maintain an orbit. A truly stationary satellite would fall to earth. The satellite only appears stationary because it is traveling at the same rate as the rotation of the earth. Geocentrists claim that the satellite is actually stationary. They reason that the satellite is held between the attracting force of the earth’s gravity and the repelling centrifugal force of the spinning universe. But the satellite must itself be moving with the spin to experience outward centrifugal force. So for the centrifugal force of the universe to really act on the satellite, the satellite would have to be following the spin of the universe around the earth, and we would see motion.

**R. Sungenis:** No, because in order to stay above a certain point above a fixed Earth, the satellite has to travel 7000 mph against the rotating universe. Also, the satellite needs no independent motion outside the spinning universe in order to experience the effects of centrifugal force than a person sitting in the fuselage of a moving jet plane would not move with the plane when the plane took a nose dive.

**Anthony:** Furthermore, whatever cosmic rotational, or gravitational, forces that are acting on the satellite would be far too small to overcome the pull of the earth’s gravity at such close proximity. We know from experience that a satellite which fails to maintain its proper speed in relation to the earth suffers a decay of orbit that ultimately results in the satellite’s destruction as it falls into the earth’s atmosphere. Without motion, a satellite falls to earth. A truly stationary satellite is impossible.

**R. Sungenis:** Again, Anthony simply doesn’t understand the geocentric physics. Since he insists on throwing out both Machian and Einsteinian physics, then he will never come to grips with the situation.

**Anthony:** Sungenis follows his assertions with dubious ad hominems, attributing ulterior motives and conspiracies to anyone who disagrees with him. For instance, he says this about NASA: “Those who control our space programs have a vested interest in keeping the public under the illusion of Copernicanism, since all their funding and projects are based on Copernicus’ premises, including the quest to find life in other worlds.”15 To Sungenis, NASA is not using the simplest cosmology and the one with the most scientific support, they are using a cosmology they know is wrong and are actively engaged in withholding information from the public in order to protect funding for the search for alien life! This is not many steps removed from crackpot conspiracy theories like the the Apollo hoax theory.

**R. Sungenis:** It’s sad to see traditional Catholics like Anthony defend the atheists who run NASA and attribute to them the purest motives but pile on the most vile caricatures on a fellow traditional Catholic. The reason, of course, is because: (1) Anthony has made popular science his infallible authority and anyone who challenges that authority must then be smacked down, and (2) Anthony
doesn’t understand either the nature of relative motion inherent in Machian or Einsteinian physics or how the geocentric system really works. It is also evident that Anthony is selective in the scientific information he will bring forth (e.g., that the Michelson experiments found ether) and he is largely ignorant of what transpired between the Church and Galileo.

**Anthony:** More importantly, it is an example of the convoluted nature of Sungenis’ thinking. He confuses a scientific model with a pseudo-scientific and largely metaphysical belief when he equates Copernicanism with the belief in extraterrestrial life.

**R. Sungenis:** Not only is Anthony ignorant of much of the scientific and historical facts, he is also naïve. That Anthony doesn’t realize that the quest to find alien life on other planets is part-and-parcel with the Copernican Principle to keep Earth out of the center of the universe and be regarded as nothing special, shows just how well NASA’s program has worked to convince Christians that NASA has the true story and the Church is full of ignoramuses.

**Anthony:** NASA certainly does operate with a heliocentric system in mind, for good reason. In fact, NASA has taken time-lapse videos of the spinning earth with two of its spacecraft, the aptly-named Galileo spacecraft on its way to Jupiter in 199016 , and the MESSENGER spacecraft in 2005 as it swung past the earth on a gravity-assisted slingshot to Mercury.17 These videos show the earth appear to make one complete revolution in twenty four hours. Heliocentrism’s explanation is simple: the spacecraft are moving away from the earth in a relatively straight trajectory, and the time-lapse videos show the earth rotating. I can only postulate what the geocentrist would say to this, since I have never seen a discussion of it from a geocentrist point of view. I imagine they would say that it is not the earth that is rotating in those videos but the spacecraft, which despite being launched against the universe’s rotation were immediately grabbed by the universe and their course reversed, and they now spin along with the universe, spiraling outwards from the earth rather than traveling straight.

**R. Sungenis:** Anthony is correct. Since the space is rotating around a fixed Earth, that rotating space will carry with it whoever is taking pictures of the Earth. As such, the Earth will appear to be rotating in the camera, but in reality the camera is rotating around the Earth. I find it interesting that Anthony knows what the geocentric explanation is, but offers no rebuttal to it.

**Anthony:** We aren’t done with geocentrist contradictions. Possibly the biggest contradiction involves the way the earth is held in place by the rotating universe. Sungenis claims that the earth is held in the center of the universe by the gyroscopic effect of the rotation of the universe as transmitted through the ether. However, Sungenis contradicts himself by placing the stars in orbit not around the earth, but around the sun! He must do this in order to solve the problem of observable stellar parallax. Stellar parallax is the apparent movement of distant stars in relationship to one another over time. It is caused by the movement of the earth in its orbit around the sun, two astronomical units every six months. To see how this affects our view of the stars, hold up the first finger of each hand in a line in front of your face. Now, close first one eye, then the other. The fingers appear to shift position in relation to each other depending on whether you are looking at them from one eye.
or from the eye a few inches away. One of the biggest arguments against the heliocentric system at the time of Galileo was the absence of observable stellar parallax. Today we know that the stars are vastly farther away than supposed in Galileo’s time, which means that the observable parallax of any star is very small. With modern techniques we can finally observe and measure parallax. With one of their best arguments defeated, the geocentrist had to scramble to incorporate stellar parallax into their own system, which they do by modifying the Tycho Brahe system to center the stars on the sun instead of the earth, just as the other planets are centered on the sun and not the earth in their system. But now the sun is at the center of mass, not the earth,

**R. Sungenis:** Anthony misunderstands. The sun has its center of mass and the universe has center of mass. The sun is the center of mass for the sun and the planets; the Earth is the center of mass for the universe.

**Anthony:** and the universe is not spinning around the earth, but wobbling around it, following the round-and-round motion of the sun as it orbits the earth. If this is true, how can the universe hold the earth in gyroscopic lock?

**R. Sungenis:** The Earth is the center of mass for the universe, and the center of mass does not move, so says Newtonian physics, as I demonstrated by the torque equations posted earlier.

**Anthony:** And what mechanism keeps the sun in orbit around the earth? Not gravity, since the sun is too large, and not the sun following the rotation of the universe, since the universe rotates around the sun. Sungenis seems to believe that there is a balance between gravity and the centrifugal force of the universe’s spin that keeps the planets in orbit, but this can’t explain why the sun orbits the earth, since the centrifugal forces of the spinning universe are centered on the sun and not the earth.

**R. Sungenis:** No, the centrifugal force of the universe spreads outward from the center of mass (the Earth), not the geometric center (the Sun).

**Anthony:** Sungenis “solves” this problem by unhinging the stars from the rest of the universe. He writes:

“Scripture does not say that the Earth is centered for the stars; it says only that the Earth is immobile. Granted, one can certainly advance an argument that the Earth should assume the center position based on nothing more than the definition of immobility within a sphere. Geometrically speaking, the only point that would not move, relative to the rest of the rotating sphere, is the exact center. Yet this fact merely begs the question: what constitutes the sphere of which the earth is the immobile center. Do the stars themselves define the universal sphere, or is the universe defined by itself? By force of logic, we are compelled to say that the stars are merely contained within the universal sphere, but are not necessarily the composite body by which the sphere is defined. This is especially true when we understand that, besides the stars and other celestial bodies comprising the universe, the universal sphere has its own substance (ether), and thus has a mass and
velocity independent of the stars. It is the universe's own mass that is rotating around the immoveable Earth, and as it does so, it carries the stars with it. As such, there is nothing to prohibit the stars from being slightly shifted to one side of the universe sphere and thus have their center on the sun, whereas the universe sphere itself is centered on the Earth.”

Let's consider this for a moment. According to Sungenis, the effects of the universe's mass are transmitted through an ether. This frictionless and invisible yet super-dense medium “carries the stars with it” as it swirls around the earth. And yet the stars are not following the trajectory of the ether, but are offset (in Sungenis’ own word, “wobbling”20), spinning around the sun instead. First, we ask the question: how? How can the same stars that are carried by the ether be moving in a different circle than the ether is?

R. Sungenis: I never said they were. The stars are moving with the whole universe and so is the ether, and all of them are pivoting on a 1AU radius (the distance between the Earth and the Sun).

Anthony: Next, we have to ask: why? Why are the stars rotating around the sun?

R. Sungenis: The stars are not rotating around the sun. The stars are aligned with the sun, not the Earth, and the sun/star unit revolves around the Earth.

Anthony: What causes it? What is the mechanism?

R. Sungenis: The sun/stars rotate with the universe. That is why we see the same stars in the same constellations night after night, since their proper motion is negligible compared to their motion with the whole universe. The sun lags behind the stars about 1 degree per day, which is why it travels through the Zodiac in one year.

Anthony: Why the sun and not, say, a point of space between Mars and Venus?

R. Sungenis: Because, obviously, that is not the way God designed it, for only a universe rotating with the sun and stars around Earth will give us our four seasons and our timekeepers.

Anthony: And why does their rotation follow the sun as it rotates around the earth? Keep in mind that according to Sungenis' the center of the rotation of the stars is rotating around the earth. Again, why?

R. Sungenis: Again, Anthony doesn’t understand the geocentric system. The sun is not the “center of rotation of the stars.” Rather, the stars are aligned with the sun, not the Earth, and both the stars and sun revolve around the Earth. Big difference.

Anthony: Actually, the “why” is obvious. Sungenis states, “By force of logic, we are compelled to say that the stars are merely contained within the universal sphere, but are not necessarily the composite body by which the sphere is defined.” He should not say, “by force of logic,” but “by
force of necessity.” There is no logic behind this assertion. There is no mechanism, no scientific explanation.

**R. Sungenis:** There is, but because Anthony got the geocentric geometry wrong, he got everything else wrong.

**Anthony:** But Sungenis’ system must have the stars rotating the sun or he could not explain parallax, yet also must have the universe rotate around the earth or it will, he thinks, contradict scripture. Therefore, he separates the stars from the “substance” of the universe (the ether) and lets the stars arbitrarily orbit the sun while the ether rotates around the earth.

**R. Sungenis:** Again, Anthony doesn’t understand the geocentric system. The space in the universe is not composed of nothing, since nothing does not exist. (In fact, later in his essay Anthony himself says “space is not nothing” in answer to Laurence Krauss). Various experiments performed in the 1800s and 1900s (which Anthony has studiously avoided) tell us that the space of the universe is a substance, not nothing. Each of the stars are embedded in that substance. The substance, and the stars and the sun, revolve around a fixed Earth. If the Earth moved, yes, it would certainly contradict Scripture which insists the Earth doesn’t move and that the sun revolves around the Earth, so says the Church that condemned heliocentrism and Galileo in 1616 and 1633. So instead of trying to use a system that does not contradict Scripture and the Church, Anthony has decided to use a system that does contradict it, and yet he has no proof that that system is true.

**Anthony:** It is ironic that even after all these acrobatics the geocentristers have not solved the problem of stellar parallax. If the stars rotate around the sun, which rotates around the earth once every twenty four hours, then stellar parallax must occur every twelve hours, not every six months as has been observed, and as fits the heliocentric system in which the earth orbits the sun once per year. Sungenis’ own animation. On the left is a yearly cycle. But if geocentrism is true, then on the right is a daily cycle.

**R. Sungenis:** If Anthony dug deeper into the geocentric system, he would find that we have both a diurnal parallax animation and an annual parallax animation on our CDROM. As such, the annual and the diurnal parallax both provide the same gradation of parallax and there is no difference between the two. I will be happy to send him a free CDROM if he would like to see it.

**Anthony:** This is just one example of the geocentristers taking an observation about the universe and forcing it to fit their system, without a mechanism to explain why it occurs as they say it does.

**R. Sungenis:** No, it is yet another example of Anthony not digging deep enough into the geocentric system and pretending that we haven’t thought out its requirements and implications.

**Anthony:** Another example is their explanation for the seasons. In the heliocentric system, the seasons are explained very simply by the fact that the axis of the earth’s rotation is at an angle to the plane of its orbit around the sun, causing sunlight to fall more on one part of the earth than another at different times of the year. To get this effect with a stationary earth, the geocentristers must move
the sun instead. They accomplish a seasonal effect by making the sun spiral above and below the earth, having its orbit slide up and down as it goes around and around. Six months from the bottom of this slide it reaches the top, and six months from the top it reaches the bottom again, creating the summer and winter solstices. Now, if the sun is really not only orbiting around the earth but also traveling above and below it, and the stars are centered on the sun, then the stars are not only wobbling around the earth but are also moving up and down! How can they do this if an earth-centered ether is carrying them, as Sungenis claims?

R. Sungenis: Apparently, Anthony didn’t follow his thinking to its logical conclusion. If the stars and the sun are moving vertically against a fixed Earth to create the seasons, then obviously his supposition that the ether is centered on the Earth is wrong. Anthony’s problem, from the beginning, is that he hasn’t understood the geocentric system, but since he is obsessed with discrediting it, he makes false conclusions from his false premises.

Anthony: But more importantly, what causes the sun to behave this way; what is the mechanism for this sliding? Now the geocentrists need to explain not only how the sun can orbit the earth, but how it can slide up and down around it. It can’t be gravity, because not only is the sun far too large to be held in orbit around the comparatively tiny earth,

R. Sungenis: Let’s clear up Anthony’s misconception. The sun’s “largeness” is not a factor, since if the sun is revolving around the universe’s center of mass, it makes no difference whether the Earth occupies that center of mass or not. The sun will go around the center of mass since it revolves with the whole universe.

Anthony: but also because at the top and bottom of its orbital slide the sun is so far above or below the earth that there is no mass but only empty space in the center of the sun’s orbit. It can’t be because the sun is orbiting the center of mass of the universe, because that would mean that the center of mass would have to be moving from above to below the earth every six months, and Sungenis requires the center of mass of the universe to be where the earth is in order to have his mythical “gyroscopic lock.” There is simply no mechanism for the sun’s behavior. The geocentrists only hold that the sun behaves in such a way because they need to explain the seasons. But having done so, they need an explanation for their explanation.

R. Sungenis: Again, Anthony didn’t dig deep enough into the geocentric system. What he fails to understand is, as the universe rotates around its center of mass (where Earth is placed) it also oscillates up 47 degrees and down 47 degrees every six months (which is 23.5 degrees each season). As such, it moves in a spiral motion, and it carries the sun and stars with it in this spiral. They all move together. The reason the universe spirals is the same reason a gyroscope will precess – it is either weighted to one side or there was an initial inertial force to start the spiral. The only difference between the typical gyroscope and the universe is that the former is anchored. Once the universe reaches the limit of sustaining its angular momentum (June 21) it will begin to spiral downwards until it reaches the limit of sustaining its angular momentum (December 21) and will begin to spiral upwards.
Anthony: These are only a few of the contradictions inherent in Sungenis’ convoluted geocentrism. Others come in his attempts to explain away common heliocentrist arguments, such as the Foucault pendulum and the Coriolis effect. Sungenis counters such arguments by deluging his audience with so much misinformation that they he must hope they think that anyone who can talk so much about something must know what he is talking about.

R. Sungenis: Notice the ad hominem argumentum.

Anthony: But if one looks closely at his system the contradictions and over-complications are not difficult to spot. Take the Foucault pendulum, for instance: a properly-suspended pendulum’s swing changes direction gradually over the course of a day; the change is greater closer to the poles than to the equator. At the pole the plane of the pendulum will rotate 360° in one day. Heliocentrism explains this phenomenon very simply: the earth is rotating underneath the plane of the pendulum’s swing. Geocentrism’s explanation is anything but simple: an ultra-dense, super-granular, yet frictionless and invisible ether is transmitting the rotational forces of the universe to the pendulum, dragging it around in the direction of its rotation.21 This swirling ether affects the pendulum despite the pendulum being situated in a building (which, when he wants to explain how an ether-measuring experiment failed to measure what it should, Sungenis claims has an insulating effect from the forces of the ether22), despite the supposed counter-rotational force of the ether particles which keeps the earth itself from spinning, and despite the supposed frictionless nature of the ether.

R. Sungenis: Either Anthony knows better and is deliberately hiding the evidence or he is very ignorant of modern physics. In both Machian and Einsteinian physics, the Foucault pendulum shifts direction either because the Earth rotates or the universe rotates around a fixed Earth, and neither of these two physics systems believes in an “ultra-dense, super-granular, ether.”

Let’s quote Einstein again for Anthony:

For it necessarily turns out that inertia originates in a kind of interaction between bodies, quite in the sense of your considerations on Newton’s pail experiment. The first consequence is on p. 6 of my paper. The following additional points emerge: (1) If one accelerates a heavy shell of matter S, then a mass enclosed by that shell experiences an accelerative force. (2) If one rotates the shell relative to the fixed stars about an axis going through its center, a Coriolis force arises in the interior of the shell, that is, the plane of a Foucault pendulum is dragged around.31

Or, of course, Anthony can invent a new physics to explain the nature of relative motion.

Anthony: Furthermore, a pendulum being influenced by a swirling ether would act like a weathervane. Picture a weathervane sticking out of the earth at any point on its surface, and a torrential, swirling ether rushing around the earth, pushing at the weathervane. The only point on the earth’s surface where the weathervane would experience any rotation is the poles. At any other

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point on the surface of the earth the weathervane would experience the motion of the ether in only one direction, and it would point in that direction. There would be no spin.

**R. Sungenis:** From his description, we can see that Anthony has totally misunderstood, and thus totally misrepresented, the ether he criticizes. The ether isn’t “swirling,” rather, it creates gravity and inertial forces, and it is the gravity and inertial forces which are acting on the pendulum.

**Anthony:** And yet Foucault pendulums around the world measurably rotate with respect to their buildings everywhere except the equator, exactly as predicted by a rotating earth. So the Foucault pendulum does, in fact, prove that the earth spins. Sungenis’ insistence that it does not is another example of his reversing a system and thinking it still works when in fact a reversed system is a different system altogether.

**R. Sungenis:** Effectively, then, Anthony is telling the world that Mach and Einstein were wrong when they “reversed systems” and concluded that the Foucault Pendulum would shift if the universe were rotating around a fixed Earth. If so, what system of physics does Anthony want to use?

**Anthony:** Sungenis has similar explanation for the Coriolis effect, geostationary satellites, and so on. There is not enough space here to go into all of Sungenis’ pseudo-scientific claims — that would take a book the size of Sungenis’ — but we should by now have seen enough to make a safe judgement of the kind of “science” he is pursuing.

**R. Sungenis:** What we have seen thus far is that Anthony doesn’t understand either geocentrism or the tenets of modern physics.

**Anthony:** Perhaps the clearest example of the geocentrism’s problems comes when we ask the question: what is the mechanism? Heliocentrism works very simply, based on a single mechanism: a large body holding a smaller body in orbit.

**R. Sungenis:** False. Heliocentrism needs many “mechanisms” and none of them are simple. It must keep the Earth rotating on a sidereal rate of 23 hours, 56 minutes and 4.7 seconds every day, every year, every century. How can it do so when there are so many inertial forces impeding the Earth such as earthquakes, volcanos, tidal waves, etc.? What is the mechanism that keeps it going? These inertial forces (earthquakes, volcanos, tidal waves) should easily slow a rotating Earth down by many seconds or even minutes per year. Venus, for example, has slowed down by 6.5 minutes. Heliocentrism needs a to allow the Earth to complete an orbit in exactly 365.25 days, every year, every century, and so on and so on.

**Anthony:** Geocentrism needs many mechanisms. It needs a mechanism to spin the cosmos around the earth,

**R. Sungenis:** No it doesn’t. It needs only one. One push and the universe, because it is so massive, will spin *ad infinitum*, at the same rate, due to the tremendous inertia it has.

**Anthony:** a mechanism to spin the stars around the sun,
R. Sungenis: Which again shows that Anthony doesn’t understand the geocentric system, since the universe which houses the sun and stars will carry them in rotation around a fixed Earth.

Anthony: a mechanism for the orbit of the sun around the earth,

R. Sungenis: No, since the sun is moving daily around the Earth because it is being carried by the universe. The only counter movement is that the sun lags behind the stars by about 4 minutes every day, which is caused by the fact that the sun has the planets in tow which causes an inertial drag on the sun.

Anthony: a mechanism for the spiraling of the sun to explain the seasons,

R. Sungenis: No, because the spiraling of the sun is caused by the universe’s spiraling as it rotates around a fixed Earth.

Anthony: a mechanism to explain how the “frictionless” ether influences the earth but no other heavenly body, and so on.

R. Sungenis: We never said the ether affects either the Earth or any other heavenly body.

Anthony: The point is that even when geocentrism claims to have an explanation, that explanation is far more complex than heliocentrism’s. In heliocentrism, the data naturally supports the system without undue effort, whereas geocentrism must force the data to fit its system.

R. Sungenis: As we see, what Anthony tried to make very complicated, is actually very simple. Except for the inertial drag on the sun, geocentrism has need for only ONE mechanism, a spiraling universe. But Anthony’s heliocentric universe has no explanation for how the Earth rotates unimpeded by inertial forces that would appreciably slow down the rotation.

Anthony: Ironically, Sungenis accuses heliocentrists of starting with a premise and forcing the data to fit: "Blinded by the unproven premise of heliocentrism, scientists would resort to all kinds of twisted and ad hoc explanations of the factual data and make up extravagant new theories as they went along, concocting bizarre concepts that brought common sense, and even personal sanity, to the brink of destruction."23 That statement is more accurately applied Sungenis himself.

R. Sungenis: Not quite, since I am not the one making up Dark Energy, Dark Matter and Inflation to keep the Big Bang operating, and I am not the one avoiding contradictions between Special Relativity and General Relativity (e.g., that light speed is limited in SRT but unlimited in GRT; that SRT disallows the Earth to be non-moving; but GRT allows it to be non-moving and the center of the universe) to build the Big Bang universe.

Anthony: The evident conclusion to take away from the data is that the earth is in motion around the sun. The only possible reason to hold the far more complex and often contradictory idea that the earth is stationary and the universe is in motion around it is because one believes that such a theory is Catholic doctrine.
**R. Sungenis:** Notice how glibly Anthony treats this dimension of the issue. It really doesn’t matter to him if he can’t find a cosmology to fit Scripture, the Fathers and the Ordinary Magisterium. Scripture can be fudged; the Fathers and Popes can be dismissed as ignorant partisans; and the Holy Spirit can be said to be uninterested in the cosmology of Genesis 1 since He only wants us to get to heaven, not know how the heavens work.

**Anthony:** Sungenis admits that heliocentrism does fit the appearances. He claims that since in his view both models fit the available data, one must have recourse to revelation and to the teachings of the Church to decide which is correct. To support geocentrism, Sungenis invokes three things: scriptures, the unanimous belief of the Church Fathers, and the condemnation of Copernicanism in 1633. As we will see, none of these sources give conclusive evidence that geocentrism is Catholic dogma.

**R. Sungenis:** Notice how Anthony slyly shifts the argument to one of “dogma.” We will see why he does so momentarily.

**Anthony:** Geocentrism in Scripture: The passage most often used to claim scriptural support for geocentrism is Joshua 10:12. It tells the famous story of God stopping the sun for the duration of a battle: "Then Joshua spoke to the Lord, in the day that he delivered the Amorrhite in the sight of the children of Israel, and he said before them: Move not, O sun, toward Gabaon, nor thou, O moon, toward the valley of Ajalon." The geocentrists claim that since God is stopping the sun, it must be moving. But this passage uses phenomenological language: it describes the way things appear. It is the language we use everyday when we say that the sun rises and sets. It is not making a definitive statement to the effect that the sun moves and the earth stands still.

**R. Sungenis:** Notice how Anthony conditions his audience before he starts to exegete the passage. In all the places where Scripture cites Joshua 10, it never refers to it as phenomenological language and neither did the Fathers of the Church or the popes and cardinals of 1616 or 1633. Anthony merely imposes his own hermeneutic on the passage because he comes to it with the a-priori belief that the Earth revolves around the sun, hence, for him it must not be actual language, only phenomenal language. Anthony is not like Rudolph Bultmann reading John 6. Even though Bultmann didn’t believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, he admitted that John 6 was a clear and unequivocal testimony that the Real Presence was a reality. Bultmann rejected the Eucharist, rather, because he simply didn’t believe John 6 was inspired by God and therefore was not true, but at least

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32 Habakkuk 3:11: “The sun and moon stood still in their habitation at the light of thine arrows as they sped, at the flash of thy glittering spear.” Habakkuk reflects the detail of the Joshua passage in that it mentions both the sun and the moon ceasing their movements. The book of Habakkuk was written in the 7th century B.C. while Joshua was written in the 11th century, thus showing how the tradition survived intact over at least four centuries. Additionally, the event is also recorded in Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 46:4: “Was not the sun held back by his hand? And did not one day become as long as two?” This Old Testament book was written just prior to the Maccabean revolt, circa 160 B.C., which makes the testimony of Joshua’s Long Day endure at least through a millennium.
he admitted what the text actually said. But Anthony doesn’t want to admit what the text actually says, so he must change the language from real to unreal.

**Anthony:** We have to be careful not to make an issue out of things that are incidental to the actual point or thrust of the biblical texts. For instance, the account of Creation in Genesis says that God made the world in six days, that he separated the waters, that he hung the sun in the sky, and so on. The point of this account is not to give a literal, time-based description of Creation.

**R. Sungenis:** Where does the Church teach Anthony’s interpretation? Certainly not in the tradition. It only came about with the liberal and modernist movements of the late 19th century when Darwin had put forth his hypothesis of evolution. Before then, all major Catholic interpreters saw Genesis as an accurate, detailed and chronological account of Creation. It is only the Catholic modernists who have made the tenets of popular cosmology their Bible and demoted Genesis into little more than a cute story.

**Anthony:** Thomas Aquinas and Augustine both said that these passages can be interpreted outside of a strict, twenty-four-hour literalism. Aquinas writes:

“There are some things that are by their very nature the substance of faith, as to say of God that He is three and one. . . about which it is forbidden to think otherwise. . . . There are other things that relate to the faith only incidentally . . . and, with respect to these, Christian authors have different opinions, interpreting the Sacred Scripture in various ways. Thus with respect to the origin of the world, there is one point that is of the substance of faith, viz., to know that it began by creation. . . . But the manner and the order according to which creation took place concerns the faith only incidentally.”26

**R. Sungenis:** Anthony is trying to tell us that Aquinas either did not believe in a literal and chronological six day creation or that the view he quotes above was the norm in Catholic teaching. Neither are true. Aquinas stuck to a literal six day creation as did all the Fathers and medievals. The only reason Aquinas makes an exception above is because of Augustine’s secondary interpretation of Genesis 1, which he posits that the Creation was made instantaneously and that the description of six days was only for the contemplation of the angels. None of the Fathers accepted Augustine’s secondary interpretation, but Aquinas made room for it out of his respect for Augustine. There is a long story why Augustine had a secondary interpretation. Although in many other instances Augustine was a superior exegete of Scripture, he didn’t know Greek well enough to figure out that the sole verse in the Greek Septuagint upon which he based his fundamental conclusion that God made all things instantaneously instead of over six days, was based on an erroneous translation in his Latin Vulgate of Sirach 18:1, and which actually means just the opposite of what he proposed in his concept of an instantaneous creation. Jerome’s Vulgate was certainly a good translation, but it was not infallible, and Jerome never claimed it to be. In his Literal Interpretation of Genesis, Augustine writes:

In this narrative of creation [Genesis 1-2] Holy Scripture has said of the Creator that He completed His works in six days; and elsewhere, without contradicting this, it has been
written of the same Creator that He created all things together. It follows, therefore, that He, who created all things together, simultaneously created these six days, or seven, or rather the one day six or seven times repeated.33

We notice that Augustine is not quite sure how the simultaneity of creation works itself out numerically. Be that as it may, Augustine’s citation of “…and elsewhere…it has been written…He created all things together” is referring to Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 18:1. The Greek of the Septuagint reads: ὁ ζωὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐκτίσα τὰ πάντα κοινὴ ("He who lives forever has created all things in common"). The word in question is κοινὴ (koinē), which normally means “in common” or “without exception.” But the Latin Vulgate from which Augustine read had translated κοινὴ with the words omnia simul in the sentence, “qui vivit in aeternum creavit omnia simul Deus solus justificabitur et manet invictus rex in aeternum.”34 The clause omnia simul means “at one time” or “altogether,” but this is obviously a questionable translation of the Greek κοινὴ. Sirach 18:1, at least in the original Greek, is not saying that creation was made simultaneously or altogether, but of all that was made the Lord created it all, without exception. The context of the passage certainly bears this out.35 The reason this mistake may have happened is that Augustine’s knowledge of Greek was at an elementary level. When he was beginning his commentary on Genesis in 401 A.D., his abilities in Greek were poor.36 It wasn’t until Augustine was an old man that he had a modest reading ability of Greek. Unfortunately, Augustine was limited to the Vulgate’s translation of Sirach 18:1, and thus he misinterpreted the meaning of the verse. Hence, his “proof text” cannot hold the weight Augustine put on it.37

33 *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Bk 4, Ch 33, No 52.
34 The Douay-Rheims, which translates the Latin Vulgate, reads: “He that liveth for ever created all things together.”
35 “He who lives forever created the whole universe; the Lord alone will be declared righteous...To none has he given power to proclaim his works; and who can search out his mighty deeds? Who can measure his majestic power? And who can fully recount his mercies? It is not possible to diminish or increase them, nor is it possible to trace the wonders of the Lord” (Sirach 18:1-6, RSV).
37 Another possibility for the Vulgate’s choice of simul for κοινὸς is that there is a slight semantic overlap between the two words. This usually happens when time and material things are inadvertently interchanged. For example, although simul’s common meaning focuses on time (and thus it is usually translated as “at the same time” or “simultaneous”), it could also be confused with the idea of physical solidarity. If, for example, the people of a city stand together against an opposing army, it could be said that the people are both: (a) standing together, at the same time, against the army, and (b) standing together in solidarity against the army. Hence, the entire citizenry’s simultaneous standing against the enemy will overlap in meaning with their common solidarity as one united group against the enemy. Naturally, if all the citizens did not stand together simultaneously against the enemy, it could not be said that they were “all together” in their opposition against the enemy. Barring such an example of semantic overlap, time is normally understood as a separate entity from space. Indeed, the normal meaning of “simul” deals with time, not commonality. The Latin Vulgate demonstrates that κοινὸς’ normal meaning is “in common,” since out of 59 uses of κοινὸς and its derivatives, only three are translated “simul” by the Vulgate (Sirach 18:1; Sirach 50:17; and Susanna 1:14), and in those three instances, it is due precisely to the semantic “overlap” described above. An examination of the other two instances besides Sirach 18:1 will illustrate this crucial point. The Catholic Revised Standard Version of Sirach 50:17 reads: “Then all the people together (koinē/simul) made haste and fell to the ground upon their faces.” This verse offers a perfect illustration of the semantic overlap between “simul” and “koinē.” The people “all made haste” (physically and spatially, as one, “common” physical grouping, “all together”). But they also necessarily made haste “at once,” that is, “at one time.” It is important to note, however, that when the people “fell to the ground,” they did not fall at the same precise instant. Like the members of any
Anthony: The Catholic Church’s Biblical Commission of 1909 set forth answers to common questions about the interpretation of Genesis: Question 5: Whether all and each of the parts, namely the single words and phrases, in these chapters must always and of necessity be interpreted in a literal sense so that it is never lawful to deviate from it, even when expressions are manifestly used figuratively, that is metaphorically or anthropomorphically, and when reason forbids to hold, or necessity impels us to depart from, the literal sense. Answer: In the negative.

R. Sungenis: And rightly so, for why would we expect the Church to say that something should be interpreted literally when in Scripture some “expressions are manifestly used figuratively”? None of the Fathers believed such a disruption of Scripture was appropriate, yet they were all 24-hour, six-day creationists. Interpreting a word figuratively does not mean that a chronological six-day creation is no longer Catholic interpretation.

Anthony: Question 8: Whether the word ‘Yom’ (day), which is used in the first chapter of Genesis to describe and distinguish six days, may be taken in the strict sense of the natural day, or in a less strict sense as signifying a certain space of time; and whether free discussion is permitted to interpreters. Answer: In the affirmative.27

R. Sungenis: And why did the Church of 1910 allow this? Certainly not because it was teaching that the universe was billions of years old. The main reason is that Augustine had a secondary interpretation of the Hebrew YOM, as noted above. Hence the Church of 1910 was allowing “free discussion” on this point out of respect for Augustine. Notice also that the Church is making no doctrine here. She is merely allowing “free discussion among exegetes.” This is nothing unusual in the Catholic Church. Such free discussion was allowed for whether the Blessed Virgin was conceived without sin right up until 1854 when it was declared infallibly. Free discussion was allowed for the Canon of Scripture right up until 1563 when the Council of Trent infallibly declared the books of the Bible and stated that no more free discussion would be allowed.

Anthony: This does not mean, of course, that Genesis is not a historical account! Indeed, the Commission affirmed that we cannot regard it simply as a legend, even an inspired legend. The events actually happened. But Genesis leaves a lot of room as to the how of creation. And in fact the very modern science which Sungenis condemns helps us fill in some of that “how” in a manner...
consistent with the order of Creation as given in Genesis. For instance, the baffling question of how there could be light before the sun is explained by the Big Bang theory.

R. Sungenis: So now we see Anthony's motive. He puts his trust in the Big Bang theory. But this creates an interesting conundrum for him. Earlier he said Genesis does not “give a literal, time-based description of Creation.” Yet above he says that the Big Bang theory can be “consistent with the order of Creation as given in Genesis. For instance, the baffling question of how there could be light before the sun...” Notice that, even though Anthony says Genesis is not literal and does not give us the “how” of creation, he does an about-face and says the Big Bang is consistent with a literal interpretation and the “how” of Creation since it tells us how the Light of Genesis 1:3 can come before the sun and stars of Genesis 1:20.

Do you see what I’m seeing? It is a “I want my cake and eat it, too” hermeneutic. Anthony will only allow Genesis 1 to be read literally if he can make it fit with his pet scientific theory. Obviously, then, if he doesn’t have a scientific theory to mix into it, then the chronology of Genesis can be interpreted other than literally. How convenient. Genesis becomes the wax nose that Anthony can mold anyway he wants as long as he can make it match the latest cosmological theory given to us by atheists!

So let’s do Anthony a favor. Let’s use his own hermeneutic to interpret not only the “Light” of Genesis 1:3 but the details of Genesis 1:1-2, which says “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the waters.” Obviously, the earth came before the Light. But the Big Bang teaches that the Light came before the earth, by about 8 billion years. In fact, the Big Bang teaches that the stars of Genesis 1:20 also came before the earth, but a literal reading of Genesis says that the earth came before the stars and before the Light.

So Anthony has a big problem. He trapped himself in the corner by telling us that he could interpret Scripture so as to be “consistent with the order of Creation as given in Genesis,” but it turns out to be very inconsistent since Anthony ignored the very order of Creation that was specified in Genesis 1:1-3.

In essence, Anthony arbitrarily chooses which parts of Genesis “leave a lot of room as to the how of creation,” and thus whenever Anthony wants to disregard Genesis’ literal chronology, he does so. Hence, his interpretation of Genesis becomes completely arbitrary, for depending on how close he adopts the latest cosmological theory will determine how literal he allows Genesis to be read. It is nothing but a mishmash of subjective gobbledygook passed off as intelligent exegesis.

Anthony: The real point of Genesis is that God created everything, and that everything owes its existence to God.

R. Sungenis: You will see this exact sentiment in all the liberal and modernist schools of biblical interpretation. They want you to ignore the details of Genesis since the details smack of six-day creationism (and thus Darwinian evolution is denied), anti-relativism (since a fixed Earth demolishes Einstein’s relativity theory), anti-Big Bang theory (since an earth created before the Light disallows
the Big Bang). Hence, the “real point” is that Anthony wants to promote the theories of popular science, not to give us an interpretation that is “consistent with the order of Creation as given in Genesis.” Anthony’s interpretation of Genesis is nothing but a shell game.

**Anthony:** The Hebrews had a radical conception of divinity, an idea of Godhead that the pagan religions had never imagined: a God who is Being Himself, absolutely independent and the Being on whom everything else depends. When God told Moses, “I AM WHO AM,” this is what He meant (a better translation would be “I AM AM,” that is, “I AM BEING”). This ultimate Creator God is a revolutionary idea, and that is what Genesis is getting across.

**R. Sungenis:** No, that is what Exodus 3:14 is teaching. It is only in Exodus that God reveals the tetragrammaton. And this brings up a very interesting point. Why didn’t God begin Genesis with a description of Himself? Why is there no metaphysical treatise as to why God created the world? Why did he begin the Bible by simply giving us a description of its day-by-day creation? Evidently, the chronological details of the creation of the universe were the most important and/or appropriate thing God could tell us. But it is precisely these detailed revelations that Anthony says are not important since he believes Genesis isn’t interested in giving us the “how of creation,” (except, of course, when Anthony wants to shoe horn in a scientific theory into the Genesis account and pretend to be “consistent with the order of Creation as described in Genesis,” viz., the Big Bang theory as referring to the Light of Genesis 1:3).

**Anthony:** Sungenis happily admits to taking Genesis so literally as to believe in six twenty-four hour periods of creation, like many fundamentalist protestants today.

**R. Sungenis:** This is another of Anthony’s red herrings. Let’s look at reality. The Fathers of the Catholic Church, to a man, interpreted the days of Genesis as 24-hour periods. The citations of their consensus is detailed in my book Galileo Was Wrong. Even Augustine did so, since his “one day” theory was only an alternative interpretation not his only interpretation. The medievals followed the Fathers, and the Lateran Council of 1215 and Vatican I of 1870, which spoke of the Creation, made no claims to the contrary. It wasn’t until 1910 (which is nineteen centuries later) that we have an ambiguous remark from the Pontifical Biblical Commission that the Hebrew YOM could be a “space of time.” So, for nineteen centuries it was the Catholics who were the “fundamentalists.”

Just how “fundamental” were these Catholics? Well, they were the very ones who interpreted Matthew 26:26 (“this is my body”) in the most wooden literal fashion, declaring that the bread turned into the actual body of Christ. Do Anthony’s “Protestant fundamentalists” interpret Matthew 26:26 literally? No, in fact, they despise a literal interpretation of such passages, since that smacks of “Romanism.” So, Anthony’s criticism comes back to bite him, if not devour him. The real “fundamentalists” were the Catholics. But Anthony, though he calls himself a “traditionalist Catholic,” doesn’t like the “fundamentalism” of traditional Catholics when it gets in the way of his cherished belief in the Big Bang theory – a theory, incidentally, that is riddled with more holes than Swiss cheese. The Big Bang is missing 96% of the energy and matter it needs to make its version of the universe even slightly plausible. So Anthony is willing to distort the chronology of Genesis based
on only a 4% probability that his pet theory is correct, yet call Catholic geocentrists “fundamentalists.”

**Anthony:** But Sungenis does them one better: he thinks the protestants don’t go far enough, because they don’t literally interpret the beginning of Genesis to support geocentrism.28

**R. Sungenis:** Correct. Obviously, the so-called “fundamentalism” of the Protestants only goes so far. They pick and choose to apply it just as Anthony picks and chooses when he wants his own interpretation to be “consistent with the order of Creation described in Genesis.”

**Anthony:** But even if those passages supported geocentrism as clearly as Sungenis believes, the divinely-inspired author of Genesis was not trying to teach cosmology.

**R. Sungenis:** We see how Anthony must continue to pump his audience to believe that “the author of Genesis was not trying to teach cosmology,” (except, of course, when Anthony believes he can squeeze the Big Bang into Genesis’ cosmology concerning the Light of Genesis 1:3). Only when Anthony says we can do so is it then allowed for the rest of us.

**Anthony:** Similarly, the author of Joshua was not thinking of geocentrism, or heliocentrism, or any cosmological model; he was giving an account of a great miracle by God.

**R. Sungenis:** Notice again how Anthony tries to minimize the historical details of the narrative, just as he did in the Genesis narrative. As Anthony described Genesis as “The real point of Genesis is that God created everything, and that everything owes its existence to God,” so he wants you to forget about the details of Joshua 10 and just consider the narrative as “a great miracle of God.”

**Anthony:** Sungenis, however, thinks not only that Joshua 10:12 is inherently concerned with astronomy, but that it is purposely so. He believes that the moon was mentioned in the passage explicitly to prevent anyone from interpreting it according to heliocentrism, since the motion of the moon cannot be stopped by the cessation of the rotation of the earth, which is how the apparent motion of the sun would be stopped in a heliocentric cosmology.29

**R. Sungenis:** Notice how Anthony tries to avoid the geocentrist’s conundrum of having to explain the moon. He does so by turning the tables and making it appear that the geocentrist’s appeal to the conundrum of the moon is out of place. How clever.

**Anthony:** Leaving aside the obvious fact that the omnipotent God could stop both the rotation of the earth and the moon’s orbital motion if He chose,

**R. Sungenis:** Notice how Anthony casually tries to implant in the audience’s mind that Joshua 10 is not a problem for him because, after all, “God could stop both the rotation of the earth and the moon’s orbital motion if He chose.” What he leaves unattended, however, is that neither Joshua 10 nor any other text of Scripture that comments on Joshua 10, nor any Church Father, nor any medieval, saint, doctor, pope, cardinal or theologian, ever allowed such an interpretation of Joshua 10. The reason was obvious to everyone – the TEXT didn’t say that God stopped the earth from
rotating or the moon from orbiting. It says that He stopped the sun and moon from moving, which means that the Earth was fixed and not moving. The problem is that Anthony doesn't like what the text actually says, so he positions his defense around convincing you that you don't need to interpret the words for what they actually say. Once again, the biblical text becomes the wax nose that Anthony will allow himself to mold any way he wishes, as long as it is consistent with his Big Bang view of the universe.

**Anthony:** it is amusing to think of the divinely-inspired writer of Joshua making careful mention of the moon in order to prevent the passage from being misunderstood by heliocentrists over a millennium later!

**R. Sungenis:** Actually, what is more amusing is watching the exegetical and contextual contortions Anthony must go through, in addition to trying to use psychological influences on his audience, in order to convince them that the addition of the moon in Joshua 10 causes no problem for his view of the universe. I have to admit that Anthony is the first to declare that the cessation of the moon's movement is no problem for heliocentrism. But then again, it’s easy to talk. Backing it up with proof is the hard part and Anthony simply has no proof, in addition to having no backing from the traditional Church whatsoever.

**Anthony:** When we think of miracles involving the sun, we would do well to think of the Miracle of the Sun at Fatima, in which the sun was seen to dance about the sky and even descend close enough to the crowd to dry them from the soaking they had received from the rainy weather. This miracle was observable only in a limited area, meaning that looking for a scientific explanation for the movement of the sun during the miracle is impossible. Should we then look for a scientific explanation for Joshua in terms of either heliocentrism or geocentrism? No. The passage has nothing to say about science.

**R. Sungenis:** Notice the same arbitrary nature of Anthony’s hermeneutic. When it was to his advantage to show that his science was “consistent with the order of creation described in Genesis,” Anthony didn’t hesitate to make the Big Bang the Light of Genesis 1:3. But now that the cessation of a moving sun and moon might cause problems for his “consistency,” Anthony decides that Joshua “has nothing to say about science.” How convenient.

Also, notice how Anthony has created an escape hatch for himself so that he isn’t required to explain Joshua 10 (at least so he thinks). He did so by posing that since there is no “scientific explanation” to the dancing of the sun at Fatima, likewise there is no scientific explanation to the stopping of the sun and moon in Joshua 10. Anthony wants to leave Joshua 10 simply as a “miracle” that cannot be explained.

But the escape hatch isn’t going to work. Anthony already admitted that he thinks he could explain the miracle of Joshua 10 by positing that “God could stop both the rotation of the earth and the moon’s orbital motion if He chose.” Hence, it would still be a miracle even though Anthony could explain it scientifically as a stopping of a rotating Earth and moving moon. Second, the problem for Anthony is that he is using two different definitions for the word “scientific.” For Fatima, Anthony is
using a different sense of the word “scientific” when he claims that there is “no scientific explanation” for the dancing sun at Fatima. The reason is that the sun has never zig-zagged in the sky as it did at Fatima. In effect, we might say that there was a two-fold miracle at Fatima. The first miracle was when God moved the sun; the second miracle was when God made it zig-zag in the sky contrary to its normal movement of traversing laterally over the sky. In this way, it was a more stupendous miracle than Joshua 10, since in Joshua 10 the sun and moon merely stopped their normal movement of traversing the sky on a daily basis but did not zig-zag or show any other extraordinary movement. As such, geocentrists can explain Joshua 10 in a scientific manner just as Anthony tried to explain it scientifically by positing that “God could stop both the rotation of the earth and the moon’s orbital motion if He chose.” In other words, the geocentrist can say, scientifically, that God stopped both the sun and moon from moving across the sky, even though the mere intrusion of God upon the sun and moon was a miraculous event.

This shows, once again, that Anthony’s “I want my cake and eat it, too” hermeneutic is not going to work this time either. He cannot, on the one hand, claim that Joshua 10 is an unexplainable miracle just like Fatima, and, on the other hand, explain Joshua 10 by saying “God could stop both the rotation of the earth and the moon’s orbital motion if He chose.”

**Anthony:** Another famous geocentrist Bible passage is Psalm 103:5, which states that God "founded the earth upon its own bases: it shall not be moved for ever and ever." The geocentrists claim that this supports the stable earth theory that geocentrism depends upon. But that is an extraordinarily literal interpretation that forces the passage into a subject — astronomy — that it is not concerned with.

**R. Sungenis:** Again, notice how Anthony so desperately wishes to draw the boundary lines before he actually exegetes the passage. Anthony is trying to convince us that if anyone interprets the passage as teaching a fixed Earth, then he has crossed over from theology to astronomy, which is simply not allowed. Says who? When has the Church said that an interpretation of a passage cannot touch upon any other discipline? Never. When the Church declared that Matthew 26:26 teaches the Real Presence of Christ, did she correct herself and say that such an “extraordinarily literal interpretation” of Scripture was disallowed because it “forces the passage into a subject of metaphysics that it is not concerned with,” since the Bible does not teach metaphysics or philosophy? No. When the Church gave her doctrine against abortion did she then correct herself and say that such an “extraordinarily literal interpretation” of Scripture (i.e., “thou shalt not kill”) is not allowed because it “forces the passage into a subject of biology”? No. It is only people like Anthony who start with an agenda concerning what can be gleaned from Scripture that such arbitrary rules are forced upon us. Of course, if we were to complain to Anthony that his imposition of the Big Bang as the Light of Genesis 1:3 is not allowed because he is now making the passage talk about astronomy or cosmology, he would be the first to complain.

**Anthony:** The point of the passage is that the earth is solid and dependable, and that this is evidence of the power of God. There are many such passages in scriptures. 2 Kings 22:16: “And the overflowings of the sea appeared, and the foundations of the world were laid open at the rebuke of
the Lord, at the blast of the spirit of his wrath.” 1 Kings 2:8: “For the poles of the earth are the Lord's, and upon them he hath set the world.” 1 Paralipomenon 16:29-30: “Give to the Lord glory to his name . . . Let all the earth be moved at his presence: for he hath founded the world immoveable.” Job 38:4: “Where wast thou when I laid up the foundations of the earth?” All the passages above and the others like them speak of the stability of the earth as giving evidence of the power of God. But again, when they speak of an unmoving earth they are speaking phenomenologically: if one stamps one’s foot, one will find a solid and unyielding earth beneath it.

R. Sungenis: We continue to watch as Anthony makes up his own rules of biblical interpretation. This new one claims that we can interpret the above passages at face value if we limit our view to the “stability” of the Earth, but once we posit that Scripture requires a more literal interpretation, we must be stopped because, according to Anthony, the passages are only “phenomenological.” How does he know this all important fact? By posing his own question-begging example, namely, “if one stamps one’s foot, one will find a solid and unyielding earth beneath it.” So Anthony at least wants some “solid and unyielding” Earth, but not too much “solid and unyielding.” This is just another one of Anthony's “I want my cake and eat it, too” interpretations. He wants the Earth to be “solid and unyielding” enough so he can stamp his foot and the Earth might move just a little, but he doesn't want a thoroughly “solid and unyielding” Earth that doesn't move at all, otherwise he’d have to be a geocentrist. So Anthony’s interpretation is completely arbitrary depending on what Anthony is most comfortable with. Since he believes in the Big Bang and Copernicanism, he doesn’t want an Earth that is completely solid and unyielding.

Anthony: The point is that the earth is stable, it has a “foundation,” or “pillars” set by God. This is a good time to bring up an interesting scientific fact: stability does not mean stasis. In fact, it is doubtful that any single thing in the universe can be truly stationary.

R. Sungenis: And Anthony knows this from what scientific set of facts? Nothing. But it is good to plant in the mind of his reader who is now conditioned to think that nothing in the universe can be truly stationary just because Anthony said so.

Anthony: Rather, we see again and again that moving systems give stability.

R. Sungenis: Notice how Anthony created another strawman. No one has argued that moving systems cannot be understood as stable. Even for the geocentrist, if the universe did not move in a stable fashion around the fixed Earth there would be chaos. But the question at issue is whether the above biblical passages are talking about moving systems. They are not, and there is a good reason why the biblical writer would opt for a motionless object that cannot be moved as the most stable and thus the most fitting analogy for the stability of God. A sole fixed object in the universe would be the best analogy for an immutable God, whereas a moving object, since it shifts from position to position, would imply that God also shifts in position. But God is immutable, and the best analogy for that divine attribute is an immoveable Earth, and that is precisely what the biblical writers are doing (apparently unbeknownst to Anthony).
**Anthony:** In the case of the earth, it is held in orbit around the life-giving sun in accordance with mathematical laws of gravitational force. It is a stable orbit, that “shall not be moved for ever and ever,” since it is founded upon the laws, the “pillars,” that God has created.

**R. Sungenis:** Notice again how Anthony imposes his private interpretation on Scripture. The passage says nothing about an orbiting Earth, but Anthony insists that such must be the meaning because he has adopted Copernicanism as his ultimate authority. For Anthony it is nothing to dismiss the interpretation of the Church Fathers and medievals or treat the Popes Paul V and Urban VIII and their college of cardinals, not to mention all the saints and doctors of the Church, as not only scientific illiterates but also biblical illiterates for thinking that all the above passages are pointing to an immobile Earth! Apparently, the Holy Spirit was leading the Church down the wrong path entirely, and was simply not a part of the proceedings against Galileo nor a part of prohibiting the Church to ever reverse the decision against Galileo.

**Anthony:** Again, care must be taken not to interpret the scriptures to mean something they are not concerned with.

**R. Sungenis:** And Anthony is going to be the one to tell us, with his biblical crystal ball, what the scriptures are concerned with, and he has absolutely no shame that his conclusions conflict with the tradition of the Church, yet he calls himself a “traditional Catholic.”

**Anthony:** This is the mistake the Inquisition made in the Galileo Affair. Dr. Carroll tells us, “The disciplinary decree of the Inquisition was... the result of the subordination of the interpretation of certain passages of the Bible to a geocentric cosmology, a cosmology which would eventually be rejected.”

**R. Sungenis:** So Dr. Carroll is Anthony’s authority, but Dr. Carroll was never a Father of the Church or a pope who condemned Galileo and heliocentrism. Dr. Carroll is merely a man who was taught from childhood in the 20th century that the Earth goes around the sun by the same atheists and agnostics who teach that men descended from apes. Dr. Carroll never investigated whether the science of heliocentrism was true, and he had no science background in order to conduct such an investigation, and he never held an official position in the Church, but somehow Anthony just knows he is right, but the Inquisition, who was an authoritative arm of the pope and the Church, was wrong.

**Anthony:** Also in Psalm 103, we read that God “maketh the clouds thy chariot: who walkest upon the wings of the winds.” Obviously this is not literal — God does not ride around in a chariot made of clouds, or walk across wings that belong to the wind. It is a picturesque way of making a point about God’s power. Why, then, should we interpret the sentences that immediately follow with such impossible literalism?

**R. Sungenis:** Wait a minute. Wasn’t it Anthony who was just telling us that the passage referred to the stability of an Earth orbiting the sun? His interpretation is also literal since he is saying that stability applies to a real thing, an orbit. The only difference is that Anthony’s literal interpretation doesn’t allow a complete literal interpretation, that is, that the Earth is immobile. So Anthony traps
himself again, just as he did with his literal interpretation of Joshua 10 (i.e., that God could have stopped the Earth from rotating and the moon from revolving).

As for Psalm 103/Psalms 104, what Anthony doesn’t tell his reader is that there is a mixture of literal and figurative language in the Psalm, as if often the case in the Psalms. Let’s take a look at the Psalm to see this variation:

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, thou art very great! Thou art clothed with honor and majesty, (literal or figurative)

2 who coverest thyself with light as with a garment (literal or figurative),
who hast stretched out the heavens like a tent (literal)

3 who hast laid the beams of thy chambers on the waters (figurative)
who makest the clouds thy chariot, who ridest on the wings of the wind (figurative),

4 who makest the winds thy messengers, fire and flame thy ministers (literal or figurative).

[ 5 Thou didst set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be shaken.]

6 Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment (literal)
the waters stood above the mountains (literal)

7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the sound of thy thunder they took to flight (literal).

8 The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place which thou didst appoint for them (literal).

9 Thou didst set a bound which they should not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth (literal).

10 Thou makest springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills (literal),

11 they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst (literal).

12 By them the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches (literal).

13 From thy lofty abode thou waterest the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy work (literal, since water comes from the heavens).

14 Thou dost cause the grass to grow for the cattle, (literal)
and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth (literal),

15 and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man's heart (literal, since God created the chemical mechanism for their production)

16 The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon which he planted (literal).

17 In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees (literal)

18 The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the badgers (literal).

19 Thou hast made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting (literal)

20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep forth (literal)

21 The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God (literal)

22 When the sun rises, they get them away and lie down in their dens (literal)

23 Man goes forth to his work and to his labor until the evening (literal).

24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy creatures (literal)

25 Yonder is the sea, great and wide, which teems with things innumerable, living things both small and great (literal)

26 There go the ships, and Leviathan which thou didst form to sport in it (literal).

27 These all look to thee, to give them their food in due season (literal)

28 When thou givest to them, they gather it up; when thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good things (literal or figurative)

29 When thou hidest thy face, they are dismayed; when thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust (literal)

30 When thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the ground (literal).

31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever, may the LORD rejoice in his works, (literal)
32 who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke! (literal or figurative).

33 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. (literal)

34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD. (literal)

35 Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD! (literal)

The tally is as follows:

Literal passages: 31
Literal or figurative passages: 5
Figurative passages: 2

So Anthony’s argument is shot down, since 82% of the passages in the Psalm are to be interpreted literally, and only 18% could possibly be interpreted figuratively. If anything, this leans the evidence toward interpreting verse 5 in a literal manner (a motionless Earth).

In fact, we can make a further stipulation about the two passages of Psalm 103/104 that are used figuratively. The two passages, verses 3 and 4, are speaking about God’s use of the material objects. Whenever God uses material objects, it is put in figurative language. Conversely, the literal passages do not depict God using the material object, but only of creating the object as we now see it operating. Interestingly enough, verse 5, which speaks of the Earth’s immobility, is not a passage in which God is using the material object, but only of his creating it the way we now see it operating, which again leads toward a literal interpretation, not figurative.

Now, if there were no other passages in Scripture that spoke of a motionless Earth, or there were no passages that said the sun revolved around the Earth, Anthony might still have an argument for placing Psalm 103:5 (104:5) in a semi-literal (i.e., an orbit) or figurative category. But the Scripture is replete with passages that state the sun moves and revolves around the Earth and not even one passage that says the Earth moves or orbits the sun. I dare say that Anthony’s interpretation of Psalm 103 doesn’t have a leg to stand on.

Anthony: We should note that not once in the scriptures is there mention of the centrality of the earth. There is much written about its stability, and there are passages that are interpreted to mean that the heavens are in motion, but none that say that the earth is in the center. The concept of centrality comes from the use of the geocentric system by the Church fathers to illustrate mankind’s centrality in God’s mind.

R. Sungeenis: The truth is, there is really no need for the Scripture to specify that the Earth is in the center, since a motionless object in a universe of moving objects must be at or near the center,
unless the wobble of the universe were so wide that it eliminated the Earth from being at or near the geometric center.

**Anthony:** Sungenis claims that geocentrism has the unanimous support of the Church Fathers. One has only to read the Fathers to see his point. They often speak of the sun and stars having a “course” or “circuit,” of the earth being stable and, indeed, centered. But just as with scripture, these passages are not concerned with teaching astronomy or cosmology but with using the established astronomy of the day to make a point about the power of God.

**R. Sungenis:** Anthony is using the same argumentation he tried before, only he is saying it in a different way. His quest is to have you believe that there is a distinction between real “astronomy or cosmology” and the “established astronomy of the day.” In other words, Anthony is using his devotion to Copernicanism to declare that the Fathers’ “astronomy of the day” was wrong for believing that the sun revolved around the Earth. But Anthony adds that even though the Fathers were technically wrong, they could still use their popular astronomy to make arguments about the power of God. In other words, the Fathers could believe in a lie about the order of the true cosmos, but they could still use that lie to show how true and powerful God is! Anthony is so conditioned by his belief in Copernicanism that he cannot see the utter absurdity of his argument.

**Anthony:** Let’s examine a few passages quoted by Mr. Sungenis in his book:

Athanasius: “For who that sees the circle of heaven and the course of the sun and moon, and the positions and movements of the other stars, as they take place in opposite and different directions, while yet in their difference all with one accord observe a consistent order, can resist the conclusion that these are not ordered by themselves, but have a maker distinct from themselves who orders them?” (Against the Heathen, Book 1, Part III, 35).

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” (Why Christians Do Not Offer Sacrifices, Ch. 13).

Basil: “It will not lead me to give less importance to the creation of the universe, that the servant of God, Moses, is silent as to shapes; he has not said that the earth is a hundred and eighty thousand furlongs in circumference; he has not measured into what extent of air its shadow projects itself while the sun revolves around it, nor stated how this shadow, casting itself upon the moon, produces eclipses” (Homilies, IX).

Eusebius: “... to whom he has permitted the contemplation of celestial objects, and revealed the course and changes of the sun and moon, and the periods of the planets and fixed stars” (Oration of Constantine, Ch. VI).

Ephraim the Syrian: “The sun in his course teaches thee that thou rest from labor” (On Admonition and Repentance).
One can immediately see that every one of these passages is making a point about God and about His relation to orderly creation or to humanity. Again, the Fathers are not teaching astronomy. Any astronomy they write of is incidental to the point they are trying to get across.

**R. Sungenis:** So Anthony’s argument is that even though all the Fathers agree that the sun revolves around the Earth, that is only an “incidental” fact compared to the fact that God made an orderly creation. This is just another one of Anthony’s strawmen. He is seeking to make degrees of truth among the Fathers, one lesser (i.e., the sun revolves around the Earth) and one greater (i.e., God made an ordered creation), so that he can minimize the lesser and enhance the greater, and hopefully distract you from seeing that the lesser is no less true than the greater. It is very similar to what he and the modernists do with Genesis 1. They distract you from its details and lead you to think that it is merely a general story about God creating the universe. I admonish Anthony with the words of St. Gregory Nanzianzus: “We, however, who extend the accuracy of the Spirit to the merest jot and tittle, will never admit the impious assertion that even the smallest matters were dealt with haphazardly by those who have recorded them.”

**Anthony:** If one listens to Sungenis one gets the impression that the Church Fathers all got together in a big room and made a decision to support the geocentric model rather than the heliocentric.

**R. Sungenis:** No, I never said or implied such a thing. This is just another of Anthony’s strawmen to beat down and show himself victorious.

**Anthony:** The truth is less exciting. The Church Fathers were simply using the best scientific model available at the time. For centuries, Ptolemy’s geocentric model fit the available data best. It wasn’t until the advent of more advanced scientific techniques and instruments that data accumulated which knocked the Ptolemaic model off its pedestal and gave credence to a heliocentric cosmology. Ptolemaic astronomy simply doesn’t fit the data anymore. Yet it was the Ptolemaic system that was held by the Church Fathers.

**R. Sungenis:** False. None of the Fathers referred to or endorsed Ptolemy. All they knew was that Scripture said the Earth did not move and the sun revolved around the Earth. They were as resolute in interpreting those passages literally as they were of interpreting Matthew 26:26 literally (“this is my body”), since they had a deep and undivided respect that all of Scripture was inspired by God and totally inerrant (unlike today’s modernists and liberals who think there are errors all over Scripture). The Fathers knew there were two possible ways of interpreting the motions in the sky, a heliocentric way and a geocentric way, which information they gleaned from the Greeks before them. Pythagorus was devoted to a heliocentric model, while Aristotle was devoted to a geocentric. There were various versions of each model in the 600 years the Greeks toyed with them. Even epicycles were part of their regimen, long before Ptolemy. What Ptolemy added that distinguished him from the rest was the equant, which put the planets on non-uniform orbits for the first time in history. But Copernicus wanted to go back to the perfect circular orbits of the Greeks prior to Ptolemy, and picked Aristarchus as his mentor. But Copernicus could never get his model to work correctly, and it

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38 Orations, II.
certainly was no better than Ptolemy's model. So Anthony's claim that "Ptolemaic astronomy simply doesn't fit the data anymore," is also true of Copernicus's model, more so than Ptolemy's model, since Copernicus had uniform orbits in perfect circles. It wasn't until later that even Copernicus discovered that he needed the same epicycles he accused Ptolemy of using, and, in fact, had to use 8 more than Ptolemy.

**Anthony:** It is interesting that Sungenis neglects to tell his audience that the Fathers not only didn't believe in heliocentrism, they also didn't believe in Sungenis' own modified Tycho Brahe model of the universe.

**R. Sungenis:** Again, the Fathers didn't promote any particular model of geocentrism. They only promoted Geocentrism, that is, a motionless Earth around which the stars and sun revolved. It was St. Hildegard (d. 1187) who promoted what we know today as the Tychonic model of geocentrism.

**Anthony:** Nor did they mean by "firmament" or "ether" what Sungenis means by them.

**R. Sungenis:** And Anthony knows this by what references to the Fathers? None, apparently, since he cites no views of the Fathers on the firmament to contrast with mine. But since Anthony has opened this can of worms, let's examine what the Fathers understood by the Firmament of Genesis 1:6-9:

**Augustine,** seeking a scientific answer to the firmament, writes:

> Now we are seeking to know whether the Creator, who has ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight, has assigned to the waters not just one proper place around the earth, but another also above the heavens, a region which has been spread around and established beyond the limits of air. What is the firmament? Is it that heaven which extends beyond the entire realm of air and above the air's farthest heights, where the lights and the stars are set on the fourth day? Or is the air itself called the firmament? This is the question that must concern us here.39

After offering his suggestions as to the nature of the firmament, he resolutely concluded:

> With this reasoning some of our scholars attack the position of those who refuse to believe that there are waters above the heavens while maintaining that the star whose path is in the height of the heavens is cold. Thus they would compel the disbeliever to admit that water is there not in a vaporous state but in the form of ice. **But whatever the nature of that water and whatever the manner of its being there, we must not doubt that it does exist in that place. The authority of Scripture in this matter is greater than all human ingenuity.**40

Apparently, Augustine did not hold to the "water canopy" theory, since he says that the water above the heavens "does exist," not "did exist," showing he believed they still occupied the same location

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39 *Confessions*, Bk 2, Ch 1-2.
40 *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Bk 2, Ch. 5, No 9.
in space in the fifth century AD when he was writing the above paragraph. Augustine is more detailed in the following quote: “...for on it the firmament was made between the waters above and beneath, and was called “Heaven,” in which firmament the stars were made on the fourth day.”

For very wonderful is this corporeal heaven, of which firmament, between water and water, the second day after the creation of light, you said, Let it be made, and it was made. Which firmament you called heaven, that is, the heaven of this earth and sea, which Thou made on the third day, by giving a visible shape to the formless matter which you made before all days.

**Thomas Aquinas**, agreeing with Augustine that the present existence of the firmament could not be doubted due to the authority of Scripture, uses a similar argument in one of his *Replies to Objections*, citing Basil as the source of the idea:

Reply to Objection 2: The solution is clear from what has been said, according to the last two opinions. But according to the first opinion, Basil gives two replies (Hom. 3 in *Hexaemeron*). He answers first, that a body seen as concave beneath need not necessarily be rounded, or convex, above. Secondly, that the waters above the firmament are not fluid, but exist outside it in a solid state, as a mass of ice, and that this is the crystalline heaven of some writers.

Reply Objection 3: According to the third opinion given, the waters above the firmament have been raised in the form of vapors, and serve to give rain to the earth. But according to the second opinion, they are above the heaven that is wholly transparent and starless. This, according to some, is the primary mobile, the cause of the daily revolution of the entire heaven, whereby the continuance of generation is secured. In the same way the starry heaven, by the zodiacal movement, is the cause whereby different bodies are generated or corrupted, through the rising and setting of the stars, and their various influences. But according to the first opinion these waters are set there to temper the heat of the celestial bodies, as Basil supposes (Hom. 3 in *Hexaemeron*). And Augustine says (De Genesi ad literam ii, 5) that some have considered this to be proved by the extreme cold of Saturn owing to its nearness to the waters that are above the firmament.

The Fathers and medievals offered other opinions on the firmament, but each of them understood it as being the whole heavens and none of them understood it as a canopy. Later, when the Church was dealing with the constitution of the space of the heavens, they maintained a view similar to the one I am espousing. During the seventeenth-century investigations of the Congregation of the Holy Office into the Copernican theory, a Carmelite friar by the name of Fr. Paolo Foscarini was censured in 1615 (prior to the Galileo case) for his heliocentric cosmology. Little known is the fact that he was...

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41 *City of God*, Bk XI, Ch 9.
42 *Confessions*, Bk XII, Ch 8.
43 *Summa Theologica*, Bk 1, Ques. 68. Art 2.
also censured for his belief that the heavens were “very thin and tenuous.” Among other things, the censor stated:

On page 45 he says that the heavens are very thin and tenuous, not solid and dense. This is clearly contrary to Job 37* ‘Together with this you have created the heavens which are most solid and spread out like the air.’ This cannot be explained as an appearance (as the author indicates) because the solidity of the heavens is not apparent to us.\(^{44}\)

Obviously, the Catholic censor was treating Job 37:18 the same way the Catholic Church was treating the geocentric verses – they were taken at face value and considered factual truth, regardless of what subject matter they addressed. Here we see that even the particulate constitution of the space constituting all of the heavens is not considered a trivial and obscure point that can be ignored. It is regarded with the utmost divine authority and the basis for rejecting Foscarini’s whole approach to Scripture. The battle ground here, as we will see in Chapter 17, is: can Scripture be trusted to give us factual information about the cosmos in addition to its already accepted infallible authority on faith and morals? The answer of the Catholic Church of the 17th century was an unequivocal and unqualified ‘affirmative,’ as it was for the sixteen centuries prior.

Accordingly, Job 37:18 has some very interesting features that support the censor’s contention against Foscarini. The Hebrew sentence reads as follows: הָאֵרֶץ (“can you beat out or spread out”) מֵאָרֶץ ("with him") לָשֵׁם ("the sky, the heavens") בָּאָרֶץ ("hard") לָאָרֶץ ("like a mirror") ("cast"). The first word, מֵאָרֶץ, is a verb appearing twelve times in the Hebrew bible and normally means “to spread or stretch out.”\(^{45}\) It is very similar to the noun אָרֶץ, which is translated as “firmament” in Genesis and the Psalms.\(^{46}\) The word לָשֵׁם ("the sky, the heavens") is from the root שֵׁם and appears twenty-one times as either "sky,"\(^{47}\) "clouds,"\(^{48}\) "heavens,"\(^{49}\) or even "dust,"\(^{50}\) with a notable difference between "sky" and "clouds."\(^{51}\) All in all, it carries the idea of a finely-grained substance that fills the sky, and by extension, the rest of the space of the firmament. The word מֵאָרֶץ ("hard") appears over forty times and is translated as "strong" (Ex 13:9); "mighty" (Ex 32:11); "hard" (Ez 3:9). The word לָשֵׁם ("cast") is from the root שֵׁם and is translated variously as "cast" (Ex 25:12); "pour" (Lv 2:1); "forms" (Jb 38:38); "firm" (Jb 41:23-24); "attached to" (Ps 41:8); "molten" (1Kg 7:16).

The literal meaning is that the sky, heavens or firmament, is not a tenuous, vaporous entity. Although ostensibly it is transparent and pliable, on another level (implied is the subatomic level), Jb 37:18 indicates the heavens are composed of an extremely dense material substance. At the beginning of creation it was expanded to fill the firmament, or perhaps became the firmament once it was

\(^{44}\) The censor’s document is titled: \textit{Judicium de spistola F. Pauli Foscarini de mobilitate terrae} (Lerner in \textit{The Church and Galileo}, p. 24). The text is from Blackwell in \textit{Galileo, Bellarmine and the Bible}, pp. 253-254. We have changed “Tobit 37” to Job 37 since Blackwell apparently misread the original Latin.
\(^{46}\) Gn 1:6-8; 14-17, 20; Ps 19:1.
\(^{47}\) Dt 33:26; 2Sm 22:12; Jb 37:18; Ps 18:11; 77:17; 108:4; Is 45:8; Jr 51:9.
\(^{48}\) Jb 35:5; 36:28; 37:21; 38:37; Ps 36:5; 57:10; 78:23; Pr 3:20; 8:28.
\(^{49}\) Ps 68:34; 89:6, 37.
\(^{50}\) Is 40:15.
\(^{51}\) 2Sm 22:12; Ps 18:11.
expanded. Modern science has corroborated these biblical truths with a plethora of scientific data showing that space is not a vacuum but is filled with an extremely fine but extremely dense particulate matter.

The firmament, רֶפֶךְ, constitutes the entire space between the Earth’s surface and the edge of the universe, and into which the stars and other heavenly bodies are placed. This is in distinction to other Hebrew words, such as הרוֹאָה (reyach), which refer to “space” (e.g., Gn 32:17, not to be confused with רוח (ruach = spirit, e.g., Gn 1:2; Ex 13:10)) or רֶפֶךְ (rachq), which refers to spatial distance, words that the Hebrew writer did not choose to describe the substance of the heavens. Accordingly, many biblical translators have utilized the English word “firmament” (or its foreign equivalent) for the Hebrew רֶפֶךְ in order to denote a firm but pervasive substance to represent the constitution of the heavens. In other passage raqiya appears as “hammered”; while in others it is “stamped”; as compared to “beaten” or “crushed” in 2Sm 22:43.

Essentially, Scripture tells us that the heavens are both flexible and rigid. Apparently, Foscarini’s censor, by nothing more than a simple declaration from Holy Writ, accepted the dual nature of the firmament, one nature observable and the other unobservable, with the latter nature being one in which “the solidity of the heavens is not apparent to us.” Conversely, a solid-shell model of the firmament, which is popular among more traditional Protestant biblicists, ignores these atmospheric and celestial dimensions, and consequently, does not do proper justice to the Scriptural language.

Anthony: In fact, much of what the Fathers have to say about cosmology is no longer believed even by geocentrists. Take Gregory Nanzianzus, who is quoted by geocentrists for saying that the sun has a circuit. But he also said, “. . . it [the sun] has such power that it sheds its light from one end of heaven to the other, and the heat thereof is in no wise lessened by distance” (Funeral Orations for St. Basil, 66). I doubt even Sungenis wishes to reject modern science when it tells us that the sun is only a small part of the universe and that its heat does, indeed, diminish with distance.

R. Sungenis: I think Anthony needs to have a little grace for Gregory. Gregory may be using “lessened” in the sense of “non-existent,” that is, that a very distant planet will still take in heat from the sun, although it is a different amount of heat than it felt on Earth. In either case, neither the Fathers nor the Church ever claimed a consensus or teaching on the sun’s heat.

Anthony: When the fathers speak of astronomy it is to demonstrate the power of God by pointing to the orderliness of the heavens, and to illustrate the centrality of humanity by pointing to the centrality of the earth in the universe. Again, they are not teaching astronomy but using it to make their points.

52 Joshua 3:4; Ps 22:2.
53 Gn 1:14, 15, 17, 20; Ps 19:2; 150:1; Ez 1:22-26; 10:1; Dn 12:3.
54 Ex 39:3; Nm 17:3; Jr 10:9.
**R. Sungenis:** In Anthony’s world, then, both the Fathers and the Holy Spirit can tell a lie to teach a higher truth. Very interesting.

**Anthony:** Today, we can make the same points using heliocentrism and modern cosmology. The universe is no less ordered because the earth goes around the sun and not the reverse. And despite not being centered in the universe — in a universe in which “center” probably has no absolute meaning — the earth and humankind are still central in God’s mind.

**R. Sungenis:** Again, the issue is not about orderliness since we all agree that whatever God creates it is going to be orderly. The issue is about how God created the cosmos. Did he make the Big Bang first and the Earth about 8 billion years later (as Anthony believes) or did he make the Earth first and the Light second (as Genesis 1:1-3 teaches)? Did God want us to believe that Joshua was “just a miracle” or that it could be explained by saying He stopped the Earth orbiting and the moon moving (as Anthony contends) or did He want us to accept that He stopped the sun and moon from moving around a fixed Earth (as the Church Fathers, the medievals, and the Ordinary Magisterium defended, at least until the modernist Catholics took over in the mid 1800s)?

**Anthony:** It is worthwhile here to say a few words about centrality, since it is the primary tenet of geocentrism. The reasoning is that the physical centrality of the earth in the cosmos is evidence of God’s specific creation. This is what the Church Fathers spoke of, and how the scriptures were interpreted. It is why a cosmological system was confused with a matter of faith in the first place.

**R. Sungenis:** Once again, Anthony’s private interpretation claims that the Church and its Inquisition was wrong in saying that geocentrism was a matter of faith and declaring heliocentrism a formal heresy.

**Anthony:** The geocentrists alternate between attacking general relativity (painting it as a conspiracy to keep heliocentrism alive) and using it to justify their insistence that the earth is the center of the universe.

**R. Sungenis:** Yes, it was, of sorts, a scientific conspiracy, but this is admitted by the very scientists who posed Special Relativity as the answer to the 1887 Michelson-Morley experiment. I am not making it up. Here are just a fraction of the quotes showing the nature of the problem after the 1887 Michelson-Morley experiment:

In the late 1950s, historian Bernard Jaffe stated in his book *Michelson and the Speed of Light*:

> The data were almost unbelievable... There was only one other possible conclusion to draw — that the Earth was at rest.57

Science historian and physicist John D. Bernal stated: “The Michelson-Morley experiment was the greatest negative result in the history of science.”58 In the late 1960s, historian Adolf Baker in his book *Modern Physics and Antiphysics*, stated:

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...Thus, failure [of Michelson-Morley] to observe different speeds of light at different times of the year suggested that the Earth must be ‘at rest’...It was therefore the ‘preferred’ frame for measuring absolute motion in space.\(^{59}\)

In 1954, theoretical physicist James Coleman wrote in his book *Relativity for the Layman*, the following admission:

...The easiest explanation was that the earth was fixed in the ether and that everything else in the universe moved with respect to the earth and the ether....Such an idea was not considered seriously, since it would mean in effect that our earth occupied the omnipotent position in the universe, with all the other heavenly bodies paying homage by moving around it.\(^{60}\)

In 1949, physicist G. J. Whitrow realized the tremendous impact of the Michelson-Morley experiment in light of the Catholic Church’s debate with Galileo and admitted the following:

It is both amusing and instructive to speculate on what might have happened if such an experiment could have been performed in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries when men were debating the rival merits of the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems. The result would surely have been interpreted as conclusive evidence for the immobility of the Earth, and therefore as a triumphant vindication of the Ptolemaic system and irrefutable falsification of the Copernican hypothesis.”\(^{61}\)

Finally, Albert Einstein tells us his motivation for inventing Special Relativity. It was because Michelson’s experiment showed the Earth wasn’t moving through space:

Soon I came to the conclusion that our idea about the motion of the Earth with respect to the ether is incorrect, if we admit Michelson’s null result as a fact. This was the first path which led me to the special theory of relativity. Since then I have come to believe that the motion of the Earth cannot be detected by any optical experiment, though the Earth is revolving around the sun.\(^{62}\)

As for Anthony’s assertion that geocentrists use GRT “to justify their insistence that the earth is the center of the universe,” that is false. We use GRT to show those who believe in GRT that even their own science supports geocentrism and that they have no way of discrediting geocentrism. The only one who doesn’t use GRT is Anthony, for if he did use it, he would have no objections to geocentrism. The quotes from Einstein make that abundantly clear. Anthony knows it, and that is why he avoids Einstein.

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\(^{58}\) *Science in History*: Volume 3, page 744, from Jaffe, p. 88.


Anthony: Since general relativity states that all motion is relative, they claim to be free to choose any center other than the sun for their coordinate system; we can just as easily talk about the universe rotating around the earth as the earth moving around the sun. But then they violate general relativity by making the earth an absolute center, not a relative center, holding dogmatically that the earth is fixed and motionless and everything else goes around it.

R. Sungenis: Anthony doesn't understand GRT, apparently. If GRT uses the coordinate system that says Earth is in the center and the universe rotates around it, then GRT is saying that Earth is in the absolute center. A “relative center” only has meaning when GRT wants to switch to a fixed universe and a rotating Earth. It is “relative” because GRT can't tell us which one is the true reality.

Anthony: The concept of an absolute center is meaningless in modern cosmology, not only because of general relativity, but also because space-time probably curves back around on itself like the surface of a balloon (to use a very rough analogy), making the concept of a center completely arbitrary.

R. Sungenis: No, the reality is that “space-time curving back around on itself like the surface of a balloon” is a made-up story without the slightest proof to it. As we noted earlier, Edwin Hubble created the “balloon” universe with “space-time curvature” because he wanted to escape the evidence from starlight redshift that put the Earth in the center of the universe. Here are Hubble’s exact words:

“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.”

Such a favored position, of course, is intolerable; moreover, it represents a discrepancy with the theory, because the theory postulates homogeneity. Therefore, in order to restore homogeneity, and to escape the horror of a unique position, the departures from uniformity, which are introduced by the recession factors, must be compensated by the second term representing effects of spatial curvature. There seems to be no other escape.  

Anthony: To posit a single, fixed reference point for the entire universe that is more valid than any other is to throw out general relativity completely. As John Paul II explained in his 1992 speech to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, “In Galileo's time, to depict the world as lacking an absolute physical reference point was, so to speak, inconceivable. And since the cosmos, as it was then known, was contained within the solar system alone, this reference point could only be situated in the earth or in the sun. Today, after Einstein and within the perspective of contemporary cosmology neither of

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63 The Observational Approach to Cosmology, 1937, pp. 50, 51.
64 The Observational Approach to Cosmology, 1937, pp. 58-59.
these two reference points has the importance they once had. This observation, it goes without saying, is not directed against the validity of Galileo's position in the debate; it is only meant to show that often, beyond two partial and contrasting perceptions, there exists a wider perception which includes them and goes beyond both of them.”

**R. Sungenis:** But the reason that “neither of these two reference points has the important they once had,” is because Einstein's physics can't tell us which one is true. Relativity can only give us a candidate list, but it has no way of picking the right candidate. We see the sun and stars go around us every day, but Relativity can't tell us if it's because the Earth is rotating or the sun and stars are going around a fixed Earth. Hence, it is not an empirical science. In the end, GRT’s adherents cheat, since they pick a rotating Earth as the true model when in fact they has no scientific proof to pick any model. Relativity is a dead end, not a new beginning. It gives us nothing but confusion.

**Anthony:** The fixation on physical centrality that drives geocentrism is pointless in another way as well. It is silly to think of God putting so much emphasis on the physical centrality of humankind as a way to demonstrate that humans are the focal point of His attention. The only possible reason to think such a thing is because it appeals to us to think that God has ordered the entire universe to revolve around us — which is rather arrogant, because in actuality all the universe is dependent upon God. He is its center.

**R. Sungenis:** Oh yes, we can all apply our pet reasons as to why it should be this way or that way, and they all amount to a mere show of subjective wishes. What we do know is that the secularists and the atheists of our day despise being in the center for one reason – because an Earth in the center of the universe could not have happened by chance. Clearer than anything man knows, it means Someone with a capital S had to put it there. We already saw this with Edwin Hubble. He said an Earth in the center was “intolerable,” “unwelcome,” “to be avoided at all costs.”

**Anthony:** And in fact heliocentrism provides a beautiful analogy for mankind's relationship to God. Just as God is a fixed and unchanging source of spiritual light and life for mankind, the sun is a fixed (in relation to the earth) source of physical light and life for mankind. Changeable mankind can only remain alive as long as we keep God at the center of our lives; if we strike off on our own course we are doomed. The moon, orbiting the earth, provides a similar illustration of Our Lady. Just as the moon shines light from the source of our solar system's light upon the earth, Our Lady distributes grace from the source of all graces upon mankind.

**R. Sungenis:** Then Anthony should write his own Bible and make planetary orbits the analogy by which one can get a picture of God's immutability and centrality. Unfortunately, it will be directly contrary to the inspired Scripture we already possess which declares that a non-moving Earth and a revolving sun is not only true, but the best analogy to depict the immutability of God and our Lady’s favor. The real problem here is that as much as Anthony talks about having God the center of his life, he has made popular science the center of his life, and thus anything that God says in the Bible is turned on its head to match the gods that Anthony really admires: Einstein, Sagan, Hawking and the
rest. Anthony doesn’t believe Scripture. He believes in his right to change the meaning of Scripture to conform to his preconceived ideas.

**Anthony:** And then there's this. This argues pretty strongly that God is thinking about humans. This is not to say that God has not left us evidence that his attention is indeed fixed upon humankind. Modern cosmology provides demonstrations for mankind's centrality in the mind of God that are far more powerful and sensible than the idea of a physically-centered earth. We will examine just one of these. The Penrose Number: A Modern Demonstration of Humanity’s Centrality in the Mind of God: Atheist scientists are searching desperately for a way to get around the conclusions that follow from the discovery of the cosmological constants and their relationship to each other, which calls into question their cherished belief that the only force driving the universe is chance. Briefly, there are seventeen cosmological constants, conversion numbers that generally reflect a magnitude or some space-time coordinate which controls the actions and interactions of fundamental forces and energy in the universe. The speed of light constant, for instance, is a constant number that is everywhere the same in the universe. That number determines how mass goes into energy and energy goes into mass. If these constants do not remain the same, there is chaos. But these constants must not only be constant, they must also relate to each other in an exact fashion with no room for error. Slight variations produce universal conditions that are fundamentally non-anthropic — any such universe would be chaotic and unable to support life. Mathematician and physicist Roger Penrose calculated the odds of a universe in which only two of the constants, the Hubble and cosmological constants, were set in relationship to each other to support life. Those odds are ten to the ten to the thirtyieth to one. If we were to write that number out, the universe could not contain it, even if each zero were a micrometer in size!38 There is something poetic about the fact that the universe cannot contain its own odds. Furthermore, it tells us that the entire vastness of the universe, which physically dwarfs humanity, was created for humanity! That is centrality: centrality in the mind of God. It is far more powerful than any demonstration from physical centrality.

**R. Sungenis:** But we are not looking for “more powerful” ways to demonstrate our centrality in the mind of God. Anthony won’t accept Scripture's and the traditional Church's simple way – an Earth in the center of a cosmos that physically dwarfs humanity. Perhaps that is just too obvious for people like Anthony. He gets more pleasure out of cosmological constants that neither Scripture nor the Church ever addressed, much less apply to humanity's significance. But isn’t that the way it always is? God puts the evidence right in front of man, as Paul says in Romans 1:18-20, but man ignores it. Like the Jews who thought they had to climb mountains and cross seas to get to God, God told them that he was right next to them (Romans 10:6-8).

What could be a more obvious sign of God’s existence, power, and care for man than an Earth in the center of a vast cosmos? Here we have one of the greatest evangelistic tools laid in our lap, but Anthony turns his head away and would rather get lost in numbers that can’t fill the universe. Here, in a motionless Earth, we have one of the greatest truths that would vindicate and restore the Catholic Church's power and prestige virtually overnight, since everyone would realize that the Church was right after all and Galileo was pushing heretical ideas, but Anthony turns his head away and worships at the feet of Carl Sagan that can’t confirm a single answer.
**Anthony:** Modern Cosmology is Not Hostile to Catholicism: It would be useful to realize that modern cosmology, unlike modern biology, is not unfriendly to Christianity. In fact, many cosmologists have converted to theism because they realize that the universe itself gives evidence for the existence of God. The Big Bang theory, which originated with Catholic priest Fr. Georges Lemaitre’s theory that the universe expanded from a “singularity,”39 has proven particularly worrisome for atheists, to the point that it was decades before the theory became widely accepted. We are used to hearing the Big Bang mentioned in the same breath as biological macro-evolution, so we tend to equate them. But the Big Bang theory simply states that there is a moment in which the universe as we know it did not exist . . . which implies something outside of the universe to bring it into existence. Prior to this theory the universe was thought to be eternal and therefore uncaused. The atheists are now trying to find a way to interpret the Big Bang as not needing a cause. Alexander Vilenkin’s famous postulation about “quantum tunneling from nothing” is one such attempt to get around the laws of cause and effect, and so is Lawrence Krauss’ more recent assertion that the universe could arise spontaneously from nothing. Neither writer understands what “nothing” actually is. It isn’t a vacuum, or an emptiness, and it is certainly not governed by laws like gravity. It is a true lack of existence. Space is not nothing. Krauss’ quantum fields plus gravity is not nothing. Nothing is nothing. It is a total absence of existence. Only God can bring something into existence from non-existence.40

**R. Sungenis:** First let me say that here we find Anthony telling us “space is not nothing,” yet it was he who vehemently criticized the geocentrist view that space is filled with Planck particles. What Anthony doesn’t appear to understand is that Krauss believes that Planck particles compose space, only his particles pop in and out of existence from other universes in Planck time of $10^{-44}$ seconds, which is why he calls it “nothing” since the time is so short. Unlike Krauss, the Planck particles of the geocentrist are what constitute the universe but they are here to stay and don’t pop off into other universes.

Second, Anthony’s realization of how the atheists have gotten around the necessity of a beginning in the Big Bang by creating the Multiverse (an infinite creation of Big Bang universes from previous Big Bang universes) has just proved my point – the Big Bang is not the evangelical tool that Fr. Lemaitre and his colleagues thought it was going to be. It only took the atheists back one step but they created a bridge to get over that lost step. So Anthony’s desire to make the Light of Genesis 1:3 into the Big Bang just ended in a Big Fizzle, and Anthony deserves it, for anyone who would twist or ignore the words of Genesis 1:1-2 (which says that the Earth came before the Light) deserves to be shown that one lie only leads to another lie.

Conversely, if Earth is motionless in the center of the universe, there is not much that Vilenkin or Krauss can say. They know instinctively that their time and chance universe is thrown out the window and they are stuck with a God who put the Earth right where their atheism wishes it weren’t.

**Anthony:** There are many more demonstrations from modern science that the universe is not the product of blind chance but of an intelligent God. Interested readers should see physicist Dr. Stephen Barr’s book, Modern Physics and Ancient Faith. (Interestingly, Sungenis has tangled with Barr, one of
the most visible defenders of theism operating in the scientific community today, due to Barr’s insistence that Sungenis’ cosmology is unscientific.)

**R. Sungenis:** I challenged Stephen Barr to a public and oral debate over his allegations that geocentrism was unscientific but he declined. I can’t help anyone who refuses to discuss the issue. At least Anthony wrote his criticisms down for display (albeit without his last name).

**Anthony:** Geocentrism as Catholic Dogma: The final argument for geocentrism being official Catholic teaching is the strongest: the condemnation of heliocentrism by the Inquisition in 1633. Sungenis acts as if this condemnation is still binding, and heliocentrism is “formally heretical.”

**R. Sungenis:** I only “act” that way because the Church has issued no official rescinding of the decrees of 1616 and 1633 against heliocentrism. That is a historical fact.

**Anthony:** If this is true, the Church is in big trouble: for hundreds of years Catholic churchmen and even popes have held heliocentrism to be true. Were they heretics?

**R. Sungenis:** Was Aquinas a heretic because he doubted the Immaculate Conception? Was Cajetan a heretic because he doubted the biblical canon? No. No one could become a heretic unless the Church made an infallible proclamation, which proclamations came long after Aquinas and Cajetan, respectively. A person becomes a heretic when there is a clear and unequivocal rejection of established dogma. Unfortunately, due to the Church’s neglect, the doctrine of geocentrism is not taught any longer. Geocentrism has gone the way of other doctrines that were once established but have since been ignored or greatly minimized (e.g., the Tridentine mass, biblical inerrancy, the condemnation of usury, the social kingship of Christ, no salvation outside the Church, ex nihilo creation, contraception, head coverings for women).

**Anthony:** In 1820 the works of Galileo and Copernicus were removed from the Index.

**R. Sungenis:** No, they were removed from the Index in 1835.

**Anthony:** Sungenis has a dubious conspiracy theory about this.41

**R. Sungenis:** Since the best Anthony can do is name call, allow me to introduce you to the so-called “dubious conspiracy theory” so you can judge for yourself:

In 1820, Cardinal Olivieri and Father Anfossi were in a bitter battle about an imprimatur sought for by Canon Settele who had just written a book espousing the Copernican doctrine. 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...65

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. Your choice is 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.

Anthony: But plot or not, it cannot be denied, as much as Sunegenis tries, that heliocentrism has been accepted as true by educated Catholics for centuries. The 1914 Catholic Encyclopedia lauds Galileo and makes it clear that no definition of doctrine was involved in his condemnation:

“It is the great merit of Galileo that, happily combining experiment with calculation, he opposed the prevailing system according to which, instead of going directly to nature for investigation of her laws and processes, it was held that these were best learned by authority, especially by that of Aristotle, who was supposed to have spoken the last word

65 Finnocchiaro, Retrying Galileo, p. 520.
upon all such matters, and upon whom many erroneous conclusions had been fathered in the course of time. . . . [1] It is undeniable that the ecclesiastical authorities committed a grave and deplorable error [in condemning Copernicanism], and sanctioned an altogether false principle as to the proper use of Scripture. . . . That [Paul V and Urban VIII] were convinced anti-Copernicans cannot be doubted, nor that they believed the Copernican system to be unscriptural and desired its suppression. The question is, however, whether these pontiffs condemned the doctrine ex cathedra. This, it is clear, they never did. As to the decree of 1616, we have seen that it was issued by the Congregation of the Index, which can raise no difficulty in regard of infallibility. . . . Nor is the case altered by the fact that the pope approved the Congregation’s decision in forma communi, that is to say, to the extent needful for the purpose intended, namely to prohibit the circulation of writings which were judged harmful. The pope and his assessors may have been wrong in such a judgement, but this does not alter the character of the pronouncement, or convert it into a decree ex cathedra.”42

R. Sunegen: We see the same canard used over and over again, that is, since the 1616 and 1633 decrees against heliocentrism were not issued “ex cathedra,” that detail serves as the fail-safe that gets the Catholic Church off the proverbial hook, and thus no one is the least responsible for rejecting geocentrism. But, in the end, such a ploy forces these commentators to admit that the doctrine of geocentrism was part of the Ordinary Magisterium stemming from the Church Fathers and the medievals and held by the Church for the prior 1600 years. But those who reject geocentrism don’t like to talk about these finer details. That’s why Anthony has stayed away as far as he can from admitting the Ordinary Magisterium’s role in this issue.

Additionally, if, as the Catholic Encyclopaedia authors desire, we make papal infallibility retroactive to 1633, let’s also make Vatican II’s teaching in Lumen Gentium 25 about the pope’s authority retroactive to 1633 also. It states:

“This loyal submission of the will and intellect must be given, in a special way, to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he does not speak ex cathedra in such wise, indeed, that his supreme teaching authority be acknowledged with respect, and sincere assent be given to decisions made by him, conformably with his manifest mind and intention, which is made known principally either by the character of the documents in question, or by the frequency with which a certain doctrine is proposed, or by the manner in which the doctrine is formulated.”

So, in respect of the Church’s geocentric teachings and its corollary condemnations of heliocentrism over the past two thousand years, Lumen Gentium 25 brings us back to square one by authenticating the authority of the 1616-1664 decrees and the level of commitment and obedience Catholics must give to them. In effect, Cardinal Poupard’s and John Paul II’s appeal to the decrees against heliocentrism as not being “irreformable” becomes moot or superfluous since, as is true with many teachings of the Catholic Church, the mere “ordinary” or “traditional” authority of the decrees plays a larger part, according to Lumen Gentium 25, in commanding submission from the Catholic
parishioner. In fact, the Church’s historic teaching on geocentrism and her condemnation of heliocentrism fulfills all the criteria of *Lumen Gentium* 25:

- “that his supreme teaching authority be acknowledged with respect”: 

It was certainly the case that popes Paul V, Urban VIII and Alexander VII understood themselves and their decrees against heliocentrism as coming from their “supreme teaching authority” and commanded that it be “acknowledged with respect.” Urban VIII, for example, approved his Holy Office’s conclusion that heliocentrism was “formally heretical” and “erroneous in faith,” and demanded that Galileo sign an abjuration to that effect. Obviously, Pope Urban VIII also considered his predecessor’s decree, Paul V’s, as authoritative, binding, and demanding respect, since the 1633 decree was based on the condemnations of the 1616 decree.

- “and sincere assent be given to decisions made by him”:

It was certainly the case that the decrees against Copernicanism required the “assent” of Galileo, Foscarini, and all the other theologians who were venturing into the area of biblical cosmology. Urban VIII sent letters of the decree against Copernicanism and Galileo’s abjuration to all the papal nuncios and universities of Europe showing the seriousness of the issue and his desire to have it widely disseminated so that the Christian faithful would be obedient to it. Alexander VII devoted a signed papal bull to the subject of banning books that threaten the faith and welfare of the Christian faithful, stating: “We command each and every one of our venerable brethren, the patriarchs, archbishops, bishops and other Ordinaries of places, as well as those beloved sons who are their vicars and officials, the inquisitors of heretical depravity, the superiors of every kind of religious Order, congregation, society, or institute, and all others...” to obey his words.

- “conformably with his manifest mind and intention”:

Few can read the documents surrounding the Galileo affair and come away without the conviction that the popes, cardinals and the Holy Offices were as resolute in their condemnation of Copernicanism as they have been about most major doctrines of the Church. The popes used and approved very solemn and foreboding language and made sure that the decrees were enforced throughout Europe.

- “which is made known principally either by the character of the documents in question”

The decrees against heliocentrism were put in place for the express purpose of protecting Scripture from false interpretations and protecting the Christian faithful from harmful teachings. Although the decrees may not reach the level of being declared formally infallible, they are, nevertheless, on the
same level of “ordinary” or “traditional” authority as most other doctrines that the Church has taught.

- “or by the frequency with which a certain doctrine is proposed”

The formal and official condemnations of Copernicanism spanned a period of fifty years (1615-1665) and were delineated by three different popes. The number of ecclesiastical documents and other personal correspondences written about the Galileo affair over the course of three decades (1615-1633) exceed 7,000. Obviously the Church considered this a grave matter. She incessantly appealed to the 1500 years of tradition on the teaching of geocentrism as her greatest bulwark against the new ideas of Copernicus and Galileo.

- “or by the manner in which the doctrine is formulated”:

During the condemnations against heliocentrism the Church issued some of the most detailed and comprehensive decrees ever written. Every wrinkle of the issue was investigated, arguments were presented and rebutted, witnesses were put under oath, experts were called in for testimony, the most severe and condemnatory language was formulated in the final decree, that is, that heliocentrism was “formally heretical” and “erroneous in faith.” If geocentric doctrine does not qualify under the rubrics of Lumen Gentium 25, what does?

In addition, Vatican I also had some important things to say regarding the authority of the ordinary magisterium and the claims of modern science. They are as follows:

Further, by divine and Catholic faith, all those things must be believed which are contained in the written word of God and in tradition, and those which are proposed by the Church, either in a solemn pronouncement or in her ordinary and universal teaching power, to be believed as divinely revealed.66

In regard to “those things proposed by the Church,” Vatican I makes no distinction between a “solemn pronouncement” (an infallible, ex cathedra, definition) and the ordinary magisterium, insofar as it concerns the truth of a doctrine. Both sources are to be considered as “divinely revealed.” Hence, if the condemnations of heliocentrism, which were “declared and defined” as being “formally heretical” and “erroneous in faith” were not “solemn pronouncements,” it follows that they were then authoritative decisions from the “ordinary magisterium,” and are likewise to be understood as “divinely revealed.” Vatican I adds:

By enduring agreement the Catholic Church has held and holds that there is a twofold order of knowledge, distinct not only in principle but also in object: (1) in principle, indeed, because we know in one way by natural reason, in another by divine faith; (2) in object, however, because, in addition to things to which natural reason can attain, mysteries

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66 Denzinger ¶1792.
hidden in God are proposed to us for belief which, had they not been divinely revealed, could not become known.\footnote{Denzinger ¶1795.}

In this case, the matter of geocentrism, which, on one level, the Church proposed as a “matter of faith,” it is a fact that modern science, especially the relativistic forms, admits that it cannot determine whether the Earth moves or is stationary. In effect, the immobility of the Earth is something that can only be revealed by “divine faith.”

But, although faith is above reason, nevertheless, between faith and reason no true dissension can ever exist, since the same God, who reveals mysteries and infuses faith, has bestowed on the human soul the light of reason; moreover, God cannot deny Himself, nor ever contradict truth with truth. But, a vain appearance of such a contradiction arises chiefly from this, that either the dogmas of faith have not been understood and interpreted according to the mind of the Church, or deceitful opinions are considered as the determinations of reason. Therefore, “every assertion contrary to the truth illuminated by faith, we define to be altogether false.”\footnote{Denzinger ¶1797.}

In regards to the issue of geocentrism, both of the above warnings come into play: (a) Cardinal Bellarmine informed Galileo that geocentrism was a “matter of faith” and that the Church, based on the consensus of the Fathers, could not interpret Scripture in opposition to the same literal interpretation that had been passed down to it through the preceding centuries. In essence, Galileo was accused of not interpreting Scripture “according to the mind of the Church”; (b) since false claims of scientific proof for heliocentrism were consistently being advanced (e.g., Foscarini, Galileo, Kepler, Bradley, Settele, Boscovich, Newton, Bessel), and from which many people became convinced that heliocentrism was correct, these would have to be classed as “deceitful opinions [that] are considered as the determinations of reason.”

Further, the Church which, together with the apostolic duty of teaching, has received the command to guard the deposit of faith, has also, from divine Providence, the right and duty of proscribing “knowledge falsely so called” [1Tm 6:20], “lest anyone be cheated by philosophy and vain deceit” [Cl 2:8]. Wherefore, all faithful Christians not only are forbidden to defend opinions of this sort, which are known to be contrary to the teaching of faith, especially if they have been condemned by the Church, as the legitimate conclusions of science, but they shall be altogether bound to hold them rather as errors, which present a false appearance of truth.\footnote{Denzinger ¶1798.}

Obviously, Galileo was “forbidden to defend opinions” of “knowledge falsely so called,” concerning the claims of science that asserted the Earth revolved around the sun.\footnote{Some Bibles during this precise time in history (1611-1633) translate 1 Timothy 6:20 as “science falsely so called” (KJV), which shows a common understanding in the early 1600s that “science” was often equated with “knowledge.”} Galileo was reminded in 1633...
that heliocentrism, as early as 1616, had already been “declared and defined as opposed to Scripture,” and was now declared to be “formally heretical” and “erroneous in faith” in 1633. Hence, the Church made it known that heliocentrism was, in the language of Vatican I, “known to be contrary to the teaching of faith,” since it had clearly “been condemned by the Church,” even though it was commonly believed to be a “legitimate conclusion of science.” These “legitimate conclusions,” the Church warned, could “present a false appearance of truth,” which is certainly the case for heliocentrism since geocentrism can be demonstrated to work just as well on a geometric basis. It is quite clear that the ordinary magisterium can, without invoking infallibility, declare these theoretical beliefs of science as propping up a “false appearance,” and are thus “formally heretical” and “erroneous.” It is clear that this was done in 1616, 1633 and 1664, and these teachings against heliocentrism were never officially and formally rescinded or reformed.

And, not only can faith and reason never be at variance with one another, but they also bring mutual help to each other, since right reasoning demonstrates the basis of faith and, illumined by its light, perfects the knowledge of divine things, while faith frees and protects reason from errors and provides it with manifold knowledge. Wherefore, the Church is so far from objecting to the culture of the human arts and sciences, that it aids and promotes this cultivation in many ways. For, it is not ignorant of, nor does it despise the advantages flowing therefrom into human life; nay, it confesses that, just as they have come forth from "God, the Lord of knowledge" [1 Samuel 2:3], so, if rightly handled, they lead to God by the aid of His grace. And it (the Church) does not forbid disciplines of this kind, each in its own sphere, to use its own principles and its own method; but, although recognizing this freedom, it continually warns them not to fall into errors by opposition to divine doctrine, nor, having transgressed their own proper limits, to be busy with and to disturb those matters which belong to faith.\(^7\)

If, for example, “right reasoning” was employed in 1887 when the Michelson-Morley experiment was preformed, it would have shown that a slight impedance of light’s velocity would be due to the rotation of space around a stationary Earth and not because matter shrunk when it moved or that time slowed down. In that case “reason” would have worked very well with “faith.” But Einstein, being an atheist, had no faith. He ridiculed Christianity and hated the Catholic Church. Therefore, he would consider the rotation of space around a stationary Earth as “unthinkable,” and his colleague Edwin Hubble, a like-minded atheist, even though he saw through his telescope evidence that the Earth was in the center of the universe, rejected it as a “horrible” conclusion and something that must be “avoided at all costs.” Faith in Scripture could have provided the necessary boundaries for the crucial interpretations of the scientific experiments of the late 1800s and 1900s. Science would have been spared the wild goose chase it was forced to run as it began inventing a world in which twins age at different rates, clocks slow down at will, matter shrinks upon movement, where one is forced to say that up may be down and left may be right in order to have at least some answer to the crucial experiments. As Thomas Aquinas put it:

\(^7\) Denzinger ¶1799.
The knowledge proper to this science of theology comes through divine revelation and not through natural reason. Therefore, it has no concern to prove the principles of other sciences, but only to judge them. Whatever is found in other sciences contrary to any truth of this science of theology, must be condemned as false.\textsuperscript{72}

Vatican I concludes:

For, the doctrine of faith which God revealed has not been handed down as a philosophic invention to the human mind to be perfected, but has been entrusted as a divine deposit to the Spouse of Christ, to be faithfully guarded and infallibly interpreted. Hence, also, that understanding of its sacred dogmas must be perpetually retained, which Holy Mother Church has once declared; and there must never be recession from that meaning under the specious name of a deeper understanding. “Therefore...let the understanding, the knowledge, and wisdom of individuals as of all, of one man as of the whole Church, grow and progress strongly with the passage of the ages and the centuries; but let it be solely in its own genus, namely in the same dogma, with the same sense and the same understanding.”\textsuperscript{73}

We aren’t done yet. Perhaps the most significant reason why the doctrine of geocentrism should be considered infallible comes, quite surprisingly, from one of the more modern declarations concerning the teachings of the Church. Lumen Gentium states in Paragraph 12:

The holy People of God shares also in Christ’s prophetic office: it spreads abroad a living witness to him, especially by a life of faith and love and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips praising his name (cf. Heb. 13:15).\textsuperscript{74} The whole body of the faithful who have an anointing that comes from the holy one (cf. 1 Jn. 2:20 and 27)\textsuperscript{75} cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of the faith (\textit{sensus fidelis})\textsuperscript{76} of the whole people, when, “from the bishops to the last of the faithful”\textsuperscript{77}

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\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Summa Theologica}, I, Ques. 1, Art. 6, ad. 2.
\textsuperscript{73} Denzinger ¶1800.
\textsuperscript{74} “Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.”
\textsuperscript{75} “But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all know....but the anointing which you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that any one should teach you; as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him.”
\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Lumen Gentium} 12 adds this footnote: “(The \textit{sensus fidelis} refers to the instinctive sensitivity and discrimination which the members of the Church possess in matters of faith. – Translator.)”
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Lumen Gentium} 12 adds this footnote: “See St. Augustine, \textit{De Praed. Sanct.} 14, 27: \textit{PL} 44, 980.” This refers to Augustine’s work \textit{Predestination of the Saints}, Book II, Chapter 14: This grace He placed “in Him in whom we have obtained a lot, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things.” And thus as He worketh that we come to Him, so He worketh that we do not depart. Wherefore it was said to Him by the mouth of the prophet, “Let Thy hand be upon the man of Thy right hand, and upon the Son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself, and we will not depart from Thee.” This certainly is not the first Adam, in whom we departed from Him, but the second Adam, upon whom His hand is placed, so that we do not depart from Him. For Christ altogether with His members is--for the Church’s sake, which is His body -- the fulness of Him. When, therefore, God’s hand is upon Him, that we depart not from God, assuredly God’s work reaches to us (for this is God’s hand); by which work of God we are caused to be abiding in Christ with God – not, as in Adam, departing from God. For “in Christ we
they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals. By this appreciation of the
faith, aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth, the People of God, guided by the sacred
Teaching authority (magisterium), and obeying it, receives not the mere word of men, but
truly the word of God (cf. 1 Th 2:13), the faith once for all delivered to the saints (cf. Jude
3). The people unfailingly adheres to this faith, penetrates it more deeply with right
judgment, and applies it more fully in daily life.

Since it is a fact that the “People of God,” which includes “the bishops to the last of the faithful,”
have believed unanimously, firmly and without equivocation in the doctrine of geocentrism from
the beginning of the Catholic Church and throughout two millennia, and who were “guided by the
sacred teaching authority” to do so, this belief necessarily fulfills the criteria of Lumen Gentium 12
that these same People of God “cannot err.” It is an undeniable fact that all the Fathers, all the
medievals, all the bishops, priests, saints, doctors, theologians and the remaining Christian faithful of
every nation believed in the doctrine of geocentrism. Additionally, three popes and their Holy Offices
officially confirmed this absolute consensus in the 17th century against a few men who, because of
their own misguided convictions, sought to depart from that consensus, making the attempt in the
wake of unproven scientific claims with the express purpose of reinstituting a novel and subjective
interpretation of Holy Writ.

As we have seen, even many years after modern science began to treat heliocentrism as a scientific
fact, the Catholic faithful still maintained their vigilance for geocentric doctrine. It has only been in
the last one hundred years or so that this consensus has waned.

Because of the waning consensus, some objectors might themselves appeal to the principle of
Lumen Gentium 12 and posit that the Holy Spirit is now teaching the “People of God” that
geocentrism has been correct all along. But that notion, of course, is impossible, since the “People
of God” could not have been “aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth” into believing that
geocentrism was correct for 1900 years and then have the Spirit suddenly change His mind to teach
them the opposite. It would make the Holy Spirit a liar, which is certainly impossible. The reality is, if
the “People of God” were led to believe that geocentrism was the truth, and which was, according
to the stipulations of Lumen Gentium 12, “guided by the magisterium” to confirm their consensus,
then there is simply no possibility that a change in their belief could be understood as a movement of
the Holy Spirit.

Anthony: More recently, in 1981, Pope John Paul II set up a commission to study the affair, and in
1992 gave a speech to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in which he stated, “One might perhaps be

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78 “And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us,
you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.”
79 “Beloved, being very eager to write to you of our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to
you to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”
surprised that at the end of the Academy's study week on the theme of the emergence of complexity in the various sciences, I am returning to the Galileo case. Has not this case long been shelved and have not the errors committed been recognized? [emphasis mine]” Later in the same speech he states that “Cardinal Poupard has also reminded us that the sentence of 1633 was not irrefrangible, and that the debate which had not ceased to evolve thereafter, was closed in 1820 with the imprimatur given to the work of Canon Settele.” Finally, he states: “The error of the theologians of [Galileo’s] time, when they maintained the centrality of the earth, was to think that our understanding of the physical world’s structure was, in some way, imposed by the literal sense of Sacred Scripture. . . . In fact, the Bible does not concern itself with the details of the physical world, the understanding of which is the competence of human experience and reasoning.”

R. Sungenis: And after all that, Pope John Paul II never made an official statement that heliocentrism or acentrism is correct and geocentrism is false. He never officially reversed or rescinded the 1616 and 1633 declaration that heliocentrism was formally heretical; and he never officially stated that the Fathers and medievals were wrong in their consensus. The only thing John Paul II did was put on a spectacle giving the appearance that the Church was finally admitting her “error,” when in fact he did nothing officially to establish that position. I attribute that to the protection of the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit did the same with Vatican II. Although a lengthy treatment of the Galileo issue was planned for Vatican II, in the end not one word was said about Galileo. As it stands, the Church’s official position on geocentrism and Galileo has not changed, although there certainly is an underground movement in the modernists and liberal camps of Catholicism to make it appear as if everything has changed and Galileo has been exonerated.

Anthony: Sungenis tries to use this speech himself, quoting the pope when he says, “It is a duty for theologians to keep themselves regularly informed of scientific advances in order to examine if such be necessary, whether or not there are reasons for taking them into account in their reflection or for introducing changes in their teaching.” Although the pope obviously meant that the Inquisition had erred by not taking scientific advances into account, Sungenis uses this statement to support his claim, saying, “keeping ‘regularly informed of scientific advances’ so that theologians can ‘introduce changes in their teaching’ is precisely what this book, Galileo was Wrong: The Church was Right, is encouraging modern theologians to do.” But however Sungenis approaches it, it is evident that Pope John Paul II held modern cosmology to be correct and the sun to be at the center of the solar system. In fact, he considered the whole discussion closed. Was he then a heretic? There is a slippery slope to sedevecantism in this line of thinking.

R. Sungenis: John Paul II is entitled to have his own personal opinion about cosmology or any other subject, but the glory of the Catholic Church is that there is a big difference between a pope’s personal beliefs and what he declares officially as Catholic doctrine. John Paul II said nothing official about the Galileo issue. I find it interesting, however, how Anthony, by using the quote from the Catholic Encyclopedia above, plays the game of, on the one hand, using papal infallibility to override the decrees of 1616 and 1633 under Paul V and Urban VIII, and, on the other hand, using the mere speech of John Paul II in 1992 to the Pontifical Academy of Science as if it were some official statement of the Catholic Church to overturn Paul V and Urban VIII. Catholics often do this. Papal
infallibility becomes the rag doll that each side will use to its advantage when needed to win an argument. Catholics will also appeal to statements a pope has made which supports a personal belief the Catholic has, but by and large they reject most of the teachings and practices of the same pope (which I suspect is true of Anthony, since he says he is a traditional Catholic). And, as Anthony did above, even though as a traditionalist Catholic there are many things that Anthony disagrees with from the pontificate of John Paul II, he will turn right around and use someone else’s disagreement with John Paul II as evidence of “a slippery slope to sedevacantism.”

**Anthony:** Cosmology is Not a Matter of Faith: As John Paul II pointed out, the mistake the Inquisition made when it condemned Galileo, and the mistake the geocentrists make today, is to equate a cosmological model with a matter of faith. Even if the pertinent passages in scripture were far more clearly geocentric than they are, the geocentric cosmology, or any cosmology, would not be a matter of faith. Sungenis disagrees with this, and blames the fact that John Paul II thought this way on the result of the Galileo Affair. He laments:

“Once geocentrism had been rejected because it was assumed that science had proven heliocentrism, the Bible would never be looked at the same way again. If the Fathers of the Church, the medieval theologians, and the prelature were wrong about interpreting the Bible as a source that gave literal and accurate truth concerning history and the cosmos, then this would forever set the stage for limiting the Bible’s domain. . . . It is a cataclysmic shift in thinking that is comparable to no other in the history of the Church.”44

But the belief that the Bible is not concerned with teaching cosmology as a matter of faith does not date to the acceptance of heliocentrism, but far earlier.

**R. Sungenis:** Once again, Anthony distorts the issue. Geocentrism, in itself, is not a matter of faith. Matters of faith are those that determine whether we will inherit eternal life with God. As such, it doesn’t make any difference if the Earth goes around the sun or the sun goes around the Earth since celestial orbits have nothing to do with salvation. But what IS a matter of faith is what Scripture declares as truth. Logically, if Scripture says the sun goes around the Earth, it is the revelation of that truth that becomes a matter of faith. As Bellarmine told Foscarini and Galileo, it would be as heretical to say that the Earth goes around the sun as it would be to say that Jesus was not born of a Virgin. To deny a propositional truth of Scripture means that one holds that either Scripture errs or speaks lies, and thus it is a sin against the Faith. The importance of reestablishing the doctrine of geocentrism is because the Church has suffered such immense persecution from the world in the last few hundred years because the world believes the Church made a mistake in condemning heliocentrism. The prestige and authority of the Church has waned to great proportions because of that image. It is my hope that a reeducation of the issue shows the traditional Church was led by the Holy Spirit to condemn heliocentrism due to the fact that heliocentrism is either not provable or is altogether false. This is precisely what is needed to restore the Church to her former authority in the eyes of the world.
**Anthony:** Sungenis claims medieval theologians on his side, but we find the contrary in the writings of the greatest medieval theologian of them all, the Angelic Doctor himself. In the Summa Theologica, Thomas Aquinas responds to an objection that everything in scriptures is a matter of faith:

"[O]f things to be believed some of them belong to faith, whereas others are purely subsidiary, for, as happens in any branch of knowledge, some matters are its essential interest, while it touches on others only to make the first matters clear. Now because faith is chiefly about the things we hope to see in heaven, 'for faith is the substance of things hoped for,' [Hebrews xi.1] it follows that those things which order us directly to eternal life essentially belong to faith; such as the three Persons of almighty God, the mystery of Christ's incarnation, and other like truths. . . . Some things, however, are proposed in Holy Scripture, not as being the main matters of faith, but to bring them out; for instance, that Abraham had two sons, that a dead man came to life at the touch of Elisha's bones, and other like matters narrated in Scripture to disclose God's majesty or Christ's incarnation."45

Cosmology is one of those subjects in scriptures which do not “order us to eternal life” but serves to “bring out” or illustrate a matter of faith and to “disclose God’s majesty.” Since cosmology is not a matter of faith, it follows that it cannot be doctrine. If I believed the entire universe went around the moon, I would be mistaken, but I would not be a heretic. Whether one believes that the earth rotates around the sun or the sun rotates around the earth really does not matter to one's own life of faith. One can be Catholic and believe either without detrimental effect to one's spiritual life, because the question of what is at the physical center of the universe is not a question of faith at all. Geocentrism is therefore a peripheral issue that is unimportant to the Catholic Faith except to vindicate the Church in the Galileo Affair — and a better way to do that is to look at the history of the Galileo Affair rather than the legend, as Dr. William Carroll does, as Jason Winschel does, as the Catholic Encyclopedia does.

**R. Sungenis:** Anthony is distorting the issue and Thomas isn't saying what Anthony wants him to say. Thomas is merely making the same distinction I made above, namely, that geocentrism, in itself, is not a matter of faith but the resurrection of Christ is, by itself, a matter of faith. But Thomas is not addressing the matter when someone denies a proposition of Scripture as being in error. For example, if someone claimed that Scripture was in error when it said Abraham had two sons, then it is a denial that Scripture is inspired and inerrant and thus becomes a matter of faith, and Thomas would agree whole-heartedly that such is heresy.

As for Jason Winschel, I stated earlier that The Angelus would not allow me to publish a rebuttal to Winschel back in 2003, but I will give the gist of that rebuttal here, since Anthony so admires Winschel’s article. In the article, Winschel writes:

- Firstly, in terms of apologetics, if the Church indeed pronounced solemnly that the earth does not revolve around the sun, then she almost certainly would have erred. Naturally, this
situation would have eliminated her claim of infallibility, which would in turn destroy her claim of Divine institution.\textsuperscript{81}

Later Winschel writes: “And yet, the earth moves!” and “Galileo was right about heliocentrism,” and “Galileo seems to have won both on theological as well as scientific grounds.”\textsuperscript{82} Here we have the typical child of the Enlightenment; one who has accepted the status quo of modern science without reservation and is willing to put it all on the line, as it were, believing that everything can be answered on that basis. The absolute fact he employs to make his conclusions is that science has proven the Earth revolves around the sun; yet, ironically, he provides no such proof in his article. Although it might appear that he gives himself at least some escape clause in the words: “then she almost certainly would have erred,” he is not so equivocal toward the end of his article:

Had the Inquisition made a mistake in declaring heliocentrism heretical? Yes. Did the Church err? Absolutely not. In fact, where the Holy Ghost played a role was in seeing to it precisely that the Church did not at this time make the error of stamping the decision of the Holy Office with her infallible approval.\textsuperscript{83}

Here we see, perhaps, an additional apologetic. The goal is not merely to protect the doctrine of papal infallibility but to minimize the role of the popes and make it appear as if they had little to do with the whole affair. The same type of evasion was employed in the 1992 papal speech prepared mainly by Cardinal Poupard. It spoke of the “error of the theologians” but laid no blame on the popes and cardinals who, everyone knows, played a much larger role than what the speech admitted. We can understand the dilemma of these apologists. Since they are convinced that a gross “error” occurred in the years 1616 to 1664, there is little choice but to deflect as much blame from off the hierarchy as possible, for image is just as important as substance in such cases. Even though these authors know that the historical record shows quite clearly that over the course of fifty years Paul V, Urban VIII and Alexander VII facilitated, interrogated, presided, endorsed, commanded, demanded abjurations, sent signed notices to papal nuncios, and signed papal bulls endorsing the condemnation of heliocentrism, respectively, the whole burden of the supposed mishap is placed on the shoulders of the “Inquisition,” perhaps because that infamous institution has always been the favorite boogeyman employed to epitomize the primitive and uneducated medievals of yesteryear who were just a bit too zealous for their Christian faith and who are thus caricatured as having not the slightest wit about things scientific. The title of the apologist’s article could just as well be worded: The Popes: Victims or Villains? and probably get his point across much better. As such, it would be his contention that the popes involved in the Galileo affair are not to be considered “villains” who besmirched the Church’s reputation by promoting error; rather, they are “victims” of

\textsuperscript{81} Jason Winschel, “Galileo, Victim or Villain,” The Angelus, October 2003, p. 10. A few months after the article was published, we approached the editor of The Angelus and asked if he would allow us to write a rebuttal for the sake of fairness. He declined, even after an appeal. A milder treatment of the Galileo affair is written by Thomas E. Woods, Jr. in How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization (2005), although Woods gives no consideration to the idea that Galileo could have been wrong. Fr. Victor P. Warkulwiz, in The Doctrines of Genesis 1-11: A Compendium and Defense of Traditional Catholic Theology on Origins (2007) is highly favorable to geocentrism.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., pp. 36, 38.

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p. 36.
an Inquisition gone awry, a runaway train that the pontiffs were helpless to stop. This is the type of murky quicksand that Catholic apologists are forced to adopt once they elevate the premise of heliocentrism to an established scientific fact. They find themselves inadvertently implying that the Church at large could be: (a) led wholesale down the primrose path of error; (b) be virtually ignored by the Holy Spirit because He apparently doesn’t deal in things stated “non-infallibly”; (c) led to maintain a spurious allegiance to the consensus of the Church Fathers; (d) led to erroneously uphold the traditional belief in inerrancy and literal interpretation of Scripture, and (e) be forever embarrassed in front of a gaping world of critics, all for the sole purpose of “saving the doctrine of papal infallibility” a doctrine which, ironically, was neither employed nor defined until the late nineteenth century.

On the other hand, this type of apologetic forces the bearer to speculate in the negative about the motivations of the popes. Toward the end of his article, Winschel, driven by his belief that “Galileo was right about heliocentrism,” finally faces the pope and, as we would expect him to do, puts the blame on the pontiff instead of Galileo:

In Galileo’s defense, one could argue that certain Churchman acted disreputably during this affair. Motivated by wounded pride, Pope Urban VIII certainly exaggerated when he referred to the whole thing as the worst scandal in the History of the Church. This in the midst of the Thirty Years’ War and hot on the heels of the Protestant Revolution, the Western Schism and the abuses of the Renaissance Era!?84

The first thing Winschel’s approach verifies for us is the very reason that our volumes were written as they are – with strong emphasis on the scientific side of the debate. Being a product of his intellectual culture (the Enlightenment, modern science, historical criticism, etc.), a whole generation of Catholics have been reared and educated in the school of heliocentric hegemony. One such example is the school of Teilhardianism, the teachings of the wayward Catholic theologian from France, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, whose corrupting influence began in the early 1900s and found its way into many of the minds of the prelates who sat at Vatican II. Earlier we cited his strange “omega-searching” evolutionary ideas, but Teilhard was also pushing for the connection between the demise of geocentrism and the rise of evolutionary thought, as well as his desire to rid the world of the traditional notion of Original Sin. In the book published in 1969 (fourteen years after his death), Christianity and Evolution, he writes:

It is not only, in fact, a few palaeontological discoveries which are forcing the Church to lose no time in modifying her ideas about the historical evidence of human origins. The whole new physiognomy of the universe, as disclosed to us for some centuries now, is introducing an intrinsic imbalance into the very core of the dogma; and we cannot escape from this except through an extensive metamorphosis of the notion of original sin.

As a result of the collapse of geocentrism, which she has come to accept, the Church is now caught between her historico-dogmatic representation of the world’s origin, on the one

84 Ibid., p 38.
hand, and the requirements of one of her most fundamental dogmas on the other – so that she cannot retain the former without to some degree sacrificing the latter.

In earlier times, until Galileo, there was perfect compatibility between historical representations of the Fall and dogma of universal redemption – and all the more easily, too, in that each was modeled on the other. So long as people believed as St. Paul himself did, in one week of creation and a past of 4000 years – so long as people thought the stars were satellites of the earth, and that animals were there to serve man – there was no difficulty in believing that a single man could have ruined everything, and that another man had saved everything. **Today we know, with absolute physical certainty, that the stellar universe is not centered on the earth, and that terrestrial life is not centered on mankind.**

With the end of geocentrism, what was emerging was the evolutionist point of view. All that Galileo’s judges could distinctly see as menaced was the miracle of Joshua. The fact was that in consequence the seeds of decomposition had been introduced into the whole of the Genesis theory of the fall: and we are only today beginning to appreciate the depth of the changes which at that time were already potentially completed [in Galileo's day].

**Anthony:** The Dangers of the Evangelization of Geocentrism: In this confused time, a time in which secular science holds as its principle dogma the explicitly anti-Catholic philosophy of metaphysical naturalism, a time in which the Catholic Church herself has been corrupted from within by the influence of modernism, it is only natural that traditional Catholics question much that comes out of both modern science and the modern Church. But it is possible to question too much. Rejecting modernism does not mean rejecting scientific concepts like heliocentrism. Doing so, in fact, can be very harmful to the traditional Catholic community. It is possible to take contra mundi too far, especially if we make a matter of faith out of a subject that does not have any special bearing on spiritual matters.

**R. Sungenis:** This is key. Anthony is admitting he has a deep-seated fear of letting go of heliocentrism. That’s understandable, since he has been taught it since he was old enough to talk. For some people, rejecting heliocentrism is just too revolutionary, too radical, too weird. “Can’t you pick some other boogeyman to attack, Sungenis? Why do you have to attack the heart of modern civilization? Can’t you stick with Not By Faith Alone and be satisfied?” No, I will not be satisfied until I tear down all the false gods of modern man, and heliocentrism is the most favored god of modern man. He loves that god because it puts the Earth out in the remote recesses of space where it most likely settled after being born from a universe of only time and chance and no God to direct it. He also loves the “relativity” that embraces heliocentrism, since it leads to making everything relative, including the morality of man. He also loves the god of heliocentrism because it shrugs off his back the Catholic Church that points the finger at his sins, since he reasons that if the Church was wrong about Galileo, well, it can be wrong on many things not directly associated with salvation, like contraception, homosexuality, women’s liberation, and a whole host of societal issues.

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Anthony doesn’t realize it yet, but he is deeply influenced by the false god of Scientism; so much so that he wants to protect this god from being taken away. He accepts almost everything this false god tells him, and even finds himself trying to support this false god by saying that Scripture verifies its existence (as Anthony did when he tried to tell us that the Big Bang was the Light of Genesis 1:3). Unfortunately, Anthony’s protection of this false god is based on a false premise, namely, “It is possible to take contra mundi too far, especially if we make a matter of faith out of a subject that does not have any special bearing on spiritual matters.” Anthony thinks this way because he failed to make the proper distinction of what constitutes a matter of faith, leaving out the divine propositions of Scripture as also being matters of faith.

**Anthony:** We should remember that the real issue at stake whenever the Galileo Affair is brought up is not whether geocentrism or heliocentrism is true, but whether or not the Church is anti-scientific. Sungenis believes that by claiming that geocentrism is scientifically true he can vindicate the Church and uphold the absolute truth of scriptures. But he fails to realize that he is doing exactly what the modernists accuse the Church of doing: trying to force scientific data to fit an unyielding model of the cosmos which he obtained from a false interpretation of the scriptures.

R. Sungenis: The insurmountable problem for Anthony’s thesis (i.e., that I am giving a “false interpretation of the scriptures) is that I have almost two millennia of official Church teaching on my side. It was the Fathers of the Church who introduced the idea taking Scripture at face value concerning the cosmos. Like Bellarmine, they believed that since Scripture gave us specific information on what goes around what, this was a sacred truth that must be defended, especially against the Greek Pythagoreans who were teaching the exact opposite. This was followed by all the medieval Church; it was held as Christian doctrine by the 1566 Tridentine catechism; it was defended rigorously when both Copernicus’ and Rheticus’ books on heliocentrism were put on the Index in the 1560s. Heliocentrism was eventually condemned as “formally heretical” by the highest arm of the Church, which was personally facilitated and approved by two popes, Paul V and Urban VIII.

The only time there was ever any wiggle room was in 1820 when Canon Settele managed to get an imprimatur out of Pius VII by the lies that Cardinal Olivieri told to Pius VII. And now that we have all three branches of modern physics (Newtonian, Machian and Einsteinian) supporting geocentrism whereas in 1616 and 1633 this was not even possible, we have all the more reason to tell the truth and vindicate the Catholic Church from the cloud of doubt and suspicion created by the atheists who have long-worshiped at the feet of Copernicus in order to minimize the power of the Catholic Church. Hopefully, after Anthony sees that I have neutralized almost every argument he has put in his essay, he will begin to see the truth of what I am advocating.

**Anthony:** The modernists will ignore St. Thomas when he carefully explains the complementary relationship between faith and reason and addresses the question of whether or not the scriptures are trying to teach natural science. They won’t ignore Sungenis: he’s too good a source of propaganda. Already one can find papers by college professors on the internet which point to Sungenis as proof that religion is anti-scientific.
R. Sungenis: Of course. Claiming that a geocentrist is “anti-scientific” is the perfect ploy. It’s great propaganda. But the truth is, NONE of these critics will take me on in a public debate and deal with the scientific issues mano-a-mano. They have been asked, but they all decline. They know that the charge of “anti-scientific” is completely false. They know that their own science supports geocentrism, since we quote their own gods (Newton, Mach and Einstein) showing so. That Anthony is fearful of such persecution shows why he has gone against his own “traditional” instincts and succumbed to the elitist propaganda. Anthony needs courage and needs to stop worrying about embarrassment.

Anthony: Sungenis is correct in believing that much of modern science is being used as a vehicle for an anti-Catholic worldview. But anti-Catholicism is not inherent in science, but is added to it when it is interpreted by scientists hostile to religion. The Big Bang is not inherently anti-Catholic, but is made to seem so by those who incorporate it into a worldview of chance-based metaphysical naturalism.

R. Sungenis: Anthony believes the Big Bang is “not inherently anti-Catholic” because he thinks he has the right to insert it in Genesis 1:3 to be the Light. As we’ve seen, he forgot to take notice that Genesis 1:1-2 puts the Earth first in the order of Creation, then the light. So if the Light is the Big Bang, then Anthony has just contradicted Scripture.

Anthony: Heliocentrism is not inherently anti-Catholic, but is made to seem so by those who mock the Church’s earlier adherence to geocentrism and subscribe to the Galileo Legend.

R. Sungenis: Not quite. Heliocentrism was made “inherently anti-Catholic” when the Church Fathers, in unanimous consent, stated that Scripture taught geocentrism; and which consensus was cited and followed by the Ordinary Magisterium; and which was upheld at the trial of Galileo in 1633. Any reversal of that tradition must first present scientific proof that heliocentrism is correct; and the Church must follow with an official declaration that heliocentrism has been proven and that the canonical decision against heliocentrism is now officially overturned. Nothing like that has happened, and never will happen, so heliocentrism remains “inherently anti-Catholic.”

Anthony: The atheists think that if they disprove physical centrality they disprove Catholicism, which is ridiculous, but by accepting these things as anti-Catholic instead of stripping the atheistic assumptions away and examining them on their own merits, Sungenis plays right into the atheist's hands and condones their interpretations and assumptions.

R. Sungenis: No, the one who plays into the atheists hands is the person who claims to be Catholic yet disregards the Catholic Church’s Fathers, the tradition, the Ordinary Magisterium and the official decrees against heliocentrism. The atheist simply points out that the person claiming to be Catholic is not obeying his Church’s decrees and really doesn’t trust that the Holy Spirit guided the Church into all truth. As such, the Church shows itself to be fallible, even though it claims to be infallible, and no Church like that is worth following and has no compelling case for God’s existence. The atheist wins.

Anthony: It would not be so bad if Sungenis held geocentrism as his own eccentric, personal view. But he acts as if it is official Catholic teaching.

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R. Sungenis: It is official Catholic teaching, and Anthony has shown nothing that contravenes that conclusion. Not only has Anthony ignored the whole tradition of the Church, he has shown no official declaration from the Catholic Church that either says heliocentrism is true and geocentrism false, nor any official declaration that says the Church Fathers, the Ordinary Magisterium or the official decrees of 1616 and 1633 were in error in their upholding of geocentrism. Essentially, Anthony has nothing but a cadre of liberals and modernists who have rejected Scripture’s inerrancy for the potage of scientific theories that purport to know how the world runs, and, ironically, actually support geocentrism.

Anthony: I spoke to an African seminarian who had attended one of Sungenis’ lectures on geocentrism. He told me, a little wonderingly, “This man speaks like a theologian, as if he speaks for the Church. But where does he get that authority?” Where, indeed? Sungenis evangelizes geocentrism.

R. Sungenis: As a baptized Catholic, I have a commission from the Church to preach the Gospel. Included in that Gospel is a recognition of both the doctrines that the Church has taught since her inception and a recognition of the inerrancy of Scripture that provided those doctrine for the Church. The Church, in turn, has never told me that I am wrong in doing so, nor has the Church ever stated to me, in any official manner, that geocentrism is false and I am not to teach it to others. As for correcting those prelates in the modern Church who follow dubious scientific theories (e.g., the Big Bang, Relativity) and who reject geocentrism, Canon 212 gives me the right to publically proclaim to all the Christian faithful that they are incorrect in their view.

Anthony: Because of his strong assertion that geocentrism is a Catholic doctrine, Mr. Sungenis and the Catholics he appears to speak for will be irrevocably associated with a falsehood by those who hear him, and all the atheists who insist that religion is anti-scientific will have more ammunition to use to confuse uneducated Americans and students in colleges around the country. We must be wary of suffering a loss of credibility.

R. Sungenis: I don’t have a crystal ball to predict the future and neither does Anthony. What Anthony needs to do now is go over the rebuttals to his scientific, biblical and historical arguments that I presented in this paper. If he can prove that I am wrong, then he can make all the accusations he wants. As of now, Anthony is just another in a long line of Catholics who don’t have any evidence to prove their claims and are more motivated on how geocentrism might embarrass them and the Church than they are in discovering the real truth. Anthony should worry much less about “suffering a loss of credibility” and a little more about the weak arguments he uses to defend his position.

Anthony: If any non-Catholic hears a Catholic, especially one who, like Sungenis, presents himself as a Catholic authority, talk about geocentrism as both scientific fact and Catholic teaching, and that person later hears a Catholic talking about matters of genuine faith and morals such as abortion, homosexuality, or any of the dogmatically defined Catholic truths, they will lump these moral subjects in with the mistaken scientific subject and believe that Catholics are wrong about both. Will anyone’s opinion that the Church’s teaching against contraception has no validity in modern times be
changed when they know that the person trying to convince them believes the genuinely outdated notion that the sun revolves around the earth? It is doubtful.

R. Sungenis: Actually, it is just the opposite. If the very Church that claims to know not only what the Scripture says but what Scripture can be applied to, makes a major mistake in both categories as Anthony claims it did in (1) assuming, in the first place, that celestial orbits were part of divine revelation and thus a matter of faith, and (2) incorrectly holding the belief that the sun and stars go around the Earth, then the atheist has the perfect alibi for why he shouldn't follow the Church in any other area.

Anthony: Or consider a hypothetical case that is closer to home: if we teach our own children that geocentrism is Catholic teaching, what will happen when these children then grow up, enter college, and take a basic astronomy class in which they see that geocentrism is scientifically untenable?

R. Sungenis: And this has been Anthony’s basic faulty premise throughout his essay. He believes geocentrism has been scientifically disproven, and I can understand why, since his scientific arguments are quite facile and distorted. This is why I've taken the time to rebut each and every scientific assertion that Anthony has made against geocentrism.

I've taken the time to help Anthony despite the fact that Anthony's motives with me are quite suspect, since he didn't write me a private letter inquiring what my answer would be to his scientific challenges, but instead, he posted his essay on his blog for all to see, complete with caricatures of me (e.g., standing on a soap box), and he refused to give his last name so that somehow he would escape being associated with his own critique.

Anthony: There is great danger that they will then doubt the Church in matters of genuine faith and morals, such as what they ought and ought not to do with their girlfriends.

R. Sungenis: Somehow Anthony is oblivious to the fact that if his children are genuine thinking adults in college, they will figure out that if the Church of 1616 and 1633, led by its illustrious popes and cardinals in the very highest places, were wrong in condemning Galileo and heliocentrism in official declarations that were sent out to the whole world with the requirement for them to be obeyed, then why should those very children trust anything the Church has to say, at least if it is not put in an envelope marked with the words “infallible and irreformable”? If the Church wasn't led by the Holy Spirit in the 1600s (especially right after it dealt with the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s), can the Church really claim any consistency with its tradition?

The problem is that Anthony is too awe struck of a possible revolution in which the Church seizes power over the world as it did in the first millennium and at least half of the second. Anthony has become comfortable with the status quo (the one that gives him cell phones and jet planes). He doesn’t want his children to be looked at with disdain when they go to college. He wants them to fit in as best they can and be judicious about which issues they will discuss and defend. He’d rather have the pottage to fill his belly now than the inheritance to eventually rule the world.
The vision I have is too big for Anthony. Hence he will scrap and claw and manufacture high-sounding arguments and make up caricatures of geocentrist so that he doesn't have to face the awesome possibility that the Church was right in condemning Galileo. Anthony is not alone. Even I have struggled with these fears from time to time. Did I bite off too big a piece? Did I wake a sleeping lion and put the Church in even more danger than she was before? Each time I asked myself those questions and prayed about them, I always received the same answer from God: “Now is the time.” Hence, I believe God has great plans to turn the world around and evangelize it from the bottom up. Showing the Church was right about Galileo would be just the spark to ignite that divine revolution.

Anthony: The crux of the matter is this: whether one is geocentrist or heliocentrist simply does not matter.

R. Sungenis: For all the reasons I gave above, it does matter. Either the Church from the Fathers to Pope Urban VIII were right about geocentrism, or Catholics today have no right to claim the Holy Spirit is guiding the Church into any truth, much less the inerrancy of Scripture and its geocentric teaching. It is precisely because of the Galileo issue that the modern prelature has rejected the biblical inerrancy taught by the traditional Catholic Church. In essence, the presumed failure of the Church in the Galileo affair has forever altered how Catholics look at Scripture. They simply don’t see it as exuding the same absolute authority that everyone from the Church Fathers to Pope Urban VIII saw it exuding. Today the modern prelature believes that Scripture is only inerrant when it speaks about salvation. This means that about 90% of Scripture is believed to be subject to error, since only about 10% of Scripture deals with specific theological propositions about how one procures salvation.

Consequently, those stories in the Old Testament that we all grew up with and cherished as the revealed word of God have all been demoted to fiction by modern Catholics. Only the most general framework of biblical history is regarded as reasonably true, and you might as well forget about the details of any historical narrative. We are told that they simply didn't happen as recorded in the Bible but were added by the transcriber for his own purposes. We are told today by modern Catholics that Genesis 1 has little to do with a real Creation story since no one even remotely close to being divinely inspired wrote it (e.g. it was not written by Moses). Instead, we are told that Genesis 1 was written by some unnamed priest when the Jews were just about to come back from the Babylonian captivity in 515 BC, and the reason this priest wrote it was because he wanted the Jewish deity to appear superior to the Babylonian deity, Marduk. Hence, this priest’s made-up story (the one we read in Genesis 1) would reinvigorate the Jewish people. In other words, the Jewish priest fabricated a story from his own mind to serve as a rallying point for the Jewish exiles.

If that is what they do to Genesis 1 (the foundation of the rest of Scripture) you can imagine how these same modern Catholics regard passages which speak about the sun going around the Earth. They are no more considered inspired Scripture than Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey. All of this started when science claimed that the Church was wrong in condemning Galileo. This then led to a reexamination of everything the Bible stated in its historical narratives. Before we knew it, almost all of the Bible’s narratives were emptied of any historical credibility, and that is where we are today. This is why, with one match we can start a huge forest fire. With the one match, which shows that
the Church was never wrong about Galileo, we can evangelize the world and silence all the liberals and modernists who have decimated the Catholic Church with their cockamamie theories.

**Anthony:** We should be wary of making what is already difficult for non-Catholics to accept even more difficult than is necessary. We should not let traditional Catholicism become cult-like. Rather than trying to convince the world that an obscure pseudo-scientific model that is only incidentally related to the Faith is correct, we traditional Catholics should instead expend our energy trying to convince the world that the doctrines and teachings of the Church on faith and morals are true. Not only are these teachings rationally tenable, they also have immediate relevance to virtuous living, a quality which geocentrism can never claim.

**R. Sungenis:** To use an old expression, Anthony can’t see the forest for the trees. He naively thinks by admitting defeat for the Church in the Galileo issue this will somehow clear the books and allow the Church to deal with more important issues of faith and morals, which will then exude its credibility with the world. But how many times have we seen the following caricature of the Church paraded around by the world in order for the world to distance itself from the Church. The caricature is: “Well, we all remember what happened when the Church falsely condemned Galileo for believing that the Earth went around the sun, and the same thing is happening here when the Church is dealing with... (fill in the blank).”

Where, for example, do you think the current climate about homosexuality originated, both in the world (e.g., homosexual marriage) and in the Church (e.g., the homosexual and pedophile scandal following Vatican II and exposed in the pontificate of John Paul II)? It came from the same mentality that said Scripture is not inerrant when it speaks about history or the cosmos, and the same mentality that says the Church of 1600 was wrong to think that Scripture covered these areas, and doubly wrong to condemn Galileo for not believing it. Bottom line, if Scripture is not inerrant when it speaks about anything other than salvation, then it is also wrong when it delves into areas such as homosexuality. Consequently, the modernists say St. Paul’s warnings against homosexuality are only his personal opinions due to the cultural biases he had cultivated (which he also exhibited against women and thus barred them from the priesthood and told them “to keep silent in the church, and if they have any questions they should wait until they get home and ask their husbands” in 1 Cor. 14:34-35). I, in fact, know priests who have told me that Scripture has no authority for them when it speaks on issues such as homosexuality, since they believe that Vatican II’s Dei Verbum 11’s phrase, “for the sake of our salvation,” limited Scripture’s inerrancy only to matters regarding salvation.

**Anthony:** We have our work cut out for us already without wasting time and attention on cosmological models. Let’s not make converting the world more difficult than it already is.

**R. Sungenis:** If Anthony thinks this is just about “wasting time and attention on a cosmological model,” then he has missed my whole message and my whole purpose. As I said above, because of his scientific prejudices, Anthony can’t see the forest for the trees. If this were merely about cosmology, I wouldn’t waste my breath, much less put my reputation on the line. I hope Anthony will reexamine his arguments in light of that perspective.
End.

November 11, 2014

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Posted by Anthony T at 2:36 PM