

Christ and the little green men

Just when I thought that faith was on the way out, along comes the government with a report on 'unexplained aerial phenomena' or UAPs (formerly known to millions of us as UFOs or 'unidentified flying objects'). Why the name change? It could be that our officials don't want us to think of extraterrestrials when we see something strange in the sky... or it could be some 'brander' who thought it was just time to update the 1940s appellation for things that hover and streak above us OR can it be that the feds don't want us to assume the worst and are trying to make UFOs more friendly and acceptable?

Personally, I don't care what we call *them* as long as we don't sweep these thousands of yearly sightings behind the government's information iron curtain. My first personal encounter with UFOs was reading "Project Blue Book" in the mid-fifties (Project Blue Book was the code name given to the U.S. Air Force' study on UFOs which started in 1952 and continued until 1969). When the project was terminated, the USAF summarized its findings thusly: "No UFO reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force was ever an indication of threat to our national security; there was no evidence submitted to or discovered by the Air Force that sightings categorized as "unidentified" represented technological developments or principles beyond the range of modern scientific knowledge; and there was no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as "unidentified" were extraterrestrial vehicles."

We now know what the government either knew but didn't want to tell us (that UFOs exist) or that they didn't know enough (about why they visit us and didn't want to admit it) or some other reason. Either way, since 1969, there have been numerous sightings by credible witnesses like military and civilian pilots that corroborate these encounters with objects that fly in defiance of our understanding of aeronautics and physics. And these sightings are increasing, dramatically.

According to a recent poll by the Rasmussen organization: "More than one-in-five Americans say they or someone they know has seen an unidentified flying object (UFO), and a majority think the government may be covering up the truth about UFOs." The latest Rasmussen Reports national telephone and online survey finds that 22% of American Adults say they or someone they know has seen a UFO – slightly up from 19% two years ago – while 66% say no one they know has ever seen one, and another 12% aren't sure.

Two years ago this month, the Director of National Intelligence released a report entitled: "Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena." Just prior to the publication of the report, the Pew Research Center released its study that stated that 65% of Americans say that they think there is intelligent life on other planets and the majority believes that UAPs present no threat to our national security. It seems that we are approaching a general acceptance that *we are not alone* anymore. This gives comfort and closure to some but upsets many others who would like to believe that *man* as we know him is the only living creature and that his address is planet Earth.

While aliens are moving closer to the realm of believability and gentrification, Christendom is struggling to hang on to its followers. It seems that it's now easier to believe in little green men in spaceships than in an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving God. Christianity is not only a belief; it is recorded history, but its history and the care that went into the recording of that history have always been in dispute by the non-believers and the deity-deniers. Christians have lived side-by-side with that disbelief for eons but have continued to practice their religion despite it. To my knowledge, aliens have not passed on their version of the Bible to us, nor have they taken out an ad in the New York Times declaring their existence. We're expected to believe it... on faith.

The desire to believe anything we cannot explain has always presented a problem. It is part of the human condition, and it is wrapped up in our human senses, but complicated by our human brain which weighs the sensory evidence of everything and then factors in an element of doubt and ultimately reaches a conclusion based on a perception of threat and the primal need to survive.

Anything that threatens our survivability is treated seriously (if not emotionally). The same is true of organized religion or organized anything. Over time, we have become more skeptical and more aware of the many threats to our way of life. Everything is viewed through the prism of a SWOT analysis. This goes for people and institutions... and especially those who govern us.

Christ said, "I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6). That begs the question: "Does that cover all extraterrestrial life if it exists as well, and if aliens are just another 'tribe' or branch of God-inspired God-created life, then shouldn't they be subject to Jesus' words, too?" Obviously, this is a question for Christians to ponder, rather than secularists, but if the existence of other life-forms can be proven then it will present a very fundamental question for everyone... about the power and relevance of faith.

It is, quite simply: "How can we justify having faith in extraterrestrials but not in God the Father of Jesus Christ? Can we live with a duality of belief in some things but not others?" Once we have had that 'close encounter of a third kind' will it inspire us to become less skeptical and move closer to God or farther away, citing science as the justification? The answer is in the stars.

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