

Millennium Year Perihelion

My Dear Friends,

Dr. Boff has communicated a rare and important ethereal message to me and to his loyal supporters on this plane of existence. The message is directed not only to his supporters but also to the idiots of the media who continue to refer to this as "The New Millennium," as they play the theme music from Arthur Clarke's "2001." Did they miss the point, or have they forgotten how to count? The latter is more likely as most of the media people have been taught the New Math.

The year 2000 is NOT the beginning of the 21st century nor the 3rd millennium. As Dr. Boff's colleague, Dr. Elena Poliakhova, has pointed out, "This is the last year of our (the 2nd) millennium." The source of this confusion is that there was no year zero. The source of this problem is that the Romans had no mechanism for using zeros in their number system. Try taking a square root by hand in Roman numerals. Then try to cube that number to get the mean motion of a planet about the Sun. Little wonder that the Romans didn't figure out Kepler's third law. Little wonder that the modern media people can't figure out which century it is.

These considerations pale in comparison with Dr. Boff's reminder that we should run East at the moment of midnight on 2000 January 2, local mean solar time, the time when the Earth's motion about the Sun is greatest and the time when the rotation of the Earth on its axis causes the speed of a human affixed to the surface of the planet to be nearly maximum. These are the important considerations related to the beginning of a new year, not because some emperor or king has decided to fix the calendar or the reference date, but because the Earth has come to its closest approach to the Sun. As the ancient Greeks said, "That which is closest, is bestest." I'm not sure which Greeks said this, but I'm sure that at least one of them did; if not, one of them should have. Please be seated; the rest is not just rhetoric.

Dr. Boff's idea, and his admonition to us all, is that we should run East at midnight on perihelion so as to achieve the maximum speed attainable by an individual who runs (Eastward) as fast as he or she can. Some of Dr. Boff's students and colleagues have invented ingenious methods for achieving maximum speed at Earth's perihelion. Recently, His Northship, the Segpeth of Speed, devised a method for driving a very fast car Eastward from Cabo San Lucas and then, at the moment of perihelion, releasing his seat clamp so as to permit the spring in the driver's seat to propel the driver forward at a rate greater than that of the car with respect to the Earth's rotation.

Others have devised mechanisms for increasing the speed of the "runner" at perihelion. Some have suggested hiring a bus whose driver is admonished to drive as fast as possible in an Eastward direction. Those riders who wish to increase their maximum speed, run from the back of the bus to the front as quickly as possible. Except for orbital "runners" who may run from the back of the Space Station to the front, there is a larger complement of colleagues of C.B. Boff who may choose to hire a fast airplane that is

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commissioned to fly to the Equator, at the exact moment of perihelion, and at the exact moment of local midnight, and then to run from the back of the plane to the front. People who decide to carry out this airborne "perihelion run" should have an examination before committing to the actual run.

Each year, there are some who question the wisdom of this philosophy and symbolism on the grounds that the Sun is moving some 600 km/s with respect to the center of the galaxy (as opposed to the paltry 30 km/s of the Earth about the Sun). This wider view is to be commended and the proponents of the galactic view are encouraged to calculate the time during the year when one may run fastest with respect to the galactic center of mass. But this is not Dr. Boff's admonition as the running Eastward is purely symbolic and serves to remind people that we are on a very small planet, orbiting an ordinary star in a commonplace galaxy; more important, it serves to point out that the inhabitants of this small planet are starting another revolution of that planet about the Sun.

It is said that Dr. Boff works in Moscow during the winters (because the nights are longer and Dr. Boff works at night). A few years ago, Dr. Sukhanov heard rumors that Dr. Boff was seen running East at midnight in Otyaberskaya. A picture was taken of the alleged runner and was distributed via the internet; naturally, the picture was dark because it was nighttime. Those of you in Russia who may hope to catch a glimpse of C. B. Boff may wish to choose October Square as your point of departure for the run. Do not be disappointed, however, if you are unable to confirm the identity of Dr. Boff; there is no documented evidence of his existence on this ethereal plane. Yet we know he exists. Thank you for your attention.

Chauncey Uphoff

Representative of Dr. C.B. Boff on this plane.