

## Beam Me Up Scotty By Bob Waldrep

"They have landed!"

With these words broadcast over nationwide radio on Halloween eve 1938, the United States populous was hurled into a frenzied hysteria. Broadcast personality Orson Welles was reporting H.G. Wells' classic 1898 book *War of the Worlds* as if it were actually occurring. Neither he nor the show's producers anticipated that citizens would be turning on their radios and believe they were in the midst of a real invasion by aliens from outer space. However, it is estimated that some six million people heard the broadcast with about 1-1.7 million believing it was a real event.

Although this is a well-publicized event, it was not the first time people have been frightened by seeing or hearing of some unidentified phenomenon in the clouds. Throughout the history of man, strange apparitions have been reported in the skies, which at the time could not be explained. Some who believe in beings from other planets, as well as some doubters, would even attribute the angels and manifestations of God in the Bible as actually being UFOs. In fact, in dealing with the Bible, it is not uncommon to hear UFO believers speak of Jesus as having been an extraterrestrial or as having an "out-of-this-world" origin.

A recent "Aliens Among Us" poll (May 2012) commissioned by the National Geographic Channel (NGC) to promote its new series, "UFO Chasers" reminds us of just how seriously some Americans take the belief that we have been visited by extraterrestrials. It also indicates the belief in UFOs and space aliens is still fairly prominent among our citizens.

On the lighter side, "Aliens Among Us" found that, if aliens were to attack, 65% of Americans thought President Obama would be a better leader than would his Republican opponent Mitt Romney. Regarding which superhero they thought would be best to call upon in the case of an alien attack, 21% chose the Hulk over second place Batman at 12%. This is an interesting finding, particularly as the poll found that seven out of ten Americans think it is more likely that aliens exist than believe superheroes are real.

Concerning UFOs, the poll found 71% of Americans believe in UFOs, 11% are confident they have seen one, 20% claim to know some-

one who has seen one, and 79% believe the government has kept something about UFOs hidden from the American public. These numbers do not necessarily reflect a similar belief in extraterrestrial life. For, when examining this phenomena one must be careful to remember that UFO (Unidentified Flying Object) does not mean alien spacecraft or flying saucer; it means just what it says: an object in the sky which can be observed or detected, but which cannot be identified or verified by the one making the observation.



H.G. Wells



Orson Welles

In other words, it does not mean that, while unidentifiable to the observer, there are not others who can identify or explain what was observed. For example, most people have seen an airplane flying in the sky and, therefore, would not classify it as a UFO. However, were that same

plane to fly over a remote area of the world where the inhabitants had never seen an airplane, it would be to them, a UFO.

As NGC is now "Chasing UFOs", we thought it a good time to look at the historical development of the UFO craze, hitting some of the highlights that have led to the current interest. Even though there have been UFO sightings throughout history it was not until the late 1940s that any degree of scientific investigation was devoted to these. Prior to that time, there was not the sophisticated technology, produced as a result of World War II, and later the space program, to properly address this phenomenon. Also, a new wave of interest occurred in the 1940s that could not be ignored.

In fact, the modern day interest in UFOs began in 1947 when businessman Kenneth Arnold, was flying his private plane and claimed several shiny sphere-like objects were flying ahead of him, in formation, and at great speed (estimated at 1200 mph). Arnold promptly reported what he had seen, setting off a chain reaction of fantastic and frightening proportions. The media picked up the story and many described what Arnold saw as "saucer-like" leading to the popular term, flying saucers. With the growing news reports, other sightings followed and the "saucers" became front page news.

Due to this, the U.S. Air Force became involved in investigating this phenomenon, estab-

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lishing "Project Saucer." Their investigations would continue for over two decades under the names "Project Sign" (1947), "Project Grudge" (1949), and "Project Blue Book" (1951). When these concluded in 1969, the Air Force admitted they could not explain 29 per cent of the UFO cases they studied. A companion study, "Project Colorado," set up at the University of Colorado and independent of the Air Force, had similar findings when they released their final report in 1969. The fact that a number of these cases could not be explained should not be taken as proof that there are extraterrestrials among us. In fact, the final report of "Project Colorado" states in part:

"The report recognizes that there remain UFO sightings that are not easily explained. The report does suggest, however, so many reasonable and possible directions in which an explanation may eventually be found, that there seems to be no reason to attribute them to an extraterrestrial source without evidence that is much more convincing...On the basis of present knowledge, the least likely explanation of UFOs is the hypothesis of extraterrestrial visitations by intelligent beings."

Throughout the many years of investigation, neither the Air Force nor any other governmental agencies, investigating UFO sightings, have admitted to or released any documented evidence to substantiate one of these so-called sightings as being due to interplanetary travel by beings from other worlds. However, most UFO enthusiasts believe the government not only has proof for the existence of extraterrestrials but is involved in a massive cover up, at the highest levels, to keep this information hidden from the public.

Among the assertions made, is the widely held belief among enthusiasts that the government cover up includes, at least, nine UFO crashes during the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Perhaps the most famous is said to have occurred near Roswell, New Mexico in July of 1947. In that case, enthusiasts claim, not only did the government recover the crashed spacecraft, it also recovered the occupants - at least one of whom, they claim, was still alive and held in captivity for a number of years. (Keep in mind that the NGC poll found almost 80% of Americans believe the government is hiding something about UFOs.)

It is amazing to think that such events could have been covered up successfully for over a half a century. It is especially difficult to believe when one considers that this same government could not successfully cover up one president's involvement with

wire-tapping (Watergate), another president's extra-marital affairs (Bill Clinton), nor an arms for hostages deal (Iran-Contra), just to name a few.

Recognizing the interests American had in UFOs, Hollywood jumped on board the bandwagon, in the 1950s, producing a number of so-called "B" movies about space aliens attacking Earth. These include films such as, *The Day the Earth Stood Still* and *The Thing From Another World*.

Television wasn't far behind with Rod Serlings' 1959 series, *The Twilight Zone*, often having similar themes, as did the program, *The Outer Limits*. In the 1960s science fiction programming wholly centered on aliens and space travel were popularized in programs such as, *Lost in Space*, *Star Trek* and, the sitcom, *My Favorite Martian*.

***"Many of the UFO reports now being published in the popular press recount alleged incidents that are strikingly similar to demonic possession and psychic phenomena which have long been known to theologians and parapsychologists."***

Lynn Catoe, Senior Bibliographer, Library of Congress

In the 1960s interest in the UFO phenomenon lessened somewhat, possibly due to advent of the space program and Americans shifting their focus to their own rising space technology interest. This would change in the early 1970s, as a renewed interest began to develop - fueled in no small part by the release, in the U.S., of Erich Von Daniken's *Chariot of the Gods?* in 1968. The book had already sold over 300,000 copies in its first year of publication in Germany.

In his book, Von Daniken posed the question, "Was God an astronaut?" He then presents his theories supporting this in the affirmative, while attempting to prove all religions are actually rooted in visitations by extraterrestrials. Cashing in on its popularity, many similar books soon followed, including some sixteen by Von Daniken.

Scientists and religious scholars quickly began to refute Von Daniken's ideas and so-called scholarship; however, his appeal to certain segments of our culture did not wane. In fact, the American public had been softened to the idea of extraterrestrials, with many being so convinced that evidence to the contrary was no longer acceptable.

The deception of the American public is so well entrenched that the reaction to a program like Welles' would no doubt be

much different than in 1938. Today's society has become comfortable with the idea of life on other planets. The NGC poll found that 22% of Americans would try to befriend an alien who landed in their backyard, 15% would flee, and only 2% would attack the alien.

A Gallup poll taken in 1990 revealed that 14 percent of Americans claim to have seen a UFO. By 2005, Gallup found that almost a fourth of Americans believe it likely extraterrestrials have visited Earth. A 2008 poll by Scripps Howard found 33% of Americans believe extraterrestrials have visited Earth. The NGC poll found an astounding 77% of Americans now think there are signs that indicate aliens have visited Earth. It is clear that this is an idea that has found a place in the culture of this country.

Consider that during the 1990s, groups like the "Moderns" in Kenosha, Wisconsin, were building devices to lure space aliens to the planet. These devices, typically built using crystals along with other component parts, even include a built-in alien detector to ensure no alien impostor tries to deceive them. During this same time period, *Unicus*, *The Magazine for Earthbound Extraterrestrials* was being published in Manhattan Beach, California-exclusively for beings from other worlds living among us - and boasted of having 3,000,000 subscribers. Aliens and others can still read articles online.

Perhaps a more startling indicator of how far this movement has come in mainstreaming is the shift during the 1990s toward it being more acceptable to some of those in the scientific and medical fields. Since such individuals are generally viewed as representing the voice of scholarship, they lend some credibility, even if unfounded.

This was particularly evident in a UFO conference held in Massachusetts during 1993. That the conference was held was not nearly so significant as who hosted it—the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and, the host sponsor, MIT physics professor and UFO advocate, Dr. David Pritchard. While MIT denied being involved in the conference and tried to distance itself from it, the fact that it was held at the Institute's facilities was used to further legitimize the conference. In fact, after it concluded, the conference quickly became known in UFO circles as "the MIT abduction conference."

One of the UFO movements more important converts was Pulitzer Prize Winner and Harvard Medical School psychiatrist, John Mack. His work includes the book, *Abductions*, in which he documented thirteen of his case studies of individuals claiming to have been abducted by aliens. At

the time of its writing, Mack said he had nearly 100 such patients and that he was firmly convinced of the veracity of their claims. (Generally, those reporting being abducted recall the alleged details while under hypnosis. The first to gain wide recognition was Betty and Barney Hill who claimed to have been abducted in 1961 after recalling the event while under hypnosis in 1964).

One of Mack's goals for his book was to convince skeptics that extraterrestrial life forms not only exist but are here on our planet. Claiming to have been a skeptic when he started his research, he wrote, "Some other intelligence is reaching out to us...I've been careful as possible to exhaust conventional explanation. None of them begin to explain this phenomenon. Though Mack was killed in 2004 when struck by a drunk driver; his influence and work lives on in his writings and through the John E. Mack Institute.

Another illustration of how extensive belief in extraterrestrials had become during the '90s was the increase in "Communion" support groups started by popular horror/science fiction writer Whitley Streiber. These grew out of his 1987 book, *Communion*, about his own alleged alien abduction. The book quickly reached number one on *The New York Times* best seller list, throwing Streiber into the spotlight of so-called "abduction cases".

Without question, there have been an extraordinary number of sightings and alleged claims of alien encounters/contacts filed over the past several decades. The question that must be addressed is: Has there ever been any conclusive evidence that any sighting can only be explained by, or can be used as proof for, the existence of beings from other worlds that visited or are visiting Earth? To put it another way, the question is not, do UFOs exist, but are

they manned by beings from other worlds?

In an appearance on *The Phil Donahue Show*, Streiber claimed to have originally been a skeptic. However, after his so-called abduction, he asked, "How else can these things be explained?" Good question.

Astrophysicist and President/Director of Reasons to Believe, Dr. Hugh Ross offers some insight as to the answer. Dr. Ross divides UFO sightings and contacts into three categories:

1) **Natural phenomenon**—According to Dr. Ross and other UFO investigators, this comprises by far the greatest number of sightings. Ross states (and many other investigators agree) almost half the sightings reported are actually the planet Venus, a bright morning star-sometimes so bright that one can read by its light. Meteors would also fall into this category, as would top secret aircraft being developed by various world governments. Birds which have been exposed to phosphorous dust and are migrating at night would also be in this category.

2) **Purposeful attempts to lie or hoaxes**—Included in this category would be the numerous "doctored" photographs that are often presented as evidence of a UFO sighting.

3) **Supernatural phenomenon**—This viewpoint has become more widespread and does not originate exclusively with biblical Christianity. For example, in the government publication, *UFOs and Related Subjects: An Annotated Bibliography*, compiled by the Library of Congress, senior bibliographer Lynn Catoe, writes in the introduction:

"Many of the UFO reports now being published in the popular press recount alleged incidents that are strikingly similar to demonic possession and psychic phenomena which have long been known to theologians and parapsychologists."

Dr. J. Allen Hyneck, while acting as a consultant to Project Blue Book, developed a system of classification of UFO "types" which has become standard. He divided UFO reports according to the distance, greater or less than 500 feet at which the UFO was observed, and subdivided each of these two sections into three, giving six categories altogether.

### Section One—Most Common Sighting

1) Nocturnal lights—Strange lights seen at a distance in the night sky, often with unusual features such as variations in the intensity of light or color and sudden, remarkable changes of speed and direction of movement.

2) Daylight discs—Distant objects seen against the sky during the daytime.

3) Radar - visuals - Distant UFOs recorded simultaneously on radar and visually with good agreement between the two reports. Radar visual sightings are the most important category of UFO reports as they give independent instrumental evidence of the sighting; they are very rare.

### Section Two—Close Encounters

1) Close encounters of the first kind—Simple observations of phenomena where there is no physical interaction between the phenomena and the environment.

2) Close encounters of the second kind—Similar to the first kind except that physical matter are observed. Vegetation may be scorched or flattened, tree branches broken, animals frightened or car headlights, engines and radios doused. In cases of electrical failure, the equipment usually begins to work normally again once the UFO has disappeared.

3) Close encounters of the third kind—"Occupants" are reported in or around the UFO. Dr. Hyneck generally ruled out so-called "contactee" cases in which the reporter claimed to have had intelligent communication with the "occupants", argu-

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## Culture Tracks



### Belief Extraterrestrial Beings (ETs) Have Visited Earth—2005 Gallup Poll

24% of those in the **US** believe Earth has been visited by Extraterrestrial Beings

21% of those in **Canada** believe Earth has been visited by Extraterrestrial Beings

19% of those in **Great Britain** believe Earth has been visited by Extraterrestrial Beings

### Belief in Extraterrestrial Beings (ETs) by Gender—2005 Gallup Poll

Among those in the **US** who believe ETs have visited earth: 29% are men; 19% are women

Among those in **Canada** who believe ETs have visited earth: 23% are men; 18% are women

Among those in **Great Britain** who believe ETs have visited earth: 20% are men; 15% are women

### Americans and UFOs—Scripps Howard Poll, 2008

33% believe it is, likely ETs have visited our planet

8% say they have seen a mysterious object in the sky

20% say they know someone who has seen a UFO

56% believe it is likely there is intelligent life on other planets

ing that such reports were almost invariably made by pseudo-religious fanatics (emphasis added) and never by "ostensibly sensible, rational and reputable persons". But even these cases occasionally have to be taken seriously by scientists.

Dr. Ross affirms in his research that people who have had contact with UFOs suffer the same physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual symptoms as demon possession. Usually the greater degree of occult involvement in one's background, the higher the chances of UFO sightings or encounters."

In his own research into this phenomenon, Los Angeles journalist, Stuart Goldman, wrote regarding Whitley Streiber, "There are many reasons to be wary of Streiber's message as well as those proclaimed by other UFO enthusiasts. First and foremost is that Streiber and others have been heavily involved in the occult prior to their abduction experiences, which could mean demons not aliens are toying with them." Goldman goes on to say, "In looking at the background of UFO abductees, it quickly becomes clear that almost to a man, they have some background in New Age or occultic beliefs. Interestingly, studies show that there are very few practicing Christians or Jews amongst UFO contactees. What could this mean? Are the aliens racists? Or does this, rather, indicate something about the belief systems of the abductees themselves."

In UFO Abductions: A Dangerous Game, investigator Phil Klass wrote: "[Whitley] Streiber's remarks suggest that he now sees himself as a modern-day messiah who has been chosen to warn the people of this planet, bringing them not the word of God but of the omniscient UFOonauts."

Paul wrote very clearly regarding such deception: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a

lie." (II Thessalonians 2:9-12)

At some point during the original Star Trek television series, we could always count on Captain Kirk saying, "Beam me up Scotty". The phrase implied an expectation of being transported to the starship, Enterprise. That was television. However, many in real life have been deceived into believing that they too have been, or will be, transported to a "starship", and alien spacecraft. Others have been deceived into believing their accounts. Both groups eagerly await the day when these space aliens will finally come to them and usher in a "new age" of hope for mankind.

One such group, known as Heaven's Gate, awaited such a transport in 1997. Their leader had convinced them an alien spacecraft was coming behind the Hale-Bopp Comet, then visible from Earth. They were told the transport would take place through their physical death. So, it was that thirty-eight followers joined their leader in ingesting a deadly poison. What a tragic and needless loss of life.

Those who wait for such a transport, wait in vain; no aliens will come for them. God makes it very clear that no spacecraft is coming to pick us up and there is only one who has the power and authority to transport us into the heavens:

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Thessalonians 4:14-17)

Regarding the fascination with alien visitations, in the chapter on UFO cults in the *Popular Encyclopedia of Apologetics*, I wrote:

"Cultural trends regarding the number of people who believe in UFOs seems to ensure they will always have a fresh supply of new recruits...approximately one-third of the American population (several million people) has already taken the initial step required to join a UFO cult - the belief that extraterrestrials have made contact with Earth (2001 Gallup Poll). At least some of these will take the next step and believe these aliens have appointed a representative for Earth who has the true message of life.

Ultimately, this message includes the way to salvation or enlightenment. It is always a departure from that of Jesus, who proclaimed: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6 NIV) Clearly, the message of Jesus is not the same as that of these so-called extraterrestrials. For, salvation comes not through space aliens or religion, it is found only through a relationship with a person, Jesus Christ."

As NGC and others continue to chase UFOs today, they would do well to remember that when gazing upon the heavens it should not be to search for UFOs or extraterrestrials; rather, the heavens should remind all us that the God of the universe who has created all things and sustains all things is real. And, one day from those heavens will come our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who alone gives us the hope of one day being transported to the true heaven where we shall forever be with the Father.



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Share your thoughts/opinions on this and other topics of concern in today's culture. Even if it's the same as ours we appreciate knowing what you think. Email: info@crosswindsfoundation.org

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