



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

The Round Earth Hoax

It's hard to believe. Not only does Charles K. Johnson of Lancaster, Calif., believe the world is flat, he heads up an organization known as the International Flat Earth Research Society of America. The society has foreign branches and boasts a membership in the thousands.

In this day when people believe anything new, it's almost refreshing to find someone who doesn't believe anything new.

Johnson, for instance, laughs at people who believe in the Bermuda Triangle as "superstitious."

"It's simply pirates," he says. "How could anyone buy such an incredible hoax as the theory that there is a great hole in the bottom of the sea which sucks in boats and aircraft?"

You've got to admire him for his spunk. Besides, he's probably right

in evaluating the Bermuda Triangle. Based on the flat-earth theory, there can't be a hole in the sea bottom. If there was, all the water would leak out.

Johnson says one of the proofs the earth is flat is that airplanes are designed to fly level. If the earth were a ball, fast-flying planes would simply fly off into space.

Gravity, he says, is part of a religious hoax perpetrated on us in the reformation. Up until then, he states, people believed the truth.

When asked if it was possible for people to fall off the earth, Johnson replied the only ones in danger of falling off were those who believed the earth was round.

To verify this practical approach to life Johnson points to his wife. She is from Australia. She swears and testifies that when she lived in Australia she did not hang on by her feet.

"When she sailed over to San Francisco," he said, "she sailed across a flat ocean. She didn't sail up, she didn't come over a hump. She said the sea was flat all the way."

Well, there you miracle-believers have it — straight from someone who knows. Of course, when it comes to trying to explain pictures from satellites, Johnson uses the same argument used by those religious leaders who were face to face with the man Jesus had healed from blindness.

"We don't care if he can see. It's all a hoax."

Johnson gets around it by saying the pictures are simulated.

As an astronomer Johnson sounds more like some theologians I know. Come to think of it, some of them don't believe in miracles either.