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# EDITORIAL

Our profoundest apologies to all our readers for the delayed appearance of this issue due, in no small measure, to the flu, which put Eve into Intensive Care and kept her in hospital for six weeks and also nearly killed the Editor. Son, however, held the fort and we are back to business.as usual.

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## THE MARTIAN DILEMMA: NASA's Scientific Failure

© By Stanley V. McDaniel

Excerpts from *The McDaniel Report: On the Failure of Executive, Congressional, and Scientific Responsibility in Setting Mission Priorities for NASA's Mars Exploration Programme*: North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, California, USA. Copyright 1994 by Stanley V. McDaniel. All rights reserved.

### A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR.

Stanley V. McDaniel is Professor Emeritus and former Chairman of the Department of Philosophy, Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California. He has a thirty-year background in teaching philosophy at the University level, including courses in Logic, Critical Thinking, Philosophy of Science, and Ethics. His professional affiliations have included the American Philosophical Association, the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, and the Alan Watts Society for Comparative Philosophy. He is the founding Vice-President of the Foundation for Critical Thinking in Rohnert Park, California.

A great scientific experiment came to a climactic and frustrating end when, on 21 August, 1993, communication with NASA's *Mars Observer* spacecraft was lost after its successful completion of an eleven-month journey to the Red Planet. Just three days

before it was to enter Mars' orbit, but shortly after instructions for orbital insertion had been uploaded, the spacecraft mysteriously failed to respond to commands from the ground, or to signal its presence to its controllers at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. In the weeks following, repeated attempts to restore communication were made. All such efforts failed.

This tragedy, ending the first mission to Mars since the *Viking* probes of 1976, is part of a much larger story - a story of apparent deception and scientific irresponsibility seemingly designed to suppress or prevent what might be one of the greatest scientific discoveries in all of human history. With a replacement mission planned for 1996, a very real possibility exists that the scenario that dominated the *Mars Observer* mission will be repeated.

During the 1976 *Viking* mission to Mars, photographs of the planet were obtained at a 50-metre resolution. <sup>(1)</sup> In the seventeen years since then, independent research groups engaged in an exhaustive study of certain unusual features revealed in the *Viking* images, most of which are located in an area of Mars known as the

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Cydonia Plain. All of these independent researchers have concluded that the data supports the possibility that some features at Cydonia may be the ruins of intelligently designed structures. None of the researchers claim that the evidence is absolutely conclusive; but they argue that the probability is strong enough to make new high-resolution photographs a top priority for any future mission to that planet.

In a letter written in January 1992 by Dr. Michael Malin, NASA Mars Observer Camera Principal Investigator, it is made clear that the artificiality hypothesis plays no significant role in the prioritizing of NASA objectives. This position is reiterated in other NASA documents: "NASA has no plans to treat images of the Cydonia region any differently than those of the other regions of the Martian surface".<sup>(2)</sup> While the region in general may be targeted, this does not guarantee any special effort to image the suspect landforms. To the contrary, analysis of NASA priorities for Mars exploration indicates that in all probability these objects would not be included.

Dr. Malin (owner of a private corporation under contract to NASA) and NASA officials were also careful to stress that because of technical uncertainties no guarantees could be made regarding photographs of *any* specific features. Yet plans were under way to photograph other specific features than the suspect landforms, and in these cases instead of emphasizing technical uncertainties, discussion of ways and means of accomplishing this took place.

As the Mars Observer mission proceeded, considerable furor arose in connection with NASA's policy for data release. NASA had announced that unlike previous missions, there would be *no immediate transmission of photography to the public*. Data might be withheld from the public for as long as six months solely at the discretion of the "Principal Investigator" under private contract - in this case Dr. Malin. The net result was that for the Mars Observer Mission NASA introduced a severe restriction on data release, providing a new potential for censorship, under cover of a technicality. As far as is known, this same restriction is in force for the planned Mars Surveyor mission in 1996.

This situation demands careful evaluation. The following two conditions appear to be irreconcilable;

1. Extensive, conscientiously developed data supporting the possibility that some objects on Mars may be artificial.
2. Absolute and inexplicable disinterest by NASA in any serious effort to gather new data on these objects by means of high-resolution photography. In the tension between these two co-existing circumstances, an ethical breach occurs. A primary consideration is the social, cultural, and scientific importance of the hypothesis. The discovery of artificial structures on a planet other than Earth

would be an event matching, at the very least, the Copernican Revolution in astronomy.<sup>(3)</sup> The importance of such a discovery has been recognized by NASA itself through its efforts to fund a multi-million dollar Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) by means of radio astronomy. When this level of importance is entered into the equation of the relation between the artificiality hypothesis and the low or non-existent priority levels that have been set by NASA for imaging the landforms, the conclusion is inescapable. Based upon the peoples' inherent right to know in a matter of such great significance,

*Any reasonable degree of doubt regarding the natural origin of any of the debated features creates a profound and compelling ethical obligation for NASA to give extremely high priority to obtaining high-resolution photographs of those landforms.*

NASA's current policy, as exemplified in the case of the Mars Observer and as currently in force for future missions to Mars, utterly fails this clear and present obligation.

For ethical, economic, and very probably legal reasons, NASA has a deep obligation to support its position by demonstrating that there is no reasonable doubt regarding the natural origin of any of the suspect landforms. Only if the hypothesis is not warranted by the data it attempts to explain, or if that data itself is seriously flawed, would it be possible without blame to discount the hypothesis as a factor in determining NASA mission objectives.

Given the overriding importance of this issue, the four questions below urgently need to be answered:

- (a) How reliable is the data utilized by the independent researchers in framing the artificiality hypothesis?
- (b) How strongly does the reliable hard data, if any, support the hypothesis?
- (c) Is NASA's omission of the hypothesis as a priority factor for missions to Mars based upon a reasonable consideration of the answers to (a) and (b) above?
- (d) If not, what are the ethical, legal, and scientific implications?

In my book *The McDaniel Report*<sup>(4)</sup> I examine and evaluate the apparent basis for NASA's discounting of the artificiality hypothesis as a factor in determining priorities. I also describe the data supporting the hypothesis and analyze its scientific status. After determining the level of data reliability, I evaluate the strength of the hypothesis in relation to the data. Below is a summary of several of the main points found in my evaluation.

A comprehensive independent analysis of the data, using established criteria for scientific methodology, shows that the methods of research pursued by the independent investigators are basically sound. There is a reasonable doubt as to the natural origin of the Cydonian objects. Papers on this topic have

been printed in peer-reviewed journals, and reputable scientists in several fields, including physics, astronomy, and geology, have expressed their confidence in the overall integrity of this report and have called for further investigation of these landforms by NASA.

**In sharp contrast, during the seventeen years since the controversial landforms were discovered, NASA scientists have promoted the false notion that those researching this topic are non-scientists whose work appears mainly in irreputable tabloids, and NASA has maintained steadfastly that there is “no credible evidence” that any of the landforms may be artificial. But NASA’s concept of “credible evidence” appears to be that the landforms must be *proven* artificial, using existing data, before any higher priority levels may be assigned. This unreasonable demand effectively closes off investigation.**

A close look at NASA’s arguments reveals that NASA’s “evaluation” has consisted largely of initial impressions from unenhanced photographs, heavily weighted by repeated examples of faulty reasoning. NASA has failed to apply any special methods of analysis; it has relied upon flawed reports; it has failed to attempt verification of the enhancements and measurements made by others; and it has focused exclusively on inappropriate methodology which ignores the importance of context. There remains no scientific basis for NASA’s position regarding the landforms. Finally, NASA has based its evaluation almost exclusively on the alleged existence of disconfirming photographs which it has never identified, and has recently admitted it is unable to identify.

Instead of carrying out legitimate scientific inquiry NASA has regularly sent false and misleading statements regarding the landforms to members of Congress and their constituents. NASA has condoned efforts to unfairly ridicule and discredit independent researchers, and has insisted that there is a “scientific consensus” that the landforms are natural - despite the fact that the only real scientific studies of the landforms indicate a clear possibility that they are artificial.

Of the various landforms investigated by the independent teams and individuals, the one that began the research, referred to as the “Face” because of its resemblance to a humanoid face, has undergone one of the most exhaustive series of tests for the evaluation of digital images originating from an interplanetary probe available to scientists today. The data collected in the course of these investigations appears to be highly reliable.

The most advanced techniques of image enhancement, photogrammetry and fractal analysis, confirmed by cross-checking and thoroughly documented, have been used. The investigators are acknowledged experts in their fields with strong academic and professional qualifications. In every test, the data has consistently tilted in the direction of artificial, rather

than natural, origin. Moreover, the various tests performed, including anthropometric and aesthetic evaluation, have been mutually cross-confirming.

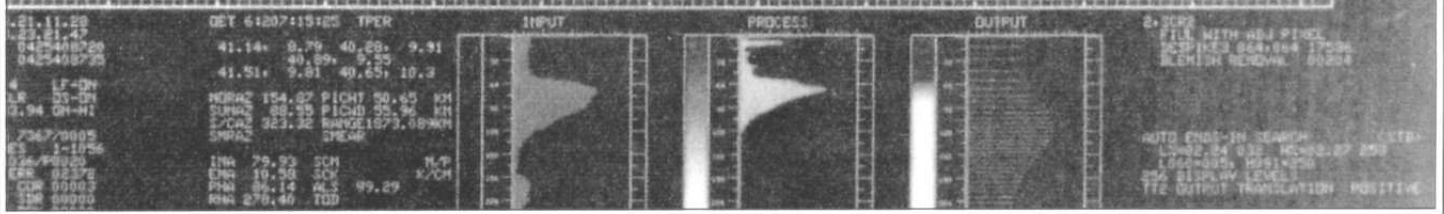
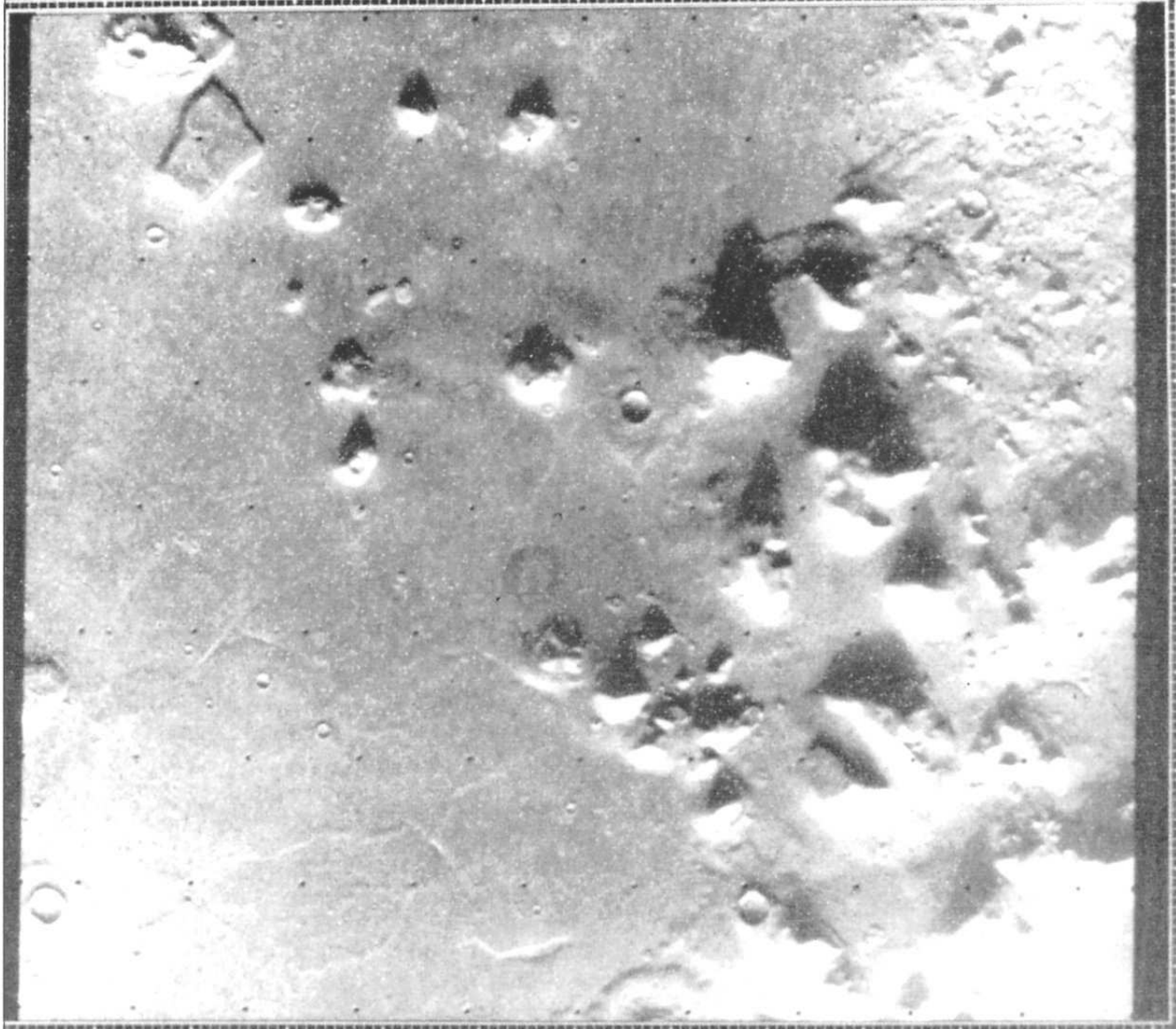
NASA’s position regarding the priority assigned to obtaining new photographs of the landforms has been throughout to resist any consideration of their possible artificial origin. NASA’s equivocal statements on the issue of priorities indicate a clear likelihood that new photographs of the suspect landforms would not be obtained.

For the failed Mars Observer mission and the upcoming Mars Surveyor mission, NASA has made a radical change in the way photographic data would be handled. Unlike previous missions, camera data need not be conveyed to the public as soon as it is received and converted into viewable images (what is often called “live” transmission). Instead, images are under the exclusive control of the private contractor for up to six months after acquisition. Thus the interests of the public in relation to camera data will be effectively turned over to the decisions of a private individual who is an outspoken opponent of the hypothesis of possible artificiality.

In the face of growing public concern, NASA has given assurances that the Cydonia “region” is scheduled to be photographed by the high-resolution Camera. NASA clearly intends to put the public at ease by making it appear that the landforms would likely be photographed because of NASA’s general interest in the geology of the “region.” But the Cydonia region is a vast area, and high-resolution photography would cover only a very small percentage of that area. No special priority for the specific landforms in question has ever been contemplated. Under the standing policy, the likelihood is high that in future missions the landforms will not be photographed. NASA’s assurances about the “region” are vague and misleading.

What could be the motivation for this behaviour on NASA’s part? In 1960, a report titled *Proposed Studies on the Implications of Peaceful Space Activities for Human Affairs* was delivered to the Chairman of NASA’s Committee on Long Range Studies. The report was prepared under contract to NASA by the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. The report outlines the need to investigate the possible social consequences of an extraterrestrial discovery and to consider whether such a discovery should be *kept from the public* in order to avoid political change and a possible “devastating” effect on scientists themselves - due to the discovery that many of their own most cherished theories could be at risk.

The concept of withholding information on a possible extraterrestrial discovery conflicts with an understood NASA policy to the effect that information on a verified discovery of extraterrestrial intelligence should be shared promptly with all humanity. A report on the cultural aspects of the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) has been in preparation by the NASA Ames Research Centre. In this report, the



The original image, 35A2, showing the Face (inverted, just above and left of centre). The image was taken late in the afternoon during the Martian summer with the sun at about  $10^\circ$  above the north-western horizon. The image covers an area about the size of Rhode Island.

If the Face was artificially constructed from the ground up it would be a relatively large structure by our standards: 2.5 km long (roughly 1.5 times the length of San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge) by about 2 km wide, by about 400 metres high at its highest point (about as tall as New York City's World Trade Centre) as indicated by the length of its shadow. If the product of landscaping alone it would approximate in magnitude to many of Earth's great civil-engineering projects.

position that NASA would not withhold such data from the public is said to be strongly supported.

NASA's actual behaviour in the specific case of the Martian objects, however, does not appear to be consistent with this policy. The absence of legitimate scientific evaluation of the landforms by NASA, its ignoring of the relevant research, its apparently exaggerated warnings that such photographs would be extremely difficult to obtain, the possible sequestering of the data under the aegis of "private contract," and the ambiguous language used by NASA officials to generate a sense of complacency around the issue, all support the suspicion of a motivation contrary to the stated policy.

According to Mr. Donald L. Savage of NASA Public Affairs, "investigators on Viking and other missions have often *waived their rights to certain types of data* and have released information of scientific

and public interest much earlier.” Given this precedent and the importance of this mission I have put forward the following five recommendations, which I urge all individuals, whether citizens of the United States or of other countries, to support.

1. NASA and the Mars Surveyor Camera Principal Investigator, by agreement, will assign a level of priority to the suspect landforms that will ensure the obtaining of high-resolution photographs of those landforms, using all means at their disposal, subject only to uncertainties beyond their control.

2. The Principal Investigator will plan for and initiate high-resolution imaging sequences on *every occasion* during which the spacecraft groundtrack is within the area from 8 degrees to 10 degrees longitude, such that the image strips include the area 40.4 degrees to 41.2 degrees N. latitude.

3. In consideration of the public interest in this area and of the possible importance to humanity of the resulting images, the camera Principal Investigator will follow the precedent of earlier missions by waiving the proprietary restrictions in the case of imaging data gathered during camera passes over the area.

4. The scientific community and the general public will be given prompt advance notice, within the constraints of predictability, as to when each such pass will occur, in order to prepare to receive the data.

5. The raw data for the specific area indicated above will be released to scientists and to the public upon receipt at JPL with no time delay. Video image conversion of data received in the same passes will be released in a continuous stream to NASA Select-TV, PBS, and others who desire to receive it. High priority will be given to the processing of such data and the processed data (in the form of images) will be released to the public immediately upon completion.

#### NOTES

1. 50 metres per pixel (a pixel is the smallest bit of digital information in the image).

2. “Information on NASA re-photographing the Cydonia Region of Mars,” page 4. Anonymous document distributed by NASA’s Office for Legislative Affairs.
3. The “Copernican Revolution” was the change from believing that the Earth is the centre of the Universe to our present understanding of the Earth as a satellite of the Sun.
4. McDaniel, Stanley V., *The McDaniel Report*. North Atlantic Books, P.O. Box 12327, Berkeley, California, USA 94701 (Telephone 510-559-8277)

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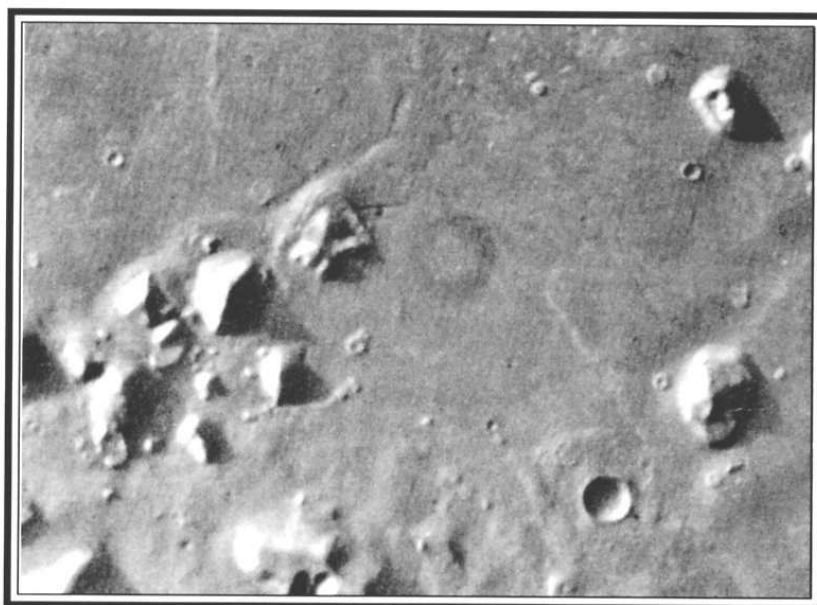
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# AS OVER 5000 AWAIT THE VIRGIN MARY, UFOs "PUT ON A SHOW" IN BRAZIL.

© *Exclusive Report No. 1 by Reginaldo de Athayde, Editorial Consultant to UFO, Journal of the Brazilian UFO Research Centre, Campo Grande, State of Minas Gerais (MS). Editor: A.J. Gevaerd. Translation from Portuguese, G.C. Source: UFO No.34 (Nov/Dec. 1994)*

North Eastern Brazil continues to receive regular UFO visitations, particularly the State of Ceará, with the heaviest concentration of sightings, landings, pursuits, abductions, and other happenings, around the town of Quixadá - including at least 36 close encounters in May, June and August of 1994. Much of this recent "Wave" has been concentrated around the mountain region known as Serra de Baturité, where, in December 1993, and throughout 1994 till August, the inhabitants were thrown into a state of terror by "balls of fire or of light," scores of people testifying that they had been pursued or attacked by such things. In one place, Amontada, numerous people, including the local mayor and local priest, observed several UFO landings. At another place in the same area, Mulungu, UFOs were seen flying over the town centre by hundreds of people, including top officials. And at a spot called Quebra Pau, farmers saw a UFO hovering above a grove of banana trees, scorching the tops of them all. Several people, including one José Ernani, aged 25, claimed close encounters. Ernani claimed to have talked "with a being of light" who said she was the Virgin Mary. She said the Serra de Baturité had been chosen by her to be the scene of a whole series of appearances.

Ernani first saw her on April 23, 1993, when he and several other people were at prayer in a grotto at Vila Peri, Fortaleza. From then onwards, on Mondays and Fridays, when praying, he alone continued to see her.

Ernani described her as a beautiful girl, in appearance aged about 19, with finely chiselled features, pink complexion, heart-shaped mouth, and long brown wavy hair. He said her eyes were "of a penetrating blue".

Ernani said that whenever she appears to him, there is always a breeze that ripples her mantle, revealing her silky hair.

Around her waist she wears a sort of sash about four inches wide, the end of which falls down along her left leg like a stole, and on this stole could be seen two faces - one of them of Jesus and the other of a white-haired bearded old man and the image of a dove, all of

which Ernani took to represent the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He said her voice was melodious and slow and measured, and she imparted this message:

"Dear children, I thank you deeply for responding to my call.

Today I bring to Baturité a message of conversion. I beg of you to pray without ceasing, for only thus will you be able to come close to God and become His children, the most important gift that Jesus desires to give you today is Himself, presenting Himself to you, through the Eucharist, as a sacrifice for the remission of your sins. My children, love Jesus in the Eucharist. Today is the day of my Immaculate Heart. Do not refuse the opportunity to offer your sacrifices in defence of my Heart. To you, my favoured children the Baturité priests, I address this message: Honour your lives, dedicating them, day by day, to the sacraments to your neighbours. Today I am blessing this land chosen by God for my manifestation".

Well now, what are we to think of all this? Madness? Fanaticism?

Let us see.

On September 1, 1993, the town of Brejo, also in the Serra de Baturité region, was visited by 3,000 pilgrims, all of whom are unanimous in affirming that, at 14.10 hrs. they observed that the Sun was losing its brightness and had become like a Full Moon and had changed colour, while a soft breeze had begun to mitigate the fierce heat of the region.

Then, as the crowd of the faithful were falling to their knees, all weeping and loudly singing, and begging the miraculous Holy Mother for mercy, at that very moment many of the eyewitnesses swear to have seen various phenomena. One farmer, José Valdenir Lima, says that as he saw José Ernani kneel down, a sort of "smoke" rose up from among the palm trees and a cold wind swept the tree tops. And others say they saw the Virgin, like a transparent being, rising up into the sky.

Whatever the facts may be, our organisation, the