

## LIFE---SPACE

It is a small wonder that the Psalmist, after viewing the wonder of the Universe, the moon, stars, the vast expanse of sky pondered: What are humans, what is the Creator's role for them? That is a good question and deserves serious contemplation. This is a vast Universe and we actually know very little about it. True, we have discovered many interesting things about the Universe, especially those things close to the earth. We have named some stars, identified planets, clocked rotations of earth and other planets, clocked the speed of light, sound, and the pull of gravity. Scientists, philosophers, and theologians have formulated these findings into theories, factual features of the functioning of the Universe and the Earth. Yet we know practically nothing about the beginnings, continuations, renewals, or destruction of the Universe or Planet Earth. We have creation theories like: 14 billion years ago the entire Universe with all the galaxies was contained in 'speck', barely visual. Then it exploded and became the beginnings of the present Universe! What we see is just an eye-span of the Cosmos! Space is full of all kinds of stuff; big rocks, like the one that recently almost hit the earth, black mass, energy, etc. and mystery!

This is our Life---Space and we have learned many things about it but still a large mystery abides. We have learned how to defy gravity, we have walked on the moon, we have conquered some diseases, but death still beckons to all of us, wars rage all around, and often our sense of duty and responsibility grows faint and uncertain. The Psalmist's question, in full force pops up, "Why, in this world, are we here?"

Then, in the face of such a question, some of the things we are kicking around, bashing, throwing out, and debating arise: truth, honor, faith, and the sacredness of life arise. What really makes life worth living? We have become rather accurate at predicting the weather, yet as a storm was approaching the coast of Florida and warnings were being announced, a cloud of dry air drifted across the storm and completely destroyed it! There is so much we do not know and do not perceive. Some person, rather hopefully, has observed: "We are structured in a Universe where truth is progressive..." I hope that is true! That is, if it means that humans are more and more perceiving particles of truth. It seems that portions of humanity do grow in the knowledge of truth, but it also seems that there is a great lag in the growth of others. We can bank on the idea that truth is progressive in the sense that it is "truth" that sets us free. Separating fact from fiction is a constant problem for contemporary humans. Concepts once treasured as 'truth' are being thrown out of classrooms. Standards once perceived as promoters of justice and peace are pushed aside. Our Life-Space is a Universe that we really know very little about and our current social climate is that of a changing culture that is losing many of its former stabilizing factors.

Years and years ago the Psalmist brought comfort to the people by reminding them that: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those that dwell therein..." Ps. 24. The Psalmist had a philosophy and a religion that provided stability and hope. The Psalmist looked upon humans as temporary tenants of Planet Earth but tenants who had a purpose and a destiny.

Life---Space, a huge, gorgeous, mysterious, ever expanding Universe! A world of unpredictable events, harsh realities, pain, suffering, hunger, evil, people of many sorts. A Universe that we do not control, wonder about, and try to find a meaningful life in it. Well, the Global Warming people say that our part of it, the earth, isn't going to last more than ten years, twenty at the most, if we don't do something about it. Others say that we didn't cause Global Warming and we cannot stop it... that is if it is really happening. The President of Iran says that this earth is going to experience a transforming experience in the next two or three years. Something like the "Second Coming" and that he is building atomic bombs to insure that the event comes about. We do not know about the remainder of the Universe, but our Earth is populated by a varied assortment of humans, some of whom are seeking a, or THE good life. What is that life and how is it pursued?

That question is answered in a variety of ways by different persons. But the search for the 'good' life by the practicing Christian is one that looks to faith and religion. The Presbyterian Church takes this approach. It is always involved in the act of examining its faith and religious concepts. At the 2006 meeting of the General Assembly the meaning of the Trinity was discussed and a number of 'terms' that might enrich the meaning were suggested. The number of terms suggested caused a Pastor to utter in disgust: "Might as well put in Huey, Dewey, and Louie..." Clever, but indicating that the Pastor had totally missed the point of what was taking place. Which was the examining of, and seeking to better understand, the 'Faith' and religious 'concepts'. Christians have to be engaged in that

sort of pursuit at all times. Turn to Ephesians chapter 1 and see how much and what Paul received from the teachings of Jesus Christ. As is true of all religious teachings we are wise to examine them, apply them to life's marvelous journey.

Those of us who are Presbyterians will do well, on life's journey, to seriously consider our history, our social traditions, our ways of governing, and our methods of dealing with divisive and troubling issues. The mission and teachings of Jesus Christ call us to recognize that life's journey stretches from now into eternity, and stresses quality... What is required of us but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your Lord. is Micah's summation of life's qualifying attributes. The expansiveness of the Universe and our minuteness does not excuse us from plumbing the depths of our faith and discovering eternal truths that give order and meaning to individual lives.

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