

Sabbath Moments
A Service of Healing and Wholeness

Sunday, May 10, 2009, 6 p.m.
Southport Presbyterian Church
The Toney Chapel

The heavens declare...

**The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they display knowledge.
There is no speech or language
where their voice is not heard.
Their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,
which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is hidden from its heat.
(Psalm 19:1-6)**

Again and again in China I talked to people who had never heard of Christianity, never heard of Jesus, never heard a single word from the Bible. Yet through nature and their God-given conscience, many believed in God. Not only did they believe God existed, they had derived some understanding about His loving character because he provided food, water, and a beautiful world. One old woman told me, "I've known him for years. I just didn't know his name." (Michael Card)

If the Milky Way galaxy were the size of the entire continent of North America, our solar system would fit in a coffee cup. Even now, two Voyager spacecraft are hurtling toward the edge of the solar system at a rate of 100,000 miles per hour. For almost three decades they have been speeding away from Earth, approaching a distance of 9 billion miles. When engineers beam a command to the spacecraft at the speed of light, it takes 13 hours to arrive. Yet this vast neighborhood of our sun—in truth, the size of a coffee cup—fits along with several hundred billion other stars and their minions in the Milky Way, one of perhaps 100 billion such galaxies in the universe. To send a light-speed message to the edge of that universe would take 15 billion years.
(Philip Yancey, *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?*)

Question: What necessary conditions must exist to allow for life?

Answer: At least twenty conditions must exist for there to be life. These include:

- Oxygen rich atmosphere
- Liquid water
- Large continental land masses
- Home star of the right temperature and mass
- Orbital path neither too far nor too close to the home star
- Moon large enough to stabilize the tilt of the planet's axis and the movement of its tides
- Magnetic field strong enough to deflect the sun's radiation
- Position in the relatively narrow habitable region of the spiral galaxy

What are the odds of even a single habitable world? One chance in 10 to the negative 15.

Question: How does a planet like earth give its human inhabitants access to the mysteries of the universe?

Answer: The ability to make scientific discoveries is no accident. The universe is designed for discovery. All the factors that make a planet habitable also create the right conditions for scientific discovery. For example, consider...

- Earth's oxygen rich atmosphere – This provides a transparent window for seeing the universe.
- Earth's precise distance from the sun and size of sun – This yields perfect solar eclipses.
- Earth's location in the Milky Way between two spiral arms in a narrow space where life is possible – This is a position "with a view." From earth, we can see beyond our own galaxy.

(Astrobiologist Guillermo Gonzalez)

**The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
(Psalm 19:1)**

Ask the earth and the sea, the plains and the mountains, the sky and the clouds, the stars and the sun, the fish and animals, and all of them will say, "We are beautiful because God made us." This beauty is their testimony to God. (Augustine of Hippo)

God be with you as you enter a new week.