

Pastor's Letter – August, 2015

Did you hear the news?! We might have neighbors? Could be! According to the astronomically smart scientists in the world of...uh...astronomy, they've discovered a planet circling a star 1400 light-years away that appears to be capable of supporting life similar to ours. Ok, it may be a bit premature to call Welcome Wagon. But there is a tittering excitement in the world of star-gazers. And it did set me to thinking.

Could it be that our friends on this planet, known as **Kepler 452B**, are as giddy as we are...as they gaze at a little blue/green orb way over in the Milky Way Galaxy...that perhaps they just discovered last week? I'm not sure why I always give the aliens the nod, assuming they outstrip us in intelligence, technology and morality. I think I hold out hope that they can teach us something. It would be one big galactic disappointment to learn that the folks on **Kepler 452B** possess the intellect of a cocker spaniel. Not that there haven't been some clever cocker spaniels! The consolation is that morally, they'd have much to show us!

Space fantasies of this sort stretch my faith. I wonder about God's relationship to them, since I figure God's domain has to extend at least 1400 light-years; probably 1401 or more. Did the **452Bs** (It's so unfortunate that they don't have a less "arithmetic" name. I'm sure they do! We just don't know it yet!)...do they have a faith story...a salvation history...a Christ-figure who brings light and warmth and wisdom to their fractured efforts to get along? Could it be the same Jesus Christ, who some here on earth have called the "Cosmic Christ"?

Some folks catch a burn because the Latter Day Saints claim that Christ made a later, better visit to North America. What if Christ came to **Kepler 452B** a million years before he appeared on earth?! Or what if he's there now?! Kind of makes the **LDS** look pretty tame!

There's something refreshing about a new planet – especially if it's **NOT** inhabited. Most of the beach front of Hawaii has long since been snatched up by developers. Alaska's locked in a dog-fight between conservers and combustors. Imagine an entirely new planet: fresh air, clean water, no taxes, no speed limits, and not a shred of McDonald's trash to be found! Like one enormous Hemlock Lake!

I like to think that God – the One right here on Terra Firma – offers that sort of fresh start to each one of us. If it's **NOT** that fresh, I want nothing to do with it! Not a fragmented, conditional, "if-you-go-get-the-witch's broom" sort of new start. Nope. I'll have nothing of the sort.

Our Bible speaks of "a new heaven and a new earth." **THAT'S** what **I'M** talking about!

Who knows? **Kepler 452B** may one day send us an e-mail, and we'll be off to a fabulous friendship. Maybe they're just as hungry for a new start as we are. If they think WE have it...well, I guess we'll both have to look elsewhere...to the ever-so-loving, ever-so-creative God who knows how to make good stuff out of nothing. Better yet, the God who can fashion beauty out of garbage. It's **THAT** God I'm counting on...no matter what side of the universe we call home.

Galactic blessings...Tim