

Into The Deep

For all the talk these days about how science and religion aren't even on speaking terms, I was quite amazed to see two back to back programs recently.

The first was all about the cutting edge in physics, which is the science most concerned with fundamental questions of where we come from, where we are going and what is the true nature of reality.

The second was all about mysticism in the Christian and Buddhist traditions...which is all about where we come from, where we are going, and what is the true nature of reality.

And while you would fully expect science and religion to be starting at separate places and ending up even farther apart – when it comes to these fundamental questions, the truth is that both science and religion end up talking about essentially the exact same things!

The reason we might spend some time on these questions of ultimate importance this morning is because this is the very place where Jesus is starting out in his ministry – as he challenges us to venture out into the deep, and there we shall find our fish, meaning our truth, and our heart's desire.

It's there, waiting to be found, but you must go into the deep.

So following Jesus' lead, let's do exactly that this morning, if just for a few minutes.

I'll try to stop before your headache gets too bad!

On the science side, it all begins with the big bang; not so different from "Let there be light..."

The Big Bang theory says everything that exists was once a particle smaller than the smallest atom, and that it exploded, and within a billion billionth of a second, much of the known universe appeared.

“Let there be light, and there was light!”

But as the theory of the big bang has been studied and thought through and measured with space telescopes and other sophisticated instruments, science is learning troubling things.

Like, after 14 billion years, the universe should be expanding very slowly by now, and eventually, due to gravity, come to a complete stop, before reversing course and collapsing in on itself.

Except, what science has discovered through careful measurements is that the universe is not slowing down, it's speeding up!

And to explain the speeding up, science is now coming to the conclusion (and you can see me after class for the details!) that this universe of ours may be only one of a million trillion universes.

And while some of them are totally different from ours, these same scientists believe that many of these countless universes are just like ours, and, hold onto your hats, each of these universes may contain not only identical earths, but identical us as well!

Sounds nuts, I know!

And then they point out something that's obvious when you think about it — that the only reality we know is “the now”, this present moment in time.

You, sitting.

Me, talking.

We live only in the ever changing present, making each moment of time a snapshot, a still life, immediately replaced by the next and next and next snapshot, and that gets these brainiacs talking about fractals.

No, it's not a dirty word.

Fractals are patterns that repeat themselves everywhere in nature: patterns like leaves on trees, spots on leopards, snowflake shapes and the designs on butterfly wings, patterns that range from the huge, like mountain ranges and galaxies, to the microscopic, like dividing cells: a variety of patterns, with each pattern being nearly identical.

And if your head doesn't feel like exploding yet, it may feel that way now, because the question these scientists ask is, what if we too are fractals?

What if this life here on our earth is only one of a million zillion lives we are all living at the same time, in different universes, except that each life is slightly different, so that at the end of all these lives, we will have lived every experience, felt every feeling, walked in everyone else's shoes?

As crazy as it sounds, doesn't that describe the wholeness that our most profound mystics tell us about?

This oneness with everyone and everything, this unity of spirit with all creation?

This little blurb came to me as I was thinking about these things the other day.

It's entitled Gossamer, after that frail yet powerful thread a spider shoots out into space, looking for a place to lay its anchor, to secure itself, to fasten down its truth.

Gossamer

The fractal is that
Repeating pattern everywhere in nature
On leaves
Snowflakes
And tiger stripes.
Take it large and fractal is the
Multiverse...
The never ending existence of a trillion zillion
Universes
In which we each exist
In which
we each live out every possible life experience
Love
Loss
Culture
Color
Gender
Race.
What if in one such world
Blacks enslave whites
Women rule over men
And hetero sex is the oddball sex?
What if every experience that
Could be felt
Is felt in full
By each and every one
Of us
In a dazzling array of lives that may see me

as fat and old
In one
Beautiful and young
in another
Married
Once,
Twice,
Many times, or
Never,
dying young, then in another,
spending years with white hair?
Not the successive lives
Of reincarnation
But the simultaneous lives
Of fractal?
If we, in this infinity of lives,
experience
all experience
Doesn't each contribute to the
Necessary whole?
So that each of our
Fractal lives is
priceless beyond measure?
Is this how
God brings
everything together?
Will we then
Know
As we are known?
See
As we are seen?
Love

As we are loved?
Fractal lives
And gossamer
Are the musings of
this day.

And with these musings, might we allow Jesus to take us into the deep, to places that move far beyond our daily routines, struggles and worries?

Might we even leave everything behind as we seek, with Jesus, these depths of True Reality, where life never ends, but is caught up in a whirlwind of an upward spiral, ever fuller, ever more complete, ever closer to the Source that summons all things into being?

The Gospel of Thomas tells us of "Jesus seeing two babies at the breast, nursing.

Jesus says to his disciples, 'These nursing babies are like those who enter the Kingdom.'

They say to him, 'Then shall we enter the kingdom as babies?'

Jesus says to them,

'When you make the two into one,

and when you make the inner like the outer,

and the outer like the inner,

and the upper like the lower,

and when you make male and female into a single one,
so that the male will not be male nor the female be female,
when you make eyes in place of an eye,
a hand in place of a hand,
a foot in place of a foot,
an image in place of an image,
then ... you will enter the Kingdom.” Verse 22.

It seems that both science and religion agree: when we move from our illusion of separateness – and come to embrace the reality of our complete unity – a unity that may be working itself out in universe upon universe, on that day, perhaps then we

“shall know as we are known,

we shall see as we are seen,

we shall love as we are loved.”

Jesus calls us into the deep.

Do we dare to follow him there?

+amen

