



To Boldly Go

Where No One Has Gone Before

A reflection by one of Illuman's Weavers, Jim Taylor

I've been a quiet Trekkie since I was 10 years old. I relished everything about the show. The characters were unforgettable: Captain Kirk, Spock, Bones, Scotty, Sulu, Chekov, Uhura and the rest. But, most of all, the themes have inspired me, opening my imagination to a greater horizon of possibility.

When *Star Trek* first appeared in 1966, I doubt even Gene Roddenberry imagined the full extent of its reach. It confronted so many of the prejudices that existed in our culture and nation and pushed us further into the wonder of its mission, "to boldly go where no one has gone before."

Star Trek envisioned a united planet that worked for the common good of all and took that intention outward. As a result, I have enjoyed the developing series, with its movies, through all these years, and *I think I am better for it!* Loads of prejudices and small-minded ideas were defied by the continuing journey into "Space: the final frontier"—*not just into outer space, but also into the space that exists between all of us!*

I didn't know it then, but *Star Trek* was helping me build a container large enough to include everyone, even the more-than-human world. I was introduced to radical ideas of inclusivity, pluralism, and universal peace. Even on the verge of adolescence, I understood the implications. If I can value and love a Vulcan, maybe I can love all human beings regardless of their race, ethnicity or nationality.

"For the profit of travel: in the first place, you get rid of a few prejudices.... The prejudiced against color finds several hundred millions of people of all shades of color, and all degrees of intellect, rank, and social worth, generals, judges, priests, and kings, and learns to give up his foolish prejudice."
~ Herman Melville (1819-1891), *Traveling*.

Of course, "what's past is prologue" (*The Tempest*, Shakespeare). In my own faith explorations, to my great delight, I discovered that God's love thrusts us ever outward! It's a *Star Trek* sized vision—cosmic! No one and nothing gets left out. "It all belongs" and everyone is included. I am a beloved son, and so are you, and so are *they!*



Bad religion has too often promoted a god who is petty—angry, jealous, needy, exclusive, concerned about trivial things, loving only those who believe the right thing or belong to the right group. We wind up with the infeasible idea of a god who is smaller than us; whose love is stingy and conditional, while demanding from us a generous and unconditional love. No wonder, many religious people settle for a system where they only love those who love them back. Jesus taught that even the pagans know how to love transactionally. A religion like this is not even global, much less cosmic.

We have been misled often by this earth-bound, parochial kind of thinking that God doesn't love homosexuals, God doesn't exist in mosques and synagogues, and God isn't concerned by the carnage of our justifiable wars or the ravaging of our planet. It's a religion that excuses itself from compassion and grace because "they" are "evil." And it easily justifies capital punishment, torture, pre-emptive wars, disregard for the poor, and hateful judgmentalism. We have become the small god we worshiped. A god who is not cosmic, not going boldly anywhere.

Acts 10:44-48 (The Message)

"No sooner were these words out of Peter's mouth than the Holy Spirit came on the listeners. The believing Jews who had come with Peter couldn't believe it, couldn't believe that the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on "outsider" non-Jews, but there it was"

If we follow the mission of Jesus' early disciples in the New Testament book of Acts, we will see that they, too, were pressed beyond their own prejudices and smallish perspectives of God. Time after time, God extends beyond the here-to-fore limitations of his love (as they understood them). And what is more, we are

asked to do the same (extend beyond the limitations of our love). The Spirit of God "poured out on the outsider" ... God going "where no one has gone before." Inclusive, global, cosmic! The nature of the energy that was poured out is love. "Love is from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love (1 John 4:7-8 NRSV)."

Love will always take us further than we were prepared to go. What an adventure! What a Star Trek! May the vision of the gospel and *Star Trek* inspire us toward something cosmic—to boldly go into the space that separates us all from one another! May it be so. Ho!

Jim Taylor is a Weaver with Men As Learners And Elders (M.A.L.Es), a ministry of Illuman. He also pastors Mosaic Community Church in Seguin, Texas. Mosaic is an emerging church with strong values for social justice and sustainability. Jim and his wife, Lynda, have three teenage daughters.

