

# A grand design needs a designer

Stephen Hawking may be a genius, but he's not omniscient.

Hawking has written a new book with Leonard Mlodinow titled "The Grand Design," in which the physicists posit that the universe did not need anything to come into being from nothingness. That is, no outside factor - whether it's called God, the Creator or any other spark - was necessary, since the laws of physics can explain the development of the cosmos without any such external influence.

One might, at this point, be reminded of an old story, in which a group of scientists believe they have determined how to recreate evolution as described in the Bible. Wanting to prove themselves, they ask for an audience with God Almighty and challenge him to a duel, of sorts.

"We have figured out how to make human beings the same way you did in the accounts in Genesis, and that will prove that science is superior and God is unnecessary," the scientists claim.

"Go ahead and show me," God says.

One scientist bends down to scoop up a handful of earth, just as it says God did before he created Adam (Gn 2:7).

"Just a minute," the Almighty says.

"What's wrong?" asks the scientist. "I'm following the procedure just as it was written."

"No," says God. "First you have to make your own dirt."

This is not to say that faith and science are incompatible. In fact the Pontifical Academy for the Sciences (founded in 1603) exists specifically for the purpose of bringing together people of faith and of reason to better understand and integrate both worlds. The reason the laws of physics and mathematics are so perfect is that the universe was created by a being so perfectly aligned with his creation that it mirrors his perfection.

According to one of the proofs for the existence of God that William Paley offers, he is a divine watchmaker who takes pride in crafting a precision instrument that runs according to exact specifications. The watch is valuable and performs a function; it could not perform its function if its parts were arranged differently. The natural laws and scientific laws we follow – and on which Hawking and Mlodinow rely – are a logical outcome of this creation.

In his study on “Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master,” theologian/philosopher Father Robert Barron reasoned that God isn’t some outside actor “squatting outside the world and arbitrarily ‘playing’ with it, undermining it, turning it upside down.” Imagine, if you will, a kid playing with marbles.

“For Thomas,” the priest adds, “God is not a distant supreme being outside the world, but rather the act of Being itself, the creative ground of the universe. Hence, to undermine the basic structures of nature is to undermine himself; to contradict nature is to contradict himself.”

Hawking may be the most eminent scientist of several recent generations – certainly of our own time – but when he says there is no place in his creation scenario for a deity, he is off the mark. When you look at our universe and go back to the very beginning, one still must wonder, if there was a Big Bang, who set it off? Scientists can tell us “what” happened. Philosophers and theologians are better at telling us “why.”

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