

## **Views from the Pews: What was God doing at the beginning of time?**

Cosmologists tell us that time and space both began together at one single instant, 14 billion years ago, during the catastrophic explosion known as the Big Bang. The entire universe has continued to expand rapidly ever since. We miss the point if we ask what happened before that, since time itself did not exist until then. But we believe that our God is the only entity that could exist outside time. Therefore, only God could have set off the Big Bang. Non-believers reject that idea, but cannot prove that the alternatives are any more convincing.

The more that cosmologists explain how the universe works, the more they are puzzled by it. At the moment time began, a set of extraordinary, coincidences became fact. Altogether, there are 15 real, measurable physical forces that had to be exactly as they are before the universe could become habitable for us. For example, if the strength of gravity been only slightly weaker, the universe would have gone on expanding too fast to allow stars and planets to form. Had it been only slightly stronger, the universe would have collapsed back into a Big Crunch. If the nuclear forces that hold molecules together had been only slightly different, the carbon and other heavy elements necessary for life could not have been forged in the furnaces of the exploding supernovae.

The statistical probability that all of these forces should come together instantly and remain unchanged over 14 billion years is way off the scale. Materialists committed to the idea that science can explain everything are stuck, because all their possible explanations are equally unacceptable, unproven or wildly improbable.

The simplest explanation is that God set all these constants from the start. For the first 9 billion years after the Big Bang, God watched as the life cycles of the galaxies created stardust full of heavy elements and scattered them through the cosmos. By 4.5 billion years ago, there was enough to form our planet Earth. Simple forms of life began around 3.5 billion years ago. Genesis One describes God's action in gifting the human environment with all the functions needed for life, plus freedom to use it, and then coming to live in it with us. The theology of Genesis One reassures us that Christians do not have to choose between belief in God as Creator, versus science for explanations of our material origins.

*Kim King*