

Atheism in Retreat

Dr Michael Jarvis

Introduction

Before the dawn of modern scientific discovery, humanity were already discussing whether there was a God who designed and put our universe in place. However, over the past 100 years science has uncovered a long list of inter-relationships between the fundamental building blocks of our universe. These relationships have revealed an amazing **Fine Tuning**, showing that even minute changes between these relationships would mean that our universe could not exist in a state suitable for life and humanity.

This Fine Tuning has led to **two possible conclusions**:

1. Either the Fine Tuning points to a Master designer behind it all.
OR
2. Maybe there are or were an infinite number of other universes and we just happen to be in the one suitable for life. Therefore, it seems to us that we are designed.

How Finely Tuned is our universe?



The late Professor Louw Alberts was a South African physicist who believed in God. He pointed out in 1996 that the balance between the universe expansion rate being too fast or too slow, cannot differ by more than 1 part in 10^{55} otherwise our universe could not exist. (Alberts 1996)

In more recent years this degree of Fine Tuning has been confirmed by many scientists and we now have a long list of finely tuned relationships that are essential for our universe to exist.

When we talk about fine-tuned relationships that cannot change by more than 1 part in 10^{55} we can make some comparisons that make it a little easier to visualise. For instance, the following illustration:

3.

How do atheists overcome this statistic against chance?

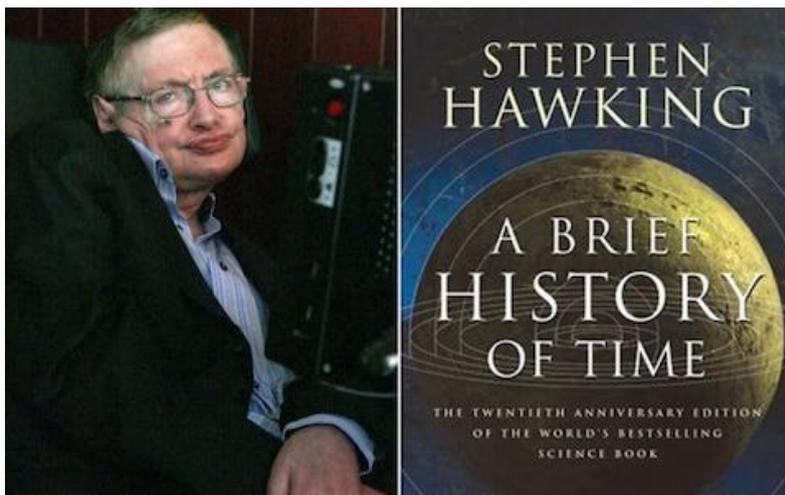
All physicists of note in the world admit that the Fine Tuning necessary for our universe to exist is a reality. Those who decide not to accept a God explanation have put their hope in the **Multiverse Theory**.

The Multiverse Theory suggests that there are or were many possible other universes but only one possible universe had the unique qualities needed for life. We happen to be in this one unique universe and so we conclude that it was designed when in fact it was just a lucky chance!

However, this **Multiverse Theory encounters major problems:**

1. To overcome the statistical probability against all the Fine Tuning relationships coming about by chance, this theory must propose an **infinite number of other universes**.
2. There is **no evidence** at all for any other universe.
3. Many leading scientists believe that there will **never be a way of testing this theory of other universes**.
4. It now seems that an infinite number of other theoretical universes cannot exist. For this I turn to the **last paper written by Stephen Hawking**.

Stephen Hawking's last paper



Stephen Hawking is possibly best known for his book 'A brief History of Time' (1988). In that book **he still left some room for God as a possible explanation for why we exist.**

However, in later publications, such as the book 'The Grand Design' (Hawking and Mlodinow 2011), he promoted the Multiverse Theory as the alternative to belief in a Creator God.

4.

Stephen Hawking died on 14 March 2018. He was about to publish a joint paper with Professor Thomas Hertog entitled '**A smooth exit from eternal inflation?**' This is now published in the Journal of High Energy Physics.

This paper suggests that an infinite number of other universes cannot exist !

This much smaller number of theoretically possible universes greatly reduces the chance that the Multiverse Theory can explain the Fine Tuning of our universe.

Hawking and Hertog conclude that **all other universes, if they exist, would have to fall within the same basic laws. If all of them have the same basic laws then we need to explain why the same set of laws are also fine tuned.**

Of even greater significance, the Multiverse Theory loses its appeal as an alternative explanation for how our universe came about without God. And we do not have any other Theory to do away with the God option.

The future of atheism?

Scientific discoveries are increasingly showing that belief in God is the best option for explaining the origin of our universe and it requires much less faith than theories that try to get around the realities being discovered by science.

These realities are the Fine Tuning evidences and the statistical impossibility of explaining all of these by pure chance.

I am told there was **once a debate on television** between a Christian Pastor and a vocal atheist. At one point the atheist said to the debate chairman *"What I can't accept is that this pastor expects me to believe that some hypothetical God made everything from nothing". The pastor replied "I admit it takes a step of faith to believe that God made everything from apparently nothing. However, my atheist friend expects me to believe that **nothing** made everything from **nothing**. To my mind that takes even more faith".*

References:

- Alberts, L. 1997. Christianity and the Enquiring Mind. ISBN 13:9781868293636
 Hawking S.W. 1988. A Brief History of Time. ISBN 0-593-01518-5.
 Hawking S and Mlodinow, L 2011. The Grand Design. ASIN B01K0T6964
 Hawking S.W. & Hertog, T.J. A smooth Exit from Eternal Inflation, High Energy Phys (2018) 2018:147. [https://doi.org/10.1007/JHEP04\(2018\)147](https://doi.org/10.1007/JHEP04(2018)147)

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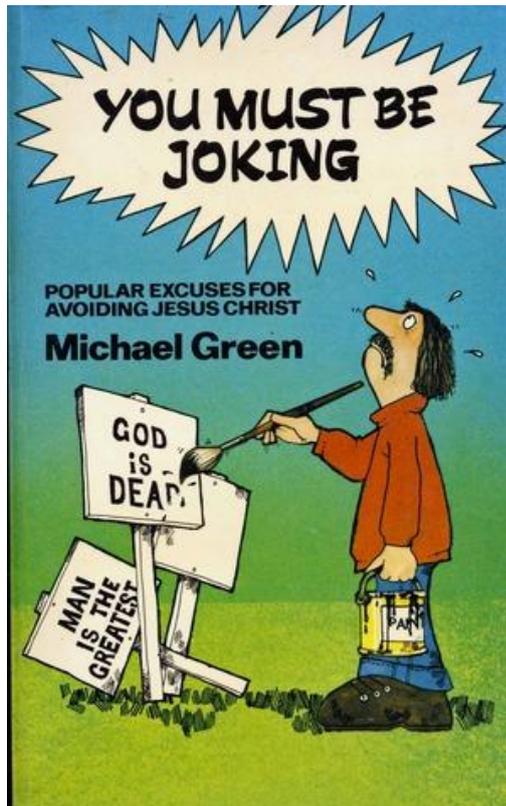
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PS. On a lighter side:

When I was a student at the University of Cape Town, Michael Green came to give lectures and he took part in debates with atheists and agnostics on campus. His brilliant mind, sense of humour and engaging speaking style had a large impact on me personally and on many other students who were keen to understand how Christianity could still be relevant in our scientific age.

Michael Green: 1930 - 2019

(1976). *You Must Be Joking: Popular Excuses for Avoiding Jesus Christ*. London: Hodder & Stoughton. [ISBN 9780340211267](https://www.isbn.org/9780340211267). [OCLC 3984467](https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/3984467)

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