

April 2018

“God created all things in such a way that they are not outside God.

All creatures remain within God --- enveloped by God.”

Meister Eckhart (1260 -1328)

Greetings,

Last month, Professor Stephen Hawking died at the age of 76.

A Nobel Laureate and world-renowned cosmologist and theoretical physicist, Professor Hawking is equally well known for his 50-year battle with motor neurone disease and his strong stand on social issues. Support for Britain’s National Health Service and activism on behalf of climate protection and nuclear disarmament were among his leading causes.

His funeral took place in the Anglican church nearest to Gonville and Caius, the Cambridge college where he had been a fellow for 52 years. His ashes will be interred next to those of Sir Isaac Newton in Westminster Abbey.

The great and the good from the Church, the State, the Academy and the Arts joined to celebrate his life and mourn his death. “Ordinary” men and women have also been deeply moved by his life and work. One person left flowers beside his college entrance with a card reading, “*Goodbye, Stephen – the universe will now shine with its brightest star.*”

Stephen Hawking does not immediately seem the sort of person who would gain so much admiration from religious leaders. In his book, “The Brief History of Time,” he left room for the possibility of a Divine power with this question: “*What is it that breathes fire into equations and makes a*

universe for them to describe?”ⁱⁱ However, a later work, “The Grand Design,” declared that there was no need for a creator.ⁱⁱⁱ

Canon Andrew Davison points out that it was not Professor Hawking’s theology that made him a great man of God – it was his cosmology! His research clearly demonstrated that the cosmos is without boundaries. It is neither fixed in time nor space. This means that there is no physical or temporal edge beyond which to locate God.^{iv} Philosopher and theologian, Meister Eckhart made that very same observation nearly 8 centuries ago!

God is not “up in heaven” or out beyond the boundaries of the universe. The whole cosmos is infused with the Divine presence. And every part of the cosmos – including you and me – is interwoven and interconnected with God. To answer Professor Hawking’s earlier question, Divine Energy *“breathes fire into equations and makes a universe for them to describe.”* The Bible names this energy as Love.

Stephen Hawking “proved” what the mystics have declared for centuries. God does not dwell on the other side of some cosmic boundary. God and the universe are an indivisible whole. We are all – literally – “one in the Spirit.”

Blessings,

Brenda

ⁱ “Locals share their memories at Stephen Hawking’s funeral,” THE GUARDIAN, 3/31/18.

ⁱⁱ Andrew Davison, “How Stephen Hawking did theologians a favour,” CHURCH TIMES, 3/16/18

ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid.*

^{iv} *ibid.*