

absoluteReality - a debate on the existence of God
Monday, August 26, 2002

William Lane Craig: Good afternoon. Well I wanted to say how delighted I am to be here to debate this most important topic. This is my first visit to Australia and I've already been enjoying the beauty of this fantastic city, despite the inclement weather, and I want to say that I'm very eager to meet students during my two weeks here. So please take the opportunity to come up after the debate and introduce yourself. I'd like to get to know as many of you folks as I can. Now in today's debate I've prepared to defend two basic contentions. First of all that there are no good reasons to think that atheism is true and secondly there are good reasons to think that theism is true. Now let me just say a brief word about that first contention that there are no good reasons for thinking that atheism is true. Atheism, the claim that there is no God is just as much a claim to know something, as is theism, the claim that there is a God, and therefore it requires some evidence. Now atheist philosophers have tried for centuries to disprove the existence of God, but no-one has ever been able to come up with a convincing argument. So rather than attack straw men at this point, I'll just wait for Phillip Adams answer to the following question: what is the evidence that atheism is true? So let's turn then to my second basic contention that there are good reasons to think that theism is true. Now I'm not claiming that I can prove that God exists with mathematical certainty, rather I'm claiming that it is more probable on balance that theism is true rather than atheism, and specifically I'm going to argue this afternoon that its probable that a personal creator of the universe exists. We can begin by taking the existence of the universe as given, but have you ever asked yourself where the universe came from? Why everything exists instead of just nothing? Either logically the universe had beginning or it is beginning-less. Atheists have always said that the universe is just eternal and beginning-less. We have persuasive philosophical and scientific reasons to think that the universe did have a beginning. Philosophically the idea of an infinite past seems absurd. Just think about it for a minute. If the universe never had a beginning that means that the number of past events in the history of the universe is infinite, but mathematicians recognize that the actual existence of an infinite number of things leads to self contradictions. For example, what is infinity minus infinity? Well mathematically you get self contradicting answers. For example if you subtract all of the odd numbers from all of the natural numbers how many numbers are left? Well infinity of numbers, so infinity minus infinity is infinity. But suppose instead you subtract all of the numbers greater than two, how many are left? Three, so infinity minus infinity is three, and it needs to be understood in both of these cases we are subtracting identical quantities from identical quantities, and yet coming up with contradictory answers. In fact you can get any answer you want from zero to infinity. This shows that infinity is just an idea that exists in your mind, not something that exists in reality. David Gilbert, perhaps the greatest mathematician in the twentieth century states, and I quote, "the infinite is nowhere to be found in reality, it exists neither in nature nor provides legitimate basis for rational thought. The role that remains for the infinite to play is solely that of an idea", But since past events are not just ideas, but are real. The number of past events must be finite therefore the series of past events can't go back forever; rather the universe must have begun to exist. This purely philosophical conclusion has been confirmed by remarkable discoveries in astronomy and astrophysics during the twentieth century. The astrophysical evidence indicates that the universe began to exist in a great explosion called the big bang about fifteen billion years ago. The standard big bang model describes a

universe which is not eternal in the past, but rather it came into existence a finite time ago. Moreover, and this deserves underscoring, the origin that it causes is an absolute origin out of nothing. For not only all matter and energy, but physical space and time themselves came into being at the initial cosmological singularity, which marks the boundary of space and time. There can be no natural physical cause of the big bang event, since in the words of one philosopher of science, the definition of a singularity entails that it is impossible to extend the space time manifold beyond the singularity. This rules out, he concludes, the idea that the singularity is an effect of some prior natural process. Now sometimes objectors appeal to non-standard models of the expanding universe in an attempt to avert the absolute beginning predicted by the standard model. But while such theories are possible, it is the overwhelming verdict of the scientific community that none of them is more probable than the big bang theory. The devil is in the detail and once you get down to specifics, you find that there is no mathematically consistent model that has been so successful in its predictions, or is corroborated by the evidence as the traditional big bang theory. For example, some theories, like the oscillating universe theory, which expands and contracts forever, or the chaotic deflationary universe which continually spawns new universes do have a potentially infinite future, but they turn out to have only a finite past. Vacuum fluctuation universe theories, which postulate an eternal vacuum out of which our universe is borne cannot explain why, if the vacuum is eternal, we don't observe an infinitely old universe. The quantum gravity universe theory propounded by the famous physicist Stephen Hawking, if interpreted realistically, still involves an absolute origin of the universe. Even though he thought the universe does not begin in a singularity as it does in the standard big bang theory. In sum, according to Hawking, and I quote, "almost everyone now believes that the universe and time itself had a beginning at the big bang." So we have god ground, both scientifically and philosophically for thinking that the universe had an absolute beginning. Now logically the beginning of the universe either had a cause, or it was un-caused. Now this tends to be very awkward for the atheist for as Anthony Kennedy of Oxford university urges a proponent of the big bang theory at least if he is an atheist must believe that the universe came from nothing and by nothing, but surely that doesn't make sense? Out of nothing, nothing comes. The atheist philosopher, Kyle Nelson gives the following illustration, he says, "supposing you suddenly hear a loud bang and you ask me 'what made that bang?' and I reply 'nothing, it just happened' you wouldn't accept that." In fact you would find my reply quite unintelligible. What's true of a little bang is also true of the big bang as well it must have had a cause, which brought the universe into being. Now from what we've already said a number of attributes about this cause can be deduced. At the cause of space and time, its cause must be an un-caused, changeless, timeless, immaterial and enormously powerful being which created the universe. It must be uncaused, because there cannot be an infinite series of causes. It must be timeless and therefore changeless at least without the universe, because it created time, because it also created space it must transcend space as well and therefore be immaterial, not physical. This cause must be unimaginably powerful since it creates the universe without any material cause. Moreover logically this cause has to be either personal or impersonal and there are at least two good reasons to think that this cause is personal. First, the personhood of the cause of the universe is implied by its timelessness and immateriality. Since the only things we know of that can possess these attributes are either minds or abstract objects., like numbers. But abstract objects don't stand in causal relations. Therefore the transcendent cause of the origin of the universe must be of the order of mind. The cause of the origin of the universe is an uncreated unembodied mind. Second only a personal cause can explain the origin of the temporal effect from a timeless cause.

If the cause of the origin of the universe were an impersonal set, of necessary and sufficient conditions, it would be impossible for the cause to exist without its effect. For if the sufficient conditions for the effect were given, then the effect must be different as well. For example the cause of water's freezing is the temperature being below zero degree's centigrade, but if the temperature were eternally below zero degrees, then any water that was around would be frozen eternally. It would be impossible for the water to begin to freeze a finite time ago. So if the cause is timelessly present the effect should be timelessly present as well. The only way for the effect to be timeless and for the effect to begin in time is for the cause to be a personal agent, who freely chooses to create an effect in time, without any prior determining conditions and thus the cause of the universe must be a free personal agent. So in conclusion then we are bought not merely to a transcendent cause of the universe, but to a personal creator, and this is what everybody means by God.

Phillip Adams: This is what everyone means by God and I'm going to start by disputing that. First of all I'm reluctant to take part in the debate on an immensely serious subject. Debates are fine for fun subjects, where you can have a bit of 'Punch and Judy' act, and take the cheap points down and go for laughs. This is a topic that has been dividing people for millennia is probably the most important subject there is and I would much prefer to have a friendly and amicable discussion, but so be it. I was I was warned about Will's arguments because someone sent me a video tape of him having a very similar discussion with Bruce Sharp, so I'm familiar with his type of argument although I think it is much more appropriate for the next debate which I understand will be between us when we'll be discussing whether or not the twenty first century scientist can be a Christian. The thing that has to be said about Will is that he too is an atheist, and I don't think he's aware of the extent of his own atheism, because there's many a God he doesn't believe in Ram, Cyrus, Jupiter, Jove, Zeus, Apollo, Mars, Mercury, Neptune, Vulcan, Bacchus, Mammon and Pluto. Nor does he worship Thor and Oden the God's of the Aztecs, the Incas, the Mayans, are not in his theology. And he is an atheist when it comes to a Goddess like Diana, Minerva, Athena, Venus and Aphrodite. He doesn't believe in the God that guides the activity of Bin Laden, who in turn believes that God granted the Boeings that hit the world trade center. He seems enthusiastic about the God that endorses George Bush's plans of massive retaliation. Does he advocate a white God? A male God? Or does he forbid the possibility that God might be black or female? Or is God odorless and sexless? I'll presume that as far as ninety-nine-point-nine percent of those deities are concerned, you and I share a common ground, we don't believe in them. Now I'll presume to argue, in fact he has that the God he believes in is fundamentally the Christian God, the Love God, the God that makes up a third of the holy trinity, and for that God, and I'm sad to say about Christianity itself has as many forms and faces and identities as any of the pantheons of past and present. In the next discussion I'll be trying to make the point that there are almost as many Christianities as there are Christians, which is one of the greatest enemy of Christianity is not atheists passing through, but Christians themselves who fight and hack at each other and have dissensions, but if the God Christians postulate has many faces. Now as a believer that God is loving, you must be uneasy about the old testament Deity, who slaughtered an entire population of this planet, saving Noah, his family, and only a boatload of animals when he was miffed by human misbehavior. Or the God that nuked Sodom and Gomorrah when the citizens were behaving like the denizens of Oxford Street in Kings cross. Or the brutal sourpuss that created eternal damnation for people to suffer in and this God clearly differs from the God of love, who sent his only begotten son from heaven to save us from

death. The death that he cursed us with along with original sin just a few eons earlier. Jesus said that his father's house has many mansions and that the label God is many God's and you can't believe in all of them. You have to choose one, and so this is the one. Now Will will argue and has argued as I do that the principle for believing in God is that you need a God for creation, but I have to warn you that your current hypothesis about scientific views are somewhat out of date. We'll tackle that in our next debate. I've got twelve television programs and two books of Paul Davies. Paul Davies believes in God. He's one of the very few prominent scientists who does, but Paul's doctrine is by no means Will's doctrine, because Will isn't a Christian fundamentalist. He hasn't argued the six day creation and the seventh day rest. He conceded the likely hood of the big bang although had admitted there are many theories. Picking up on the idea that you can't get something out of nothing, Will insists that God was 'the something' that gave birth to time and space and matter and energy and all the wonders that now surround us. In effect the big bang is a great orgasm and that reminds me of the great Egyptian mythologies surrounding Ra and that creation of the universe. It may interest you that Ra stands on a little mountain called Benben that represents a mountain above the primordial waters and masturbates and from his semen he creates everything. It's funny how many of the creation myths eliminate women. Will argues that there has to be a beginning and god provides this. Now this is primitive to atheism. Theologians and priests and congregations war about God's nature. We aim to strike an agreement with people. We agree on one thing, we agree that we've got to believe in God. For many of us simply do not believe in father Christmas, or the tooth fairy, others though, humanists, communists, skeptics may mount all sorts of arguments and come to logical conclusions, but the atheists simply says 'I don't believe', because atheism isn't a philosophy, isn't a reality, isn't an elaborate set of rules, it simply makes this clear; 'thanks, but no thanks'. I tell you that I don't believe in Father Christmas. I don't expect you to mount a huge philosophical argument about it and you'd probably think that that is fair and reasonable. I've never believed in God, but God knows I've tried to. I gave up on God when I was five everyone around me believed or seemed to believe in God. My dad was a congregation minister and I prayed to the LORD, but my prayers weren't answered. I left messages on God's answering machine, and he never returned my calls and whilst waiting, I suddenly discovered that believing in God was unnecessary. Surplus form God's requirements that God would be found by us. And I found him through a contemplation of the terror that I had internally. I'd lie on my little bed at night, my grandparents rejected brass bed, in the sleep hour and I'd fall up through the roof every night, fall up through the darkness gaining speed, being more and more terrified as I went through the planets and the stars and the suns and the seemingly endless distance. And the concept of eternity was overwhelming. One night I solved the problem of infinity. I bounced off a rocky wall I'd discovered around the universe, like an eggshell around the egg and I fell all the way back to the earth with a great sigh of relief. There was an end. The problem was the next night, when I repeated the nocturnal flight I broke through that rocky surrounding and found that it was unnecessary to think of a beginning and even if you did, God wasn't much of a help. There has to be a beginning and God was the beginning I said to my grandmother then who began God? Where upon she boxed my ears. Ten years later, when reading why I am not a Christian, I learnt that Russell asked himself exactly the same question when he was nineteen. Knowing what Russell said, that there was a defining silence, during which he would ask that the nature of God is superfluous. Barton provided the answer. God was simply another question. God was the name we gave to what we didn't understand. The problem with God is that as science advances he decreased. Stephen Hawkins, among others, prophets a vision of version of the universe, ranging

from the quantum mechanical to the great drama of the cosmos that needs no awkward pause, given that God's an equation. As to God's relationship with human beings: what relationship? Were only here because after a few billion of those years and asteroid hit the planet and wiped out the dinosaurs, allowing a new species to be dominant, namely us. In turn were likely to be wiped out ourselves by our own stupidity, or by another asteroid. Leaving the planet to be dominated by insects and if so, who would the praying mantis pray to? An infinite God. That God worship is new, they create God in their own image according to their needs and circumstances and cultural attitudes. With so many God's, all mutually inclusive, conflict and cancel each other out you cant talk about God unless you define the God you're talking about otherwise it gets so fuzzy, so enormous, so vague as to be meaningless. People in any case will believe what they want to believe. I have a simple suggestion - I'm always getting letters from Christians and other religious critics in the same way - lets get on with treating each other decently and don't let a little thing like God come between us. Thank you.

William Lane Craig: well I'm very grateful for phillip's serious response to the issues that I raised in my first speech. My fear in participating in this debate is that he would use his infamous rhetoric and ridicule to reduce the debate to a contest of wit in which I would surely not be able to compete with him. And I'm glad that you have treated this in a substantive and serious way that is worthy of the topic. Now if you remember that I said I was going to defend two contentions in today's debate. The first: that there is no good reason to think that atheism is true. Now do you notice that in his opening speech phillip didn't present any arguments for atheism? He gave us no justification, no reason to think that God does not exist. Instead he made two comments. Phil is an atheist too, because he doesn't believe in many God's. But that's not what it means. Atheism is the belief that there is no God. As long as I believe in one God that means I am a theist, not an atheist. The encyclopedia of philosophy, which is the standard reference work in the field, says according to the usual definition, an atheist is a person who maintains that there is no God. So that is the claim that phillip needs to defend tonight. My argument as I presented it is consistent with any of the monotheistic faiths in the world today. I argued that there is a personal creator of the universe who is immaterial, timeless, changeless, space less, immensely powerful and who created the universe out of nothing. I fact fundamental theistic conclusion is compatible with any monotheistic religion that gives us a specific idea behind the being we are talking about. Secondly phillip responded that atheism isn't a belief or a set of beliefs its just an absence of belief, but again we don't want to quibble about semantics, but that's just not what atheism is. As the encyclopedia of philosophy says atheism is the claim that there is no God. Phil has confused atheism with agnosticism. Agnosticism is the absence of belief in God, but atheism is the belief that there is no such person as God. And therefore if he is going to defend atheism rather than agnosticism, there needs to be some justification for believing that there is no such person as God. Secondly his re-definition of atheism trivializes atheism. He says that atheism is merely the absence of God belief, so that even little infants are atheists, because they don't have a God belief. Can you imagine one woman talking to another and saying, 'I just heard that you gave birth to baby twin girls', and she says, ' yes its true, but its so sad. They're both atheists'. Well that trivializes the claim to be an atheist. In fact on that definition my cat is an atheist, because the cat doesn't have a belief in God. So if were going to take this seriously it is the claim that there is no such person as God. Therefore it requires justification and we are yet to hear from phillip why we should think there is no such person as God. Secondly I presented what I think are good reasons to think that theism is true and I did it by means of a series of pre-disjunctions.

First either the universe had a beginning or it did not and I argued that both philosophically and scientifically the universe did have a beginning. Phillip Dint give a response to this so I won't have a chance to respond now until my last five minute speech since he didn't respond. He only alluded to Paul Davies, but I want to quote from an interview that Phillip had with Paul Davies called the big questions in the beginning. And this is what Davies said in that interview; the coming into being of the universe as discussed in modern science is not just a matter of imposing some type of organization or structure upon a pre-existing coherent state, but literally the coming into being of all physical things from nothing. So that is Paul Davies view, and I don't think he's changed it because in March this year, Paul Davies writes in his lecture 'the big bang' before March 2002, "contrary to popular belief the big bang was not the explosion of compressed lump of matter in a pre-existing void. Space itself comes into existence from nothing at the big bang." So thus Phillip knows from his own interview with Davies that the standard big bang cosmology requires the creation of the universe literally out of nothing. Now that leads to my second disjunction either that beginning had a cause or it did not have a cause and it seems to me that it would be metaphysically absurd to say that the universe just popped into being, uncaused out of nothing. When you think about it, it is worse than magic. I mean when a magician pulls a rabbit out of the hat at least you've got the hat and you've got the magician. But on the existing view, the rabbit or the universe just pops into existence uncaused out of nothing. It seems to me that that is metaphysically impossible. There has to be a cause that brought the universe into being. The third disjunction that I examined then was whether or not that cause was personal or impersonal and I gave two arguments as to why the cause had to be a personal being. Firstly it's implied by his timelessness and immateriality, which suggests that it is of the order of mind. And secondly only if the cause is a free personal agent can you explain how a timeless effect or rather a timeless cause can give rise to temporal effect with a beginning like the universe. I think these are very persuasive and powerful arguments for thinking that the cause for the universe is indeed personal. Now against this argument Phillip simply raised the question; who caused God? Once you understand the concept of what it is to be a necessary timeless, space less, uncaused being, you can see that question becomes a meaningless question. Keith Ward the British philosopher who has written in his book 'God chance and necessity' writes as follows, "If one ask what caused God the answer is nothing could bring into being a reality that wholly transcends space-time and which is self-existent. To fail to grasp such an idea is to fail to grasp what God is" in other words once we understand that God is the uncaused space less timeless creator of the universe you can see that it's meaningless and trivial to say, 'what is the cause of an uncaused being?' that's like cracking your brain thinking, 'why is it that all bachelors I meet are unmarried? Why aren't there any married bachelors?' It's because of the concept, it's conceptually necessary that a bachelor is an unmarried male. Similarly it's conceptually necessary that a timeless, space less, self-existent being doesn't have a cause. So unless you Phillip can show some sort of absurdity in saying that there is a timeless space less self-existent being I think we have good grounds for believing that there is a personal creator of the universe who is timeless, space less, changeless, immaterial and who brought the universe into being out of nothing. A conclusion which is consistent with and suggestive of the position that all of the great monotheistic faiths have held long before the existence of big bang cosmology or any of the evidence that I share with you today. And therefore I am persuaded that theism is the most rational and plausible view that an intelligent person in the twenty first century can hold. Thank you.

Phillip Adams: what's the point of postulating an answer that is in itself a huge question? What's the point of coming up with an argument which cannot be dealt with? Ladies and gentleman I'm struggling with this issue that has dominated my life for many years. I will regress back to the beginning, the postulated beginning, my father the minister spoke about from the pulpit. And I insist that there has to be something before this beginning. And before that, and before that, and before that. Just as I've discovered from that painful bouncing off the great rocky wall above the ceiling when I sleep at night, that there couldn't be an end. I am fascinated by Christianity's lopsidedness. Christianity taught me in Sunday school that there had to be a beginning and there wouldn't be an end. There had to be a moment, detonation, creation, this is long before the big bang theory. There had to be a beginning in God's sovereign plan and there couldn't be an end. And this seems to me inadequate. There can't be an end because we will be in paradise for eternity, but why not in the beginning. So I would give you as a profound explanation, it would be much more harmonious and equally balanced to live in a universe and cosmos that is endless at both ends, with time and space being mirror images of each other. If you introduce a being and insist it was begun by God the question that I ask myself and the burden he must have asked himself cannot be thrown aside with clever little metaphors and about rabbits and hats and magicians. We know that the magician pulls the rabbit out of the hat, and we know where the magician came from. In the one breath this gentleman that it is intellectually inadequate, intellectually inferior, trivial to not be able to grasp the notion of an endless pre-existing thing/presence/spirit and at the same time he says that because there has to be a beginning, that is going to be the proof of what happened before. This saying gets to me, it makes me giddy, it doesn't help. You have to accept that it is possible to postulate a universe, many universes that go on and on. Now the big bang is one of these theories, it's a theory that the majority of scientists hold. When I was growing up and I heard about the big bang. Similarly why not have an endless oscillation of big bangs where the universe expands, reaches a point predestined by the second law of thermodynamics and then dies, and then it falls back in on itself and off it goes again. To imagine therefore an infinite progression and program of big bangs where there have always been big bangs and there always will be big bangs and they simply will go on for all eternity, rather like pearls on a necklace on a long piece of string. There are new theories however that kind of describe the theory of everything that look at particles, the subatomic string theory, and we're now moving to an N-theory/membrane theory with brains which argues that the only way to make the math's work, which has been tantalizing scientists ever since big bang theory and Einstein, is to postulate an infinity of universes. Not sequential, but all at once and in fact we'll deal with this in the next lecture. There is currently an argument that gave enormous power to the answer lying in not just this universe, but infinity of others. And that they co-exist with ours. They are in this room, unseen. Some of them you are in, some of them you are not. Some of them you are in with a different name. Some of them the math's didn't work out at the moment of gestation and nothing happened. But the way N-theory, which is now linked to the theory, $E=Mc^2$ and is a very powerful idea that many scientists believe, they've got us on the edge of the theory of everything that will explain the totality of creation. The way its going there may be billions and billions and billions of universes of which this is just one tiny effortless endless event. Now I find the whole concept of God mad. Let me elaborate once again there is no beginning there is no end it just goes on and on forever in a scale that is simple staggering far beyond the imagined scale of monotheism. Its fascinating that Will makes his argument for the existence of God talking about the big bang and matters arising that could have got him burnt at the stake as a heretic by brother Christians not so long ago. And it's a great

pleasure that I observe that I am here talking to you today and mounting counter arguments and also without the torture of the inquisition and being put to death. So I suppose we're making some progress. I doubt that we're going to resolve this issue in the next thirty minutes. It's been tantalizing in making peoples heads ache for thousands of years. And just as no atheist can never prove, can ever prove, that there is no God. No theist has ever proved that there is. In fact I remind you of that wonderful statement by Douglas Adams my famous name sake and his testimony in hitch hikers guide to the galaxy, "We are dealing with God, who refuses to prove himself". I don't find that quite necessary. I don't have to prove anything. The proof has to lie with those who postulate, not with those that reject theism.

William Lane Craig: In my closing statement I'd like to draw together some of the threads of the debate, and see what conclusions we might draw. First I think it is evident that in this debate we've not heard any reasons why atheism is true. At best if my argument fails today we are left with agnosticism, but we have no good reason to believe that God does not exist. What about the reason I gave think that theism is true? First of all I argued that the universe had a beginning and my philosophical argument is going irrefuted in today's debate, s even if the scientific evidence fails, we have the philosophical argument against the infinitude of the past. But what about scientific evidence? Well here phillip suggested in his last speech two possible models that area aimed at averting the absolute beginning predicted by the standard model. First he suggests the oscillating model which contracts and expands forever. I know however in my first speech the oscillating model popular back in the 1960's, but is no longer was defended today because it contradicts the singularity theorems developed by Martin and Penrose. Stephen Hawking in his 1997 book 'the nature of space and time' said that the Hawking-Penrose singularity theorem lead to the abandonment of attempts to argue that there was a previous contracting phase and a non-singular bounce into expansion. Instead everyone now believes that the universe and time itself had a beginning at the big bang. So it turned out that these oscillating models have an infinite future perhaps, but only a finite past. What about the theory of everything, or string theory or N-theory? Again the fact is that this method also fails to secure the infinitude of the past. In a very recent work, done in September last year, by Arvin Ward and Alice Valenkin of MIT. They were able to generalize their results on infinity models that I spoke about in my first speech, in such ways to extend these conclusions to other models including; N-theory, string cosmology and specifically they stated, I quote, "our argument can be straightforwardly extended to cosmology in higher dimensions." Specifically brain cosmology mentioned by phillip in his last speech. So according to Valenkin, and I quote "It follows from our theorem that the cyclic universe is 'past incomplete'. That is to say the need for an initial singularity has not been eliminated and therefore such universes are not 'past incomplete'." So again when you look at the evidence scientifically it is on the side of that disjunction; that the universe had an absolute beginning and that that beginning had to have a cause. Here phillip didn't dispute this. If the universe did begin to exist there must have been a cause which bought it into being. Then I argued that that cause must be personal, and he did not dispute either of my arguments for the personhood of the creator. He said in his last speech, he said "what is the point of providing an answer that simply raises more questions?" well all scientific explanations are like that. Every scientific explanation we give raises further questions and that isn't a deficit of the explanation. If the learn that a disease is caused by a certain virus, we'll still want to know; where did that virus come from? So the very nature of explanation arouses further questions. And I think that the God hypothesis does raise profound questions about the nature of God and his relationship to us. Does he care

about us? Does he reveal himself to us in any special way that we might know him more fully? Or has he remained aloof and distant from the world he has made? He said “well in Christianity there is a beginning, but there is no end, and this is aesthetically displeasing.” Well ironically this is exactly what modern science teaches. Modern science says that the universe and time began at the moment of the big bang and the universe will go on expanding forever, a world without end. So the very argument he finds distasteful is postulated by modern science as well as by the Christian faith, in fact any linear view of time that has a beginning of time has such an asymmetrical quality to it. And I simply will say that the facts contradict his aesthetic tastes and therefore we need to go with the facts. Frankly in conclusion let me just say a personal word, since Phillip felt free to share from his own autobiography. I myself was raised in a church going family or a Christian home as Phillip was, but as a teenager I began to ask the big questions in life about the meaning of existence and I also felt that darkness and despair that he writes in his own book. But I found the answer in Jesus Christ and in God. I found that through Jesus Christ I could come to know this personal creator in a personal way that invested my meaning with joy, hope and purpose that I never dreamt possible and I would encourage you, if you are an open minded seeker today to do what I did, to look into this, to begin to explore, to keep an open mind, because I believe that it could change your life, the same way it changed mine.

Phillip Adams: I'd like to congratulate you on having a highly intelligent cat incidentally. Look you're very fast with the science and I haven't got time to go into it at this stage – perhaps we can do it some other time- but your manipulation of scientific theories really is not of worth. The jury is out on these theories because they are in constant fluctuation, they are constantly being amended and Paul Davies, a dear friend of mine, although we profoundly disagree on the issue, is just as likely to change his mind in the light of the new N-theory, which in fact does take us back before the singularity. So some theories do have a look at what happens before that remarkable nano-second. The other part of the debate we haven't tackled, but will have just had a crack at it is the relevance of God, and I'd like to spend the five minutes I've got left dealing with that. I think God, if he exists should be ashamed of himself. For the last couple of thousand years he has caused nothing but trouble. Ladies and gentlemen we have narrowly escaped the twentieth century in which one hundred and fifty million people died in wars and genocides. One hundred and fifty million of our fellow human beings were slaughtered and butchered in that century and I think there's every chance that in the 21st century we might even see that number greater still. I would put it to you that God and the belief in God played a significant part in the majority of those deaths. Not that religion was necessarily responsible for those who caused that carnage, but God ultimately was, but all too often clearly it is exacerbated by (religion), and I can't think of an example of a case where religious belief sorted out a problem. Christianity specifically promised us peace, love and harmony. It doesn't deliver. Christianity just cuts itself to pieces in Northern Ireland. It tears the whole world apart in the Balkans, even without the hatred of the Muslim world. It tears itself apart. We've also got to face the awesome fact that at the moment we have a world teetering on the edge of another catastrophe between Christians and Muslims; and not for the first time. Not for the first time by any means. So I look at religion and I see a population lost before me. Show me anywhere it has really helped? I spend most of my time at the moment, working with fellow Christians, who are deeply loved, on the issue of the refugee crisis in Australia. We are fighting a Christian prime minister and a Christian minister for immigration, who are pushing this malevolent, cruel and shameful policy in the name of

Christian people. What is the point of a God that he will ask you to embrace or indeed the religion you're seeking in Christ? We're probably on the edge of a world where God is ever receding, ever retreating, changing his nature and appearance, his emphasis with the goals I mentioned before. All of whom have used God to do their own ends - All of whom belong to God. With the God Will has postulated we'll all slowly die, by the second law of thermodynamics, which is in fact one which all scientists currently agree on, unlike this universe - however it was formed. We may be about to accept it in a world without God's of any sort, and if we do so it is only fair that should be a cause of mourning. It may be a wonderful opportunity to see if we can make a better system without the great divisions caused by belief in God, let alone by belief in Jesus Christ. I have a great affection for Jesus; I think that he was one of the great standup comics of history. I think his one liners are devastating and although we know that, there is very little known about the historical Jesus. With all the Christian scholars being in reverence and awe, the historical Jesus is very hard to find. I have great respect, but I do not respect the Judeo-Christian God, because I regard him as a brute, who has created great cruelty and great horror in this world if he in fact exists. No if we don't sort out all this we'll never agree. This is something that will never happen. I think as long as there are humans there will never be an agreement on this issue, and probably it is important that there was. But I go back to the point I made before the one thing that we must agree on is that this division between us - in your case the existence of God- should not stop us working together on important issues such as justice, compassion and decency. At the end of the day I hope that the subject of God doesn't hinder things.