

by Gavin Oldham - first broadcast over Christmas 2016.

*Our thoughts often turn to a wider perspective, seeking to resolve the big questions of life, the universe and all that. Many people look for an answer in their faith, but many others struggle to find a reconciliation between those faiths and everyday life: what science teaches us about the world.*

*Here is an attempt to make sense of it all written from a Christian perspective by Gavin Oldham some years ago. It's called 'Love in Creation'.*

## [Audio](#)

The apostle St. John lived longest of all Jesus's original disciples, and towards the end of his long life he wrote a letter to other Christians. In it he describes his great realisation that the nature of the conscious creator – that is, God – is love, unconditional love.

I would like to take that great revelation, that God is Love, and reach back across the mists of time to the point where it all began. To the point when there was nothing: literally no thing. No space, no time, no energy. Just this concept of Love: as the bible says, God is spirit, so Love is spirit.

Just like any architect or builder needs tools to undertake his construction, so Love needed tools to bring about Creation. In my understanding there were three such tools, all reflecting the nature and character of Love which formed them. These tools are the great natural laws which we feel and experience all around us to-day, and without which we know that our existence would be impossible. They are Gravity, Light and Time.

**Gravity** is the one that we all take for granted, but without which there would indeed be no thing. It not only holds us to the surface of the Earth, a gift we can experience whenever we walk, lie on the ground, or jump in the air: it also binds our planet together, the Moon to the Earth, the planets to the Sun. It also holds the atoms which comprise all material and ourselves together: the protons, neutrons and electrons. Without it all would dissipate – indefinitely. So at the timeless point of Creation, all things were made by the power of Gravity working on no things, literally making something out of nothing.

But if Gravity is one of the tools of Creation it also bears all the hallmarks of its Creator, Love. For Love draws together, it does not drive apart: that is the nature of Love, and God is Love. If God is almighty it is in this capacity to create something out of nothing, a process started at the point of Creation.

Modern science continues to grapple with its understanding of what makes nature tick, but the three tools of Creation, the laws on which Creation is based, remain as elusive as ever. In a sense Gravity should be the most comprehensible with its great consistency and all pervasive presence: but it is not. We read about "weak gravitational forces" within the atom, but we don't know what they are. Many have sought to master, manipulate and control it, but it will not. We can read about investigations into its character, from 20<sup>th</sup> century experiments in Germany to the American Space and Defence programs: there are a few tantalizing hints, but nothing in any way conclusive. And it is just as well that it is such a mystery, for imagine what dreadful chaos we could bring about by reversing the power of Gravity.

But, if Gravity is indeed forged by Love. it is perhaps little wonder that we find it so hard to fathom, for we are touching on the membrane of divinity.

**Light** and energy are synonymous, and we know that with light there is the potential for life. Again, it is part of everyday experience: a perpetual delight of brilliance and hues. Its presence thrills us and inspires us, and its variety dazzles us with all the colours of the spectrum. It is the changemaker, the force that makes things grow, the source of heat and nourishment. Without it what was transparent becomes invisible, what was lively becomes lifeless, and what was full of potential, inert. Space maybe infinite, but light and energy are bounded by parameters: we know that all forms of light travel at a maximum speed, 286,000 miles per second, and that energy exists only from absolute zero: -273°C.

As Gravity began its work at the point of Creation, forming everything out of nothing in what the scientists call 'singularity', the explosive nuclear energy that propelled its expansion was driven by Light in the great event that we call the 'Big Bang'. From that point on Love set in motion the process of creative evolution which is amazingly well sequenced in the Bible's book of Genesis. Gravity divided earth from sky, and seas from dry land, and light gave life to growing things: first fish, then animals and eventually humans.

So it is little surprise that, when St. John came to write the first chapter of his gospel, he speaks of the Word of God - that is, Love - being the Light of the world, and how 'the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overpowered it'. John describes Jesus, the manifestation of God with us, as this Light and it is fitting indeed that the life-giving tool of Creation should be used to illustrate God in this way. Light is forever reaching out, forever giving of its brilliance, forever sharing of itself: as such it also bears the hallmarks of its Creator, Love – a physical expression of u4gu4pe.

Light has also baffled scientists for centuries. As with Gravity, it is so tangible, so accessible, yet so elusive. For a long time it was not possible to determine whether it was a wave or a particle, and the assumption now is that it has properties of both. We understand a little more of photons, we capture its images in chemicals and electronic files, but we still don't really know what it is. Like Gravity, its forces have primeval power and we harness Light at our peril, as witnessed by mankind's use of nuclear energy and the discovery of laser weapons.

Again, if Light is indeed forged by love, it is perhaps little wonder that we find it so hard to fathom, for we are touching on the membrane of divinity.

But if Gravity and Light shared between them the responsibility for Creation, there would still be no existence without **Time**. For Time gives shape to the created order, and allows for change and evolution to take place. It is the law which marks out the development of the universe and the parameters of our human lives. It, acting in concert with Gravity, governs the motions of the planets, the passing of the seasons, and the re-shaping of the continents. Time sets the speed at which things happen: it is amazingly consistent and regular. Indeed the only points where its consistency is disturbed are at the boundaries it shares with the other two great tools of Creation: at the speed of Light, where Einstein discovered how Relativity challenges the smooth working of Newtonian mechanics, and at the edges of those 'black holes' in space where Time is challenged by the power of Gravity.

Humanity's whole experience of the universe is a mere blink of an eye when set against the backdrop of the whole Creation process: just 100,000 years out of 15,000,000,000. That's the equivalent of less than a minute within 24 hours.

It was just 3,000 years ago that the writer of the book in the Bible called Ecclesiastes sought to explain things against the backdrop of Time:

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,

a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,

a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,

a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain,

a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away,

a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,

a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace."

Time moves forward at its steady pace, yet it is amazing how humanity has managed to turn its own evolution into an exponential experience. Perhaps the book of Genesis rightly identifies this process with the point at which humans become aware – going against God to seize the fruits of the tree of knowledge, and gaining the capacity to differentiate between right and wrong. For unless we can understand and live in the mind of God – of Love - the time for our existence will indeed be short. As we approach a full appreciation of the infinite power of God's technology, we have to understand that it is only sustainable technology for us if we can all also aspire to God's character: and that is Love. A moment's thought on nuclear power proves this point.

So it is incumbent on any species with the capacity to live in God's knowledge to also live in the Love which is God. Love has given us Time – some time - to allow us to re-shape ourselves in the image of God, but the exponential rate of our own technological progress is fore-closing that option for us. Time may be a great healer – it is Love's way of providing healing grace – but this pre-supposes our own continued existence to be able to benefit from it.

Of course time travel has fascinated science fiction writers for years, but we can do nothing to alter the pace of the natural world, no matter how hard we try. The seasons, night and day, and the passage of tides are as regular as clockwork and the only thing we can disrupt is space: physical disturbance. For time rolls on in a way which we can feel, measure and rely on: but which is impenetrable to scientists and engineers.

As with Gravity and Light this is just as well, to prevent us from altering the past or pre-determining the future. We say 'God knows what the future will hold', but it is Love giving Time to work its purposes. And when Love engages with humanity, it is through the medium of its Creation, standing alongside us against the powers of nothing, darkness and timelessness which incessantly pull at the process of constructive and continual Creation, until Creation is complete.

So time rolls forward, and within the limitations of our human perception our focus builds and then recedes as we move into the future and away from the past, respectively.

But Love sees the whole history of Creation as a canvas, as a mother nurtures her growing child. That's u4gu4pe again.

So if Time is indeed forged by Love, it is perhaps little wonder that we find it so hard to fathom, for we are touching on the membrane of divinity.

The three tools of Creation are therefore as tangible to us today as at all stages in the wonder of Creation, since its very start. Gravity holds you to the chair in which you sit. Light illuminates the world around you. Time gives you the opportunity to experience life. All are the tools created by Love to establish Creation, and all bear the hallmarks of Love. And all continue to co-operate in the process of continuous Creation, which we experience not only in our human lives but also in the whole natural universe.

And a final note: if the nature of God is indeed love and the action of that love working as gravity, light and time created all things, including ourselves – then surely it is logical that love should come to share the experience of that creation: to show what unconditional love looks like, to teach us how to relate to one another, even to save us from all that goes wrong at the cutting edge of creation? Christians believe that's what happened when Jesus joined us on Earth two thousand years ago.

*'Love in Creation' was written, and read for Share Radio, by Gavin Oldham.*

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