

## The Greatest Story Ever Told

I love science! I did not excel in chemistry or physics in my school days, but in my adult life I soak up as many popular presentations of scientific discovery as I can; in particular, physics and cosmology. The discoveries about the nature of reality and the universe by Einstein and those who have followed him up to this very day are so awesome that they seem to enter into the realm of the mystical. My faith in the awesome, mysterious power of our Creator God is only enhanced by these discoveries: It is not threatened the least little bit!

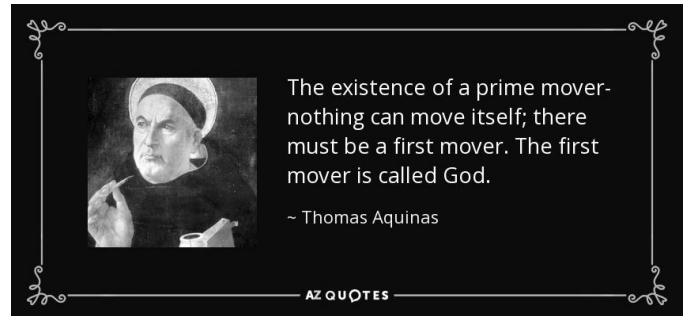
This past Friday I heard an interview on the “Science Friday” program of National Public Radio featuring the Physicist, Lawrence Krauss. Krauss has a book coming out this month entitled “*The Greatest Story Ever Told . . . so far.*” **It is clear that this title is a deliberate swipe at Christianity, in particular, and religious belief, in general.** Krauss is among those in the scientific community who are known as the “New Atheists” or, simply, as “a militant atheist. He regards science and scientific method as covering all of reality: Therefore, if there is a God, he ought to show up in science experiments or observations. The other word for this world view is “empiricism:” It is the belief that true knowledge about the world and reality comes only from sensory knowledge and experimentation. And, for those like Professor Krauss, religion is the enemy of true knowledge.

Now, to be fair to Krauss, there are strains of Christianity which are anti-intellectual and anti-science. Some biblical fundamentalists, for example, reject the scientific claim that the earth is 4.5 billion years old and they appeal to some “biblical mathematics” to calculate that the true age of the planet is 6000 years old, (6 days of Creation x 1000 = 6000 “For God a thousand years are one day and one day is a thousand years.”) But this form of Christianity is only a loud, vocal minority. Otherwise, there is a rich intellectual heritage associated with the Church which has been conveniently glossed over by modern writers.

The mistake that Krauss, and others like him, make is cleverly exposed by the Catholic Philosopher, Edward Feser:

“ . . . whatever the specific empirical details turn out to be, the facts that there is a world at all and that

*there are any laws governing it cannot be made sense of unless there is an **uncaused cause sustaining that world in being**, a cause that exists of absolute necessity rather than merely contingently (as the world itself and the laws that govern it are merely contingent). [*



*Think of it this way: you can't find out why checkers boards exist by looking at the rules of checkers themselves, which concern only what goes on within the game. The rules tell you how each piece moves, how the game is won, and so forth. But **why** are the pieces governed by **these** rules, specifically, rather than others? Why do any checkers boards exist at all in the first place? No scrutiny of the rules can answer those questions. It is impossible to answer them, or indeed even to understand the questions, unless you take a vantage point from **outside** the game and its rules.*

*Similarly, what science uncovers are, in effect, the “rules” that govern the “game” that is the natural world. Its domain of study is what is **internal** to the natural order of things. It **presupposes** that there is such an order, just as the rules of checkers presuppose that there are such things as checkers boards and game pieces.*

***For that very reason, though, science has nothing to say about why there is any natural order or laws in the first place, any more than the rules of checkers tell you why there are any checkers boards or checkers rules in the first place.***

*Thus, science cannot answer the question why there is any world at all, or any laws at all. To answer those questions, or even to understand them properly, you must take an intellectual vantage point from outside the world and its laws, and thus outside of science. You need to look to philosophical argument, which goes deeper than anything mere physics can uncover.”*