

# God Is Love... & LOVE NEVER ENDS

by Brian Zahnd

Why is there  
something instead  
of nothing?

The only answer I can  
imagine is Genesis 1:1: "In  
the beginning God..." But  
why would God say, "Let  
there be light" and

initiate Creation? The only answer I can imagine is God is love.

*What is light? God's love in the form of photons.*

*What is water? A liquid expression of God's love.*

*What is a mountain? God's love in granite, so much older than human sorrow.*

*What is a tree? God's love growing up from the ground.*

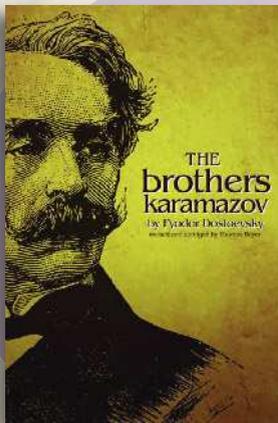
*What is a bull moose? God's love sporting spectacular antlers.*

*What is a whale? Fifty tons of God's love swimming in the ocean.*

As we learn to see Creation as goodness flowing from God's own love—we begin to see the sacredness of all things. As Dylan and Dostoevsky say, *in every grain of sand.*

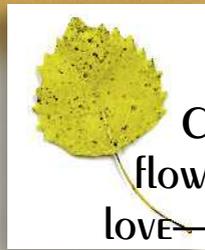
All of creation is a gift—a gift flowing from the self-giving love of God.

Why is there light and oceans and trees and moose and whales and every grain of sand? Because God is love—love seeking expression in self-giving creativity. Unless we understand this we'll



misunderstand everything and misspend our lives. In our

misunderstanding and misspent lives we harm Creation—including our sisters and brothers, all of whom bear



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the image of God.

*Love never ends.*

At the end of all things there is love. Love abides. Love endures. When the last star burns out, God's love will be there for whatever comes after.

In the end it all adds up to love. So when you are calculating the meaning of life—if it doesn't add up to love, recalculate, because you've made a serious mistake!

Existence only makes sense when seen through the lens of

“LOVE ALL OF GOD'S CREATION, BOTH THE WHOLE OF IT AND EVERY GRAIN OF SAND. LOVE EVERY LEAF, EVERY RAY OF GOD'S LIGHT. LOVE ANIMALS, LOVE PLANTS, LOVE EACH THING. IF YOU LOVE EACH THING, YOU WILL PERCEIVE THE MYSTERY OF GOD IN THINGS. ONCE YOU HAVE PERCEIVED IT, YOU WILL BEGIN TIRELESSLY TO PERCEIVE MORE AND MORE OF IT EVERY DAY. AND YOU WILL COME AT LAST TO LOVE THE WHOLE WORLD WITH AN ENTIRE, UNIVERSAL LOVE.”

—Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*

love. At the beginning of time there is love. At the bottom of the universe there is love. It's in God's ocean of endless



love that we live and move and have our being.

Admittedly freedom allows for other things

“IN THE FURY OF THE MOMENT I CAN SEE THE MASTER'S HAND IN EVERY LEAF THAT TREMBLES, IN EVERY GRAIN OF SAND.”

— Bob Dylan, *Every Grain of Sand*



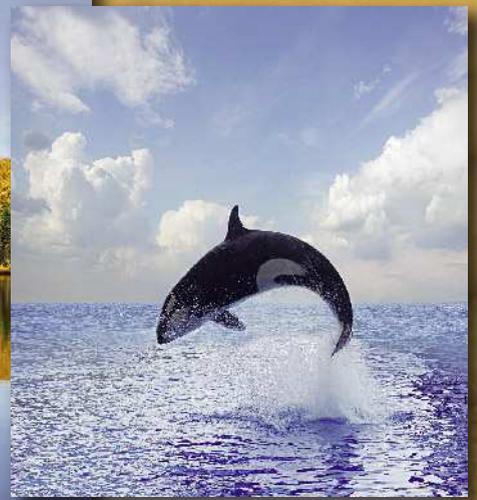
too (from cancer cells to atomic bombs)—but at the bottom of the universe it's love all the way down. Cancer cells and atomic bombs will not have the final word. Love alone has the final say.

*“Unless you love, your life will flash by.”* (Thank you, Terrence Malick.)

Love alone gives meaning to our fleeting fourscore sojourn. Why? Because everything else returns to dust. It's love alone that never ends. It's love alone that is greater than the grave. Death severs all, save love. We remain connected to our departed loved ones by the unseverable bond of love.

*Love remembers.*

God's love is great enough to remember all and to re-member all. If Creation is an explosion (or rapid expansion) of God's love (and I believe it is)—New



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Creation (or resurrection) is the triumph of God's endless love

perfection in the love of God.

It's a journey that will take us a lifetime, and perhaps longer.

But the trajectory is clear: We are always moving toward the way of love.

If what we're doing, praying,

it is too easily forgotten.

*Loveless orthodoxy is death.*

We've all seen those who in the name of Jesus have perfected meanness. The iconic and tragic-comic example would be the Westboro Baptist folk—but there are plenty of

other less egregious, but still tragic, examples.

The journey of faith almost always begins as somewhat elitist (I'm saved!)—but it always

moves toward becoming egalitarian—Peter learning Gentiles are accepted by God. Love triggers the divine and deep (but often repressed)

over death.

This is the question: Which is endless, Love or Death? The answer is Love. If God is love and if love never ends and if the meaning of being is love—and if Jesus is the supreme incarnation of God's eternal love—then that should tell us something about what it looks like to follow Jesus. Following Jesus is a journey toward

preaching, saying, isn't moving us toward love then it's not the true way of following the love of God who is Jesus Christ.

This needs to be said, because

**Jews...Muslims...Hindus...Buddhists...Atheists. I'm thinking of specific people...friends. But will they be saved?! That's not my business. My business is to love and point to Jesus.**



**IF CREATION COMES FROM THE EXPLOSIVE EXPANSION  
OF GOD'S LOVE—I FIND IT SIGNIFICANT THAT WE LIVE  
IN AN EVER-EXPANDING UNIVERSE...IT'S NOT STATIC,  
IT'S EXPANDING...AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT!**

instinct that all things belong. All God has created is good. Sin is the corruption, the hole, in the fabric of God's goodness.

*You too belong. You too are accepted. I will make room for you.*

Over time, as we are properly formed, love will elicit this kind of language. Love is open.

What about the borders of your love? Are they shrinking? Static? Expanding? Who are you embracing in love—fewer people? The same people? More people?

I'm not worried about having borders of love that

**TODAY I FIND IT MUCH EASIER TO LOVE PEOPLE WHO  
ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM ME. I'VE LEARNED TO  
GENUINELY LOVE PEOPLE OF OTHER RELIGIONS—AND  
STILL CONFESS JESUS IS LORD.**

Love is expansive. There is a largeness to love. Sin is mean, petty and small. The whole world of Hell in C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce* was no bigger than a grain of sand. *Selah.*

If Creation comes from the explosive expansion of God's love—I find it significant that we live in an ever-expanding universe. The universe is not

are too broad. Loving too many people will hardly be a crime at the judgment seat of Christ.

In my earliest days of following Jesus I had an air of triumphalism—I'm on the winning team! But as I mature I find triumphalism shrinking and love expanding. Today I find it much easier to love

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shrinking, it's not static, it's expanding...at the speed of light!

God is love. God is light. God's love is expanding at the speed of light.

And what is the wrath of God? The love of God wrongly received. **Either we go with the grain of love or we suffer the shards of self-inflicted harm.** And that you "did it to yourself" by resisting God's love makes it no less of a judgment.

people who are very different from me.

I've learned to genuinely love people of other religions—and still confess Jesus is Lord. Jews... Muslims...Hindus...Buddhists ...Atheists. I'm thinking of specific people...friends.

*But will they be saved?!*

That's not my business. My business is to love and point to Jesus. I do believe that no one who loves the way of grace ever comes to a bad end.

Back to the question about

our borders of love—why would our borders of love shrink and not expand? Only one answer: Fear.

As I observe the world—politically, socially, economically, religiously—I observe there really are only two forces that move people: Fear and Love. So when you observe the events that make news (especially if there's controversy)—ask this simple question: What's at work here? Fear or Love?

Then ask yourself another question: What's moving me? Fear or Love?

Finally, make the decision to move with love and refuse to respond to fear. You can afford to make that risky move because...**God is love and love never ends.** □

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