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Believes in Creation

By Kristin Cock 26.03.2019 07:00

THE BIG QUESTION: How did the universe come to be?

A fresh survey reveals that one in four Norwegians believe that God created the universe.

- It is surprising to see so many people reporting that they are open to the idea that God created the universe, especially considering that religion has a lower status in Norwegian society today. Still, it looks as though many people have an affinity for the biblical narrative, says Rune Arnhoff at the Nordic Bible Museum.

According to a national survey conducted by YouGov for the Nordic Bible Museum, 25 percent believe that God created the universe, 51 percent report that they do not believe in it, while 21 percent answer that they do not know.

- Maybe the connection between science and the contents of the Bible is closer than we often think. Many perceive the Big Bang as an arbitrary beginning of the universe, while others think of it as the moment of Creation, the whole thing controlled by God. In both cases, there is the idea of energy turning into matter, says Arnhoff.

The Big Bang

Jon Vidar Sigurdsson, professor in medieval history at the University of Oslo, is surprised that so many Norwegians believe in Creation.

- Practically all research points in the direction of a Big Bang theory, where a large explosion in space initiated the expansion of the universe and became the basis for all life, says Sigurdsson.

- I would assume that most teachers in Norwegian schools today support that theory, and convey it to their students, he says.

Sigurdsson believes that defiance among Norwegians could explain the high numbers.

- Our society has become increasingly less religious in the past years. The position of Christianity has diminished. People might have a desire to believe, and wish to maintain Christian values. In answering yes to the question about faith, people might feel as though they oppose the more recent developments, he says.

Searching for answers

Arnhoff suspects that many people wish to find an explanation to the origin of the universe to gain a greater understanding of our existence in itself.

- Science can prove that the universe has a beginning, but it cannot explain why it exists or what has transpired prior to its existence, he says.

When asked which religion participants identify with the most, 37 percent answer Christianity. The remaining individuals identified with Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, or indicated that they are believers but do not adhere to a specific religion.

- Surprisingly, young people are the strongest believers.

Among those from the age of 18 to 29, 31 percent of participants report that they believe that God created the universe, while 25 percent of those over the age of 60 give the same answer. Only 21 percent of those between 40 to 49 years old believe in the Bible's history of Creation.

- It is also interesting that education does not appear to have an influence when it comes to faith, says Arnhoff.

He refers to data from the survey which show that merely two percent differ between those who have received primary education and those with university education, when it comes to being religious. The numbers suggest that those with higher education are slightly more firm in their beliefs.

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