

CHERRY BLOSSOMS

Spontaneous flowering of ideas

13 January 2026



This year, I will pen spontaneous thoughts in the form of short letters called “Cherry Blossoms” and share them with you from my heart. Let the river flow ...

Is an omnicausal cosmos or multiverse sufficiently self-explanatory? Or is there an indelible need for an acausal first cause behind that cosmos? Buddhists would say yes to the first question. Christians would disagree and say no to the first question and yes to the second. I believe that the Christians are right. Here’s why.

A cosmos or multiverse that is utterly contingent within itself relies on nothing other than all of its internal components. Each component depends on every other component. Each element inter-exists (“inter-be”) with every other element in a seamless whole. While this may seem to resolve the issue of how each element comes to be, the elephant in the room remains — what accounts for the existence of the whole cosmos in the first place? *Why and how is there something rather than nothing?* The Buddhist answer of a beginningless “interbeing” type of cosmos offers no solution to this problem, no answer to this simple question. In effect, the interdependent cosmos is like a cat chasing its own tail!

The Christian answer posits an acausal creator — God — as the primordial first cause of the cosmos. God as creator is absolute and transcends all causality. The logic of causality that applies to the cosmos and within it is thus not applicable to its creator, God. God by definition requires no prior cause. Our human articulation and communication of God is indeed contingent on language and conception (hence, empty). But this emptiness does not exhaust the ineffable reality of God himself. As acausal first cause, God creates the cosmos. The next question is how: does God create everything out of nothing or something? If something, what is that something?

Classical monotheism would posit that God created the cosmos out of nothing: *creatio ex nihilo*. The trouble is this: how is it possible for this “nothing” to be? If we say that God is omnipresent whose immeasurable being pervades all of space and time and beyond

without obstruction, then this nothing or *nihilo* must be pervaded by God too. How can it be otherwise? For the presence of nothing would necessitate the absence of God in that very nothing! Hence, it seems to me more reasonable to posit that God created everything out of something. And that something is his *very own being*. In short, creation emerges out of, subsists within, and returns back to God's being — God who is the *alpha* and the *omega*, the first and the last, of all that is.

A third possibility is this: that God created everything out of nothing but that nothing is none other than a freely manifested contraction of God's being into empty absolute space. Out of this absolute space that is a contraction of God's being, all things and life emerge. In other words, this nothing is a "kind" of something (albeit a divine something contracted into a spacious void) out of which all things are creatively exuded in cosmic fecundity. This idea of divine contraction into space resonates with the Buddhist notion of emptiness as absolute space of phenomena (*dharmadhatu*) in Dzogchen cosmology.

Theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg speaks of this third option and calls this self-contraction of God *tzimtzum*, perhaps borrowing from the Kabbalah metaphysic of Isaac Luria (1534-72). Either way, whether in the second or third case, the theory of creation is not the model of classical monotheism wherein God and creation exist in absolute separation from each other ontologically. Rather, it is more a case of panentheism. In panentheism, creation exists within God and is part of God even though God transcends creation in ineffably infinite ways. Etymologically, "pan-" refers to everything; "en-" means in; and "theism" refers to God as the centre of doctrinal belief.

Panentheism, whether in the classical or Pannenberg sense, sounds more intelligible to me. The cosmos exists within the being of God and is constituted by God's very being. Once in motion, the cosmos continues its dynamic existence in utterly contingent, self-organizing, and interdependent ways that Buddhists would find familiar. Even so, the cosmos remains grounded in God and reliant on his selflessly loving, non-controlling, and spontaneously helping flow of grace, for its sustenance and its redemption.

In the end, the mystery of God and creation remains a mystery, entailing a deep silence. I humbly surrender all of my faith seeking understanding to that great mystery in whom I live, move, and have my being. It is the same mystery to whom I ultimately belong, unconditionally and totally, and towards whom I shall return. May you all be blessed.

Ad majorem dei gloriam

✠ **Chris**