



***In Memoriam: Rev Dr Ian Masson Fraser, MA, BD, PhD***

December 17, 1917–April 10, 2018

Minister at Arbroath and Rosyth; Warden of Scottish Churches House; Executive Secretary of the World Council of Churches; Dean and Head of the Department of Mission at Selly Oak Colleges; Research Consultant to the Scottish Churches Council; informal ambassador for the British Missionary Society and Boards; member of the Iona Community; and author.

**The Fraser Prize essay 2017**

The question set for the Fraser Prize 2017 was the topic of the Scottish Church Theology Society conference which was later held in January 2018: *“What is the significance of modern cosmology for theology today?”* Issues which could be covered included, but were not limited to: the consonance (or otherwise) of the ‘Big Bang’ theory with religious understandings of origins; the challenge (or otherwise) to religious belief of the discovery of intelligent life elsewhere in the Universe; the religious implications (if any) of the Anthropic Principle, and of Multiverse theory; the implications (if any) of the ‘heat death’ of the Universe for Christian eschatology.”

The winning paper was by Isaak Deman, a student at the University of Leuven in Belgium. The paper was entitled: *“From Big Bang to Heat Death? Theological Considerations on Modern Cosmological Issues”*

In the assessment of the Reading Panel:

‘This essay was a good response to the question, identifying and exploring topics from cosmology which are of theological interest. Out of all the essays, this paper tackled the subject in the most constructive and creative way. It uses knowledge of biblical languages in an illuminating way and has the confidence to deploy systematic theology in addressing the issues that modern cosmology raises. The analysis of Walton’s work is fresh and skilful, and the distinction between material and functional creation is well explained. The style is accessible, while being scholarly, and the essay sustains a strong argument throughout, that science and religion are not incompatible.’