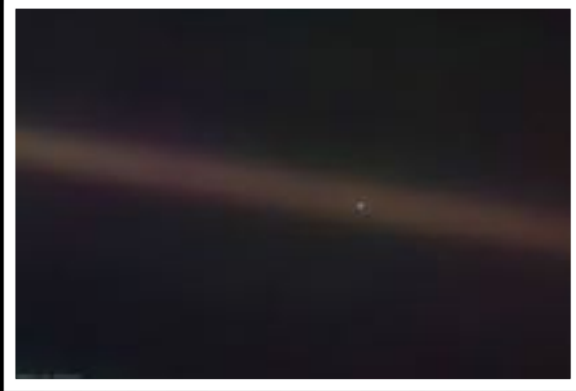


PALE BLUE DOT

Carl Sagan



"In some respects, science has far surpassed religion in delivering awe. How is it that hardly any major religion has looked at science and concluded, 'This is better than we thought! The Universe is much bigger than our prophets said, grander, more subtle, more elegant. God must be even greater than we dreamed'? Instead they say, 'No, no, no! My god is a little god, and I want him to stay that way.' A religion, old or new, that stressed the magnificence of the Universe as revealed by modern science might be able to draw forth reserves of reverence and awe hardly tapped by the conventional faiths. Sooner or later, such a religion will emerge."

"The evidence, so far at least and laws of Nature aside, does not require a Designer. Maybe there is one hiding, maddeningly unwilling to be revealed. Sometimes it seems a very slender hope. The significance of our lives and our fragile planet is then determined

only by our own wisdom and courage. We are the custodians of life's meaning. We long for a Parent to care for us, to forgive us our errors, to save us from our childish mistakes. But knowledge is preferable to ignorance."

"In every culture, the sky and the religious impulse are intertwined. I lie back in an open field and the sky surrounds me. I'm overpowered by its scale. It's so vast and so far away that my own insignificance becomes palpable. But I don't feel rejected by the sky. I'm a part of it—tiny, to be sure, but everything is tiny compared to that overwhelming immensity."

