

## EAST CENTRAL REGION, ACPE

Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio & Pittsburgh, PA.

July 2004

### Contents:

Frankly Speaking

July CPE Day

Certification Deadline

July CPE Day-Program &  
Registration information

Job Opportunities

Calendar of Events

ECR Roster Officers &  
Committees

Supervisory Education

Officers of the Region

August Newsletter Deadline

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### Looking for God in a Mind Blowing Big Universe

*When I look at your heavens, the work of you fingers, the moon  
and stars which you have established; what are (we) that you are  
mindful of us?*

Psalm 8: 3,4a paraphrased

When the Psalmist penned these lines, he expressed his astonishment that the Creator of the vast world could possibly be mindful of humanity. I'm sure that looking up into the black night sky strewn with countless stars has always seemed overwhelming to us humans—but if David had only known what we know about the size of the universe, it would have fried his circuits! What is even more amazing to me is that our understanding of the “size” and “nature” of the universe as it is unfolding to scientists today suggests that the universe is more gigantic that we thought even a few years ago.

I have just finished wading through Brian Greene's book, The Fabric of the Cosmos: Space, Time, and the Texture of Reality for the second time. Admittedly, much of it is beyond me, but even the parts I do understand stretch my capacity to grasp. Greene, whose last book, The Elegant Universe, introduced laypersons to “string theory,” takes his description of the cosmos a step further in his present book. In it he traces the contributions of many physicists and astronomers over the past generation who have pieced together the current understanding of our universe. For Greene, the focus of this book is not about the size of the universe, but about understanding what we have come to know or believe about the nature of the universe by uncovering the process by which it has come to be what it is. This is a great “detective story,” which has some fascinating collateral discoveries among which are these:

1. Space is not empty—it consists of many kinds of “fields” that are made up of “waves,” like microwaves, light waves, etc.
2. These fields are what make wireless communication possible.
3. The microwave field across the entire cosmos is a uniform temperature.

**Supervisory Education  
In the Region**

**Associate Supervisors**

Rhonda Gilligan Gillespie  
Lonnie E. Long  
Dana C.J. Schroeder

**Supervisory Candidates**

Ruth Alpers  
Ed Bastien  
Carrie Cullen  
Bill Foster  
Donald Harris  
James Mitchell  
Evans Mulima  
Jon Paulus  
Joe Roberts  
Pat Shelden Ward  
Tim Waits  
Frank Woggon

**Officers of the Region**

Frank Ciampa, Director  
Katherine Nininger, Chair  
Lin Barnett, Vice Chair  
Rhonda Gilligan-Gillespie,  
Accreditation  
Carol Reynolds Green, Board  
of Reps  
Frank Impicciche, Board of  
Reps  
Bob Uken, Budget &  
Investment  
Mary Burks-Price, Certification  
Co-Chair  
Michael Rice Saxton,  
Certification Co-Chair  
Carl DeMeritt, Clinical  
Members Co-Chair  
Martha Amann, Clinical  
Members Co-Chair  
\_\_\_\_\_, History  
Earl Hoppert, Long Range  
Development  
Daryl Hanson, Nominations  
Carl Buxo, Professional Ethics  
Billie Beverly, REM  
Celia Thurston, Research  
Karl VanHam, Standards

4. Two particles billions of miles apart in space can be connected in such a way that they act in concert, as though they were physically attached to each other.
5. All that we experience in the "interior" of the cosmos may be very much like a holographic image of activity taking place "on the surface" of the cosmos (whatever that means).

However strange and wondrous these characteristics of the cosmos may be, I want to give you Greene's comparison to try to grasp the size of the entire universe (the cosmos). He says that if the cosmos were the size of the earth, then all the universe that we can see with our telescopes and other instruments of detection would be *smaller than a grain of sand!* Let that sink in. What would the Psalmist have said about a God who reigned over such a universe as that? How does God even find humanity in such vastness? For that matter, is it any easier for us to deal with this expanding understanding of the nature of existence?

My hope comes in another aspect of Greene's book. He makes it clear that the key to understanding the cosmos is in understanding the tiniest elements in the universe—which in present day physics are believed to be sub-atomic: consisting of electrons, quarks, and "strings." In these unbelievably tiny particles is written the history of the cosmos—going back to a "big bang" before which all the substance of the universe had compressed to a size smaller than an atom. Don't ask me how that could be—it's in the book.

Someone, long ago, said that if we truly understood a drop of water, we would understand the universe. If the astrophysicists are correct, we need to understand far less than a drop of water to unlock the universe to us.

God is in the small stuff as well as in the great. One of the most clarifying things in Greene's book to me was a statement that there was a moment in the history of the unfolding cosmos when the conditions were just right, and at that moment, what was happening on a microcosmic level got projected on to the huge screen that today we know as the universe, the cosmos.

So I think we have two choices: we can conceptualize God in a particular way, and as our understanding of the universe grows, God can get lost among the galaxies beyond our ability to imagine; or we can imagine a God who was there when this all got started, and

#### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **July 9, 2004 CPE Day**-  
Earlham School of  
Religion – Mike Saxton,  
Coordinator
- **September 24-25, 2004 -**  
**ECR Fall Conference,**  
**Hilton Suites, Lexington,**  
**KY.**

#### DEADLINE FOR THE AUGUST 2004 NEWSLETTER

Information for the August  
Newsletter must be received  
by July 28, 2004. Send to the  
Regional Business Office.

let our picture of God expand with our understanding of the elegant universe in which we find ourselves! "How Great Thou Art"—indeed!

Collegially,  
*Frank*

#### Certification Fees & Deadlines:

The next regional certification meeting is Thursday, September 23, 2004 in Lexington, KY. Applications are due (postmarked) by August 1, 2004. Materials will be due to committee members by August 23, 2004. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by E-mail [saxtonm@sjrmc.com](mailto:saxtonm@sjrmc.com) or by phone 574-282-8904 or E-mail [mary.burks-pice@nortonhealthcare.org](mailto:mary.burks-pice@nortonhealthcare.org) 502-629-3152.

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**July 9, 2004 CPE Day –Earlham School of Religion –  
9AM-4PM. Contact Michael Rice Saxton for more information.  
[saxtonm@sjrmc.com](mailto:saxtonm@sjrmc.com) or 574-282-8904.**

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#### Job Opportunities:

No ads were received this month.