



GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL

Living and Sharing the Gospel

NZ Update – 27 March 2014

Greetings from Auckland!

Festival Letter: This year's letter from Dennis Richards announcing details of the new site in Ngongotaha, including accommodation options, is in the mail this week. The annual letter from the Board Chairman is also in the package.

Please note that Festival accommodation bookings are to be made directly with Willowhaven, not the Church. If bookings are made via the AA travel website (www.aatravel.co.nz), there is a discount of around 5%. (Cabins are \$75, tourist flats & chalets \$95.)

Vanuatu visit: I will be in Vanuatu next week, visiting the members there. I'll be away from March 30 until April 6. Prayers are requested for Mrs Lina Taren (Billy's wife), who is seriously ill in hospital in Norsup at this time.

Milestones: Yvonne Wayne has reminded me that the second baptising tour by the Worldwide Church of God in NZ was exactly 50 years ago, in March 1964. Frank Simpkins and Dexter Faulkner visited 82 people and baptised 21 on that tour. (The first tour was in April 1962.)

In the last 3 weeks or so the Auckland church has enjoyed celebrating the 60th birthdays of William Trevarthen and Jim Wood.

Hope Project:

Please continue to remember the Hope Project, which aims to get the gospel into the hands of every household in NZ via a TV ad and distribution of a booklet during this bicentennial year of the gospel in Aotearoa. The project leaders are about to go on a roadshow visiting the ministers' associations in more than 70 cities throughout the country. They are also putting additional resources on the website <http://www.hopeproject.co.nz/>. On the "Partnership" page of the website are links to lots of resources, both video and articles, equipping Christians for explaining the gospel and feeling more comfortable with personal evangelism.

Big Bang: I thought the following article from theologian and pastor James Emery White on the recent discovery of gravitational waves from the birth of the universe was worth sharing with you.

Warm regards to all, *Rex*

The Big Banger

By James Emery White

This week was a cosmologist's dream.

A discovery was made that few scientists thought would ever be discovered at all, much less in their lifetime: ripples made in the fabric of the universe following the Big Bang.

First predicted by Einstein, scientists believed that gravitational waves were common, constantly crashing over the earth, but had never been able to detect them.

This week we did.

And they confirmed a theory that has been tantalizing scientists for decades: the Big Bang wasn't just big, it was fast. As in almost instantaneously, miraculously fast – beyond even the speed of light (which was previously thought to have been impossible). In fact, it happened when the universe was only a trillionth of a trillionth of a trillionth of a second old.



As first posited by M.I.T. physicist Alan Guth, the event is called "inflation," and refers to the universe going from something smaller than the end of your little finger to 100 trillion trillion times that size.

The idea of the "Big Bang" was first put forward by Dr. Edwin Hubble. For whom we named the Hubble telescope. His theory was that at one time, all matter was packed into a dense mass at temperatures of many trillions of degrees. Then, about 13.8 billion years ago, there was a huge explosion. And from that explosion, all of the matter that today forms our planets and stars was born.

Hubble's idea was confirmed through what had been called the discovery of the century. On April 24, 1992, the Cosmic Background Explorer satellite, better known as COBE, gave stunning confirmation of the hot big bang creation event.

But how did the expansion following the Big Bang take place? If it was a bang that expanded, how did it spread out so far with such equal temperatures?

Now we know.

As *USA Today's* coverage reported, "it underwent a fast and incomprehensibly massive growth spurt in its earliest infancy."

In other words, as we might say, it was a start of biblical proportions. Miraculous, even. I mean, who or what can go beyond the speed of light and spread out the entire universe instantly

from a single explosion? Sounds kind of like an "in the beginning, God created" thing to me.

Just saying.

We already knew the Big Bang pointed to something outside of our boundaries of knowledge. It doesn't take a physicist to wonder what made the Big Bang "bang," and even less of one to ask "If nothing existed before the Big Bang, then where did the stuff that got banged come from?"

As Alan Guth himself once noted, even if you could come up with a theory that would account for the creation of something from nothing through the laws of physics, you'd still have to account for the origin of the laws of physics.

So I celebrate with physicists and cosmologists the world over. It really was a remarkable discovery. It opens up the idea of endless universes, and space-time issues that boggle the mind.

So let's celebrate the Big Bang.

Just don't forget to celebrate the Big Banger as well.

Sources

"Space Ripples Reveal Big Bang's Smoking Gun," Dennis Overbye, *The New York Times*, March 17, 2014.

"Gravitational waves offer new insight into Big Bang," Traci Watson, *USA Today*, March 18, 2014.

Alan Guth, *The Inflationary Universe*.