

Evidence For Christianity Newsletter

REPORT ON '07 SUMMER TEACHING TRIPS

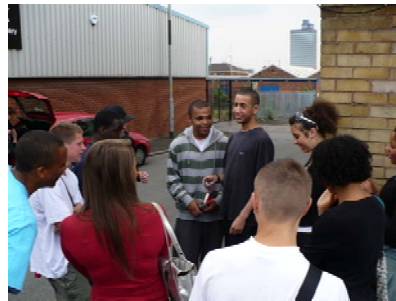
UK June 6-13.

I returned to the UK this summer. The visit began with teaching in Edinburgh where I did a class on Science and God. It was great to see Ben Brady and his beautiful wife in what, to me, is the most beautiful city in the world. After this, I returned to Reading. I taught several brand new classes on this trip, including one titled "Ethics in an Unethical World. This class was about the Christian world view as compared to that of scientific materialism and postmodernism. I also did a class titled "Christianity and World Religions" in Marley. This focused both apologetics and world view of world religions and Christianity. I also did a class at Reading University titled "A Response to the God Delusion." Dawkins' new book, of the same title, is a massive hit in the UK. It was really fun to do a class on campus at Reading University.

The UK visit included a day at Oxford University with my good friends James and Emily Grieg. We got to see the labs of Richard Dawkins himself. After this, I traveled to Manchester to teach classes for the church there. One highlight was teaching for the teen group. The church has only two teens and the church leader, Andy Boakye said there may be eight or ten in the class. There were twenty teens! After a forty minute class, we had Q & A for 90 minutes. A lot of faith was created. While in Manchester I got to see the Rylands Papyrus, the oldest manuscript of the New Testament (ca AD 125). The UK visit ended with a trip to Croydon in South London, where I did another new class titled, "The Bible, from God or Man." The church in Croydon had done a survey in the area of the questions which interested people. On a Monday night there were more guests than members at this event.

South Africa June 13-18.

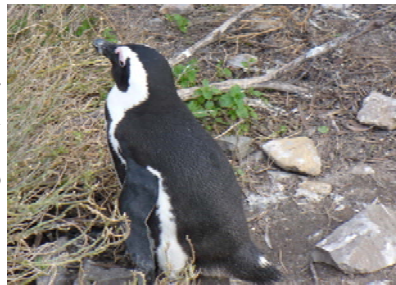
From London I flew direct to Cape Town. This is by far the farthest south I have been. Cape Town is a beautiful seaport town. No one told me about the weather, but I should have known, since it is winter here. I froze. Cape Town is a unique city, made up of about 1/3 whites, 1/3 blacks and 1/3 "coloreds." The coloreds are somewhat mixed in race, but the main distinction between them and the blacks is that they learned Afrikaans and participated more in the white economy in the past two hundred years. The groups still live almost completely segregated. Of course, this is not the case with the church I visited here. I stayed with the family of Werner Vos. Security is a big issue throughout South Africa. Although there has been fantastic progress since the breakup of the apartheid system, crime has spiraled out of control. I taught a midweek class on From Shadow to Reality for the church here. There were an unprecedented number of guests at the meeting. I was very fortunate to travel with the church staff to Robben Island, which is where Nelson Mandela and the other important political prisoners from apartheid times were held. This was a very moving experience, as our guides were former political prisoners who had served with Mandela. From Cape Town I flew to Johannesburg (Jo-burg to the locals).



Manchester Church



Tim and Chevy Dannett



Penguin, Robben Island, S. Africa



Worship in South Africa

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2008 International Christian Apologetics Conference

June 6-8

Elmhurst College
Elmhurst, IL

www.evidenceforchristianity.org



Coming next Month...

Review of the Dead Sea Scroll Exhibit at San Diego's Museum of Natural History

by Dr. John Beggs

This is a cosmopolitan city of twelve million. Soweto, a township of Jo-burg, was the center of gravity of the anti-apartheid movement. The city is considered to be the murder capital of the world. It is a mixture of Western-style city and striking poverty in the townships. I did a class on the book of Daniel for a group of about 800; over half of which were visitors to the church. The singing in Africa is amazing. The dancing, the African-style yodeling (is that a good word for it?): it is something which cannot be described. It can only be experienced. I did a class on The Problem of Pain and Suffering for the Pretoria group, a Sunday morning lesson on God and Science for about 900 (in a region of about 450 members) and a Sunday evening service in Soweto on From Shadow to Reality. The church in Johannesburg is a total racial mixture, while in Soweto I was the only non-black person in the room. Quite a contrast. I was able to visit the former home of Nelson Mandela in Soweto. That and reading Mandela's "The Long Walk to Freedom" was a great inspiration.

From Johannesburg, I was off to Durban. This is a city of three million on the Indian Ocean. By contrast to the other places I visited, Durban has a population of over one million from the Indian subcontinent. The church I visited reflects this diversity. This is a small church of about sixty members. At a Monday night midweek event I taught The Bible: From God or Man to about 100. This was the biggest event the church here had experienced in a very long time. I had a fantastic time getting to know the leaders, Duncan Comrie and his wife.

From Durban, I flew back to Johannesburg to teach a class on spiritual gifts to the staff of the church, followed by a brief visit to a nature preserve, then off for home.



Abidjan, Ivory Coast, July 13-17.

My daughter Katie and I traveled next to West Africa. We flew through Dubai and Accra, Ghana—a trip of forty hours—to reach Abidjan. This is a wonderful city of six million where the common language is French. This is where it came in handy to have Katie along, as she has taken three years of French. We had amazing experiences in this wonderful country. The Ivory Coast is still recovering from a seven year civil war which devastated the country. In Abidjan one can still see bombed-out buildings, yet the people have a renewed sense of pride and patriotism in their democracy. While in Abidjan we got used to eating a lot of fish. Utensils are optional, as we usually ate with our hands. I taught a class on spiritual gifts to the college group. Abidjan has a campus group of over 500 students! Katie and I taught a class on parenting of teens together, with about 400 in attendance. All the classes were on the campus of the University of Abidjan. The dorms there have about 8-10 students in a room. This is not what we are used to. The people here are so warm and friendly and the singing is indescribable.

We had a wonderful time with Blaise and Patricia Feumba and many others in the church here. Sunday AM was a service at which there were about 2500 in attendance. I did a class on From Shadow to Reality. Katie and I were almost speechless at this event. It was an unspeakable joy to be with this faithful and loving group of disciples of Jesus. Much to my embarrassment, I was crowned at the end of the service King Batafoye Oka II. That afternoon I taught for the Bible school on church history to a class of about 500. This was a great mind-opener for the Christians in Western Africa who have had very little of such teaching. After a three hour question and answer meeting with the church staff the next day, Katie and I were off to Douala, Cameroon via Conondo, Benin.

Douala, Cameroon, July 17-21

Cameroon is another French-speaking country. Douala is not the capital, but it is the largest city, with a population of several million. This city has almost no modern-looking buildings, but it is a bustling center of business. Cameroon is an absolutely beautiful country with mountains, forests and abundant fertile land. It supplies food for many of its neighbors. In this somewhat sleepy country, there is much poverty, but there is also plenty of good food to be had by all. Common food here includes fish, manioc and pounded yam. People seem so happy here and they are very warm and inviting. It seems to rain an awful lot here as well. We spent a lot of time with Raymond, the church leader here, as well as with Elizabeth, Ebenezer and Gilbert from a church in Bimenda.





Lagos Church

Abijan leaders

Cote D'Ivoire, Nigeria & Cameroon

After a class on church history and leadership, and one on spiritual gifts for the teens (about 30) we spent a day traveling with Ebenezer, Gilbert and Raymond to Limbe, a small fishing village in the English-speaking corner of Cameroon. The mountains, the banana, rubber, oil palm and other plantations, the rivers... the trip was wonderful. We ate fresh-caught fish right on the beach in this charming little city. Then we were back to Douala for a class for the parents of teens. Katie was so exhausted she was unable to help in the teaching. In the evening there was a class for the whole church. There are about 120 members in this little group. Again, the singing and dancing was truly an experience to behold. We met a woman there who was not a member of the church. She was the landlord for Raymond and his family. Despite not being a member, she was so impressed with the spirit of the church that she decided to donate land for a church and to provide all the funding to build a building. This very poor church was blessed by God in a miraculous way—land and a building at no cost!

Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria, July 21-26.

Very early the next morning, Katie and I were off for Lagos, Nigeria with Elizabeth and Ebenezer for the West Africa Christian Conference. Lagos is another place which defies description. This is a city of well over twenty million inhabitants. Fortunately for me, we could use English here. The city has many problems with its very bad roads, corruption and inescapable poverty, yet the people have a can-do attitude that does not die. They are some of the happiest people you will ever meet. Lagos is by far the most religious place I have visited. There are churches of every kind everywhere. It seems that there are one or two churches on every block. In the center of the city, in the “islands,” there is a bustling business center with many modern buildings. It is very crowded here and the driving is another one of those “you have to experience it” things.

Katie and I made so many great friends here, as leaders had come from all over Africa and even from the US for the conference. I renewed friendships with Chris and Rolayo Ogonnaya, with George and Titi, with Shadrach, Israel Areola, Phillip Osagie and many others. On Friday I taught a class on “The Bible, from God or Man” to about 1000. Katie and I did a class for the teens and a class for parents of teens—each about three or four hundred. The conference included speakers such as Mike and Ann-Brigitte Taliaferro (San Antonio), Dolapo Ogundpe (Johannesberg), George Irungu (Nairobi), Blaise and Patricia Feumba (Cote d’Ivoire) and many others. We got to spend time in a huge open market which was so crowded it is hard to conceive from a Western mindset. The food here is interesting. One dish in particular called agusi was interesting to Katie and me, as it has a slimy consistency. We are not used to this. The most common dish is pounded yam, which is pretty good.

Sunday AM at the conference was fantastic. The first two elders for our family of churches in West Africa were appointed. Phillip Osagie and Israel Areola are powerful and mature men of God. The entertainment was inspiring, the lesson was encouraging. There were about 4000 in attendance. People came from Ghana, Sierra Leone, Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, and ten other churches in Nigeria. We were especially encouraged by the faith of the Christians from places such as Port Harcourt which is having so much trouble with kidnappings and other troubles due to the insurrection in the Niger delta. I cried three times during the service, which is really saying something for a relatively non-emotional person like myself.

From Lagos we traveled to Abuja. One interesting experience happened in the airport. The man in front of us in the security line had the barrel of his machine gun sticking out of his bag. He made it right through the x-ray machine without problem, but they took Katie’s tweezers, as they were a potentially dangerous weapon. Go figure. The beautiful and very modern city of Abuja is the capital of Nigeria. The streets are wide and clean. We visited a village called Clinton, as some more famous visitors had come there a few years ago. At this village they make pottery, some of completely by hand; without even a potter’s wheel. The meeting in Abuja was for church leaders in Africa. I taught a class for the church in Abuja. We were part of some very convicting classes on humility and vision.

From here we flew back to Lagos where I taught one last class on the Problem of Pain and Suffering for one of the regions of the Lagos Christian Church. This was followed by another forty hour journey back home.

What is the interpretation of Hebrews 4:3 ?

¹Therefore, while the promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear so that none of you should miss it. ²For we also have received the good news just as they did; but the message they heard did not benefit them, since they were not united with those who heard it in faith (³for we who have believed enter the rest), in keeping with what He has said: So I swore in My anger, they will not enter My rest. Hebrews 4:1-3

The context of Hebrews 4:3 is that the Hebrew writer is discussing the possibility of us turning back to Egypt and therefore falling in the ³desert. The author is warning Christians that they must keep moving forward in their faith. If we give up our faith, we will lose our salvation. Metaphorically, we will "fall in the desert," and not enter the promised land, which is a foreshadow for heaven. I discuss this fairly thoroughly in chapter one of my book, From Shadow to Reality (www.ipibooks.com).

Given this context, the Hebrew writer is telling his hearers that as Christians there is a sense in which we have already entered that rest (heaven) when we believed and were baptized (as were the people of God under Moses, see 1 Corinthians 10:1-5). However, we can still lose this salvation. We can "fall short" of the Sabbath-rest (ie of heaven) if we pull back from the faith and no longer follow Jesus.

This is why the Hebrew writer continues by quoting Psalm 95:11 "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." If we turn back from our faith in God, we "shall never enter my rest." That is, we will not enter heaven. Even though we have salvation now, and therefore in a sense we have heaven already, we can still fall short and not make it to heaven. It is not time to rest yet. We need to keep striving to the goal. Like the Hebrew writer says, (v. 9) There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God..... let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience."

I hope this helps. It goes against a very common false doctrine which is the perseverance of the saints, also known as "once saved, always saved." We can lose our salvation if we fall into disobedience. Let me suggest to you a brand new book on the topic which was just recently published. It is "Troubling Questions for Calvinists," by F. LeGard Smith. It is available from Cotswold Press.

I have many Jewish friends. How can I help them to understand that Jesus is the Son of God and that he is the Messiah taught about in the Old Testament?

Good question! I have a few suggestions for you to consider.

1 Purchase a book on Judaism and its relationship to Christianity. I have read a number. Let me suggest my favorite. It is "You Bring the Bagels, I'll Bring the Gospel." The book is by Barry Rubin. It is important that you understand the Jewish perspective on the Old Testament so that you can anticipate the kinds of questions you will be asked.

2. Consider reading my book "From Shadow to Reality." This book (available at www.ipibooks.com) will give you a feel for how thoroughly the Old Testament—from Genesis to Malachi—is all about Jesus Christ. Understanding the foreshadows and prefigures of the New Covenant and of Jesus will give you confidence as you wade into the Old Testament with your Jewish friend. objections which Jewish people have been trained to raise with regard to Jesus of Nazareth.



Once you are ready, I suggest you ask your friend to do a study of messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.

You will find a lot of material for this study in From Shadow to Reality. There is a study titled Messianic Prophecies at the web site. Some passages you will want to use include John 5:39-40, Luke 24:44, Isaiah 53:1-9, Psalms 22:15-18, Isaiah 9:1, Micah 5:2, Zechariah 11:12-13, and Daniel 9:24-25. In each case, when you study the Old Testament prophecy, establish for you friend that this is indeed a prophecy of the Messiah first, then go to the place in the New Testament where the prediction was proved true in the person Jesus of Nazareth. To summarize these prophecies, according to the authors of the Jewish scripture, the Messiah must be born in Bethlehem, be raised in Galilee, be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, be crucified, be pierced, be silent when accused, and be killed in Jerusalem some time around 33 AD. Obviously, Jesus fulfilled all these prophecies.

4. Once you have established that Jesus fulfills the expectation of the Jews for a Messiah, then I suggest you begin to show your friend the claims of Jesus. This is the pattern of teaching to Jewish people which was exhibited by Peter on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. He mentioned that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Messiah, then he mentioned his miracles, then he mentioned Jesus' claims and demands on our lives. My suggestion for you is to use the book of John as a source, both of the miracles Jesus worked and of his claims about himself.

Has there been any scientific analysis on the Book of Enoch that will prove it is unbiblical?

I am not an expert on the book of Enoch. I doubt science will have anything to offer on the book of Enoch. Science generally has little if anything to offer in analyzing literature. However, scholars can tell us a lot about this book. It is of particular interest because the book is referred to, definitely by both Jude and perhaps by the Hebrew writer.

A few facts about the book.

It obviously was not written by Enoch. No one believes it was written by him. By definition it is part of the Pseudepigrapha (books attributed falsely to an important Bible character) It is also known as 1 Enoch, as there are two other pseudepigraphical books of Enoch--2 and 3 Enoch. The book was not included in the OT Apocryphal books, even by the Roman Catholic Church.

However, the Ethiopian Coptic Church considers Enoch to be inspired. It is considered to have been written about 160 BC, during early Maccabean times, but some scholars put it in the 3rd century (200's) BC. It is possible that the book is a compilation of writing from both periods. It was probably written in Aramaic, or possibly Hebrew, but we have no Hebrew manuscripts. The only ancient manuscripts are in the Ethiopic language (except see below). It is quoted from in Jude 1:14-15

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him Compare this with Enoch 1:9, translated from the Ethiopic:

And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of His holy ones To execute judgment upon all, And to destroy all the ungodly: And to convict all flesh Of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, And of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. There is no evidence the Jews as a whole ever accepted this book as canonical.

Some important early church fathers did believe it was inspired, including Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian. It was favored by the early church at least in part because of its messianic prophecies. Tertullian claims the Jews rejected the book because of its messianic prophecies.

Some early church teachers rejected Enoch as non-canonical and concluded that Jude is also non-canonical because it quotes a non-canonical book. By the fourth century, nearly all Christian churches had rejected the book as canonical.

The oldest Ethiopic manuscript is from the 5th century.

Fragments of 1 Enoch were found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, confirming its Jewish origin.

The subject of the book deals largely with the role of angels. It talks about the relationship between angels and men and the origin of the Nephilim. The Nephilim are the result of sexual relations between fallen angels and women. The fallen angels were headed by Azazel.

To quote Enoch

"And they became pregnant, and they bare great giants, whose height was three thousand ells [*the Ethiopian text gives 300 cubits (135 meters), which is probably a corruption of 30 cubits (13.5 meters)*]: *Who consumed all the acquisitions of men. And when men could no longer sustain them, the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. And they began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one another's flesh, and drink the blood.*"

This unholy act led in large measure to the downfall of mankind and to the subsequent judgment of the flood of Noah.

Other parts of the books deal with later history of Israel, including the giving of the Law to Moses, and even a recounting of some of the events of the Maccabean times (160's BC).

The cosmology of Enoch is somewhat problematic. There may be some scientific errors in the description of the heavenly bodies.

As to whether the book is "biblical" (I assume by this you mean inspired by God), you can read the book and decide for yourself what you think. The book was used by some of the Jews, particularly those of the Qumran/Essene sect, but it was not accepted by the main body of Jews as rising to the level of canonical writing. Some early Christians considered it inspired, but the overall verdict of the early church was that it is not.

My opinion is that this is not an inspired book, but I suggest you do your own study. The most interesting fact about the book is that it is quoted by Jude. Assuming that Jude is inspired, does this, by implication, mean Enoch is inspired? I say no. Jude can quote writings of non-inspired Jews without this necessarily implying that the entire book is inspired. Nevertheless, it is clear that even Jude gave some credence to this book, at least as a useful spiritual book, if not inspired. Also, the book gives some helpful ideas to us in order to understand who the Nephilim may have been. It is possible that the theology of the Nephilim in Enoch is accurate, although it will be hard to prove this one way or another. I believe you ought to reach your own conclusions about this book.

Below are some references so you can read a translation of Enoch for yourself.

Vanderkam, JC. (2004). *1 Enoch: A New Translation*. Minneapolis:Fortress, p1ff (ie. preface summary).

Nichelsburg, GW. (2004). *Hermeneia: 1 Enoch 1*. Minneapolis:Fortress, p7-8.

The Ante-Nicene Fathers (ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson; vol 4.16)

The Book of Enoch compiled and edited by Ronald K. Brown [ISBN 0-9675737-0-X](#)

1 Enoch: A New Translation, translated by George W.E. Nichelsburg and James C. VanderKam. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004. [ISBN 0-8006-3694-5](#)

Christian Evidences Weekend at Princeton University

Date: **04/07/2008 - 04/09/2008** Time: **TBA** Place: Princeton, NJ

This will be a Christian Evidences weekend sponsored by the Central New Jersey Church of Christ. More information will be forthcoming. For more information, the local contact is James Rempel, rempejla@msn.com

Christian Evidences Workshop in Toronto, Canada

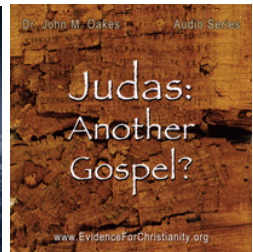
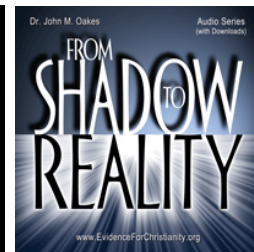
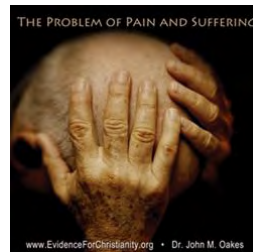
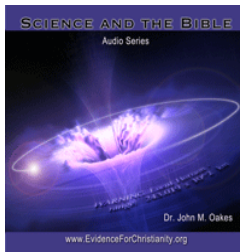
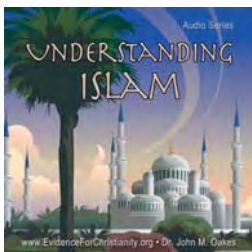
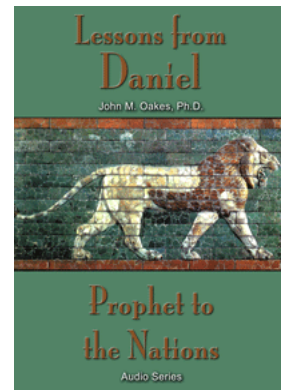
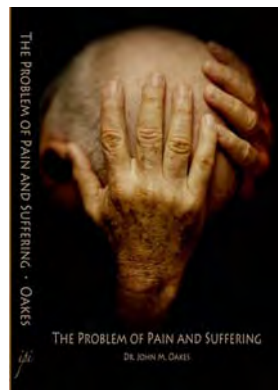
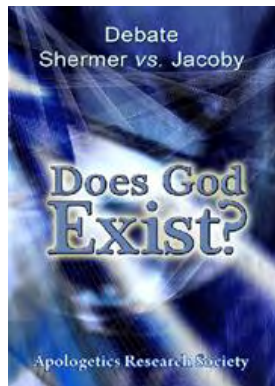
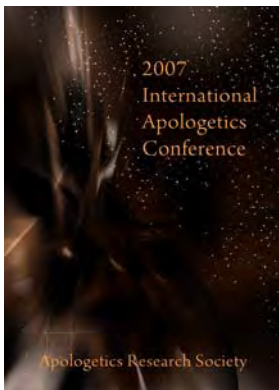
Date: **05/16 – 05/18/2008**

This teaching weekend will be sponsored by the Toronto Church of Christ. Classes will include Science and God for teens and college on Friday night, From Shadow to Reality on Saturday and History, Archaeology and the Bible on Sunday. For information contact Mike Luzine mluzine@rogers.com

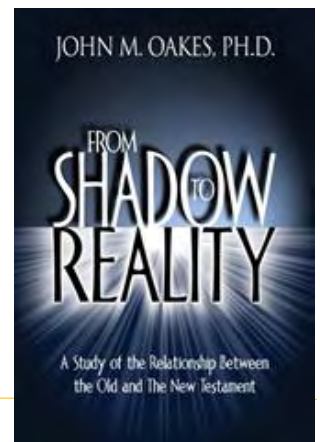
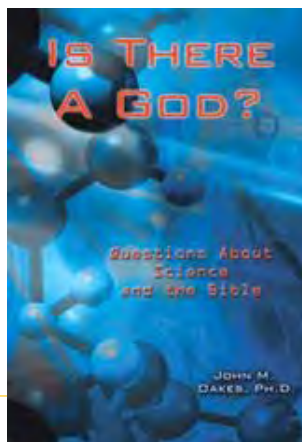
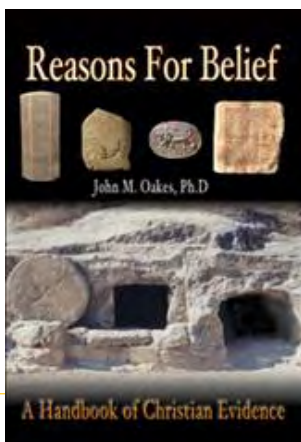
2008 International Apologetics Conference

Date: **06/06/2008 - 06/08/2008** Time: **TBA** Place: Chicago, IL We will be having our second International Apologetics Conference in Chicago June 6-8. The theme will be Apologetics and World Religions. There will be a three-way debate/forum on the question: What is the true legacy of Abraham? The participants will be a leading scholar of Islam, Shabir Ally, one of Judaism, Rabbi Schmuley Boteach and Dr. Douglas Jacoby, who will be defending the Christian viewpoint. This event will be Saturday evening. There will be an evangelistic event on Friday evening, an apologetics-focused service on Sunday, many classes on both Friday and Saturday, field trips and more. Cost will be \$120. Student registration will be \$90. For information contact Jan Oakes joakes01@san.rr.com

Recent Publications



Books Published



Caracas, Venezuela, Aug 6-10.

My beautiful wife Jan and I had a wonderful experience of traveling to South America together. Having Jan along in a Spanish-speaking country is very helpful. My Spanish is pretty good, but she is almost fluent. We flew through Panama City, landing in the sea-side airport, which is about an hour from Caracas. The city is three thousand feet elevation above the sea. Caracas lies in a long, narrow valley between large mountains. It is stunningly beautiful. Caracas is home to about eight million people who are crammed into this amazingly beautiful setting. The poor people live in barrios on the impossible steep hillsides outside the city. It rains a lot here and mudslides are not uncommon. The poor live literally on the edge of destruction. The atmosphere in this country is strongly affected by the presence of the dictator Hugo Chavez, but the people seem to go about their lives without regard to their political situation. The city has major crime problems, making it unsafe for us to walk the streets by ourselves. At one point there was a downpour in the city which was so intense that there were rivers two and three feet deep rushing down the streets at very high speed. We feared that in driving we might be swept away.

The church we met with here is fairly small—about eighty members. It is lead by a very faithful couple, Luis Fernando and Fanny Herrera. Our first night there we had a wonderful meal which included the national dish, which is a corn cake/bread called arepa, as well as yuca which is a kind of tuber and black beans. It seemed like we had a new and exotic type of fruit drink with every meal. Our first day I taught classes on Pain and Suffering to the Bible group leaders and one on Science and God to the church. The next day I taught a class for the men while Jan taught two different classes for the women: one of the woman's role for the "sentinels," the older women in the church and one on spiritual gifts for all the women. We got to visit the museum and former home of Simon Bolivar. Bolivar is the national hero as the liberator of Venezuela (and Panama, Columbia, Ecuador and Peru). There no artifact from Bolivar's life too small and insignificant to venerate. Even the currency (bolivares) honor the founder of the country. After our tour of the city I taught From Shadow to Reality to the church of about 60.

Our last day in Caracas we were up at 3:00 AM to fly to Bogota. Unfortunately, our computer, tickets and passports were stolen in the airport, which delayed our plans somewhat. The ever-patient Luis Fernando Hererra drove us to the US embassy, to the airline headquarters and back to the airport. We arrived in Bogota about thirteen hours late, but hardly worse for the wear.

Bogota, Columbia, August 10-14.

The last stop of my summer adventures was a wonderful one. We were met by our serving and ever-vigilant friend Edilberto Ramirez as well as Paul Alejandro and others. We were graciously hosted by Campo Elias Leal Torres, whose wife Klaudia had a six-week old child. Bogota is a city of about ten million. It is at an elevation of 8000 feet. Amazingly, given that it is just above the equator, it is fairly cold there. We needed a coat at night, and even during the day it only reaches about 70 degrees. It is very mountainous and green there. The surrounding mountains are very beautiful. The look of the city is not unlike Caracas, but it is not quite so crowded. Our stereotype of Columbia as a place of drug runners and terrorists was belied by what we saw. Although we were told that there are many guerillas hidden among the people and that kidnappings are a significant problem, this is a peaceful and relatively prosperous country. There is plenty of poverty, but in general it is not so striking. The city has many modern buildings and wide streets. Down town is nestled against Mt. Monserrat, which is a 10,000 foot peak. Arepas are popular here, along with many different kinds of soups. The national meal is paisa, which includes chicharon, beans, papa, rice, arepa, avocado, egg, plantain and beef.

On Saturday I taught a class of God and Science to about 100. We spent time with Fabio and Sophia, leaders of a church in Cali as well as the leaders of a church in Medellin, Columbia. Lunch was traditional soup. Later, I taught a class on spiritual gifts to about 150 while Jan taught two classes; one for the marrieds and one for the single women.

Church on Sunday was inspiring. There were about 900 in attendance. I taught a class on From Shadow to Reality before church and one on Pain and Suffering for the lesson. We went with Paul Alejandro and Klaudia to tour the city, including a trip up a ridiculously steep tram to the top of 10,300 ft. Mt. Monserrat for a breathtaking view of the city and a very memorable lunch. Afterward, we spent very fruitful time with Flavio and Rene Uribe, the couple who have been leading the church here in Bogota. Rene is the daughter of Richard Reinbolt, a medical missionary whom I have know for twenty-eight years. The next day we did some shopping and I taught a class on Daniel to the staff. We had dinner with Daniel and Marlin. Daniel is the head of CSA books. We discussed translating materials for use in Central and South America. On our last day in Bogota we traveled to the clinic and school run by HOPE Worldwide. This was a truly mind-opening experience.

**Caracas, Venezuela****Modern part of city****Barrios on the hillside****Caracas' Herrera family****Columbia leaders and Oakes**



Bogota Church



HOPE Medical Clinic and Pre-School

This was a truly mind-opening experience. The school is located in a steep, narrow canyon in a mind-numbingly poor part of the city. According to Salvador, who runs the school and clinic, almost all the men in the area “work” as thieves and drug-runners. There is a near complete social breakdown here. Yet, the HOPE school is a beacon of light there. Because of the patient love and service offered by HOPE, drug-use is way down now in the community. Families now usually say a prayer before meals, thanks to the influence of the children. There is a very long way to go, but the church here is offering hope to these people. Jan set up an opportunity for us to send shoe-box gifts to all 100 children in the school this Christmas (contact us if you want information about this program).

Our hearts were truly moved as we heard many stories from the people who are affected by the work of HOPE here. We will be praying that we can make a difference for the people here. Following this visit, we were scurried off to the airport. This time, the travel, thankfully, occurred without incident.



National Dish in Bogota



HOPE Pre-School students

Letters to the Editors

John y Jan Oakes,

Reciban un caluroso abrazo desde Bogota (Colombia) y nuestro mas sincero deseo de que se encuentren muy bien, disfrutando del amor de Dios en sus vidas.

Queremos darle infinitas gracias por todo el amor que demostraron por nosotros la iglesia de Cristo en Bogota, nos conmueve ver sus corazones y su disposicion para ayudarnos a afianzar nuestra fe en Dios, en Jesus y entender la biblia con mayor claridad, ya que

leemos pero muchas veces el corazon no entiende la trascendencia del mensaje de salvacion. Lamentamos las dificultades por las que tuvieron que pasar en su viaje, pero tambien nos alegra que Dios los hubiera guiado hasta nuestro pais. Los amamos mucho y esperamos verlos de nuevo. Gracias por toda su ayuda.

Atentamente,

familia Gaviria

Dr. Oakes,

I just wanted to let you know that your book, “Is There A God,” was the first one I read (as an atheist) which jump started my on my path to God. – That was 6 years ago. Thank you.

Brian Hawkes

Dear Dr. John Oakes,

This note is simply to express my heartfelt thanks to you for making that incredible teaching trip to Douala-Cameroon last month. The truth is that disciples in Cameroon were greatly impacted by the deeper insights in to the Scriptures that came out of everything you taught and shared. The young Church in Bamenda where I'm based has been enjoying great spiritual feeding through the teachings I've had the privilege to share from your book: FROM SHADOW TO REALITY. EVERY MIDWEEK HAS BECOME A TIME NO DISCIPLE WISHES TO MISS AND EVEN OUR LANGUAGE HAS BEEN DEEPLY IMPACTED AS I HEAR DISCIPLES ALLUDING TO THE AMAZING INSIGHTS EVEN IN DAILY CONVERSATION.

I've already embarked on the translation of some articles from your website starting with the one: THE PROBLEM OF PAIN AND SUFFERING because I can relate to it given my past experience with cancer. I look forward to staying in contact with you to continue to benefit from the wisdom that flows from your teaching and walk in the Lord.

Once more thanks a million that you came!
Gilbert.

Hey thanks for putting us on the mailing list! we are loving the reading. Hope all is going well with the trips your husband and daughter are taking this summer. We've prayed for all that is going on with the Oakes family this summer.

love,
Mindy

¡¡¡¡¡Hola Jan!!!!!!

Recibe muchos saludos y nuestro amor. Solo quería saludarte y contarte que ya se iniciaron las charlas bíblicas en Suchitoto, hasta el momento 5 personas estan estudiando de manera formal, pero aproximadamente 25 personas llegan a las charlas. Te ruego por favor ores porque Dios trabaje en los corazones de estas personas, y también su necesidad espiritual pueda ser atendida. Gracias por todo lo que has hecho por nosotros, pues ustedes también formaron la semilla de gratitud en los corazones de estas personas. Saludos a John y tus hijos.

Hasta pronto
Perla de Fernandez

Thanks for your good deeds.

Love,
Sara

Thanks and glad to be in your loop! You guys are doing a good work!

Good bless,
Greg

Jan:

Thank you so much, I feel so encouraging for you and your awesome heart for God. Thank's for the Newsletter, it's amazing.

Love in Christ.
Osvaldo

John,

Excellent newsletter; I particularly enjoyed your answer in the Q&A section about the inerrancy of scripture. Very instructive. Thank you.

Jeff

A Note From The Authors

The newsletters contains questions and answers from that month, new articles, information about future events, and letters to the editors. Send letters to john.oakes@gccd.edu or reply to joakes01@san.rr.com. Send links to other sites, book reviews and the like, any suggestions or ideas for articles, format of the newsletter, ideas for the web site www.evidenceforchristianity.org.

The purpose of the Apologetics Research Society is to disseminate and discuss materials relevant to the evidence supporting faith in Jesus Christ and in the Bible. Relevant topics will include science and the Bible, historical and archaeological evidence, theological questions, answers to common criticisms of the Bible (such as supposed inconsistencies and errors), questions about the text of the Bible, prophecies, miracles, and others. Our goal is not necessarily to give THE answer, but to give out useful information, bring up a variety of points of view, and incite people to think about why they believe what they believe. We will remain as non-denominational and non-sectarian as we can.

ARS is incorporated, and is exempt from California state franchise and income tax. We now have IRS 501 (c)3 tax exempt status. We are currently raising funds for the teaching schedule of John Oakes' teaching ministry, the sending of apologetic materials to developing countries, translations and other projects. Please mail donations to Apologetics Research Society 5758 Avenida Sanchez San Diego, CA 92124, or by credit card at the Make A Gift page of www.evidenceforchristianity.org.