

ROLLING STONE MINISTRIES



LEFT: STEWARTS AT RATIO CHRISTI CONFERENCE IN NC

ABOVE: JOHN WITH HIS APOLOGETICS CLASS IN NIGERIA

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Greetings this Christmas season! It is hard to believe that 2014 is nearly over, but as we reflect back on it, it had been an eventful year of opportunity and blessings.

First, we thank the Lord for His goodness, protection and direction as we serve Him all over the world. Second, we thank Him for family, the blessing of having children we can love and pray for.

Finally, we thank Him for friends--those who encourage us, pray for us, and bring us joy.

So many things have happened in 2014 that I'd have to write a tome to do them all justice. I will try to give the highlights in order to keep your eyes from glazing over. Let's start with international ministry opportunities.

Nigeria

In February Laurie and I made a return trip to Jos, Nigeria to teach Christian lawyers biblical peacemaking (Laurie's task) and teach Christian leaders apologetics (i.e., defense of the faith, a species of evangelism) (John's task). Just getting to West

Africa proved to be an ordeal, as our connecting flight from Charlotte to Atlanta was cancelled, leaving us no way to get to Nigeria from Atlanta on time for our classes in Jos. In a near miracle, we were able to be re-routed through New York City, and our four suitcases full of books & syllabi made it, too.

Laurie initially estimated she'd have about 20 lawyers and judges willing to come to a weeklong, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. class. It turns out nearly 140 attended, and gave rave reviews of Laurie's seminar. Now they want

Merry Christmas from RSM

her to return for more training with a goal of opening up their own mediation center.

I had about 25 pastors and church leaders from across Nigeria come to my weeklong class on apologetics. For the first time, in addition to providing the students with a 40-page syllabus, I used a power point presentation to teach the material, and brought my own projector. When the week was over, I was privileged to preach that Sunday in one of my student's churches. There were about 1,000 in attendance, but what struck me was how the streets are blocked off on Sundays in Jos to prevent suicide car bombing, and how Laurie and I had to go through a metal detector to get onto the church property, monitored by an undercover policeman with a handgun in his back pocket. Those details are shocking to us Christians in America whose biggest concern on Sundays usually involves the weather and lunch plans. In Jos, Nigeria, believers constantly live under the threat of terrorism, and that fact is part of what motivates us to leave the safety and comfort of America to minister to them. Please pray for our brothers and sisters in Nigeria.

Canada

I had the opportunity to speak at the largest apologetics

conference in Western Canada in April. Now in its 4th year in Vancouver, B.C., the conference has grown so much that it has split into two locations, each with 1,000 attendees. I spoke about "Reaching Our Brave New Secular World," and had a chance to "hang out" with some of the top apologists in America and Canada. I also made some great contacts for Ratio Christi ("Reason of Christ"), the campus apologetics ministry that Rolling Stone Ministries is partnering with, and for which I serve as International Director.

Philippine Islands

This July mission trip was the first extended trip I've taken without Laurie. I lead a team of four apologists from Ratio Christi to Manila to present an apologetics conference followed by an academy to train believers in the evidence for Christianity. A typhoon ("hurricane") struck just before we arrived, but it only had a minor effect on our ministry. Our conference had several hundred attend, and the academy was well attended. I had a chance to meet with church leaders from throughout the Philippines, and they were all excited that Ratio Christi had come to establish a presence. From this mission trip we have been able to create a Ratio Christi chapter at the University of the Philippines, with up to 40 attending the

weekly meetings, and three other campuses are in the planning stages of having chapters. A return trip to the Philippines is planned for 2015.

Kenya

This was my seventh mission trip to Kenya, tenth to Africa, but my first to that continent without Laurie. I was invited to be a keynote speaker at an August conference at Lake Nakuru, about three hours from the capital of Nairobi. There were about 700 in attendance for the three-day conference. I spoke on "Biblical Faith," "The Case for Jesus," and "When Israel Strikes Iran." My apologetic message on "The Case for Jesus" drew a standing ovation, indicative of the need in Africa and around the world for Christians to hear the evidence for the truth of Christianity. I was also able to preach twice in Nairobi after the conference was over, visiting one of our dear pastor friend's church, and being blessed to see the joyful enthusiasm of our Kenyan brothers and sisters. Please pray for them, as the threat of terrorism continues.

United States

I had opportunity to speak at churches in Iowa, including our home church in Lake Panorama, at an apologetics conference in North Carolina, at Ratio Christi's Symposium in South Carolina, at

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our old church in California, and at a banquet at Camp Berachah in Auburn, WA. It was great to speak again at the "Cutting Edge" class at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Orange, CA where I taught for ten years. RSM was launched out of that class. Laurie and I are blessed to have those folks as friends and supporters.

WHO Radio

John was the guest host several times this year on the most popular radio show in Iowa on WHO News Radio 1040, Des Moines. It gave him the opportunity to interview guests on such topics as "life after death" and "are miracles real?" John had Christian scholars on to address these issues, and the shows were well-received even though it is a secular station.

Personal

Laurie has been practicing law in Iowa for over two years now to help make ends meet as I move into full-time ministry. Recently we obtained a building in our little town of Panora for Laurie to open her own law & mediation practice. The good news is this gives her more flexibility to set her own schedule. The bad news is there are significant startup costs and no steady income yet.

I've concluded that I've hit the age where my body's warranty

has expired. I lost my reading glasses on my mission trip to the Philippines, and when I went to an optometrist to get new glasses he found cataracts in both eyes. Now I know why things look so blurry. After the first of the year I will go in to get the cataracts fixed.

2015

I've been pouring myself into writing a book on apologetics, with a working title of "The Case for Christianity." It is time consuming and tedious to write such a lengthy treatise, but it is an opportunity to lay out systematically the reasons why a thinking person should embrace Christianity.

My calendar is already starting to fill up for 2015. I am speaking in Cedar Rapids, IA during the first week of January, then again in February at an apologetics conference where I am one of the keynote speakers. I have been asked to teach in the doctoral program at Multnomah University in Portland, OR in June. It will be a week-long, modular course on apologetics involving 40 hours of class instruction.

Laurie and I are working on international trips. I have an invitation to speak in Kenya in August. We are looking at possible trips to the Philippines,

Nigeria, Uganda, New Zealand and Australia.

Needs for Rolling Stone Ministries

We appreciate all who have partnered with us. We need your encouragement and prayers to continue the work of RSM. It has never been our first choice to go to danger-filled places where the languages, cultures, and worship styles are different. But what makes it worth the effort of leaving the comfort and security of America is the changed lives of the people the Lord has called us to reach. We invest a lot of time preparing for these trips, and then spend a lot of time away from home. We count on the generous support of those, like you, who believe in what we are doing, and whose financial gifts help pay for our ministry expenses. Laurie and I hope you will continue to hold us up in your prayers, and do what you can to help us. If you are able, please help out RSM with a generous gift.

We hope you have a Merry Christmas, and a blessed New Year.

John & Laurie Stewart

www.RollingStoneMinistries.org

RSM PHOTOS FROM THIS YEAR



Laurie's class in Nigeria



Phillipines Apologetics Conference



Panora office



Canada Apologetics Conference



Nat'l Apologetics Conference

Rolling Stone Ministries
P.O. Box 186
Panora, IA 50216