

August 2005

WONDERS OF SCIENCE

“... bringing life to science”

WONDERS OF SCIENCE IS A MINISTRY OF WHITTIER CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS



The Fire Department Gets Involved!

For five years we have been working with a church in Norwalk, OH to arrange a series of Wonders of Science programs for their community. At long last, a beautiful theater in the downtown area was secured. The trouble was, the program necessitated a long drive from another scheduled program, then an immediate turn-around getting back to that original area to continue with other programs. After five years of obstacles for the church I was grateful that the Lord had now arranged for the opportunity.

Little did I realize what battles we were yet to face. I could only assume that Satan was stepping up his interference. No sooner had we arrived than the weather became unbearably humid and in the upper 90's. Much different than what is normal for the area. I was told hurricane Dennis pushed humidity up from the Gulf. Then, the beautiful Victorian Theater downtown had air conditioning mal-functions so the audience would have to tolerate stifling indoor temps during what was expected to be standing room only crowds.



The Victorian theater was an incredible place to present the series to the Norwalk, Ohio community

I was next informed by the local fire marshal that he was going to stop the programs if we didn't have some sort of license for pyrotechnic activities. I was told to call the state office and talk with the Chief. When I did, he was sympathetic with my frustration over a seemingly petty concern that was blown out of proportion by an enthusiastic local official, over a flame the size of a few matches. He said the state had just passed an ordinance to give the local fire marshals total authority in their jurisdiction.

Hours of further interaction followed. I had to return later to the theater to show the officer what I was going to do. He brought along an electrician to check over all my equipment and the connections. He preferred that I purchase additional circuit breaker boxes and have them wired into the power coming from the main power box before it reached my equipment, even though I had multiple circuit breakers installed with double protection on all my power lines.

That in itself delayed my set-up several hours. Graciously, the electrician took his own time after hours to drive me to the supply house (which stayed open after hours as a favor to both of us) and then spent the next two hours helping me re-wire an additional power box.

After he was satisfied with the power arrangements, he assured the fire marshal that all was up to his standards. The fire marshal then said we still needed a licensed pyro technician, but agreed to assign one of his licensed firemen to stand on stage, in uniform, with a fire extinguisher in hand so the programs could proceed. To keep the fireman from being embarrassed over such an insignificant job, I chose him as one of the switch operators for the Million Volt demo later that week. I had fifteen minutes to get ready for the first opening program after working all day in the hot stage area.

What an amazing turnout! The theater was indeed packed and people were standing in the lobby watching through the curtains in the concessions area. The theater owner/manager was apologetic about the lack of air conditioning, but he had tried to get it fixed and the job was not done properly. Daily returns by the servicing company did not fix the problem until the last night. What was encouraging was that the crowds kept coming back in spite of the heat.

There was a most unusual aspect to the program in Ohio. The theater had a beautiful pipe organ and a gracious man named Gary volunteered nightly to play family oriented popular music for a half hour before the science programs. He concluded his evening's performance with a delightful arrangement of the "whistling song" from the movie, "March From the Bridge on the River Kwai," the same piece I play over the laser during the first evening's program on light and color.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE BEST KIND!

I imagine this has happened to a number of people who travel extensively, but it is certainly a rare occurrence. Imagine two friends or families living hundreds of miles apart, who haven't seen each other in a long time. Then, they meet in a distant city among hundreds of thousands of vacationers who are milling about.



Terry and I concluded the Norwalk, OH programs where the Lord blessed in so many unusual ways. The stress of meeting excessive local ordinances in dealing with fire marshals, local and state officials and electricians was wearying as it added to the unseasonably hot and humid conditions of that week. The wonderful host family we were with, however, and our friends helping during the programs made all "troubles" seem transient.

Since Terry and I had not had a "day off" in months of ministry, we chose to drive for a day and then spend the night in Niagara Falls, NY as we passed by on our way to New England. Little did we know of the surprise in store for us. We arrived after lunch so I thought we'd view the American locations first, then walk across the bridge to Canada as the sun set to give a better angle of light on the Horseshoe Falls.

As we navigated our way through the crowds Terry grabbed my arm and when I turned, there were our Phoenix, AZ friends, Karsten and Bonnie Solheim (see picture above). Many of the WOS Newsletter readers will remember that Karsten and I were busy with Dr. George Speake at the Spokane World's Fair in 1974. Last December's newsletter has a photo of the three of us with Jim Adams, Moody Institute of Science's General Manager in those days.

Some would say it was a marvelous coincidence. The timing had to be to the second, because moving through crowds is distracting and fleeting. Of the thousands visiting that day, two couples from the other side of the country happened to be in the same place at the same instant. We had a nice dinner together, then watched the falls lit up with colorful lights followed by a spectacular fireworks display. What a perfect end to the day!

This is just one of the simple blessings that the Lord allows in this life. It gives us pause to realize that He is in control of circumstances and that we should be ever vigilant to be prepared to interact with anyone brought across our paths.

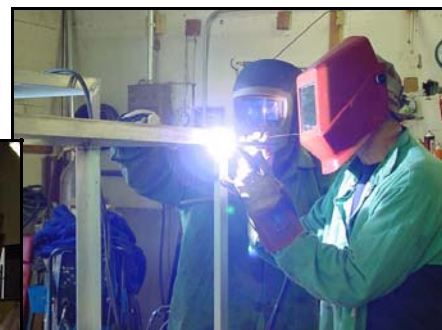
Equipment Repair/Construction

During our ministry in New Hampshire, we had the privilege of being hosted by a family living in a log house. Bob and Kathy built their own log house and his skills in excavating, machining and welding have been applied to the Wonders of Science equipment over the past couple of decades. Our visit this time was no different.

When I arrived, he made his customary check of the trailer. As he suspected, the "quick and dirty" wire connectors used by most trailer sales yards for the electric brakes are very susceptible to corrosion and needed replacing. The brakes were not working as they should have because some of the wires were not grounded properly. It took two days to rewire the system, replace the wiring socket on the truck and fix the internal trailer light.

Once that was all done, we could begin the process of designing and fabricating demo tables for upcoming weekend programs, school assemblies and possible overseas ministry. Bob has a large, fully equipped shop that allowed us to unload the truck and trailer for measurements and proceed with the welding and machining necessary.

We put in long hours during fabrication in between the science presentations, but the new tables will be vastly more efficient and load easily into the truck. That will enable us to accept the many requests for shorter programs ministering to youth groups, schools and smaller community events and yet have the availability of the full stage set in the trailer for the week-long requests that have been so well received over the past 70 years.



Dean and Bob were able to design and work on the new demo tables at Bob's shop.

**COMMENT
CORNER...**

"My friend Jamie said that he was strangely peaceful after the program and the next day at work, things that would usually set him off didn't. So I think that your program made some inroads to his thinking, we pray. Continue to sow the seed and let God give the increase. Thanks for the personal touch."

-- Visiting Engineer --

"Hi, I'm a missionary from Brazil and while there I saw you on Brazilian TV 'Ripley's Believe It Or Not.' We're here on furlough and friends brought us to your programs tonight. I had no idea what it was until I entered the lobby of the theater and saw the poster. I said, 'No way is this possible!' but it is really you in person. Thanks for the tremendous surprise and for what you shared tonight. The theater was packed and people were standing in the lobby."

-- Missionary from Brazil --

"It's All Just A Ubiquitous, Fortuitous Collision of Atoms"

The bright flashes of lightning were like flashbulbs in my face as I hunched over the steering wheel, gripping it tightly against the crosswinds of those treacherous mountain roads. "One thousand one...one thousand two..." I'd been counting the seconds between the flash and the thunderous crash that followed, five seconds for every mile away. I was getting nervous when I could not get out any more than, "One thou..." then a resulting Ka...blam!

We rounded a curve entering Wilmington, VT and I crept to a crawl through the middle of the village. There was no traffic at this late hour. I located an old hotel and there were two parking spaces open on the street right across from the entrance. "Thank you Lord!"

After checking into the hotel we went to the truck to retrieve our bags. It was 10 pm and we hadn't eaten since lunch. We noticed a light on in a quaint establishment with a clever sign "Rhythm & Beans." The proprietor was a young and personable man perhaps in his early thirties. The kitchen was closed, but he was gracious enough to put together a great salad.

After breakfast the next morning, as Terry and I returned to the truck we were prompted to leave him with both courtesy DVD's one of which we usually make available to our hosts for a night's lodging. The titles are "Unlocking the Mystery of Life" and "The Privileged Planet," both of which have been made available for broadcast on PBS recently. I returned to the café and Sean met me outside. We had a further discussion regarding physics and atomic structure and then he concluded the conversation with, "I think it's all just a ubiquitous, fortuitous collision of atoms. Life was an accident waiting to happen, and, here we are," he said, gesturing with a flourish.

That comment opened the door for my introduction to the DNA video that I presented to him. Then, since his area of expertise was physics, electronics and atomics, I also gave him the "Privileged Planet" video. He reluctantly, but graciously accepted them, having already heard my position on the issues. He said he would watch them and we parted.

A month later after we had concluded our ministry in New England, we made it a point to stop by again on our way home to California. Sean was there and greeted us with a warm smile, then set about to make us lunch. We only had time for some brief interchanges because of his other customers, but as we were leaving, he said he wanted to get in touch via email to have some questions answered. "The DVD's you gave me really got me thinking and I need some answers presented in the sensitive way with which you spoke to me before. These videos are real science!" Many intellects we encounter feel Christianity has no scientific basis for its position.

I was thrilled to do so. Pray for the Lord's continued work in Sean's mind and heart. It is always so humbling to respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and then watch what the Lord does in people's lives, people one might not think would be open to the things of the Lord.

Lad Allen and Jerry Harned, the writers/editors of the DVD's I gave Sean, were the creative force behind Moody's internationally acclaimed productions. Now with Illustra Media/La Mirada Films, they continue with Irwin Moon's dream of using media to present the gospel through very high quality productions. Pray for their team's continued success and faithfulness.



Sean and Cassie were very gracious business owners.

Our Essential Ministers Behind the Scenes

No ministry can survive without the faithful financial support of the Lord’s family. In addition to that, many work tirelessly with us whenever we arrive near their communities. Some drive for an hour or two to help unload, set-up, prepare auditoriums, help at the media table and when it’s all over they return to pack up and load. Hours and hours of tireless work that only those immediately present and the Lord Himself can notice.

This most recent tour was an especially heavy load for Esther as she prepared the Victorian theater in Norwalk, OH for our arrival. The Green Room was immaculate, the staging area like new and her indomitable spirit was as encouraging as ever. She is a professional seamstress and has created hundreds of costumes for the theater over the years as well as all my equipment covers. During the series she also treated us to a tour of Thomas Edison’s birthplace, in the nearby village of Milan, Ohio.



Our helpers, Kathy, Bob, Ann, Jon and Esther (far right).

This tour was also one during which I was continuing to build some new demonstration tables. Jon and Ann Johnson arrived to help us at the Rumney Conference as did Bob and Kathy Holmes. Jon is an engineer and safety officer with the state of New Hampshire and Bob does excavating, welding and machine work. Their tireless input was most helpful. In Bob’s case, he rewired the trailer’s electrical system and then spent two weeks working with me to cut, weld and fabricate my designs.

Bob and Kathy have a friend who is an accomplished inventor. Herb is an electrical engineer, computer scientist and general all around wizard when it comes to systems control. He and his wife Gail have also contributed over the years sharing fantastic ideas I incorporate into the science programs.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to such treasured friends who are there with us “slugging it out” in the trenches year after year, decade after decade. Their share in the fruit the Lord brings through Wonders of Science is certainly well deserved.

WCS WONDERS OF SCIENCE

Dean Ortner
6548 S. Newlin Avenue
Whittier, CA 90601

Phone: 562-699-5610
Email: WCSWonders@aol.com

**Check Out Our Website at:
WWW.WhittierChristian.org**

Address Correction Requested



ECFA Member Organization



ACSI Accredited



WASC Accredited