

VISITING SCHOLAR NEWS

RTB 30
REASONS TO BELIEVE

MARCH 2016



Welcome to *Visiting Scholar News!* This quarterly newsletter was created to share how our visiting scholars are expanding RTB's reach across the country and around the world. *Visiting Scholar News* will also serve as a place where we can give updates and announcements about the visiting scholar program. One such announcement is that we recently extended the visiting scholar program to include local applicants.

In this issue you'll meet RTB's newest staff scholar, AJ Roberts, who transitioned from visiting scholar to an on-staff scholar. You'll also learn how past visiting scholars are using their gifts and knowledge to serve Christ's Kingdom. In future issues, you'll hear from our visiting scholar program assistant, Karina Rodriguez. She will share how our visiting scholars continue to serve as strategic partners in helping us further RTB's mission. We hope you'll enjoy learning more about this dynamic group of ministry multipliers!

Fazale Rana

VISITING SCHOLAR HIGHLIGHT

AJ Roberts



What is your area of expertise?

I have a PhD in cell and molecular biology with an emphasis in virology, a BS in chemistry, and an MA in Christian apologetics. I spent eight years in bench research at Yale and NIH. I was also assistant professor of medi-

cal and graduate education at the University of Virginia and director of the graduate program in microbiology, immunology, and infectious diseases (2006–2013). I also participated in cross-cultural missions, including spending two years in Russia.

How did you come to Christ?

I was 12 years old when I became a Christian in response to the testimony of a trumpet player in a Christian band. It was the first time I recognized the significance of the resurrection and that Jesus was truly alive and wanted to be my Lord and Savior.

What project or accomplishment do you consider to be the most significant in your career?

Scientifically it would be when I conducted a series of experiments at NIH that led to an animal model for SARS coronavirus infections. The model allowed us to test viral contributing factors to disease and to test multiple potential vaccines and therapeutic drugs against SARS. Vocationally it was (prior to RTB) using my scientific training as a platform for speaking on HIV/AIDS risks and prevention in Russia and coupling that with Christian mission work among Russian school teachers, expats, and my Russian neighbors.

What do you like most about RTB's visiting scholar program?

It's hard to pick just one thing, especially since I have "visited" for so long. The Christ-centered team and the family aspect of the staff is a blessing and privilege not easily found or duplicated. I have enjoyed the opportunities to speak and contribute in ways that draw from my life experience to further the gospel by providing reasons to believe!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Visiting Scholar Tom Phillips published a paper in *Nature* titled "Exotic Atoms: Antimatter May Matter."

Congratulations, Tom!



Dominic Halsmer

Engineer

Visiting Scholar Dates:

January 2014

With winter setting in on the windy plains of Oklahoma, I find myself fondly reminiscing about my three weeks as

a visiting scholar at RTB headquarters in Southern California last January. It was not only a nice place to spend a good chunk of the winter, but also one of the most productive periods I have ever enjoyed as a researcher in science and theology. Interactions with RTB scholars during that time helped me develop a book proposal on ingenuity in nature (*Hacking the Cosmos: How Engineering Assists Science and the Humanities in Making Sense of the Universe*). I am still extremely grateful for the opportunity. It is a memory I will always cherish.

Although my sabbatical leave from Oral Roberts University officially ended in May, I continue to work on my book. I have also enjoyed returning to the engineering classroom and working with students on the science and faith research team. I was particularly encouraged by the conversations that occurred last October at the Science in Society Conference in Chicago. I was there to participate in the science and religion track, presenting an update on our effort to help Christians in America's Bible Belt reconcile science-faith issues. I soon found myself engaged in deep conversations with several atheists and agnostics who were curious about our work of reconciliation. As I described how we help Christians reconcile science and faith, God began to show me that these issues were also being reconciled in the minds of these skeptics! Through our work, God called them to reconsider His existence, now that the supposed barriers to faith were being removed. I had prayed for opportunities to share with scientists and engineers, and I left the conference rejoicing that God was able to use our work in this way.



EXPLORE MORE RESOURCES FROM OUR VISITING SCHOLARS

Dominic Halsmer: Watch his YouTube video series on "The Role of Engineering in Science-Faith Dialogues"

Don Olson: Read his article on "How God Equipped Humans to Outrun Animals"



Don Olson

Analytical Chemist

Visiting Scholar Dates:

February 2013

Using science to serve the Lord in outreach is something that gives me great joy in life. Even in my 80s, when naps become

important, I still lead an active life. Recently, through a friendship with Steve Cochrane, co-founder of the YWAM organization in South Asia, I joined up with YWAM to do some missionary work in India. Steve and I led a class in YWAM's Discipleship Training School in Pune, India. I taught on God's character as revealed through His creation and introduced the students to RTB.

While in Pune, I received a last-minute invitation to guest lecture on a science topic of my choice at Savitribai Phule Pune University, one of India's premier universities. A topic that came to mind was to compare modern scientific discoveries with knowledge of the universe revealed thousands of years ago in the Bible. This topic was accepted by my host, but I was told I could not use the word "Bible"; however, I could use it as a reference if I referred to it as "the Good Book." The topic was not one the audience of 300 or so students and professors, mostly Hindus and Muslims, expected to hear about, but they were all ears and the lecture was well received.

Steve, who has a doctorate in the history of Christian-Muslim relations and can speak on a range of Christian and spiritual topics, is exploring the possibility of another lecture at Pune University as well as other Indian universities. In addition, a new opportunity has opened up for both of us to give lectures at a university in China. Hopefully and prayerfully, these events will spark a new form of outreach for YWAM in Asia that can reach a segment of the population largely missed by conventional missions.

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