

International Teaching Ministry of Douglas Jacoby



International Bible Teaching Ministry Update 2004 Issue 05

"Challenging men and women of faith to think"

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Sep-Oct 2004 teaching bulletin

This is the 5th of 6 regular teaching bulletins for 2004. One more bulletin will be sent out in 2004. Special notices are sent intermittently. If you enjoy the bulletin, please tell your friends about it so that they can subscribe, too.

I. FOUNDATIONS FOR FAITH -- OLD TESTAMENT SERIES finally published!

The new CD series mentioned in the last update is now out! 15 lessons are accompanied by a 96-page handbook, full of information readably condensed to provide the big picture of the O.T. I am very excited about this series, which is currently being taught here in Athens. If you are a preacher or teacher, you may be interested in this material for a Sunday School or midweek series.

II. SYDNEY, BRISBANE, AGANA... and preaching in a denominational church

Since the last update I've made two trips across the Pacific. The first trip was to Sydney and Brisbane. As in many churches, these congregations are finding their way forward without the benefit of full-time staff. (Sydney has elders; Brisbane is building an eldership.) It was certainly encouraging to return to Australia, to visit old friends, and to see the eagerness of so many to be taught. As in many of the cities I visit, I try to emphasize: I am not here "to give the answers," rather to show where the real answers are. Or in words of the modern proverb: "Give a man a fish, feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime."

I very much appreciate the work the Sydney members are doing: tireless hours volunteered to steady the ship and keep the congregation God-focused. The Australians show us that, though it may not be easy, we can all keep growing as we trust the Lord to raise up more leaders. Lessons included The Tower of Babel, The Faith of Abraham the Pilgrim, and Bible Study Strategies. It was a special treat to share a teaching day with Andrew Kitchen and Stuart Plaskett, just two of the very talented indigenous teachers Down Under.

My second transpacific trip was to Agana, Guam, a couple thousand miles to the north of Australia, where the Micronesian Christians are forging ahead along new pathways of leadership. One mistaken impression is that many churches no longer aim to evangelize the world. Imagine my surprise when I met the entire Saipan church at the teaching weekend! They had all made the flight from Saipan, the island immediately to the north of Guam. (Guam and Saipan were both battle sites of WW II.) I had no idea this congregation even existed; they were planted by the Agana church nearly a year ago. Of course the hospitality and warmth of the Guamanians (as they are called) was phenomenal. (There's something about island peoples...) Please keep the congregations of the western Pacific in your prayers.

More locally, I've been teaching a midweek series in Atlanta on the Pastoral Epistles. The group I teach is a very mature and encouraging group of disciples, and I enjoy the assignment immensely. This weekend I head to Denver, then Chicago, Philadelphia, Omaha, and Fayetteville. International trips include Osaka and Rome (the biblical study tour). In the final update of the year more will be shared about these cities.

One other city I preached in this month is Thomson, Georgia. This was quite an amazing Sunday! For one, the congregation was not a Church of Christ. I'd originally been invited through the internet; the preacher had been writing to me through the Q&A forum for several years. I believe it was good and right to take advantage of an opportunity to share the gospel in this small city (population 6000). Furthermore, two weeks before my arrival, the preacher delivered a message on "Tradition." He showed from the scriptures that the "sinner's prayer" is nowhere to be found in scripture, insisting that the only way to be saved is to have faith in Jesus, repent, and be baptized. Half the church walked out, saying they preferred the altar call and sinner's prayer; naturally his job is less stable than it was before. To find a man who teaches the biblical truth on (1) conversion and (2) commitment was very refreshing indeed.

III. AIM SESSIONS III & IV (August & November, 2004)

AIM Session III took place 23-28 August in Athens. The topics: Christian Evidences, the Holy Spirit, and Church-Building C. Six European brothers flew in for the session, which added a lot to the quality of the fellowship. Leaders--some on staff, some not--arrived from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland. Scott Green (Seattle, Washington) was our

guest speaker, and did a fabulous job, especially as he honestly assessed mistakes of the past and vital principles for continued forward motion. The next session, in November, focuses on the Minister's Spiritual Life. In addition to Sam Laing and myself, we have two guest speakers: Alonzo Welch (history and lessons from the Churches of Christ) and Greg Garcia (finances and the Bible). The number of AIM students continues to grow, both overseas and domestically, with approximately 50 enrolled now, including distance students in various nations around the world.

IV. ROME Biblical Study Tour

Nearly 140 brothers and sisters have signed up for the autumn conference in (ancient and) modern Rome. Yes--many have asked-- there's still room! Visit the website for more information. Of the registrants, about 85 are men and 55 women. A half dozen teen disciples are also attending. Also, nearly 90 have opted to visit Mt. Vesuvius and one of the cities this volcano destroyed in 79 BC: Pompeii. Rome 2004 promises to be a faith-building event.

Note: September 15th is the official deadline. After this time, applications will be considered one by one, and providing there is availability, will be accepted. I am informed by my agents in Rome that there is still room, perhaps for another 20 to 40 persons at the most.

V. Preparing for the Storms

All of us go through "storms" in life. We all experience peaks and valleys in our faith. Sometimes tempestuous events and trials come -- and sometimes the storms are actually literal. Let us keep the brothers and sisters in our prayers who live in Florida, Grenada, Jamaica, Cuba, and so many other places. I have heard from many of the challenges that the season's hurricanes have brought.

How can we be best prepared for the storms (Matthew 7, Ephesians 4, etc)? Let us keep one another sharp. In my travels, I see disciples sharpening disciples (Proverbs 27:17) all over the world. Ideas are being exchanged. New connections are being made and old connections are being strengthened. New congregations are being planted. (Just today I learned of FIVE new church plantings in Mexico!) A new authenticity is emerging. You can't make another person grow, but we can all teach the truth, and do our best to model it. Above all, let us be determined to be men and women of the Book. This is our best insurance against theological errors and the hurt and pain that inevitably flow from them. Thanks for your interest in the international teaching ministry.

Your brother,
Douglas Jacoby