

International Teaching Ministry of Douglas Jacoby



International Bible Teaching Ministry Update 2005 Issue 01

"Challenging men and women of faith to think"

Past newsletters are available at the [website](#). Enjoying the updates and the website? Please spread the word. (If not, just click on REMOVE.) And if your email address has changed, please send us both new *and* old address. The website features new material every day. Look for Q&As, Articles, and daily Bible studies under "Through the N.T. in a year."

Jan-Feb 2005 update: MATERIALS / ATHENS 2005 / A TSUNAMI VICTORY STORY

I. TEACHING TRIPS

Teaching trips during the first two months of the new year included Ghana (Accra), China (Hong Kong), the Philippines (Manila), and Minnesota (Minneapolis). Reports written by local disciples are viewable at the website until 22 February. Following are some of my own perceptions.

My visit to Ghana was very, very encouraging. It was so good to reconnect with so many Christians there, some of whom were converted in London. (We lived there in the 1980s and again in the mid-'90s.) Accra, like so many churches, is a congregation in transition. There are so many older, more mature Christians there.

Romans 15:14 comes to mind! I taught three series while in Accra: The Wisdom Literature, The Holy Spirit, and a special leadership series, including a lesson for the brothers (with sisters present) on The Women's Role. I hope to return to Ghana this summer, for a regional conference. Please keep the West African churches in your prayers as they strive to move forward with reduced resources. The African brothers and sisters are eager for you to know how much they appreciate your support through the years, and no less at this present time.

Hong Kong--and all the Chinese churches--seem to be thriving. It was amazing to me that about one third of this church of 2000 took a day off work to study God's word (Daniel). Everyone came for the evening meeting (Holy Spirit), and the following day once again a large number came for the lessons on Revelation. Special thanks to the translator of my many handouts (Andy in Macau) and to all the brothers who translated into Cantonese for me during my lessons. As I always do when visiting Asia, I remind the church that we have something in common besides Jesus Christ and our mutual love of Asian cuisine. We too have Asian relatives (having adopted a Chinese girl 10 years ago)!

Manila is the city Vicki and I were in when we committed to adopt an orphan over 10 years ago, and this was my first time back to the Philippines since. Church leaders converged from every corner of the nation, from Laoag to Zamboanga, some 14 congregations in all. The leaders' meeting at which I spoke was attended by 1000 Filipino small group leaders, staff members, and others. What an electric atmosphere! The Filipinos, whose personal warmth is legendary, lived up to their reputation--and to my memories of 1994.

Minneapolis used to support our work in Sweden when we lived in Stockholm (1989-1992), and this was my first time to visit the church since that time. On the last visit I had brought samples of pickled herring, reindeer meet, and other Scandinavian delicacies. (Come to think of it, I forgot to declare them when I passed through US Customs--oops!) I taught a series of lessons on the Holy Spirit, replete with multiple Q&A times. All the brothers and sisters seem so eager to learn, and it was a joy to be reunited with the disciples in Minneapolis/St Paul, as well as Madison (a large portion of that congregation had driven 5 hours to be with us for the weekend).

Local teaching includes Sunday school in Athens (New Testament Survey), though Athens is not the only city where I enjoy the opportunity to teach and enjoy good fellowship. Nearly every week this year I have been teaching in the Atlanta Church (East Cobb Region). The first two series have been on 1-2 Thessalonians and the Wisdom Literature. I recently presented a powerpoint on archaeology to two Atlanta regions (Lilburn and Lawrenceville). Once again, what a fellowship feast! People seemed to exude enthusiasm for archaeology--even those who previously (the Lord will forgive them!) thought ancient history was a bit too dry to capture their interest.

Later this month I head to Florida (Jacksonville), and during March Vicki and I will both speak in London. I am especially grateful for the generous sponsorship of friends who believe in the teaching ministry and have contributed generously to my third world missionary trips.

II. NEW TEACHING MATERIALS

In March I am beginning work on THE FAITH UNFURLED: NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY. The audio series includes 14 lessons and 7 appendixes, and is accompanied by an 80-page handbook. (The new series corresponds to Foundations for Faith: Old Testament Survey 15 lessons plus a handbook, released last October.) This will be available in the Spring, as will a series my wife Vicki is recording on Ruth.

Two of my books have just been republished. TRUE & REASONABLE has been revised and reissued by IPI (February 2005). THE SPIRIT has also been revised and published by IPI (February 2005).

Finally, a set of four evidences messages on CD is now available through the website. This material will be especially useful for non-believers, Christians with questions of a scientific or academic nature, teens with questions about the Bible, and anyone who wants to be better equipped to share the faith with others. The four lessons of FROM FACTS TO FAITH I are:

- Why I Trust the Bible
- Big Bang, Dinosaurs, Cavemen and Evolution
- Atheists and Atheism
- The Problem of Human Suffering

III. MANUSCRIPTS WEEKEND --repeated from Nov-Dec update

In May a special manuscripts weekend will be held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, site of the largest Papyrus collection in the western hemisphere! In addition to viewing the biblical manuscripts--some of which go back to the 100s--there will also be several powerpoint presentations and lessons on how the Bible came together. While a good number are expected to attend from the midwest churches, others are also welcome. Cost: \$40. Color brochures are available on request (please reply at "contact").

IV. AIM DEVELOPMENTS

AIM Session V took place in January, focusing on Old Testament. Speakers (in addition to Doug and Sam) included Joseph Harris and Rabbi Jim Egolf. Sherwin Mackintosh came up from Gainesville, Florida for the unit on Music and Worship, which for many was his favorite "Church Building" unit to date. AIM Session VI, slated for May, focuses on Counseling and Psychology. Guest speakers include Drs. Michael and Mary Shapiro, both of whom hold PhDs in psychology, and practice in Athens, Georgia.

New students in the Athens Institute of Ministry include a dozen preachers and teachers from the nation of Nigeria, plus one evangelist in Kenya. The total number of AIM students worldwide is now about 75. We ask you, please pray for our ministry.

V. ATHENS, GREECE!

The city for our next Biblical Study Tour has been chosen: Athens! Full details of the 2005 BST are viewable at the website. In addition, the schedule for the 11th annual ITS has also been posted. (NOTE: Would teachers planning to attend please let me know, even if you are not ready to register? This will make it easier to design the program. Thank you.) If you would like extra color (printed) brochures for friends, please request them by emailing toneyipibooks@mac.com.

The seminar has been advertised for the last 6 weeks, and several have already registered, taking advantage of the significant discounts for early payment. You can pay by credit card online by the end of the month (or by phoning (617) 875-5036 anytime), or through US check or bank wire. All details at website. We expect a great turnout this year, and a great time of learning and fellowship.

And now, moving from the Greek nation to a Greek citizen (whose spiritual citizenship was recently modified in a rather dramatic way), please read the personal letter (below) from Ioanna. With this inspiring story of faith and conversion this teaching bulletin concludes.

God bless, and thanks once again for all your support and prayers

Your brother,
Doug

VI. TSUNAMI STORY: IOANNA

The following email (condensed and adapted) was written by a Greek woman, whose life was touched directly and indirectly by disciples in Greece and Britain, and whose spiritual journey was enormously accelerated by the South Asian disaster of December.

17 December 2004: My long awaited trip to my brother's wedding was finally taking form... Malaysia! The country that overtakes your heart with its exotic beauty and tropical beaches, and where my brother's heart has been for 8 years. At last the moment has come! I was leaving with mixed feelings: joy about the trip, deep thoughts about the Bible studies I had just days ago with a few disciples. I was thinking about sin, repentance, and baptism. My Bible was near to me at all times, keeping me confident and calm on the plane. And the more I read it, the more relaxed I was feeling. Finally I arrived. The country was exactly as I was hoping to find it: welcoming people, tropical places, hot climate, rich flavors. The days were passing quickly. The wedding was beautiful and according to traditional customs, and I was very happy for my brother. The next days we were touring into the nearby islands in all joy, gladness and laughter, until our return flight, scheduled for 26 December.

26th December: I opened my eyes suddenly as a loud noise abruptly woke me up, like a noise from above. I thought it was a plane flying too low -- the windows started shaking. I still didn't understand what was really going on. My bed started moving-EARTHQUAKE!, I thought. I tried to stand up on my bed, but couldn't because of the violent shaking. I said to myself, "Calm down, it'll be over soon." The noise, however, was getting louder and louder. The bed, which was relatively heavy, was being thrown left and right like a feather. In front of me, the TV set was also dancing on the floor!

"Calm down," I kept saying to myself, it'll be over in a few seconds. But the seconds were becoming minutes, and I was feeling the whole 23-floor hotel shaking like mad. I was on the 10th floor in a room all by myself. "It's gonna collapse," I said. "No building can withstand such powerful tremors for so long"... Despair filled my heart, and my eyes started getting watery. "The end is here!" I thought. I started praying as that was the only thing I could do. I wanted to get out of the room, but kept falling back to the bed. I can't recall how many times I must have prayed "... Hallowed be thy name." Then the tremors stopped. I quickly dressed, grabbed my bag and off I rushed to the stairwell. Everyone was running, babies were crying, people were half dressed, bare footed, running towards the stairs. I must have gone a couple of floors down, when I suddenly started hearing the noise again... the walls were making that noise--it was starting all over again! "Not again, God!" Everyone was running, grabbing the stairwell handrail for dear life. Some stood still, frozen from fear, others were falling down. Don't stop walking!" they were shouting to us! Then I realized that there were 15 floors above us. Pictures of September 11th were flashing through my mind. "What would happen if all this crumbles?" In my mind were the words of the disciples about my need to be baptized: "You never know when will your last day be. That's why you shouldn't delay." "It's not fair," I said to God. "I'm not baptized yet, Father! Please don't take me before I get right with you!" I was praying with all my strength to God to let me live, to allow me to get baptized before I died. With all these thoughts I finally reached ground floor. There I found my Greek friends. "Thank you, God!" I was praising him for showering his mercy on me. I felt his presence so powerfully. It was as if he were speaking to me, telling me how much he loves me. Faith replaced doubt. I couldn't believe how good he was to me. I couldn't believe he heard my prayers -- I felt relief and joy. He was next to me. And honestly, that shocked me more than the earthquake! The worst was over, we thought. After a little while we collected our things and left the hotel. En route to the airport, we were going to a shopping mall... The time was 12:30pm. However, our ordeal wasn't over yet. It was only the beginning!.. We had three hours ahead of us before going to the airport. Last minute shopping. The mall was situated on the road next to the seashore, 30 meters from the beach. As we drove there, we noticed that the waters had receded. Hundreds of tourists were walking on the mud, taking pictures, marveling at the mysteries of nature as the waters went back into the ocean, leaving an empty sea bed. We were asked if we wanted to stop and take some photos, or even walk on the beach and get closer to this phenomenon, which people said they'd never seen before. We thought about it, but said "no" as we were in a rush to do the shopping before catching our plane. We tried to park on the beach in front of the shopping mall, for convenience, but "unfortunately" only found a place to park many blocks behind the mall. The shopping area on the beach was packed with life. Tourists gazing at the beach, others with shopping bags walking on the road. At the far end we noticed a few small waves rising. We entered the mall and went straight up to the 4th floor... Within 20 minutes we could see everyone pressing their faces against the big glass windows. What were they watching? We got curious and approached also, only to see the most horrific and devastating sight I have ever seen. The sea had swallowed everything! It had reached the ground floor of the shopping mall. The people who were relaxing on the beach were no longer there... Trees were torn out from the ground, uprooted! Cars were moved from their positions and were thrown through the shop windows! People running to all directions! Fish, coconuts and even large sea-rocks were standing in the middle of the road! I just couldn't believe what I was experiencing in front of my eyes! "Where are all the people?", I was asking again and again. "There were hundreds of them before--kids, tourists, women--where have they all gone?" I didn't want to hear the answer. "No, this is not happening! Why? Why? Why, God?" So much grief and sorrow, so many corpses... The ambulances were running to collect any dead body on the road, so that the rest wouldn't be too shocked. Panic everywhere. I wanted to cry, but my eyes were too dry from the shock. We rushed as quickly as we could from the emergency stairs, and left the building through the back doors, and went towards the car. None of us could believe what we had just seen. I was in shock and scared. I overheard my friends saying, "Imagine if we HAD stopped to take pictures on the beach!... Imagine if we had arrived at the mall 15 or 20 minutes later!" Then I realized how much he loves us.

29 December: The Lord had saved me so I could come to him and be baptized. Brothers and sisters, the Lord hears us... He gave me the opportunity to be saved, and I wasn't going to miss this opportunity! From now on, my purpose in life had to be to live to please him... And I would start from today! My brothers and sisters, I got baptized today, 29 December 2004, with great joy and eagerness. By sending out this email I wanted to encourage you never to lose hope. If God is with us, who can be against us? Praise The Lord! Amen

--Ioanna

"Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging" (Psalm 46:2-4)... "I will give you thanks, for you answered me - you have become my salvation" (Psalm 118:21).