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International Teaching Ministry of Douglas Jacoby

2nd Quarter 2006 International Teaching Ministry Update

This is the second update for the year 2006. Updates from 2005, 2004, and earlier are available at the website, in Teaching Archives. This bulletin highlights a new audio set: "Revelation & the End of the World," worldwide impressions, the expansion of the ministry school, and more...



I. PERSONAL

After nearly two years of building a relationship with the North River Church of Christ, at last (in June) we have moved from Athens to **Atlanta**. New house, new address, new telephone numbers, and all the joy of unpacking! We've also downsized. This only made sense, as we now live nearer the expensive metropolis of Atlanta. Besides, our eldest soon leaves home to start college at the University of Florida. He made us proud at graduation, receiving many honors. Of special note, he won Scholar-Athlete of the Year. (Yes, in the Jacoby family we aim to cultivate not only the mind, but also the body and the spirit.) The girls are about to enter 11th and 7th grade. Our dog has taken advantage of the transition time to drag her paws, and has slipped in her obedience. (Please pray for her to obey her earthly masters.) If you need our new address and contact information, please let us know.

One amazing thing about our new church home is the number of **adopted children**, especially from Asia. In fact, we now have three *teenaged* Chinese girls from the same orphanage in Shanghai. In 1994/1995 they even shared the same "bedroom"! They are Joyanna (Malutinok), Mia (La Pointe), and Lily (Jacoby). When Dave Malutinok shared Sunday about the work of adoption (Hope for Children), there were many tears of joy and awe among us in the audience. God continues to look after orphans. He is awesome!

For the international teaching ministry, the North River Church of Christ (<http://www.northriverchristians.com>), a group of nearly 400 adult members, has been a most supportive spiritual environment. The elders are men of vision, and have both short- and long-term vision for what the church can be. We love it when our preacher, Tom Brown, focuses on Jesus Christ and his centrality in our lives. The deacons and all the members are involved, and the small group dynamic of the congregation has been building momentum since the start of the year. Our summer internship for campus students combined evangelism with biblical study. It was taught by Tom Brown, myself, and others, was a huge success, and will be repeated next year. Worship at North River is growing strong, and it's easy to see God moving in the church family. It's especially encouraging that the members really want to know what is happening globally; I have regular opportunities to report on my travels and solicit prayers for needs worldwide. It's all about staying connected.

I would like to thank you all for your **support**. I need it so very much: moral support -- thanks for believing in the teaching ministry! -- prayer support, and financial support. God is answering many prayers, and the teaching ministry is now better funded than in 2005. If you would like to contribute, please scan the report below.

Finally, let me share what I have been studying lately. On the academic side, I have been researching how the Old and New Testaments came together. This is the issue of "canonization." Two of my audio sets deal with this subject, which is probably the most complex part of all of church history! I have also been enjoying the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, of which I am a member. The latest edition covers the origins of mankind, the nature of the Flood, and other scientific issues arising from the book of Genesis. This area of study has gripped my interest ever since 1976, and is a major reason for my writing *Genesis*,

Science & History (2004).

On the personal side of Bible study, I have been reading the Greek New Testament this year. From January to April I read the Greek NT for the fourth time, and now am about 60 chapters through the next reading. (I may have been especially motivated because "Greek Week" was to take place in June in Orlando, with students attending from Florida, South Carolina, Italy, and China. This was my first time to teach Greek in the classroom, and the series seemed to go well. I know I wanted to be in top shape for this event.) Once I return to English Bible study, I look forward to reading the ESV (English Standard Version) as well as the TNIV. I am finding many things that challenge my character, leadership, and knowledge of God. Reading in another language is always an excellent way to make yourself slow down and really listen to God's voice.

II. NEW TESTAMENT GREEK

We would like to offer "Greek Week" again in 2007. This year it took place in Orlando in June. Please send an e-mail if you would like to take part next year -- present students included. For full details on the 2006 program, search the website ("Greek Week").

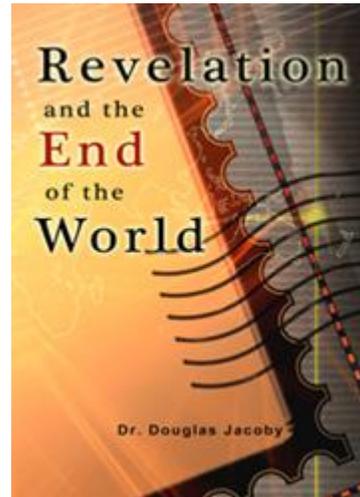
III. OOPS!

Due to an email program glitch, last week thousands of you received a barrage of unsolicited correspondence. I am very sorry. This was both humbling and embarrassing for me. Thank you all for your forbearance. Fortunately, I am using a new mailing program now, and the problem has been rectified.

IV. NEW AUDIO SERIES

The new audio series, *Revelation and the End of the World*, has finally been released! I have always been fascinated in this topic, and I know I am not alone! There are so many questions that arise as we think about the ponderous events of the endtimes.

Does Revelation really prophesy the end of the world? Who is the Beast? Were current political events in the Middle East foretold 2000 years ago? No book in the Bible has led to so much excitement, speculation and doctrinal error! This teaching series has been designed to direct our thoughts upward as we sink our roots downward, deep in the Word of God, and into the book acknowledged to be the most difficult in sacred canon. But is it really so hard to understand? Most of this exciting book is actually quite straightforward. There's no need to be mystified--especially as we see how the Apocalypse relates to our daily lives. You'll be inspired by the example of our 1st century brothers and sisters who, in the face of overwhelming odds, overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.



The 4 audio CDs are "Welcome to the World of the Apocalypse"; "Keys to Understanding," "Chapter by Chapter"; and "Doctrinal Error & Revelation." If you're a teacher or preacher, you will find a lot of material for your congregation. Or, if you're a Bible reader who wants to take your study to another level, this series may be for you.

V. AIM: NEW CITIES, NEW TEACHERS

During the early second quarter of 2006, the Athens/Atlanta Institute of Ministry began in **London** and **San Diego**. Thus AIM is now based in *five international cities*.

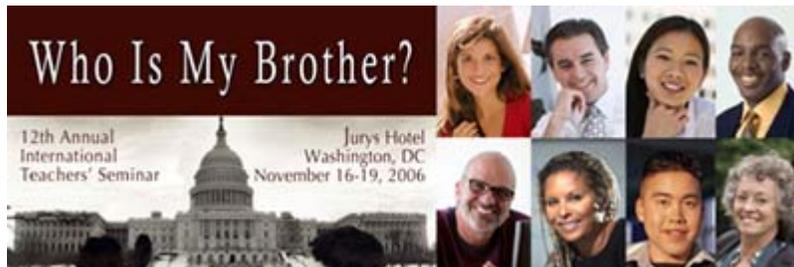
Speakers in **Georgia** last session included Sam Laing, Joey Harris, Ed Anton, and myself. The San Diego session also featured Gordon Ferguson and John Oakes. I taught the UK session solo, but hopefully as funding increases we can afford to send more teachers to London, and also to **Manila**. Joey Harris will join me in **Lagos** for the West African session later this year. Tom Brown will be one of the speakers in our November Georgia session. We also expect to see Steve Kinnard (New York City) soon join the ranks of our AIM teachers.

More and more ministries are seeing the need for theology. And yet not everyone agrees; far too many still view theological training as a

"luxury item," something nice for teachers but not "practical" for preachers and the congregation. How wrong this is! What could be more practical than theology? This sort of training makes the Bible come to life, for the one being trained as well as for those he or she teaches. Moreover, it equips us to learn from history (biblical history and church history alike), so that we are less likely to relearn its painful lessons. Last, it secures followers of Christ in their faith, so that when the storms come--as come they will--they will stand firm.

VI. 2006 INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS' SEMINAR--PARTICIPATION RISING

Who is my brother? Great question, and one everybody is asking. So far, registrations are coming in from all over North America and Europe. Speakers, teachers, and discussion group leaders include **F. LaGard Smith** (Lynchburg), **Scott Green** (Seattle), **Douglas Jacoby** (Atlanta), **Malcolm Cox** (London), **Andy Blocker** (Washington DC), **Steve Staten** (Chicago), **Roger Lamb** (Chicago), **Steve Kinnard** (New York), **Gordon Ferguson** (Phoenix), **Kelly Petre** (Boston) and many more. Note: This is not intended to be a "decision making" event, but a time of honest teaching, sober reflection, and open discussion. The 2006 ITS is **for anyone interested** -- men and women, staff and non-staff. Click on the image below for full details.



VII. TRAVELS

Second quarter cities include Paris (France), Madrid (Spain), Gainesville, San Diego, Tijuana Mexico), Charlotte, Bridgetown (Barbados), Port of Spain (Trinidad), Orlando, the also Atlanta Christian Church. I also had the opportunity, through the Mexican Bible School, to **webcast** a series of lessons on the Holy Spirit to eager listeners in Mexico, Guatemala, and Venezuela.

With such a demanding travel schedule, you may wonder how I stay personally connected. (Yes, lots of people ask me that.) For one, the family and I are in constant touch by email. Then there is Skype, which allows you a sort of "videophone" experience (for free!) over an internet connection. Also, anytime I like, I am able to listen to our church's sermons through the North River website. Finally, because of the amount of travel, I occasional bringing family members along with me. (For example, tomorrow I will take our 15-year-old along to the conference in Daytona Beach.)

What do I see as I travel the world? Are there any common impressions I am receiving? Yes, there are...

VIII. OBSERVATIONS FROM HEBREWS 10

What I have observed in my 2006 travels among the Churches of Christ, comparing the spirit of Christians today to what I observed a year ago, is that **confidence is on the rebound**. Not so say that anyone has reached supersonic speed, but in most cities people are calmly processing, becoming more outward focused, seeking leadership, and open to the leading of the Lord. What follows are my own (admittedly subjective) impressions. Take them for what they're worth. Please consider the familiar text from the end of Hebrews 10 (NLT):

*Don't ever forget those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering. Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten, and sometimes you helped others who were suffering the same things. You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail. When all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew you had better things waiting for you in eternity. **Do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord, no matter what happens.** Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. "For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay. And a righteous person will live by faith. But I will have no pleasure in anyone who turns away." But we are not like those who turn their backs on God and seal their fate. We have faith that assures our salvation.*

Thoughts for your consideration:

1. Tens of thousands of Christians, at least in the cities where I have taught, have been "hanging in there"--modern phraseology for "persevering." This perseverance shows their willingness to suffer and their desire to follow Christ. (Also their willingness to follow *godly* leadership.)
2. The Hebrew writer puts the spotlight on *confidence*. I am (was) tempted to say of my global perspective, "Faith is on the rebound," but I don't think that's quite fair. Actually I think that those who have hung in there have shown that they have done indeed faith--and perseverance to go with it. Equating "processing speed" with faith is not really fair. As long as we are looking to the Lord, putting our trust in the Spirit, as opposed to leaning on the arm of flesh, we are pleasing to Him. As the New Living Translation puts it, "confidence trust" the Greek word, *parresia*, can mean openness, frankness, boldness, confidence, assurance.
3. Through the course of the 1990s and early 2000s, congregational and individual confidence took some direct hits. Not that everybody was affected alike. Some were barely shaken, others felt the need to distance themselves emotionally to find space to breathe. As confidence returns, communication is also improving. The brotherhood is doing better at being "quick to listen, slow to speak."
4. When confidence is high, outward focus is the natural concomitant. Last year it was not often that I sold a book on evangelism (*Shining Like Stars*); this year the demand is growing, and at some conferences they are selling out. Following Jesus is not just *one* thing, whether Bible study, evangelism, or even church attendance. Discipleship includes many components.
5. We do not know at what hour our Lord will come. We must be prepared at all times, walking in his will and looking to him as our sovereign master.
6. Through most of biblical history, the people of God died still waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled. Consider, for example, Hebrews 11:39: "All of these people we have mentioned received God's approval because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised." Willingness to persevere *whether or not* we receive our object of achievement in our generation or not. The "on-demand" economy and culture of modern times has affected every stratum of society and every aspect of life, church and faith included. We all need to remember that God is quite often likely to let us wait, rather than to give us whatever we ask for. This sort of perseverance is a mark of character. The "name it and claim it" mentality is a mark of immaturity. I commend all my brothers and sisters who are keeping their faith in the Lord, regardless of whether they are achieving their dreams, hopes, or goals. Not to give an excuse for low expectations--just to undercut any ground for boasting. "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."
7. Confidence needs to be in God, not in the church, the plan, the system, goals, documents, programs -- anything manmade. This is what walking in the Spirit means. To rely on law or system, or to be legalistic or humanistic--this is what walking in the flesh is. The two are ever at odds with one another. Let's put our confidence where it should be: in the Lord!

FAREWELL

Please, I ask you to continue keep the teaching ministry in your prayers. Pray that it will lead to serious biblical reflection, and build unity among Christians worldwide. Also, please pray for people in the Middle East. Current military actions are hurting many, increasing antipathy, and complicating the logistics of worship and evangelism, especially in Israel and Lebanon. Brothers and sisters in those countries have specifically asked for -- and need -- your prayers.

You may expect the next quarterly update in early October. *Arrivederci, Auf Widersehen, Aloha, Cheerio, Au revoir, Ciao, Jambo, Adios!* -- Doug

CAN YOU SUPPORT THE TEACHING MINISTRY FINANCIALLY? *Your help is valued and needed. The international teaching ministry is not possible without the support of generous donors. Here are several possibilities...*

1. ATHENS INSTITUTE OF MINISTRY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Total need: **\$70,000**

Received in 2006: **\$30,900**

The Athens Institute of Ministry was established in January 2004 to train preachers, teachers, and serious Bible students. Biblical education is a deep need, and it is also the area in which I feel most called to serve. Sessions take place in Georgia or at long distance by DVD. Please see the download document at the website for full details. We are eager to offer scholarships to worthy students in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and throughout the second and third worlds generally. Your donations help students to participate who otherwise would not be able to afford the tuition. We want to extend scholarship offers and assistance to as many students as possible. Currently AIM has some 80 scholarship students in 27 nations, and many of them need ongoing sponsorship. Our eventual hope is to support the principal AIM teachers on a part-time basis. AIM is a tax-exempt entity with 501(c)(3) status. All contributions you have made to AIM are tax-deductible. The Athens Institute of Ministry admits students of any race, color, national, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities made available to students of A.I.M. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in admissions policies, scholarships, or other programs.

2. THIRD WORLD TRAVEL FUND

Total need: **\$25,000**

Received in 2006: **\$16,652**

Currently I am making teaching visits to 40 cities a year, half in the US and half outside. Funding is needed to cover airfare and reasonable speaking fees for third world visits, and in some cases accommodation and meals, when not provided by the local church. We are in the process of applying for tax-exempt status for IBTM (International Bible Teaching Ministry), so that any contributions to this fund will be deductible. Once 501(c)(3) status has been granted, any contributions, even before that date, will be allowed as tax deductions by the IRS. A notice will be placed at the website once 501(c)(3) status has been granted for IBTM.

3. GENERAL MINISTRY SUPPORT

Total need: **\$35,000**

Received in 2006: **\$17,130**

General support donations help to compensate IBTM's international teachers for research, developing new materials, and speaking in the developing world. This is also the category to contribute to if you are not sure, or do not have a strong opinion, about how your donation should be spent. We are in the process of applying for tax-exempt status for IBTM (International Bible Teaching Ministry), so that any contributions to this fund will be deductible. Once 501(c)(3) status has been granted, any contributions, even before that date, will be allowed as tax deductions by the IRS.

4. THIRD WORLD BOOK FUND

Total requested: **\$10,000**

Received in 2006: **\$1600**

In the majority of developing nations around the world, monthly salaries are in the range of \$30-\$300. Books, which typically cost \$10 or more, are an exorbitant expense for persons living in such economic situations. Helping Christians and churches through biblical education can make a tremendous difference, building faith and expanding the horizons of readers. The Third World Book Fund is not only for books, but also for audio messages. Free books and audio are distributed not only to individuals, but also to church libraries. We are in the process of applying for tax-exempt status for IBTM (International Bible Teaching Ministry), so that any contributions to this fund will be deductible. Once 501(c)(3) status has been granted, any contributions, even before that date, will be allowed as tax deductions by the IRS.

Please consider becoming a *monthly* supporter. Even \$20 or \$50 a month would make a difference. To inquire about this possibility, email dj@douglasjacoby.com. Thank you.

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