

# International Teaching Ministry of Douglas Jacoby



## International Bible Teaching Ministry Update 2008 Issue 05 REPORT FROM MINSK, BELARUS

"Challenging men and women of faith to think"

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### EGYPT-ISRAEL-JORDAN UPDATE

At this point 111 have registered for the July trip to the Middle East. Participants are from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Italy, Nigeria, South Africa, Trinidad, the Philippines, Switzerland, the Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Yes, there is still room! For details, click on VISIT ISRAEL at website.—DJ

### REPORT FROM MINSK

*Note: The Republic of Belarus (population about 10 million, capital Minsk), is an eastern European nation surrounded by Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, and the Ukraine. When the Chernobyl (or Chornobyl) nuclear disaster took place in the Ukraine in 1986, the winds brought the fallout to Belarus -- with terrifying and catastrophic effect. The economy of the nation was hard hit, and the health of nation crippled. Large territories (in fact about 200-250 sq km) of the country is now uninhabitable. According to Operation World, Belarus suffers radiation-related health problems at 80 times the world average. Another challenge the church faces is that the government chose Orthodox Church as a partner and actively supports only them and seeks to restrict the freedoms of any other believers.*

Greetings from Belarus! Our nation used to be a part of the Soviet Union, but with its collapse in 1991, we became independent. The church was planted in July 1994, and at our height were 350 members. Because of the firestorm that came through our fellowship in 2003, our membership is now 160. Nevertheless, we have refused to give up the mission. We are preaching the word, and people are being baptized. This month two men, one in his 40s and the other in his 60s, became your brothers, and many more are studying the Bible.

In early February Douglas Jacoby visited us. He had taken the train from Kiev through the night, and shared many ideas with our only minister. That evening, 40 persons gathered in a sister's apartment. The group consisted of our leaders -- about 25 people -- plus another 15, and this was our Sunday service. We prayed and studied, but as is our custom, we did not sing. It is illegal for us to meet, and it doesn't seem worth risking arrest, especially with a two to three year prison sentence if anyone is caught.

Everyone I spoke with who had a chance to join was very thankful. Many others wanted to be there -- even a number of non-Christians -- but could not come, because of the size of the apartment. This was a really stirring event, and everyone is still talking about it. This was in fact only the second visit from any outsider in our entire history. (Tomm and Lori Wilson, of Milwaukee -- at that time Cincinnati -- also visited 12 years ago with Helping Hand.) It was so refreshing to hear some perspectives from "outside"!

The time of Bible study (Powerpoint) was stimulating and motivating. With the outlines and scriptures in Russian, and all the pictures, people were able to follow along easily. For some, the material was new; for most of the older Christians, this was a time of strengthening in their faith. Afterwards, many of us were able to get answers to their questions during the extended Q&A time. Now, many disciples are studying their Bibles more vigorously. This is helping us to live more confidently for Christ.

We especially thank the North River congregation in Atlanta for funding Douglas' visit to us, and hope he will be able to return to our city. Whoever is reading this, please send us people who could teach us. Even if they come as tourists to our

beautiful country and spend a day with us, we will be thankful. We will be ready to organize a special meeting, and try to involve every Minsk disciple. Please remember us.

– Evgeny, Minsk COC disciple --



Leaders in Minsk.

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