

International Teaching Ministry of Douglas Jacoby

International Bible Teaching Ministry Update



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FLOODS (PHILIPPINES), NORTH AMERICA,
EASTERN EUROPE, AND SALMON

"Challenging men and women of faith to think"

All newsletters available at the main website, douglasjacoby.com. This website contains over 8000 pages of (free) material. The second (subscription) website contains advanced N.T. studies as well as weekly O.T. podcasts. That address is jacobypremium.com.

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Greetings from Atlanta.

Yesterday I found a biblical question in my inbox. It was from the Philippines -- sent to me back in June! (Yes, I often fall behind.) I replied, but wasn't expecting an email back, given the scope of the flooding and destruction in Manila. (Was this man a typhoon victim? I wasn't sure the brother to whom I wrote would have access to the internet, or even electric power. After all, there has been extensive flooding this week from Typhoon Ondoy (80% of Manila was under water). Millions are affected. Hundreds of thousands are displaced, and many are dead or missing. And frighteningly, yet another typhoon is on the way. But today the Filipino brother wrote back. I was quite stunned by his response.

"Thanks for your response... About the flood here in the Philippines: our family is okay, though our house is still flooded with water. God is so amazing, because one of the disciples in our Bible Talk opened his house for us. As of today we are living in their house, waiting for the floodwater to subside so we can go back home and return to normal life... Once again, thanks for your answer. It is a great privilege to be given your utmost attention in spite of your busy schedule. Thanks for your concern as well. May God bless you more and use you more for His glory."

Needless to say, I was humbled. Amidst a national emergency, he is thanking *me* for sacrificing *my* time?! (How can my situation be compared with his?) What an attitude! It's not just cheerfulness (part of the Filipino national character). Underneath the positive and buoyant spirit is *gratitude* -- to God and to others. And *humility*. There's certainly a lesson there for me, and probably for most of us.

If you would like to help the flood victims, please make a donation to HOPEww.

It has been a while since the last update, and there's a lot to report. To make it easier to read, this bulletin is divided into several sections: *Speaking, Writing, Podcasts, Financial support, and The Parable of the Salmon* (that's right!). I do hope you will find something here that speaks to you -- that supports you in your walk with God.

Yours in Him,
Douglas Jacoby

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SPEAKING

I like talking -- apparently, since teaching is what I do. But it was not always this way. My first speech ever (in high school) earned an 'F'. Public speaking used to make me so nervous that I couldn't think clearly. By the time I'd been a Christian seven or eight years, this was changing. My confidence was growing. Now I speak two or three hundred times a year. Since the last update (18 August), I've been mainly preaching and teaching in North America.

Phoenix

At Arizona State University I delivered an evidences presentation, part of an evangelistic weekend series. Peter and Vanessa Heins are doing a superb job leading the campus students, setting the pace personally and providing heart and inspiration. I was also privileged to stay with one of the church elders, and really enjoyed our late-night chat. The August weather was as expected: dry and hot. No -- scorching!

Las Vegas

I was greeted warmly (and early) at the airport by the campus ministry of UNLV, and later delivered two PowerPoints on apologetics. Las Vegas: What a contrast between the pure-hearted church members and the flagrantly sinful metropolis! Parallels with ancient Corinth have rightly been drawn. (Use "LasVegas.com" as a keyword at the main website, if you want to learn more.) And no, I didn't spend even a nickel in the slot machines. The only "tourist" thing I did was to walk around the Bellagio, of *Oceans 11* fame. I was there to preach. Many thanks to the elders and staff for making this trip possible. (For me this was the 49th state -- I've missed out on North Dakota.)

Denver

In Denver, at the International Leadership Conference, it was my pleasure to teach on Islam & Christianity with an Iranian brother -- in fact, a former Muslim. Behzad and I shared our two-hour workshop, with an alert crowd. The fellowship was the best part of the Denver conference (at least for me). As soon as I landed, I prayed I would meet another brother at the airport. I was coming in early, so I was not sure any other conference participants would be there. As I walked towards baggage claim, who appeared around the corner but Werner, a brother from South Africa! It was so good to talk with Werner for more than an hour as we took the shuttle to our hotel. Then, as I was checking in, a brother who had just flown in from Siberia (Vladivostok) recognized me. I received an enormous hug, right there in the hotel lobby. Yes, this was an *international* conference! If you'd like to hear the lesson Behzad and I taught, please click [here](#). For all the lessons, click [here](#).

Washington DC

We lived in the DC area for about ten years (Washington, Maryland, and Virginia). So returning there to speak was a joy -- many old friends. I addressed the teen parents on Saturday night, and gave three evidences lessons on Sunday. I certainly appreciated the hospitality of Randy and Kay McKean, and the attentiveness of the audience, from the teens all the way to those in their 80s. It would be great someday to just go back for a week and spend time with the brothers and sisters, and catch up on life.

Vancouver

In Canada Vicki and I benefited tremendously from our time of fellowship with Brian and Sara Felushko. Brian is an evangelist, teacher, and (mature) university student. Sara is his very wise and personable wife, and also a professional counselor. The Felushkos showed us around the Vancouver, a beautiful and striking city. Lucky Canadians!

Bloomington, Illinois

On Sunday (this week) I presented two lessons on the reliability of the Bible. But the night before I was also supposed to speak. Severe weather -- on top of the significant flooding in Atlanta the week before -- delayed my flight by many hours. By the time I landed, the evening session was long over. This was the first time we can recall in over 20 years of international speaking that I had to renege on a speaking engagement.

Fortunately, Nick and Dee Neargarder ably spoke in my place. (Thanks, Nick!) Then from Bloomington I headed to Chicago, spending a day with my brother and family.

Atlanta

On Wednesday (this week) I spoke at Georgia Tech on "Strangers in the World." It was super to see so many new faces -- young Christians as well as visitors to the campus ministry. I teach and preach often in the North River Church of Christ, our church home. Their website is nrcoc.com.

Kiev

I'll be in the Ukraine again in a few weeks, as we complete the AIM course (our biblical training program). Yet I realize I forgot to share the update from the *last* visit. It was written by Masha Lyashenko, a deaconess in the Kiev Church of Christ and an AIM student. Thank you for your words, Masha -- sorry I forgot to put up your report earlier. (Masha is an excellent servant, leader, writer, singer, and translator. I consider it an honor to know her, and her husband, Ivan.)

Learning the Lessons of History

There were about 100 ministers -- both paid and non-paid -- who gathered in Kiev in April. They came from all over the Ukraine, and there were representatives even from Russia, Moldova, Belarus, Lithuania, and Latvia. We all came together as students of AIM-Kiev.

This time Douglas Jacoby came to our country to teach us Church History and Worldviews. It was great to learn more about the ancient church -- how courageous and faithful our brothers and sisters were; how they went through suffering and took a stand for their precious convictions. No less amazing was hearing how many branches grew through the centuries on the tree that was planted on the day of Pentecost. And though the teaching of the church was compromised in every generation, there seem to have been people who tried hard to restore the biblical foundation, holding on even to the point of death. We saw how easily and gradually -- step by step -- the teaching of Christ was replaced by humanistic rules; how much it hurt the church to become allied with government; what a huge danger arrogance brings; and how serious a challenge it is for all of us now to keep our first love, not quenching the Spirit, but holding on to the Word.

At the end of the course Douglas called all of us to study history, to study God's Word, and to preach the Word without apology or hypocrisy.

After immersing ourselves in Church History for two days, we swam into the deep waters of World Views, all of which in fact appeared shallow in comparison to the truth of the Living God. It was impressive how similar the idolatry of Canaan was to views that hinder people from seeking the true God in modern times.

The next week, after Douglas left Kiev and went to Moldova, we had a big staff meeting where many brothers and sisters were sharing how the Church History and Worldviews courses impacted them both as disciples and as ministers. Everyone was so excited to have knowledge to accompany our zeal. We are looking forward to seeing Douglas later this year. In the meantime, we are willing to learn the lessons of history.

Moldova

Moldova is one of the less wealthy European nations. The president's goal has been to raise the minimum daily salary to \$10. There were riots in Chisinau, the capital city, shortly before I arrived. (No, I didn't cause them.) While I was teaching in Kiev, the Moldavian Parliament was set on fire; the debris was still in the streets. So I am glad I could be there to encourage the disciples, and also to remind them that demanding our rights (putting our trust in politics) is not the way of Christ. I taught on the Cross, spoke with the leaders, and shared news from around the world. I appreciated my translator -- she was wonderful. (No, I do not speak Moldavian Romanian! Yet I did try, using a strange combination of Latin, Spanish, Russian, and Italian to guess the Romanian words! I'm sure this was quite comical.) One of the brothers wrote, *"Thanks a lot for your helpful thoughts. We were very encouraged and inspired by the big picture you made known. The lesson on leadership and life had an impact on me: I want to study deeper and share with others."*

WRITING

In addition to being a speaker, I am also a writer. My first book came out in 1986. But the truth is, I have enjoyed writing for many years. When I was ten years old, I hammered out a play (science fiction, setting: Arcturus). I typed it on an old Underwood manual typewriter, with great gusto, as I "hunted and pecked."

Though the digital age is now upon us, I doubt old-fashioned "analog" books will soon disappear. And a good thing -- for all of us book-lovers.

Book in Spanish!

Our parenting book, *The Quiver: Christian Parenting in a Non-Christian World*, has now been translated into Spanish. The title is *La Aljaba: Una Crianza Cristiana en un Mundo no Cristiano*. Vicki and I wrote the original edition in 2005 (revised 2007). [Click](#) to order the book from IPI. We pray this book will help families all over the Spanish-speaking world.

The Next Publication

After *Jesus and Islam*, I began working on a new book. The title is *Compelling Evidence for God and the Bible: Finding Truth in an Age of Doubt*, and will be published by Harvest House. It should hit the bookstores in early March.

PODCASTS

Embracing new technology is, for most of us, daunting. We wait till the wave has overtaken us, *then* we jump in. I'm certainly that way. This year I finally began creating weekly podcasts. It's been rewarding and fun. 40 Old Testament podcasts have already been recorded and uploaded at the second website, jacobypremium.com. Twelve more lessons will be recorded in the 2009 series.

I like hearing from the people who are benefiting from the lessons. This email came in recently: *"My wife and I are using the site to pace our study and cover all of the New Testament in our first year in the church. Every morning we look forward to this. I'm also on target to read the entire Old Testament by the end of the year, and the O.T. personalities podcasts have been a great complement to my studies."* Another email read: *"I listened to the podcast on Elijah, and I must say it is one of my favorites to date. I have been inspired how God speaks to me in his word (strong, steady, and consistent), and how he listens to prayer -- and how I need to "reengage" when I have faced discouragement. Thank you, brother!"*

In January 2010 we will launch a series of podcasts on difficult, misunderstood, or controversial topics. For example, war, euthanasia, "illegal" immigrants, the death penalty, politics, medical ethics... In a few weeks I'll explain how to access these audio lessons.

UPCOMING

AIM VIII will take place next week (Family Life, with Ron Clark, from Portland, Oregon). The schedule is at the main website. Then at the end of October, approximately forty men and women will meet in Italy for a tour of Rome and Pompeii (plus pre- and post-tours in Florence, Pisa, Napoli, and Capri). The final teaching trip of the year (November) will bring me to the Ukraine (completing the AIM program), India, Bangladesh, Singapore, and Korea. After I get back from Asia, I'll attend an apologetics conference in New Orleans; some 4000-5000 participants are expected. The lessons will be meaty, and I am going only as a student. (Even teachers need to be taught -- continuing ed!)

2009 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Here is the financial situation of the teaching ministry. Including general support, travel, AIM (the ministry school), the Third World Book Fund, and technical/website, the 2009 budget is \$152,500. So far \$110,080 has been given, so we are 72% of the way there. Though we're a little behind last year's level (the global economy?), we certainly rejoice in all that has been given. A huge *thank-you* to all who have given to the international teaching ministry. More complete details available at home page (click on left tab).

THE PARABLE OF THE SALMON

I was recently walking along a river in Ketchikan, Alaska, the "salmon capital of the world." For about a mile, its limpid water affords a clear view of countless salmon swimming upstream. They come to spawn -- traversing thousands of miles of ocean. After they enter fresh-water rivers and streams, their throats swell shut. They will never eat again, instead using their reserves for the battle ahead. I'd watched documentaries on salmon and their rugged determination, but it was another thing to see them close up. They struggle against the swift current, through the whitewater, their stamina phenomenal indeed.

The farther along the river I walked (upstream), the more lean and ragged the fish were. Their considerable resolve is instinctive. However, at times they were making no progress at all, and occasionally were even swept backward by the current. Yet they pushed on, propelling themselves not only upstream but also up over the rocks and small waterfalls.

Then, as I took in the agonizing salmonic struggle, I saw myself. Urging people to take the Bible seriously, challenging certain traditions, opposing the strong forces of pragmatism, relativism, nationalism, materialism -- this is a herculean mission. In going against the flow, at times it feels like an awful lot of effort to move forward only a few feet. 2009 has been a long year. Is it the economic downturn? or turning 50? or all the questions, ideas, and problematic situations I'm exposed to nearly every day? I do not know. At any rate, I grow weary, low on fuel, yet I try to keep going, to renew spiritual strength and resolve (Isaiah 40:31).

Of course not all salmon have the energy to keep going, and those who don't lie on the stream bed, a testimony to the difficulty of the journey. Yet even those who *do* make it to their journey's end will then die. The salmon decompose, but they enrich their environment, taking their final place in the food chain, *becoming* nourishment for their young and others creatures (bears etc). In death there is life.

Why do they do it? Why the tremendous exertion? Their goal is to reproduce, to contribute to the next generation. The teaching ministry aims to strengthen Christians (Ephesians 4:11-16), yet is not always valued. The work may proceed slowly, and for sure it is often against the current, but there is a goal: to help men and women, believers and non-believers alike, to know the Lord through his Word. It's all about facilitating fruitful and productive Bible study -- not just head knowledge, or information, but transformation.

I didn't feel sorry for the salmon, although their noble struggle was marked by pain and pathos. But I did learn something from them: perseverance. No matter how hard the battle, we keep fighting. The challenge of the teaching ministry is difficult, and it is often lonely work. Yet if I can help disciples of Christ grow stronger, and influence outsiders to the faith to make their decision for Christ, it's all worth it. (I'm always elated when I hear about those baptized as a result of this ministry; recent encouragement has come my way from such countries as far removed as Colombia and Bangladesh.) As Paul mentioned, the ministry meant fruitful labor (Philippians 1:22). May it continue to be so.

Thanks for your prayers, donations, and moral support. All are *much* appreciated. You are making a difference.

Your brother,
Douglas