

International Teaching Ministry of Douglas Jacoby



International Bible Teaching Ministry Update 2010 Issue 7 -- HAITI

"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, O.T. podcasts, and weekly podcasts on hot issues. That address is jacobypremium.com.

23 October 2010

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Georgia! The autumn is beautiful, and today is my 33rd spiritual birthday. I'll always be indebted to the brothers who took a chance and shared their faith with a stranger. I'd been at Duke University for only one day, a freshman seeking truth and open to the gospel, when they knocked on my door. May you and I continue to be willing to take a chance on others. Many are looking.

Many are seeking too on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola. The place it's been most humbling for me to minister in 2010 has to be Haiti. All the world knows of the devastating January earthquake: hundreds of thousands dead, millions homeless.

LES CAYES & PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI

My trip was catalyzed by a friend from the Dallas-Fort Worth Church of Christ. With fellow dentists from around the country, he devotes Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends to the poorest country in the western hemisphere. In September he brought his wife and three of their four kids. I joined them, with a group of about 20 dentists and hygienists, setting up a clinic in a Les Cayes orphanage.

Bomb scare!

Half the dental group rendezvoused at Miami Airport, to spend the night at an airport hotel before the early flight to Port-au-Prince. We had just gone to bed when we heard the sharp rapping on our doors. "Police. Everybody out! Leave your things." We exited, a little stunned and wondering what the problem was (fire? bomb threat?). The entire airport was evacuated while the bomb squad came in. My friend's wife and kids were on CNN that night.

It turned out that the suspect had been arrested ten years earlier for illegally transporting bubonic plague. This time he was legally conveying a biological sample, but the container resembled a pipe bomb. Everything came to a standstill, and we were not permitted back into our hotel rooms just before 5 am. Yet we needed to check in for our flight just ten minutes later! None of us slept a wink. It had been many years since I was awake over 40 hours straight. (Not that any of us arriving

in Haiti was about to complain.)

Dirt pies

After landing in the capital, we took a charter flight to Les Cayes. It was my fortune to sit with the man in charge of the operation. A successful dentist in California, he volunteers in Haiti a dozen times a year. And that despite his own struggles with cancer. As he told me about the starving children he has seen, his eyes welled up. "*No child* should have to eat dirt." (Some parents feed their sons and daughters fried dirt, perhaps temporarily stopping hunger pangs but at the same time filling their emaciated frames with countless parasites.) "It's not that there's no food; there are so few jobs." With unemployment around 70%, people will do anything for food. Although he is not a person of faith, his active concern for the impoverished touches the hearts of believers and nonbelievers alike. Our group consisted of agnostics, Jews, and churchgoers of every type. What a wonderful opportunity to share the gospel!

The orphanage at which the clinic was set up houses over 1000 children, though not all the patients were children. Over \$120,000 in free services were provided. Most of the procedures carried out were extractions. Though Les Cayes is a good distance from the epicenter of the quake, still people were anxious, and more than willing to share their stories. One woman had been in Port-au-Prince the day of the quake. I overheard her relating a nightmarish experience. She had just left one building to walk to another. The first collapsed, killing everyone inside, then the second, with the same result. She was the sole survivor. The whole nation is shaken and haunted by the memory of 12 January.

The road to the capital

A Haitian friend drove me from Les Cayes all the way to the capital, about 5 hours away. While he drove, I did my best to communicate in my version of broken French, a notepad often coming to the rescue as I wrote out words and made many inelegant drawings, Pictionary style. This man is the father of three and has a good job. I was curious as to whether his family had enough to eat. "We make do. We have chicken twice a week." Inquiring about the fare the other days, I learned more about the make-do Haitian diet. Beef is a rarity. "We eat mainly vegetables. Lots of rice, peas, and spaghetti. This morning I had coffee and bread."

I inquired whether refugees from the capital came to his town of Les Cayes. "Yes, my family [of five] took in 13 more people. Our house was packed. Even now there are seven people there." There was not a trace of complaint or self-pity in his voice.

The nearer we got to Port-au-Prince, the more debris was visible. Huge cracks appeared in roads and buildings. More and more bridges were washed out (we simply drove around them), and thousands of persons milled about at the roadside. Lean-tos and tents were everywhere. And the air was no longer clear, dust and pollution obscuring the blue sky. Finally we arrived at the church property. 110 persons were living in the hastily erected tents (scorching hot). The smell of sweat and urine was heavy in the air. It rains frequently, which cleanses the grounds, but with the steepness of the hills, running water can wreak havoc in a tent. All around the church property is rubble. "100 people died in that apartment building," a brother tells me, pointing to a pile of rubble 20 yards from the church. "Another 100 died over there," he continues, pointing to another collapsed building 30 yards from where we stood. If you would like to see a two-minute video of the church property, please visit douglasjacoby.com.



Giving and receiving

In Port-au-Prince I presented a number of lessons (a leadership workshop, a sermon on the Kingdom from Acts 14:21-22, and a discussion on difficult biblical subjects for the main leaders). I also delivered clothes, shoes, vitamins--which disappeared instantly--as well as a colorful token of love suggested by my wife: lollipops. The kids loved them! (The dentists just smiled.) A few weeks later, in Miami, we were able to donate many books, as well as a national subscription to the premium website. Their letters of thanks overflow with appreciation. Of course I feel like *I'm* the one who received the most. In giving we receive (Acts 20:35).

How do they keep going?

I requested a number of the disciples in Haiti to tell me how their lives have been affected by the disaster. I also asked what scriptures helped them to keep perspective. How do they renew their strength (Isaiah 40:31)?

- Beatrice is a ten-year-old Christian and mother of two. I asked her how it's been since January. "Not easy"-- choked up, she could not speak, tears filling her eyes. After regaining composure, with a gracious smile she told me her favorite scriptures are Philippians 4:8 and Romans 8:37-38. Her message to you: "God is faithful... pray and stay with Jesus, and God will show us good things." Such optimism amidst such pain.
- Volvick, 38, is an evangelist in Les Cayes. The scripture from which he has derived great strength is 1 Corinthians 15:58 (no surprise!). When I asked him what he wanted us in the United States to know, he said, "Tell them it's difficult for many families to eat every day. Keep praying for us in our hour of difficulty and testing. I think in the end, with God, we will be victorious."
- Louise, 70, has been a disciple of Christ for 15 years. She takes great comfort in the Apocalypse (the book of Revelation), and seems herself to have apocalyptic expectations for her country. Her message: "I wish you courage, because we do not live by law, but by faith."
- Gabrielle, 76, is the oldest member of L'Eglise du Christ de Port-au-Prince. She accidentally opened her Bible to Psalm 37 (how appropriate!), but then referred to Jesus' words in John 16: "Peace I give you." She was calm, faithful, bearing the quiet wisdom of years.
- Then I spoke with Chees, 11. He was cheerful. "Was your house destroyed?" I asked. "No, but I moved to the church property to be with my uncle." Many do not trust their poorly constructed homes to weather a storm. Every night there's a loud thunderstorm, children screams pierce the darkness. They're afraid it's another earthquake.
- Alex, a young man who had left the church, was struck by something I said in the sermon. I had shared about a brother who quit for ten years, then returned. Alex felt that in the message God had directly spoken to him--as he too has been away ten years, and is wrestling with the decision to come back. I asked him what he'd learned in his decade away. "What we have inside the church family is so much better than what's outside." Already this year nearly 90 persons have joined the number of the disciples. A number of them had strayed.
- Junior, 20, was eager to tell me that Ephesians 6:10-18 (the armor of God) is his top passage. "With God everything can change. God is good." I wondered how many people he knew had died in the quake. "Ten of my friends went missing. Some of their bodies still haven't been found." Talking later with the brothers, I realized that his loss was unusual. Many lost *twice* as many friends and family.
- Anael has been a Christian for 14 years. He was working on the fifth floor of his office building, and expressed how very fortunate he was that he wasn't crushed in a collapse. His favorite passage is Isaiah 60. "I'm confident we will continue to make progress. We are joyful citizens of the kingdom; it's a great privilege; we are special in the eyes of God... But I'm concerned that our children grow in their faith. Will they choose to follow God?" His message to the church in Atlanta (and to all of you): "Apply the pages of the Bible; live it out."
- Last, Jorel, a seasoned disciple and leader of the congregation in Port-au-Prince, named John 14:1-4 as the passage that has given him perspective. "When things are very hard, I love to

think of what God is planning for me and my family."

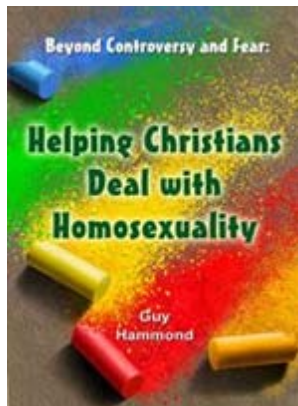
Such Christians are not distracted by the troubles of this world. Their eyes are on the prize. Remember Haiti. They need your prayers, donations, and love. Currently the nation is dealing with a cholera outbreak. Although their future is unknown, they know who holds the future. Their faith is an inspiration to us all.

VISIT ISRAEL!

The annual *Biblical Study Tour* next year will take place in the Middle East. [CLICK](#) for details.

NEW SERIES ON HOMOSEXUALITY

This is a joint production of SIW and AIM (Strength in Weakness Ministries and the Athens Institute of Ministry.) Visit [IPI](#) to order this remarkable series, with over 5 hours of lessons.



4TH QUARTER SPEAKING TRIPS

- Oct 2-3, Columbus OH
- Oct 29-30, Los Angeles CA
- Nov 10-12, Port of Prince, Trinidad
- Nov 29-30, Boston MA
- Dec 9-11, Bucharest, Romania
- Dec 11-14, Kiev and Lviv, Ukraine
- Dec 15, Tel Aviv, Israel

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PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS

Miss a newsletter? You can find previous bulletins (a total of about 20 pages in 2010) by clicking [HERE](#).

Farewell

You can expect one more newsletter in 2010. *Please* tell your friends about the international Bible teaching ministry; so few know. And even among subscribers, only 55% even *open* the newsletters. (I know because the program tells me.) Thanks for caring, and as always, thanks for your prayers.

Yours in Him,

Douglas Jacoby

