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*Our goal is to provide readers with an overview of realities in and with regard to Israel,
with particular reference to the Gospel.*

Readers will view those portions of MaozNews in which they have interest.

To that end, we seek to diversify.

In this issue:

It's all in a Day's Work, pg. 1

Egypt, the West – and Us, pg. 3

Baruch's biography (continued) pg. 4

2011 USA Trip, pg. 6

It's All in a Day's Work

I never imagined retirement would be so busy.

I've been preaching at least once a month at church, teaching the Young Adults every week on and once a month on Friday, teaching a Preaching and Listening To Sermons class every other week, meeting with the Young Adults Committee and the with Youth Work Committee, editing the last OT volume of the *Modern Hebrew Bible*, reviewing the editorial work on my *Judges*, putting the last-last touches on *Malachi* in English and completing the editing of the Hebrew version, writing a commentary on *Romans*, translating the *Westminster Confession*, attending three required classes for a Masters in Biblical Studies and the work required for these, reading up in preparation for writing my thesis, keeping up with correspondence, planning for our annual trip to the

US, leading the National Social Aid Fund – all that following my duties to my wife as a husband, keeping up with the three children in the US (and their children), teaching Rose ...

Good grief! I just went over the list and am horrified – or, rather, grateful not to be bored to bits by a sedentary, goal-less retirement. I am occupied in the service of God and his people. What a joy and a privilege!

As I sit in my office, my eyes scan the shelves of books. There are so many I'd love to read just for pleasure – but there is no time for such occupations. Here we have no rest. I'm at the computer, increasingly squinting due to my cataracts (still not "ripe" for an operation) from some time just after 04:00 am, all the way until 08:00 or so in the evening, with breaks for meals and (from time to time) a chat with Bracha. My back aches for much sitting. My eyes are dry for looking at the computer. My "mouse finger" hurts from over-use. At times I have to struggle to stay awake, or alert, or focused. But I am leaving behind me what I hope will become a useful legacy for the church in this country. Thank you, those of you who make this possible through our prayers, encouragement and giving. I do not deserve such friends, but thank God for each of you.

Some days are different, like last Tuesday: I spent the early morning in God's word and handling correspondence until Bracha awoke. After showering and a quick breakfast, I worked on the Thursday preaching class lesson and left for the HaGefen offices, where I was to go over the maps HaGefen is preparing for its edition of my commentary on *Judges*. I left my car for servicing in the garage, read an article on Descartes' concept of ideas in preparation for my thesis on Hermeneutics, and then met with Dianna, the artist. We spent four hours poring over the maps, ensuring locations and discussing different problems. I left with a list of name-places for which more information is required.

Before leaving HaGefen, I met with the Accountant to discuss issues related to the National Social Aid Fund in preparation for an oncoming meeting, and then with David to discuss future publications. I hastened home to a bowl of wonderful soup Bracha prepared, when Shoshi arrived for our weekly editing session on the *Modern Hebrew Bible for Youth*. So I gobbled down the soup, made Shoshi a cup of coffee and we spent over just under 5 hours editing the first three chapters of Daniel. It was slow going because we needed to become accustomed to the literary distinctives of Daniel in contrast to other biblical books and to accommodate ourselves to the characteristics of this period of biblical history (Persian literary influences, the increased formalization of administrative language, Persian literary imagery, for example). We also labor with an Aramaic that is, at best, faltering, and much of Daniel is written in Aramaic, not Hebrew. So we needed to tread slowly and to use more reference instruments than usual.

Shoshi left at about 17:00, and I returned to handle correspondence and then fine-tune Esther and Ecclesiastes following our editorial process and before the results are sent to our control groups. I then prepared the class (on sin) that I am to teach the Youth this weekend and brushed over the class on thinking that I am teaching the Young Adults. It was 21:00, just in time for the evening news, brushing my teeth and going to bed. Wednesday was another day, but I'll spare you ...

Egypt, The West – and Us

You will have received my bulletins on events in Egypt. The full articles are available on my website at http://www.themaozweb.com/?goal=productlisting&categories_id=5 where possible, I preferred sending links, so that those who wish can read the articles while others simply note that they are available for future reference.

It is not without reason that, so far, protest has erupted in Islamic States. In spite of protestations to the contrary, Islam is an oppressive religion, fomenting oppressive cultures and oppressive régimes, relegating its adherents to a backward culture in which the individual is largely unimportant and might is right. Faced with the consistently high standards of life and the privileges of freedom in the West, Islamic frustration has found itself two major outlets in recent years: Al Qaida's aggressive anti-western terrorism (which has killed countless more Muslims than westerners), or public uproar against regimes that – willy nilly – represent the outcome of an Islamic political culture.

Part of the difficulty in reading events in the Middle East is the product of perspective. Western eyes differ from those of other views. From an Islamic point of view, nurtured in the desert culture of Mohammed, where tribal loyalties were repeatedly forged and betrayed and armistices were short-term conveniences, the West has once again proven its weakness in terms of principle. No one in his right mind expects international politics to be conducted on the level of moral principle. But the West has often spoke in such terms, which are now perceived in the Middle East as just another form of tribal interests, albeit, on a larger scale. That being the case, what does the West have to offer the Islamic world which it is not itself fast losing?

The US is seen as shamelessly hopping onto the bandwagon of national protest and forsaking a loyal ally in the process. Just a little more pressure, a few more advantages, and the US will turn its back on the rest of its allies in the Middle East, forge understandings with Iran, and all will be well – until it is time for another significant Muslim push. Meanwhile, the West is being eroded by the constant drip-drip of Muslim immigrants and by the naive effort to achieve peace through a multiculturalism that both Germany and Britain have recently described as unworkable.

The result of Western responses to recent Middle East events has been an emboldened Iran, a more arrogant Hezbollah and a belligerent Hamas on the one hand,

and increasingly beleaguered Arab western allies on the other. In most Islamic Arab countries where protests have not erupted, the reason is not to be sought in the happiness of the populace but in the still-strong hand of the régimes. Where free elections were held and radicals were allowed to participate, less-than-democratic governments were established (see, for example, Gaza, Lebanon and Turkey), controlled by radicals who are not formally installed as leaders of their respective countries but hold disproportionate political clout.

The world is undergoing a tectonic revolution, far more significant than the collapse of dictatorial Communism: western moral and social values are being eroded, differences of value between East and East are diminishing while the price of food and the various kinds of fuel is rising, placing still further pressures on autocratic régimes. Hutingdon's Clash of Civilizations is but one part of the picture. The global village has created a situation in which no country is isolated from the after-shocks of such changes. Human society will not be the same in 30-40 years. I wonder: will it take that long?

Meanwhile, the church is busily accommodating itself to the world, subscribing to a hedonistic post-modernism in which truth is considered relative and no truth is worth the sacrifice of life. Seeking to be increasingly people-friendly, we are less and less God-friendly, less committed, less willing to challenge our culture and less determined to change it. We, too, need a major revolution – the kind that Jeremiah sought to promote, the kind that drove the apostles to turn the world on its head, that transformed Europe and changed the course of history. We need the kind of divine intervention that will change us into radical Christians, true lovers of God and courageous heralds of the word of God.

Baruch's Biography (continued)

In our last installment, Baruch returned from his first visit to the United States in 1974, where he made initial acquaintance with the Reformed movement there.

The Second USA Trip

In 1976 I returned to the USA for a month and visited Drew Garner, Walter Chantry and Al Martin. Al allowed me to address his Sunday School class. I also visited my father and his family. By then, our relations were cordial, but I was always careful not to take anything for granted. My father baked his deservedly famous pizzas and we all had a good time together. Daniel was friendly but somewhat reserved while Stuart and I seemed to grow closer.

Stuart and I shared a room. For some years now he had been courting Myra, a delightful lass to whom I had taken from the first minute we met. Stuart was in a quandary: should he marry her? I am pleased to say I encouraged him to marry. They

now have two children and a lovely family life (no thanks to me, much as I would have loved to attribute some of their blessings to myself).

During this visit I made the acquaintance of Ron McKinney, the young Pastor of a local Reformed Baptist congregation in Dallas and the editor of a Reformed magazine, *The Sword and The Trowel*. We became friendly. His wife, Bonnie, was a typical southern belle, gentle, homey in the best sense of the term, an excellent cook. Ron was later instrumental in the founding, with others, of what became known as “The Continental Baptists”, who took issue with those who affirmed the Third Use of the Law and insisted on the continued validity of the (First Day) Sabbath. This was a development I always regretted, not only because I was uncomfortable with the position espoused by Ron and his friends, but because I thought that we Reformed Baptists should be able to discuss matters without forming camps and creating divisions. There is room for discussion, mutual edification and respect, even in the presence of strong opinions in important matters. There is a wide difference between being doctrinally faithful and doctrinaire, and I feared our young movement would become the latter.

I did write an article for *The Sword*, on prayer, which I have cherished over the years, reread and reminded myself of its truths repeatedly. Like many, I have seldom prayed enough or well. There have been times of extreme dryness in prayer. I am grateful for those times when God broke through my spiritual lethargy and granted me a sense of his presence as I prayed. I am grateful for his listening heart and for his supporting grace. But my prayer life was never such that I was satisfied.

While in the USA, I learnt of a Messianic Jewish Conference to be held at Messiah College in Pennsylvania. I decided to attend and was disappointed to witness a shallow, arrogant, smug spirit among many who attended. The level of preaching was sub-standard, hunger for God and for his glory was barely evidenced. Instead, there was a sense of angry desperation and of self-affirmation.

The conference was run with a high hand by the Chernoff family and their supporters. Dissenting voices, even innocent questions, were forbidden. At that stage in my understanding, I was in uncomfortable but not yet adverse to the Messianic Movement, as later study taught me to be. Still I left the conference saddened by what I had seen.

Following the conference, I spent a few days in Carlisle with Walt Chantry, taking counsel and learning from him. He encouraged me to work for the establishment of a local Reformed church in Israel. I was reticent to do so. I thought that I would be able to work well within the context of some local church which would allow me the freedom of my conscience. I thought that churches in Israel were too willing to divide, and that unity should be preserved as much as possible. Nor did I believe myself to be suited for the task of church planting. On the other hand, I recognized the need of a stable, expository

ministry and of a churchmanship that would be consistent with biblical principle. I undertook to think and pray about the matter.

That year the Reformed Baptists held their annual Family Conference at Long Beach, New York. Although on my own, I was encouraged to attend, which I did. What a contrast to what I had seen and heard at the Messianic conference! Donald MacLeod preached on the glory of Christ, a series to which I have listened many times since, always to my spiritual benefit. The weather was warm and Donald became so heated while preaching that he removed his jacket and, thinking he was reaching the chair behind him, dropped his coat on the floor – and proceeded to trample it as he preached, totally oblivious to the treatment he was according his poor jacket. The topic was nothing less than heavenly. We were given a whiff of the fragrance of Christ's glory.

Commencing a Ministry

Everything in this mortal world is subject to change. Only God is forever. We change, the circumstances we are called upon to address, the resources at our disposal, and the staff in whose company we are called to serve is subject to change. One of the major challenges in any ministry is continuity in the face of such fluctuation. Hopefully, change is to the better, bringing us ever closer to the image of him who created and redeemed us. When I joined CWI, I did not expect what was to come, but God, who leads all things according to his good and wise desires, led throughout.

CWI had a long-standing ministry in Israel that went back to the turn of the 20th century. In the mid-1900's, the work focused largely on the medical abilities of Dr. James Churcher and his team of dedicated nurses, administrative assistants and, at one stage, two other doctors. Bracha and I were to develop what was, in effect, a new branch of the work which focused on the production and distribution of Christian literature in Hebrew. CWI engaged in similar activity in the past, but had long been focused on medical work, accompanied by and subservient to a humble witness. One of the greatest needs facing the young Israeli church was the lack of good literature that would inform the mind while challenging the hearts; that would introduce the church to the fundamental doctrines of the Faith, equip it to understand, live by and proclaim the message of the Gospel. We set ourselves to make some contribution to meeting this need.

Our work began with no office, no typewriter and no clear program. We decided to continue production of the magazine, now to be renamed *A Word in Season* (phonetically the same as our previous name, but with a different spelling). We also produced our first book – Walter Chantry's *Signs of an Apostle*. The text was laboriously written in longhand, typed on an office typewriter, and produced from paper plates - all 500 copies.

Choosing *Signs of an Apostle* as our first publication was unwise. We had labeled ourselves as reactionary rather than responsive, in opposition rather than in defense of important matters. We also took issue with a conviction to which many of those whom we loved and respected held dear (we still do), consequently threatening our ability to address them on more pressing matters. It would have been wiser, more appropriate, more gracious to commence our publication program on a positive note. I regret that choice to this day, while my view of the issue has not altered.

I have also learnt over the years to respect those with whom I disagree, to hear them out. Truth is not the exclusive domain of any. It is larger, more glorious than any of us can contain. The early enthusiasm of a young convert has been replaced by what I hope is not the indolence of older age but the relative wisdom of experience and the fruit of God's dealings. I have learnt more from those who disagree with me than I could have ever learnt from those who agree.

The magazine soon became a quarterly and was produced in the same manner as was the book. We distributed it free of charge to a growing mailing list. Efforts to add an insert with news of the local congregations were greeted with consternation: social and official opposition to the Gospel was deemed to be far more dangerous than it really was. Most congregations operated almost clandestinely, and were encouraged to do so by the missionaries working in the land, whose visas would be revoked if they were discovered evangelizing. The congregations therefore viewed any public news of their life, witness and endeavor as undesirable exposure. We had to withdraw.

Slowly, we began to discover that the ability to converse in two languages – even to be considered linguistically articulate – was not the same as an ability to convey the intended meaning from one language into another. I had to work hard at my syntax, broaden my vocabulary and acquaint myself more thoroughly with the topics on hand. Only so could I understand both the message and the spirit of the message of each book in its native language, and then render it faithfully and convincingly into Hebrew.

This did not come easily. I am an energetic person who finds it difficult to sit at a table and labor over texts for 10-12 hours a day, yet that is what I had to train myself to do. In addition, I am not a man of details, as anyone who has corresponded with me will have discovered as he labored to decipher my typos. Neither did I have the time for niceties: there was a lot of work to be done! An acquaintance once said, "If a work is worth doing, it is worth doing badly". I long to produce a near-perfect work, but would rather produce more less-than-perfect work than spend time constantly honing what I hope someday to produce. I have learnt to compromise.

To be continued

2011 USA Trip

Very few windows are left for churches who might wish Baruch to report on his work or minister God's word in the Cleveland, Phoenix and Dallas-Fort Worth areas. If your church is interested, please contact us at once at bmaoz@GMX.com

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