

**MaozNews No. 130**  
**Published every 4 weeks or so**  
**December 2018**

© Baruch Maoz

I apologize for the error in the number and date of the previous issue

**Israel – The Messianic Movement, Part Two pg. 1**

**Israel – The Church, pg. 2**

**Israel – Society, pg. 3**

**Ministry News pg. 4**

**Family News, pg. 5**

**Israel – The Messianic Movement, Part Two**

*Continued correspondence with a much-loved brother concerning the Messianic Movement.*

Dear brother,

We may well be talking about different things under the name of the Messianic Movement. Obviously, under that epitaph I am not referring to that movement of the Spirit among my own people, particularly in Israel, in consequence of which some are being born again by the power of the Spirit through the Gospel, turning from themselves to God, repenting of their sins and seeking to serve him according to his will. Many who go under the name “Messianic” (including the church to which my wife and I belong) are only so in name. In that sense, the moniker “Messianic” merely means “Jewish Evangelical” and serves as a means of avoiding the Hebrew pejorative term, Notsri, associated with the horrors of the Crusades and the persecution of our people in the name of Christ.

I deeply dislike disagreeing with a brother whom I love and respect, but my sincere affection requires me to do so here:

Regretfully, contrary to your view, all the negative examples I mention are not an exception. They are characteristic of what I mean by the Messianic Movement, including an overt or covert disavowal of the Trinity, a low Christology and a confused soteriology resulting in a version of the Gospel that has nice things to say about Jesus but that has lowered the threshold of the Faith so as to render it acceptable to Jews without their despairing of their ability to please God by way of law-keeping and adherence to tradition.

The God in whom they believe is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Jesus in whom they believe is not God the Son, Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Maker and Sustainer of all things, who took on humanity and bore the guilt and punishment

our own sins in his body on the tree, thereby securing our full redemption. Instead, they insist on supplementing his achievements with their own – as if the meagre candle of their sin-stained abilities could add anything to the grandeur of the sun's light or to the fullness of the redemption secured by the blood of Jesus.

Their scriptures are indeed inspired by the Spirit of God, but they add human traditions, through which prism God's will is to be understood. Their church is one, united in Christ, but they consider themselves as an elite in that one church by virtue of their Jewishness and/or of their adherence to the Torah and Jewish custom.

No wonder that, with such a message, some among them enjoy, as you say, access to ultra-orthodox (Jewish) people. There is little astonishing about that. Their Gospel is "another Gospel which is not another".

As a matter of fact, the majority of churches in Israel are just now looking into the views of some of the more prominent individuals in the Messianic Movement precisely on the issues I raise here, in the same spirit in which I raise them. Hence, I have good reason to believe my view of reality is the correct one and that time will yet prove me right.

I wish I wasn't.

In Christ by grace and with much affection,

Baruch

*By Way of clarification: the Messianic Movement of which I speak is primarily that evidenced outside of Israel. Most of the so-called Israel Messianic congregations eschew Messianic aberrations and differ little from the average evangelical congregation anywhere in the world.*

### **Israel – The Church**

The Israeli church is showing increasing signs of maturity, with all the pangs of growth normally associated with such a process. There is a growing concern for theological and moral integrity in spite of the fact that confusion reigns as to the nature of both. As a result, a sense of corporate responsibility is also developing that could lead to some practical expression of unity and mutual responsibility.

Previous rejection of the idea that the informal National Conference of Hebrew-Speaking Congregations be transformed into a meaningful and formal association opened the door to aberrations. Needing to decide which of the churches to invite to attend the conference, as well as the many years of fellowship and growing co-operation, have fed into a desire to deal with departures from some biblical standards. Committees have been set up to look into specific issues and to make recommendations to the attending churches.

So long as such a process is directed Godward, is not transformed into an instrument of imposition but is accompanied by an eagerness to learn from God's words and apply what is learned, this is an extremely welcome development. The measure of theological reflection evidenced in unexpected instances is likewise encouraging.

New home groups are springing up around the country as the first steps toward the establishment of new churches.

## Israel -- Society

**Tensions on the border with Hamas** have receded, until the next round (which those in the know say is sure to come). Instead **tensions on the border with Lebanon** is increasing due to Hezbollah's tunneling into Israel, Iran's concerted effort to upgrade Hezbollah's rocketry and Israel's equally concerted efforts to stymie any such upgrading. Following Israel's effective diplomatic and military interventions, Iran has largely desisted sending military material' to Lebanon via Syria. Instead, it is constructing factories within Lebanon and storing weaponry, rockets and ammunition in civilians homes and under civilian institutions such as schools and hospitals in the hope that Israel will not be able to destroy these.

The incident in which Syria downed a Russian spy plane while intending to aim at Israeli planes has somewhat limited Israel's freedom of **action in Syrian skies**, but it has also forced the Russians to set limits to Iranian actions in the country.

The lack of progress, even the semblance of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians has led to an **outbreak of terrorist attacks**, eagerly encouraged by Hamas in Gaza, where it has largely been contained. Shootings, stabbings and car rammings have increased, primarily in the West Bank against settlers, but some attacks have occurred within Israel proper. The simmering pot of Palestinian frustration is threatening to boil over. The Palestinian Authority speaks out of both sides of its mouth, officially opposing terrorism and cooperating with Israel's security forces and, at the same time, praising terrorists and paying large sums to the families of "Palestinian martyrs".

Meanwhile, the police have completed their **investigations into the Prime Minister's conduct** and recommended that he be indicted for bribery, fraud, breach of trust, and obstruction of justice on a series of accounts. Mrs. Netanyahu has been indicted on two accounts of bribery, one account of the mis-use of public funds and is liable to indicted along with Mr. Netanyahu for obstruction of justice. Pundits assume Mr. Netanyahu will force elections before the Attorney General decides whether or not to press charges.

The Minister of Homeland Security proposed the appointment of a **new National Police Commissioner** who was charged with abuse of authority in writing off traffic tickets given to senior police officers under his command, witness tampering and using his rank to abuse a citizen who criticized him for reckless driving among other purported misdeeds. His candidacy was rejected by the Commission for Public Standards. In response, the Minister insisted that Commission's decision be ignored and his candidate installed. "Everyone is liable to make mistakes", he explained. "We will never find a perfect Police Commissioner". The candidate has withdrawn his candidacy and the search is on for a new candidate.

Sharp rises in the costs of water and electricity have led to a **broad sweep of price hikes** in the food and transportation ministries. Governmental efforts to stymie the price of housing has led to a slow-down in the construction of new homes.

## Ministry News

My **translation of the New Testament** is now being edited. My editor and I spend some 10 hours weekly, reviewing editorial comment and seeking improvements, and the further hours evaluating possible improvements separately, summarizing our conclusions and prepping for the next session. We've completed the Gospels and Acts. We expect to complete Ephesians in the next session or so. Pauls' more abstract, theological terminology presents a challenge in our effort to maintain fidelity to the word of God and ensure maximal accessibility for our readers.

The constant challenge is to translate, not interpret. But, for example, one can translate the Greek word, *sarx*, as *flesh*, *body* or *meat*, or perhaps in some cases one should translate the word as *sinful desires*. Another example is the Greek word, *nomos*, which can be translated into Hebrew as *law*, *guiding principle* or *Torah*.

Above all, we seek to maintain the tension between remaining as close to the Greek text as the level of the Hebrew language we have chosen to follow will allow and remaining true to the Hebrew language and to our readers as the text will allow. Translations also tend to level the language of all New Testament authors; we seek to maintain the difference between Matthew, John, Paul and others. It's a fascinating process!

The **book on church life** will probably be ready for editing by the middle of January. I am now going over the draft for the last time, fine-tuning the text and improving on the language.

Being the first book in Hebrew on the topic, it has become a large undertaking, with supplements suggesting marriage and burial ceremonies, a draft church constitution and statement of faith, pre-baptismal courses, pre-marriage counselling programs and the like, as well as a discussion of the purpose for which the church was created, the nature of its life, the structure of authority in the church and the spheres of its activity. The (detailed) table of contents alone consists of four pages.

If my readers derive 10% as much benefit from reading the book as I have in writing it, I will be thrilled and grateful beyond words. I wish I had known some of this before embarking onto a pastoral ministry, but then, would probably have been so intimidated that I would not have dared undertake that awesome calling. Now, although over 11 years after retiring from pastoring, I dearly miss it. It was an inestimable privilege to serve God by loving and serving his people.

**Har'el**, who I am tutoring, progresses well in the Lord. He has been asked to play a larger role in the life of the church he attends. Over the last few months he has been active among the young adults, and has recently been asked to join the Sabbath School committee. We meet every other week for study and prayer.

I remain in search of a **capable webmaster** to manage my website, update it and render it more active than I my limited abilities permit.

## Family News

**Eran** is still in pain following the accident, but is steadily improving.

**Keith and Shlomit** are being significantly challenged. Keith has lost consciousness repeatedly, even while taking out the trash, sweeping the floor or taking a shower. We remain lovingly concerned for him. Shlomit is bearing an extremely heavy burden providing the family, running the house, caring for Keith and for the children, cooking, cleaning, shopping ... They are very much alone and feel it deeply.

We are eager to be with them as soon as possible and alleviate some of the burden. Bracha and I are now readying our **home here in Israel for sale** and intend to put it on the market in the next week or so. We have provided our lawyer with most of the necessary documentation for Bracha's application for an **immigration visa** and are encountering difficulties in obtaining some. Your prayers would be appreciated on both accounts.

We shall use the proceeds from the sale of the house to cover the remainder of our mortgage and to ship our belongings to the US. The rest will be set aside as savings in case of an emergency. We are grateful for God moving our bankers to grant us a mortgage following the break-in to our hose three years ago. Mortgage was grant in spite of our age and in spite of the insurance company's refusal to insure the mortgage because of our age. Following the break-in, the extensive damage to our home and the theft three years ago, we were unable to meet our financial obligations. The mortgage enabled us to do so. We expect to move to the US owning a house and yet debt free.

Meanwhile, we're hosting and visiting friends, **beginning to say our goodbyes**. It is a sweet-sad time in our of lives, with a new beginning ahead of us. Responses to our public announcement of relocation plans have been kind, rendering our intended departure somewhat easier.

We have not yet reached to level of covenanted **support** that will enable me to continue writing. A hearty "thank you" is due to those churches and individuals who have responded and assured us of their continued support. We would be most grateful if readers of this newsletter, particularly those who have supported our labors up to this point, would consider supporting us in the future. Until we relocate to the US, support should be sent to Berean Baptist Church as over the details given below. Upon relocation our support will be conveyed through the Reformed Baptist Network (RBNNet). We will provide supporters with the relevant information.

In Christ by grace,

Baruch and Bracha Maoz

**You can help** by purchasing copies of Baruch’s books from Barnes & Noble or from Amazon, by asking for them at your local bookstore and **by posting reviews of these books** on Barnes & Noble or Amazon websites. Positive reviews help us sell.

**COME LET US REASON TOGETHER** (On the Unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church). Christ as the fullness of divine revelation and his work as sufficient for our whole salvation, Presbyterian and Reformed.

**JONAH: A PROPHET ON THE RUN** a devotional commentary on the book of Jonah, Shepherd Press.

**MALACHI: A PROPHET IN TIMES OF DISTRESS** a devotional commentary on the book of Malachi. Founders Press.

**COLOSSIANS: The All-Sufficient Savior** a devotional commentary on the book of Colossians. Founders Press.

**The commentaries are suited for personal devotions and group studies**

Baruch’s sermons may be heard on [Sermon Audio](#)

To remain abreast of developing circumstances in Israel, visit the [MaozWeb](#) or “follow” Baruch on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) (@BaruchMaoz).

Intermittent bulletins are produced as necessary



LinkedIn



**Following a breach in Berean Baptist’s bank account**, checks in support of our ministry should be written to the order of **Berean Baptist Church special missions account, POBox 1233, Grand Blanc MI, 48480-3233**. Please designate: “For Soli Deo Gloria”, or, “For the ministry of Baruch Maoz”. Bank transfers may be made to **Chemical Bank, 2301 W, Big Beaver Rd. Suite 525, Troy MI 48084 ABA Routing 072410013 , Berean Baptist Account 5389484382 Swiftcode: CHEMUS33**

All contributions are tax deductible. Receipts are sent at the end of each calendar year or at donor’s request. Please do not send contributions directly to us; we value accountability.

Funds sent for the ministry will be used exclusively for that purpose.

We reserve the right to use personal funds for the purposes of the ministry.