

MaozNews No. 29
Published every 4 weeks or so
May 2010

In this issue:

At The Crossroads, pg. 1
Ministry and Family News, pg.

MaozNews is a monthly publication. Our goal is to provide readers with an overview of realities in and with regard to Israel, with particular but not exclusive reference to the Gospel. Readers will view those portions of MaozNews in which they have interest. To that end, we seek to diversify.

At The Crossroads

Since it's founding, Israel has been under siege. In 62 years of its existence, Israel has fought 6 major wars, two "minor" ones and faced terrorist attacks from within and without. Every bank, coffee shop, restaurant and supermarket is protected by armed guards who conduct body searches on all who enter. Upon graduation from High School, young men serve for 3 years in the military, and young women 2. Men are then subject to annual call-up for training and military duties.

Amazingly, in the face of such relentless pressure, Israel has maintained more than a vestige of a democratic society, however imperfectly. Its economy has flourished, its scientists lead the world in many fields, its agriculture is world renown, its musicians sought in every major orchestra and its medical advances are at the forefront of human achievements.

But Israel continues to face **substantial internal threats** to its existence, no less stringent than the external ones. Tel Aviv Mayor, Ron Huldai's alarm and the following articles are but symptoms of the malaise that portends ill for Israel unless it is able to change course, quickly and radically.

Corruption in high places, cynical politics that promise peace while consistently working against a resolution of the Middle East conflict, a secular society increasingly subject to the unilateral impositions of radical religious impositions, the impossibility of maintaining a truly democratic society so long as it withholds privileges from its non-Jewish citizens, growth in the number of murders, attacks against the weak and the elderly, an active sex trade, rampant substance abuse, a disconcerting increase of drunkenness among the very young, a floundering educational system, an inefficient political order coupled with the lack of moral leadership and poor views

of both the judicial and the legislative systems, a relatively tamed spoken and written press ... the list goes on and on.

Yours prayers are needed - and we here, in Israel, need to preach and live out the Gospel with increased urgency. God will judge Israel for its sins, and us for dwelling at ease in Zion, untroubled by what we see and know.

A Protest against the Religious Educational System in Israel

Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai urged the "silent masses" in the city to rise up against the amount of **funds being given to the ultra-Orthodox sector at the expense of the working public**, raising the ire of the Orthodox sector's representatives in government. The mayor was speaking at a debate entitled "Educational Core", organized by the Kibbutzim College of Education in Tel Aviv. Helashed out particularly at the notion that state money was being used to cover private education in that sector, while so many in the ultra-Orthodox community itself were unemployed. "With the force of political pressure and in the name of multi-culturalism and other progressive slogans, Israel is funding and fostering large groups of separatists and, if you will, the ignorant; whose number is growing at a shocking rate and **endangering our societal and economic strength**," said Huldai.

"These things must be said, because we don't have another country," Huldai said. "Sobriety is in order, and perhaps even rebellion, among the silent masses, to restore to Israeli democracy the right to intervene and determine on issues so close to our hearts, like education." The Tel Aviv mayor admitted that his words crossed the bounds of political correctness, but said they must be expressed.

"We have no choice but to speak explicitly about the existence of two sides to Israeli society: Those who contribute to its foundation and growth, and those who are funded by them," said Huldai. In recent years, "negative and dangerous" developments have been evidenced in the Israeli educational system. These "must be opposed until they are corrected." By way of example, Huldai pointed to a series of laws that have eroded public secular education. "Today Israel is apparently the only country in the world where **private education is funded by the public**, without that educational system being required to accept a minimum of educational demands that are essential for the future of society," the mayor said.

The ultra-Orthodox Shas party was quick to condemn Huldai over his comments, describing it as "**unsurprising bigotry** ... Huldai prefers foreign children to ultra-Orthodox children and disguises his bigotry as if it is an academic analysis," said the party. "This is wild incitement, wrapped in shallow stigmas." The chairman of the Knesset Finance Committee, MK Moshe Gafni (United Torah Judaism) said in an interview to the ultra-Orthodox radio station Kol Hai in response to Huldai's remarks: "People can say what they want about Haredim (the Ultra Orthodox) ... It is not possible to define what core subjects are."

A Prominent Journalist's Plea

From Ynet, May 2 2010, by Yair Lapid, edited and abbreviated by MaozNews

Let's talk about this once and for all without anger. Let's talk about it without needless hatred and without you thinking that I'm trying to undermine your way of life, your faith, or the way you choose to be Jewish. I do not wish to level charges at you, but rather, just tell you – in the subdued way typical of desperate individuals – about my situation. Because **I cannot go on**. I indeed keep moving up the hill, like an old vehicle running out of gas, but I won't make it to the final stop. Soon, we'll hear the engine's last grunt and everything will come to a halt. I look to my right and you're sitting next to me, in the passenger seat; to my surprise, you look satisfied. You have a big smile on your face. I ask you what's so funny but you don't answer. Your optimism despairs me even more.

Both of us are here, yet I feel like I'm alone. Our children are sitting at the back; my 2.6 kids and your 6.9 kids. My son is munching on a snack. "Give them a little too," I tell him in English, so the haredi kids won't understand. He offers them some of his snack. He's a good boy. But why don't the Haredi kids speak English? Why are they allowed to speak Yiddish – an entangled combination of Hebrew and German – but **refuse to learn English**? Rashi spoke French, Maimonides spoke Arabic, and the Talmud was written in Aramaic. Did you know, I ask the kids, that Aramaic isn't a Jewish language and has no religious significance? It was the administrative language of the Persian Empire and was imported to Israel during the Second Temple era by the immigrants from Babel? The kids don't respond. My children are used to their father's silly remarks; the haredi kids simply don't study history.

Already Strangers

The silence in the backseat grows deeper. They're not hostile, heaven forbid; that just have nothing to talk about. They can't talk about computers, literature, geography, history, or even the Bible. Yeshivas barely teach any Bible, only Talmud. That doesn't leave much to talk about. They're just kids, but they're already strangers. And they don't study math. I studied math and I was terrible at it. Perhaps this is why I fail to figure out the equation I see in the rearview mirror: How exactly will 2.6 children support 6.9 kids? Twenty percent of students in Israel's schools are Haredim; another 20% are retired; another 20% are Arab. I have no problem with any of them. One is permitted to be haredi, or Arab, and certainly a pensioner.

However, if at this time already **it's unclear how 40% of the country's citizens are able to support the other 60%**, can you imagine what will happen here in 10 years? ... My children in fact have no future because, in the past eight years, we've seen a 24% decline in the number of students in teacher colleges in the national education system. People don't want to be teachers in our sector; not with the current salaries. Why are the salaries so low? Because in those same eight years, the number of teaching cadets in your sector leapt by 111% - and all of this comes from the same budget.

Save Our Children

You want private education for your students? No problem whatsoever; pay for it. There is **no other country in the world – not even one! - where the government funds private education.** There is no other country in the world where Education Ministry representatives are not allowed to enter a school whose bills they pay (and fully so – 100% of the bills.) There is no other country in the world where teachers refuse to present their curriculum to the body that pays their salary. ... I fail to understand how you're not bothered by the fact you live at my expense, but I can no longer pay. The money is gone. There's no more left. I don't have enough to give my children, and I don't have enough to give yours.

Do you understand how this makes me feel? What am I asking of you after all? I want your children to study some more subjects – again at my expense. Of course, at my expense. I give up on anything that you suspect of being tainted by our values, so let's stay with the basics: Hebrew, English, math, and computers, merely the fundamental toolkit that enables a person to be a productive citizen, able to earn his own living one of these days. You and I were already ruined, but help me save our children.

Partnership or Else

Is this truly what you wish for them? **You want them to be doomed, from the day they were born, to live in abject poverty?** Do you want their apartment to be even smaller and more crowded than the one in which you live today? Do you want them to live on government allowances like beggars, at the mercy of every government and every fleeting public mood? Do you want them to depend on the good will of the non-religious – good will that is quickly dissipating?

You seem like a good father, but loving your children also means concerning yourself with the kind of people they'll grow up to be and the kind of world they'll be living in. Our children are heading for a world where they won't be able to coexist. I support you unwillingly, subjected to an aggressive and conscienceless governmental coalition, yet my children will simply not be able to continue in this way. It won't happen in 30 or 40 years, or on some date which we can ignore, as we always do, assuming this will all happen after we die. Even I can make the calculation: if more than 50% of the children who entered first grade this year are not part of the national school system, in 12 years more than 50% of our 18-year-olds won't join the army; in 15 years, more than 50% of them won't go to university or join the workforce. I'm looking at the numbers time and again, searching for another way to read them, but there is no other way. We need to find the way, my friend, or it will end badly.

Discrimination under the Guise of Religion

On May 1, Israel's High Court of Justice instructed the Beit Yaakov school in the ultra-Orthodox town of Immanuel to figure out a way to run classes for both Ashkenazi and Sephardi girls without racial segregation. In other words, **school authorities are invited to continue segregating** Occidental (Mizrahi) and Western (Ashkenazi) pupils **without admitting segregation.** The students would be segregation grounds other than their cultural background, representatives of

the Immanuel ultra-Orthodox community said.

Ashkenazi parents in Emmanuel had established a separate, privately-run educational program next to the State school in which the Mizrachi children studied. The school and the state-funded Independent Education School System, which runs it, are now required to find within a week a compromise that would enable Ashkenazi and Mizrachi girls to study together, or **to separate the girls on the basis of religious criteria rather than skin color or background**. The court ordered the school in August to "remove every sign and effect of the rampant discrimination", including the removal of a wall that had been constructed in the middle of the school playground to separate the two groups of girls.

The parents' attorney, Motti Glick, told the court his clients would not agree to merge the mostly Ashkenazi "Hasidic" track with the mostly Mizrachi "general" track, because they had been so ordered by their rabbis. He said the girls were separated two and a half years ago due to the Mizrachi girls' **"inadequate religious standards"**. Segregation was exercised on a religious basis, rather than a racist one. "I can wager that all the girls of the ["Hasidic"] track don't have televisions at home and all the ["general"] track girls do," he said.

Presiding Justice Edmund Levy said he read in ultra-Orthodox newspapers "reports that make the word 'incitement' pale by comparison." One of the parents, Yitzhak Weinberg, a father of two students in the school, told the court that due to new families moving into the town, students from "newly religious" families who were **not religious enough** were admitted to the school. He said his daughter related after coming home from school one day that "when she closed the top button of her shirt she was shouted at" and described in a derogatory term. "We maintain a separatist way of life, that's the ultra-Orthodox way," Weinberg said, adding that the ethnic issue is of no concern to him, and that he and the other parents "only want religious and educational segregation."

Three destructive trends threaten Israel's very existence as **a Jewish and democratic state**. The first is the continued occupation of the territories, which as of next month will have gone on for 43 years. Ruling over a large Palestinian population through forceful and nondemocratic means compromises Israel's moral case and destroys its image in the eyes of the international community, while buttressing extreme nationalist sentiment within the country and eroding moral conviction within Israeli society.

The second destructive trend involves the **expansion of the ultra-Orthodox community**, most of whose members do not work and refuse to bear the burdens of military service or paying taxes.

They are dependent on welfare payments and they deprive their children of the kind of education that would give them the necessary skills to join the labor force.

The third destructive trend is the discrimination against and **marginalization of Israel's Arab citizens**, many of whom want to study and to work but have difficulty finding employment and integrating into society.

Unless these trends are reversed, the Ultra-Orthodox will continue to be isolated at the expense of the **shrinking core of Israelis who work and serve their country**, while the Arabs, in the absence of opportunities, will be pushed to the margins of society and into the arms of Islamic radicals. Within the space of a very short time, these two sections of Israeli society will constitute the majority. The shortage of tax-paying working people and the growth of citizens dependant on State welfare will cause the Israeli economy to collapse. The lack of draftees will threaten Israel's ability to defend itself.

Policies presently pursued by Prime Minister Benjamin **Netanyahu's Government amplifies these ominous trends** through its refusal to undertake meaningful, sincere negotiations with the Palestinians, its insistence on continued support of the settlement enterprise, its payoffs to the ultra-Orthodox political parties and its declared policy of alienating Israeli Arabs by stymieing their legitimate aspirations.

In choosing to partner in Government with Shas and Yisrael Beiteinu, respectively **radical religious and nationalistic parties**, Netanyahu has chosen policies that accelerate domestic collapse and whose results can only be exacerbated by the Prime Minister's inability to make decisions.

In a weekend interview, opposition leader Tzipi Livni called for ending these destructive trends before it is too late. She also called for two strategic decisions to be taken: the first, to partition the country into two states, one Jewish and the other Palestinian; the second, to impose the teaching of a core curriculum to ultra-Orthodox in an effort to integrate them into the labor market. Both challenges, one related to the peace process and the other to domestic issues, must be dealt with at once. Livni warned that time is of the essence and **called on Likud to make common cause with Kadima** and form a National Unity Government that would aim at achieving a peace agreement ,put an end to ultra-Orthodox extortion, change the electoral system so as to enable the winning party to govern and promote Israel's truest interests abroad.

Typically, the Prime Minister has deferred his reply.

Ministry and Family News

Work on the fourth volume of the **Modern Hebrew Bible for Young People** has brought us to the tail end of the editorial process and more than just the beginning of laying the material out for the printer. Psalms, Proverbs and Job are soon expected to be produced by fall of this year, with work proceeding apace on the fifth and last volume of the Old Testament. Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs and Lamentations have been translated. Daniel is next in line while Baruch edits the afore-mentioned five. Baruch continues to volunteer his time to this important project and intends to continue to do so until it is brought to completion.

Most of the time devoted to the **commentary on Romans** is presently given to investigating Paul's use of the Old Testament in this letter – a central issue for Jewish readers. Of course, there are many linguistic allusions that are no more than literary customs employed by Paul as

they were by any Jewish writer of his day. But the major part of Paul's argument in his letter to the Roman church claims to be the product of a compelling, valid understanding of the OT. It is Baruch's desire to demonstrate the integrity of that claim.

The last but one stage of editorial work on Baruch's **commentary on the Gospel of Matthew** is now completed. He has yet to review the work once more and then submit it to the publisher. **Judges** will be next.

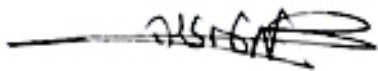
Progress is also being made in Baruch's work for a Masters degree in Biblical Studies. Most of his effort is presently given to extensive reading. He intends to frame his thesis proposal toward the end of fall this year and intends to deal with the **Christian Use of the OT**.

Eran, Avital, Noam, Maya and Nadav in San Jose CA are doing extremely well, in spite of a momentary scare when Noam's blood sugar level dropped to 20 (!) and Eran's being transferred to another position at work. **Shlomit's** pregnancy has been void of hitches. She and **Keith** in Cleveland OH are working hard (Keith at three jobs!) because Shlomit is not expected to return to work after she gives birth in mid-August. **Markus** is hard at his work in Irvine CA and his studies (a MSc. in Engineering) and **Tamar** at mothering **Yotam**.

Rose is nearing the end of her training to be a dental assistant and is praying for a good placement for the duration of her military service. She has been achieving high marks at the course, which will help her placement. **Felix and Katya** are seeking to purchase a home, and little Maya has now been relieved of the restraining straps she has had to wear for the last three months. Her pelvic bone has developed well.

Bracha and Baruch's health has kept up very well. They continue to be active at church and are looking forward to their visit with friends and the family this summer.

Yours in the Gospel,



Baruch and Bracha Maoz

TAX-deductible **support for our ministry** should be written to the order of **Berean Baptist church, P.O. Box 1233, Grand Blanc, Michigan 48480-3233**. Direct bank transfers may be made to **Franklin Bank, 24725 West Twelve Mile Road, Southfield, MI 48034 USA, Routing Number 241271957 Berean Baptist Special Account No. 567495976**. Please inform Max Sharp at Berean Baptist Church by email of the details of the transaction (including date, transaction number, sum and designated purpose) at maxsharp@earthlink.net All contributions are tax deductible. Receipts are sent at the end of the calendar year or at the donor's request. Please do not send contributions directly to us – we consider accountability extremely important.

Funds sent for the ministry will be used exclusively for that purpose.
We reserve the right to use for the ministry funds sent for personal use