

**MaozNews No. 33**

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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.*

**King David's Private Spa**

(Based on an article by Ofer Petersburg, YNET 8 Sept. 2006)

In recent days, archeological digs in Jerusalem have stumbled upon a tunnel that seems to lead to a pool used by King David himself. The digs, conducted over many years, are located in David's City, west of the Wailing Wall. A year ago, archeologists discovered a pool from the days of the Second Temple that had been used by pilgrims to refresh themselves after the long journey.

Recently, the edge of a tunnel was discovered. Archeologists posit that the tunnel leads to a pool, originally located next to a fruit tree garden where King David and other kings of his dynasty used to bathe.

To ascertain whether the find is King David's spa, it will be necessary to dig to the other end of the 30 meter-long tunnel, an undertaking that will entail some months of careful digging, and which cannot be conducted without permission from the Greek Orthodox patriarchy, which owns the land.

Professor Ronny Reich of Haifa University, the leading archeologist at the David City dig, does not believe that the tunnel leads to King David's baths. Only when the dig uncovers dateable artifacts will they be able to posit what lies at the other end.

### **Darwinism's Israeli Triumph**

Dr. Gavriel Avital, the chief scientist at Israel's Ministry of Education, was dismissed on following a scandal-filled trial period of less than a year. Sources familiar with the affair said Avital was fired over statements he had made, in which he questioned the theories of evolution and of global warming.

Avital called for a critical presentation of Darwinism, and for a consideration of biblical creationism as another possible explanation of life on earth. "If textbooks state explicitly that human origins are to be found among primates, I would want students to pursue and grapple with other opinions. Many people do not believe the evolutionary account is correct," he said. "There are those for whom evolution is a religion and are unwilling to hear anything else. Part of my responsibility, in light of my position with the Education Ministry, is to examine textbooks and curricula ... If they keep writing that the earth is growing warmer because of carbon dioxide emissions, I'll insist that is not the case." Avital's comments sparked a public uproar, with many environmentalists and scholars calling for his dismissal.

Addressing his comments against environmental groups, Avital insisted in articles he had published that there is "no scientific connection between global warming and human activity. It has never been scientifically proven that climate change is the result of carbon-dioxide emissions."

### **Baruch's Biography**

*In the previous installment, we left off with Baruch in Sinai, following the mobilization of his military unit in October 1973 for what has become known as the Yom Kippur War.*

#### **A Call to Gospel Work**

During the four months or so my unit spent in the Sinai, there were many opportunities to speak of Christ and both directly and indirectly. The role I was playing in the division and in the lives of the men accorded me some moral authority, of which I sought not to take misplaced advantage. This, I considered and still believe, was as important as speaking up for the Gospel when occasion permitted. Moral integrity is essential to those who are called by grace, and all the more so to those called to preach the Gospel.

The men had learned by then that foul language was not to be used in my presence and that I took no interest in the pornographic magazines that circulated among them. I forbade gambling (also forbidden by Israeli military law) and stringently applied that restriction as best I could. There were also opportunities to explain the Gospel to individuals and to groups of the men who would gather to wile the hours away.

I had time to read and study God's word, and had taken to bringing theological books and commentaries with me to the desert. There was also plenty of time to pray. The nights were long and I often had night duties. We spent long hours traveling from one unit to another, and time off from duty gave me further occasion to think and pray. I began to evaluate what I was doing with my life.

I had been called to the work of the Gospel. Since my break with Victor, I had taken up secular employment because no occasion presented itself to do otherwise. I was managing well and had

earned a good salary, which enabled me to commence the publication of a Christian magazine, the first issue of which was published in early October 1973, just before the outbreak of the war. But my conscience still troubled me. I was not doing all I could do for God's kingdom.

What is more, I had studied with the intention of serving the Lord and the Gospel. But I had left the ministry and was now employed in secular work. Some 18 months before October 1973, I had met and been befriended by the Rev. Murdo MacLeod, Director of The British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews (short names were preferred in those days...), later to become Christian Witness to Israel (CWI) following its amalgamation with the Barbican Mission to the Jews.

I was suspicious of foreign mission boards but trusted Murdo, his high view of the church, his godly, manly humility and his commitment to the work of the Gospel. His coherent and coherent, theologically-motivated desire to engage in the evangelization of my people challenged and stirred my heart. I now had to answer the claims of my conscience, awakened by what I believe were the workings of God's Spirit. Surely, God had not opened those many doors and provided for me so generously, merely to enable me to make money, have a family and produce a magazine. The needs were greater, and I was ignoring them. Opportunities beckoned, but I was not sufficiently focused.

Finally, following consultation with Bracha, I wrote Murdo on a sandy, wind-blown and busy day in Sinai, offering to serve with CWI. In April 1974, two days after my military service concluded following an agreement between Israel and Egypt, Bracha and I made our way to England with two-year old Avital, to be interviewed and accepted into service by the CWI Council.

Upon our return, we took up the work, with few guidelines. Murdo was the kind of leader that made room for others to develop. He would seldom praise. But he would support, advise and, when necessary, criticize. Self-starters worked well under him, but if you were in need of external drive or encouragement, you would not flourish. He expected men to bear the burden of the ministry with fortitude and personal sacrifice, without approbation. The highest praise I ever received from this dear man was something like, "Humph. I suppose I couldn't do better myself." When Bracha and I were later forced out of the Brethren Assembly, Murdo was a bastion of low-key encouragement and support.

### **Joining CWI – First USA Trip**

Murdo was determined to seek a foothold in the USA among the numerically small but emerging Reformed Baptist churches. He decided I should spearhead this effort. He had a few USA addresses in his files and asked Erroll Hulse for more. Armed with these, I traveled to America in the autumn of 1974. There were three main contacts that he wanted me to visit: Al Martin in Montville New Jersey, Walter Chantry in Carlisle Pennsylvania and Drew Garner in Houston Texas.

I first traveled to Dallas, where I was delighted to renew contact with my father and his wife. I stayed with them, and Dad was surprisingly proud of his "minister son". He introduced me as such to friends and acquaintances, and was happy to drive me from one appointment to another in which I labored to represent the work. The older of my father's two sons from Muriel, Stuart, and I became friends. Muriel was kindness itself.

I was delighted to be with them and was very conscious of the fact that I did not deserve that pleasure. After all, my time with them in 1957 left a poor impression. I was careful, therefore, to keep well out of their way and to be as unobtrusive as I could. I took care to wipe the bathroom surfaces

and mirror every time I took a shower, and to air the room thoroughly, so that whoever used it after me would not have noticed that I had been there. I made no demands and expected nothing. Nevertheless, I was welcomed warmly and still remember the wonderful thin-crust pizza my father would make as we sat in the den, just next to the kitchen, talking, reading, playing or watching television.

My father took me to White Rock Lake, one of his favorite spots and where he and I had often gone before Mom had spirited my brother and me away from Dallas and ultimately took us to Israel. We talked. He could not make sense of my faith in God, and especially not of my faith in Christ.

- "After all, you're Jewish!"
- "Yes, and so is my faith in Jesus".
- ???

This was something he could not bring himself to understand. The Spirit of God did not enlighten him. I could only pray.

I visited Dallas Theological Seminary, a bastion of informed Dispensational Premillennialism in the USA. At that time I was still Premillennial myself, although warmly and increasingly more intelligently committed to a Reformed soteriology and its wider implications (which I was in the happy process of discovering). The seminary had me address the students and arranged for meetings with various members of the faculty, but nothing much came of the visit. Dallas Seminary was adamant in its opposition to Calvinism. So much so that it had declined to graduate students who embraced that view in the course of their studies. As soon as it became clear that I held to the abjured view, interest in our work dissipated.

Believers' Chapel, however, showed great interest, especially due to the influence of S. Lewis Johnson/ Dr. Johnson had been dismissed from the Seminary due to his Calvinistic views. For some years the Chapel prayed for our work and sent me cassette recordings of sermons preached in its services. Then its interest waned.

Tom McCall and what was then the work of the American Board of Missions to the Jews in Dallas showed limited interest but, of course, they had their own work to support and were not likely to introduce us to potential supporters.

From Dallas I drove to Houston, Texas. In fact, I think I recall Dad driving me there. He had taken pains to spend much time with me in the course of my visit. My host was Drew Garner, an eager, loving, gracious and well-read man. Francis, his wife, could cook up a storm, especially of Italian food, which we three enjoyed no end. I preached for Drew at Bellaire Baptist Church and he graciously befriended me – a man at least twenty years younger than he.

One day I told him the story of the cold beer we had been given in the midst of the tank battle. Drew became excited: "You drink beer?!"

- "Sure. Within reason."
- "And here ah was thinkin' you'd keep away frum alcohol!"
- "Well, I keep away from drunkenness, but I see no reason to avoid drinking beer to a reasonable extent." I wondered what would come next. American Baptists are generally known to be strict teetotalers. Would this be the end of a pleasant and promising relationship?
- "Jess a maument!"

Drew disappeared into his basement. A few minutes later he emerged, carrying a case of beer. "Ah thot you Izraelee Baptists might not appreesheeayte us Reeformed men enjoyin' owa liburty in Chrast. So, ah hid mah beer in the seller."

We had a good laugh and a good beer while Drew boasted to me of his son, Phil Garner, who was a pitcher in National League baseball. Drew was one of the early-birds of the revival of Reformed convictions in North America. He had been swayed by the scriptures and through reading books by Arthur Pink and various Puritan writers of experiential Calvinism. He preached that Calvinism with a healthy enthusiasm. The church he served was small and did not seem to grow. Somehow, Drew – a wide-minded theological preacher – was not enabled to foment the emergence of a second generation of church leaders or to attract potential leaders to the church he served.

Years later, in the late 1990's' Drew visited us in Israel. He was still a warm-hearted man, greatly aged, with more memories of the past and unfulfilled longings than hopes for the future or a sense of satisfaction for things achieved. We had good fellowship, but I could not help sensing a touch of sadness for him as he departed on his way home. At the time of writing Drew and his dear wife, Francis, are still alive, and are still in Houston, where they have served God for many years.

*To be continued*

### Family and Ministry News

**Bracha and I** have returned from a 3.5 month-long, 9,500 miles of driving in the US, where they visited friends and family. In the course of that time grandson, Yonatan Owen Thompson, was born, another was announced to be on the way, a gall bladder was removed, Bracha flew cross-country to aid the family, and we drove from northern Ohio to southern Florida, thence across to Los Angeles and up to San Jose, before returning home. We were only partially successful in bolstering our support, greatly eroded by the drop of the US Dollar and the Euro in comparison with the Israeli Shekel (by some 40%). We are grateful to our many hosts and friends, who made this trip so pleasant and so encouraging.



During the trip, I worked on my commentaries on **Romans** and **Matthew**. Shepherd Press has accepted my English commentary on **Jonah** and we are seeking a publisher for his **Judaism is Not Jewish**. There is much demand for the latter book, and an updated revision has been prepared. Work

on **Malachi** is also continuing. A talk I gave on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may be seen at

<http://deimos.apple.com/WebObjects/Core.woa/Browse/westmont.edu.4733963584>

Volume Four of the **Hebrew Bible for Youth**, consisting of Psalms, Proverbs and Job has recently been published by HaGefen Publishing. Work on the final volume of the OT is well ahead.

**The church** has done well and the **Young Adults Group** functioned under the leadership of **Simon** Jameson, who has just completed his mandatory military service and applied to study in London with the European Missionary Fellowship. He and **Miri**, both members of the Young Adults Group, are now leading our Youth Group and Miri has joined the Young Adults Committee in place of Danielle, who is to be enlisted on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Please pray for our young soldiers, **Iliya, Alena, Danielle** and **David**, for those about to be enlisted (**Itsik** and Danielle), and for the committee (Simon, Itsik and Miri).

**Avital and family** in San Jose are coping with the challenges of life. **Eran** is doing well at work while **Avital** is heavily involved in volunteer work, required at the charter school both girls attend.



**of the need to inject. She is active on her school's soccer team (seen dribbling ).**

**Maya** swims, sings and goes through life with a merry frolic and a determined attitude. Both girls are doing well at school. **Nadav** is now the oldest of the boys at his kindergarten. Gentle, sensitive, inquisitive, he is a joy – and a joyful handful. Next year he will graduate to pre-school.

**Noam leads a fully normal life, with diabetes in tow and under control. Having been connected to an insulin pump has relieved her**

Following a two-year internship, **Keith** has been called to serve alongside Pastor Fred Pugh and the other Elders of the church in Cleveland. **He and Shlomit** are now parents to Yonatan Owen, born on July 26<sup>th</sup>, one day after Baruch and Bracha left for Carlisle Pa.



Following Yonatan's birth, Shlomit had to have her gall bladder removed. Being void of medical insurance, they opted for an immediate operation rather than delay for an easier but much more expensive procedure. Bracha was able to help by caring for the baby while Shlomit was in hospital.

**Tamar and family** have returned to the Seattle area. Relocation and the increase in salary which brought about that relocation failed to cover the costs of living in California. After a year, Boeing wanted Marcus back and offered him full relocation expenses, a career opportunity and a further raise in his salary. The offer was accepted, and so the Richardsons returned.

They are presently in temporary quarters provided by Boeing, but have rented a house into which they expect to move in the coming weeks, and are seeking church fellowship in the area. **Tamar** is expecting her second child.

**Yotam** remains a source of joy and of challenge – parenthood is serious business!



**Rose** has been transferred and now serves in a military base near home. She reports for duty Sunday-Thursday and is free on most weekends. We are delighted to have her home more often. Military service and the consequently intense exposure to a stringently non-spiritual and generally immoral atmosphere constitute a challenge. Your prayers are sought.

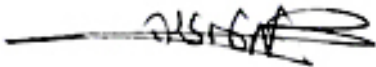
**Katya and Felix** have moved to a smaller flat on the hospital premises, thus reducing their costs with a view toward saving up for the purchase of a home. **Maya** can crawl now. Katya is about to undergo an operation, to remove an extraneous rib which is applying pressure on a major artery.

**Miri** is a young lady at church who has just completed her tour of military duty. She served with distinction as an officer. Miri is a highly principled, stable and generous young lady who wishes to devote 2-3 months to assisting a family, a missionary family or a Christian institution, with time to study God's word, read and pray, before turning to her studies. All she asks for is room and board, although some pocket money may be in place. If any readers of MaozNews have a niche for Miri to fill, please write to us as soon as possible.

I have resumed my studies for a MA in Biblical Studies and will be writing a thesis on **the Christian Use of the Old Testament**. The thesis is to be jointly supervised by Professor Tremper Longman III and Dr. Vered Hillel.

My sermon on John 3:16 – the Love of the Father (Bracha says it's her favorite) – may be heard at <http://faithchurchpa.org/sermon/sermon-baruch-maoz>

In Christ by wonderful grace,



Baruch and Bracha Maoz

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