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**In This Issue:**

**A Grave New World, pg. 1**

**Baruch's Biography Continued, pg. 5**

**Ministry and Family News, pg. 7**

**A Grave New World**

**Weakness Versus Uninhibited  
Madness**

Limpid international leadership due to the moral weakening in the West has created a vacuum into which the demons of horror and destruction have been inexorably invited. In Europe – central Europe to boot! – Vladimir Putin snubs his nose at the West, reminding those who wag their finger at him that Russia has nuclear weapons.

This kind of language has not been heard for decades. But Europe, fueled by a vague humanism, the lack of patriotic conviction, its fear of war and its self-imposed dependency on Russian gas can do nothing without upsetting the apple cart of its short-term comfort.

Obviously, myopic Europe no longer understands that the best way to avoid war is to be ready for it.

America has followed track in Ukraine, with Iran, in Libya, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Africa (anybody remember Boko-Haram?) and is about to cut loose and flee Afghanistan, leaving it to the wiles of the Taliban.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Americans have enlisted in “moderate” militias such as Al Qaeda and El Nusra while others proudly fight in the ranks of the Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL).

The West does not realize how large a role it has played in the creation of the Islamic monster.

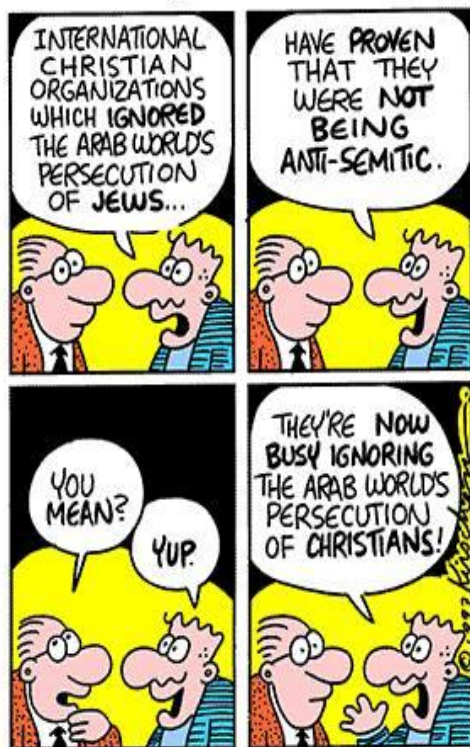


It is not that the West was naïvely passive; it was active in a very conscious way, with Saudi Arabian encouragement and often as the fruit of Saudi manipulation.

Saudi Arabia is now likewise threatened by the threat it played such a large role in creating: the US, NATO, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan armed, trained and funded what ultimately became the Taliban on the one hand and Al Qaeda on the other. These became the catalyst for the radicalization of large swaths of the Muslim world, ever increasingly extreme: the Muslim Brotherhood, Al Qaeda, Al Shabab, Boko-Haram, Al Nusra and, most recently, ISIL.

Jerusalem Post's Dry Bones cartoonist whose work is below

## Dry Bones



to but one example of the West's moral indolence, one that will inevitably lead to the very "Clash of Civilizations" that Huntington saw brewing those many years ago.

Much like many of the Slavic countries, certainly Russia, the Arab world is not ready for the creation and conduct of democratic society. The lack is not genetic; it is cultural, but it is very deep. A certain outlook on life is necessary for the creation of a democratic society: respect for the individual resulting in freedoms of conscience, expression, commerce and movement and well as a respect for national individualities and a sense of shared moral accountability on the other (contra multiculturalism) are but the fundamental ingredients of such a world view – in short, a biblical view of man and of society. The Russian Slavic lands and the Muslim regions have never been effectively exposed to such convictions, and the West is losing them at an alarming pace.

If there was ever a time when the church needed to awake from its slumber, divest itself of the individualistic Gospel it has embraced in which comfort is esteemed above principle and worldly success is mistaken for spirituality, it is now. If there was ever a time when the church needed to be retaken by the Gospel, and to go out to address nations as nations, it is now. If there was ever a time in which the church needed to have a large, biblical view of God and of his ultimate purposes in the world, it is now.

A truly biblical doctrine of God leads to a biblical doctrine of creation, inevitably giving birth to a biblical doctrine of salvation and therefore to a biblical doctrine of eschatology that will motivate us first to embrace and then win the world for God in

Christ, above all by our manner of life. THAT is what we need. THAT is what the world awaits. THAT is what the Gospel beckons us to embrace.

### Israel

Israel finds itself in a boiling cauldron: Hezbollah in the north (Lebanon), ISIL or Al Nusra in the northeast (Syria), tottering Jordan, likely to be taken over by one or another of the radical groups in the east, Al Qaida and Moslem training grounds in the south and southwest, and Hamas in Gaza.

The mood in Israel is increasingly grim. Political leadership is listless. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is widely despised but there is no one in sight who seems likely to successfully challenge him. Netanyahu is deemed more of a politician bent on survival than a statesman who can lead the country forward in a new direction. Every election gives rise to a new political hope, only to be dashed on the rocks of reality.

Economically, Israel is just short of a miracle, but that too is being eroded by a slowing down of world economy, by increased boycotts of Israeli products and by an overly-strong local currency that renders its exports costly. At the same time, the gap between the poor and the rich in Israel is growing. Israel is in sore need of a benign social shake-up.

More than that, it is in need of a moral wake-up, a spiritual transformation that will give it hope, expectation, direction and a well-based confidence. In other words, Israel needs the Gospel

One of the many beauties of the Gospel is in its amazing impact on societies and cultures; in its ability to morally transform a people and provide it with values that serve as an

impetus for ongoing moral, cultural and economic growth. The Gospel must never be thought of in the scrawny modern terms of "four things God wants you to know," nor be considered as occupied primarily with the destiny of individuals. It has the glory of God as its goal and, to that end, the utter transformation of human society the world over.

"Now it **will** come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it and many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us concerning his ways and that we may walk in his paths' ." (Isa. 2:2-3).

### The Church in Israel

It has been encouraging to note a growing sense of national responsibility emerging in the churches. Not only are many involved in commendable social undertakings (caring for the homeless and the needy, rehabilitation of substance abusers, anti-abortion) but a growing number are engaged in reaching out to suffering fellow-humans in Syria and elsewhere.

While nothing but right-wing patriotism, at times almost extreme, is acceptable in most Israeli churches, this is ameliorated by a sincere love for all regardless of nationality. In addition, Israeli Jewish Christians

are challenging expressions of anti-Israeli attitudes among evangelical Palestinians and their supporters and

### Helping Refugees in Jordan

*The following is a report from two pastors in Israel and in Jordan – one Jew, and one Arab.*

In continuation of the service of Arab and Jews from Israel helping Muslim Syrian refugees in Jordan, a mixed group went out again last week. Fourteen people, including four from the Jewish side and ten from the Arab side with three pastors. They traveled to Jordan to work with local congregations there.

They started the serving in the north where hundreds of supply bags and school bags were distributed, and continued in Amman and other areas.

There were a lot of children's activities and it was heart warming to see hundreds of Muslims, especially women dressed in the customary Hijab and children filling the churches, singing worship songs, hearing a clear gospel message, playing games, watching the Jesus film and receiving a lot of love and attention.

At one time one of the leaders asked a church full of children, what is sin. A young girl, covered with the Muslim dress, jumped up and answered: Not believing in Jesus.

God directed the team to meet the right people .

At one time as they were sitting in the hotel lobby they asked if they could play the piano and began singing worship songs. One of the guests, a Saudi from a high ranking family that was covered from head to toe, with only her eyes showing, was very impressed and started to record them on her phone. She asked if she could do that and one of the women

at the same time enlisting to pray for Israel and her enemies.

asked if she knew what it was. When she said she didn't, they started to talk and after a while she was offered a New Testament which she gladly took. She asked if they could continue to talk when the team came back in the evening and the girls agreed. That evening the team only came back at 11 o'clock at night. That woman knocked on their door and they stayed up until five in the morning sharing. Please pray for her.

One of the most touching times was when they visited Christian refugees from Iraq, whose homes ISIS had marked with the letter NUN in Arabic and told them that they had 48 hours to leave, pay *jiziah*, convert or be killed. They fled leaving everything behind. One of them said: "I left everything for Jesus, I will not betray Him." It really makes you appreciate what we have!

We also want to help the Christian and Yazidi refugees in Northern Iraq. God willing we will visit them shortly, bring some help and see how we can get involved with all these people who live in the streets. The winter is coming soon and it is very cold there.

We are very grateful to God for these great opportunities, as a united body of Believers from Israel that includes Arab and Jews to touch the Arab world around us with the Gospel of the Messiah and His love.

We appreciate your love, prayers and support.

Blessings in the Messiah,  
I.S (Israeli Pastor) and R.S  
(Jordanian Pastor)

## Baruch's Biography Continued

### Goals and Struggles in the Pastoral Ministry

One of my concerns was that Grace and Truth would not become introverted but that it would have a broad concern for the Body of Christ in Israel and for unbelievers, Jewish and Gentile, in Israel and abroad. In consequence, one of our dreams -- never realized -- was to send out a missionary couple from the church.

In an effort to cultivate such a broader interest, we engaged in local evangelism while sermons often dealt with God's determined intention to glorify himself by bringing the world to love, worship and obey him in Christ. We seldom had what are normally viewed as 'missionary sermons,' among other reasons because few of my sermons were topical, unless the topic was part of a theological series. My preference was for systematic exposition. One cannot, of course, preach expositional series without coming to texts that call for the world to submit to God, or that indicate the amazing breadth of God's grace.

The reason for my preference is quite simple: God did not provide us with a systematic theology, nor with a dictionary of Christian theological or philosophical terms. He provided us with the Bible, composed of narrative, poetry, exhortation, wisdom and apocalyptic literature. One can safely assume that he knew what form of truth could most effectively convey his message to mankind. Surely, ministers of God's Word, called to convey his message, should do so in a manner that indicated their respect for the method he chose for such communication.

In addition to our preaching efforts, in the very early stages of our church life we contacted the Underhills, a missionary family working in Kenya, and budgeted to participate in their support. However small that support was in financial terms, it was meant to be the fulcrum for more substantial missionary involvement through a growing acquaintance with the real-life labors of a missionary family.

In the course of time, we were able to host the Underhills and expose the church to them and their labors in a more meaningful way. One of the couples worshipping with us, Andy and Shiri Vinten, were being watched and cultivated with the view of them undertaking a missionary calling. Their lives took a different turn and that hope was never materialized.

In the course of time, at the initiative of Eitan, one of the Elders, we also took interest in the Teasdales, working in a remote area of Kenya. We were able to send youth groups over to assist in the work. In the course of these trips the young people were challenged to walk closer to the Lord as well as take an active interest in the spread of the Gospel. Such embassages continue to date.

Sergei\* and Alexandra\* immigrated from Siberia with their toddler of a daughter and two teenage daughters. Their family life was a disaster and the two teenagers were profligate to an extreme. Efforts to tame Sergei's outbursts of rage and his well-meaning but childish manipulations continued for years. In the course of that time we were called to their home on numerous occasions at all times of the day and the night. Many a time we'd find Sergei outside of the home, fuming, refusing to come back in. Alexandra would then be at her wit's end seeking to negotiate between her husband and her unhappy daughters, and the two girls crying out of anger, sorrow and frustration.

When Alexandra was diagnosed with advanced terminal cancer, it fell to me to inform one of the estranged daughters and coax her to come with me to visit her mother. Following that, the other daughter came. It was a painful period for all five, as Alexandra slowly waned, consumed by the dreadful disease, until she died.

That was a turning point in the life of the remaining family. Sergei moved in to live with his daughters, bringing his younger daughter with him. As the years went by, the two adult girls made poor choices of spouses, only to bear the unwelcome consequences. One of them drew near to God, turned from her sins and, in time, became active in the church. The other vacillated. Neither of them had parental wisdom and their children suffered consequently, continuing the cycle of sad individuals, ill-equipped for life.

We labored hard and long for this family, with few desired results, but for one: the youngest daughter has grown to be a delightful, godly young lady, active in the church, in love with God, eager to serve and far better adjusted than her two sisters. Another of the sisters continues in church, severely crippled by her choices but being upheld by the grace of God.

Misha\* and Tamara\* were another couple that arrived at the church's doorstep. They had immigrated to Israel with different spouses, met, fell in love, divorced their spouses and married. Later exposed to the Gospel, they and their two young boys (one of whom was the child of a previous marriage) had been in fellowship in a church in Be'er Sheba.

They had an obvious love for one another and were a delight to know. Interviewing them, it became clear that Misha understood the Gospel and sought to lead a life compatible with it. Tamara was clueless. We therefore invited Misha to participate in Communion but asked Tamara to abstain. She was furious: in Be'er Sheba they were both admitted to the table. By what right had we decided to exclude her?! Our explanations fell on deaf ears. Nevertheless, the couple continued to attend church, and we continued to give the bread and the wine to Misha but not to Tamara.

Then, one day, Tamara asked to speak with the Elders. We met with her most willingly, and she narrated her story: She had indeed been deeply offended by our refusal to extend to her the right of Communion. But as she sat through repeated Communion services, heard the messages that preceded each and witnessed the solemnity of the proceedings, she began searching her heart and discovered to her dismay that she had not ever put her trust in Christ, never turned to God in repentance and never had an assurance of forgiveness. She had simply agreed on an intellectual basis that the Gospel was true. Consequently, she sought God's grace and now believed she had been converted.

We counselled her to wait a few weeks. Perhaps she had merely undergone an emotional experience. Perhaps she simply wanted to belong. Tamara readily agreed and it soon became obvious to us and to her family that God had done a work of transforming grace in her heart. It was a joy to invite her some weeks later to the Lord's Table.

She and Misha have brought up two lovely young Christian men. Misha's daughter, living with her mother, has also been converted, and all are active in the church

Then there was Zenya,\* her seven children and besotted husband. Zenya is an amazingly gifted individual. There is nothing to which she puts her hand in which she does not become highly competent -- often the product of self-learning. She suffered greatly at her husband's hand, bearing his infidelities, his waste of the limited family resources and his abuse. Finally, with our encouragement, she sought to put her life in order. Her husband was told he must either amend his ways or leave the house. If he chose the better course, he would be extensively helped. The church was more than eager to stand by him and to help Zenya in her efforts on his behalf.

But earnest promises were repeatedly broken and no real sign of change was evident. Finally, on the grounds of adultery, Zenya divorced her husband and began putting the pieces of her life back. It was a slow and painful process in which we were privileged to play some small part and God blessed her courageous faithfulness. In the course of the years, Zenya has been a faithful congregant and has made extensive contributions to the life of the church, where she continues to serve and to worship.

These were some of the ways we sought to reach out with the Gospel to the lives of the needy. We were greatly rewarded to see God glorified in the lives of these and other families, and grateful for the joy of seeing the fruits of the Gospel in their lives. These are the sweetest aspects of a pastoral ministry.

### Ministry and Family News

#### Family

The **Erez family** have moved to Bothell, just north of Seattle and a 15 minute walk from where Marcus and Tamar live. **Eran** tore a bicep tendon while moving house and was consequently incapacitated. As a result, **Avital** has learned to do the kind of work normally the domain of her husband. **Nuni** (Noam) has been accepted into her junior high school's volleyball team, through which means she has made new friends. **Mikee** (Maya) and **Nadavi** (Nadav) are busy making new friends at school as well.

Shortly after Baruch's departure for Israel, **Shlomit** gave birth to **Elinor Rae**, their third child and second daughter. **Jonathan** and **Kaykay** (Caytlyne) dote over their little sister with affection, much as they dote over each other. **Keith** has been called to the pastorate of a church plant in Camp Hill PA, so the Thompsons will be moving toward the end of the year from Cleveland. It is not an easy departure -- their hearts have become entwined with those of many in Cleveland. But the time has come for them to move on.



**Tamar and Marcus** are readying themselves for the next newcomer to the family, due in October. They are facing some delicate decisions and are seeking the Lord's guidance. **Yotam** and **Avishai** have commenced school and pre-school respectively.

## Ministry

Baruch was privileged to teach a four-lecture **class at the Jews for Jesus (Israel) summer evangelistic campaign** and is preparing to **supply the pulpit at church** while the Pastor is engaged in a two-month visit to the US. He is heavily engaged in the **New Testament translation**, devoting almost all of his waking hours to that work in an effort to complete the initial draft of the Epistles before the end of the year so as to devote the whole of his attention to getting as close to completion as possible in his work on the **Romans commentary**.

At the same time, the Maozes are busy preparing for the move to a smaller home and with its design and fitting.

## Support

We have just completed preparing our own **2015 budget**, curtailing costs as best we can so as to reduce our shortfall. Next year we shall be sending Rose to school, and this will add a further welcome challenge. We are still short, but the shortfall has definitely been reduced. As church and private budgets are being prepared for 2015, we would be grateful if supporting individuals and churches would consider the level of the support they give us. To enable us to budget, please inform us of your decision, even if you will be terminating or reducing the present level of support. Such information enables us to plan and to pace our own expenditure.

**You can also help** by purchasing copies of Baruch's three 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. The three books are:

COME LET US REASON TOGETHER (On the Unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church) P&R. This book presents Christ as the fullness of divine revelation and his work as sufficient for our whole salvation.

JONAH: A PROPHET ON THE RUN, Shepherd Press. A non-technical but informed commentary on the book of Jonah, with practical application, themes for further study and discussion. Designed to be useful for preachers, private devotions and group Bible studies.

MALACHI: A PROPEHT IN TIMES OF DISTRESS, Crossbooks. A non-technical but informed commentary on the book of Malachi, with practical application, themes for further study and discussion. Designed to be useful for preachers, private devotions and group Bible studies.

Baruch's sermons may be heard, among other sites, on [Sermon Audio](#) (click)

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

Intermittent bulletins are produced as necessary.



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