

MaozNews No. 81
Published every 4 weeks or so
October 2014

In This Issue:

Baruch's Biography Continued (A Spy in Our Midst), pg. 1

Ministry and Family News, pg. 3

Baruch's Biography Continued

Our last instalment described some of the joys and trials of a pastoral ministry.

A Spy in Our Midst

The Orthodox community in Israel has persuaded itself that Israeli Jewish Christians are consciously motivated by a sinister desire to bring about the destruction of the Jewish people, so conscious that much of Israeli Christian activity is carried out clandestinely so as not to be discovered. Regrettably, some Israeli Christians have added credibility to this myth by responding to Orthodox anti-Christian activity and seeking to cloak their activity as much as is possible.

Israeli churches are open to all, welcome all and do not conduct their day-to-day life underground. However, disruptions of special events, attempts to intimidate, pressure on employers to dismiss Christian employees and other such activities have driven churches to be cautious. Church directories are not published. In the past, special events were advertised only by word of mouth. Some newcomers who aroused suspicion were treated accordingly -- however understandable, not always for good reason. Readers will recall the Orthodox community's efforts to stymie the dedication of Grace and Truth's facility some years back and my earlier story of how Yad Le'Achim pressured my own employer to dismiss me, simply because I am a Christian.

Over the years, the local church has gained in confidence. Apart from membership lists, very little is hidden. Announcements of events are public and there is a plethora of Israeli Christian bodies with offices and other facilities scattered around the country. Evangelism is far more frank than before and the young generation does not hesitate to identify as Christian at school, in the military, at work and on the street.

Grace and Truth was a prominent church in Israel, active on a social, evangelistic, educational and organizational level -- a natural target for over-zealous religious radicals who, for lack of other excitement, chose to play cops and robbers.

Sveta arrived at the church's doorstep with references from a church in Jerusalem. As ever, we contacted the Pastor in Jerusalem to ensure she had left in good order and were informed that he barely knew Sveta. She had attended a small number of times and then inquired as to a church in Rishon LeTzion, since she was

moving closer to the coast. She had left in good order but he could not vouch for her, as he did not know her well enough.

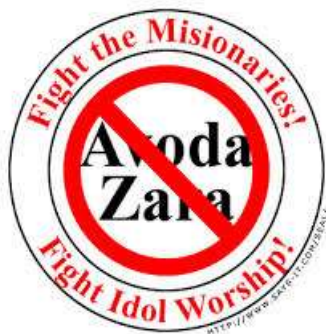
Sveta attended the services faithfully. In the course of time she professed faith, sought and was admitted to baptism and then into membership. But attempts to visit her were repeatedly rebuffed, until we insisted, only to discover that she lived in Tel-Aviv. Why, then, attend Grace and Truth and not a church in Tel-Aviv? Her answer was that she identified with the emphases and conduct that characterized Grace and Truth. OK. Well enough, but we would like to visit you and meet your husband. Finally she acceded and we arranged to meet in central Tel-Aviv. Her husband, she explained, was not a believer and was unwilling for us to come to their home, but they would meet us nearby.

Alex and I went. We met Sveta and her husband, a big, bearded, gruff man with little to say and obviously discomfited by the meeting.

Sveta enlisted to assist in the instruction of our children at Sabbath School.

As a church, we published a weekly information sheet, distributed to the congregation in Hebrew and Russian, informing of activities and inviting congregants who wished to do so to contact officers of the church, whose names and contact details were provided. One of the officers was Ze'ev, a Deacon and a dedicated man who worked for a firm providing computer maintenance to various bodies, among which was the Petach Tikvah Education Department. Ze'ev would instruct teachers on the use of computers and repair glitches in hardware and software. He was popular with the various schools he serviced and much valued by his employer. Over the course of time, the Petach Tikvah municipality enlisted him as one of its staff members and he continued in the same line of work under the aegis of his new employer, with the added duty of instructing students in the use of computers.

Local elections led to a change in the city government and the Education Department was taken over by a representative of the local religious party. Shortly thereafter, Ze'ev was informed that his employment was terminated on the grounds that he had sought to evangelize children with whom he came into contact in the course of his work.



Nothing was further from the truth. It is a matter of principle on which we at Grace and Truth insisted, never to take advantage of someone's need, age, innocence or dependency in order to promote the Gospel. Particular reference was made in this respect to children and to the socially and materially needy. We believe that truth can only be promoted by adherence to high moral standards.

It had been our practice to be on the lookout for opportunities to fight a legal battle that would serve the interests of the wider body of Christ. We would examine each situation with great care because we realized that losing a legal battle would have a baneful impact on the church, but where we were persuaded that we had an airtight case, we would pursue it. We examined the facts and decided this was an excellent opportunity. We took the municipality to court, charging it with unlawful dismissal.

To our amazement, the municipality defended itself by providing the court with a mass of documents sent to the municipality by the semi-governmental

Orthodox organization, Yad Le'Achim. These were documents from our church, weekly bulletins and Sabbath School material, all meant to prove that Ze'ev was an active member and officer of the church, that we were committed to evangelism and that we taught children the Gospel.

At the same time, Sveta disappeared. Her name later appeared as a material witness on the part of the defence.

We won the case. The municipality could not prove that Ze'ev had ever engaged any of the children with the Gospel or that he had sought to promote the Gospel among the teachers and others of the educational staff he met in the course of his work. The municipality was reprimanded, Ze'ev received ample reparations and a fine was imposed on the municipality. The court also ordered the municipality to reinstate Ze'ev, but he declined to work in what would have now become a hostile environment. This was the first time that an Israeli court was asked to defend the equal right of Israeli Christians to employment. So far as I know, it brought an end to similar attempts by Yad Le'achim.

Ministry and Family News

Family

The **Erez family** have settled in Bothell, just north of Seattle and a 15 minute walk from Marcus and Tamar. The children are very happy with their respective schools and with the neighborhood. **Noam** and **Maya** are both involved in volleyball, and Maya in the school choir. It's fun to be able to walk over to Uncle Marcus and Aunt Tamar's house and play with Yotam and Avishai. **Nadav** has many friends who reside nearby and continues to enjoy them and his Lego.

The **Thompsons** are moving at the end of this month to Camp Hill PA, where Keith has been called to pastor a church plant established by Grace Baptist in Carlisle. They are excited over this new development in their service for the Lord, give thanks for the years at Christ Covenant in Cleveland and seek God's continued blessing for the future. **Yonatan** and **Caitlyne** absolutely dote over little Elenor.

Tamar and Marcus are readying themselves for their third child – this time expected to be a girl. **Yotam** and **Avishai** are, respectively, enjoying school and pre-school.

Katya and **Felix** are now well established in Montreal. They are both learning French while Felix does part-time jobs and is preparing for a 3-year course in diagnostic imaging. Katya awaits hearing whether or not she has been accepted into a nurses' refresher course. **Maya** and **Emma** are in daycare.

Rose has moved into an apartment and continues to pursue her studies with determination. She achieved higher than usual grades in the entrance exam and is now applying for a scholarship.

Ministry

Baruch is heavily engaged in **preaching at the church** while the Pastor is on a visit to the US. He has progressed well in the **New Testament translation**, having completed the initial draft of the New Testament apart from the book of Revelation and is now fine-tuning that draft, incrementally submitting it for editorial comment and comparing his findings with those of other translators and commentators. At the same time, he is now primarily involved with his work on the **Romans commentary**.

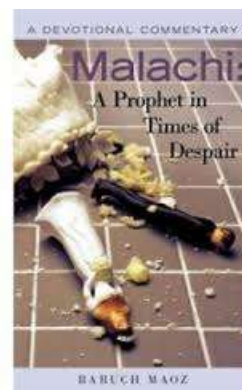
At the beginning of next year he plans to take up the writing of a **commentary on Nahum**, the completion of which would bring him over the half-way mark in his series on the Minor Prophets.

Baruch is further engaged in the publication (in English) of his devotional **commentary on Colossians**. It is hoped that this new publication will be available in early 2015. This is the only commentary Baruch originally wrote in English. It will be translated into Hebrew as soon as Baruch can find the time to undertake that project.

Baruch has been asked to lecture on Colossians in January, at an annual Israel Conference held near Karlsruhe, **Germany**; and then on Colossians and Micah in Hamburg. He and Bracha expect to travel together for that period.

At the same time, the Maozes are busy planning the **2015 visit to the US** and preparing for the move to a **smaller home**. The latter means ridding themselves of possessions that will not be needed or not fit into a smaller home. One of their two vehicles has been sold and a new, super-mini, purchased. The other of their older vehicles is soon to be sold as well. Churches interested in the possibility that the Maozes visit them in 2015 should write post haste to languageservice4u@gmail.com

You can help us 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 sell the books!



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 devotional commentary.

MALACHI: A PROPHET IN TIMES OF DISTRESS, Crossbooks. A devotional commentary.

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

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.



Tax deductible **support for our ministry** should be written to the order of **Berean Baptist Church** Special Missions Account, Box 1233, Grand Blanc MI 48480-3233. Transfers may be made to **First Place Bank** 2301 West Big Beaver Rd. Suite 525 Troy, MI 48084 USA
Routing Number 2412- W. Swiftcode Wells Fargo Bank San Francisco, CA WFBIUS65
Please designate: For Maoz Ministry.

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.