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**Renewed Tensions Perhaps Abated**

Palestinian frustration due to the lack of progress toward the realization of their national has been simmering for two years, with spasmodic geographically scattered outbreaks. The Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas has found himself riding a tiger of his own making: likewise frustrated with the lack of progress, he initiated a series of bold moves on the international scene, appealing to the United Nations for recognition, seeking and obtaining membership in various international forums, threatening to sue Israel in the International Criminal Court.

Increased supportive understanding and criticism of Israel by European Governments, repeated spats with the US Administration and the obvious bad blood between President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu, the weakening of Western resolve in the face of a stringent and radicalized Islam all added to the boil. With the collapse of Lybia; the Syrian Government's failure to suppress revolt; the rise of ISIS and its successes; the near-collapse of Iraqi and Afghanistan's Governments into the hands of Islamic extremists, Abbas was driven toward a more aggressive stance against Israel, recently expressed by a reversion to anti-Semitic verbiage and traditional Muslim hatred themes, adding fuel to the fire of an exacerbated situation.

Foolishly, Israel responded with actions that increased Palestinian frustration and made a negotiated resolution of the conflict evermore unlikely, primarily by the expropriation of land and by well-targeted building projects.

Lone wolf attacks are the product of Abbas' incitement, Israel's actions and Western "understanding," each such attack leading to further defensive measures that inevitably have been translated into restrictions imposed by Israel on the Palestinians, adding to the mixture. Hamas, nursing its wounds following the recent Gaza confrontation and not daring direct conflict with Israel, has encouraged its operatives to take individual action, falsely claiming that Israel intended to change the status quo maintained on the Temple Mount since its capture by Israel in 1967 and then-generously established. Rioting resulted, with President Abbas calling on the Palestinians to "cleanse" the Mount of "Israeli defilement."

In response, right-wing Israeli politicians began making well-advertised visits to the Mount, insisting by implication and sometimes by the statements they made that the status quo be altered.

All this resulted in what may well become an uncontrollably explosive situation, potentially defused following direct conversation between Jordan's King Abdullah (the Custodian of the Temple Mount), Prime Minister Netanyahu and Secretary Kerry, and

indirect talks with President Abbas. It remains to be seen whether these efforts will reduce tensions and bring the parties back to the negotiating table.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has displayed extremely poor leadership. He failed to provide the Palestinians with an alternative to violence; failed to keep his Government and other senior politicians in line; failed to respond to obviously-mounting tensions and made practically every wrong step imaginable in response to Palestinian initiatives instead of taking the initiative himself. At the same time he has lost the confidence of his party, of the international community, of his Palestinian opponents and of the majority of Israelis. It is likely that this will be his last term in office.

### Baruch's Biography Continued

#### CWI and Jews for Jesus

Murdo McLeod, Christian Witness (CWI) to Israel's Director, was a bold visionary. He assumed leadership of a small, dispirited Mission and transformed it into a lively, enterprising body with bold new initiatives in Europe, the Far East and Israel. He accorded CWI an increased presence among Evangelicals, Reformed and otherwise, as well as among the bodies engaged in the evangelization of the Jewish people in Israel, Europe and the US. CWI became a major influence in Jewish evangelism, with members of its staff playing central roles in the promotion of international cooperative efforts in areas of theology, methodology and ethical standards. At the same time, Murdo initiated CWI endeavors in the USA both in search of a broader support basis as well as wider fields of service.

Jews for Jesus (JFJ), an American-based missionary organization dedicated to Jewish evangelism, aspired to become "the most important Jewish Mission in the world." Disciplined, aggressively innovative, highly motivated, determined, doctrinally conservative, increasingly well-funded, ambitious, there seemed little to stand in its way to achieving the status among Jewish missions to which it aspired. Amalgamation with CWI seemed to be a major step in that direction. So Moishe Rosen, JFJ's enterprising leader, cultivated Murdo's friendship and, when he deemed the moment was suited, proposed a gradual amalgamation.

A number of senior CWI staff members were diametrically opposed to such a step. JFJ was deemed by them to be arrogant, self-serving and by far too leader-orientated, at times insensitive to what were considered to be legitimate concerns. JFJ's internal relations were considered militaristic and unwholesome. Rumors were told of a JFJ "Inner Sanctum" into which only the privileged were allowed to enter; of the prohibition imposed on field staff to sit at desks; of summary terminations of employment and an emphasis on numbers (of tracts distributed, souls "saved") and the such like. At international forums, it was said, Moishe would invariably arrive after everyone else was seated so that his entrance would be noticed and JFJ participants would appear each day with the same color shirts so the numerical weight of their presence would be seen -- except on days when voting took place.

I was among those of the CWI staff who opposed the amalgamation and, with other such (Sarah Chan, Paul Morris, David Bond -- all senior field staff) threatened to resign should such a step implemented. Murdo put an end to the process and the two organizations remained separate.

Moishe was less than pleased. Failing in his attempts to cultivate us, he sought to negate our influence in CWI and when that failed, became an intractable opponent at every opportunity. My own role in the formation of what became the

Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, an international cooperative forum in which JFJ had great interest, and the obvious positive role that JFJ played in Jewish evangelism provided Moishe with ample opportunity. We had repeated clashes, most of which were unnecessary and did little to promote our shared concern for the Gospel among our people. Regretfully, personal tensions spilled over to relations with other JFJ staff members, many of whom were gifted, dedicated individuals.

Moishe was a highly competent individual with a concern for the salvation of his people. He broke new ground because he dared to plow a new trough rather than follow the old ones. He was a visionary who declined to be daunted by obstacles, at times ramming through them with enviable determination and far-sightedness. He had an ability to identify and attract the loyalty of potential leaders and left behind him an organization that has maintained a steady conservative doctrinal stance alongside a growing evangelistic endeavor. His contribution to Jewish evangelism will undoubtedly continue to bear fruit. In Israel, JFJ has managed to attract, train and motivate an impressive body of young men and women dedicated to extending the reach of the Gospel among our people. In later years Moishe reached out and we were enabled to mend fences, although both of us remained wary one of another.

### The Dutch Connection

In the late 1980's, Marie Lousie-Hak visited Israel from the Netherlands. Marie was interested in the establishment of Christian rehabilitation centers for substance abusers in Israel. She had been involved in such efforts in her home country and had a love for Israel. Substance abuse in Israel is as high as in any country, including Holland. She contacted me, I discussed the issue with the church and with CWI, and we decided to explore possibilities. Potentially, here was an opportunity. As a church we had always been aware of our diaconal duty to society and has sought ways to fulfill it.

At the invitation of a number of Pentecostal brethren and churches, I travelled to the Netherlands to study various rehabilitation approaches, visit centers and preach in churches. It was a fascinating experience to visit churches whose doctrinal views were so far from my own, to be allowed to preach freely and to witness the avid love for God's word displayed by the brethren. The fact that I identified myself theologically as Reformed made no difference to them so long as I drew a clear line from scripture. Their love for God, his word and the Jewish people was heart-warming. Their willingness to entrust me with the pulpits laid a heavy burden of responsibility on me: to be true to what I understood God's word to be saying while not betraying their trust; to declare the whole counsel of God as best I understood it -- and to do so without offense as well as without compromise. Those were my goals and the aim of my endeavors. Others will have to judge whether or not I live up to them. It was a pleasure to pay the Netherlands a series of repeat visits.

The daily (Christian) Press got wind of this strange phenomenon: a Baptist who affirmed Reformed doctrine, preaching in Pentecostal churches; a Jewish Christian from Israel who called for the unity of the church, decried Messianic emphases and had little to say about end-time speculations. Here and there I began to notice sombre, black-clad individuals who attended my preaching and

disappeared without so much as a word. I often thanked the brethren who invited me and wondered as to where my Reformed brethren were to be found.

There were organizations in the Netherlands supportive of Israel. But these were reticent with regard to evangelism, maintained a distance from local Israeli congregations and focused on political and economic support of the State. A meeting between myself and leaders of International Christians for Israel, Carl van Oordt and Pee Koelewijn led to little mutual understanding.

The main Reformed church in the Netherlands at that time was the Herformed Kerk and the main evangelical body was the Gereformeerde Bund, led by Engineer Paul de Graff. In the past, the Bund and de Graff himself had been in close connection with CWI, supportive of its efforts. But the Bund had been influenced by neo-evangelical tendencies and developed some hesitation over the evangelization of the Jewish people. Things came to a head when Murdo and I proposed an evangelistic outreach via advertisements in Israeli newspapers. The Bund had undertaken to support these, but then sought to water down the content of the advertisements so that they no longer included a call for repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. Relations between CWI and the Bund were severed, not without some personal acrimony between Murdo and de Graff.

In the course of one of my visits to the Netherlands, I gained audience with Mr. de Graff and sought to come to some understanding with him. He had been convinced that, following the Holocaust, the church had no right to call Jews to repentance. He could not bring himself to agree with me that, following the Hholocaust, the last thing the church should do is to avoid preaching the Gospel to the Jewish people, or at least standing with those Jewish Christians who engaged to do so.

It was a tense meeting. Engineer de Graff was polite but as intransigent as any Dutchman can be. We parted on friendly terms and agreed that I would visit him again whenever in the country, but he never acceded to another such meeting.

Nothing came of the plans for a rehabilitation center, but the young people who were behind Marie's initiative decided to form a support Israel group that would feed churches in the Netherlands with news of local Israeli congregations, of evangelistic endeavors and of daily Christian life in the country and seek to encourage contact between churches in the two countries. Under the auspices of this group I continued to visit the Netherlands, calling upon churches and Christians to engage in Jewish evangelism and to promote a more evangelical concern for the people of Israel and the fledgling church in Israel.

The Gereformeerde Gemeenten remains one of the more evangelical Reformed denominations in Holland. Warmly committed to the standards of Dort, with a typically Dutch emphasis on piety, the Gemeenten had a well-organized youth work through the country. Being neither Presbyterian nor a member of a formally-recognized sister denomination, I could not be invited to preach in Gemeenten churches. But two national leaders of the Gemeenten's youth work, Johan de Jong and Jan Maurice, got wind of my labors in the country. They decided to introduce me to their churches by way of a region youth conference where I was invited to speak alongside a well-respected senior Minister of the church noted for his Gospel interest in Israel. Another senior Minister, much younger, was invited to attend and to review.

Following the session at which I spoke, The Rev. Cornelius (Cees) Sonnenvelt asked to speak with me. Cees interviewed me, seeking to form an opinion of me, my purposes and my labors. It was a firm, friendly and thorough inquisition upon which I now look back with gratitude. I was delighted with Cees' doctrinal concerns, his commitment to the Gospel and his obvious concern for theological and methodological integrity. I sought to assure him that I shared those concerns and that I have never equivocated with regard to what I believed to be true. However, I insisted that I had as real a duty to God's people as I do to his truth and that where I was allowed to preach freely, I considered myself obliged to do so.

A year later I was invited to address one of the largest Charismatic churches in Amsterdam. It turned out to be one of the wildest assemblies I ever attended. Awaiting the invitation to speak, I cringed at much of what was going on. Ascending the pulpit, I was flabbergasted to see Rev. Sonneveld and another individual, obviously another Minister in his dark suit, white shirt and black tie, among the congregation.

Following the service, Cees approached me, introduced the other gentleman and inquired if I would be open to meet the Gereformeerde Gemeenten's Zendings (Mission) Committee. I was more than open to such an option. So, the next day I was privileged to sit alongside a body of sombre, devout, committed and competent individuals whom I have come to love and respect. But I'm putting the cart before the horse:

I was closely questioned. Primarily the brethren wanted to know why I kept coming to the Netherlands. Was I after money? No. My concern was to encourage evangelical and particularly Reformed engagement in preaching the Gospel to the Jewish people. I'd be happy to support any such endeavor, no strings attached. I was also deeply concerned over the rise of the Messianic Movement and what I considered to be its baneful impact on the church at large and on evangelism in particular.

Would I encourage the establishment of a Dutch denomination in Israel? No. The Dutch should be in the Netherlands. But I would encourage any solidly biblical Dutch denomination to work for the establishment of a similarly biblical work in Israel.

If the Zendings Committee would consider some form of cooperation with me in Israel, would I be willing to sever my contacts with Dutch Pentecostal churches? I saw no reason why it would be right for me to do so. The Pentecostals had welcomed me when those closest to my understanding of the Faith displayed no interest. They treated me with kindness and respect. They were my brethren and I intended to continue to treat them as such.

A short while later, while back in Israel, I was informed that the Zendings Committee had established a secondary body, the Deputaatschap fuer Israel, commissioned to promote the Gospel among the Jewish people, with particular interest in Israel. Initially, cooperation was tentative, but it extended over the years into fruitfully shared labors. The Deputaatschap was one of the major sources of support for Grace and Truth's building project. In fact, the Committee established a broader cooperative body, the Isaac da Costa Fund that, along with Patmos International, has played a large and generous role in Grace and Truth's social endeavors in the country.

Over the course of the years I had formulated a determination to decline oft-repeated invitations to evaluate other ministries or other individuals. Having been made aware of the conflicts within denominations in the Netherlands and of the way bodies competing for public and financial support often relate to one another I had insisted on the adoption of a policy which forbade negative remarks about other bodies. But for one unwelcome slip of the pen, this policy has implemented faithfully, and the slip just mentioned was corrected with grace and gentle honesty. It has been a privilege to work with my brethren from the Gemeenten and I am pleased to have this opportunity to give them the credit they deserve.

## Ministry and Family News

### Family

The **Erez** and **Richardson families** are enjoying the close proximity, celebrating together the Sabbath evening meals and other traditional Jewish festive occasions. **Noam**, now 15, is working hard at her schooling, having enrolled in the bacularette program and having set her eyes on a career in Diabetic nursing. **Maya**, a vivacious 12 year old, is living life to the hilt and 9 year old **Nadav** has made many friends.

The **Thompsons** have moved to York Haven PA, where Keith now pastors a church plant in Camp Hill. It was a sad occasion, leaving the church in Cleveland, where many had become dear to the Thompsons and many valuable lessons were learned. Do pray for Christ Covenant and for Fred Pugh, the senior Pastor, as they seek for a new man to come alongside Fred. **Yonatan** and **Caitlyne** continue to dote over little Elinor.

**Tamar** and **Marcus** now embrace Eliya, their first daughter. **Yotam** and **Avishai** enjoy being big brothers but have expressed some interest as to when Mommy is going to “give Eliya back” – or whether Eliya is there to stay.

There is no news of **Katya** and **Felix** but that they are doing well in Montreal.

**Rose**, now living on her own, continues her studies with a good deal of sacrifice, on most days not going to bed before midnight as she prepares for exams or writes papers. She achieved higher than usual grades in the Entrance Exam and is now applying for a scholarship. We’re in regular contact with her and are pleased to note her progress.

### Ministry

**Baruch** has just about completed an **extended series of sermons on the book of Micah** while the Pastor of the church was overseas. His work on the Romans commentary is making excellent progress. By the end of the month it is expected that the actual writing of the commentary will have been completed. What remains is for a careful comparison of my findings with those of competent scholars. Two very large stacks of books await my reading and careful comparison.

At the same time, I am about to commence work on a commentary on Nahum while I continue work on the **Modern Hebrew translation of the New Testament**. While awaiting editorial comment on work already submitted I continue to hone the work on hand. CrossBooks is preparing my **devotional Commentary on Colossians** for the press while plans are being made for the annual tour of the US. In the course of that trip I intend to work on an initial translation of the book of Revelation and on a translation into Hebrew of the commentary on Colossians. Churches interested in the possibility that the Maozes visit them in 2015 should write post haste to [languageservice4u@gmail.com](mailto:languageservice4u@gmail.com)

We have not yet been successful in selling our house. The housing market in Israel has been frozen while the public awaits long-promised new Governmental taxation policies on new purchases. This has created a buyer’s market, reducing the value of homes and the

consequent reduction of new construction initiative. Unless the new policies address the situation, the cost of housing will rise considerably in Israel.

The local Municipality and Land Registry Authority unfairly imposed on us unnecessary and very costly **alterations to our present home**, rendering us incapable of selling the house until these were carried out. Initially, I prepared to contest these, but soon discovered that doing so would involve still higher expenses, and so have acceded to demands. I engaged an architect and a construction company. Following that, the work took over a month, with dust flying everywhere, the yard dug up, stairs and a wall removed and other modifications done to the building and the surrounding fence. Happily, this work is now ended. We have applied for confirmatory inspection in the hope that new demands will not be placed upon us

**Thank you for your prayers!**

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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 on the book of Jonah.

MALACHI: A PROPHET IN TIMES OF DISTRESS, Crossbooks. A devotional commentary on the book of Malachi.

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"

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Intermittent bulletins are produced as necessary.



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