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**Israel**

In about a month from now Israel will have undergone elections and steps will have been taken to form the next Government. At the time of writing, widespread dissatisfaction with incumbent Benjamin (Bibi) Netanyahu has not led to the rise of a leader who is deemed by the general public to be up to the onerous task of the Prime Ministership of Israel. Mr. Netanyahu is generally considered to have failed on many fronts, but he is at least a known factor. All other contenders are, as of yet, unproven and the stakes are so high that the majority are unwilling to take a chance.

The Israeli public is evenly divided between Rightist, Centrist and Leftist parties, with the Arab and Orthodox parties representing sectarian interests rather than a coherent political ideology. The former will never support a rightist Government while the latter will support in Government whichever Coalition will accord their sector more advantages.

The issues facing the new Government are of great purport: Relations with the Palestinians, peace negotiations and the likelihood of an outbreak of violence while the Middle East Cauldron continues to seethe and boil around us; social tensions between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs, between the Orthodox and the secular, between the political Right and the Left; a prosperous economy the fruits of which only a few enjoy while the rest languish in deepening poverty; a collapsing medical system; widespread corruption in high places, including Government and the police; the spread of anti-Semitism in the world, strained relations with the US Administration and with the international community; the Iranian threat and that from Hamas and Hezbollah ...

What kind of masochist would even want to be Prime Minister under such circumstances?

**The Church in Israel**

The church lost one of its pioneers and leaders with the passing away of Victor Smadja. Born in Tunisia in 1931, he lost his father in the Holocaust – one of the relatively few who were expelled by Vichy France to Europe to be delivered into the hands of the Nazis.

Victor and his wife, Suzie, immigrated to Israel in 1956. Jewish Christians then numbered in Israel no more than 200. The Smadjas established a home in what was then an oft-attacked border township on the outskirts of Jerusalem and joined a local congregation that gathered in the Finnish School in Jerusalem and was pastored by a Lutheran missionary. In the course of time he was invited by the British Jews Society, one of the longest-serving missionary societies in Israel, to share in and ultimately assume the leadership of what was then dubbed “the Christian Youth Conference” but was in fact the only context in which Israeli Christians from all over the country met for fellowship and instruction in the scriptures in their own language.



Victor and Suzie experienced persecution in the early years, and then again when they moved to a humble flat in Jerusalem. But their testimony was always clear. Three sons were born to them and a daughter. One of the sons suffered severe brain damage in consequence of which the Smadjas were unable to care for him. He was lovingly hospitalized and cared for until he passed away

In 1969 Victor joined with others to form what is known now as the Israeli Messianic Assembly, Jerusalem Congregation. This was a cooperative effort on the part of a number of strong-minded individuals to set their personalities and personal interests aside and work together for the overall good of the Gospel. As his fellow-Elders passed into their reward, Victor emerged as the sole leader and *de facto* Pastor of the congregation, strategically housed in a building in Prophet’s Street donated by the CM&A, where the congregation still meets.

Warren and Linda Graham, CM&A missionaries moved from Be’er Sheba to Jerusalem and joined. They had commenced summer camps for children and youth, which they now subjected to the oversight of the church Victor pastored.

Victor pioneered Dolphin Press, the first consistent Jewish Christian publishing effort in Israel, beginning with a primitive printing press established on the premises of the Finnish School. His first publication was a section from Billy Graham’s Peace With God, painstakingly set to type with rubber stamps! Dolphin

later became Yanets Press. At one time Yanets was the operator of one of the largest printing machines in Israel.

A plethora of Christian books in Hebrew flowed from the Press, including facsimile reproductions of writings by Jewish Christians in earlier generations. Always eager to promote evangelism, Victor was happy to provide churches and evangelists, free of charge, with literature he had produced.

Passing away, Victor left Suzie and three of his children. The elder of his two sons now runs Yanets Press while the other has been appointed Pastor of the church his father served for many years. Like many a pioneer, Victor was a strong-minded man, principled, dedicated, faithful. He forged ahead in spite of difficulties that sent others scurrying. He had a warm Pastors' heart. Many hundreds in Israel owe him a great debt for his contribution to their spiritual lives through his pastoral ministry, the youth and children's work, the conferences and his publications.

### Ministry News

Baruch's **Introduction to the Pauline Epistles** is now being reviewed by a publisher. Final editing of his **commentary on Romans** has another 23 pages to go and then will be submitted to a publisher for his own review and editing work. Baruch's **Studies in Matthew** is now on hand and work on his **commentary on Nahum** is progressing well. Baruch discovered that he had omitted to write on **Obadiah** and so will go back to write on that book before proceeding to work on **Church Function and Structure**. He is presently reviewing editorial comments on his **translation of Matthew**, recently received.

In addition to his **preaching duties** at our own church, in February Baruch preached for a church in Haifa and has been invited to preach in March for a church in Jerusalem. He will also be commencing a bi-weekly expository series on the Pauline Epistles, hosted by a church north of Tel-Aviv.

Most of the windows in our **USA trip** have been booked. We still have a few in or near the following locations: Louisville KY, Kansas City KS, Dallas and San Antonio TX, Phoenix AZ. Interested churches are invited to write posthaste to [languageservice4U@gmail.com](mailto:languageservice4U@gmail.com)

We are in the throes of packing our belongings, getting rid of some and preparing to move into **our new home**. Our eldest daughter, Avital, plans to come in April to help us with packing. We expect to commence moving by the end of that month.

A **hearty thanks** goes to those of you who informed us of your **intentions for the coming year**. We are still looking forward to hearing from a number. Even if you need to inform us that you will no longer be able to support us, knowing what we can expect enables us to budget responsibly. We are still far from making up for the loss of our major supporter, rendering your support and information concerning your support all the more valuable.

**Thank you for your prayers!**

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**You can help** 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 on the book of Jonah.

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

All three are available from Barnes & Noble and from Amazon

Baruch's sermons may be heard 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.



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