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The Scene in Israel, pg. 1
Ministry News, pg. 2
Family News, pg. 2

The Scene in Israel

Israel has led by a Caretaker Government since the elections held in April 2019. No party garnered enough votes that would enable it to create a coalition large enough to form a Government. A second round was held in September, with the same results, although the political bloc of parties in support of the incumbent Prime Minister, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu lost ground. Elections are again scheduled for March 2 2020.

Two major blocs are vying for power. The first is led by Mr. Netanyahu, who has served four country as Prime Minister and is aiming at a fifth (the Israeli political system sets no term restrictions but is sure to set such once Mr. Netanyahu's long reign comes to an end). He is supported by the two religious Orthodox parties and by two (perhaps three) parties further to the right, one of which is led by extremists whom Israeli courts have repeatedly forbidden to run on the grounds of its racist stance, including support of Baruch Goldstein, who mass-murdered Muslim's in a Hebron mosque.

The second bloc is led by former Chief of Staff ,Benjamin Gantz, supported by two parties to his left. Prominent members of Mr. Gantz' party include two other former Chiefs of Staff.

The Joint List, a coalition of three Arab parties, is in dedicated support of neither contestant but is likely to support Mr. Gantz in exchange for commitments to improve the lot of the just under 2 million Israeli Arabs whose towns and villages have been neglected over the years.

The differences between the political platforms presented by Messrs. Netanyahu and Gantz differ but slightly, with a major exception to be mentioned later. The major difference between the two parties, which difference constituted the sole obstacle to their forming a coalition government, is Mr. Netanyahu himself. Mr. Gantz refuses to serve under a Prime Minister indicted by Israel's Attorney General for bribery, breach of public trust and corruption. He insists that Mr. Netanyahu first defend himself in court and, if and when he is exonerated, return to serve. He offered Mr. Netanyahu a rotation agreement, according to which the latter, upon exoneration, would assume the Prime Ministership.

The offer was declined. Mr. Netanyahu has requested parliament (the Knesset) immunity from legal proceedings, which he is more likely to obtain from the position of Prime Minister. At the same time, he is seeking to block efforts to form the Knesset Committee required to review and determine the fate of his request. So long as such a committee decision is not rendered, court proceedings against Mr. Netanyahu may not proceed.

In other words, these three rounds of elections and the hundreds of millions of Shekels expended are all about Mr. Netanyahu. Israel is now led by a hamstrung Caretaker Government, the majority of whose Ministers have been appointed by Mr. Netanyahu without the approval of the Knesset Plenum because the Plenum cannot meet once elections have been set.

Meanwhile, long-term policies are not being framed and many, already approved, plans cannot be implemented because the State has no budget; it operates on a monthly basis calculated on the basis of 1/12 of the last approved budget in 2017. The health and educational systems are crying out for resources and military preparedness is being stalled for the lack of a fully empowered Government and the inevitable absence of long-term financial planning. The housing market is again heating up, welfare programs are suffering.

The main difference between Mr. Netanyahu's policies and those of his political nemesis is that Mr. Netanyahu believes that the Palestinian pot can keep simmering, with no significant damage to Israel, while Israel continues to erode – or at least endeavor to erode – Palestinian aspirations for political freedom. Mr. Gantz believes that a resolution to the conflict with the Palestinians must be energetically sought in order to divert the enormous amount of human and financial resources presently investing in managing the conflict toward the development of Israel's much-needed social and economic infrastructures. The Middle East would be very different if the running sore of that conflict could be healed. Iran would inevitably be far less of a threat, Hamas and Hezbollah would be considerably weakened and both Israelis and Palestinians would enjoy the fruits of cooperation.

Ministry News

I'm still working on the **Bible Study notes Ezekiel**. The second half of the book contains many hapax legomena and difficult sentences over which translators and interpreters differ strongly. Providing linguistic equivalents in modern Hebrew has proven to be a greater challenge than anticipated. We are revamping the editorial process of **my translation of the New Testament** in the hope of improving efficiency. I am about to commence review of editorial comments on my translation of **the Gospel of John**. My commentary (in Hebrew) on **Galatians** is being edited by another publisher while HaGefen is editing my book on **church life and structure**.

I have yet two more sermons to preach in the church we attend, and one each in a church in Haifa and at Grace and Truth (which I pastored for over 32 years). I had to decline other invitations for lack of time. I intend to use the opportunity afforded me to call the churches to maintain faithfulness in the face of waves of doctrinal and practical aberrations now threatening the church, and to encourage increased doctrinal and moral fidelity. I hope to strengthen that which is good and encourage those whose spirits are low.

As of March 1st, my work, the nature of which will not alter, is to be conducted under the aegis of Reformed Baptist Network (RBNNet), a registered 501(c) 3, and continue to be overseen by Faith Reformed Baptist Church in Media PA. I am grateful to Faith Reformed Baptist Church and to RBNNet for their ongoing encouragement to continue my ministry of writing exegetical, devotional and theological books for the fledgling Israeli church. That is what will take up the larger part of my time. I've more writing projects ahead of me than years to complete them – and the need is greater than I can aspire to meet. I seek God's wisdom and the guidance of friends in the choices I make as to what to write and when.

In addition, I will endeavor to resurrect efforts to create a counter-movement to the Messianic Movement, encouraging Jewish Christians to join and remain in local Christian churches, grow in Christ and make their distinctive contributions within that context while reaching out to their own people in love both in practical ways and – above all – with the Gospel. There is no room for ethno-centric churches, nor can Jewish tradition or law-keeping add anything to his achievements. His work is sufficient for the totality of our salvation and the clearest affirmation of his sufficiency is to be found in the unity of the church. Churches ought to be Christo-centric. He must have the priority in all things.

To that end, black and white, Jew and Gentile, Korean, Chinese, Spanish and English speakers should break down the barriers that divide them into separate churches so that we learn and gain from each other those unique perspectives each culture affords and give our savior the central place in our shared congregation life. The difficulties involved are not insurmountable; the advantages are not to be forgone. Love for God in Christ will empower us to love one another to break down those fences and establish a visible, tangible unity that will speak to the world in which we live in terms it can understand.

Your prayers are very much needed. Inquiries concerning our ministry may be sent to Pastor Matt Forman, Faith Reformed Baptist Church, 110 Old State Road, Media PA 19064. Tel 610.566.8959, mrforeman@gmail.com.

We are looking into various ways of reducing expenses while ensuring our future in terms of a measure of financial security. At the encouragement of our overseeing church, we have taken counsel with a financial advisor, whose services are all the more needed since we know so very little about living in the US – I've never even prepared an annual tax return. There is so much I need to learn.

With the advice and guidance of others, I've prepared a carefully studied living budget taking cost of living realities in the US into account, however, our financial advisor is concerned: due to the realities of the ministry, we have not been able to set aside as much as is likely to be needed to secure us financially in our later years, once I am not longer able to work. Not having paid US Social Security while living in Israel, we are not entitled to draw on Social Security, nor on Medicare. Our advisor has shown us that, should we face a medical emergency or need assisted living, we will not be able to secure such if we have a large part of our equity invested in a home, especially as we are relocating to the Seattle area. We have, therefore, decided to sell the home we purchased in Chattanooga and rent rather than buy in Seattle, Our son-in-law and eldest daughter, Eran and Avital, own a house available to us for a reduced rent.

This decision has created an expected annual shortfall of \$27,537. If you have supported us until now and intend to continue to do so; if you have not supported our work but intend to do so in 2020, or if you supported us but intend to bring that support to an end, please be so kind as to write us as soon as possible so that we will be able to plan accordingly. The best address to use is bmaoz@themaosweb.com, with a copy to our overseeing church at mrforeman@gmail.com. An explanatory letter from Pastor Matt Foreman, ministering in my overseeing church, is attached (to view, click <https://www.dropbox.com/s/taqpfvgvgyiuj1lw/Overseeing%20Church.pdf?dl=0>).

As readers of MaozNews and those who are personally acquainted with me know, I am extremely reticent to discuss monetary affairs or to seek personal support. I promise not

break the habit that reticence has created. However this is an urgent request. Please do inform us at your early convenience of your intentions.

A hearty *thank you* goes to those who wrote to tell us that Samaritan's Ministries is the way to go in terms of a catastrophic medical coverage and to those who have reaffirmed their support of our labors in the coming years. What you wrote was both encouraging and informative. As warm a *thank you* goes to those who have supported us until now and, following our relocation to the US, have chosen to discontinue that support. Your help has enabled us to achieve whatever little we have been able to achieve. Please continue to pray for us. We are grateful for you and rely with confidence on the Lord for the future.

As of March 1st, support for our ministry should no longer be sent to Berean Baptist Church. As of that date, all support should be sent to **Reformed Baptist Network, 860 Peachcrest Ct. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505 USA.** Bank details for direct transfers are **Chase Bank, Plainfield Four Mile 3539 Plainfield Ave. NE Grand Rapids, MI 49525, Account Number: 236738891.** The routing number for domestic wire transfers is **021000021.** The Swiftcode for international transfers is **CHASUS33.** Please indicate: For Baruch Maoz's ministry.

Family News

As stated in the previous issue of this newsletter, our **relocation date** March 4 2019. We've contracted for our belongings to be shipped to Seattle on February 17. We will not ship most of our belongings – shipping costs are calculated by volume and it is cheaper to purchase what we need in the US than ship what we have. So, we are sorting through our belongings: what should we take? What should we leave? What can we sell, and what should we give away? I've given away as many of my books as I deemed wise. But books are an important part of my toolbox, so we will need to ship all of what is left. Happily, weight is not the issue when calculating shipping costs :-)

Avital and Eran, Maya and Nadav spent three weeks in Thailand while **Noam** finished her school year and made her way to Canada, to visit, Micah, her beau and his family. **Keith and Shlomit remain** challenged. Keith has still not been able to find employment. His health is stable and he is learning to live with SIBO, an incurable but manageable a malady. **Jonathan, Caitlyn and Elinor** are well. Jonatan's favorite day of the week is Friday "because it is test day" – he is bored for most of the week. **Avishai** is about to commence riding school and little **Didi** is Tae Kwan Do. It is hard to think of gentle little Didi taking up such an energetic course. **Yotam** would rather be home-schooled with his younger brother and sister, but his parents are convinced that he is better served by studying at school. As a result, his grades have dropped somewhat, although he knows the material very well.

Bracha is bracing herself for the process we are to undergo in the next two months, and then for acclimatization in the US. We both find it extremely hard to leave our beloved country and the church of Christ here. But we remain convinced that this is the right step to take at the present stage of our lives.

In Christ by grace,

Baruch and Bracha Maoz

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 us sell. Details below:

Come Let Us Reason Together (On the Unity of Jews and Gentiles in the Church). Christ as the fullness of divine revelation and his work as sufficient for our whole salvation, Presbyterian and Reformed.

Jonah: A Prophet on the Run a devotional commentary on the book of Jonah, Shepherd Press.

Malachi: A Prophet in Times of Distress a devotional commentary on the book of Malachi. Founders Press.

Colossians: The All-Sufficient Savior a devotional commentary on the book of Colossians. Founders Press.

Soon to be available: **Galatians: He Did it All** a devotional commentary on the book of Colossians. Founders Press.

The commentaries are suited for personal devotions and group studies

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 [Twitter](#) (@BaruchMaoz).



Until March 1st, checks in support of our ministry should be written to the order of **Berean Baptist Church special missions account, POBox 1233, Grand Blanc MI, 48480-3233**. Please designate: “For Soli Deo Gloria”, or, “For the ministry of Baruch Maoz”. Bank transfers may be made to **Chemical Bank, 2301 W, Big Beaver Rd. Suite 525, Troy MI 48084 ABA Routing 072410013 , Berean Baptist Account 5389484382 Swiftcode: CHEMUS33**

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.

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.

**As of March 1st, funds in support of our ministry should be sent to RBNet
Details are provided above**