

MaozNews No. 24

Published every 4 weeks or so
December 2009

In this issue:

Baruch's Biography
 Difficult Decisions
 On the Way Home
Prospects of Peace in the Middle East
Threats to Israeli Democracy
Christians in Israel
 True Doctrine and True Conduct
 Harassment
Ministry and Family News

Our letters are premeditatedly long. We expect our readers to flip through the pages and choose those portions in which they have the most interest.

Baruch's Biography

This instalment brings life at the WEC College to a close, describes Baruch's ordination and his preparations for returning home.

Difficult Decisions

I returned to College at the end of the summer and discovered that Colin Waltham, Norman Gray and I were to serve as Head Boys, with Norman leading. In a real sense, this was a mistake. Norman was a prankster, no less than Colin and, although all three of us were extremely serious about our studies I. Perhaps the College staff thought that, if they asked the cats to watch the milk, they would achieve positive results. I do not know if they achieved what they wanted, but we had a whale of a time.

Periodic interview with the students were held by the College staff, where our progress was assessed and we were given guidance as to what was expected of us for the future. The staff could see that my heart and mind were in Israel, with Bracha and with the work of the Gospel there. At the next periodic interview, it was suggested that perhaps I should undertake a more intensive course in the course of a shorter time, so as to return home to Israel sooner. The idea greatly appealed to me, but was it the right thing to do? I requested time to consider the proposal and was given two weeks to decide.

Those were an agonizing two weeks. I longed home. I was anxious to wed Bracha and to take up the work that needed to be done in the country. Few were engaged in evangelism, few taught the youth, little literature was available. But, then, no one had ever had the opportunity I was given to study. Ought I not make the most of it?

I prayed, pleaded with God for a sign, sought to take all considerations into account and consulted with friends. God accorded me no signs – it was time for me to grow up and make responsible decisions. My friends were divided in their opinions I was left to myself and, finally, decided. I longed to equip myself maximally for the work ahead, cognizant that others would stand on my shoulders and forge ahead further than I was able to forge. But someone needed to lay the foundation. Since the staff believed that I could cope with almost two academic years in the remaining one and a half year, I requested that they allow me to undergo the three year course rather than the shorter, two year course on which I was enrolled. I intended to complete those studies in the 18 months left to me in College. My request was graciously granted. I remained at College and completed a three year program in two, and have been grateful ever since.

My new-found convictions, still undeveloped, immature but non-the-weaker brought me to another decision. I had been preparing to return to Israel and work with CLC, but CLC's views of ministry and of the Christian life were informed by the conviction that holiness was achieved through an experience of Ultimate Surrender, leading to entire sanctification. I had come to believe that holiness was the product of Christ's sacrifice and of God's consequent and gracious blessing on habits of self discipline, self denial and obedience to his word.

I decided to return to Israel apart from any commitment on the part of CLC. Time would serve in the hands of God to make his will clear. My choice led to a friendly severance of mutual obligations between CLC and me, one that permitted the continuance of very good relations for which I am thankful to this day.

On the Way Home

Before going home, I thought it was important that I be ordained. I inquired with Martin Gouldthorpe, who spoke in turn with John Caiger. It was agreed that I would be ordained by Mr. Caiger in the course of a Sunday service. I duly went out to buy a clerical collar...

I left College with much gratitude for the two years spent there, proceeded to London and stayed with the Gouldthorpes as I prepared to take a train through Paris to Brindisi, where I was to board an Italian ship bound for Marseilles and then, via Cyprus make my way to Israel. I remember nothing practically nothing of the ordination service.

In the course of my time in London, I was asked to visit someone who in hospital. My time was limited, so I decided to attempt to visit him out of normal visiting hours. When refused entrance due to the stipulated limitations on visits, I explained that I was a minister. The nurse threw a glance at my neck and exclaimed, "But you're not wearing a collar!" I smiled knowingly, at bit taken back by her remark. Then the light went on in her eyes and she stated, "Oh, I see. You're not one of those!" I was not sure what she meant, but I immediately agreed with her, and was granted entrance. I decided that, from hence I should wear a clerical collar more often.

Obviously, I was about to return to Israel where, to my knowledge no one else affirmed the Reformed Faith. There was good reason to establish contacts that would aid me in promoting a greater understanding of the truth in Israel and in enlarging my own understanding. I knew no one. I had, however, purchased every Banner of Truth book on which I could lay my hands and knew the main offices of the Publishing House were in 79 Chiltern Street, London, very close to Madame Tussauds wax museum. I therefore made my way to Chiltern Street, knocked on the appropriate door and announced that I would like to speak "with a manager". "Yes, but with whom?" I didn't know. All I knew was that I wanted to speak with someone in charge. I was introduced to Humphrey Mildred, who had just taken over from Erroll Hulse as Business Manager for the Banner.

We had a pleasant conversation. He wanted to know all about my change of mind, the situation in Israel and my personal plans. He then invited me to tell him how he or the Banner could help. Brash, unthinking and certainly unaware of what I was about to request, I responded in a manner that, in my later and relatively more mature years, brought many a blush to my cheeks: "Well, Mr. Mildred, I'd be grateful if the Banner could send me a copy of each book it publishes." Generously, Humphrey agreed and, for many years, I received a freshly minted copy of the Banner of Truth books as they were published. One day I awoke from my stupor and suggested that I order and pay for the books, like everyone else.

Erroll had just written his book, *THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL*, which is a view of the Six Days' War and its supposed eschatological implications, defending a Premillennial view of the nation and of the future. Humphrey suggested that I might be interested in meeting Erroll. Having obtained my agreement, he telephoned Erroll and we arranged that I would travel down to Hayward's Heath to meet him. I spent a delightful 24 hours with Erroll and have been ever grateful to God for his enthusiastic friendship, his trust in me and his warm-hearted encouragement.

To be continued

Prospects of Peace in the Middle East

Culled from our almost-daily update. *Breaking News*, www.TheMaozWeb.com

signalled weakness, malleability and indecision. These are poor impressions with which to commence negotiations in the volatile Middle East. The Palestinians have been persuaded that continued determined rejection will lead to further American pressure and still further Israeli capitulations. Are they mistaken? Second, the freeze refers exclusively housing construction. It does not include public buildings (schools, synagogues, clinics, cultural centres, municipal facilities). It excludes Jerusalem and its environs, in which large tracts of the West Bank are enclosed. While American Ambassador

The recent decision, framed by the Israeli Government, to **freeze construction in the West Bank**, is highly problematic. As a result, Netanyahu's prospects are unenviable. First, the decision **came too late and offers too little**. Had Netanyahu, upon taking up office, initiated a (temporary or permanent) moratorium of construction in the West Bank, the world would have applauded, and the Palestinians been forced to the negotiating table. But **the decision was the product of considerable American pressure**. Rather than displaying leadership, vision and independent vigor, the decision

Netanyahu is known to be a gifted communicator. Some give credence to his view of the future. But he is generally viewed in Israel as **a weak leader**, subject to pressure and insufficiently resilient to handle firm opposition. While he did not condone political violence, he played an active role in creating the atmosphere that led to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin because Rabin signalled his willingness to make territorial compromises. Yet Netanyahu offered Arafat a compromise in Hebron and has now indicated his willingness to make “painful concessions” for peace with the Palestinians. He repeatedly expressed himself in firmly against negotiating with terrorist organizations, with special reference to prisoner exchanges, yet is now more willing to make greater concession to Hamas for the release of abducted Israeli soldier Gilead Shalit than any Prime Minister before him.

A short time after accepting the road map, Sharon revealed that its trails led to **a dead end**. No Palestinians met the basic conditions, none were capable of signing a final-status agreement, none had the power to implement peace. When Sharon, the father of Israeli settlements spoke in favour of dividing the land, no Palestinian leaders took up the challenge to compromise. Thus was the Gaza disengagement born. Sharon realized that disengagement was the only plan of action a centrist Israeli leader could advance without a real partner for real peace.

Six years later, Netanyahu has reached the exact same point. He accepted the principle of **two states**, and received no response. He suspended **construction in the settlements**, and was rejected. He courted Mahmoud Abbas, and was disparaged. He offered a

Extraordinary, George Mitchell, is right to describe the decisions as “more than any previous Israeli government has offered”, it leaves much room for **Palestinian disbelief and mistrust**. After all, public institutions have often served as guises for expansion. This is all the more the case when the Israeli decision specifically stipulates that, following the ten month moratorium, **construction will resume**, and at an accelerated pace. Prime Minister Netanyahu has since repeatedly stated that construction will be renewed. No condition was attached, not even with reference to progress in negotiations or the signing of a peace treaty!

The third reason why the decision to freeze housing construction in the West Bank is problematic is that it has produced a situation in which **Israeli society is now being threatened by its own citizens**.

“Produced” is the word of choice because early rumblings have indicated that what has now come to the fore has been in the process for a long time. Many of the 300,000 West Bank settlers believe that resettlement of the land is a divinely-imposed duty that hastens Ultimate Redemption. They have long been **a thorn in the flesh of Israeli democracy** by imposing their will on Israeli Governments; building without license, calling upon soldiers to disobey evacuation orders and rewarding those who respond to their overtures with monetary gifts; harassing Palestinians, destroying their property and livelihood; and refusing to abide by Governmental decisions that did not tally with their convictions. They have attacked police, harassed Israeli soldiers and have now declared their intention to challenge the Government, in some cases even questioning its legitimacy.

measured, circumspect and coordinated steps. A second disengagement would have to be an improved version of the first, a **plan with a political dimension** and an economic depth that would strengthen the moderates – Palestinian and Israeli.

If the Prime Minister dares to go forward with a disengagement, things would be easier for Israel on all fronts. It would help Netanyahu domestically, as the first disengagement helped Sharon, and it would turn the Prime Minister into the new leader of the Israeli center.

It remains true that **the Palestinians never had a better moment** to establish peace on more favourable terms, precisely due to Netanyahu's weakness, combined with the political constellation in Israel and US President Barak Obama's policies and preferences.

This leads us to the fourth reason why the Israeli Government's recent decision is problematic. Palestinian Authority President, **Mahmoud Abbas, is likewise in an unenviable position**: Never viewed as a firm leader in a society where arbitrary strength is most admired; with his people divided between Hamas in Gaza and those under his control in the West Bank; having declared his intention not to run for re-election; and with the lack of a strong leader in line to take his place, Abba is ill-placed to sign and to implement any agreement he might be able to achieve with Israel. His present intransigence is no more than a show of strength, a product of his inability to impose his will on his few supporters.

These factors all render the prospects of peace in the Middle East disconcertedly low and should drive us to pray.

historic **reconciliation with the Palestinians**, but they slam the door in his face. He offered a Palestinian nation-state, yet no one will talk with him.

Among the few close to the Prime Minister, some say he has undergone a turnabout. Israel's might, not the settlements or the settlers, is his top priority. Had there been a proposal on the table assuring Israel's security in exchange for a painful withdrawal, Netanyahu would not hesitate.

The tragedy is that negotiations haven't begun. Abbas isn't giving Netanyahu anything he can use to realize the centrist worldview he has adopted.

Under such circumstances, Netanyahu has two options. One is the plan devised by former IDF Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz: the establishment of a Palestinian state with temporary borders. The second is **another unilateral disengagement** - the evacuation of about 20 West Bank settlements and their transfer to the Fayyad government. The Mofaz plan has major advantages, but Netanyahu fears unlimited, unrestrained Palestinian sovereignty. He might be forced to seriously consider the other option: We can't rule out that in 2010 Netanyahu will implement another limited disengagement, as did Sharon in 2004 and 2005.

Such a disengagement will have to differ significantly from its predecessor: it will have to be **coordinated with the Palestinian Authority** and granted European support, and it will have to turn the evacuated area into an economic prosperity zone. It will need to prevent Palestinians from smuggling in weapons and increasing their military might, and must assure Israel's right to self-defence. Such a plan would have to be **part of an overall strategic outlook** that drives both sides to the conflict toward peace through

Threats to Israeli Democracy

Just as Israeli democracy is being threatened by radical rabbis who deny the Government's authority to render decisions contrary to rabbinic opinion, Israeli Justice Minister Yaakov Neeman on Dec. 7, said he believes Halakha (rabbinical religious legislation) should be the binding law in Israel, Army Radio reported. "Step by step, we will bestow upon the citizens of Israel **the laws of the Torah**, and we will make Halakha **the binding law of the nation**," said Neeman at a Jewish law convention at the Regency hotel in Jerusalem. "We must return the heritage of our fathers to the nation," Neeman said. "The Torah has the complete solution to all questions," he added. Neeman's statements during the conference were received with applause from participants, among them Shas spiritual leader Rabbi Ovadia Yosef.

Parliamentary Opposition leader Tzipi Livni criticized Neeman's comments, describing them as **troubling to "every citizen** who cares about what happens in Israel in terms of its values and democracy." Neeman's remarks also drew criticism from left-wing politicians, including Meretz leader Haim Oron and (Arab) Hadash chairman Mohammed Barakeh. "It is unfortunate that the Justice Minister has detached himself from the state of Israel's basic values and is being disloyal to civic and national principles," Oron said on Tuesday, using a play on words on Neeman's name, which means "loyal" in Hebrew. "His remarks reflect a disturbing process of 'Talibanization' occurring in Israeli society," Oron continued.

Barakeh called on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to oust Neeman from his position, saying, "The man who sees his main role as establishing **a fundamentalist Israel** is a threat to the country's democracy." A former Justice Minister, Amnon Rubinstein, said Neeman's plan "would amount to severing the majority of Israel" from the state, with most of Israel's judges replaced by rabbis. In the wake of the uproar caused by the justice Minister's remarks, his spokesman issued a statement on Tuesday, denying Neeman intends to replace Israel's legal system with rabbinic law. "Justice Minister Yaakov Neeman "wishes to clarify that these remarks were not a call for Jewish religious law to replace the laws of the State of Israel, either directly or indirectly," a statement from the ministry said. " Minister Neeman spoke in broad and general terms about restoring the stature of Jewish law and about the importance of Jewish law to the life of the country."

Christians in Israel

True Doctrine and True Conduct

Over the years, the Israeli Hebrew-speaking church has been reticent to challenge various teachings that arose within. Denials of Jesus' deity as equal to that of the God the Father, insistence on continued obligation to the Mosaic Law, denials of Jesus' humanity, extravagant claims to spiritual power and authority were allowed to spread without public or even congregational demur. The only issue church leaders seemed to be willing to take up were challenges to their own authority. Immorality, personal, financial and sexual, was likewise allowed to continue without firm challenge.

This is slowly changing. Readers of MaozNews are aware of a conference that took place some years back, in which a clear stand was taken for the full deity of Messiah, and another in which the purported authority of rabbinic tradition was challenged and a Statement of Faith (however vague) adopted.

On Thursday, November 19 of this year, a further important step was taken in the issuance of a public statement concerning the false teachings of on David Bar-David, who is described as denying the humanity, including his being a descendant of King David; the death of Jesus on the cross: the authority of large portions of the scriptures (with specific reference to the apostolic writings).

It is now to be seen whether such a step will lead to a clear and firm stance on other issues, including those that pertain to morality.

Harassment

In a spate of severe events all around the country, the Levines, a Christian family in Beith She'an, 20 miles south west of Jerusalem, have become the object of repeated harassment by the large Orthodox community in the town. Thrice vehicles they owned were vandalized and twice completely destroyed by fire. Threats, verbal and bodily, are repeatedly made against members of the family, with the local police doing very little in response. Finally, the family has engaged a lawyer, submitted formal complaints and demanded action be taken to bring an end to the violence.

Meanwhile, Jack Teitel, accused of fire-bombing the home of Messianic David Ortiz and severely wounding his then-14 year old son, has been remanded in custody. Word is out that Teitel did not act on his own, requiring further precautions on the part of local Christians and congregations.

In Be'er Sheba, the City Rabbi has been taken to court for allegedly sponsoring and leading a protest two years ago, in which a local Pastor was manhandled, his glasses broken and he thrown into a pool.

Ministry and Family News

Church Work

Baruch's main duty in **the church** (Tikvat Yisrael – The Hope of Israel) is to work with the **young people**. We are grateful for the confidence that Pastor Tom and his elder, Sasha, have expressed by asking Baruch to do this work. The church has a group of 9 young Christians, aged 17-23, with another 2 who do not profess faith. In spite of the church's best efforts and highest aspirations, it has been unable to provide this group with a settled framework in which they would be challenged, assisted, cultivated and taught. Consequently, even the dedicated Pastor's children have tended to seek such edification outside of the church. Our challenge is now to create, under the hand of God, a sense of identification, of purpose and of dedication to the church.

In many ways, not least because of his age, Baruch considers himself **unsuited** to the task, however much he enjoys being with young people. It is his hope to create a fund that will enable to church to **send some of its promising youth for training overseas**. Meanwhile, he will maintain an holding position, investing as much of his time as he can into the group.

On Tuesday evening they meet to paint, clean and otherwise **renovate the facility** being used by the church, which was in need of a face lift. The walls of the main hall have now been painted and we hope to be able to lay an industrial carpet in the main hall. This will replace the uninviting grey and heavily stained cement floor presently in place. Work is soon to commence on the

foyer, then the class rooms and the bathroom. The Youth Room will be renovated last. We are looking for **smallish groups of volunteers** (3-7 individuals) who would be interested in spending 10-21 days in Israel, volunteering help in the renovating process.

Every other Friday the young people meet for a **festive meal, Bible Study and fellowship** and, on the last Friday of alternate months, the meeting is held at the Maoz residence, when most of the evening is given to a meal, prayer and games. On the first Saturday night of alternate months, the church meets at the Maoz residence for an evening of **song, prayer and fellowship**.

On the writing front, we have completed editing **Proverbs**, while Baruch is presently working on **Job**. The search for an **editor** for his books has not yet been crowned with success – your prayers are earnestly sought. The non-Christian who edited Daily Christian Disciplines turned out to be far more expensive than we envisioned. Baruch is busy with his studies and on the commentary on **Romans**. He has been accepted to study for an MA in Biblical Studies, majoring on a thesis, to be devoted to the Christian use of the Old Testament. The thesis is to be overseen by Dr. Tremper Longman III.

The Family Front



Eran and Avital (with Noam, Maya and Nadav) are about to arrive for a three-week visit. We are eagerly looking forward to their arrival and have laid plans for our time together. Baruch completed construction of the tree house.

Maya is missing in this photo (did she take the picture?), but she was with the family when they experienced their first real snow – at Lake Tahoe.

Keith and Shlomit have been asked to await the final decision of the church in May of next year. Appreciating the dedication of the church and the Senior Pastor's example and capabilities, they have agreed. They are extremely happy in the church and Shlomit's employment has eased the challenges with which they must deal. They were visited during Thanksgiving by Marcus, Tamar and Yotam. Here is a picture of two of the sisters.



On Thursday, November 18, at 0.50 am, **Katya** gave birth to Maya (3.875 Kg.) and is now enjoying the pleasures of motherhood. Felix is all agog, a devoted husband and an eager father. We would gladly provide you with a picture, but have yet to receive one ourselves.

Bracha has been cooking for her once a week and pops over to help as time and duties will allow.

It is a joy to see Katya and Felix so happy together.

Marcus and Tamar have joined a good church and are seeking to make their contribution to the life of the congregation.

Here is a picture of Yotam, an obviously happy baby, who did not cry the whole 11 hours on the way home from Cleveland to Irvine!

Marcus is doing well at work, and they are both delighted to have Marcus' father and family close by. Relations are getting closer by the day.



Rose has settled in well at home, and we enjoy her greatly. She has found a house-keeping job for the duration of the time until her mandatory enlistment in February and is determined to save enough for driving lessons. Her vivacious love of life is both a challenge and a delight. Many challenges face her, especially as she commences her military service.

Bracha's 83 year old mother, Tsipora, fell and fractured her right hand in two places. As can be expected, this has put her back more than it would were she fifty years younger. Bracha travels to visit her once a week and is seeking to be as much of a help to her mother as possible. Tsipora was one of the many victims of the Holocaust, and we are committed to alleviating her present misery as much as we can. Hired help has been brought in, and Bracha cooks some of her delicious food for her mother.

Bracha is busy with the scanning project she has undertaken, seeking to bring the project to a close. After that, since the project will end, she will look for new employment.

Baruch's cataracts are not yet "ripe" for an operation, but are steadily approaching that stage. He expects the operation will be conducted in the first half of 2010. For reasons we cannot understand, but for which we are grateful nonetheless, he is relatively freer from the pain caused by his chronic condition, and feels better, than he has many years. (Some of you must be praying!) He is as busy as ever and enjoying every minute.

*In January, Bracha and I will celebrate **41 years of marriage**. I thank God for these years of blessing and Bracha for her love, dedication and sacrifice, and intend to surprise Bracha with a few days away from the rush and bustle of things to relax and enjoy. Details are not to be disclosed until the time comes (Bracha reads my every word.....) Thank you for your prayers and love, which greatly contributed to the blessings we received, and continue to enjoy.*

Baruch

Baruch

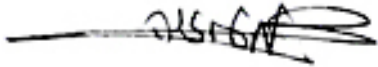
end of the
traditional time for celebration

As
we approach the
year and the tradi-

of our Lord's coming into the world

for our salvation, we join in wishing you all the holy, glorious joys of this festive season. Thank you for standing with us in prayer, for your encouraging letters and for the many indications of interest, concern and fellowship in the Gospel. We are aided by these more than words can tell.

Yours in the Gospel,



Baruch and Bracha Maoz

TAX-deductable **support for our ministry** should be written to the order of **Berean Baptist church, P.O. Box 1233, Grand Blanc, Michigan 48480-3233**. Direct bank transfers may be made to **Franklin Bank, 24725 West Twelve Mile Road, Southfield, MI 48034 USA, Routing Number 241271957 Berean Baptist Special Account No. 567495976**. Please inform Max Sharp at Berean Baptist Church by email of the details of the transaction (date, transaction number, sum and designated purpose). All contributions are tax deductible. Receipts are sent at the end of the calendar year or at the donor's request. Please do not send contributions directly to us – we consider accountability extremely important.

Funds sent for the ministry will be used exclusively for that purpose.
We reserve the right to use for the ministry funds sent for personal use