

**MaozNews No. 25**  
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*MaozNews is something a monthly publication.*

*Our goal is to provide readers with an overview of realities in and with regard to Israel,  
with particular but not exclusive reference to the Gospel.*

*Readers will view those portions of MaozNews in which they have interest.  
To that end, we seek to diversify.*

**We wish our growing family of readers a blessed 2010, full of the presence of God, overflowing with grace that leads to holiness and to still greater love for God. May we all serve God faithfully and bring him the glory that is rightfully his. Thank you for your prayers, for your support and for promoting MaozNews among your friends.**

**Water Technology in Israel**

*From Breaking News, [www.TheMaozWeb.com](http://www.TheMaozWeb.com) Dec. 24 2009*

In a country with few natural resources and where the most famous body of water is the Dead Sea, Israel is taking the lead in **water technology**, the latest export-oriented industry to help it weather the effects of the global meltdown. The country recently hosted its fifth annual Water Technologies, Renewable Energy and Environmental Control convention, where hundreds of firms displayed their innovations.

The force behind the Jewish state's entry into the budding multibillion dollar industry has been decades of expertise in satisfying local demand. A growing number of Israeli firms are eyeing lucrative overseas markets, offering cutting-edge expertise in areas such as **desalination technology, sewage-eating bacteria and wastewater treatment**. "Israel is definitely one of the leaders, if not the leader, when it comes to water. ... I think of Israel as the Silicon Valley of water," said Shawn Lesser, president of Sustainable World Capital, an Atlanta investment group that focuses on clean energy and water technology companies.

Reflecting the growing prominence of water technology, Israel's fastest growing technology company this year was Aqwise, a water treatment company that uses small, **bacteria-dispensing plastic cubes to break down sewage**, increasing treatment efficiency and capacity. Aqwise's vice president of business and development, Udi Leshem, said "The main growth engine of the company has been growing into foreign markets, starting in Israel as a base and then exporting to Europe, the United States and other places," he said. "Once we did that, growth accelerated."

Another company, Israeli start-up TaKaDu, has found a high-tech solution to the age-old problem of **leaky pipes**. Instead of relying on heavy wrenches and machinery, the software firm uses advanced algorithms and mathematical models to monitor for small leaks and unusual activity that lead to costly pipe bursts. It's selling the technology to water companies.

Water leaks cost utility companies \$14 billion a year, according to a 2006 World Bank report. Halting these leaks could save enough water to meet **the needs of an additional 200 million people a year**, the report said. Though other companies have attempted to crack the same problem, investors said TaKaDu – which is backed by several prominent venture capital funds but has yet to turn a profit – is one of the first software-only solutions. "This technology is important. You have an enormous advantage if you can quickly know and can monitor where the leaks are coming from and fix them," said Raphael Semiat, a water technology expert at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa. TaKaDu, at less than a year old, is now plugged in and running tests on Jerusalem's water system. "Essentially, they were blind to their network. We made them see," said Amir Peleg, TaKaDu's founder. TaKaDu is also conducting tests in Europe and Asia.

Israel's interest in water technology goes back decades, an emphasis that started out of necessity in a country that is two-thirds desert, said WATEC Chairman Booky Oren. "Here in Israel, we're faced with the water shortage problem every day," he said. "We need to produce **technology that increases water conservation and production**." Shaul Arlosoroff, a leading Israeli water expert, said yearly consumption hovers around 200 cubic meters (7,000 cubic feet) per capita. That's about one-sixth the amount of water consumed by the average Californian, he said. The push into water technology mirrors the aggressiveness of the resource-poor nation in other sectors. In a region where many of its neighbors hold some of the world's biggest oil reserves, Israel has none. Instead, it has long focused on **high-tech development and environmental innovation**.

Israel has become a hotbed for innovation in solar, battery and renewable energy technologies. Among its most famous ventures is "Better Place," a project founded by former SAP AG executive Shai Agassi that will set up a nationwide network of plug-in stations to recharge electric cars. The firm, working with Nissan-Renault, hopes to reduce dependence on foreign oil and lower pollution levels. In the water world, Israeli company Netafim pioneered **drip irrigation**, a technique that can grow crops in harsh conditions, in the 1960s. It has since grown into a global company with \$500 million in annual sales. Thanks to advances in wastewater treatment, most of the country's agriculture is now cultivated with recycled water, according to the Agriculture Ministry.

Only recently has Israel begun to realize the enormous opportunities of exporting its technology. Israel's Trade Ministry hopes the country can export \$2.5 billion in water technology in 2011, a jump from \$1.4 billion last year and \$750 million two years earlier. "We're emphasizing growth in all sectors of **water technology** – drip irrigation, desalination, conservation, wastewater – everything," said Oded Distel, director of the ministry's national water technology program.

### **Why Israel Should Become Secular**

*Yom Kippur 2009, adapted from an article in HaAretz by Carlo Strenger*

This and the following two articles are but a sample of the kind of discussion going on in Israel today, as the nation re-examines the foundations of its national life.

The secularization of Israel is in the interest of religious Jews no less than of Jewish non-believers. I call upon religious Jews to **join the process of secularization**. Israel's history, like that of Europe, has been determined in many ways by the tension between two conceptions of authority: revealed truth and critical inquiry. The conception of revealed truth has dominated most of human history. Truth and values are based on an absolute source that lies in the past. This is the basic structure of traditional religions. They all derive their authority from a presumed revelation in a mythical past.

The concept of critical inquiry emerged in a series of enlightenment movements, starting in India in the 6th century BCE and ancient Greece in the 5th century BCE. It gained historical prominence in Europe from the 17th century onwards. This view **denies the validity of absolute authority**. Instead, it relies on the combined effort of enlightened human beings to inch closer to truth and justice. Europe's secularization began in 1648, after thirty years of religious wars that had left large parts of Europe virtually depopulated by war, illness and famine. Europe realized that as long as politics and religion were intertwined, lethal conflicts could not be resolved. Slowly, through many centuries, Europe moved from revealed truth to critical inquiry as its guiding principle.

**Violence is built into the idea of revealed truth.** Religious belief, by its nature, is non-negotiable. Humans are not believed to be entitled to choose whether to accept or reject such belief. Criticizing what has been handed down by tradition is considered in most religions to be a major sin. When two or more belief systems clash on major issues, war is inevitable. Consequently, Christians and Muslims, Catholics and Protestants fought bitter religious wars.

This is why Europe embarked on the long, slow process of secularization. It realized that **politics must become pragmatic** and, to that end, religion must be expelled from the religious process. The Founding Fathers who framed the constitution of the United States took full advantage of Europe's painful learning process and created the first and most important instance of a clearly secular political order. The French soon followed suit. The advantages of secularism emerged quickly. Its first, dramatic, result was the scientific revolution beginning in the 17th century. Once the flow of ideas was no longer controlled by religious authority, science - which is based on **critical, collective inquiry and the free exchange of ideas** - flourished. A mirror image is presented today by the Islamic world. Bernard Lewis has shown that the difficulties experienced by Islamic countries in their efforts to modernize are the product of **Islam's role in all facets of life**. The result is a closed mental universe. The Arab states combined translate per annum fewer books than tiny Greece.


It is of enormous importance to realize that secularization has **nothing to do with an anti-religious attitude**. The U.S. constitution does not allow religious symbols in buildings connected to the legislature, executive or judiciary. Yet the U.S. is by far the most religious Western democracy, and many religious communities co-exist peaceably, with very little conflict. Israel was originally conceived as a secular state. Hebrew University of Jerusalem was founded more than twenty years before the state. The idea of free, critical inquiry as a core value was adopted by both the University and Israel's declaration of independence.

**Ben-Gurion's consequent historical compromise with the Orthodox religious parties** has turned out to be a catastrophe. Israel, to this day, does not have a constitution; the Rabbinate is involved in the lives of countless people who would prefer to have little or nothing to do with religion, and the Orthodox stream in Judaism (a minority in worldwide Jewry) exercises a monopoly that aggravates and alienates millions of Jews in Israel and the Diaspora.

Nowhere else are Jews trying to impose their religious creeds on each other; nowhere else has the conflict between religion and freethinking remained as bitter. The involvement of religious parties in Israeli politics has led to a polarization that is not to be found anywhere else outside of Islamic countries. Far from leading to the promotion of religion, the involvement of religion in politics has led to an unnecessary culture war. **The demand for secularization** should be supported by all religious Israelis, because it is in their interest as well as of secular Jews. Religious leaders should be at the forefront of the movement to turn Israel into a secular state.

**Corrupt and Hypocritical Religious Leaders**  
(Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater)

*Adapted from an article by Rabbi Levi Brackman, which appeared in Yediot Achronot, Oct. 11 2009*

 No wonder **people are getting fed up**. Many secular Jews, especially those living in Israel, maintain that the **deceit and double standards** that they see within the rabbinate and religious organizations have turned them off religion. Organized religion has become a dirty word in the eyes of many because of the corruption and hypocrisy that it often breeds. Indeed, through my teenage years, I put religious leaders on pedestals, only to be forced to remove them later. Of all the religious leaders I met, from all sectors of Jewish religious life, I could not find one who truly belonged on a pedestal as an example of perfection.

This experience taught me that no **one deserves unconditional reverence**. In the final analysis, humans are humans and as such are prone to make mistakes. Even religious leaders are subject to desires, lusts and temptations. Although we expect our spiritual leaders to set an example of morality and ethics, and many of them try to do just that, they are not infallible. The problem, however, lies both with some religious leaders and their followers. **Some religious leaders like to portray themselves as holy and perfect**. They demand reverence and are offended when they are not treated with the respect they perceive as being due to a person of their stature.

This egotism in turn plays into the natural human need of reliance and trust in others.

Most of us know the limit of our own knowledge and abilities and therefore find it comforting to be able to **put our faith in a person** whom we expect to be well versed in God's ways, wise, holy and perfect. One of the beauties of Judaism and of the Hebrew Bible is that all the main characters are portrayed in a uniquely human fashion, warts and all. **Even Moses** was not allowed to enter the Land of Israel because he hit the rock instead of speaking to it. In Judaism, religious leaders have but one role – to teach Torah and to render Halachic (Jewish law) decisions. Yes, we can look up to them hoping that the Torah they have learnt has made them better people, but **we must never expect absolute perfection** of them, nor should religious leaders portray themselves as such.


When religious leaders misbehave, their conduct inevitably reflects negatively on their religion as a whole. They must, therefore, be held accountable by their co-religionists. However, we must all be more sophisticated and realize that, although humans may fail to live up to their teachings, this does not detract from the truth of the teachings themselves.

Although we must constantly strive for higher standards, **corruption, sin and hypocrisy are unfortunate facts of life** and to give up on religion because of hypocritical and corrupt religious leaders is to throw out the baby with the bathwater.

Ultimately, we are all autonomous human beings with **choices of our own to make**, and both positive and negative aspects to our character. As one of the great Chassidic masters once said, "One who sees only the negative traits of others will learn only from them and end up completely negative. One who notices the positive in others will be able to learn from that and incorporate it into their own life and therefore become a better person." We can choose to see only the negativity in our religious leaders or we can learn from the abundance of positive attributes that they have. If we do the latter we are much more likely to become better people ourselves.

### **Banned from Marrying**

*From an article by David Regev, published in yediot Achronot, Nov. 11, 2009*

 Some 45,000 Israeli citizens labeled "shtuki" by the Rabbinate are not permitted to marry because the identity of their fathers is unknown. Some 10,000 of these, the majority of whom are minors, are officially defined "**bastards**". Such are the findings of a survey conducted by New Family (NF), an organization dedicated to advancing family rights and the rights of individuals within families. The survey was conducted ahead of the International Child Rights Day, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Some 3,500 "shtuki" are born in Israel every year, 2,800 of whom are born to single parents. These children **do not know who their biological fathers are**. In some cases, the children were born from sperm donations and the identity of the father will never be known. According to the NF, these children eventually discover that they are not permitted to marry according to the Israeli Rabbinates' rulings. Seeking to register for marriage, they are sent to the rabbinical court where a prolonged procedure is carried out and which often ends with a **marriage refusal**.

Irit Rosenblum, an advocate and the founder and chairperson of NF, says these children are listed in the **Rabbinates' black book** for the rest of their lives. Sources at Israel's Rabbinates say "shtuki" are not prohibited from marrying. "When a mother is single, the identity of the father is irrelevant and the child is deemed kosher for all purposes and intent," they say. Concerning married women, the Israeli Rabbinates doesn't look for bastards, unless the woman herself testifies that she had given birth out of wedlock." Eli Ben Dahan, Director of the Rabbinical Court said Sunday that **"the list of bastards** is kept at the Rabbinates and that it is highly confidential. The list includes less than 50 names. Israel does not have a list of "shtuki."

### **Armageddon**

The name, Armageddon, is a Greek corruption of the Hebrew *Har Megiddo*, meaning "the Mount of Megiddo". Megiddo, situated on a mount at the southern tip of the Jezreel Valley, was **an important city in ancient Israel**, and long before. It has been extensively excavated, with finds that go back all the ways to the period of the Judges.

Recently, a large monumental structure, most likely a temple, and an adjoining compound were explored. Professor David Ussishkin and Professor Yisrael Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University's archaeology institute, present directors of the excavation, ongoing for many years, describe the structure and its surroundings as **"the earliest evidence of urbanization** in the region". The facade and the rear walls of the compound are well-preserved. The front wall is four meters thick. The rear walls of the compound are about 50 meters long. Stones from one of the side walls were taken in ancient times, and reused for other structures. In the hall between the walls, excavators found three pairs of large, well-worked basalt stones. In the hall's center sits a pair of round basalt stones, and two pairs of squared stones lie to the sides. Smaller pieces of lesser-quality limestone were discovered in the center of the hall. Researchers are uncertain whether the basalt stones formed the bases of wooden columns or served as altars.

The site offers much evidence of **animal sacrifices**: Thousands of animal bones were found on the floors and in the corridors. The large number of bones and the monumental size of the structure led the researchers to conclude it was a temple. Dr. Paula Wapnish of Pennsylvania State University examined the bones and found that most came from sheep and cattle - domesticated animals. Only a few came from animals in the wild.

During the period in which the temple was used, Finkelstein says, cultures throughout the Near East were making their **first steps toward urbanization**. Large settlements developed in the vicinity of rulers' dwellings, surrounded by smaller, agricultural communities. In recent years, evidence of monumental construction and central settlements of this sort has been found not far from Megiddo at Tel Rehov, near Beit She'an, and at Beit Yareah, near Lake Kinneret. These all date later. No structures equal in size to the find in Megiddo have been found.

A large workforce of laborers, planners, engineers, stoneworkers and artisans would have been needed to erect such a structure. The temple was built on the northern slope of the hill at Tel Megiddo. To construct such a large building on a slope, the era needed to be leveled, requiring the movement of large quantities of earth. This could not have been accomplished without a strong central government. The large basalt stones are not part of Megiddo's natural landscape and, most likely, were brought from the north, where

ancient volcanic activity created extensive deposits of basalt. This presupposes a **local, effective and centralized government** in control of the area where such professionals lived, and which could provide the not inconsiderable material resources necessary.

The construction workers apparently lived in a community proximate to Megiddo. In a survey conducted near tel Megiddo, the territory to the west was shown to be sown with pottery shards from the period when the temple was built. Further examination revealed that, during the Early Bronze Age, there was a settlement there on **about 150 acres**, making it the Near East's largest settlement of the period. The temple was built on the highest point at the edge of the settlement, like the acropolis in the city-states of Greece and throughout the East, with the inhabitants living around it.

Apparently the rulers of Megiddo did not rely only on manpower from the city. This is evidenced by an extensive survey researchers conducted throughout the western Jezreel Valley. They found an **unparalleled flourishing of settlements** dating to the period of the temple. Professor Arlene Rosen of the University of London, who specializes in climate research, found that at the end of the 4th century B.C.E. conditions in the Jezreel Valley were well-suited to agriculture: extensive rainfall, springs for irrigating fields and fertile soil.

What led to the temple's downfall? Tel Megiddo, says Finkelstein, sits on a geologic fault. Archaeological findings show the temple was abandoned at some stage, with no evidence of fire or other violent events. Geologists Dr. Shmuel Marco of Tel Aviv University and Professor Amotz Agnon of the Hebrew University have found evidence of a **strong earthquake** that damaged the site, probably leading the inhabitants to abandon it. Megiddo was resettled to a lesser extent 200 years later. The later inhabitants established new temples at the tel, which served until the end of the second millennium B.C.E.

The Early Bronze Age temple was initially discovered at Tel Megiddo in 1996. Researchers realized this was an impressive structure. Since then, evidence accumulated supporting estimated dimensions: In 2000, two large column bases were excavated. Then last summer, most of the structure was excavated, and the researchers were surprised. The temple, it emerged, was built on a larger area than had been previously assumed, and is **an artful construction in which excellent materials were used**. Based on pottery shards and carbon-14 dating of olive pits found on the temple floor, the building was constructed shortly before the year 3000 B.C.E., during the Early Bronze Age. To date, it is the largest and most splendid structure of its sort to be found in the Near East.

### **Family and Ministry News**

Teaching **Romans**, we have passed the half-way mark and are now reveling in the wonderful confidences described in Chapter Eight, each secured by the sacrifice of Christ and repeatedly confirmed by the work of the Holy Spirit. Following this series, we shall commence a series on **How to Preach and Listen to Sermons**, designed for our own church but made available to other congregations in the area.

Editorial work on **Daily Christian Disciplines** has been completed. We are now seeking a publisher. My **commentary on Judges** is soon to be edited and prepared for publication. I am unable to engage in distribution and therefore prefer that my books are handled by another body. The **commentary on Romans** is making slow but steady progress. I am now in the second round of examination, comparing my findings with those of other commentators. I expect this stage to take up the better part of the coming year. The **commentary on Matthew** is also being edited, and I continue to be involved in research and contemplation of my thesis on **the Christian use of the Old Testament**. My goal is to show how an objective, contextual, literary and historical approach to the Old Testament inexorably leads to Christ.

The considerable rise in the value of the Shekel in relation to both the US Dollar and the European Euro, coupled with the high cost of working with a new editor has meant that we have had to channel more funds toward editing and are unable to hire **secretarial assistance**. This has brought us to rethink our work

plan and to decide that further funds will be used either for editing or for publishing rather than assistance in the office. Streamlining the distribution method of MaozNews, of maintaining the addressee's database and of budget oversight (by way of software) render such assistance less necessary. Work among the **young people in the church** is encouraging. We have set up a Young People's Committee, and I choose to submit to it all issues related to the activities of the group. This is one way in which I am seeking to prepare them to **assume mature godly responsibility in the church**. Much as I enjoy working with the young people, I hope to be able to hand over to someone ready for the task within the next few years. The elders of the church have approved the training of one such young man, whom I hope to prepare to take my place within the next few years.

On Tuesday evenings we meet for 3-4 hours of work, **renovating the facility** used by our church. So far, most of the work has entailed cleaning and painting. We hope to be able redo the floor in our worship hall and to overhaul the toilets, both is grievous disrepair. The new seating arrangement initiated by the young people has contributed to a more visible sense of community, shown the young people **they can make a difference**. One of the congregants is now building a pulpit, while others are assisting in dry-walling.



**Eran and Avital**

**The Erez family** (Eran, Avital and their three children) visited us in Israel for three weeks. It was more than just a pleasure to have them. Their departure left a resounding silence in our home and an ache in our hearts. The children have grown and are a real delight – only they are so very far away ...

**Shlomit** is expecting her first child. **Tamar** was with child but her pregnancy ceased. God willing, Bracha and I will be travelling to **the US this summer**. **Bracha** is planning to remain in the USA for a lengthy period visiting family and assisting Shlomit following childbirth and – hopefully – moving house. Baruch will be with her for part of the time, and she will be sorely missed during the rest. **Katya**, Felix and little Maya are doing well. **Rose** is learning to drive and preparing herself for military service. She is to enlist on Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>.

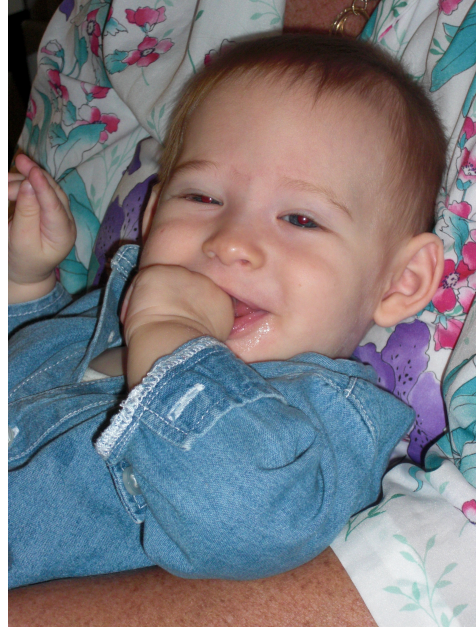
If you have not received notice of our impending visit to the USA and your church would like us to visit, please **write us** as soon as possible. Windows remain in the planned itinerary in the Cleveland, Cincinnati, South Florida, Birmingham (AL), Fort Worth, Phoenix, San Francisco and Los Angeles areas. Please note that, to avoid any conflict of interest, we will decline invitations from churches supporting Grace and Truth Christian Congregation.

Yours in the Gospel,

Baruch and Bracha Maoz



Doesn't look Like Maya's having fun ...



Tamar's Yotam loves to smile

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