

**MaozNews No. 36**

**Published every 4 weeks or so**

**December 2010**

*Our goal is to provide readers with an overview of realities in and with regard to Israel,  
with particular reference to the Gospel.*

*Readers will view those portions of MaozNews in which they have interest.*

*To that end, we seek to diversify.*

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**Disturbing Radicalization**

As MaozNews has repeatedly stated, Israeli society is undergoing a process is disturbing radicalization. Recently, a number of leading rabbis signed a religious ruling which **forbids renting and selling homes to gentiles**. They defended their decision by explaining that the land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people. "We don't need to help Arabs set down roots in Israel," Rabbi Shlomo Aviner of Beit El said.

"Racism originated in the Torah," said Rabbi Yosef Scheinen, who heads the Ashdod Yeshiva. "**The land of Israel is designated for the people of Israel**. This is what the Holy One Blessed Be He intended and that is how the [sage] Rashi interpreted [the Torah]." However, he added, he did not view the ruling as racist so much as segregationist. "The world is big and the State of Israel is small. God intended this land for the people of Israel, yet the whole world covets it. That is injustice."

Meretz faction whip Ilan Gilon requested that the Attorney General dismiss the rabbis who had signed their names, all of whom are in government employ. "We are witnessing **an epidemic of racism and xenophobia**. We must act firmly," he said. Deputy Knesset chairman MK Ahmed Tibi described the ruling as a "mass crime [committed] by

a group of racist rabbis who should be given intensive course in Jewish history." The group should be tried for "incitement to racism," added Tibi.

Haifa Mayor Yonah Yahav termed the ruling a "**desecration of God's name**. It is bringing hatred against those with whom we have chosen to live." Nazareth Mayor Ramiz Jaraisy also decried the moving: "We are all children of the land. Both nations must search for common ground and not bring about escalation."

Chief Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu of Safed published a similar ruling some months ago. His ruling was reprinted in October. "Their **way of life differs from than that of Jews**," the ruling stated. "Among [the gentiles] are those who are bitter and hateful toward us, who meddle into our lives to the point that they constitute a threat ... Neighbors and acquaintances [of a Jew who sells or rents to an Arab] must distance themselves from that Jew, refrain from doing business with him, deny him the right to read from the Torah, and similarly [ostracize] him until he goes back on this harmful deed," the ruling reads.

Prominent Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, denounced the ruling. "I've said for some time that there are rabbis who **must have their pens taken away**," he remarked. The Attorney General's office stated on Thursday that it would look into the criminal aspects of the ruling. In an official response, an Assistant to the Attorney General said that Weinstein would **examine possible criminal and disciplinary aspects** of the ruling. "The attorney general thinks that it appears that the statements attributed to the rabbis are problematic in several aspects... and are inappropriate for public officials," the statement said.

Earlier, the Chairman of Yad Vashem, Israel's central holocaust memorial described the ruling a "**severe blow to the values of our lives as Jews** and human beings in a democratic state." Past experiments have taught us just how important, and at the same time how fragile, these basic values are to coexistence. The Jewish people have experienced suffering, persecution, ostracism and the revocation of basic rights".

In the Knesset, the recent wave of anti-democratic legislative initiatives was highlighted by the amendment to the citizenship law and the draft bill that would make it possible for small communities to reject "incompatible" residents. These bills, are only part of a trend which recently prompted the Knesset Speaker to state: "There are members of the Knesset who appeal to the emotions of the public and in so doing are creating a global image **of Israel as an apartheid state**.

"In my opinion, their behavior shames the Jewish people. If such a thing were said in relation to Jews anywhere on the globe, a hue and cry would be raised in Israel on the need to stand up against anti-Semitism. My view is unequivocal: The Attorney General must determine if this is a case of incitement ... this is **another nail in the coffin of Israel's democracy**. Let me make this absolutely clear: I believe these people severely damage the State of Israel.

"Israel can justify its **faith in itself as a Jewish state only if it wields its democratic powers totally and unreservedly**. This moral right will be taken from us if we prove to the world that, when it comes to democracy, we deny anything which does not suit us ... It is wrong to say that, in the name of the Jewish state, he is permitted to

discriminate or set up a dividing line between one citizen and another, or between a citizen and a resident, or even between a citizen and a guest.”

### **An Image from The Recent Fire**

Israel recently fought the worst fire in its modern history. Fifty million trees were burnt, 5,000,000 square meters affected, including 270 homes, of which 84 were destroyed. Forty three individuals were killed, among them three fire-fighters, one of whom was a 16 year-old volunteer.

Assistance was called in from Azerbaijan, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, Greece, France, Spain, and the US. Three fire-fighting teams from the Palestinian Authority also enlisted.

Below is an image from that fire. The entire western slope of the Carmel range has been destroyed and declared off limits. Trees are falling and power lines are down, now to be redirected.



### **Baruch's Biography**

*In the previous installment, Baruch began describing his 1974 trip to the USA. We left him in Houston, with Drew and Frances Garner.*

In the course of this first visit to the US since my conversion, it was my privilege to make the acquaintance of Al Martin and Walter Chantry, both well-known leaders of the Reformed revival in the USA and well respected in Britain. Al was a fiery speaker with a note of authority that was sometimes disconcerting, not so much for its strength but for its manner, its basis and its direction.

Al expected to be obeyed. He exerted firm leadership in the church he pastored and the Elders who served alongside him were held up as examples for the flock. Of course, Elders *should* be examples. They should lead exemplary lives. But they should not present themselves as examples to be emulated. Further, Al and his Elders expected to be obeyed in some matters that were best left to the consciences of the people.

Like most of the early Reformed brethren, Al treated me with extreme caution. Having come out of the Fundamentalistic camp, where Arminianism and Dispensational Premillennialism were *sine qua non* with biblical veracity, he found it difficult to believe that anyone interested in Jewish evangelism – let alone a Jewish Christian – could be anything but Dispensational, even if he professed a Reformed understand of the Faith. I was not allowed near any of the church members until Al had thoroughly interviewed me, and even then, at the church picnic, I was closely watched and my words carefully noted.

Al himself was the epitome of kindness. He and his wife hosted me, cared for my every need and allowed me hours of listening through earphones to a number of superb cantors Al loved to hear on his record player. I spent a whole night at his home listening to Handel's Messiah.

From New Jersey I traveled to Harrisburg, where Walter Chantry met me at the train station and grilled me as carefully as did Al. Only then did he drive me to Carlisle, where Grace Baptist was situated. I was hosted in a large, old country house by the Hurleys. John Hurley was an Elder in the church.

It was a beautiful home, just outside the city and I was cared for kindly. Walter allowed me to address the Sunday School class concerning the state of the church in Israel. Having contracted severe laryngitis, I was forced to do so in a whisper, while my voice was amplified to the full capability of the sound system.

Upon my return to Israel, Grace Baptist sent a contribution that enabled Bracha and me to buy a refrigerator instead of the broken-down one we were using, and then an IBM Golf Ball Typewriter (the latest technological advance in those days), which was used to lay text for our books. Grace Baptist supported my work since then, until 2008, and Walter Chantry has been a friend, a mentor, a guide and a shining example for many years.

While in Carlisle I met Ernie Reisinger. Ernie owned a construction company and his heart was all for God and his glory. He used his considerable resources to promote the doctrines of God's grace in Christ as far and as wide as his reach would allow. Ernie did for me what he did for countless others: he plied me with books. We met in the loft of some house – I'm not sure if it was his home or his office, He questioned me with a friendliness that immediately put me at ease, and then gave me his imprimatur. As far as he was concerned, I was "alright". Walt Chantry rightly held Ernie in high regard and I have little doubt but that his approval played some role in Walt's warm acceptance of me. In the course of time, Grace Baptist became my sponsoring church in North America and, in effect, my USA home church until my retirement from the pastorate in 2008, when all contact with the church was lost.

In the course of this visit I met Al Herman, a cynical young Jew. He had no faith in God and viewed the idea that Jesus had any claim to Jewish allegiance as strange, to say the least. Members of Grace Baptist Church had been speaking to him of the Gospel. They were eager for us to meet. I doubt our encounter had any part in Al's later conversion, but he, his wife Debbie, and Bracha and I have become fast friends over the years. At one stage Al and Debbie considered moving to Israel to assist in the work, but Grace Baptist balked at the thought and their intentions were never realized.

Faith Reformed Baptist Church in Media, near Philadelphia, was another of my stations in the course of this tour. Wayne Mack was the Pastor. A young man was then living with him: sixteen year old Bob Strain, who was later called to pastor FRBC. Faith Reformed became the first of our supporting churches. It has stood with us through thick and thin over the years, and their ongoing support continues to the time of writing.

Bob visited us in Israel at a time when we were forced to meet in homes. The church later sent Rebecca and her father, Phil, to assist us in the building project, funding their ticket and their time with us. The congregation has always shown an intelligent, friendly and detailed interest in our work. The church's young Pastor, Matt Foreman, has taken up the church's interest in our work and has been an encouragement as we have sought to promote unity between Jews and gentiles in Christ, and to continue a literature ministry.

During this trip I had the joy and privilege of meeting Tom Wells, a Reformed fundamentalist pastor in Cincinnati, where Jerry Moore lived, and who was about to preach at Jerry's wedding. I was to conduct the wedding – the first I was ever privileged to conduct. I stayed with Jerry until the ceremony, got to know and respect Debbie and was delighted to have a small part in their joy. Debbie made the best fruit pies I have ever tasted. She had both an eye and a hand for home design. Regretfully, the two wandered from the Faith and, to my knowledge, are not walking God's ways now.

One of my next stations was Grand Rapids, where I met a self-confident church with a high view of church discipline. If I closed my eyes when the senior Elder preached, I could have thought I was hearing Al Martin. It was unnerving: the same inflections of voice, the same emphases, even the same idiosyncratic idioms and phrases. I have always believed that we should be eager learners from all and any, that we should respect those who forged the way for us and who have been used of God. But aping a capable man of God never seemed to be the right way to grow in Christ.

The trip extended over a four month period, with Bracha and me separated. By the time I entered the third month, I could barely sleep. Bracha was alone at home and I missed her very much. The heavy program never disturbed me. Trips taken in later years were far more strenuous, premeditatedly so. I then decided I would never travel without her for more than 21 days, and have kept that promise over the years with but one exception in 1976.

*To be continued*

### **Family and Ministry News**

Editing my **commentary on Matthew** has come to a close. Matthew will now be submitted to the publisher. I have completed writing a commentary on Malachi and am

half-way through translating and revising it for an English readership. In January, Bracha and I will travel to Germany, where I am to lecture on **Malachi**. We will take the opportunity to spend some time together, as we hardly do so when I am engaged with work at home.

The **Young Adults group** has grown significantly, and I am endeavoring to pass on more and more responsibility to the group's committee. We are now learning principles and methods of Bible study. I am also teaching our church and a sister congregation a **course on How to Preach and Listen to Sermons**. Following a brief introduction, two men are invited to preach briefly on an assigned text, and then the congregants to offer constructive criticism. One of my goals is to teach the congregations how to derive spiritual benefit from the ministry of the Word.

There is **no family news** to share, except to say that the severe drought has caused a section of our house to sink, creating **cracks in the wall and shattering glass panes**. We shall need to undergird that section of the house and are now consulting how this could best be done and at what minimal cost.

The **children** and **grandchildren** are all well, as are **Katya** and **Rose**.

We are presently planning the **2011 USA trip** and hope to have the joy of meeting many of our friends in the USA in the course of that time. Some few vacancies for speaking engagements are still open. **Tamar** is expected to give birth to her second child in April. Bracha is planning to be with her to help. She and Baruch's schedule would place them in the USA in the summer of that year.

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