

**MaozNews No. 40**  
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*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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**A National Social Aid Fund**

*On February 27 I sent out the following letter to the churches of Christ in Israel:*

With the beginning of the wave of immigration to Israel toward the end of the 1980s', tens of thousands arrived in Israel with nothing to their name. The social challenge was enormous: how to absorb these immigrants and help them acclimatize? Among the immigrants were many Christians.

Grace and truth Christian Congregation, which I then pastored, was blessed with many immigrants, whose worldly possessions were in the few suitcases they were able to take out of the former USSR – most of which were of no use in Israel. Grace and Truth faced the same kind of challenge with which Israeli society was faced.

In response, the church took similar action to that in which all of Israeli society eagerly engaged: we gave all we could to meet the immigrants' need of bedspreads and blankets, basic furniture, household utensils, suitable clothing and such like. We organized courses to teach newcomers how to conduct themselves in a free society with regard to house, personal and medical insurance, managing a bank account and similar areas of personal responsibility.

Within a short space of time, our resources were depleted. I therefore appealed

to friends overseas to enable us to continue to respond to the needs of our brothers and sister. As money came in, it was used to provide the immigrants with basic needs. Then the response became overwhelming: within a short space of time, some \$250,000 was deposited in the church's kitty.

Grace and Truth was then a congregation of 40 or so, to which a growing number of immigrants were being added. Obviously, it was not right for so small a number to have the benefit for so large a sum. I therefore proposed to the church that we found a national social aid fund that will assist Israeli Christians from all evangelical congregations in the country to lay an economic foundation through the purchase of homes and obtaining a professional education.

Generously, the congregation agreed and Keren Tkumah – The National Social Aid Fund – was established. Grace and Truth transferred the monies received to that Fund. It is important to emphasize that the Fund did not belong to Grace and Truth; it was founded at that church's initiative and made wholly independent of the church.

Keren Tkumah immediately registered as a charity and, although its annual monetary flow excused it from the duty of a CPA's scrutiny, the Board decided that the Fund would operate according to the highest moral and administrative standards possible. For that reason, since its founding, Keren Tkumah has had its annual financial reports overseen by a CPA., and an annual audit was submitted to public scrutiny.

The Management of the Fund was comprised of Christians from various evangelical congregations. It was determined that immediate relative of the members of the Fund's Boards would not be allowed to submit requests for loans. It was further agreed that Board members would excuse themselves from taking part in any review of requests submitted by individuals with whom the members had familial, social or congregational connections.

Loans are given to evangelicals who are either citizens or permanent residents, who have been in the land at least two years, are recommended to the Board by a local church to which they have belonged consecutively for the last 24 months or longer. Recommending churches must be recognized by the National Pastors' Fellowship, must have contributed a least the value of \$100 per annum the last two years and are included in the List of Recognized Churches maintained by the Fund (joining that list is very simple). Requests for loans are accepted only after all other resources have been exhausted.

Loans are given at a 1% interest plus linkage to the Cost of Living Index to order to secure the value of the Fund's capital base and cover the miniscule operating expenses (accounting, the CPA and legal fees when these are required). Loans are normally given for periods of up to ten years, although some families were accorded 15 years or so.

So far, the Fund has helped over 110 families purchase homes! In addition, a number of families have been enabled to obtain a professional education. Today there are 47 active loans. All the Fund's available resources are immediately plowed into new loans.

Out of the over 110 families, only two have defaulted. In one case a family left for Canada without paying its debt. Steps are being taken to secure that payment. Another family bought a home and then left the country, renting the flat out. We appealed to the Court and have had all rent received for the flat redirected by the Court to the Fund. In this way the debt (including legal expenses) is being paid.

Present members of the Managing Committee are Hanan Lukatsch, Samuel Likhtman, Meno Kalisher, Sasha Zatulsky and the undersigned. Soon three new members will be added.

It has been a great honor for me to initiate the founding and serve as the head of the managing Committee since its founding. But I have come to the conclusion that it is time for me to make room for new leadership in this post, as I have done in others. Over the last 18 months I have been discussing this step with the Board. In the most recent meeting, held on Friday February 25<sup>th</sup>, I resigned from both the Chair and membership of the Board. Hanan Lukatsch was elected to take my place.

I thank God for the privilege of the years of service he accorded me. I consider it important – as much as in me lies – to secure the ongoing ministry of the Fund and its expansion. The work done by the Fund is sacred. It is conducted with a premeditatedly low profile, on a volunteer basis and out of an earnest, heartfelt desire to serve the Body of Christ in Israel. I thank present members of the Committee and those who served in past years for the privilege of serving alongside them. I thank the readers of this letter for the privilege or serving in so precious an effort.

As I bring my service through the Fund to a close, I plead with you and with all the churches of Christ in the country: support the Fund as much as you can. The Fund is filing a central and important role in the life of Christians in this country, providing a service no other body is providing. In so doing it is supporting the churches of Christ and contributing to the strengthening of the Body of Christ in Israel. I call upon all churches in our country to add the Fund to their annual budgets: if each church contributed a mere 500 NIS per annum, the cumulative sum of over 75,000 NIS would amount to one or two loans each year! You would be assisting families to put roots into the soil of Israeli society and build a future.

I further request your consistent prayers for present Board members and for those who will be invited to join.

With love for Christ, his people and his church,

Baruch Maoz

### **Baruch's Biography**

*Continued*

*In the previous chapter, Baruch commenced work with CWI in early 1974, on behalf of which organization he travelled twice to the US. In the course of that visit he met some of the early pioneers of the contemporary renewal of Reformed Baptist convictions. He commenced a literature work and was encouraged to consider church planting.*

## **Early Growth**

Slowly, distribution of our magazine grew. Our 16 page, 12 pt. font, stapled A4 issue grew to a 36 page, 10 pt. A8, production. Just under two hundred initial readers grew to about 1,000 – Me’Et Le’Et reached virtually every Christian home in Israel. Our books also began to find an audience within the small but developing Christian congregations among the Jews in Israel.

Pressing needs remained unanswered, ever knocking at the doors of our hearts. Our first magazine was joined by Re’a Ne’eman (*A Faithful Friend*), geared to the 9-12 year olds. This magazine was illustrated, and printed in colour. Because our means were limited, we had to prepare each colour by hand and print it separately. Glossy chromo paper was too costly, so we used simpler paper that cost much less. Still, Re’a Ne’eman became a household friend in most Israeli Christian homes.

Bracha provided administrative assistance while changing diapers, warming bottles, laundering clothes, and keeping an extremely busy house clean, tidy and inviting. A consistently helpful role was played by other members of what had by then had become Grace and Truth Christian Congregation. Of special note were Dudu (David) and Etti Tel Zur, who assisted in editing the magazine, illustrating it and preparing suitable learning activities for our young readers.

## **CWI Israel Leadership**

Dr. Churcher retired and Dr. Brian Pokroy took up the leadership of the work. He and Murdo MacLeod saw things differently. Brian had joined the Society when it had shifted from its original doctrinal moorings and held to what was then a normative fundamentalism. Brian shared those convictions and naturally expected the work to continue on the same grounds. Murdo was not very excited about the medical work, while he had a deeply cultivated love for and confidence in books. Nurtured on the rich literary heritage of the Puritans, he was eager to see more of such literature produced in Hebrew. He also held to firm, however gentle, Reformed convictions. The result was a series of painful tensions between two good men.

Brian and Murdo were very different personalities. Murdo was a Scotch Presbyterian, accustomed to high views of theology, smoke-filled rooms in which thorny doctrinal issues were discussed while sipping good scotch whiskey. Brian was a sincerely stern separationist. Murdo enjoyed the good things of life while never compromising on issues of holiness and doctrinal truth, as he best understood them. Brian was suspicious of theologizing, wary of Presbyterianism and uncomfortable with Murdo’s overt confessional commitment and with his firm disavowal of Dispensationalism. Murdo’s Calvinism was the straw that broke the proverbial camel’s back. Unless God intervened, a clash between was inevitable, and came as no surprise.

Finally, Brian submitted his resignation. A young couple arrived from South Africa to take up the reigns of the work, but this turned out to be a disaster. I was then the only person available for the post, and was asked to assume the role of CWI Field Leader.

I hesitated. I did not want to become engrossed in administrative work, and knew myself to be unsuited to the task. I had no experience in administration, had never

led a work, was poorly educated much in every way and had little inclination to redirect my time and energies away from what I was doing.

In addition, work had begun toward establishing a church, and I did not want anything to take precedence over that aspect of my efforts. Circumstances were such that I had little choice: CWI Israel needed a Field Leader, and none other was available. Ill equipped, in no way prepared by the Society for the task, I was pressed under protest into the role of Field. I was given no guidance. There was no orderly handing over of responsibilities, not even a formal appointment until much later.

Murdo promised that CWI will allow me to focus above all on the work of the church, so long as CWI's own ministry did not suffer in consequence. I therefore embarked onto a dual, perhaps triple, ministry, without quite realizing what this would mean in terms of time, energies and commitment. It was 1977.

### **Avital's Eventful Birthday**

Three years earlier, on Avital's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday, Bracha and I celebrated with a party to which Avital's little friends and our family were invited. My mother and Nathan were present. Avital was not feeling well and, bravely, fought her way through the party. She was wheezing badly. We had become accustomed to her asthmatic attacks, medicated her as we normally did and carried on with the celebration.

The party ended and everyone left to make their ways home. Avital health deteriorated and she began struggling for breath. Having exhausted resources at hand, we decided I would take her to the hospital. By the time she was admitted, she began slipping. High doses of Cortisone immediately administered intravenously and she was given an adrenaline shot. There was no response, not even another shot and anxious hours of waiting. Only after three hours or so, her breathing slightly improved, enough for her to be transferred to the Children's Ward.

I called Bracha and asked her to bring me a change of clothes. She arrived with Uzzi and Nitsa, some food, a light jacket and clothes. I settled down for the night on an armchair beside the child's bed. Her breathing was heavy. From time to time it seemed to be getting worse. There she was, a helpless child in an oxygen tent, struggling to live. I prayed, Oh how I prayed! But there was no change.

Every half hour or so the young doctor in charge would return, examine her, shake his head and administer one medication or another. At around 2 am her situation worsened considerably. The doctor arrived and, after he examined her, said to me: "Mr. Maoz, we've done all we can. It doesn't look good but there is nothing more we can do. If you wish, I will give her another shot of adrenaline, but we can't give her any more – hear heart won't take it". Shivers went down my spine. I felt the cold hand of Death approaching.

I thought for a moment, sent a quick prayer to heaven for guidance and said, "No. No more adrenaline. She's in God's hand. Let's wait to see how she will do". He shrugged, put a hand on my shoulder and walked away. I knelt beside Avital's bed, wept and prayed: "Lord, you gave Bracha and me this child. She is yours to take. I'm afraid to say what I know I ought to say, but I trust you. Do what you see fit, but please don't let her suffer".

I don't know how long I prayed or slept, but when I awoke, Avital was breathing quietly. I stuck my head into the oxygen tent and took her pulse. It has slowed down to a reasonable rate. Tears rolled down my cheeks, this time for joy. I gave God thanks for restoring my child. In due course, morning arrived.

In the course of the morning rounds, the Head Doctor arrived. He was a rotund, white-moustached, fatherly figure. He embraced Avital as a grandfather would embrace a grandchild and, smiling toward me, said, "We've turned a corner. Thank God". I was overcome with emotion. "Yes! If you only knew! 'Thank God' is not just a phrase." Later, Bracha arrived and I could relate the story to her. We gave God thanks together and, a few days later, we were all back home. But I was never the same. That event did not become a memory; it became a vivid factor whenever I thought of my children or anything I loved and enjoyed in this world:

They're all God's, to give or to take. But their mine too, to love and to cherish, to serve and to enjoy for as long and the Maker sees fit.

### Ministry and Family News

**Bracha** is about to leave for just under two months in the US, where she plans to visit the children and their families and assist Tamar, who is to give birth to a second boy. She hopes to return in early May with Shlomit and little Yonatan, later to be joined by Keith. Until she does, I shall be all alone again.

Bracha has completed the project in which she was involved and is earnestly seeking gainful employment in an effort to supplement our income. Once we are both back in the country (more of than below), she hopes to find a job.



**Avital and Eran** have decided to put down deeper roots in the US by

purchasing a home. **Noam** is fast becoming a teenager (she recently had a bright red streak painted into her hair – see below).

**Maya** alternates between choir and martial arts, and **Nadav** is soon to go to "big school".

“Look, Grampa, what I did with my hair. Nice, isn’t it.”

“Well, errr, ehheh, uhhhh, well, yeah .... it’s certainly *different!* Very special on a very special girl!”

(She’s actually kinda pretty)



**Shlomit and Keith** are also looking into the purchase of a home, now that Keith is settled in the church. If you think Keith is skinny – it’s no reflection of Shlomit’s cooking ... **Yonatan** is has made up for the weight he lacked when born and has developed into a mild-natured, happy little baby. We look forward to having them both with us late this spring, when they lead a group from their church to visit Israel.





**Tamar and Marcus** have settled in Bothell, near Seattle, and Marcus is doing well in his job at Boeing. Little **Yotam** keeps them on their toes – a good preparation for **Avishai**, the new baby, scheduled to arrive in March! **Tamar** will have her hands full.

Savta **Bracha** is about to travel to be with them for the occasion.

**Bracha and I** plan to visit the US this summer, some two months following Bracha's return from the US, where we hope to visit family and friends and report to supporters. We hope to purchase a small vehicle in an effort to reduce costs (rental has advantages but is too costly for our pockets). As we travel, I will be working on the translation of the Bible into Modern Hebrew, my commentary on Romans and my thesis.

**Katya** has been fighting colds, as she does every winter, but little Maya is growing well. Having learned to walk, she has also been able to get her hands in everything ... **She is an** inquisitive and cheerful child. **Felix** is Acting Regional Manager for the Israeli Department of Antiquities. In this country, one cannot stick a spade into the ground without alighting on some archaeological discovery. Every construction, therefore, requires approval by Felix's department.



**Rose** is now into her second and last year in the military. She serves in a military base near home and, except for duties, is able to come home daily.

Life in the military is proving to be a social and spiritual challenge. The time is drawing near for Rose to begin thinking of her professional future – a big step into the Great Unknown. It's good to know that God is there, managing all things.

### A Cry of Rage and Sorrow

Below you will see recent photographs of two dangerous Israeli settlers, murdered in their sleep by a courageous defender of the Palestinian motherland. Pictures of these children after the bloodbath are too shocking to be shown.



How low can anyone sink so low as to slip in under cover of darkness, invade a home and slit the throat of a mother, a father and three innocent children?!

Israel's response is condemnable. Acting in vengeful spite by being contrary ("They don't want us to build? Well, watch this!") is a poor substitute for an intelligently meaningful policy. But nothing, absolutely nothing, can justify the horrific act perpetuated in the name of the conflict by those beasts of humanity who perpetuated this attack. Israel can and should be criticized for many actions, and for much inaction, but no anti-Semite, masquerading as an anti-Zionist, can justly accuse Israeli's of anything that comes near to the horror of the murder in Itamar.

### You Can Help

It has been encouraging to receive responses to our series of bulletins on recent Middle East developments and to our monthly issues of MaozNews. Many readers distribute copies of these to friends and fellow-church members. Thank you.

We will continue to offer special comment whenever events in our region justify more extensive attention. Our bulletins are separate issues, unrelated to the monthly newsletter, MaozNews, such as is now in your hands.

You can help us further by following us on Twitter (@BaruchMaoz), retweeting, by recommending us to friends and Facebook contacts, and by clicking "like" on our Facebook page.

Subscriptions may be had for free at [bmaoz@GMX.com](mailto:bmaoz@GMX.com). Back-issues of both the Bulletins and MaozNews are available on our website at

[http://www.themaozweb.com/?goal=productlisting&categories\\_id=5](http://www.themaozweb.com/?goal=productlisting&categories_id=5)

Above all, please pray for us!

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 (including date, transaction number and sum) at [maxsharp@earthlink.net](mailto:maxsharp@earthlink.net)

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