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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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Finding King David

A United Monarchy?

Based on an article from HaAretz, May 6 2011 by Asaf Shtul-Trauring

Every summer for the past four years, Prof. Yosef Garfinkel of the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem headed for a rocky hill in the Valley of Elah. "This is the most photogenic site in the country," he declares. "We have here a fortified city with a wall that was six meters high and had a population of 500 to 600 people. You won't see houses, walls, stairs and standing gates like these at other sites in Israel." The impressive settlement is surrounded by a casement wall - a double wall made of large boulders (weighing seven to eight tons each) with chambers between the walls. The fortifications still stand two to three yards high and ring an area of almost six acres. Some 90 buildings line the wall, some of which have been uncovered. According to Garfinkel, this site provides unique but definitive proof for the existence of a city that was part of the Kingdom of David in the 10th century BCE.

If he's right, his discovery is likely to have significant implications for a prolonged dispute in biblical archeology, the roots of which lie in the 19th century. In the past two decades, an important group of Israeli archaeologists and biblical scholars embraced the view that the kingdom of David and Solomon bore little resemblance to the biblical portrait of a united monarchy under David and Solomon, extending from Be'er Sheva in the south to Dan in the north. No archaeological finds have corroborated the existence of such a kingdom.

Some concluded that the kingdom was a small tribal entity, meager in substance and sparse in population, within the boundaries of Jerusalem and its immediate surroundings. Garfinkel maintains that the fortified settlement in the Valley of Elah was part of the extensive Kingdom of David, comprising of at least three major cities: Jerusalem, Hebron and the

settlement he is excavating. "The site reflects a capable government which necessarily rested on a periphery," says Dr. Eilat Mazar from the Hebrew University, a member of the school that maintains the existence of a larger kingdom. "In light of these ruins, is it possible to assume that no broad periphery exists? That is unthinkable," she insists.

The Evidence

"I did not come here to look for David," Garfinkel says. In the summer of 2007, he arrived at the Khirbet Qeiyafa site with a small team to examine the fortifications. He found two archaeological layers, one from the time of Alexander the Great, the other from the Iron Age. This was where he wanted to excavate. "In tells that contain layers of 20 cities, each city digs into the earlier one and steals stones from it. Things get chaotic. I prefer to excavate sites with one or two periods, where there is less damage from one layer to the next," he says.

Garfinkel identifies the settlement he is excavating with the city of Sha'arayim, which is mentioned in I Samuel. He identified two gates in the settlement's fortifications, in the west and in the south (Sha'arayim means "two gates" in Hebrew). "You won't find another city in Israel or Judah with two gates," he notes, and adds, "Sha'arayim is mentioned only in connection with the Davidic period. When David killed Goliath, the Philistines escaped via Sha'arayim." "This city is the sentry of the Kingdom of Judah," he says, pointing to the valley. "The Elah Valley is on the route that leads from the coastal plain to the hill region. On west you have the five Philistine cities and, in the east, the Kingdom of Judah. This was a crucial boundary, which explains the site's geopolitical importance."

Prof. Israel Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University is among those who believe that the biblical narratives are void of historical foundation. He is far from convinced that the site Garfinkel is excavating was part of the House of David rather than a Philistine or Canaanite settlement. Even if it belonged to the Kingdom of Judah, he says, he does not think it reinforces the notion of a developed Davidic kingdom. His colleague, the historian Prof. Nadav Na'aman, points out that most of the data about the site have not yet been published, "the proposition that the site is related to the center in Jerusalem seems highly improbable."

Garfinkel's thesis is not being propounded in a vacuum. Other archaeologists argue that, in recent years, they have unearthed significant findings from the United Monarchy. Mazar claims to have found the ruins of David's palace at the City of David site outside the present-day wall of Jerusalem. The structure she uncovered is located atop a hill in the northern section of the City of David, a little to the south of the Temple Mount. At the foot of the structure are previously discovered massive terraces towering to a height of 16.5 meters and known as the "stepped stone structure." According to Mazar, the terraces formed a supporting wall for the palace. This is Mazar's most impressive discovery, but her dating is controversial, since it is based on pottery shards found above and below the stratum she excavated. The fact that the stratum were disturbed by subsequent layers of building may be the reason. Mazar dates the structure to the 10th century BCE. Others are certain that it is of later construction.

Another recent archaeological find in which Mazar was involved made headlines: a large wall, 70 meters in length and 6 meters high, located in the same area. Mazar dates this to King

Solomon's time. Again, the dating has been contested, even by some in the conservative camp. "No one agrees with me," Mazar admits, though her confidence appears unshaken. "There is no doubt that the statements to the effect that Jerusalem was a humble, nondescript village no longer hold water. There has been a revolution," she declares. "Findings in Jerusalem indicate construction of an extraordinary character, pointing to equally extraordinary royal scope and power." Some scholars also cite finds made in Jordan to reinforce the notion of a developed kingdom. The American anthropologist, Prof. Thomas Levy, from the University of California, San Diego, is currently excavating at Khirbat en-Nahas in southern Jordan, which was a large copper mining center in the Iron Age and is located in a region thought to have been under the control of the Edomites. Three years ago, Levy, using carbon-14 dating, dated the site to the end of the 10th century BCE, the Solomonic period. According to the conservative camp, such finds bolster the credibility of the biblical narrative, which speaks of a developed entity in the region of Edom in conflict with the United Monarchy.

Prof. Finkelstein rejects this interpretation. "No inscription was found which could shed light on the Kingdom of Solomon," he says. "There are no impressive remnants from earlier periods in classic Edom. The findings are more closely related to the Assyrian hegemony and to Arab trade in the region." Scholars are divided as to when the region's peoples moved from a simple rural society to urban life. Finkelstein and his colleagues espouse a view known as "low" or "late" chronology. Its essence is that archaeological strata attesting to fortified settlements and traditionally dated to the reigns of David and Solomon in the 10th century BCE date decades later. The low chronology method rules out the existence of a united monarchy in the 11th and 10th centuries BCE.

Garfinkel is convinced that, whether the city was part of Judah or was Canaanite or Philistine, Khirbet Qeiyafa already existed in all its glory in the 10th century BCE. "Our dating destroyed the low chronology," he says with satisfaction. But Finkelstein insists, "It will be very difficult to persuade me that four carbon-14 readings will change the picture in the face of 400 existing readings. The Khirbet Qeiyafa site is very important but is of no relevance in the dispute over chronology."

An Ongoing Saga

Archaeologists have sought evidence of the United Monarchy at Hatzor, Megiddo and Gezer, all of which are mentioned in I Kings as part of Solomon's construction projects. Toward the end of the 1950s, Professor Yigael Yadin unearthed a large six-chambered gate at Hatzor. On the basis of the archaeological strata and the pottery at the site, Yadin and Yohanan Aharoni, another leading archaeologist and historical geographer, dated it to the Solomonic period in the 10th century BCE. Drawing on the biblical reference to the gates of Solomon, Yadin went on to Megiddo and Gezer, where he found gates with a similar structure. His conclusion was that a well-developed centralist ruling authority existed in the 10th century BCE. This authority built monumental structures and drew up master plans which were implemented throughout the kingdom. The finds seemed to attest to the existence of a united monarchy reaching at least to Hatzor, north of Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee).

According to the minimalists, the United Monarchy never existed. Two kingdoms developed side by side, with the Kingdom of Judah and its capital, Jerusalem, developing at a later stage, following the consolidation of the Kingdom of Israel in the ninth and eighth centuries BCE. David and Solomon are entirely fictional figures.

On July 21, 1993, a dramatic discovery made at the Tel Dan dig in northern Israel. The excavation director, Prof. Avraham Biran and the researcher Gila Cook, discovered a basalt stele with an Aramaic inscription which included the words "BeitDavid" (House of David). In the inscription, dated to the ninth century BCE, one of the kings of Aram boasts of having killed 70 kings, among them Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel and another king, a descendant of the House of David. Biran was initially accused by some of forgery, but it soon became clear that this was the first direct extra-biblical proof of the existence of a dynasty founded by David.

This discovery called for a reformulation of minimalism, and Finkelstein was one of the first to assume the task. In the mid-1990s, he published a series of articles in which he put forward his thesis, which integrated the minimalist critique in a more moderate version. In 2001, he and Neil Asher Silberman, a contributing editor to *Archaeology Magazine*, co-authored "The Bible Unearthed," in which they presented their thesis concerning the historical validity of the biblical narrative. Finkelstein and Silberman maintain that the two kingdoms were not a united nation, liberated from Egyptian bondage, which conquered the land under the leadership of Joshua. They sprang up concurrently from the local Canaanite peoples. Only in the ninth century BCE did the Kingdom of Israel begin to emerge, flourishing in the eighth century, after which it was conquered by the expanding Kingdom of Assyria.

Judah, in contrast, was a small kingdom that did not become a significant entity until the seventh century BCE. The initial authorship of the relevant biblical text is dated to this period, when populations from the northern kingdom were exiled and some reached the Kingdom of Judah under the rule of Josiah. According to this approach, the biblical narrative of the patriarchs and the conquest of Canaan constitutes an attempt to create ideological grounds for the two kingdoms. A "pan-Israelite" ideology of this sort could justify the territorial ambitions of Josiah, the king of Judah, who considered himself the heir to the ravaged Kingdom of Israel.

Prof. Amihai Mazar, of the Institute of Archeology at the Hebrew University terms himself a moderate conservative. He insists, "It is impossible to treat any of the episodes until the conquest of Canaan as historical." However, he adds, "Starting from the narratives of the judges, the social-economic-political-international background is very consistent with the archaeological reality. That also holds true for the United Monarchy." Finkelstein disagrees. "Demographically and economically," he says, "it was a relatively humble kingdom. We are talking about some 20 small sites in the Judean Hills. If we exaggerate, we reach a total of 5,000 souls, in Jerusalem itself barely a few hundred." In that case, Yadin erred when he dated the gates at Megiddo, Gezer and Hatzor to the 10th century BCE and cited them as proof of the United Monarchy. Those sites are outside the boundaries of the modest rural polity described by Finkelstein and Silberman, who argue that the gates should be dated to the ninth and eighth centuries BCE, long after Solomon's death, and affiliated with the monarchs of the Northern Kingdom during its period of prosperity.

In contrast, the archaeologist Amnon Ben-Tor, from the Hebrew University, who presently directs excavations in Hatzor, passionately defends the dating of the finds at his site. "What can I say but that ... we determined that the gates do in fact belong to the 10th century?" Similarly, Amihai Mazar maintains, "There is a certain problem of dating at Megiddo. At Hatzor and at Gezer there is no problem at all. The gates can be dated to the 10th century BCE, not with certainty but with no little measure of probability."

Confirmation

Garfinkel that his finds at Khirbet Qeiyafa attest to the existence of an established kingdom in the 10th century and rebut the notion that David was "a sheikh in a Bedouin tent". The most important discovery made at the site that allegedly backs Garfinkel's interpretation is an ostrakon, a potsherd bearing an inscription, which, according to some scholars, is in ancient Hebrew. "At least three researchers in Israel said it is biblical Hebrew, but there are some researchers who are not quite certain about that," Amihai Mazar notes. Prof. Gershon Galil of the University of Haifa, who recently deciphered the inscription, maintains that "30 major researchers accept our reading, which shows that the inscription is in Hebrew - the earliest Hebrew inscription discovered to date. Of the 18 words that appear in the inscription, eight appear only in the Bible."

Garfinkel also cites the city's structure as proof of its affiliation with the Kingdom of David. As Garfinkel notes on the excavation website, "The planning of Khirbet Qeiyafa includes a casement city wall and a belt of houses abutting the casements, incorporating them as part of the construction." This type of urban planning," he adds, "is known only in Judah and exists at four other sites, all of them in Judah. There is no casement wall in the Canaanite or Philistine culture. Nor are the homes integrated into a wall in the Kingdom of Israel; this is a Judahite fingerprint." Further proof, Garfinkel says, lies in what was not found at the site: pig bones. Not one bone of the non-kosher animal was found by an archaeozoologist who examined over 3,000 bones found in the course of the excavations.

In addition, "there is not one icon of a human being or an animal in this city, even in the sacred area. The site is completely aniconic," Garfinkel says, referring to the practice of shunning the concrete representation of divine beings or living creatures. "There is much controversy about when the monotheistic conception emerged in Israelite worship and when the aniconic approach evolved. Some argue that this development did not occur until the end of the Second Temple period or until the Persian or Hellenistic periods. But when one compares this room to cultic structures at Canaanite or Philistine sites, you find biblical taboos observed here: there are no pig bones and there is no iconic ritual. The site differs from all the small villages that characterized settlement locales in the 12th-11th centuries BCE."

Finkelstein does not rule out the possibility that this is a Judahite city. He seems to be further modifying views he expressed with great confidence in the past. "It's a possibility that cannot be ignored," he says. "But if it is a Judahite site it will not change what we say in the research about the scope of the early monarchy. It would be immeasurably preferable if the dig were presented to the public in a more moderate form. In my opinion, presenting the results in

the form of antagonism against modern research is not the right way." Prof. Avi Faust, from the Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archeology at Bar-Ilan University, who affiliates with the conservative camp, says, "We do not yet fully understand Khirbet Qeiyafa. In my opinion, we have not succeeded in fitting it into the general picture of the southern region of the Land of Israel. I can say in general terms that it is not a Philistine site, but not with 100 percent certainty that it is Judahite."

Europe: The Parasite and the Host

Based on an article by Victor Volsky, March 3, 2011, American Thinker

<http://www.americanthinker.com/printpage/?>

[url=http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/03/europe_the_parasite_and_the_ho.html](http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/03/europe_the_parasite_and_the_ho.html) Seite 1 von 3

Nature never ceases to amaze. Take the Mammoth Wasp. The female of the species searches for the larva of a dung beetle or rhinoceros beetle. Once the prey is spotted, the wasp paralyzes it with a venomous sting and lays her egg on the outer skin of it's larva. On hatching, The wasp larva bites through the helpless host's integument and proceed to munch away on the beetle's soft tissues, starting with the least vital organs, such as muscle, blood or fat, and leaving the crucial nervous system for dessert. By extending the life of the host as long as possible, the predator ensures for itself a supply of food which stays fresh till the end.

It's a matter of conjecture how versed in biology were the leaders of militant Islam, but the plan of conquering the West they concocted a few decades ago closely mimicked the Mammoth wasp's strategy: invade the prosperous North; entrench themselves among the indigenous population; paralyze its will to resist with the poison of multiculturalism and political correctness; then gnaw at the innards of the host societies, multiplying and feeding on their hosts until total control of Europe is achieved.

According to the great Islamic scholar Bat Ye'or, the roots of the problem go back to an association called the Euro-Arab Dialogue, created in July 1974 in Paris. The grand objective was to meet the acute demand for cheap labor in the European Union countries whose pampered, sybaritic population would not touch dirty jobs and creating a counterweight to the hated American monolith for the price of securing oil supplies from the Middle East.

Hundreds of thousands of poor, unskilled immigrants from North Africa, Middle East and Asia flooded EC countries. The invaders had no inkling of the ultimate objectives of the project; they were seeking economic opportunity. But the masses have never been consulted by leaders, who viewed their foot soldiers as so much cannon fodder.

European assimilation of the newcomers was not on the agenda; it was assumed that the immigrants would live in isolated enclaves, out of sight and out of mind of the locals. The European elites believed that all those Arabs, Turks, Kurds and Pakistanis would form a permanent proletarian class, forever content with its lowly status. Such naiveté was all the more striking given that the Islamist leaders were not reticent about their true goals. Thus, in 1974, speaking at the UN, the Algerian leader, Houari Boumedienne declared: "One day, millions of men will leave the Southern Hemisphere to go to the Northern Hemisphere. They will not go there as friends because they will go there to conquer. And they will conquer it with their sons. The wombs of our women will give us victory."

How's that for lack of ambiguity? That Boumedienne's proclamation was ignored goes to show the power of wishful thinking on the part of the self-deluded Westerners. Muslim leaders saw the gates of Europe thrown wide open and perceived a long-awaited chance to turn the

tables on the infidels, cherished by the Moslems ever since their expansion was stopped at the walls of Vienna in 1683.

Ever since, the West had lorded it over the world of Islam, which was mired in backwardness and seething in impotent fury. The day came when the Western civilization lost its nerve and gave the forces of Islam an opportunity to enter the enemy fortress and conquer it from within. The principal cities of Western Europe sprouted Moslem colonies led by radical imams supplied in a steady stream by the Saudi and Pakistani madrassas. The immigrant enclaves isolated themselves from their host societies, acquiring all the trappings of independent quasi-states. They came to be dominated by fundamentalist mores and customs; Sharia courts sprang up and Moslem leaders gradually accustomed the authorities to view the virtual autonomy of their immigrant subjects as an unavoidable fact of life.

Generational change failed to housebreak the Moslems, as naïve Western politicians and intellectual had hoped. Each generation of Moslems turned increasingly more radical; drifted father away from their "infidel" neighbors; and increasingly viewed their native countries as conquered lands at the mercy of the triumphant victors. A typical example is Albaicin, the historical quarter of the Spanish city of Granada. The Moslems there are convinced that, since having seized control of Albaicin, they will be seize control of the whole city and, in time, of the entire El Andaluz, the crown jewel of the medieval Muslim Caliphate.

Here is how the late Oriana Fallaci, a famous Italian journalist and an intrepid and passionate defender of the European civilization, described their tactic in her book The Force of Reason: "In Granada, they created a situation similar to the one which was engulfing Beirut and is now engulfing many cities in France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Holland, Sweden, Denmark, etcetera. Ergo, today the quarter of Albaicin is in every sense a State within a State.

"An Islamic feud, an apostatic domain, which lives with its own laws, its own institutions, its own hospital, its own cemeteries, its own abattoir, its own newspaper (La Hora del Islam), its own publishers, its own libraries, its own schools (that teach nothing but how to memorize the Koran), its own shops, its own markets, its own banks. Even its own currency, given that in Albaicin all is bought and sold with the gold and silver coins struck on the model of the dirham in use at the time of Boabdil Lord of old Granada. (Money coined in Calle San Gregorio that, for the usual reasons of 'public order', of which the Spanish Ministry of Finance pretends to know nothing)."

The Islamist colonizers relentlessly strengthen their positions, playing on Western society's sense of guilt, assiduously fanned by the progressive media. Using salami tactics, the Moslems increasingly demand and receive special treatment. Swimming pools in London accommodate Muslim sensibilities in bathing attire. Schools serve halal food. Prison guards have been forbidden to wear St. George's Cross because it offends Muslim prisoners. Muslims have called for the implementation of Sharia (Islamic) law in Britain. The Archbishop of Canterbury has said some form of Sharia law there is "unavoidable."

This internal expansion proceeds unopposed. Islamists brook no criticism and, aided and abetted by the politically correct indigenious elites, effectively gag the few brave Cassandras' who dare to warn of the creeping danger. Their favorite tactic is to assume the pose of victimhood and complain of discrimination -- the dreaded, all-purpose accusation which they wield as a burglar wields his jimmy. As soon as another in a long series of Islamic terrorist attacks occurs, Moslem organizations in the West raise a hue and a cry about the growing danger of "Islamophobia", and the media darkly warn against an "overreaction." Major Nidal, screaming "Allah Akbar", shoots up Fort Hood, killing 13, and the US Army Chief of Staff reacts by expressing alarm about how the attack might affect his diversity program.

To add insult to injury, a large proportion of Moslems and almost all their leaders parasitize on the societies they openly despise. In their eyes, to exploit one's victim, to live off its largess, is but a conqueror's privilege. According to tradition, Genghis Khan said: "The greatest joy a man can know is to conquer his enemies and drive them before him, to ride their horses and take away their possessions, to see the faces of those who were dear to them bedewed with tears, and to clasp their wives and daughters in his arms!" How wonderful it is to revel in the knowledge of one's power and impunity, how sweet to watch the humiliation of the helpless enemy!

While feeding on the host, the parasite is relentlessly driving for supremacy in Western Europe. Moslem communities are rapidly multiplying through a high birth rate and the constant flow of immigrants. They are motivated by vicious envy and a consuming hatred nourished by religious zeal, while the indolent, listless Europeans, having lost their will to live, are sliding ever closer to the edge of the abyss.

As the demographic weight of the Moslem communities in Europe increases, so does their political influence. Soon the time will come for the finale. The parasite will attack the nervous system of the host -- its political institutions. The agony will not last long. The Green Banner of the Prophet will be hoisted over Europe and a new caliphate will rise on its ruins. The great civilization, that has given the world Shakespeare and Goethe, Beethoven and Mozart, Leonardo and Rembrandt, Newton and Einstein, will be no more.

I am grateful to the Rev. Albrecht Hauser for this article and for his many years of friendship. Rev. Hauser served as a missionary in Pakistan and, for years, played a large role in the missions outreach of the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church of Baden-Wurttemberg. He is a true friend of the Moslem people, a devout and intelligent Christian and a loving partner to his wife, Rosemarie. I am honored to count him as a friend in Christ.

Baruch's Biography

(Continued)

In the previous installment, Baruch took initial steps toward forming a church in Rishon LeTzion. He framed a proposed Confession and a Constitution and commenced services in his home. He was then joined by four others.

The First Step Toward A Church

With such wide disparities between the four of us, it was obvious, therefore, that we could not work together to establish a church before we were able to establish significant agreement that would enable us to agree on the essence and the function of a church: what would be taught, by whom and with what means? What are the relative places of preaching, fellowship, evangelism, music and social involvement? What would be our functional emphases? Will there be a stated membership and, if there will, how and on what grounds is one to be included in it? What offices will there be in the church and how will office bearers relate one to another and to the congregation? Whom would the church baptize and who would partake of communion? What are the goals and grounds of church discipline, and how should it be exercised?

We were eager to make progress, but clearly understood that we first needed to lay a foundation on which to build. Personal friendship and personal preferences were not enough. We needed guidance from the word of God. Unable to establish a church at that stage, we decided to form what we chose to describe as a "Fellowship": we would not assume the duties and privileges of a church beyond a preaching ministry. We would not exert church discipline,

have membership, baptize or give communion. There would be no officers, only a Leadership Committee.

Meanwhile, we would meet on a weekly basis on Saturday mornings (Sunday worship is regretfully not yet an option for Jewish Christians in Israel; it is a workday. I long for the day when we in Israel will be able to worship with all the people of God, on the same day). The word of God would be preached by four of us (Eli declined to preach) and each would have complete liberty to preach according to his conscience, even if it meant that we disagreed with each other in the course of our sermons. None of us was to be polemic. Meanwhile, the four preachers would form the Leadership Committee and would, on a semi-monthly basis, meet to discuss a confessional basis for what we hoped would become a church.

It was early May, 1974. A good many years had passed since a new church had been formed in Israel, when a number of Jewish Christian church and Mission leaders had left their respective churches to form what ultimately became The Messianic Assembly in Jerusalem, led by S. Kofsmann, Victor Smadja, Jacob Goren and others. Ours was the first effort to form a church from the ground up, by individuals who led neither churches nor missionary societies. It was also the first time a church was to be formed on a confessional basis. We had no previous experience in church planting, nor were there in the country others on whom we could lean for advice, so we groped our way.

We agreed to meet on a weekly basis, every month alternation from one of the two homes in Rishon LeTzion that could accommodate our small group. One home was that of the Goldberg family. The other was the Maoz residence.

Attacked

The Orthodox were not at all enamored with our presence. As soon as they found out we were holding regular services, they came out with a poster, placed on municipal billboards all over town. Bright red, with large dark letters, the posters announced:

DANGER, MISSIONARIES!!!

Arthur Goldberg, David Zeidan, Baruch Maoz and David Tel Zur
are dangerous missionaries operating in our city

Be warned. Inform us of any activity related to these individuals

The intention was to try and stir the city against us and to intimidate us so that we would entertain second thoughts about establishing a church in the city. We responded with a similar poster, designed exactly like the one that was posted against us, with important differences:

DANGER, MISSIONARIES!!!

Arthur Goldberg, David Zeidan, Baruch Maoz and David Tel Zur
are missionaries operating in our city

If interest to know more, contact us at the following numbers

And then we provided three telephone numbers

The Orthodox were persuaded that we would cower under the light of exposure, but we welcomed it. We were not doing anything of which we should be ashamed, and we were certainly not going to allow opponents of the Gospel to silence us. So far as I know, this was the first time a Christian community has responded in such a way to orthodox opposition. Our opponents were in confusion. They hastily went through town, pulling down our posters, and that was the end of any such efforts.

Another attempt of a different nature was made on one of the occasions in which we met for worship at the Goldberg home, in Shikun Mizrach in Rishon LeTzion. I believe it was in mid 1975, some months after our second child, Shlomit was born. The fellowship was hosting

overseas friends at the time, one of whom was blind, and I was asked to meet him and his friends at the door when they arrived for worship. Bracha, our two girls and I had arrived (Shlomit had since been born and was but a baby), and Bracha was busy helping prepare one of the bedrooms to serve as a Sabbath School classroom.

We heard a commotion outside. A large gathering of black-clad Orthodox men were outside the gate, accompanied by many local residents, most of whom were not religious. I instructed Bracha to collect the women and children and to stay inside, while the men stood along the fence and kept the protestors out of the yard. The gate was breached and I rushed to close it by clutching the gate with one hand and a fence post with the other. The crowd grew steadily and their protests grew louder and louder: "Missionaries! Turncoats! Traitors! Nazis! Haters of Israel! Murderers of Jewish souls!"

I asked a congregant to happen to have a camera with him to distance himself from us and the crowd, and take pictures, so we would have evidence to present to the police and the courts, should the need arise. As he positioned himself, our guests arrived and I had to force my way through the crowd to make my way to them and then back again, to the house. Grasping the gate again (one of the men had taken my place) I suddenly felt a blow on my right hand, and another, and another. Someone was hitting me with a broomstick in an effort to break my grasp of the gate. Dudu arrived and, standing beside me sought to help me keep the gate closed so that the protestors would not enter and threaten the women and children. We were all packed together, Protestors and congregants, friends and foes. We could hardly move.

I called out to the men from the congregation to call the police and to form a second line behind me, when someone raised his fist and aimed a blow to my face. To protect me, Dudu took the only action he could think of in the short space of time available and in the crush of people: he interjected his face between mine and the blow. It was a hard blow. We all heard it, and Dudu was knocked off his feet onto the line behind us. The attacker was taken aback by his own violence and melted into the crowd, with Dudu calling after him, "God bless you!"

The police finally arrived and dispersed the crowd. Dudu recovered from the initial consequences of the blow he had sustained, but his jaw began to swell. No, he would not press charges. Nor would any of us. Within a short space of time, the swelling was so bad that Dudu could not see through his right eye. I was immensely grateful to him for his sacrifice. He made nothing of it.

We held the service and made our way back our respective homes. When the photographs taken were developed (there were no digital camera in those days...), I was astonished to see that Bracha had been out in the yard, alone. "What on earth were you doing there?!" I asked her. "We had instructed all the women and children to stay in the house." "Well, I couldn't just sit there," she answered. "The Orthodox angered me with their violence, and I wanted them to know that they can't intimidate us!" Timid, shy, quiet Bracha, out on the frontlines...

A week later, a delegation of residents from the area asked to meet with us. Naturally, we agreed, and were surprised to see Dudu's assailant among those who arrived. They introduced themselves. The assailant spoke up: "We've come to apologize. We were deceived by the Orthodox, who told us you had kidnapped children and were taking them to Germany to be Christianized, and that you had taken advantage of a blind man. I'm sorry, we're all sorry and (turning to Dudu), I apologize for hitting you." We shook hands, and that was the end of the matter.

By early 1976, we were ready to propose the founding of a church. Art had regretfully left us, on very good terms. He saw that we three were coalescing in one direction, and he in

another. So he returned to his former church. Over the years, we remained friends, and Art, with his wife Zella, fulfilled a very positive role in the life of my children.

Ministry and Family News

I was able to renovate my ThinkPad at a very reasonable price. I can now use this excellent **laptop** for at least another year. I've never owned a better laptop, not received better service than that given by IBM whenever the hardware needed servicing.

Many thanks to those who wrote in to Mr. Padgett at Presbyterian and Reformed. I am very pleased to inform you that P&R have decided to publish my revised Judaism is not Jewish.

Meanwhile, I've begun the self-publishing process for my commentary (in English) on Malachi, and am back in harness on my commentary (in Hebrew) on Romans. My present focus is on honing the language while researching and commenting on Paul's use of the Old Testament in his arguments in the course of that important letter. This is no small matter for Israeli Jewish readers: is the Christian use of the OT legitimate, or is it a case of special pleading. My thesis will be dealing with this very issue from a slightly different angle.

Plans for the **US trip** this summer are near complete. Very few windows are still open, and interested churches are invited to write as soon as possible. Contact with new churches would be especially welcome. In this connection Bracha and I wish to make special mention of and offer special thanks to Patmos International, who have stood with us faithfully over the years; and to Berean Baptist Church for handling our US income. Without this help, we could not survive. **Pirkko Saira**, of Patmos International, underwent an operation one day before this letter was sent out. Please pray with us for her fullest recovery.

There is not much news from the family. **Avital** underwent a successful minor operation, from which she has now recovered. **Keith, Shlomit and Yonatan** visited us for a short while in the course of a tour of Israel Keith and Shlomit initiated and led. **Bracha and I** are well. **Tamar and Marcus**, with their two children, are also well.

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