

MaozNews No. 95
Published every 4 weeks or so
January 2016

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Home

We returned home on December 17th and since then have been busy alternating between work and dealing with the situation that took shape in our absence. Negotiations with the contractor failed. We have had to pay the full amount contracted to him and prepare to take him to court for damages.

The insurance company has accepted partial responsibility for damages incurred during the break-in but not for the losses. We will recoup about 35% of the expenses involved in repairs. As to the water damage this is still being negotiated. An agreement has been reached with the contractor. He too has accepted partial responsibility for the quality of construction and has accorded us damages that cover some 30% of what the repairs actually cost. We are relearning how to manage realities, as these have drastically changed with all of our savings wiped out, significant debt created and our monthly income reduced. Some churches have increased their support, for which we are immensely grateful.

The house is now more than just livable and I am busy to the extreme in writing, translation and editing. A fuller report follows in the Ministry and Family section of this letter. We are, still, merely human and therefore still need your prayers.

Israel Today

Israel is experiencing the shame of having a former Prime Minister who was recently found guilty of accepting bribes, of the present Prime Minister's wife being investigated for minor theft and the misuse of public funds and of yet another Mayor being investigated for sexual misconduct, including rape, and the acceptance of bribes.

At the same time, democratic freedoms are being eroded in the era of free speech and those who dare disagree with the present Government's policies are described as unpatriotic. Jewish settlers guilty of the murder of Palestinians are treated with kid gloves while Palestinian terrorists experience the full weight of the law and, ominously the government is offering prizes to authors who engaged

in “patriotic” writing. It would appear as if a dark shroud is growing over my beloved country. I fear for my people.

On the other hand we witness increased eagerness to establish acceptable ethical norms, Israeli science flourishes and the economy is stable contrary to all expectations in the volatile Middle East. Examples of social concern abound and there is a sizeable vocal minority that insists on extending the Palestinians a hand of goodwill. Our enemies are at bay, except for the painful daily experience of attacks by young Palestinians. Still daily life is conducted as normal and Israeli society holds out as many promises as it represents problems. I am proud of my people. Above all, I pray for the nation and long for the day when the Gospel will flourish in our midst.

A series on Messianic Jews/Jewish Christians aired on a major TV channel was discontinued due to pressure from the Orthodox but responses received were more than acceptable. Open evangelism is being undertaken via the Internet and meets with evident interest. Church government is increasingly framed and conducted with seriousness, and inter-congregational relationships are deepening.

New Reformed churches are being established in two locations in the country, with full cooperation between Presbyterian and Reformed brethren. In one, two Elders have recently been installed. In another, a single believer who prayed many years for fellowship has now been joined by 19 others, with 35 in attendance at worship services.

Reformed Baptist Network

Some friends understood my comments in the December 2015 issue of MaozNews, under the caption “Reformed Baptist Network,” as referring directly to one of the two sides in the recent unwelcome conflict. While I do believe that “we separate far too easily,” and that in many cases this is due to “our arrogant self-righteousness,” I did not intend to infer that one of the two sides bore all of the responsibility for the division, or that arrogance and self-righteousness can only be found among those of any one side.

I do believe more could have been done to avoid the conflict, and that more of the burden of responsibility for that lack is to be found on one side than on the other. With that said, I did not intend to take public issue with either side. What happened among us Reformed Baptists is characteristic to Evangelicals and should never have occurred. Contrary to our best intentions, the Gospel is not commended by our divisions, nor is Christ exalted.

We all attribute far too much weight to *our* view of things rather than to the unity of the body of Christ, and far less than appropriate weight to the views of others. Rather than conversing as brothers, we retire into our theological ghettos, raise defensive walls and thus grow further apart. We all pay lip service to the primacy of Christ and to the consequent unity of the church, but in practice attribute more weight to matters that are secondary to him and to that unity. We preach much about grace but practice too little of it in the context of our inter-church relations.

Shame on us. If we conducted our marriages in the same way, we would all be divorced, or single. Yet we consider ourselves righteous if we decline to apply the principles of grace in the way we do theology.

I long for the breach to be healed and for us to walk together, hand in hand in the service of a Cause far greater than our own.

Ministry and Family News

My LIFE AND EPISTLES OF PAUL has been proofread and edited. I am soon to receive the draft for final comment. I am presently reviewing editorial comments on my Hebrew translation of THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH. This is a delicate matter because the wording is so loaded, so carefully framed, and the editor has little understanding of the theological issues implied by the changes proposed. I'm researching HABAKKUK in preparation for writing a commentary on the book while awaiting editorial comment on my translation of MATTHEW and MARK in the Modern Limited Vocabulary Hebrew Bible.

Founders Press has informed me that my MALACHI will be republished toward the end of the first quarter of 2016. As soon as I can pry myself free, I intend to fine-tune the COMMENTARY ON COLOSSIANS and hand it over to them as well. My JONAH in Hebrew is nearing the end of the editorial process and work on ROMANS will then be contemplated.

With considerable hesitation, I have commenced MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY MEETINGS for church stragglers in our area. My goal is to strengthen their understanding of the Faith and, hence, their renewed attachment to a congregation to which they could contribute and under the loving discipline of which they could come. My desire is to see these people locked into the local congregations. Therefore, as a general rule, regular attendees of churches will be discouraged from coming.

The format is guided discussion: questions are posed relative to the text and discussion ensues in which the factors of the text are reviewed and weighed for the drawing of conclusions. Finally, practical applications are considered. I hope to encourage spiritual-minded thinking about God's word.

God willing, the 2016 VISIT TO THE US will commence in mid-April, much earlier than usual, and end in July. In the course of that time, apart for short trips to Seattle and Montreal, we plan to remain primarily in the east and the mid-east. Churches in the following states interested in the Maozes visiting them are invited to write to us: Washington, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Kansas, Ohio and Michigan. We also plan to visit Washington DC.

I have had the privilege of RIVKA's administrative assistance for over a decade. We first worked together at HaGefen and then, upon her and my retirement from HaGefen, on an hourly basis for almost four years. Her dedication, goodwill and frequently demonstrated abilities were a tremendous help, relieving me of many duties. A good number of you have commented on the pleasure of corresponding

with her. RIVKA is now teaching full time and is no longer available to extend me the kind of help needed. She has, therefore, withdrawn, much to my regret. Her task is to be assumed by LEAH, whom I am happy to introduce to you in the next two paragraphs.

“Greetings! I am excited to come alongside Baruch and Bracha to support them in their work both in Israel and abroad. I am originally from the Chicago suburbs from a non-religious home, but became a Christian in high school through a youth church with a heart for the Jewish nation. Consequently, I first found my way to Israel eleven years ago when I joined my church on a summer trip as a counselor at an Israeli Believers youth camp. I returned several years later as a volunteer youth assistant at a local congregation, during which time I met the man whom I would later marry.

“I have now been living in Israel for nine years with my native-born husband; we have a beautiful 2 year-old daughter and have another one on the way. I enjoy the sunshine and changing of seasons, crafting, interior design and spending time with family and friends. I look forward to assisting in the operation and productivity of Soli Deo Gloria, all the while growing - professionally, intellectually and spiritually - along the way.”

We will soon open an email account for Leah and inform you accordingly. Meanwhile, please address me with any letters you would normally address Rivka.

Leah and her husband are moving from Jerusalem to a town nearby. Pray for them as they settle in, as the time for the birth of their second child draws near, as they seek out a congregation to which to attach themselves and as she assumes the responsibilities borne until now by Rivka. Pray that I would be wise, kind and considerate as we work out the nitty-gritty of our working together and that we would reflect Christ in all we do.

Our three daughters, three sons-in-law and nine grandchildren are all well, as are Katya and her family and Rose. Bracha coped extremely well with the operation and has since proven emotionally resilient, trusting in the Lord. Although cancer-free following the operation, she tires more easily. In the goodness of God, she continues to gain strength and has renewed her visits to the gym in order to make still further physical gains. As for me, what can I say? I’m really doing well.

We are about to celebrate our 47th wedding anniversary and have dared begin to think of our 50th! God has been good to us beyond our wildest dreams. We thank God for the sweetness of our relations, for our deep friendship and for blessing us as he has over the course of these years. In spite of recent painful providences and the shock of our new realities, we look forward to the future with eager expectation.

As a result of recent events (the break-in, poor construction of the house including consequent water damage, Bracha’s operation, the car accident, etc.), we have lost over \$200,000. We have been completely wiped out and must now live hand to mouth from a reduced and fluctuating monthly income while resting

in God for any emergencies that may arise. As soon as we have completed discussions with the insurance company and with our contractor, we will issue a full report. We thank God for entrusting us with this series of challenging providences and with the call to rely on him so consistently. We seek grace to honor him by our conduct. Thank you for your prayers to that end.

In Christ by grace,

Baruch and Bracha Maoz

You can help by purchasing copies of Baruch's books from Barnes & Noble or from Amazon by asking for them at your local bookstore and **by posting reviews of these books** on Barnes & Noble or Amazon websites. Positive reviews help sell the books!

COME LET US REASON TOGETHER (On the Unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church), P&R. This book presents Christ as the fullness of divine revelation and his work as sufficient for our whole salvation.

JONAH: A PROPHET ON THE RUN, Shepherd Press. A devotional commentary on the book of Jonah.

MALACHI: A PROPHET IN TIMES OF DISTRESS, A devotional commentary on the book of Malachi. **Presently unavailable.** To be republished by Founders Press in 2016.

**The devotional commentaries are well suited
for personal devotions and group Bible studies**

Baruch's sermons may be heard on [Sermon Audio](#)

To remain abreast of developing circumstances in Israel, visit the [MaozWeb](#) or "follow" Baruch on [FaceBook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and on [Twitter](#) (@BaruchMaoz).

Intermittent bulletins are produced as necessary



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