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Israel – The Messianic Movement, pg. 1

Israel – Society, pg. 2

Ministry News, pg. 3

Family News, pg. 3

Israel – The Messianic Movement

In response to a statement I made in MaozNews No. 219 (November 2018), a beloved brother asked, would I wish to push back “an instrument which God not only allowed to grow but is also using in many ways, even though it is made up of sinners who make mistakes”, is the Messianic Movement “not a positive contribution to the body of Christ”? My response follows, slightly modified to meet the requirements of this newsletter.

Beloved brother, there are many plants in God’s world, some of which are weeds that “God has allowed to grow”, such as the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Christ-denying liberal Christianity, Islam ... While Messianic Judaism is not as radical a weed as those just mentioned, the mere fact that the Movement exists and has grown cannot serve as a justification for its teachings.

I frankly doubt God is using the Messianic Movement, let alone his doing so “in many ways”, as you put it. Not only is the Movement pronouncedly non-evangelistic (although there are happy and welcome exceptions), but a growing part of the more prominent leaders in the Movement call for a moratorium in preaching the Gospel to the Jews, insisting that faith in Christ is not necessary. Others in the Movement deny the trinity, play down or outright deny the deity of Christ. Very few Jews are to be found in the Movement and, of the few who joined, even fewer were converted to Christ through it. Most of us Jewish Christians were converted with no relation to the Messianic Movement and continue to serve God with no such connection. The overwhelming number of Messianics are Gentiles seeking in Jewish tradition what only Christ can offer.

Still further, the Messianic Movement imposes an interpretive (rabbinic) grid on the scriptures, increasingly views the maintenance of Jewish tradition as a means to receive from God by merit what is only given by grace, and divides the church into the (Messianic) spiritual elite and all the others. Israel, eschatology and/or Jewish tradition become the focus of their church life rather than God as he is known in Christ. These are all unbiblical.

I am Jewish and will never cease to be Jewish, but my Jewishness adds not an inkling to my walk with God. That walk is all by grace, a grace purchased for me by the life, death and resurrection of Christ and made effective in my life by the workings of the Holy Spirit. I desire to encourage Jewish Christians not to deny their heritage and, at the same time, not to transform it into a focus of their lives. I would like to see an international fellowship of Jewish Christians who are active, faithful members of their respective churches and who, as a fellowship, have a voice to our people, support our people's just causes, challenge our people where challenge is called for and make their distinct contribution to the churches to which they belong. Christ has but one church, which ought not be divided on the grounds of linguistic, cultural or national differences.

Throughout the course of my rather long ministry, I have sought to maintain what I perceive to be the biblical tension between loyalty to God's truth and loyalty to God's people. I have reached out to and worked alongside many with whom I disagree (although not on the central matters mentioned above). Most of my endeavors were for the church in Israel at large, regardless of our very real differences and I leave behind me a list of bodies, initiated by myself and that served the whole body of Christ. Many of them continue to do so (The National Social Aid Fund, The National Fellowship of Hebrew Speaking Congregations, the Messianic Action Committee, the National Evangelistic Committee, to name but a few).

I have never pretended to have all the truth, nor have I any such pretensions now. But some truths are not only clear in God's word but crucially important. They are not mine to buy or sell; they are mine to obey. That I shall endeavor to do, as kindly, as firmly and humbly as I can, while remaining open to correction at all times and ever willing to bear the consequences should that might be called for as a result. It is to that end that I wish to renew my efforts to establish an international fellowship of Jewish Evangelical Christians.

Israel -- Society

Hamas and the Islamic Jihad in Gaza joined in attacking Israel in the course of 3 days, during which some 500 rockets were fired at Israel. About 100 were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome anti-missile system, 20 hit targets resulting in one death (ironically, a Palestinian working in Israel), wounding others and damaging property. The remainder fell in open spaces or short of their mark. The barrage was in response to the discovery of an Israeli military intelligence unit inside the Gaza strip, which discovery led to a fire-fight in which 7 Palestinian militants and one Israeli officer were killed. Note should be made of the fact that Hamas and the Islamic Jihad have promoted months of violent attacks on our borders, arson, sniping and infiltration.

Israel responded to the barrage by attacking Hamas and Islamic Jihad military infrastructure, in each case warning residents, including militants, ahead of time, to vacate the buildings. Attack tunnels, munition depots, training bases and command posts were destroyed.

Egypt and Qatar brokered an undeclared cease-fire to which the Israeli Government acceded and which has provoked increasingly angry dissatisfaction in Israel. The Minister of Defense, Avigdor Liberman, had insisted on a firmer, more strategic response to Gaza's aggression. His view was rejected and he has, consequently, resigned. In the next few days we shall learn whether or not his act will force new elections.

Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the Palestinian Authority in charge of the West Bank, having lost control of Gaza due to a military coup organized by Hamas, is contending for the right to control Gaza but has been completely sidelined. Hamas and the Islamic Jihad are calling the tune, and Israel is responding. They have declared that their immediate goal is the removal of Israel and Egypt's blockade of the Strip, a blockade imposed following a series of attacks on Israel and Egypt and due to determined efforts by the two terrorist organizations to arm themselves. Israel and Egypt have offered to lift the blockade if the organizations disarm and disavow terrorism.

Ministry News

The editorial process of my translation of the New Testament has been stalled by the publisher due to other undertakings it has accepted. That process is expected to be resumed soon. Meanwhile, my Romans commentary is in the hands of the printer. Below you is to cover for this new publication.

I am making good progress in the writing of a book on church life, to be titled TOGETHER IN CHRIST. I've completed writing my commentary on Galatians and am now producing daily expositions culled from a slightly revised and updated version of Calvin's lectures on Galatians— a feast for any reader, and which I much enjoy translating.

I have been asked to translate Bible notes and have completed translating those on Hosea as a sample. Because the Hebrew version of the notes is to be based on the Hebrew (Masoretic) text, there is a need for additional explanatory notes that were not necessary in the original, based on an English translation. Adding these is, in itself, a significant project. I am now engaged in translating the notes on Philippians, where as many such explanatory additions are not necessary because the Hebrew is, itself, a translation (from Greek). There will be need for a few comments where the Hebrew translation differs from the English, but these will hopefully be few and far between.

Upon completion of the project, I hope to know my Bible better.

Family News

Avital and Eran underwent an accident, in the course of which Eran broke a joint in his neck. He is and will be limited in movement and restricted as to his ability to work for some weeks or longer.

Keith is undergoing treatment for his SIBO. He suffered, as expected, a radical declension and is now slowly climbing back towards normal. The fact that he had borne the disease, undetected, for so very long, means that his path to full recovery will be long as well. He is presently unable to work. In the

goodness of God, Shlomit is able to work on a part-time basis and provide food on the table. They are both exhausted due to these months of trial and challenge.

Tamar and Marcus are doing well, as are all our grandchildren, and we. Bracha and I need to have some dental work done (implants, bridges, crowns) and are tending to that. We've asked for an assessment on our house, which we hope to receive in the next week or so, and plan to put the house on the market next month. Our plan is to relocate, God willing, in June.

Fifty-five years ago, on November 11, God broke into my heart and transformed it, forgave my many sins and made me his own by grace. I have since learnt to understand that I have always been his, although for some 20 plus years engaged in arrogant rebellion. Since then I have strayed often, erred and sinned. But God has sustained me, showered me with grace and repeatedly brought me back to his paths. I thank him for such amazing kindness, wholly undeserved and unrequited. I thank him for the gifts of his Son and Spirit, for his living, inscripturated word, his well-loved church which I have yet to learn to love as I ought, and for the privilege of serving him. I thank him for my wife and wonderful family, for the privilege of pastoring a local congregation and having something of an input into other people's lives, and I thank him for the busy life he has now given me and for the hope of a still more glorious life in his eternal presence. I thank him, too, for you, dear brethren, for your love, prayers and support. Soli Deo Gloria!

We have delayed sending out this letter for the following important notice

Please note: following a breach in Berean Baptist Church's bank account, all transfers are now to be made to: Chemical Bank, 2301 W, Big Beaver Rd. Suite 525, Troy MI 48064 ABA Routing 072410013 , Berean Baptist Account 5389484382

Swiftcode: CHEMUS33. Checks may be written to the order of Berean Baptist Church Special Missions Account and sent to P.O. Box 1233, Grand Blanc, MI 48480-3233

6705 Rustic Ridge Trail, Grand Blanc, MI 48439. Please designate: "For Soli Deo Gloria", or, "For the ministry of Baruch Maoz". Thank you.

The old account is now defunct.

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 us sell.

[COME LET US REASON TOGETHER](#) (On the Unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church). Christ as the fullness of divine revelation and his work as sufficient for our whole salvation, Presbyterian and Reformed.

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

MALACHI: A PROPHET IN TIMES OF DISTRESS a devotional commentary on the book of
Malachi. Founders Press.

COLOSSIANS: The All-Sufficient Savior a devotional commentary on the book of Colossians.
Founders Press.

The commentaries are suited for personal devotions and group 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 [Twitter](#) (@BaruchMaoz).

Intermittent bulletins are produced as necessary



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Following a breach in Berean Baptist's bank account, checks in support of our ministry should be written to the order of **Berean Baptist Church special missions account, POBox 1233, Grand Blanc MI, 48480-3233**. Please designate: "For Soli Deo Gloria", or, "For the ministry of Baruch Maoz". Bank transfers may be made to **Chemical Bank, 2301 W, Big Beaver Rd. Suite 525, Troy MI 48084 ABA Routing 072410013 , Berean Baptist Account 5389484382 Swiftcode: CHEMUS33**

All contributions are tax deductible. Receipts are sent at the end of each calendar year or at donor's request. Please do not send contributions directly to us; we value accountability.

Funds sent for the ministry will be used exclusively for that purpose.

We reserve the right to use personal funds for the purposes of the ministry.