

A few preliminaries:

I had to decide whether to write a scholarly paper or one that was relevant. I choose the latter.

I'm not sure how much time my paper will take but I'm sure Kai will let me know. If I go over, I will suffer the wrath of Kai. Reminds me of the Star Trek II - The Wrath of Khan. At first I thought this was about a Jewish guy - the wrath of Khan like the wrath of Irving Khan.

What could he do? Throw his soup at me? Here, feel the wrath of Irving Khan!

This paper will discuss some of the major changes and influences we deal with in Jewish ministry.

The Internet

Without a doubt the biggest change in ministry has been the development of the Internet. The way we communicate has been revolutionized as the web has effected every generation. Social Media has led the way.

In the US there is not a person who has not heard of Social Media. Many people, and I would say everyone under forty, communicates with Social Media. Facebook and YouTube have become household words.

When I was in Israel a few years ago one of the college guys on the trip was talking to an Israeli girl in Burger Ranch. I couldn't blame him, she was very cute. He asked if he could take her picture and she said, "Yes! Yes! Facebook!" No language or cultural barrier there.

Social Media is not the only way communication has changed. Think of email. It's hard to think of the last time I wrote a letter. My mother is 82 years old and sends email. She doesn't even send cards any more unless it's an e-card. As a result of her using email I get less birthday cash as well. If people mention mail at all, it is referred to as snail mail. Obviously only a dinosaur would use it.

The internet has not only changed the way we communicate, but the way

we learn. Let me give a few examples.

The search engine Google is used so much it has become a verb. Not sure about someone? Google her! Not sure about something? Google it! My daughter-in-law complained to me about my son. I have noticed that whenever one of my daughters-in-law makes a statement that contains the phrase “your son” it will be a negative statement. She said, “Every time I ask your son a question, he says Google it.” I responded by saying I do the same thing.

When my fridge broke I knew what to do. I went to YouTube and found a video of how to make the repair. I had a teacher who showed the repair step by step. Who needs a manual? I had a private lesson from an expert while I was still in my pajamas. I made the repair in my pajamas as well. The only thing I didn’t do in my pajamas was buy the part because my wife complained when I tried to leave the house still in my pajamas.

Look at the number of universities offering classes online. My nephew takes high school classes from a virtual high school. Every type of education is now possible if you have access to the web.

It goes much deeper than these changes. The Internet has woven its way into our daily life. We are so involved with the web we don’t even think about it any more.

Think about what we do on a regular basis:

We bank online  
We check our stocks  
We book a flight, a car, a hotel  
We listen to the radio, podcasts  
We get our news online

One of my boys called me and asked what I was doing. I told him I was watching the news. He told me only old people watch the news. He is correct.

Some people have even bought a home from a real estate web page.

What’s one of the first things people ask when they come to your house?

What's your internet password?

It's not only online communication that has changed, but offline as well.

Smart Phones

We now cannot exist without a smart phone. Our phones have become the major way we communicate. The only thing we don't do with them is talk to other people. Think of how they have changed daily life:

Texting

People are texting each other constantly. Younger people, to me that's 95% of the world, text each other while they are in the same room. People are texting on their phones every free moment. Some of you may be texting on your phone right now and I consider that rude.

Twitter

If you don't have enough nonsense and constant interruption in your life, you can now sign up for other people's nonsense. Or input as the case may be. People now follow the most minute details of a stranger's life. Then they ReTweet the updates.

Apps

Not sure what music you're listening to?

Have a problem?

Need to be more organized?

Or, do you need to waste more time?

Get an app for that!

*This technology is here to stay. Ministries who don't master the Internet and keep up with emerging technologies are out of business.*

*Two Examples of Rabbis and Texting*

*Texting During Yom Kippur Services? How One L.A. Rabbi Is Bringing Social Media to His Synagogue*

*Congregation Or Ami's Rabbi Paul Kipnes is the type of plugged-in religious leader who peppers his sermons with references to Star Trek and jokes about the NFL's replacement refs. Standing on stage at the Fred Kavli Theater at the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza this past Wednesday, with a vibrant purple, gold, green and blue tallit draped over his shoulders and a white yarmulke atop his bald crown, Kipnes opened Yom Kippur morning services by asking the nearly 1,000 Reform Jews in attendance to honor this Day of Atonement, when Jews fast and repent, by turning off their cell phones.*

*But this prohibition only lasts about forty minutes.*

*"Because it's the 21st century, you're going to help me with my sermon," Kipnes says, as we transition into the Kedushah prayer ("Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts!"). The congregation's Facebook page and Twitter handle, along with Kipnes' cell phone number, appear on an enormous screen to the right of the stage, along with a request to text, tweet or post an ending to this sentence: "There is holiness when..."*

*And, one by one, smartphones emerge from purses and suit jacket pockets throughout the theater, casting their unmistakable glow on sidelined paperback copies of Gates of Light, a high-holidays prayer book.*

*Another recent article in the Jewish Ledger, Connecticut Edition:*

*Rabbis respond: Texting on Shabbat? July 5, 2011*

*A few weeks ago, the New York-based Jewish Week reported on what it described as the growing trend among Modern Orthodox youth to text on Shabbat. And so, we decided to ask Connecticut rabbis to give us their thoughts about texting on Shabbat.*

*<http://www.jewishledger.com/category/ct-news/>*

## **Jewish Identity**

Another major change that has affected Jewish ministry in the US is intermarriage.

A National Jewish Population Survey shows before 1970 the intermarriage rate was 13%. Now the rate is close to 50%. One out of every two Jewish people are marrying Gentiles. Considering the small percentage of Jewish

people on the planet 50% is a staggering number. Our friend Tuvya Zaretsky has done a lot of research in this area.

There has also been a change in the way younger Jewish people view themselves. According to a recent NYT article, college aged Jewish students don't view their Jewishness as the most important part of their identity. A part of this is the whole generational viewpoint. "I'll decide who I am and then tell you who I am." There is now a difference between being Jewish and being Jew-*ish*. One of the obvious results of this is the changing attitude towards Israel.

The Issue of Israel

There is a growing separation between younger Jewish people and the nation of Israel. Let me quote an article entitled:

**The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment**  
**Peter Beinart dated JUNE 10, 2010**

In 2003, several prominent Jewish philanthropists hired Republican pollster Frank Luntz to explain why American Jewish college students were not more vigorously rebutting campus criticism of Israel. In response, he unwittingly produced the most damning indictment of the organized American Jewish community that I have ever seen.

The philanthropists wanted to know what Jewish students thought about Israel. Luntz found that they mostly didn't. "Six times we have brought Jewish youth together as a group to talk about their Jewishness and connection to Israel," he reported. "Six times the topic of Israel did not come up until it was prompted. Six times these Jewish youth used the word '*they*' rather than '*us*' to describe the situation."

That Luntz encountered indifference was not surprising. In recent years, several studies have revealed, in the words of Steven Cohen of Hebrew Union College and Ari Kelman of the University of California at Davis, that "non-Orthodox younger Jews, on the whole, feel much less attached to Israel than their elders," with many professing "a near-total absence of positive feelings." In 2008, the student senate at Brandeis, the only nonsectarian Jewish-sponsored university in America, rejected a resolution

commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the Jewish state.

We can summarize this generation by paraphrasing a US car commercial, "This is not your father's Jewish generation!"

### US Society

There has been an effort to remove God from society in general. Even the word religious has been replaced by spiritual. It is not uncommon to hear someone say, "Oh, I'm not religious but I am spiritual." Nobody really knows what that means. I think it's kind of a "I am a well rounded person who has some sort of inner depth which you may not notice upon first meeting me so let me state it."

In the US there is an active campaign, which has been very successful, to remove any trace of God and the Bible from society.

No Bible teaching or reading is allowed in Public Education, God is removed from public meetings. Graduations prohibit the use of God's Name. The event mentioned below is from 2008, but it has laid the groundwork for graduations since.

### An article published in 20-20 Faith Hindsight MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2010 **VALEDICTORIAN'S MENTION OF "GOD" AND "JESUS" FORBIDDEN IN GRADUATION SPEECH**

"Renee Griffith was forbidden to speak as a 2008 high school valedictorian because she was going to mention God and Jesus.

Griffith was asked, along with other students at Butte High School in Montana, to speak about what had gotten her through high school.

The students were required to turn in their speeches for approval prior to graduation.

School officials asked Griffith to replace the words “Christ,” “His joy,” and “from God with a passionate love for him” with just words like “my faith” and “a love of mankind.”

She refused to make the changes, and was not allowed to give her speech.”

This cultural shift has gone so far as to make the mockery of Christians an acceptable practice.

Christians are now seen as bigots. Consider the Chick-fil-a Incident. For those of you who may not know, Chik-fil-a is a fast food restaurant started and run by a Christian family. Let me refer to an article mentioned by the source of all truth, Wikipedia.

#### Chick-fil-A same-sex marriage controversy

In June and July 2012, Chick-fil-A Chief operating officer Dan T. Cathy made several public statements supporting the traditional family, (A biblical view) saying about same-sex marriage that those who "have the audacity to define what marriage is about" were "inviting God's judgment on our nation". Several prominent politicians expressed disapproval. Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, and Chicago Alderman Proco "Joe" Moreno said they hoped to block franchise expansion into their areas. The proposed bans drew criticism from liberal pundits, legal experts, and the American Civil Liberties Union. The Jim Henson Company, which had a *Pajanimals* kids' meal toy licensing arrangement with Chick-fil-A, said it would cease its business relationship, and donate the payment to the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. Chick-fil-A stopped distributing the toys, citing unrelated safety concerns that had arisen prior to the controversy. Chick-fil-A released a statement on July 31, 2012 saying, "We are a restaurant company focused on food, service and hospitality; our intent is to leave the policy debate over same-sex marriage to the government and political arena." To me, the Jim Henson Company is acting like a bunch of Muppets.

#### Response

In response to the controversy, former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee initiated a Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day movement to counter a boycott of

Chick-fil-A launched by same-sex marriage activists. More than 600,000 people RSVPed on Facebook for Huckabee's appreciation event. On August 1, Chick-fil-A restaurants experienced a large show of public support across the nation with the company reporting record-breaking sales. A consulting firm estimated that the average Chick-fil-A restaurant had 29.9 percent more sales and 367 more customers than on a typical Wednesday.

Protesters staged a same-sex "kiss day" at Chick-fil-A restaurants nationwide on August 3, and suggested that supporters of same-sex marriage donate the cost of a Chick-fil-A meal to gay rights groups.

Taking a Biblical stance on marriage has a direct effect on work in the Jewish community. Our view is out of touch with most of the Jewish community.

An article entitled: U.S. JEWS AMONG MOST SUPPORTIVE OF 'GAY' MARRIAGE, Published: 04/27/2013 said the following:

Times of Israel stated American Jews show among the highest levels of support for gay marriage, from all American subgroups measured in recent polls, according to figures published this week by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press.

According to five polls of Americans in 2012 and 2013, with the most recent conducted in March 2013, 76% of US Jews support legalizing same-sex marriage, while 18% oppose and 8% did not express an opinion.

The figure is remarkably high, particularly when compared to the number of Protestants (34%) and Catholics (53%) who support same-sex marriage.

## Government

It appears that the US Government is also a part or a leader, depending on your view, of changing treatment of religious organizations:

*Update (May 16): The Southern Baptist state newspaper that sparked the recent Chick-fil-A same-sex marriage controversy, as well as pro-life*



*advocates, are also claiming to have been targeted by the IRS audits.*

Franklin Graham complained to President Barack Obama today that IRS agents unfairly audited his two ministries, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) and Samaritan's Purse, in an attempt to intimidate them after the BGEA ran controversial election ads in Billy Graham's name.

In a letter, Franklin Graham claims that the IRS's acknowledged inappropriate targeting of groups with "tea party" and other conservative buzzwords in their names—a scandal which continues to snowball—extended to Christian and Jewish groups.

Both the BGEA and Samaritan's Purse passed the audits and retained their tax-exempt status. But Franklin Graham says the audits, which "wasted" ministry time and money, were not "coincidence" or "justifiable."

### College Campus

As was mentioned earlier, not only is there a lack of interest in Israel as a nation by the Jewish students, but on many campuses in the US Israel is seen as the bad guy. Rising Political Correctness has led to an environment where the claims Islam cannot be challenged as tolerance must be practiced. For those of you who do not live in the US, Tolerance in the US means as long as you agree with my views you are OK. If not, I will not tolerate you and your opinions.

### Church Changes

To lay the blame on society would be comforting but not completely correct. The churches have also contributed to a changing picture in Jewish evangelism.

Many pastors today are Supersessionists, Replacement Theologians in the common tongue. Supersessionism has been gaining ground over the last few decades. I know this is a big issue for some people but the feeling of this writer is belief in replacement theology does not automatically mean a church is not interested in Jewish evangelism. BTW - Does anyone remember ***Super Session*** album conceived by Al Kooper and featuring the work of guitarists Mike Bloomfield and Stephen Stills, released on Columbia Records in 1968?

However, Replacement Theology does open the door to a non-biblical view of the Jewish people and the Jewish nation. Yes, I did say non-Biblical, if you disagree you will have to deal with that. Yes, I did say open the door. Not everyone goes through the door, but the door is open.

Along with this there are many in the church today who are Biblically illiterate. I understand this is subjective and based on my experience of being a guest in many different churches across the US and Canada, but nevertheless, it is correct.

Many churchgoers today seem to have a secondary experience with the Bible. Most of their exposure to the Bible is on a PowerPoint screen at Sunday service. Many people can't even find the books of the Bible. Is it surprising in this environment that many Christians view Israel and the Jewish people as irrelevant? Certainly Jewish ministry is losing its attractiveness in the mainline denominations.

Coupled with this, the popularity of topical sermons which often neglect to teach basic theology. The average churchgoer today cannot dispute what they hear from the pulpit because they are not familiar with the Scripture. Most believers also cannot respond to current issues in society from a Biblical perspective.

Christian Palestinianism has been on the rise. Though we may disagree who is bad in this movement, there can be no disagreement that it has had an effect on the church. It is not uncommon to go to a church in the US and Canada and see the flags of every Arab country and not the flag of Israel.

There is no question the church in the US is changing. Twenty years ago you could tell what a person believed by the denomination they were a part of. Now the range of beliefs in a denomination is as wide the range of beliefs held in conservative Judaism. One last topic, anti-semitism.

### Anti Semitism

Unfortunately, anti-semitism will never go away. It has been and will be a constant factor in reaching Jewish people. We need to be aware of the different forms anti-semitism has taken. My friend, Olivier Melnik, is always a good source for this information.

We can respond to this changing world by staying in touch with the next generation, at my age that will be the next two generations, or three. They are the ones who naturally communicate in the latest fashion. They can lead us in our changing world.

In addition to this, we can do what every generation before us has done, cling to the Word of God as our guide through the shifting patterns of society.