



HAVURAH

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new paradigms in

Jewish evangelism

new paradigms in Jewish ministry by Aaron Trank

What does a strategic effort to reach Jewish people with the gospel look like today? And what challenges must be overcome when bringing the message of Jesus to our people? From Shabbat (Sabbath) meals to intentional communities, from witnessing-on-the-way projects (like our Massah/Israel to India adventures) to social media networking, we will



explore some of the new paradigms in Jewish ministry that have risen as we have brought the gospel into new and emerging cultures within the global Jewish community.

What's a paradigm anyway? A paradigm isn't just a pattern or model of something: it is a worldview that underlies the theories and methodology of a particular subject—in our case, Jewish ministry. Tactics can be modeled, but strategy provides the core theory from which tactics are developed. A good strategy can last forever, while tactics must change with the ebbs and flows of culture and technology.

As evangelists we need to constantly innovate. While our message will always stay the same, our tactics for getting that message to its intended recipients must constantly be

reevaluated to maximize our effectiveness. This innovation, which brings the message of the gospel to the lost in a manner that they can understand and engage with, is a key component of contextualization. With Paul as our model for contextualizing the gospel throughout various cultures he encountered (see the Mars Hill account in Acts 17), we are left with examples that highlight the need for us to contextualize the gospel as we bring it into new cultures and emerging subcultures too.

That contextualization births new tactics and new methods of bringing the gospel to our Jewish people. This is vital for us to understand as we think about the greater work of Jewish missions. The timeframe for rethinking our methods in order to stay relevant and effective has been shortened due to the speed of technology.

Yet, even when we are willing to question our current methods in light of emerging culture, it is our understanding of that emerging culture which drives our innovation to create effective methods of evangelization.

One of my favorite examples of innovation in this area occurred in 1969. Moishe Rosen had a dilemma. He had just begun sharing the gospel with Jewish hippies in New York's Washington Square Park, but the sanctioned gospel tracts that he had at his disposal simply didn't resonate with the hippie counterculture. They were wordy, with one Scripture passage after another, little or no graphics and tiny type. Moishe decided to take a risk. Moishe handwrote and illustrated his first broadside, "A Message from Squares," which presented a simple gospel message mixed with some self-deprecating humor in an unconventional way. It engaged the hippie counterculture through a communication channel that was wide open but previously untapped. It spoke to Jewish people where they were at and alleviated their cultural fear about engaging with traditional Christianity. Thus began a revolution in methods in the Jewish missions movement which has brought us to this current day.

Moishe's example serves to highlight the need for innovation. In fact, his example guaranteed that even four decades later, Jews for Jesus continues to hold "creativity in our staff" as one of our core values. As we continue to innovate new tactics for reaching our people, we face many of the same challenges that Moishe faced back in 1969:

- Fear and ignorance about the New Testament deeply embedded in Jewish culture
- Fear of alienation and repugnance from the greater Jewish community for unbelievers who are investigating Jesus' Messianic claims
- A constant slough of disinformation and anti-missionary propaganda that muddies the waters for Jewish seekers and new believers

How do we confront these challenges today? That's where new paradigms come into play. Developing new paradigms of ministry requires honesty, creativity and courage on the part of believers; we must be honest with ourselves about how effective our efforts are. We must be willing to creatively think out of the box about how to engage with our Jewish people and we must have the courage to risk failure in trying new things. As professional evangelists, as well as everyday ambassadors for the Messiah, we must look for open channels of communication and, once we have found them, we ought to do our best to mitigate the challenges we face in sharing with our people.

So what are some of the new paradigms of Jewish missions today? We've recognized three areas in particular where we've spent a good amount of time thinking, praying and innovating with our methods:

Engaging with Jewish seekers

Meeting the needs of Jewish people

Proclaiming the gospel to Jewish people

While there are a lot more communication channels available to us today than there were forty years ago, it should be noted that our two-fold strategy has remained the same:

to engage Jewish seekers with the gospel, . . . we need to use their preferred method of communication.

To engage Jewish seekers with the gospel, we must be **available** and, to engage with people, we need to use their **preferred method of communication**.

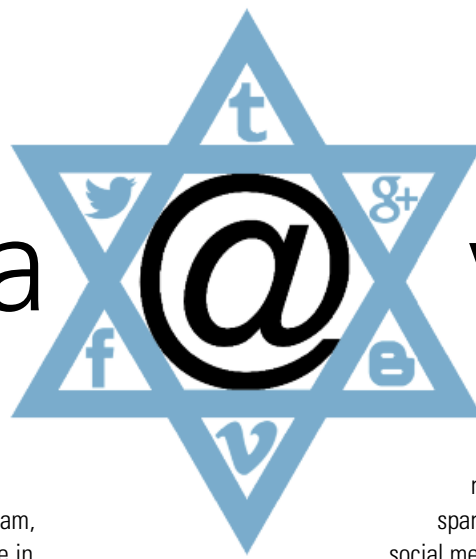
And today, the Internet is the choice of many. We provide information for seekers who aren't ready for conventional conversation. We provide a way for seekers who are ready for personal communication to reach us through social media: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, YouTube, Skype, etc. [See the article by Arielle Rothbard on page 4.]

This type of innovation, to create new evangelism methods with the development of new technology, requires a time investment and learning curve, but it has allowed us to connect with Jewish seekers around the world outside of

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social media @ work



by Arielle Rothbard

What do Twitter, Facebook, Google+, StumbleUpon, Reddit, Foursquare, Flickr, Tumblr, Pinterest, WordPress, YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, LinkedIn, MySpace and Meetup have in common? An imposing list of new and evolving technology, they're the current face of social media networking. The Google+ button is pressed over five billion times a day, students its largest demographic. YouTube viewers browse through the site fifteen minutes a day (which is huge, as they skim blog pages in seconds). Over half of all bloggers are 25 to 40 years old; the bulk of the remainder far younger. These platforms allow the user to curate a personal experience. Many times this creates a wonderful, non-traditional platform for evangelism. Below are ways several Jewish ministries are implementing social media.

When MSNBC News covered a story on Life in Messiah Ministries (LIMM) housing a post-Hurricane Sandy displaced couple, LIMM broadcasted the story on their Twitter feed and website. However, Marilyn Miller, who works on social media outreach for LIMM, admits they could be doing more. She says currently their online presence is more to show LIMM is "alive."

Chosen People Ministries (CPM) does what they consider indirect Jewish evangelism. CPM responds to Christians' Jewish evangelism questions and receives prayer requests through Facebook and Twitter. However, their Isaiah 53 Campaign in New York was Facebook-integrated. Staff member Lyndsi Vasquez echoes LIMM, explaining their social media is primarily for donor and public awareness of Chosen People.

Likewise, CJFM (originally known as Christian Jew Foundation) primarily uses Facebook. CJFM equips Christian fans for Jewish evangelism and seeks to "pique the curiosity of Jewish non-believers who might be open to talking about Yeshua" says Brian Nowotny, their director of communications. Content posted on Facebook includes tough questions, blog posts, "Messianic Perspectives," a daily broadcast, other resources and tours to Israel. They are expanding their Twitter presence, too.

Jews for Jesus (JFJ) uses social media to engage unbelieving Jewish people who are questioning Jesus' claims. Usually, we create content to share widely first, for

example our YouTube "Journeys of Faith" testimony series. A comment on our blog or a video response to our YouTube channel might spark a conversation. The golden rule of social media is: Respond unto others as others

would have you respond unto them. For example, answer a LinkedIn message on LinkedIn, or comment on, hashtag or tag a shared Instagram photo. This can be unnatural for many accustomed to email and snail mail inquiries. Yet, while the goal is organic communication, the end goal still is an in-person meeting. This can mean transitioning a seeker into a place where they feel comfortable enough to have a phone, Skype or even face-to-face meeting, location permitting. Some of our staff experiment with Google+ Hangout, a live video feed where up to ten users can join and anyone can watch on YouTube during or after. However, JFJ's branch locations in Jewish-heavy metropolises still play an important role in event-driven evangelism, live events being another primary focus of social media tools.

Two summers ago, Jews for Jesus' Summer Witnessing Campaign (SWC) integrated a Network Evangelism Team (NET) made up of missionaries and volunteers to address a need for greater online evangelism. NET, comprised of 25 to 85 members since its inception, regularly addresses Jewish seekers' queries across all JFJ social media platforms. Sean Trank, who began NET, says, "We have seen Jewish people come to faith and during SWC we addressed 100+ questions a day—and moderated a chat room which we continue to do year round."

NET will soon transition from Facebook to Google as their internal home base to dialogue and spur each other on in their work. The group doubles as a good training ground for newer evangelists who can witness to unsaved Jews, mostly between 18 and 37 years old.

It really is possible to effectively engage seekers through social media channels. Challenges arise as the millennial generation makes it plain that they don't want to be directly "sold to." The gospel, while not a product, behaves similarly. It is the responsibility today of Jewish missions to maintain a gospel presence online where many Jewish people can easily find content on Jesus as Messiah.

Are you doing social media evangelism, too? Got ideas for where to take it next? Join the conversation on Twitter: @havurahmag, #socialmediajff



2 tables, 25 folding chairs, one community

by Rachel Friedlander

“We’re going to need another table,” Melissa had said to Jhan. They stared into the dining room of their Brooklyn home that night in 2007 at a piece of furniture that, as Melissa would one day put it, “came to represent a way that God was moving.”

When Jhan and Melissa Moskowitz relocated their Chicago life to Brooklyn, New York, seven years ago, they had a vision for their new, spacious five-bedroom home. “Jhan had a bit of a romantic notion that there would be children and grandchildren running throughout the house,” Melissa mused.

In an unconventional way, that dream would come to fruition.

It began with a couple of transient college students, looking for temporary housing. Their need matched the Moskowitz’s hospitable hearts perfectly, and soon those bedrooms began to fill up (they even remodeled and added two more!). Others came and went, and the home was full and hectic. Soon, Melissa proposed a Friday night dinner to bring the “family” together.

“The first week we were five people. The next week they asked if they could invite their friends,” Melissa explained. And so it grew—from 5 to 12 to 18 to 22 to what it is today—somewhere between 21 and 35 people each week,” Melissa explained. But something besides numbers began to grow as well.

“The young Jewish believers who began attending each week also began meeting with each other at other times during the week. When they talked about coming to our house on Friday nights, they would ask each other, ‘Are you

going to Shabbat?’ So we realized that ‘Shabbat’ was not just an event on the Jewish weekly calendar; ‘Shabbat’ had become a group of people who wanted to be together.”

Today, young adults travel up to two hours or come from down the block. They’re college students, or recent grads, newlyweds and first-time parents. They’re actors, missionaries, marketers, babysitters. Some are Jewish believers, some are gentile believers, and a few are unsaved Jews. But they have one thing in common: they were each drawn to that home on a Friday night to share a meal.

Dessert follows. Then long conversation—some of which is serious, some ridiculous. Words echo throughout the house . . .

Melissa cooks three weeks a month, while the fourth is designated a “potluck” meal.

It works like this: “We ask people to arrive at 7:30 p.m. (they are invited via Facebook on Wednesday of each week); we usually sit down at the table by 7:40 p.m. We have the blessings over the candles, wine and challah. We say grace, and then we eat.” Melissa explains, “I serve the food buffet style from the island in the kitchen. As people are eating, we go around the table, introduce ourselves, and everyone gets to tell, one by one, what the best part of their week was.”

When dinner is finished, the table is cleared and ears are attuned to the sound of the *drash* (teaching from the Torah portion). Dessert follows. Then long conversation—some

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(Continued from page 3) our traditional branch areas with minimal financial investment.

Hospitality: Friendship, Community and Shabbat

“Soup, Soap, Salvation,” the slogan of the Salvation Army, isn’t often applicable to the contemporary Jewish community. How do we share the gospel with a community that typically doesn’t need our help in meeting their physical needs? Yet are there other needs that we can meet? In 1943, Abraham Maslow, a Jewish psychologist from Brooklyn, published a paper called “A Theory of Human Motivation” in which he proposed that

each of us is driven by a hierarchy of needs: physiological, safety, belonging, esteem and self-actualization.

While we may not have the opportunity to meet physiological or safety needs, we often do have the opportunity to address needs of Jewish individuals in the area of belonging.

How do we share the gospel with people who innately fear it?

Loneliness is a common emotion for college students and young professionals who leave what was once called home to move into a new city with new possibilities. Those new possibilities, however, usually involve a high degree of uncertainty and a lack of built-in community. Leaving home means making new friends and finding new groups to spend time with. Meeting this need for friendship

and community requires an intentional investment in relationship through hospitality.

On any given Friday evening, the smiling faces of college students, traveling Israelis and New York hopefuls looking to make it big in the Big Apple can be seen meeting together for a Shabbat meal in the home of Melissa Moskowitz in Brooklyn. [Read about this in the article by Rachel Friedlander on page 5.]

This Brooklyn community is just one example of the intentionally evangelistic Messianic communities that have begun to form in cities around the world where young Jewish people go to pursue education, career or adventure.

The relationships are authentic, but this paradigm of Jewish ministry has developed as a response to the need for belonging of young Jewish people, whether believers or not.

Trekking: Witnessing on the Way

How do we share the gospel with people who innately fear it? This question has driven Jewish evangelism strategists throughout the modern missions movement. Answering this question has shaped our ministry and given us the fervor for proclamation evangelism that some missions organizations have abandoned. We must preach the gospel! But we must do so through effective communication channels with a goal of mitigating that ingrained cultural fear.

There are several key factors in our witness that can allay

the Jewish cultural fear of the gospel. Three key influencers are timing, environment and terminology.

A significant number of Israelis who complete their mandatory military service leave Israel to travel for up to a year. They are in life transition—between army and pursuing an education or a career. Many are asking the existential questions that they couldn’t while they served their country. They are uniquely open to exploring alternative spirituality options because of the timing of their trip. Their top destinations include India, Nepal, Thailand, Laos, New Zealand, Australia, Argentina, Bolivia, Columbia and Peru. Many of these young Israelis set out to travel alone but end up traveling in packs with other

Israelis on the same travel schedule to the same destinations. The Israeli traveler community that forms is not particularly wholesome, with rampant drug use and indiscriminate sex, but it does provide great opportunities to witness.

Young Israelis are much more open to considering the gospel when they are outside of Israel. Why? Because the cultural pressures against the gospel are much stronger in Israel than they are outside it. Israeli trekkers can read the New Testament without fear of social stigma or familial consequence. For the past six years, our Massah Israel outreach has engaged with these traveling Israelis to share their faith. For almost all the Israelis, it is the first time they have had an authentic exchange on the subject. We have been able to till soil and plant seed with individuals who acknowledge that their openness is due to the fact that they aren’t in Israel!

I’ve never been so aware of my spiritually descriptive language as when I have spent time sharing the gospel with Israelis in India. Most Israelis have no context for understanding “Christianese”; it can be confusing to them at best, but downright offensive to them at worst. Our Massah teams practice giving their testimonies in a way that other Jewish people can understand and connect with.

Time for Newer Paradigms?

What happens when our methods are no longer effective? What happens when these new paradigms become old paradigms that are challenged by further technological and cultural development? Hopefully, we change! We must continually innovate to stay relevant, not for our own sake, but for the sake of the effective proclamation of the gospel among our Jewish people. We must continue to ask the hard questions about our tactics and be willing to change our tactics as new paradigms are proven to be effective.

Do you have an insight you would like to share? Let’s continue this conversation on our Facebook page: [facebook.com/HavurahMag](https://www.facebook.com/HavurahMag)

This article is based on a message Aaron brought to the attendees at Urbana 2012 in St. Louis and is available in audio at bitly.com/urbmp3111



(Continued from page 5) of which is serious, some ridiculous. Words echo throughout the house: there are clusters picking at the dessert on the kitchen island, eight girls on a couch petting a very grumpy canine (Frodo), a handful of guys on the front porch with a far less grumpy golden retriever (Strider) and some who never left their seat at the dinner table.

“I guess the best way to describe the formation and growth of Shabbat is that it was organic; it remains fluid; it always surprises us; it’s both a lot of work and a huge joy,” says Melissa.

In September of 2012, it took more effort than anyone could have anticipated. Jhan Moskowitz was suddenly taken from this earth. The man who had ministered to countless young adults on the porch of that home, the one who spouted wisdom with his arm easily flung across the back of that wicker couch, was gone.

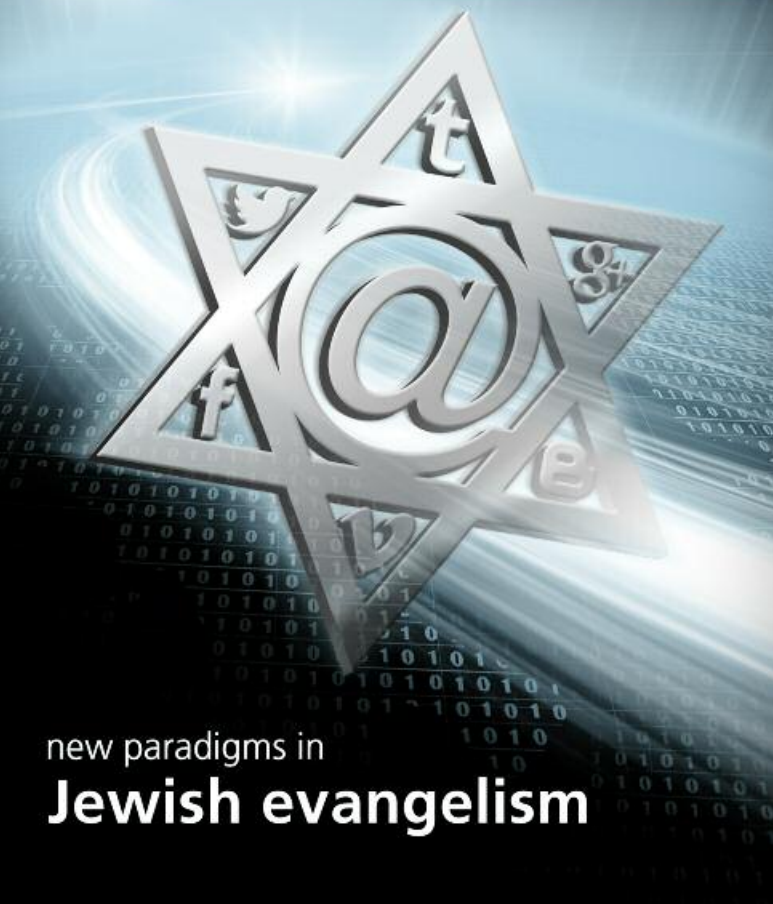
And the crevice left was large enough for many to fall in. But something amazing happened.

Each member of the community, doused in grief, stretched a bit further. They set up, they cleaned, they cooked, they were together. They finally got to do what had always been done for them.

The hole will never be covered, but the group has gotten stronger through the stretching.

Now, as they go around the table each week and share their small triumphs and memorable moments that they proclaim to be their “best of the week,” it’s understood (and sometimes also said), that simply being in that dining room is one of the brightest highlights of all.

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INSIDE

NEW PARADIGMS IN JEWISH MINISTRY
Contextualizing for Jews in 2013

SOCIAL MEDIA @ WORK
Evangelism to the
twitterverse and beyond

**2 TABLES, 25 FOLDING CHAIRS,
ONE COMMUNITY**
Hospitality ministry through Shabbat



share the gospel
see the world!

Got summer plans? There is still time to get involved in Jewish missions!
Here are a few of our upcoming opportunities:

New York Summer Witnessing Campaign:

If you're a Jewish believer age 18–35 and are passionate about the gospel, consider joining us for a month of what could be the most challenging evangelism opportunity of your life: sharing Y'shua on the streets of New York! Contact aaron.trank@jewsforjesus.org or visit j4j.co/joinswc2013



Massah Israel Outreach:

If you're a Jewish believer age 18–25 and are ready to grow in your faith, apply for our one-of-a-kind ten-week discipleship and evangelism program starting in New York, journeying on to Israel for discipleship and training and continuing to India for outreach to Israeli trekkers. Contact aaron.trank@jewsforjesus.org or visit j4j.co/joinmassah2013

