

An Introduction to Tikkun America

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We recently returned from a wonderful spirit-filled weekend at the annual Tikkun “Restore Family Conference.” I was at the leadership part of the conference that began on Tuesday, and noticed that much more of Tikkun’s organization and vision was presented earlier in the week. That was intentional, because we want the family part of the Conference to be packed full of life-giving ministry rather than with organizational information. It is that way every year, and I have consequently noticed that our members who are not leaders and do not attend the earlier part of the conference, come away with only a vague understanding of Tikkun’s foundational purpose, and its value to Ohev. I have therefore decided to devote this message to familiarizing you with aspects of Tikkun that you may not know. It is, after all, Ohev’s primary ministry affiliation, and is therefore very important.

Ohev Yisrael belongs to both Tikkun and the UMJC – both Messianic Jewish organizations, but very different. The UMJC is a delegate-led organization of member congregations, whereas Tikkun is apostolic, and it’s American component is led by what is called the American Apostolic Team (also known as the AAT). Tikkun America is headed up by the head apostle (*shaliach*), Dan Juster, and I am honored to be an Associate *Shaliach*. The other Team members serving currently are Glenn Blank, Jack Jacobs, John Glueck, Ben Juster, Michael Weiner, and Todd Westphal. Richard Cleary recently came onboard as a provisional member of the team, and Don Finto, a former International Board member, is honorary. The International Board is situated in Israel and, while Tikkun America is semi-autonomous, it is a subsidiary of Tikkun International. This links us directly to Israel, which we consider to be of great importance.

Tikkun America describes itself broadly as “a network and covenant community of fivefold ministry leaders and congregations.” By the term “fivefold,” we mean the five ministry offices mentioned in [Ephesians 4:11-13](#):

“Furthermore, he gave some people as emissaries, some as prophets, some as proclaimers of the Good News, and some as shepherds and teachers. Their task is to equip God’s people for the work of service that builds the body of the Messiah, until we all arrive at the unity implied by trusting and knowing the Son of God, at full manhood, at the standard of maturity set by the Messiah’s perfection.”

Appreciation and incorporation of the five-fold gifts is primarily what sets Tikkun apart from the UMJC, the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America, and all other Messianic Jewish organizations in the United States.

Covenant commitment and ministry accountability are two other very important aspects of Tikkun. The Tikkun Manual states:

“Our desire is to minister out of long-term, covenant relationships, and the Tikkun organization is an expression of these relationships”.. “our general orientation is toward lifelong building together with a common vision from God. This continuity of relationship

applies the ideal of community to a band of ministers whose calling now spans several nations around the globe.”

The Tikkun Manual also gives a short account of Tikkun’s formation history:

“The vision to birth this network of congregations and ministries came through the prayers and discussions of Daniel Juster, Asher (Keith) Intrater, and Eitan (Andrew) Shishkoff in the early 1980’s while all served at Beth Messiah Congregation in Maryland. Moshe (Marvin) Morrison and Michael Rudolph were a significant part of these discussions early on, and became part of the first council of leaders of several local congregations.”

The Manual then lists publications by Dan Juster and Asher Intrater that it considers foundational in conveying Tikkun’s values; they are:

- *Growing to Maturity* (Dan Juster)
- *Jewish Roots* (Dan Juster)
- *Relational Leadership* (Dan Juster)
- *Israel, the Church and the Last Days* (Dan Juster and Asher Intrater)
- *The Irrevocable Calling* (Dan Juster)
- *Due Process* (Dan Juster)
- *Covenant Relationships* (Asher Intrater)
- *Models of Accountability* (Dan Juster) booklet.

It is important to note that, while Tikkun considers itself to be a close ministry family, it goes out of its way to be inclusive of others. The Tikkun Manual states:

“We affirm the legitimacy of many other ministries and leaders who have Scriptural integrity but who may not hold our views on various matters. We recognize that God is in the process of correcting all of His people and restoring right understanding. Various communities understand more or less of this restoration. Therefore, Tikkun and its related ministries and congregations are free to enter into cooperative relationships with others who do not share our distinctiveness, so long as they do not compromise our principles and vision. Our prayer is that we all will grow continually closer in achieving God’s best.”

Tikkun is also unique among other Messianic Jewish organizations in declaring its appreciation for the Christian Church and in its willingness to work with it. The Tikkun Manual states:

“It is important to note that wherever we minister, Tikkun seeks to connect to the Christian community. It is our desire to be joined to the *church of the city* as one way of fulfilling our calling to help the Body of Messiah be restored to Jewish-rooted understanding of the Word.”

There is not enough time to expound on every aspect of Tikkun, so I will extract and read sections from the Tikkun Manual, and trust that you will find it interesting and informative. Here is how Tikkun describes itself:

Tikkun is an Apostolic Network

1. **Equipping:** “Tikkun trains leaders and congregation members through visits to congregations, conferences, training institutes, and more. We also equip leaders through phone and email communication.”
2. **Encouragement:** “Tikkun leaders are available to encourage leaders during times of pressure and spiritual attacks. This includes counseling and advice as needed.”
3. **Oversight:** “Tikkun provides oversight through the Tikkun America Apostolic Team. As a part of this oversight, we participate in local eldership deliberations on major decisions. Such oversight takes place through the submission of reports, through various modes of communication, and occasionally through on-site visits.”
4. **Accountability:** “When leaders are accountable for their ministry and personal lives, congregants can live in safety. This includes Scriptural teaching, financial management, program implementation, and the general quality of congregational leadership. In addition, Tikkun provides a court of appeal for congregational members who believe that a serious wrong or error has occurred that was not rightly settled in their appeal to their congregational elders (*z'kenim*). When congregations join Tikkun, their leaders demonstrate that they are open to correction and are willing to be accountable to a Tikkun court of appeal.”
5. **Apostolic and Prophetic Alignment:** “We believe that Tikkun’s form and practice of government is on a healthy trajectory toward the New Covenant model in the Scriptures by its recognizing all fivefold ministries, especially apostles and prophets. The embracing of apostolic ministry is one key to spiritual blessing because the blessings of God flow when we are in proper leadership order.”
6. **Kingdom Expansion:** “..Membership in Tikkun connects leaders and congregations to relational government, and to Kingdom expansion that is rooted in the Land of Israel.

Tikkun is a Prophetic Network

“One of the signs of the New Covenant is the giving of prophetic gifts by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is poured out on all flesh, and we are told that “Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.” The book of Revelation says that the Spirit of Yeshua is the Spirit of prophecy. For this reason, we invite true prophetic input into the leadership of the network. Prophetic direction can arise from any leader or person who has a prophetic gift – not only from a recognized prophet (*navi*), though the latter plays a special role. In all cases, these prophetic

words are submitted for discernment and confirmation. Tikkun International and its affiliates Ohalei Rachamim, Revive Israel, and the Tikkun America Network, are all apostolic and prophetic. By *apostolic* we mean that the network is led by a person or persons recognized as having the gift of the apostle. An apostle is one who has abilities from the Holy Spirit that are requisite to the tasks of founding, fostering, developing, equipping and multiplying. The term “apostle” as used here does not equate modern-day apostolic leaders with the original apostles who followed Yeshua, some of whose writings made Scripture; it is rather a description of the Holy Spirit gift of apostle. By *prophetic*, we mean that we seek prophetic input from God for major directions. We do not just depend on our rational calculation to build in God’s Kingdom. That an apostle seeks the leading of the Spirit is foundational to his leadership. In addition, those who prove themselves to be credible prophets have a significant role in hearing direction for the network. This hearing is always submitted to the apostle and the government of the network for discernment and confirmation.”

Tikkun is a Fivefold Ministry Network

“Tikkun fully embraces the reality and significance of the equipping gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11 – apostle (*shaliach*), prophet (*navi*), evangelist (*m'baser*), pastor (*ro'eh*), and teacher (*moreh*). We have already spoken about the *shaliach* and the *navi*, (the prophet), but all of these gift ministries are for us today. We believe the Bible teaches that senior men of “fivefold” gifting, led by a Head *Shaliach*, will tie congregations and trans-local ministries together so that the all-too-often conflict between the congregational and the para-congregational is avoided.”

Tikkun is a Holy Spirit Oriented Network

“Tikkun International embraces the outpourings of the Holy Spirit that we call revival. This was first documented in the First Great Awakening, a decade of heightened spiritual fervor in Great Britain and her colonies that began in the 1730’s, the Second Great Awakening that occurred before the Civil War, the Welsh Revival that happened at the turn of the twentieth century, the Azusa Street awakening that launched Pentecostalism, and the Charismatic renewal of the 1960’s to 1980’s. ..We do not judge revival by the presence or absence of unusual physical manifestations, though the latter have been notable in most revivals. The key fruit of revival is transformed hearts; motivations for Scriptural holiness become dominant in God’s people. We believe that birthing revival can be accomplished through persistent prayer and that lasting revival requires a strong emphasis on teaching the Word of God; both of these are ideals of high priority within Tikkun. “

“As part of its Holy Spirit emphasis, Tikkun believes that the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit are essential for believers to build one another up. This includes not only the gifts that are more clearly supernatural – such as prophecy, tongues, interpretation, and the working of miracles – but also those anointings that are less spectacular such as wisdom, helps, and administration. We pray that all of God’s gifts would be fully operative among His people. We invite this by maintaining openness to the moving of the Holy Spirit in our gatherings. The above notwithstanding, during these times of revival and renewal, we resist

adopting culturally Christian ways of expressing joy and worship that would distract from the Jewish culture of the Messianic Jewish synagogue. We are careful not to allow Jewish space to be eroded by the dominance of non-Jewish culture.”

Tikkun is a Messianic Jewish Network

“Most of Tikkun’s primary values are shared by other apostolic networks – the centrality of Yeshua, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, discipling believers in Kingdom life, “fivefold” ministry, the power of the Holy Spirit, relational commitment, integrity, accountability, etc. Certainly all Tikkun congregations share these values. Tikkun has, however, a distinct primary calling that distinguishes it from most other such networks, and that is a calling to participate in the restoration of the Jewish people. It is on this special calling that this “Manual” focuses; it is not intended, nor can it contain, a complete description of Tikkun’s vision and values. In order to succeed, Messianic Judaism will need its leaders to have tremendous persistence of vision. We are standing against the historic opposition of the Synagogue and also against almost two millennia of opposition from much of the Christian community. We must be tenacious. First, we must know that we have heard God and have received confirmation at such a level that we will not drop out when the going gets tough. We will need encouragement in this, and so we strongly encourage all Tikkun congregations to be engaged in the Messianic Jewish movement as a whole.”

Tikkun is a Relational Network

“The foundation of the Tikkun network is relational support among leaders who are committed in love to Yeshua the Messiah and are also committed to the Messianic Jewish vision of Tikkun. The first priority of this support is a prayer network whereby we are updated on one another’s lives through local and regional councils, correspondence, telephone, and email. We must be committed to inform one another, fellowship with one another, and pray for one another. At this stage of the Messianic Jewish movement, the demands of local congregations are so great that their leaders require much nurture and support. To facilitate this, under the leadership of the Tikkun America Apostolic Team, designated Tikkun leaders make visits to congregational leaders and their congregations. Leaders are also invited to meet individually, in small groups, and during special getaways for prayer, mentoring and relationship building. Our ideal of ministry is a *team concept* whereby the complimentary gifts of various leaders are used for the common good. Team ministry is the established Scriptural pattern. An equipping and caring network geared for ministry expansion requires meeting together and praying for one another. We come together in regional monthly or quarterly fellowship meetings for mutual encouragement, edification, and prayer. “

Tikkun is a Network of Accountable Congregations and Ministries

“As a network, we reject the independent orientation that has become prevalent in today’s religious world. We believe that people should have accountability downward, at a peer level, and also upward.”

- “Congregational members are accountable at a peer level to one another, and upward to *chavurah* group leaders and *z'kenim*. “
- “Group leaders are accountable to *chavurah* members downward, and to *z'kenim* (elders) upward. “
- “*Z'kenim* are accountable to their *shamashim*, coordinators, group leaders, and congregants downward, to their elder peers, and to senior *z'kenim* of the network upward.”
- “Senior leaders are accountable to their *z'kenim* downward, to their peers on Regional Councils, and to *sh'lichim* (apostles) upward.”
- “*Sh'lichim* are the most accountable of all; they are accountable downward to everyone in the Network, including to individual congregants, and to their *shaliach* peers. And, in common with all humanity, they are accountable upward to God.”

Tikkun is a Network Committed to Restoring Christians to their Jewish Roots

“We are convinced that the Scriptures were written in a Jewish context and can be fully understood only in that context. It is thus a primary aspect of Tikkun’s vision to serve the Christian community by showing them a Jewish-rooted understanding of the Scriptures, and we do it in the following ways:

- In a spirit of *shalom*, we take advantage of private and public opportunities to teach Christians about the Jewish roots of the faith *without seeking to make them into Messianic congregations*.
- We help revive the Christian community’s calling to intercede for and share with the Jewish people, and we teach about God’s irrevocable calling of the Jewish people. We seek to partner with the Christian community for the salvation of the Jewish people, for only as one Body of Messiah will this God-given goal be reached.
- We foster a committed yet prudent unity with the rest of the Body of Messiah by developing solid relationships with Christians and Christian congregations. When we join in larger gatherings of believers, we make certain that our unique identity as Messianic Jews is not compromised.

Tikkun is a Network of Broad Orthodoxy

“We affirm broad orthodoxy, meaning that Tikkun is in full unity with the basic historic convictions of the Body of Messiah. This enables us to cooperate with a broad spectrum of the Christian community. We believe in the full inspiration of the Scriptures, and that they are true in all the authors’ intent and teaching (*inerrancy*). True doctrine is built on the foundation of trustworthy Scriptures interpreted in the context of its original culture’s definitions of words,

phrases, and concepts. Tikkun's basic doctrines are in harmony with the teachings of many of today's fine conservative scholars of Scripture, as well as those of the past. We maintain the truths of the incarnation of Yeshua, His truly divine and truly human natures, His substitutionary atonement for our sins, His resurrection, the work of the Holy Spirit, Yeshua's bodily return from Heaven, and everlasting life in the Age to Come for those who receive Yeshua as Messiah/Savior and Lord. While we seek to more accurately express these truths in Hebraic ways, we agree with the essence of these teachings. Tikkun cannot accept for membership, leaders, or congregations who depart from these convictions."

Tikkun is a Financially Committed Network

"Tikkun utilizes tithing and *explicit percentage* financial commitments as its means of support. American congregations make a financial commitment, and congregational leaders tithe to support the apostolic ministry and accountability structure overseen by the Tikkun America Apostolic Team."

The End

Well, that's it. I hope these excerpts from the Tikkun Manual have spoken more loudly and accurately than I could have, had I told them to you in my own words. I hope it is evident to you how unique among Messianic Jewish and Christian networks Tikkun is, and how its New Covenant biblical values, its services, and its protections, accrue directly to you, Ohev Yisrael's members.