

# **Building Bridges Between Adventists and Jews**

**Jewish-Adventist Church Planter  
Training Manual  
For Pastors and Theology Students**

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# Mission Statement

The Worldwide Jewish Adventist Friendship Center is a multinational organization dedicated to fostering mutual respect, dialogue, understanding, education and research between Israel and the church, especially between Jews and Adventists. The closeness and similarities between Adventism and Judaism (Style of life, Sabbath, Messiah etc...) give them the unique opportunity to generate interfaith dialogue at the highest levels, bringing together Jewish and Adventist leaders and renowned scholars.

Many Jews now recognize that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel. The Worldwide Jewish Adventist Friendship Center therefore provides a place within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination for every Jew who is waiting for the second coming of Jesus our Messiah to worship God in the context of their faith without denying their own culture.

# Mission Towards Jews: Biblical Foundations

## 1. Biblical Reasons:

- a) Jesus' commands
  - Matthew 28:19
  - Matthew 10:5
  - Acts 1:8
  
- b) Paul's instructions:
  - Romans 11: 1, 4, 5
  - Romans 10 : 13, 14

## 2. Historical Reasons:

- a) We owe a debt to those first Christians who gave their lives to spread the Good News of salvation through Jesus.
- b) Remember that they were Jews.
- c) The miracle of the survival of the Jews throughout thousands of years.

## 3. Theological Reasons:

- a) Similarity of Jewish and Adventist beliefs
- b) Similarity of fundamental values
- c) We worship the same God.
- d) We share the same holy book.
- e) We have the same hope (the resurrection, God's kingdom)
- f) We have a similar understanding of the Messiah.
- g) We follow a similar lifestyle.
- h) Christians recognize that their religious roots are from Judaism. While more Jewish rabbis recognize that Christianity is really not so distinct from Judaism.
  - “Jews and Christians worship the same God, seek authority from the same book – the Bible, and accept the moral principles of Torah”. New York Times Sunday, 1 October, 2000. p.11
- i) Who do we worship as God incarnate? A Jew.

## 4. Prophetic Reasons:

It is the only mission clearly stated in Biblical and extra-Biblical texts

- a) Biblical texts :
  - i. Romans 11 : 11-12
  - ii. Romans 11 : 23
  - iii. Romans 11 : 25- 26
  - iv. Hosea 3 : 4,

E. G. White Commentary about Hosea text:

“The prophecies of judgment delivered by Amos and Hosea were accompanied by predictions of future glory. ... through Hosea was given a prophecy that set before them the privilege of having a part in the final restoration that is to be made to the people of God at the close of earth's history, when Christ shall appear as King of kings and Lord of lords.” PK298

v. Zecharia 12 : 10

E. G. White commentary about Zecharia text:

“The work of which the prophet Zechariah writes is a type of the spiritual restoration to be wrought for Israel before the end of time” (Letter 42, 1912). SDABC vol. 4 1180.

b) Ellen G. White Statements:

✠ “There is a mighty work to be done in our world. The Lord has declared that the Gentiles shall be gathered in, and not the Gentiles only, but the Jews. There are among the Jews many who will be converted, and through whom we shall see the salvation of God go forth as a lamp that burneth. There are Jews everywhere, and to them the light of present truth is to be brought. There are among them many who will come to the light, and who will proclaim the immutability of the law of God with wonderful power. The Lord God will work. He will do wonderful things in righteousness.”--Manuscript 87, 1907. Ev 578.

✠ “When this gospel shall be presented in its fullness to the Jews, many will accept Christ as the Messiah.” AA 380.

✠ “In the closing proclamation of the gospel, when special work is to be done for classes of people hitherto neglected, God expects His messengers to take particular interest in the Jewish people whom they find in all parts of the earth.” AA 380.

✠ “Among the Jews are some who, like Saul of Tarsus, are mighty in the Scriptures, and these will proclaim with wonderful power the immutability of the law of God. The God of Israel will bring this to pass in our day. His arm is not shortened that it cannot save. As His servants labor in faith for those who have long been neglected and despised, His salvation will be revealed.” AA 381.

## 5. A very specific Adventist Mission

a) “*Comfort my people*”, it is a mission of consolation entrusted to the Adventist people.

“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.” **Is. 40:1-2**

“A voice of one calling: “In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” **Is. 40:3-5**

b) “*He will turn the hearts of the children to their fathers*”, it is a mission of reconciliation entrusted to the Adventist people.

“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.” **Mal. 4:5-6**

# Maimonides' 13 Principles Articles of Faith in Judaism

## The greatest systematic statement of Jewish belief

In the same sense as Christianity or Islam, Judaism does not have codified Articles of Faith. Many attempts have indeed been made at summarizing and condensing the Jewish faith. But these have always lacked the one essential element: authoritative sanction on the part of a supreme ecclesiastical body.

### Philo of Alexandria's attempt

The first to make the attempt to formulate them was Philo of Alexandria. In his work *De Mundi Opificio*, lxi., Philo enumerates five articles as embracing the main beliefs of the Jewish faith.

- God exists and rules
- God is one
- The world was created
- Creation is one
- God's providence rules Creation.

### Rabbis reaction to Philo's five articles

Among the *Tannaim* and *Amoraim* [rabbis of the Mishna and Talmud] this example of Philo found no followers, because there were no statements of belief about the resurrection or the divine origin of the Torah.

### Maimonides' 13 principles

The 13 Principles of Faith is the best known Jewish creed; it was formulated by Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, better known as Maimonides, or Rambam (1135-1204 CE).

### Ani' Meamin

- Over time, two poetic restatements of these principles (*Ani Ma'amim* and *Yigdal*) became canonized in the *siddur*, and these principles eventually became widely held.
- Today, most of the Orthodox Jewish community holds these beliefs to be obligatory. However, "even a cursory examination of Jewish literature shows that Maimonides' principles were never regarded as the last word in Jewish theology".

### **1. I believe that God creates and guides all creatures, and that God alone made, makes and will make everything.**

Judaism affirms theism as the basis for religion, as does Islam and Christianity. Beyond merely teaching that a god exists - which rules out atheism and agnosticism - Judaism specifically notes that only one god exists, thereby ruling out polytheism.

This is accepted by Orthodox, Conservative, most Reform and some Reconstructionist Jews.

### **2. I believe that God is one and that there is no unity that is in any way like God's. He alone is our God, Who is, Who was and Who always will be.**

Maimonides explains “If one even allows himself to think that there is another deity other than God, than he violates the commandment “You shall have no other gods before me”. This is accepted by Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and many Reconstructionist Jews.

**3. I believe that God is not physical and is not affected by physical phenomena, and that there is no comparison to God whatsoever.**

Maimonides explains “In many places our holy scriptures do speak of God in physical terms. Thus we find concepts such as walking, standing, sitting and speaking used in relation to God”.

In all these cases, though, scripture is only speaking metaphorically. In the Talmud our sages teach us that “The Torah speaks in the language of man” (Berachot, 31b).

This principle is accepted by all denominations.

**4. I believe that God is the very first and the very last.**

Maimonides explains “The fourth principle involves the absolute eternity of the One. Nothing else shares God’s eternal quality. This is discussed many times in Scripture, and the Torah teaches it to us when it says “The Eternal God is a refuge” (Deuteronomy 33:27).

This principle is accepted by all denominations.

**5. I believe that to God alone is it proper to pray and it is not proper to pray to any other.**

Maimonides writes “God is the only one we may serve and praise... We may not act in this way toward anything beneath God, whether it be an angel, a star, or one of the elements... There are no intermediaries between us and God. All our prayers should be directed towards God; nothing else should even be considered. Jewish law requires the worshiper to be aware that it is God being addressed, to “know before Whom you are standing” (Berachot, 28b).

**Prayer with *Kavanah* (with intention)**

The Hebrew word for such intent is *kavanah*. The Talmud teaches that the minimal level of *kavanah* required is that “one who prays must direct one’s heart towards heaven” (Berachot, 31a).

This principle is accepted by Orthodox, Conservative and most Reform Jews.

In contrast, most Reconstructionist and some Reform Jews have redefined the word prayer. Instead of believing in a personal God, the word ‘God’ is redefined as a natural process or a philosophical idea, not an ontological reality.

**Chassidic prayers**

In a direct contradiction of Maimonides’ fifth principle many Chassidic Jews pray to their deceased Rebbes, asking them to intercede on their behalf. They argue that they are only asking the souls of the dead to act as intermediaries between them and God, but this is precisely what Maimonides attacks as heresy.

**6. I believe that all the words of the prophets are true.**

Maimonides explains “We must realize that there exist human beings who have such lofty qualities and achieve such great perfection that their souls become prepared to receive pure spiritual wisdom. Their human wisdom can then become bound up with Creative Mind of God and receive an inspired emanation from it.

This is prophecy, and those people who achieve it are prophets.”

“All prophets have one thing in common. They all see their prophecy only in a dream, a vision or a trance. This is what the Torah means when it says “If there be a prophet among you, then I, God, will make Myself known to him in a vision - I will speak to him in a dream” (Numbers 12:6).

This principle is accepted by Orthodox, Conservative, most Reform Jews, and some Reconstructionists Jews.

## **7. I believe that the prophecy of Moses was true, and that he was the chief of all prophets, both those before him and those after him.**

Maimonides explains “Moses was superior to all prophets, whether they preceded him or arose afterwards. Moses attained the highest possible human level. He perceived God to a degree surpassing every human that ever existed...”

God spoke to all other prophets through an intermediary. Moses alone did not need this; this is what the Torah means when God says “Mouth to mouth, I will speak to him.”

This principle is accepted by Orthodox and Conservative Jews. However, this does not imply that the text of the Torah should be understood literally.

The rabbinic tradition maintains that God conveyed not only the words of the Torah, but the meaning of the Torah. God gave rules as to how the laws were to be understood and implemented, and these were passed down as an oral tradition.

This oral law ultimately was written down almost two thousand years later in the *Mishna* and the two *Talmuds*. The founders of Reform Judaism replaced this principle with its opposite — **the theory of Progressive Revelation**.

For Reform Jews, the prophecy of Moses was not the highest degree of prophecy; rather it was the first in a long chain of progressive revelations in which mankind gradually began to understand the will of God better and better. As such, the laws of Moses are no longer binding, and it is today’s generation that must assess what God wants of them.

This principle is also rejected by most Reconstructionists, but for a different reason; most think that God is not a being with a will; thus no will can be revealed.

## **8. I believe that the entire Torah now in our hands is the same one that was given to Moses our teacher.**

Maimonides explains “We do not know exactly how the Torah was transmitted to Moses. But when it was transmitted, Moses merely wrote it down like a secretary taking dictation... Thus every verse in the Torah is equally holy, as they all originate from God, and are all part of God’s Torah, which is perfect, holy and true...”

The person who says that some passages were written by Moses of his own accord is considered by our prophets and sages to be the worst sort of nonbeliever, and a perverter of the Torah... Such a person is in the category of those who say “The Torah is not in heaven”... Regarding such a person the Torah says “He has despised the word of God, his soul shall be utterly cut off” (Numbers 15:31).

Maimonides writes that to a lesser degree, this principle also covers the Oral, as well as the Written Torah. This includes the Mishna, early halakhic Midrashim, and the two Talmuds.

No modern Jewish denomination totally accepts this principle. Orthodox Jews recognize that over the millennia, many scribal errors have crept into the Torah's text. The Masoretes (7th to 10th centuries CE) compared all extant variations and attempted to create a definitive text.

In general, though, Orthodox Jews view the Written and Oral Torah as virtually the same that Moses taught, for all practical purposes.

Due to advances in biblical scholarship, and archeological and linguistic research, all non-Orthodox Jews reject this principle outright. Instead, they accept that the core of the Oral and Written Torah may come from Moses, but that the document that we have today has been edited together from several documents.

Conservative Jews tend to believe that much of the Oral law is divinely inspired, while Reform and Reconstructionist Jews tend to view all of the Oral law as an entirely human creation.

### **9. I believe that the Torah will not be changed nor will there be another Torah from God.**

Maimonides explains "If any prophet comes to alter the Torah, we immediately know that he is a false prophet. It does not matter whether he is Jewish or gentile, or how many signs and miracles he performs. If he says that God sent him to add or subtract a commandment... he is a false prophet. The same is true if he teaches that the commandments were only given for a limited time and not forever.

This principle is accepted by Orthodox and Conservative Jews, as long as one understands that this claim is understood within the system of the dual Torah, the written and the oral law.

In contrast, Reform Jews state instead that Revelation is progressive, thus Jews are not bound by the understanding of Revelation that came from the Written or Oral Torah. The early Reformers, as well as modern day prominent Reform theologians teach that the laws of the Torah and Talmud are no longer binding; Instead, each Jew is empowered to interpret the word of God, and this interpretation literally creates new and separate commandments for each person.

### **10. I believe that God knows all the deeds of human beings and their thoughts**

Maimonides explains "The tenth principle is that God knows all that men do, and never turns His eyes away from them. It denies the opinion of those who say "God has abandoned His world".

This principle is accepted by Orthodox, Conservative and most Reform Jews. It is rejected by some Reform and most Reconstructionist Jews.

### **11. I believe that God rewards with good those who observe his commandments, and punishes those who violate His commandments.**

This is an extreme case where the Ani Ma'amim states precisely the opposite of what Maimonides actually wrote.

Maimonides believed that the only possible reward was that if a person perfected his intellect to the highest degree, then the part of his intellect that connected to God, the active intellect, would be immortalized. This position, obviously, bears no relationship to the popular understanding of divine reward and punishment.

The common understanding of this principle is accepted by many Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews, and is generally rejected by Reconstructionists.

### **12. I believe in the coming of the Messiah and even though he may delay, nevertheless I anticipate every day that he will come.**

Maimonides explains “We believe that the Messiah will be greater than any other king or ruler that has ever lived... One who doubts this denies the Torah itself.

This principle is accepted by Orthodox Jews. Conservative Jews vary in their beliefs, some affirming a personal messiah, while others affirm a messianic era. Emet Ve-Emunah

The Conservative movement’s statement of principles, notes: We do not know when the Messiah will come, nor whether he will be a charismatic human figure or is a symbol of the redemption of humankind from the evils of the world. Through the doctrine of a Messianic figure, Judaism teaches us that every individual human being must live as if he or she, individually, has the responsibility to bring about the messianic age.

Reform Jews generally concur with this latter position; they are more likely to believe in a messianic era than a personal messiah.

Reconstructionist Jews reject the idea that God can send a personal messiah or bring about a messianic age, but they do teach that man can use the power or process termed God to help bring about such a world.

### **13. I believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead whenever the wish emanates from God.**

Maimonides wrote much on this topic, but in most cases he wrote about the immortality of the soul for people of perfected intellect; his writings were not about any resurrection of dead bodies. This prompted hostile criticism from the rabbis of his day.

Rabbinic works usually refer to this afterlife as “Olam Haba” (the world to come). Note that some books use this phrase to refer to the messianic era, a physical realm right here on Earth; in other works this phrase refers to a purely spiritual realm. It was during Maimonides’s lifetime, that this lack of agreement flared into a full-blown theological dispute, with Maimonides himself charged as being a heretic by many Jewish leaders.

Some Jews at this time taught that Judaism did not require a belief in the physical resurrection of the dead, as the afterlife would be a purely spiritual realm. They used Maimonides’ works on this subject to back up their position. In return, their opponents claimed that this was outright heresy; for them the afterlife was right here on Earth, where God would raise dead bodies from the grave so that the resurrected could live eternally.

# Historical Development of Judaism

## Founder of Judaism

Often identified as Moses  
Biblically begins with Abraham

## Biblical Time line

God in the world (Gen 1-11)  
God's election of Israel (Gen 11-50)  
Two Commonwealths and their features  
    From Sinai to Babylon (1446 B.C. – 587 B.C.)  
    From Babylon to the Destruction of Jerusalem and Masada (586 B.C. – 70 CE.)

### First Commonwealth

Period: (1446 – 587 BC.)  
Exodus and the Law (1446 – 1406 BC.)  
Period of the Judges (1406 – 1050 BC.)  
United Kingdom (1050 – 931 BC.)  
Fall of the Northern Kingdom, Israel (722 BC.)  
Features of the First Commonwealth  
    Identity as a nation  
    Legal code  
    Worship and sacrificial system

### Second Commonwealth

Period (586 BC. – 73 CE.)  
Fall of the Southern Kingdom, Judah (586 BC.)  
End of Exile (537 BC.)  
Last Biblical Prophet, Malachi (440 BC.)  
Conquest of Alexander the Great (332 BC.)  
Maccabean revolt (166 BC.)  
Herod the Great, Hasmonean Kingdom (37 BC. to 4 CE.)  
Destruction of Jerusalem (70 CE.) and Masada (73 CE.)  
Features of Second Commonwealth  
    Ethnic Identity  
    Legal Code: Keeping the Law  
    Devotion to God  
    Party Division: Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Zelots, etc.  
    Messianic expectation

## Rabbinic Judaism

### Talmudic Tradition

Developed after fall of Masada by the Pharisees as the source of Rabbis  
Emphasized in the actions not dogma  
Today Judaism emphasizes obedience to the law, not a personal belief  
The Mishnah collected  
136 CE. Bar Kochba rebellion put down and Jerusalem razed  
Jews dispersed to various parts of the world  
Jews prospered in Persia  
When Shi'ite Islam came to Persia in 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Judaism moved to Iberian Peninsula

### **From Talmudic Tradition to Middle Ages**

Rashi (Rabbi Solomon Isaac) (1040-1105 CE.) = Literal interpretation

Rambam (Rabbi Moses Ben Maimonides) (1135-1204)

Known for his intellectual defence of Judaism

Time of the Crusades, begun in the 11<sup>th</sup> century

1492 – Messianic Hope but Persecution instead

Kabbalistic scholars had predicted 1492 as a redemptive year

Ferdinand and Isabella unified Spain under Catholic rule and expelled Jews

Many Jews settled in south-eastern Europe under Turkish rule.

Two main Jewish groups

*Sephardic* Jews – Spanish roots, Turkish and Arab influence, “Ladino” language, Spanish dialect, Hebrew script.

*Ashkenazic* Jews – north and north-eastern European roots. Separate from Gentile Europeans. Yiddish – German with Hebrew script.

### **Renewal of Messianic Expectations**

#### **17<sup>th</sup> Century – Sabbatai Zevi**

Jews from Europe, Middle East, and North Africa thought him to be the Messiah

Publicly proclaimed by Nathan of Gaza as the Messiah

Sabbatai went to convert the Turkish Sultan but was converted to Islam and became a Muslim

General despair among Jews over failed messianic hope

#### **1844 and the Lubavitch movement.**

### **New Movements and Reinterpretations of Judaism**

#### **Chassidism**

Central Figure: Baal Shem Tov

God is found not in study or obeying the law but found inside the person and manifested in singing and dancing.

Joyful expression of God in their midst.

New cultural forms from 18<sup>th</sup> century culture (for example Amish)

Followed Talmudic tradition

After Besht’s death, villages setup centred around *rebbe* or *Tzaddik* who was believed to have healing powers

Rebbe was given absolute obedience

Russian persecution (pogroms) drove them to the U. S.

European Jews were almost exterminated by the Nazis

Some objected to the new state of Israel without the Messiah but accepted later.

#### **Reformed Judaism**

Arose in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, their My.

Accepted European culture and intellectual climate.

Central figure: Moses Mendelssohn.

Studied in University of Berlin.

Abandoned outward Jewish forms.

Jews were free to adopt the culture in which they lived.

#### Main Characteristics

Traditional forms not authoritative.

Talmud not considered authoritative.

Following orthodox practices not wrong but not binding.  
Religious practice is in a state of continued development.  
Does not seek a Messiah – if a Messiah exists, it is people working to make a better world.  
Initially opposed a separate homeland for Jews but in the wake of the Holocaust they supported the state of Israel.  
Meeting place is called a temple.  
Similar concerns as mainline Protestants.

### **Conservative Judaism**

Arose in the 19<sup>th</sup> century  
Central figure: Zecharias Frankel in Germany  
Characterized by adhering to the law and adapting to the contemporary culture

### **Reconstructionist Judaism**

Appeared in 1934  
Central figure: Mordecai Kaplan  
Small movement attempting to integrate religious Judaism into all aspects of Jewish life.

## **Modern State of Israel**

### **Third Commonwealth**

Migration to Palestine in the 19<sup>th</sup> century  
English took Palestine from Turkey in 1917, League of Nations mandate to 1948  
Both Arabs and Jews immigrated  
Holocaust moved international opinion in favour of Jews  
First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897  
Creation of the State of Israel in 1948  
Reunification of Jerusalem in 1967

### **Divisions of Judaism**

**Orthodox:** observant Jews

**Hasidism:** From 17<sup>th</sup> century and the Baal Shem Tov

**Reformed:** From 18<sup>th</sup> century, Moses Mendelshon

**Conservative:** From 19<sup>th</sup> century, Zecharias Frankel in Germany

**Secular Judaism:** Not believers, Judaism as culture

Other Isolated Groups

**Yemenite Jews** – transported from Arabian peninsula to Israel in 1940

**Karaite Jews** – Accept only Torah and live in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem's Old City.

**Falash Mura Jews** – from Ethiopia since 2<sup>nd</sup> Commonwealth but moved to Israel to avoid famines in the 1980s

**Bnei Israel** – From India, The Bnei Israel community was completely isolated from most of the other Jewish communities of the world. They immigrated in the 1950s.

## **Sacred writings of Judaism**

### **The Bible**

Torah - law

Prophets - Nevihim

Writings - Ketuvim

**The Mishnah (200 CE.) The Halacha**

Six categories of laws

Seeds, Feasts, Women, Damages, Holy Matters, and Purities

Halakah – application of the law

**The Talmud**

Mishna and Gemarra

Mishnah completed by Rabbi Judah the Prince in 200 CE.

Seventeen volumes

Two versions: Palestinian 4<sup>th</sup> century CE.

Babylonian 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE.

**The Kabbala**

Mystical tradition supposed received by Moses at Sinai.

**The Zohar**

Mystical interpretation of the Torah, traditionally attributed to Yochanan Ben Zakhai but written by Moses de Leon.

**Jewish view of Spiritual and Physical Realm**

**Spiritual Realm**

**Ultimate Reality**

One supreme holy God

Covenant maker with His people

**Spiritual Beings**

Angels

Satan

**Type of Spiritual Existence**

Resurrection

Heaven

Gehenna (temporary for most)

**Relationship to Humanity**

Covenant relationship

**Physical Realm**

**Belief system**

Worship of one God

Obedience to God

Prayer

Community

Keeping Kosher

Keeping the Sabbath

**Source of revelation or enlightenment**

Torah and Talmud

**Relation to spiritual realm**

Belief in God

Keeping the law

**Ultimate goal of religion**

To live as God's chosen people according to the law

Resurrection

The Coming of the Messiah

Welfare of others

**Rituals:**

Orthodox dress

Mezuzah containing the *Shema* in home on doorposts.

Dietary laws (kashrut)

Prayer (*talith* and *tefilin*)

Life cycle

Birth – circumcision for boys, naming for boys and girls

Boy's Bar Mitzvah at thirteen – now accountable for keeping the law  
(Conservative and Reformed have Bat Mitzvah for girls)

Marriage

Death – Funeral held as soon as possible after death; usually the same  
or following day.

**Significant days**

Sabbath

Rosh Hashanah – Jewish New Year

Yom Kippur – Day of Atonement

Sukkoth – Feast of Booths

Simchat Torah – final day of reading entire Torah.

Hanukkah – commemorating purification of the Temple

Purim – rescue of Jews by Esther

Passover – Deliverance of Jews from Egypt

Shavuot - Pentecost or Feast of Weeks

**Worship**

Synagogues

Orthodox have separate place for women

Ark, Bema, and Menorah

Ark – Contains Torah scroll.

Bema – Podium, pulpit, reader's platform.

Menorah – Candelabrum.

**Organization**

**Local Congregations**

Leaders

Cantor – song leader

Rabbis – preachers

Conservative and Reformed congregations may have women cantors and Rabbis

**National Organizations**

Consistoire (consistory) of ...

Jewish Council of ...

The Board of Deputies

Most of the countries have Rabbis and Great Rabbis. One of the Great Rabbis  
is elected as the head of Religious Organization.

**World Organization**

The most important is the World Jewish Congress, founded in 1936, it represents  
Jewish Communities in nearly a hundred countries and has its headquarter in New  
York.

# Israel and Jesus

## Introduction

Our workshop is about understanding and reaching the Jewish people. Before reaching out to them it is very important to understand them and to see them as God's children, loved by God and still today in the heart of God in a very special way.

## 1. Do we have to preach the Gospel to the Jews?

I ask this question because we are faced, even in the midst of the SDA church with:

- 1.1. Indifference towards Jews
- 1.2. Prejudices against Jews
  - 1.2.1. Anti-Semitic prejudices
  - 1.2.2. False theologies about Israel
  - 1.2.3. Distortion of the understanding of the responsibilities of the Jews in the crucifixion

## 2. God's Love for the Jewish people

- 2.1. God's love is unconditional
  - 2.1.1. **Deut. 7:6-8** God does not love Israel because of her righteousness but because of the promise He gave to the fathers.
  - 2.1.2. **Jer. 31:3** "I have loved you with an everlasting love."
  - 2.1.3. **Isaiah 54:7** "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back."

## 3. Were the Jewish people responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus and are they cursed for that?

- 3.1. Jesus and the Jews
  - 3.1.1. When Jesus came preaching the kingdom, the Jewish people were very open and followed him by the thousands. Five thousand besides women and children were present at the first multiplication of the bread (Matt 14:13-21) and four thousand at the second (Matt 15:29-39).
    - Mark 1 : 22, "The people were amazed at his teaching,
    - Mark 1:27,28, "The people were all so amazed that they asked each other,
    - Mark 2 : 1-4, "A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home
    - Mark 2:12-13, "He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying,
  - 3.1.2. Jesus had a mass following. A brief perusal of the synoptic gospels reveals  
27 passages in Matthew,  
33 in Mark and  
39 in Luke where Jesus is in relation with the Jewish people  
In these passages we find the general attitude of the Jewish people in regard to Jesus.  
Evidence of a positive attitude is in  
23 of the 27 texts in Matthew,  
29 of the 33 in Mark, and  
35 of the 39 in Luke.

Matthew 4 : 22	Mark 1 : 22	Luke 4 : 15
5 : 1,2	1 : 28	4 : 32
7 : 28,29	1 : 33	4 : 36
8 : 1	1 : 45	5 : 1
8 : 18	2 : 2	5 : 15
9 : 8	2 : 13	5 : 19
9 : 33	2 : 15	5 : 26
11 : 7	3 : 7,8	6 : 17
12 : 15	3 : 20	7 : 11
12 : 23	3 : 31,32	8 : 4
12 : 46	4 : 1	8 : 19
13 : 1,2	5 : 21	8 : 40
14 : 13,14	5 : 24	8 : 43
14 : 21	6 : 14	9 : 10,11
14 : 34	6 : 32-34	9 : 14
15 : 30,31	6 : 44	9 : 37
15 : 32	6 : 54-56	9 : 43
19 : 1	7 : 14	11 : 14
20 : 29	8 : 1	11 : 27
21 : 8-11	8 : 9	12 : 1
21 : 14-16	9 : 14-15	13 : 17
21 : 45-46	10 : 1	14 : 25
26 : 3-5	10 : 13	15 : 1
	10 : 46	18 : 15, 36, 43
	11 : 8-11	19 : 2-3
	11 : 18	19 : 36,37,48
	12 : 12	20 : 1, 19, 26, 45
	12 : 35-37	21 : 38
	14 : 1,2	22 : 2-6

We have very few passages indicating a negative attitude of the Jewish people toward Jesus.

Matthew 8: 33,34	Mark 3 : 22	Luke 4 : 16-30
9 : 23-25	5:16,17	8:37
12:24	5 : 38-40	8:53
13:54-58	6 : 1-6	14:15

3.1.3. “Jew” and “Jews” in the Gospel of John. Pursuing this line of investigation, the words “Jew”, “Jews”, or “Jewish” occur 71 times in John’s gospel. In 16 instances the word refers to the Jewish people, 50 times to the leaders of the people, and in 5 instances it refers neither to the Jewish people nor to their leaders, but to Pilate or to Jesus. Among the 66 occurrences referring either to the Jewish people or to their leaders,

17 indicate a positive attitude towards Jesus, 39 are neutral and 10 indicate a negative attitude.

- John 2:23 “many people ... believed in his name.”  
John 3:26 well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.”  
John 6:2 and a great crowd of people followed him  
John 6:5 Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him,  
John 6:10-15 ...about five thousand of them “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.” and make him king by force  
John 6:24 Once the crowd realized... they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.  
John 7:12 Among the crowds ... Some said, “He is a good man.”  
John 7:31 Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him.?  
John 7:40-41 On hearing his words, some of the people said, “Surely this man is the Prophet.” Others said, “He is the Christ.”  
John 7:45-49 ...“No one ever spoke the way this man does,  
John 8:2, where all the people gathered around him  
John 8:30 Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him.  
John 10:40-42 Here he stayed and many people came to him. They said, ...” And in that place many believed in Jesus.  
John 11:45-48 Therefore many of the Jews...put their faith in him. ... If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him,  
John 12:9-11 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him.  
John 12:12-19 The next day the great crowd .... They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna !” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Blessed is the King of Israel  
John 12:42 Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him.

3.1.4. In all four gospels we see that the Jewish people were in favor of Jesus. Many texts tell us of crowds coming to hear him preach – thousands came to listen to him - the feeding of the multitude and the Sermon on the Mount for example. Right up until the end, only a few days before the crucifixion, the Jewish people supported Jesus. On Palm Sunday when Jesus came to Jerusalem, the Jewish people cried out, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they did not call, “We want him to die.” Only a few days after that, he was arrested but all the gospels say that it was just a small group of leaders of the Jewish people who were against Jesus, not the entire population.

3.1.5. The time of the crucifixion: Between the day of the palm trees and Passover, the population of Jerusalem is not the same, indeed Passover is a feast of Pilgrimage (biblical text) many Jews came in Israel for the feast. More the feast was close and more the population of Jerusalem was biggest by the coming of the pilgrims. That means that the great majority of the people who where in Jerusalem at that time, have never heart about Jesus, They even did not know him at all. Those worshippers could come from the cities of Judea, Samaria, Galilee but also from many others country as in Acts 2:8-10 during the day of the Pentecost an other pilgrimage feast “*Then how is it that each of us hears them*

*in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome...”.*

Then we can understand that those people not knowing what happened and who is this “Yeshua ben Yoseph” trusted the leaders of the people, if the leaders said this man is guilty of blasphemy, that could be, must be right.

**3.1.6. Barrabas or Jesus?** When we come to the story of the Barrabas, we have to be very careful, because the case is not obvious and is very ambiguous.

It is not sure at all that Barrabas was a criminal or murderer, the non Christians sources presented him as a zealot, a “terrorist” or an “activist” (in depend in which side you are). A man who loved Israel, who wanted to fight against the occupation of the land by the Roman Empire. This is what Luke 23: 19 says: “Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.” Every insurrection against a foreign army can lead to some deaths, even we don’t want that.

All stories have to be read and understood in their own context before condemning.

More than that, if I said that the case was not easy it is also because of the ambiguity of the name of the people in this story. A very old tradition say to us that the first name of Barrabas was “Jesus”, a very common name at that time, the very name of a hero of the Jewish history “Joshua” or Yeshua”. As you know each name in Hebrew has a meaning, Barabbas is a name which means “Son of the father” (Bar = son + Abbas = Father).

Therefore, even though the crowd said “Yeshua, the son of the father” the leaders who wanted to kill Jesus could easily interpret any answer the crowds give in the way they wanted.

**3.1.7. “Let his blood be on us and on our children!”** Are the sufferings of the Jewish people all through the centuries were really a proof of their guilt? Are the sufferings of the Jewish people were the fulfillment of this sentence some Jews have pronounced “Let his blood be on us and on our children!” (Matthew 27:25)

At this point I would like to share with you two reflections.

a) if we think that the sufferings of the Jews were the consequence of the rejection of Jesus and that sentence, we must recognize that a Jesus’ prayer on the cross was not granted by his father. For on the cross, Jesus dying prayed in this way: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34)

It is incredible to believe that this Jesus’ prayer could be rejected by the father.

b) I would like to thank Dr Richard Lehmann, who wrote an article about this sentence in the magazine “L’Olivier” N°3, (Spring 1991) and who give an very

interesting interpretation of this sentence. The blood of Jesus is more symbol of blessing than symbol of curse. I am wondering that the blood of Jesus will be on me and on my children. For the blood of the lamb is for the forgiveness of our sins not the opposite.

**3.1.8. E G White identify clearly the Leaders as responsible for the death of Jesus:**

When Christ was upon this earth, the great mass of the common people would have accepted Him had it not been that they were afraid of what the Scribes and Pharisees might do. These leaders, sitting in Moses' seat, claiming to know God, saw that Christ was drawing the attention of the people from them. They determined to oppose His work, and once started in the path of opposition, no evidence had any weight with them. 9MR, 265

**3.1.9. What was the reaction of the Jewish people to Jesus after his death?** In the book of Acts we see that thousands of Jews believed in Jesus. Concerning the day of Pentecost, thousands welcomed his message and were baptized (Acts 2:37-41) "Day by day the Lord added to the church those who were being saved." (Acts 2:42-47) "Having the goodwill of all the people. After some months or years the number of believers in Jerusalem was about five thousand." (Acts 4:4) "And day by day, month by month the Lord added a great number ... to the church." (Acts 5:12-14). A very encouraging text shows that even those who were against Jesus during his ministry on earth (priests and leaders) believed in him about three years after his death (Acts 6:7).

With an estimated 10,000 Jews who believed in Jesus living in Jerusalem three years after his death, how can we honestly claim that the Jews have rejected Jesus?

**3.1.10. What happened after the dead of Stephen?**

Acts 13 : 42 - 43  
Acts 14 : 1  
Acts 17 : 4, 11, 12  
Acts 18 : 8, 17, 20  
Acts 19 : 8, 9

Many in Israel were very sincere people, waiting for an intense spiritual life and were ready to accept Jesus as the Messiah.

**4. Let rememeber that we all are responsible for the death of Jesus.**

4.1. If we come back to our fist question, we will recognize that all of us are responsible for the death of Jesus. If Jesus died on the cross, it is not because the Jews have rejected him but much more because he gave his life for our salvation.

4.2. He died because I am a sinner, and his death is the only way for me to get the eternal life.

4.3. According to Ellen G. White

“The four evangelists,--Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,--all bear record that Jew and Gentile, priest and people, rulers, kings, and governors, all classes and tongues, were represented in rejecting Christ, a man who was innocent, and against whom no proof could be found. He came to this world to live God’s law in human nature. He came to testify to the world’s unfallen, to seraphim and cherubim, to angels and to men, that Satan’s rebellion against God and his law was without foundation or excuse, that in his law God had revealed his character. This character Christ represented by living that law, thus vindicating it, and showing its immutability. This Satan could not tolerate. He could not bear to lose all that he had attempted in heaven, and in attempting which he had lost heaven. He and his evil angels united in a desperate companionship with disloyal and evil men. They resolved to use the whole power of their corrupt energies in putting out of the world the light of truth.” RH, January 23, 1900 par. 11

All humanity has rejected Jesus

“When John wrote, “He came unto His own, and His own did not receive Him” (John 1:11), he was thinking not merely of the crowd at the cross, or even of Israel, but of every generation that has lived. Except for a handful, all humanity, like that raucous crowd at Calvary, has failed to recognize in Jesus their God and Saviour. This failure, humanity’s greatest and most tragic, shows that humanity’s knowledge of God is radically deficient.” Seventh-day Adventists believe... p. 17

4.4 That’s why according to the Bible God did not reject Israel as people of God.  
Rom. 11 : 1,2, 11 - 15

**5. Why Judaism rejected Christianity:**

It is true that after that time the Jewish people has rejected the Christianity. But we have to think a little bit about the reasons of that rejection.

5.1. The destruction of Jerusalem. Before that even, Jerusalem was the center of the Jewish life, after it become more and more difficult to thing that Jerusalem could play anymore this role, the torah become the central part of the Judaism and Rabbis wanted to protect the Jews from assimilation.

5.2. The apostasy of the church. This reason is much more on the responsibility of the Christians. During all the centuries after the conversion of the Roman Empire to the Christianity, the Church became a power who persecuted the Jews and Israel. They wanted to convert the Jews, but because that did not happened they started to force them to the conversion by persecutions. More Christianity run away from the original teaching of Jesus and more the Jews run away from the Christianity.

**Conclusion**

Acts 13:23 “From this man’s descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised.”  
Acts 5:31 “God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.”

# The Mission Toward Jews is Possible

Believing in Christ does not separate us.

Today, there are many statements from the Jewish people and especially from Jewish scholars that Jesus can be recognized as an authority within Judaism. Even before the modern state of Israel began, the New Testament and studies relating to Jesus were taught in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Now that university has a chair of New Testament studies. Believing in Christ does not separate Jews from Christians.

## 1. What some modern Jewish scholars wrote about Jesus

### 1.1. Moses Maimonides, great commentator of the Middle Age

All these matters which refer to Jesus of Nazareth, only served to make the way free for the King Messiah and to prepare the whole world for the worship of God with a united heart, as it is written: 'Yea, at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord' (Zeph. 3:9). In this way the messianic hope, the Torah, and the commandments have become a widespread heritage of faith—among the inhabitants of the far islands and among many nations, uncircumcised in heart and flesh. *Mishneh Torah*

### 1.2. Rabbi Joseph Klausner, Jerusalem Hebrew University's professor

If we can give the Jewish readers an exact understanding of the historical Jesus which will be neither that of Christian theology nor of Jewish theology and which is as scientific and objective as possible... then we would fill a blank page of Israel's history which has been until today written almost entirely by Christians. Jesus was a Jew in everything he did and thought. As many devoted Israelites he practised all the commandments, he regarded God as his heavenly Father, had pity on the poor, sustained those who fell down and loved those who repented. It is under the sign of tears, threats and promises that he exercised his ministry of teaching... Jesus was the most Jewish of the Jews, even more Jewish than the great master Hillel. The day when he will be freed from the stories of the miracles and of mysticism, the moral book of Jesus will be one of the most precious jewels in all of Jewish literature of all time. *Jesus of Nazareth*

### 1.3. Martin Buber, German Philosopher

For almost fifty years the New Testament has been one of my principal topics of study and I consider myself to be a good reader who listens without prejudice.... From my youth, I felt that Jesus was like a big brother to me. That Christianity considered Jesus as God and Redeemer was always apparent to me as a fact to take extremely seriously, one that I had to seek to understand for myself. That wish to understand resulted in my personal relationship with and a brotherly attitude towards Jesus which only reinforced and purified me while I see Jesus in a stronger and purer light than ever.

Two Types of Faith p. 33

### 1.4. Shalom Ben Chorim, Israeli Professor

Buber's profession of faith correlates with my own position. Jesus is for me

the eternal brother: he is not only the brother of men, he is also my Jewish brother. Further on, Chorim says: "I never hesitate to say that I consider Jesus of Nazareth as a third authority, to place next to the interpretations of Hillel and of Shammai. It seems to me that a particular tendency in interpreting Jesus is coming to light. It is a question of the internalization of the Law where love becomes the decisive motivating factor.

*Bruder Jesus*, Edition Paul List, Verlag KG, Munich, 1967, p.12

#### 1.5. Rabbi Josy Eisenberg, French TV Speaker

If the rupture between Judaism and Christianity gave birth to two different and opposed religious systems, very often antagonist, there is no such opposition between the two parts of the Book that is composed of the Old and the New Testaments. "We must never forget that their stories took place in the same country and in the middle of the same people. In other words, the stories that are told in the New Testament belong to Jewish history, took place among Jews, and except for Pontius Pilate concerned Jewish men and women. This is completely true of the Gospels, and it is also true for the greatest part of the New Testament scriptures. Therefore there is an absolute continuity between the two great parts *Women of the Bible*. Editions du Stock, 1993, p. 379

#### 1.6. Pinchas Lapide, Bar Ilan University's professor

Pinchas Lapide wrote a book: *Jesus, son of Joseph*, in which he tried to identify the position of the Jewish people in relation to Jesus.

Between 1948 and 1975, 187 books or studies with Jesus as the essential topic were written in Hebrew and published in Israel.

There are also more than 500 books about Jesus in the context of other trends in Judaism not taking into account Jewish books written in languages other than Hebrew. This demonstrates the richness of the literature and the deep interest of Jewish people in Jesus.

#### School books in use in Israel

In conclusion we can describe briefly the main portraits of Jesus in the school books used in Israel:

1) Nowhere do they put on Jesus' shoulders the responsibility for the hatred that Christians subsequently had against the Jews. Nowhere is it imputed retroactively to Jesus in his disfavor what the church has done.

2) The Jewish identity of Jesus, naturally understood in all the texts, led indeed to a different interpretation of his historical role: pretender to the Messianism, herald of the end of the times, charmer of the people, preacher, moralist, or rebel patriot against the pagan yoke; but when it is a question of his death as a martyr on the Roman cross there is a clear identification with the Nazarene.

3) Even if some texts speak about 'deviations of Jesus in connection with the official Judaism of his time, it is much more often a question of his faithfulness to the Torah, of his attachment to the Scriptures and of his Jewish morality. It is in the current Israeli school books that we found indubitably the most sympathetic picture of Jesus ever presented to any Jewish generation.

Can the Jewish picture of Jesus proposed by the current teaching in Israel serve as an example of tolerance, by which the Christian teaching could be inspired to elaborate a more Christian and authentic image of Judaism?" Pinchas Lapide

Pinchas Lapide : “Jesus in Question”

From both sides, for almost two thousand years, we have lived and prayed the one against the other; let us now together research the earthly Jesus, let us learn to discover him first as a human being and then let us see where God will lead us. *Dialogue with Hans Kung*, Editions Beauchêne, 1979 p. 76

## **2. The Messiah in the Jewish Tradition**

### **2.1. According to the Talmud there are Two Messiah**

...the words “no shrub of the field was yet in the earth” refer to the first Messiah, and the words “no herb of the field had yet sprung up” refer to the second Messiah. Why had they not shot forth? Because Moses was not there to serve the Shekinah-Moses, of whom it is written, “and there was no man to till the ground”. This is also hinted at in the verse “the sceptre shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet”, “the sceptre” referring to the Messiah of the house of Judah, and “the staff” to the Messiah of the house of Joseph. “Until Shiloh cometh”: this is Moses, the numerical value of the two names Shiloh and Moses being the same. It is also possible to refer the “herbs of the field” to the righteous or to the students of the Torah...

Zohar Soncino Zohar, Bereshith, Section 1, Page 25b

### **2.2. The sufferings of the Messiah**

“Rachi in his commentary on the Guemara adds that as well as being a perfectly righteous man, he will know, just before his revelation, the most terrible sufferings. According to the expression of our Sages : “three measures of sufferings were introduced in the world; the first for the patriarchs, the second one for the period of persecutions and the third one will be for the Machia’h”.

Why it will be so? Because before revealing the highest perfection in the world, the Messiah would redeem his generation from their sins. It is through the suffering of the Messiah that this will be done. That’s why, said the Alche’h, “he will accept them with Joy”. And the Maharal of Prague said that the Messiah will suffer because it will be time to make all the evil disappear from this world. That is the task of the Messiah.” Machia’h Maintenant n° 58, du 22 juillet 1993, p. 3

### **2.3. The coming of the Messiah in 1844**

Then the Admour Hazaken said that the Machia’h should come en 5603 (1843-1844). afterwards, the Tsema’h tsedek (3rd rabbi of Loubavitch) explained that the deliverance was replaced by the edition of the “Likoutei-hatorah”, one of the fundamental books of Hassidic thought. That was therefore only a spiritual redemption by which no one could be satisfied. Machia’h Maintenant n° 46 du 30 janvier 1993 p. 3

### 3. What will be the Jewish answer to the Jewish Adventist Mission?

#### 3.1. According to the Bible

Hosea 3 : 4

Zecharia 12:10

#### 3.2. According to Ellen G. White

There are among the Jews many who will come to the light, and they will proclaim the immutability of the law of God with wonderful power. Man.74, 1905.

When this gospel shall be presented in its fullness to the Jews, many will accept Yeshua as the Messiah. (AA, 380).

There is a mighty work to be done in our world. The Lord has declared that the Gentiles shall be gathered in, and not the Gentiles only, but the Jews. There are among the Jews many who will be converted, and we shall see the salvation of God going forth as a lamp that burneth. (1MR, 314-316).

The time has come when the Jews are to be given light. The Lord wants us to encourage and sustain men who shall labor in right lines for this people; for there are to be a multitude convinced of the truth, who will take their position for God. The time is coming when there will be as many converted in a day as there were on the day of Pentecost, after the disciples had received the Holy Spirit. The Jews are to be a power to labor for the Jews; and we are to see the salvation of God. (1 MR, 137-138).

The Jews are coming into the ranks of God's chosen followers, and are being numbered with the Israel of God in these closing days. Thus some of the Jews will once more be reinstated with the people of God, and the blessing of the Lord will rest upon them richly, if they will come into the position of rejoicing that is represented in the Scripture, "And again He saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people."-- (SI Manuscript 95, 1906).

... there are to be a multitude convinced of the truth who will take their position for God. The Jews are to become a power to labor for the Jews, and we are to see the salvation of God. (6MR, 327)

### Conclusion

To have a true perspective of what separates the Jews from Christianity, we must remember their history. The radical separation started in the second century and increased more and more when the Church accepted many pagan doctrines: Sunday, Easter, Christmas, and then a long history of antagonism and anti-Semitism separated these two religious communities.

But today we can say that the Mission towards the Jews is possible, there is more openness than even before among Jews. Let's enter in this work with joy and conviction that the Lord will bless this work.

# Why Planting a Jewish-Adventist Congregation?

## Introduction

Our specific mission today is to reach every person and people group on the earth in order to prepare a special people who will stand and be ready for the Second Coming of Jesus. But everyone belongs to an ethnic group, a specific people or culture. The only way we can reach all people today is to present the gospel in a such manner that they can comprehend it and accept it.

## 1. The Adventist Mission

- a. Matthew 28:19-20. Jesus sends us to make disciples of all the nations.
- b. Revelation 14:6-12. The last mission of the remnant church is to reach all the nations.
- c. Isaiah 40:1-5. The mission of John the Baptist is a mission of consolation to Israel.
- d. Malachi 4:5-6. The Mission of Elijah is a mission of reconciliation between Israel and the church.

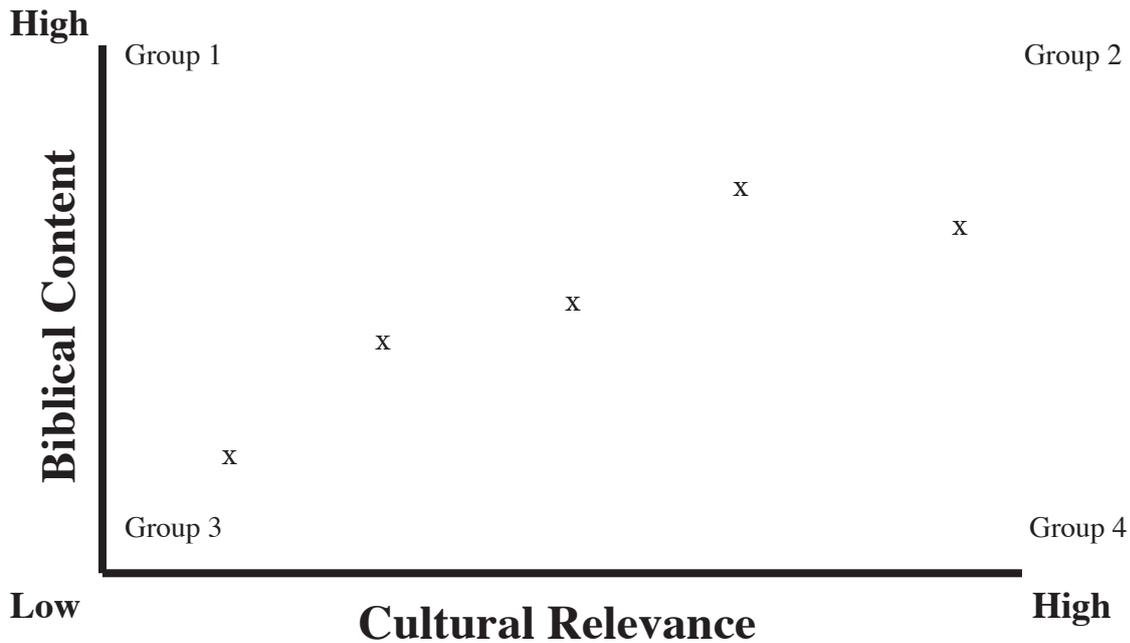
## 2. Being Missional

- a. The essence of the Adventist Church is to be a missional church
- b. Definition of a missional church:
  - Missional means actually doing mission right where you are.
  - Missional means adopting the posture of a missionary, learning and adapting to the culture around you while remaining biblically sound.
  - Missional means being a missionary without leaving your zip code.
  - A missional church is “on mission”. (Stetzer 2006, 19).

## 3. Contextualization

- a. **Definition:** Contextualization is the ability of a person or a church to share the gospel of Jesus Christ as good news for each family of each ethnical or national group of people living on the earth at a particular time and a particular place in the light of God’s Word. Each group of people has his own worldview that includes system of believes and understanding of the world (its origin and destiny). This worldview provides to us the framework of an effective communication of the gospel step by step in order to avoid prejudices, to meet their needs and their wants.
- b. **Two dangers:** Irrelevance and Syncretism.
  - Lesslie Newbigin said:
    - Everyone with the experience of cross-cultural mission knows that there are always two opposite dangers, the Scylla and Charybdis, between which one must steer. On the one side there is a danger that one finds no point of contact for the message as the missionary preaches it, to the people of the local culture the message appears irrelevant and meaningless. On the other side is the danger that the point of contact determines entirely the way that the message is received, and the result is syncretism. Every missionary path has to find the way between these two dangers: irrelevance and syncretism and if one is more afraid of one danger than the other, one will certainly fall into the opposite. (Newbigin 1994, 67)

- c. A contextualized church is a church that is “biblically sound” and “culturally relevant”. The gospel does not spread in a cultural vacuum, but it’s always incarnated in a specific cultural context (Van Engen 1994, 164). As Stetzer explains: “Many Christians have been unable to distinguish churches that are culturally relevant and biblically based from those that are compromised by the culture. From them, anything culturally relevant seems worldly and therefore unspiritual. (Stetzer 2006, 21)
- d. Hughes Scales, described in Stetzer book (2006, 21) give a very good vision of the relevancy to a culture through a simple graphics.



The group one is high in biblical content but very low in cultural relevance.  
 The group two is high in biblical content and high in cultural relevance.  
 The group three is low in biblical content and low in Cultural relevance.  
 The group four is low in biblical content and high in cultural relevance.

The goal of each church should be to be high in biblical content and high in cultural relevance. This church will sound very biblically and will meet the needs and wants of the group of people they want to reach.

Where is our missional group in this Hughes Scales?

A church is a missional church when “it remains faithful to the gospel and simultaneously seeks to contextualize the gospel so the gospel engages the hearers and transforms their worldview” (Stetzer 2006, 25). Example of Paul in Acts 17:22-23.

#### 4. Contextualized Mission is Biblical

- a. 1 Corinthians 9:19-20. The advice of Paul for any specific mission is to be flexible and to adapt our forms to the specificity of the ethnic group we try to reach: “Jew with the Jews, Greek with the Greeks”.

- b. Philippians 2:5-9. The foundation of this ministry is in Jesus himself who gave the greatest example of contextualization: “but [Jesus] made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”
- c. Acts 15:19-20. This text is very clear about the attitude of the disciples and the church when confronted with a new culture. The Church was Jewish. They reached Gentiles with the Gospel and the biggest question was: “What do we have to ask of the Gentiles in order for them to enter the church? Circumcision or no circumcision?” The decision was very wise “we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.” And they decided not to impose circumcision.
- d. Acts 16:1-2. Paul was there in Jerusalem. He took part in the decision, he even wrote in 1 Corinthians 7:19 “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing...” and yet he went to Lystra, took with him Timothy to train him for the ministry and he circumcised him. Paul was not in opposition to the church, he just wanted to be consistent with his teaching of contextualization and to be “a Jew with the Jews”.

## 5. Contextualization is not compromise

- a. Culture is not a synonym for sin. Every group of people has their own culture. The culture of an ethnic group is its richness and its heritage.
- b. Culture and Identity. Culture identifies a person or a group of people. Who has the right to say that the American culture is better than the European culture or that the European culture is better than the African? Nobody.
- c. The limit of contextualization is biblical teaching. If I am in opposition to the bible then I have to choose to be faithful to the teaching of God’s Word.
- d. Contextualization does not concern doctrine. It is about the “form” of worship, dress, food etc... not the content of the Adventist Message. The doctrine and the message of the Seventh-day Adventist church is the same.

## 6. Ellen G. White and Contextualization

### a) Paul’s Method

“Paul did not approach the Jews in such a way as to arouse their prejudices. He did not at first tell them that they must believe in Jesus of Nazareth.... Step by step he led his hearers on, showing the importance of honoring the law of God.... The Gentiles, Paul approached by exalting Christ.... Thus the apostle varied his manner of labor, shaping his message to the circumstances under which he was placed... the laborer for God is to study carefully the best methods, that he may not arouse prejudice or combativeness. This is where some have failed.... He is to study to be skillful when there are no rules to meet the case.... Tact and good judgment increase the usefulness of the laborer a hundred-fold.” (GW 118, 119)

### b) We should be wise in order that they may know how to adapt ourselves

“The people in every country have their own peculiar, distinctive characteristics, and it is necessary that men should be wise in order that they may know how to adapt themselves to the peculiar ideas of the people, and so introduce the truth that they may do them good. They must be able to understand and meet their wants. Circumstances will arise which demand immediate action, and it will be necessary that those who are right on the field should take hold of the interest, and do the thing that is necessary to be done under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.” (TM213).

**c) Our work is not to tear down, but to build up**

“...in every case special efforts should be made to come close to hearts by personal efforts. Avoid running down the churches; do not let the people receive the idea that your work is to tear down, but to build up...” (Ev. 227)

**d) The work for the Jews is to be treated with special wisdom**

“The work for the Jews, as outlined in the eleventh chapter of Romans, is a work that is to be treated with special wisdom. It is a work that must not be ignored. The wisdom of God must come to our people. In all wisdom and righteousness we must clear the King’s highway. The Jews are to be given every opportunity of coming to the light.” (SDABC vol 6, 1079; letter 96,1910)

**e) Speak upon points of doctrine on which you can agree**

“In laboring in a new field, do not think it your duty to say at once to the people, We are Seventh-day Adventists; we believe that the seventh-day is the Sabbath; we believe in the non-immortality of the soul. This would often erect a formidable barrier between you and those you wish to reach. Speak to them, as you have opportunity, upon points of doctrine on which you can agree. Dwell on the necessity of practical godliness. Give them evidence that you are a Christian, desiring peace, and that you love their souls. Let them see that you are conscientious. Thus you will gain their confidence; and there will be time enough for doctrines.” (GW 119-120)

**f) We are required to meet the needs of the people**

“The worker in foreign fields will come in contact with all classes of people and all varieties of minds, and he will find that different methods of labor are required to meet the needs of the people. A sense of his own inefficiency will drive him to God and to the Bible for light and strength and knowledge.”

“The methods and means by which we reach certain ends are not always the same. The missionary must use reason and judgment. Experience will indicate the wisest choice to follow under existing circumstances. It is often the case that the customs and climate of a country make a condition of things that would not be tolerated in another country. Changes for the better must be made, but it is best not to be too abrupt.

“Let not controversy arise over trifles.” (GW 468)

## **8. Presentation of Adventist Synagogues**

- a. Today hundreds of Jews are coming to God in many countries because they have the right to worship God in their own culture.
- b. The success of this method and the failure of the past in our attempts to reach Jews is a demonstration of God’s blessing upon this kind of work.

### **Conclusion:**

The time is very short. Jesus is at the door. We have so many prophecies from Ellen G. White and the Bible about the conversion of the Jews and their participation in the last proclamation of the Gospel that we have a sacred mission to start a Contextualized Jewish Outreach Ministry everywhere.

Speaking about the Jewish people, Paul asked the following question, “And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” Rom 10:14.

# The Jewish Outreach Ministry, A Small Group Ministry

## Introduction

The golden age for Jewish outreach work was the first century. Thousands of Jews gave their heart to Yeshua. That is why I am convinced that what happened during the earliest period of the church can happen today. What we have to do is to learn the secrets of their success from Yeshua and His disciples.

How did they manage to bring thousands of Jews to Yeshua?

*“When this gospel shall be presented in its fullness to the Jews, many will accept Christ as the Messiah” AA380*

How that will be possible?

Ellen White said in the same book:

*“The organization of the church at Jerusalem was to serve as a model for the organization of churches in every other place where messengers of truth should win converts to the gospel.” {AA 91.1}*

“The organization of the church at Jerusalem was to serve as a model” for us.

What was special in that organization?

Do we have something to learn from the church in Jerusalem that could help us to win the Jews today and to see the fulfillment of the prophecies?

I think yes.

## 1. Let's remember first the growth of that early church.

Yeshua chose **twelve apostles**. And very soon in the gospel we read that the 12 grew to **72 disciples** (Luke 10). After that the third number is given in Acts 1: they were **120 in the upper room!**

On Shavuot (feast of the weeks), Peter gave a very bold speech about Yeshua and **3,000 people** were baptized in one day (Acts 2).

I believe that could be possible today too, but how? In imitating the method of the disciples.

Their work was mostly a work carried out in houses and in small groups.

**Acts 2:46** *Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.*

**Acts 5:42** *Day after day, in the temple courts and **from house to house**, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Yeshua is the Christ.*

**Acts 20:20** *You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.*

The work was carried on at home and from house to house...

We said 3000 baptisms in one day, and the text continues to describe a tremendous growth.

**Acts 4:4** *But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to **about five thousand**.*

**Acts 4:32** *All the believers (multitude) were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.*

**Acts 5:14** *More and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.*

**Acts 6:7** *So the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*

How many believers in Jerusalem at that time? No fewer than 10,000.

According to Joachim Jeremias (1979, 122<sup>146</sup>) the regular population of Jerusalem at the time of Yeshua was about 20,000 and 200,000 during the pilgrimage feasts.

That means half of the Jewish population in Jerusalem were believers. the Jewish people had not rejected Yeshua.

Now we think about the organization of that church. Let's remember what Ellen White said: "*The organization of the church at Jerusalem was to serve as a model*".

In Acts 2 there were 3,120 believers; in Acts 4 there were more than 5,000 believers. Anyone who knows Jerusalem, who walks in the Old City or in the City of David, knows that there is not one building in Jerusalem in which we can hold a meeting with 3,000 or 5,000 people.

The early church did not meet in big buildings for their worship but in houses.

How many people can meet in a house? Especially 2000 years ago? Not many, maybe 20-25 people per house.

Each house was a local church, if there were 10,000 believers they had a minimum of 400 local home-churches in Jerusalem.

Can you imagine - a small town like Jerusalem with 20 to 30,000 inhabitants, had 400 local churches? We can really understand why that church grew so rapidly. Everywhere in every street, believers were meeting to worship God and to learn about Yeshua the Messiah.

That was the situation in Jerusalem. They did not try to have big churches of 100, 500 or 1,000 members. No! They wanted to spread the gospel in every small corner of the holy city That's why they organized themselves as small groups of believers.

## 2. What did they do in small group meetings?

Acts 2:42 *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

Five items was includes in their meetings

1. Study the Bible together
2. Pray together
3. Fellowship together
4. Eat together

Acts 2:46-47 *Every day they continued to **meet together** in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and **ate together** with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

The fith one is to

### 5. Learn together how to witness for Yeshua

If we want to see the Jewish outreach to grow, we have to organize this work in small groups and follow the model of the church in Jerusalem.

## 3. What will this ministry of small groups do?

- a. Small Groups will help Jews come to meet friends not 'come to church'.
- b. Small Groups will help us and our fellow believers grow as disciples of Yeshua.
- c. Small Groups will build deep relationships between believers and a strong sense of community (in Acts everything was done "together").
- d. Small Groups will help believers develop their spiritual gifts and serve the community.
- e. Small Groups will help more people come to faith in Yeshua.

## Conclusion

Our purpose is to win Jews for Yeshua, not only to be a believer but from being a new believer, to being a disciple, then to being a servant and ultimately a minister.

Our goal, as growing believers should be to reach the point in our life where we are making disciples of other believers and teaching them how to do the same.

This goal will be reach only if we follow the model of the early church at Jerusalem and small group ministries can help us to reach this goal.

*"The organization of the church at Jerusalem was to serve as a model for the organization of churches in every other place where messengers of truth should win converts to the gospel." AA 91*

# Practical Advice for a Successful Mission Towards the Jews

## 1. Biblical Methods

### 1. 1. Approach method of Jesus

“Christ drew the hearts of His hearers to him by the manifestation of His love, and then, little by little, as they were able to bear it, he unfolded to them the great truths of the kingdom. We also must learn to adapt our labors to the condition of the people,--to meet men where they are. While the claims of the law of God are to be presented to the world, we should never forget that love, the love of Christ, is the only power that can soften the heart, and lead to obedience. All the great truths of the Scriptures center in Christ; and rightly understood, all lead to him. Let Christ be presented as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, of the great plan of redemption. Present to the people such subjects as will strengthen their confidence in God and in His word, and lead them to investigate its teachings for themselves. And as they go forward, step by step, in the study of the Bible, they will be better prepared to appreciate the beauty and harmony of its precious truths.” *Review & Herald, November 25, 1890 § 5*

### 1.2. Approach method of Paul to the Jews

“Thus the apostle Paul describes His manner of labor. He did not approach the Jews in a way to stir up their prejudice. He did not run the risk of making them His enemies by telling them in His first effort that they must believe on Jesus of Nazareth; but he dwelt on the promises of the Old Testament Scriptures, which testified of Christ, of His mission, and of His work. Thus he led them along step by step, showing them the importance of honoring the law of God. He also gave due honor to the ceremonial law, showing that Christ was the one who instituted the whole system of sacrificial service. After dwelling upon these things, making it manifest that he had a clear understanding of them himself, he brought them down to the first advent of Christ, and proved that in the crucified Jesus every specification of the prophecies had been fulfilled. This was the wisdom that Paul exercised.” *Review & Herald, November 25, 1890 § 2*

## 2. How Can Your Jewish Friend Know the Messiah?

### 2.1. He has to recognize that God loves him and wants him to have peace.

“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness” (Jeremiah 31:3).

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

2.2. He has to recognize that it is our own sins that separate us from God.

“Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your G-d; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1-2).

2.3. He has to recognize the need for atonement through sacrifice.

“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; It is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life” (Leviticus 17:11).

God commanded that once the temple mount was designated as the place of worship, all the sacrifices of God’s people were to be brought there. Yet God in His mercy has not left us without atonement.

2.4. He has to recognize that Yeshua (Jesus) became our atonement according to the plan of God.

“Surely He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:4-6).

“He sacrificed for their sins once for all when He offered Himself” (Hebrews 7:27).

2.5. He has to receive Yeshua into his life through prayer.

A prayer with a Jew has to be addressed directly to God the Father. We can start the prayer in a Jewish way: “Bless are you Lord, our God, king of the Universe, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...”

### 3. Series of Bible Studies with a Jew

#### 1. Trust in God

- God’s Existence
- Maintain confidence in God in spite of what happened during Jewish history.

#### 2. Trust in the Bible

- Presentation of the Prophet Daniel
- Jews can feel very close to Daniel who lived in the Diaspora. They have been in a similar situation.

#### 3. Study of the book of Daniel

- The historical part will demonstrate that God leads in our life.
- The Prophetic part will demonstrate that God directs human history.
- The book of Daniel gives a clear vision of Christian history.
- Daniel 9 and the 70 weeks is the best news that Jews can hear, It is a wonderful prophecy of the coming of the Messiah and the date of His coming.

#### 4. The Law

- The Ten Commandments
- The Sabbath
- The Sanitary laws

#### 5. The Sanctuary

- The symbolism of the Sanctuary and our personal spiritual life
- The symbolism and meaning of the sacrifices
- The notion of Forgiveness
- Theology of Substitution

#### 6. Meaning of the Biblical Feasts

- Pessah - Passover
- Shavuot - Pentecost
- Rosh Hashana – Feast of the Trumpet
- Yom Kippur – Day of Atonement
- Succoth – Feast of Tabernacles

#### 7. The Messiah

- The Messiah in Jewish Tradition
- The Messiah in the Bible
- The Messianic Prophecies

#### 8. Applying what we have discovered in our studies

- The History
- The Law
- The Sanctuary
- The Sacrifices

#### 9. To Jesus – The Messiah

- The date of His coming – Daniel 9
- The Messianic prophecies and His life
- The Meaning of His death – Isaiah 53 – The substitution
- Justification and salvation by faith
- His resurrection and His Heavenly Ministry

#### 10. End Time Prophecies

- The Day of Atonement and the Purification of the heavenly Sanctuary
- The End of the Time and the Second Coming of the Messiah

### 4. Use an appropriate vocabulary

#### 4.1. The Bible

It is better not to use the designation ‘the Old Testament’. This suggests that the Jewish Bible is “dated” or no longer valid. The Old Testament may be called the TaNaKh consisting of:

The Torah or five Books of Moses,  
The Nevi'im or Prophets and  
The Kethuvim or Writings.

It may also be referred to as the Jewish Bible or Hebrew Bible. The New Testament, if used, should be referred to as a Jewish Book.

#### 4.2. Gentiles and Christians

- For some, an explanation that all gentiles do not consider themselves Christian may be necessary.
- Many Jews see all gentiles and Christians as one and the same. They may also identify gentiles with persecutors of the Jewish faith.
- Humility, prayer and genuine compassion must characterize Christian witness. Far too often Jewish impressions of Christianity have been characterized by Christians' arrogance, superiority and a disregard for Jewish culture.
- Paul warns us against this kind of gentile pride in Romans 11:13-32.
- Use terminology that emphasizes the Jewishness of the Christian faith.

#### 4.3. Christian Words

#### To be Replaced By

Old Testament	Tanach or Hebrew Bible
Baptism	Immersion, Tevila
Christian	Believer
Christ	Messiah or Yeshua or Jesus
Conversion	Teshuva
Cross	To be avoided
Church	Temple - Quéhila – Assembly of believers
Action Group	Biblical Group
A Converted Jew	Jew who did Teshuva
Christmas	Pagan Feast
New Testament	A Jewish Book
Palestine	Israel
Pastor	A biblical teacher, in Hebrew “Cohen Dat”
Evangelism	Biblical Meeting
Holy Spirit	The Spirit of God, in Hebrew “Ruach Hakodesh”
Savior	Messiah
Trinity	God

#### 4.4. Jewish Calendar

Know and recognize the Jewish calendar and holidays. A Jewish friend will appreciate that you know enough to respect their observances. For example, 2005 is the year 5765 on the Jewish calendar. Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is October 4 this year and will mark the beginning of the year 5766. It is appropriate to send a “happy new year” card to your Jewish friends and relations. Yom Kippur, which is the holiest of the High Holy Days for Jews, is the Day of Atonement. It occurs five days after the Jewish New Year.

## Conclusion

“God’s workmen must have breadth of character. They must not be men of one idea, stereotyped in their manner of working. They must be able to vary their efforts, to meet the needs of the people under different circumstances and conditions. God would have His servants, young and old, continually improving, learning better how to minister to the wants of all. They should not settle down contented, thinking that their ways are perfect, and that others must work just as they do.”

*Review & Herald, November 25, 1890 § 6.*

## How to Start the Shabbat in a “Jewish-Adventist Style”

### 1. A different day

The Shabbat has to be a different day. If you feel that you are living like any other day, then there is something wrong in your Sabbath celebration.

### 2. A day for the Lord

According to the text of the Bible, the Shabbat is not a day for yourselves but for the Lord: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy... but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God” Ex. 20:8, 10.

This means getting dressed up in your favorite clothes, buying or preparing your favorite foods.

Since the Shabbat is a new day, different of the regular week days, make it different, that means try to avoid regular entertainment: TV, radio, movies. You must find the “Shabbat Dimension” of that day.

### 3. A Kabbalat Shabbat or Celebration of the Beginning of the Shabbat

Here are the basic steps of doing a kabbalat Shabbat at home or a celebration of the beginning of the Shabbat in a Small Group.

#### 3.1. Candle lighting.

Before sunset, the Jews are kindling their candles, usually about fifteen minutes before sunset. Through this lighting of the candles we invite God into the home, we invite him to bring peace and harmony. It will help to have a spiritual atmosphere at home. Most of the time two candles are used.

#### 3.2. Evening Spiritual Service.

The family gather together, praying, singing, playing biblical games role, reading the Bible, saying stories and sharing testimonies. All is done with deep reverence, fellowship and joy. Each family or circle of friends creates their own Friday night traditions that include Shabbat songs, words of the Bible, stories for children, and time for the children to share some spiritual experiences and to say what they are grateful for.

It is also a good time to share about the week’s Torah portion. In some homes, people go around the table to share what they are grateful for, or to tell a small miracle story.

#### 3.3. Gathering at the Shabbat table.

Ladies have prepared a beautiful table for the first meal of the Shabbat.

**3.3.1. Shalom Aleichem.** Everyone gather at the beautiful table and we sing “Shalom Aleichem”, this song greets angels who escort people at home from his synagogue.

**3.3.2. Wife blessing.** The husband bless his wife by the reading of the text of Proverbs 31:10-31 “A wife of noble character who can find?”. It is a beautiful song that praises

a believer woman who is taking care of his family, and is nice with the poor and the needy. In the Jewish tradition the Shabbat is also compared to a bride or a queen, so this song is a praise of the Shabbat too.

- 3.3.3. Blessing of the children.** Right before Kiddush, many parents bless each of their children to walk in health and strength on the path the Biblical teaching.
- 3.3.4. Kiddush.** Everyone stands as the leader hold in his hand a full cup of grape juice, to sanctify the Sabbath by remembering that “in six days, God created the heaven and the earth -- and on Shabbat He rested.” Shabbat is the day of rest and reflection. “Kiddush” literally means to make a distinction, to put aside, to make holy. That means to elevate something physical and make it spiritual. By reciting the Kiddush, we elevate not only the cup but our person to a high spiritual level of sanctification.
- 3.3.5. Hands washing.** We wash our hands in order to purify ourselves before we break bread.
- 3.3.6. The Motse.** Two breads or challot are on a plate, covered with a cloth and set on the table with a cup of salt. The two loaves commemorate the double portion of manna which fell from the heavens each Friday while Israel were in the desert of Sinai. After the blessing, the leader cuts the challot for everyone and serves. We place salt on the bread because salt is a preserver, symbolizing that this meal is a moment that will last for eternity.
- 3.3.7. A Festive Meal.** A traditional Friday night dinner usually includes several courses. This is a time to enjoy each other’s company while partaking in the delicious Shabbat food.
- 3.3.8. A Word of Torah.** This part is really what separates the Shabbat table from any other “fun dinner party”. It could be a good time to choose a portion of the parasha for the week which is deep and relevant and discuss it together.
- 3.3.9. Songs.** We all remember some favorite spiritual songs from Sabbath School, summer camp or pathfinder activities. Song will relax you and propel you into the Shabbat experience. Besides, if there are any children around, they will love it.
- 3.3.10. Grace after Meals.** According to the Bible the grace have to be said after the meal, not before: “When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you”. Deut. 8:10. We prepare ourselves for the grace by rinsing our fingertips with water, called Mayim Acharonim, which is usually passed around the table.

Shabbat Shalom!

# Coordinator for Jewish Ministries

## Job Description

### 1. Good knowledge of the Jewish people in the target territory.

This first step could last for about 3 to 4 months

- Survey about the Jewish people within the Conference
  - Number of Jews
  - Living borough
  - What kind of Jews (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, liberal, secular...)
- Gathering all information possible about Jews living in the territory
  - Who are Orthodox Jews?
    - o What they believe?
    - o How do they live?
    - o Where and How they worship?
  - Who are the Conservative Jews?
    - o What they believe?
    - o How do they live?
    - o Where and How they worship?
  - Who are the Reform Jews?
    - o What they believe?
    - o How do they live?
    - o Where and How they worship?
  - Who are the Liberal Jews?
    - o What they believe?
    - o How do they live?
    - o Where and How they worship?
  - What are the characteristics of the Secular Jews?

### 2. Gathering a team of lay people for this ministry for training,

This second step could last from 6 to 9 months

- Knowing that the Jewish people is a urban ethnic group, it is important to take contact with the pastor of the largest city of the Conference
- Preaching in each church close to the Jewish boroughs
- Presenting the Jewish ministry by sermon, the objective is to arouse interest for this ministry.
- Gathering names, address, e-mails and phone number of volunteers from each church
- Initiate a first meeting with all the volunteers
- Explanation again what is this ministry
- Organizing a calendar of training
- Starting training

### 3. Being trained

This step is to be done simultaneously with the point 1 and 2 (6 to 12 months)

- Defining the target population (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Liberal, Secular...)  
for each volunteer according to their place of living or their own affinity.
- Understanding that the Jewish Ministry is a Friendship ministry
  - How to be friend with Jews
  - Connecting to Jews

- Spend time to visit Jewish places in order to make friends
  - o Jewish synagogues
  - o Jewish restaurants
  - o Jewish organizations
  - o Jewish feasts (Passover, Purim...)
- Be part of Jewish-Christian dialogue meetings
  - o Attending their conferences
  - o Introducing our Centre to these leaders
- Learning Jewish liturgy for worship
  - o It is important to know which songs, which prayers are meaningful for Jews
  - o Sorting the Jewish liturgy from the “siddur” Jewish prayer books of Reformed, Conservative Liberal Jews in order to differentiate between biblical reading and prayers, from non-biblical readings and prayers.
  - o Making a list of what could be acceptable in a Jewish Adventist worship
- Taking time to visit Messianic organizations
- How do they make evangelism in order to check what could be adapted to Adventist personal ministries
- Participating to “Jews for Jesus” evangelism, if they accept to add the SEC Jewish Adventist Friendship Centre to their list of recommendation to Jews who accept Jesus.
- Learning how they worship with Jews
- Learning Jewish messianic songs
- Training the lay volunteers to what has been learnt in contact with Jews, Jewish-Christian, and Messianic organizations
- Reading Books and magazines about Jewish Evangelism
- Understanding that Jewish Ministries is a small group ministry
  - Learning as much as possible about small group ministry
  - Training the lay volunteers for small group ministry
- Learning how to give Bible Studies to Jews
  - Study of Shema Israel Bible Studies (USA Voice of Prophecy)
  - Build Bible Studies adapted to Jews in England
  - Study of E. G. White writings about Jewish ministries
    - o `Jesus Methods
    - o Paul’s Methods
  - Speeches of Apostles in the book of Acts
    - o Peter, Stephen, Paul...
- The Bible Studies have to be built on the Hebrew Bible
  - Daniel
  - Sanctuary
  - Laws and Torah
  - Biblical Feats
  - Messianic Prophecies

#### **4. Start to think about organizing small groups**

- Selecting lay members who are able to run small group ministry
- Adaptation of houses for Jewish ministry
- Using small group ministry to train lay members about Jewish ministry

## **Jewish Outreach Ministry**

- Topic of interest for Jews
  - Bible Studies for Jews
- Inviting Jewish friends to the small groups

### **5. Thinking of planting a new Jewish Adventist congregation**

- Where?
- With whom? Building a team of worship leaders and music
- Building a Jewish Adventist Liturgy
- When to start?
- Maybe to start once a month with a Jewish Adventist worship to be train and to be used with Jewish Adventist liturgy
- Rehearsal and training for Jewish Adventist Worship

### **6. getting back to the point 2 and 3, and 4, to feed the New Jewish Adventist Congregation...**

Etc...



## **Consensus Statement**

Voted at the  
Adventist-Jewish Friendship Conference,  
6-12 February, 2006  
Jerusalem, Israel

As participants in 'Comfort, Comfort My People', an Adventist-Jewish Friendship Conference, meeting in Jerusalem, Israel, 6-12 February, 2006, we give our assent to the following consensus statement.

1. We affirm the words of the prophet Isaiah, taken as the title of this conference, intending them to express our positive attitude towards the Jewish people, acknowledging the need for healing in our relationship, and affirming our conviction that they occupy a unique place in God's purposes.
2. We as Seventh-day Adventists have much for which to repent in how we have related to Jews. Anti-Judaism and even anti-Semitism, rather than true brotherhood and acknowledgment of commonly held spiritual truths, have too often characterized our relationships. For this we ask forgiveness from those Jews affected by our actions.
3. We have been reminded at this conference of the richness of our Jewish heritage in areas as diverse as lifestyle, Sabbath, worship and common hope, to name but a few. We have much more to learn from Judaism about how to deepen our faith and become better Seventh-day Adventists.
4. We affirm our common heritage with Judaism, acknowledge our indebtedness to it, and aspire to relate to Jews in love and openness.
5. We affirm that among Christians, Seventh-day Adventists have a unique relationship to the Jewish people. We share common truths, such as the significance of the Hebrew Scriptures for our spiritual nurture, and of biblical law for our ethical instruction. In particular we note the significance of the Sabbath for both groups. Further, our unique relationship is grounded in the conviction that the Jews occupy an unparalleled place in the divine-human relationship, a point affirmed by the New Testament in its referring to them as 'His people' (e.g. Romans 11:1-2).
6. We wish to encourage the world-wide Seventh-day Adventist Church to explore the exegetical and theological foundations for the relationship between Christianity in general and Adventism in particular on the one hand, and Judaism on the other. This should be done in depth, as a matter of urgency, and in a spirit of unity. In particular, to address the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27; to

study comprehensively Ellen White's statements concerning the place and role of Israel in God's salvation-history; and to investigate the potential impact of the Holocaust on Adventist biblical hermeneutics. Further, to investigate with an attitude of openness, how such study might influence future formulations of the Adventist relationship to Judaism.

7. We acknowledge that our aims cannot be achieved through theological discussion alone. Therefore, we wish to encourage initiatives that will enhance dialogue, friendship and mutual respect for each other's traditions.

8. We contemplate the future hoping for a willingness to learn from each other, anticipating a celebration of our common heritage, which will lead to our mutual spiritual enrichment, while honouring the God whom we both serve

# **Consensus Statement**

Voted at the  
World Jewish Adventist Advisory  
15-18 August 2008  
Buenos Aires, Argentina

The World Jewish Adventist Advisory, held in Buenos Aires on August 18, 2008 has accepted to endorse the issue statement voted by the NAD Jewish Advisory on August 6, 2008 called

## **THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH REFLECTS ON THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BIBLICAL FEASTS**

As Jews have joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church, many have felt the need to establish congregations around the world that follow the Adventist doctrinal teachings, while worshiping according to Jewish liturgy. These congregations mark Biblical holidays with special events, selectively incorporating elements of Jewish tradition and culture.

The World Jewish Adventist Advisory has come to understand that the celebration of traditional Jewish holidays and feasts as a legitimate form of contextualization in reaching out to the Jewish people. However, we do not understand such practices to constitute literal observance of Levitical rituals.

Further we understand that the literal continuation of the ceremonial sacrifices would constitute a denial of the Messiah, Yeshua, and his salvific fulfillment of those rituals. The festivals and fasts today serve an important and instructional function in light of His sacrifice.

Accordingly, we do not believe or teach that observance of any of the Jewish customs, traditions, and practices associated with the annual feasts are obligatory. We recognize that all the feasts find their ultimate meaning and purpose in the ministry of the Messiah.

We do not teach that those who engage in secular labor on the annual feasts and fasts are transgressors. Neither do we believe that the annual feasts and fasts have equal Biblical standing with the weekly Sabbath.

On the other hand, we do not believe that it is necessary for Jews to relinquish either their identity as Jews, or their spiritual and cultural traditions, if they affiliate the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Marking biblical feasts and fasts present an opportunity for Seventh-day Adventists, Jews and non-Jews alike, to experience the key biblical narratives. Marking these key events helps the participants to personally identify with the plan of salvation. Engaging the biblical feasts enriches Adventist spiritual formation with holistic worship and liturgical symbolism. It engages the body as well as the mind in true worship. By marking the annual feasts we experience the rhythms of joy as we remember what God has done and what He has promised to do for His children.

## **Consensus Statement**

World Jewish-Adventist Advisory  
15-18 August, 2008  
Buenos Aires, Argentina

As members of the World Jewish-Adventist Advisory held in Buenos Aires, 15-18 August 2008 we fully accept and give our assent to the consensus statement voted at the Adventist-Jewish Friendship Conference, meeting in Jerusalem, Israel, 6-12 February, 2006.

1. We affirm the words of the prophet Isaiah, taken as the title of this conference, intending them to express our positive attitude towards the Jewish people, acknowledging the need for healing in our relationship, and affirming our conviction that they occupy a unique place in God's purposes.
2. We as Seventh-day Adventists have much for which to repent in how we have related to Jews. Anti-Judaism and even anti-Semitism, rather than true brotherhood and acknowledgment of commonly held spiritual truths, have too often characterized our relationships. For this we ask forgiveness from those Jews affected by our actions.
3. We have been reminded at this conference of the richness of our Jewish heritage in areas as diverse as lifestyle, Sabbath, worship and common hope, to name but a few. We have much more to learn from Judaism about how to deepen our faith and become better Seventh-day Adventists.
4. We affirm our common heritage with Judaism, acknowledge our indebtedness to it, and aspire to relate to Jews in love and openness.
5. We affirm that among Christians, Seventh-day Adventists have a unique relationship to the Jewish people. We share common truths, such as the significance of the Hebrew Scriptures for our spiritual nurture, and of biblical law for our ethical instruction. In particular we note the significance of the Sabbath for both groups. Further, our unique relationship is grounded in the conviction that the Jews occupy an unparalleled place in the divine-human relationship, a point affirmed by the New Testament in its referring to them as 'His people' (e.g. Romans 11:1-2).
6. We wish to encourage the world-wide Seventh-day Adventist Church to explore the exegetical and theological foundations for the relationship between Christianity in general and Adventism in particular on the one hand, and Judaism on the other. This should be done in depth, as a matter of urgency, and in a spirit of unity. In particular, to address the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27; to

study comprehensively Ellen White's statements concerning the place and role of Israel in God's salvation-history; and to investigate the potential impact of the Holocaust on Adventist biblical hermeneutics. Further, to investigate with an attitude of openness, how such study might influence future formulations of the Adventist relationship to Judaism.

7. We acknowledge that our aims cannot be achieved through theological discussion alone. Therefore, we wish to encourage initiatives that will enhance dialogue, friendship and mutual respect for each other's traditions.

8. We contemplate the future hoping for a willingness to learn from each other, anticipating a celebration of our common heritage, which will lead to our mutual spiritual enrichment, while honoring the God whom we both serve.

# Consensus Statement

World Jewish Adventist Advisory

7-11 May 2013,

Kiev, Ukraine

## Reconciliation between “The Jewish people and the Seventh-day Adventist Church:” obstacles and recommendations

*“Now all things are of God who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God was pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)*

### Introduction

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a prophetic movement, which seeks to call all people into a covenant relationship with God in preparation for Christ’s soon return. This includes the desire to live fully God’s love, in the words of Jesus “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34,35)

We as Seventh-day Adventists seek to respond to God’s call in demonstrating God’s love through word and deed. Because of God’s love, the Adventist church desires to be a reconciling community, and to advance the reconciliation God offers to us. As Adventists we want to be responsible with the commission to reconcile, and we seek to reconcile Christians and Jewish people.

One of the hindrances to reconciliation has been theological misunderstandings that historic Christianity has promoted, which have aided in the development of anti-Semitic sentiment. Due to this historical fact, this document considers these historical issues as primary considerations in reconciliation between the Jewish people and Christianity.

Considering the painful history of the Jewish people and Christianity from the fourth century to these days, in the perspective of the Seventh-day Adventist mission to the Jews, it has become imperative to rethink our relationship with the Jewish people. As the fundamental premise, we affirm that this reconciliation should be rooted in and inspired by our relationship with God and His revelation.

We shall address the main obstacles that impede this reconciliation, and then recommend ways for the implementation of this reconciliation.

### **Obstacles**

**1. Replacement Theology.** This refers to the idea that Christianity has replaced Israel in terms of election (chosen people) and truth (Sunday replaced Sabbath, salvation replaced creation, New Testament replaced Old Testament, grace, replaced law, etc.).

**2. Misunderstanding the Covenant.** This refers to the idea that Jews and Christians are under two separate covenants. In fact, they are under the same covenant that has been broadened (Daniel 9:27).

**3. Misinterpretation of Daniel 9:24.** This refers to the suggestion that the Jewish people have been, “determined to finish the transgression ... and to anoint the Most Holy” implying that they have failed and therefore had to be replaced by a new chosen people; when all the actions actually described in the verbs of the text refer only to the redemptive ministry of the Messiah.

### **4. Anti-Semitism**

- Theological - the three above obstacles contribute to Anti-Semitism.
- Psychological - stereotypes about Jews such as; they are rich and love money; are (too) intelligent and they control the media, banks, movie industry, etc.
- Renewed forms of anti-Semitism.

### **Recommendations**

Re-establish relationships that have been broken or strained throughout centuries, for that purpose we recommend:

1. That we implement the work of reconciliation in our lives and in the development of our personal relationship with Jewish people.
2. That all the above perspectives (especially about Replacement Theology, Misunderstanding the Covenant, Misinterpretation of Daniel 9:24 and Anti-Semitism), be considered and shared with the Seventh-day Adventist Church members and become an inherent part of our communication of the prophetic word.
3. That we encourage our instructors at all levels, including university and seminary professors, our pastors and evangelists by sharing information about the historical and theological challenges implied in these issues.

4. That the leaders of the World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center conduct a consultation with members of the Biblical Research Institute to consider the topics discussed in this form.

5. That we explore the possibility of having these perspectives be integrated in our publications such as Sabbath School quarterlies, books, journals, and articles in dialogue with publishers and editors.

### **Conclusion**

It is our prayer that God grants us a reconciling heart.



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## Resources on Internet

- World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center website
- Subscription to our weekly newsletter/parasha (English and Russian)  
[www.jewishadventist.org](http://www.jewishadventist.org)  
[www.boruh.info](http://www.boruh.info)
- Adventist Mission World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center website  
<http://wjafc.adventistmission.org/>
- Web magazine: Shalom Adventure  
[www.shalomadventure.com](http://www.shalomadventure.com)
- Web Radio "Shema Israel Radio"  
[www.shema-israel-radio.com](http://www.shema-israel-radio.com)
- Boston College: Center for Christian-Jewish Learning  
<http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/>
- ICCJ: International Council of Christians and Jews  
<http://www.iccj.org/en/>
- New Advent — Church Fathers and their writings  
<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/>

