

Chapter 3

JEWISH AND ADVENTIST ISSUES

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Introduction

In the quest for a better relationship with the Jewish community at large and for proper ways of witnessing the Adventist faith to this specific community, we, Seventh-day Adventists, should reflect on some important issues that bear directly upon these matters. The issues presented here are the results of my personal reflections through five years experience implementing Jewish-Adventist congregations in Brazil, and working closely with other Jewish-Adventist congregations in the South-American Division.

Jewish Issues

Lack of Knowledge about Seventh-day Adventists

The first issue we must face is the almost complete lack of knowledge about Seventh-day Adventists in Jewish circles. Jews usually know nothing of Adventists, and the little knowledge some of them may have is usually informed by other Christian groups that normally do not have much sympathy towards Adventists. This second-hand information may come through different sources: (1) interfaith dialogue, which the most active and important one is the Jewish

and Catholic dialogue that has been taking place for some decades; (2) Christian apologetic literature, with its highly biased and negative presentation of Adventism and Seventh-day Adventists; and (3) the Messianic Jews, which usually maintain the common Baptist view and attitude towards the Adventist Church and its beliefs. Only a very small number of Jews have a first-hand knowledge of and contact with Adventists, usually through our health system (hospital, clinics, health centers, and spas) or our school system. Even then, the amount of knowledge obtained through these first-hand contacts is quite small, and it should not be a surprise that actually these Jews who seems “to know” Seventh-day Adventists in reality have no idea of who we are and what we stand for.

Abhorrence and Rejection of Proselytism

The second important issue to bear in mind is the strong Jewish abhorrence and rejection of any kind of proselytism targeting the Jewish community and the Jewish people or individuals. This attitude is a normal human reaction of self-preservation. Normally, no one wants to “be converted,” and this fact becomes a strong reality in the Jewish context. Jewish identity was formed through millennia of struggle for survival against all the common trends for assimilation (integration into a culture, search for acceptance into the larger community, intermarriage, education, etc.), and against all supernatural and over natural events (anti-Semitism, persecutions, Inquisition, pogroms, Holocaust, etc.). The Jewish people survived as no other culture or ancient people in history. This is a tremendous fact. Any attempt of complete assimilation, and even eradication or annihilation, has failed—the Jewish people survived them all. Since Persian times, when Haman planned to destroy all the Jews, through the Roman Empire, when Hadrian decided to blot out Jewish memory from history, until modern times with the Third Reich and its “Final Solution,” Jewish enemies passed into oblivion, powerful world empires became dust in history, but the Jewish people remained alive and well. The same is true concerning conversion. All attempts to convert the Jewish people, be it pagan (i.e. Antiochus IV Epiphanes) or Christian (Catholic or Protestant), by force, or through preaching, have not succeeded. Every endeavor against the Jewish people was unsuccessful. So Jews who participate in the Jewish life and community are usually happy and proud of their identity and faith. They do not want to convert to another religion and become part of another social and

religious community. Even if they are not active in Jewish life they do not want to become anything else. Even if their Judaism is superficial, the Jewish identity is in the inner core of their being.

Growing Assimilation Rates

Paradoxically, with that just said above, the last issue deals with the actual high rate of assimilation observed in the Jewish community worldwide, especially outside of the State of Israel. The major modern force behind this event is the growing phenomenon of intermarriage. According to recent research in the United States (National Jewish Population Survey [“NJPS”] of 2000-2001), only 28 percent of the children born in a mixed family environment were raised as Jews; 41 percent were raised in another religion; and 31 percent were raised with no religion at all. In the second generation of those 28 percent raised as Jews, only 15 percent of their children will marry a Jew. According to statistics, intermarriage is the strongest factor for a growing assimilation phenomenon in the Jewish context of today. The rates of intermarriage among different Jewish groups, according to NJPS 2000-2001, were the following: 3 percent of children of Orthodox Jews or Modern Orthodox Jews marry a non-Jew; while the rate is 37 percent among children of Conservative Jews; and 53 percent among Reformed Jews; and it goes as high as 72 percent among unaffiliated Jews (for more details on this research see <http://www.simpletoremember.com/vitals/WillYourGrandchildrenBeJews.htm>). This American panorama is not much different from other Jewish communities around the globe (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew#Population_changes:_Assimilation).

Adventist Issues

Lack of Knowledge of Jews and Judaism

In general, common Seventh-day Adventist people lack a real knowledge of Judaism and the Jewish people. Most Adventists actually have never met a Jewish person and have no idea what Modern Judaism is, what the Jews think, believe, how they live, etc. As most Christians, many Adventists have stereotyped and preconceived ideas about Jews: “they are all Pharisees”; “money oriented”; “prone to usury”; “always very rich”; “everyone is a genius”; and so on. These misconceptions, loaded with old prejudices and hatred, have always

been a tremendous barrier for the establishment of true communication and relationship with the Jewish people. To get over these kinds of preconceived ideas is a necessity at all levels: from the common church members to pastors, from the simple denominational worker to administrators and theologians.

Anti-Semitism

All these misconceptions are profoundly rooted in anti-Semitism, the most serious issue we Seventh-day Adventists need to face in our ranks if we really want to fulfill our mission towards the Jewish people. As Christians, we received it as an inheritance from traditional Christianity. In our midst, anti-Semitism commonly manifests itself in sermons, literature, Bible studies, theological articles, etc. It is extremely offensive to a Jewish person who might be hearing us or reading our writings. It might turn him or her off and cause a complete loss of interest for Seventh-day Adventists and their message. Besides all these negative factors, anti-Semitism is a serious issue because it is unbiblical, and its ideas and tenets are against biblical teachings. The biblical texts that are used many times in its support are taken out of their context and twisted in order to serve human hatred and prejudice. We Seventh-day Adventists view ourselves as “repairers” and “restorers” of the old and forgotten biblical truths (Isa 58:12). It is therefore our sacred duty to restore a right attitude towards the Jewish people, an attitude faithful to biblical teachings. Only then will we be able to become the faithful witness to the Jewish people God wants us to be.

Lack of Concern

As a corollary to anti-Semitism, one may find a lack of concern for Jews and for Israel in our ranks. As Christians, we love the Bible that Israel gave to us (both the Old and New Testaments), we love the God of Israel, and the Messiah of Israel. As Seventh-day Adventists, we are Christians who also love the Sabbath, the holy day of the God of Israel. However, we frequently have little interest in Israel and the Jews, the human chosen channel through whom we received all these things (John 4:22; Rom 9:4-5). Worse still, even there are those in our ranks that are passionately against them. We need to get beyond this human apathy and negative feelings and become more like Jesus and God who have a passion for every human being, the Jews included. As Paul said, the Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone, Jews and Gentiles

alike (Rom 1:16). This passion for every human being should be coupled with a profound sense of indebtedness to the Jewish people. From them we received all that is precious to our Christian and Adventist faith. To recognize this debt is a religious duty; as Paul once wrote to the Roman believers while speaking about the financial contribution that the churches in Macedonia and Achaia were sending to the poor in Jerusalem: “They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews’ spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings” (Rom 15:27). However, beyond the recognition of our indebtedness through sharing with them our material blessings (in the light of this statement of Paul, there should not be any restriction on our part to use our financial resources to share the Good News with Jewish people, and help those of them who are in need), we should repay our debt with the most precious blessing we received from God: Love! Divine love, real love, a love that springs from the heart of God through us unto them. In the light of God’s love and biblical teachings, this is the only right and conceivable thing to do.

Priority in Mission

This question of our indebtedness to the Jewish people brings up another issue Seventh-day Adventists need to deal with, that of our priorities in mission. The mission of the Adventist Church is pretty clear to all its members. Seventh-day Adventists all believe that it is plainly stated in Jesus’ Great Commission to the apostles in Matt 28:18-20 and in Revelation’s description of the Three Angels’ Message (Rev 14:6-12). To go to every nation, tribe, language, and people, preaching the Eternal Gospel, making disciples, preparing men and women to meet the Messiah at His Second Coming is our sacred duty. How this can be achieved, however, is an open question. This brings up the issue of methods and goals:

1. For the most part of our mission history, we have used the method of the missionary station (church-school-hospital) and our goal was geographic and numeric. We believed that if we could implement a missionary station in every country and establish churches, schools, or a hospital in every city of a country then we would have fulfilled our mission. Later we perceived that to be well established in a country did not mean that we were well known, and that our message reached everyone in that country. In most cases, we perceived that our message only had an impact on one small percentage of the Christian

population of that country, while the other groups, and even the great majority of Christians, were in complete ignorance of Seventh-day Adventists and their faith.

2. This reality brought the World Adventist Church to make a tremendous shift in its missionary method and strategy, and to implement the Global Mission program. The emphasis now is to reach every ethnic, social, and cultural group in every country of the world. In order to achieve that goal, we turned to the methodology of contextualization of the Adventist message in such a way that it may speak to and touch the target groups. With this new emphasis, Seventh-day Adventist missionary challenges have multiplied. Even countries of the Americas and Europe where the Church has been well established for many decades, have now become great “mission fields” and enormous mission challenges. Since the Church was unable to respond both structurally, financially, and humanly to such a challenge, priorities needed to be established. We needed to choose what social, cultural, and religious groups should be the major targets, and where to appropriate money. In our decision making, we have used a very rational criteria—target the great cultural and religious unreached groups and the most unentered areas:

a. Our great priority became the “The 10/40 Window,” this geographic area of the world that covers most parts of Northern Africa and Asia where 65 percent of the world’s population lives. In this area live the great majority of the hundreds of millions of Muslims in the world, as well as the Hindus, the Buddhists, and other non-Christian religions.

b. Another great focus is China, with its one billion inhabitants, and the countries of the former Soviet Union.

c. The secularized and postmodern societies in the Western countries, involving mainly Europe and North America, also became a priority.

Since these three great priorities are a gigantic challenge, the thirteen million Jews scattered in many countries of the world seem to be a group of minor importance, and according to good sense, not deserving of much attention. We could pause, however, and ask ourselves if reason and good sense should be the decisive criteria for our mission strategies and priorities, especially when the Bible states that God may work in ways that are unreasonable and foolish to the human mind (1 Cor 1:18-31). In relation to this specific issue, the question of the New Testament missionary and evangelistic strategy seems to be an issue that should be reflected upon. This strategy is concisely stated in Rom 1:16, where Paul declares: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power

of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jews, then for the Gentiles.” Could it be that the order for “the Jews first” and “then for the Gentiles” still remains God’s personal strategy to make the Gospel His power “for the salvation of everyone who believes”? Would there be a need nowadays to revive the reality of the ministry to the Jews to the importance it had in the time of the apostles (Gal 2:1-10)? Would the witnessing of Jesus in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, again precede the final preaching “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8)?

Usually, the common Seventh-day Adventist answer to these questions would be that the content of these passages is related to the historical situation of the Early Christian church in the first century, and it is not relevant any more. In the first century it was good sense to start preaching to the Jews and then go to the Gentiles, as the apostles and Paul did. The rationale for this strategy existed then but is irrelevant for today. What logical and practical contribution would preaching to the Jews first make to our Adventist mission? On the contrary, an emphasis on the Jews could produce much damage to our mission to the Muslims, for example, and obliterate a work with a much larger and important social, religious, and cultural group. It could also make harder our work with the secularized and postmodern Western society, in view of the growing anti-Jewish and anti-Israel feelings that are taking place in many Western countries.

This seems to be a good answer to the question, very rational and sense making. But the question still seems to be relevant in view of some statements of Paul and Ellen G. White. Paul, in Rom 11:11-16, speaks of a “principle of power” related to the Jews and the preaching of the Gospel when he says:

Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their casting off is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

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These verses deserve more attention of our theologians and missiologists. The argument of Paul says that when the great majority of Jews did not accept the Gospel and were therefore cut off from the olive tree of God, even then, reconciliation and enrichment came to the whole world (vss. 11b, 12a, 15a). What would happen if a great number of them (their fullness, vs. 12b) were grafted back (their acceptance, vs. 15b) into the olive tree? His answer: "How much greater riches their fullness will bring!" (vs. 12b); "life from the dead!" (vs. 15b). When Israel failed, the world was enriched and reconciled; if Israel is brought back there would be power to bring about the end. In order to make the whole batch and all the branches holy (the world) God focuses on the first-fruits and the root (the Jews), says vs. 16.

Paul continues to speak about the possibility of the Jews to be grafted into the olive tree again (Rom 11:22-24):

Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in His kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into the cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

Even in their present state, away from the olive tree, and even after being cast off, for Paul the Jews are the natural branches of the olive tree of God, and it is more easy and natural for them to be grafted in than it is for any other human being. The olive tree of God, His Church, belongs naturally to the Jews. It is "their own olive tree!"

How strange these words sound to our Christian ears: The Church belongs naturally to the Jews? The Church is their own olive tree? For sure, in the divine olive tree, there is no favoritism, all are equal before Him: Jews and Gentiles, men and women, rich and poor, all are precious and equally loved by God and members of the same body, branches of the same tree (Rom 3:11-12; 1 Cor 12-13; Gal 5:6; Eph 2:11-3:6; 6:9). However, this tree, according to Paul, is a Jewish tree, a Jewish house, open to all humans, to all persons, but still Jewish.

Then Paul finishes by declaring God's mystery for Israel in the time of the end:

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the fullness of Gentiles comes in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them when I take away their sins." As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs. For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience. So they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that He may have mercy on them all (Rom 11:25-32)

There is a time, a time called by Paul as that of the "fullness of the Gentiles," when will come, by God's grace bestowed upon these Gentiles, the "fullness of Israel." And when this will happen, Paul seems to say, there will be a richer blessing bestowed upon the entire world, with power to bring about the end.

According to Paul, the Jewish disobedience to God should not be a motif for Christians to despise them, as has been the case throughout the centuries of Christian and Jewish relationships in the Western world. It is rather an opportunity for Christians to become the vessel of God's mercy and grace to them, in such a way that this prophecy may become a reality one day. Maybe we Seventh-day Adventists, who were called by God to be His messengers in these last days, are this "fullness of the Gentiles," the people of the end. And it would be through us that this mystery of God for Israel will come to pass. Indeed, it seems to be the case in one biblical passage (Isa 40:3-5) that we Seventh-day Adventists take as a biblical reference to our work in these last days of human history. We believe that in these last days, Seventh-day Adventists are the voice calling in the desert preparing the way for the coming of the Lord, so that in the end, the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all humankind will see it. These verses, however, are preceded by a very specific exhortation of God to His messenger, and it has been emphasized in this conference in such way that it has become its very motto: "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" (Isa 40:1-2). Would these first two verses be part of our specific mission as Seventh-day Adventists? If it is so, the New Testament mis-

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sionary strategy (“to the Jews first” and “then for the Gentiles”) is still relevant for us, and would reveal God’s personal strategy for the worldwide mission.

In Ellen White’s writings there is found a special emphasis on our responsibility to be God’s messengers to the Jewish people in these last days. She even states their special participation in the final preaching of the Gospel to the entire world (which would be related to Paul’s “principle of power” in Rom 11). I selected just a few of these references.

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 (1911:381).

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 (1905:letter 96).

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 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 (1905:par. 25).

There will be many converted from among the Jews, and these converts will aid in preparing the way of the Lord, and making straight in the desert a highway for our God. Converted Jews are to have an important part to act in the great preparations to be made in the future to receive Christ, our Prince. A nation shall be born in a day. How? By men whom God has appointed being converted to the truth, there will be seen “first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear” [Mark 4:28]. The predictions of prophecy will be fulfilled (1946:579).

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 (1946:578).

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 (1911:381).

These statements of Ellen G. White, together with Paul's arguments in Romans 11, point to the existence of a Global Mission strategy in God's mind with a special emphasis on the small socio-cultural and ethnic world religion group of our time—the Jews. The coming of this small group into the Church will provide power to help fulfill its mission to the rest of the world. How this Divine strategy should affect our present Global Mission strategies is an issue Seventh-day Adventists need to face seriously, not only in order to fulfill our mission to the Jews, but our mission to the world as well.

Method of Contextualization

Once we engage ourselves in mission to the Jews, the question of how to do this work comes to the forefront. Should we do it with little accommodation on language, message, dress, or should we go for an in-depth contextualization?

Historically, those among us who tried to do this work did it in the "classical way," adapting the language in public speeches, developing Jewish sensitive Bible studies and literature, giving public lectures in a decorated Jewish style, etc. However, these basic accommodations were implemented only in the public outreach areas. The Adventist group that resulted from such work usually maintained the traditional Adventist liturgical and religious styles afterwards. This was the way we worked for years through the Jewish Heritage Institute. Many Adventists, including some influential leaders, think that this is as far as we can go in contextualization; beyond that we run the risk of establishing

non-Seventh-day Adventist religious congregations with no ties with the main body of the Adventist Church.

By observing the success the Messianic groups have in their work with the Jewish population, especially in North America, many Adventists are prone to do it in a “messianic way.” This way of working implies an in-depth contextualization, involving outreach strategies, liturgy, and lifestyle. The “messianic way” usually hides its connection with the Christian religious group that is behind it, or is done in an independent way, with a very loose relationship with its Christian mother religious congregation. This hidden or loose relationship is devised in order to give the impression to the Jewish public that the Messianic movement is an all-Jewish movement with no connection with a Christian Church. This way of contextualization has its positive and negative points:

Positive: The method has already proved to have some good results. It works well with the Jewish concern of assimilation and loss of the Jewish identity.

Negative: The Messianic movements endure, in general, a strong opposition and rejection by the Jewish community as a whole. They became open enemies, and a war is being waged between the Jewish community and the Messianic groups. The Messianic groups openly preach the end of Judaism, as we know, since, for them, all Jews will become Messianic in due time. The Jewish community accuses the Messianics of lying by hiding their true Christian identity, and of using deceptive methods in order to lure vulnerable Jews to their fold. Furthermore, some Jewish leaders accuse the Messianic agenda of concealing what they call a Spiritual Holocaust, since, according to the common Messianic point of view, historical Judaism will come to an end because of Messianic proselytism.

The Adventist-Jewish Friendship Center at the General Conference Global Mission Department has been promoting what I would call a “new way,” which involves an in-depth contextualization, as the Messianics do, but openly declares its Seventh-day Adventist affiliation. It also has positive and negative points:

Negative: Since we work openly, we should expect to face more barriers and prejudice from the ordinary Jewish person in general. Once it is known that we are Adventists, many Jews will not want to come to our meetings, or listen to what we want to say. Besides that, as we work openly, we will become practically the only contextualized movement whose religious affiliation can be clearly identified by the Jewish community, so Adventism could easily become the target of opposition and accusation by Jewish opponents. We may also be wrongly

charged for the misdeeds of others, since these “others” hide themselves while we are out in the open (this happened more than once in Brazil).

Positive: Working in an open way has a number of advantages. First of all, nobody would can accuse us of practicing deceptive proselytism, using lies, concealing our identity, trying to pass for what we are not in order to lure Jews. People would know who we are and what we stand for, and therefore, whoever would come to our meetings and programs would come knowing that we are Adventists. We will also have the opportunity to share the reason we Adventists believe that a Jewish person who becomes a Seventh-day Adventist should maintain and care for his/her Jewish identity. Adventist identity is not in opposition to a Jewish identity, rather on the contrary, an Adventist identity should strengthen the Jewish identity of those Jews who might want to join us. The worldwide Adventist Church today recognizes this right through its Jewish-Adventist congregations. Also, since it is openly declared that we are Adventists, we do not need to hide any of our beliefs as some Messianics do. Adventist beliefs can be preached with wisdom, in their biblical perspective, and be lived as any Adventist would live (Sabbath keeping, eating accordingly to biblical laws, believing in the Doctrine of the Sanctuary, preaching the imminent coming of the Messiah, etc.). In the end, to be a Seventh-day Adventist is in itself also a very Jewish thing to do. Finally, once Adventists are known, we may more easily win the respect and the friendship of the Jewish community. Even those who would not join the church may become our friends, relate more easily with us, and even promote Seventh-day Adventists in the Jewish community as a whole. That has been the experience in Brazil, where many Jews have come to our Shabbat meetings and to our celebrations of the Jewish holidays. They became our friends, and we became the only contextualized Christian religious group invited to such events. To witness in an open way and show respect for others, can win respect from those being reached!

Conclusion: A Proposition

In conclusion, I would like to make some suggestions, some personal reflections, in what seems to me to be some possible lines to follow in our work for the Jewish people, especially with the Jewish communities that are located outside the State of Israel (the Jews who live in Israel face a completely different situation from those who live outside the State of Israel):

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1. As a Church we should follow the “new way” pattern. It is harder, but in the long term it is better. Its results may be greater than we imagine, for it may open the way for the Spirit to work in unseen and unimaginable ways, not only with the Jewish community but also with us. We should look not for immediate results, but be prepared for a long run, waiting for the moment when God would guide men and women of goodwill in both communities.

2. At present, we should focus our missionary endeavors not on the Jewish community as such, but on the assimilated Jews (who became assimilated usually through inter-religious marriage). We should develop strategies that could work with mixed couples and become attractive to them. As the great majority of Jews involved in mixed marriages are indifferent to their Jewish heritage, or are assimilated, reaching them with the Adventist message and having them join us would be a recovery of their Jewish identity through Adventism. This would have a very positive impact on the Jewish community, and especially on the family of this Jewish person as they see their son or daughter returning to Jewish values and practices that were long ago forgotten and abandoned. Let us work with the assimilated Jews, and then let them witness to their relatives and to their community.

3. In the Jewish community we should work through dialogue, building true friendships, and developing common projects, so that we may know them better and they may have the opportunity to know us. Then, both communities might be blessed by the wisdom that comes from knowing each other, and from respect and love that might grow out of the relationship. For where truth, love, knowledge, and wisdom are present, there will be found the abiding presence of the Shekhinah of the Lord, the very source of all divine realities among people.

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