

General Conference of

Seventh-day Adventists

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HOW TO WORK FOR THE JEWS

by
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Seventh-day Adventists, more than other Christians, should have the greatest success in winning Jews to Christ. The Sabbath, the health message, the sanctuary, our unique eschatology--Jesus has given us much to offer the Jewish people.

Yet if we do not approach the Jews correctly, we will fail. Work for the Jews requires exceptional tact and sensitivity, though it is not to be left for a certain group. All Adventists with a burden for the Jews should make a prayerful and patient effort to bring them the truths of the three angels' message. Before starting, however, there are some basic principles which MUST be followed.

Show an interest in Judaism and Jewish customs. Value his/her ability to teach you. If the conversation is on religion, ask questions (though chances are he will know almost nothing about the Bible). It would be wise to read some Jewish literature to know what they are interested in.

Never initiate a religious conversation and, unless they bring it up, don't talk religion if their family or friends are present. When the subject arises, never press it or appear preachy. Be humble and willing to listen to

his views. Avoid arguing at all costs.

Don't make statements like, "you Jews" or "that Jew" or "the Jewess." Instead say, "the Jewish people" or "the Jewish gentleman" or "that Jewish lady."

Show sympathy for their suffering. Statements like, "The Jews have suffered because they killed Christ" infuriate them.

The Holocaust still burns in the Jewish conscience. Many bitterly ask: "How can there be a God who allowed this?" Remind your Jewish friend of what a miracle it is that there were even that many Jews left for Hitler to kill. Stress that you believe it is only a miracle of God that the Jews have survived at all after all these millenia. If you believe it, say that every Jew you meet increases your faith in God and His promises in the Bible.

When the topic of Jesus comes up, avoid emphatic statements such as "The Messiah has come," or "Jesus is the Christ." Say that it YOUR belief from study, prayer, and experience that Jesus of Nazareth fulfills the Hebrew prophecies concerning the identity of the Messiah.

Be familiar with texts from the Old Testament which point to Jesus.

The Jews never want to forsake their Jewish identity. Explain that if they accept Jesus they are strengthening, not forsaking it. Don't make statements like, "I knew somebody who was a Jew, but now is an Adventist."

There are certain "buzz" words which have a negative connotation to the Jews. Instead of Christ, use Messiah or Y'shua. Instead of Christian, use believer. NEVER use convert; instead say, a change of heart, or a new life. For baptism, use immersion, for cross, say place of atonement, for Holy Spirit, say Spirit of God. For church, say congregation, for Old Testament, say Hebrew Scriptures. For saved, say redeemed, for Saviour, say Redeemer, for holy trinity, say God. After you have won their confidence and have talked religion with them, some of these sensitive words can be gradually introduced.

NEVER criticize Israel or its leaders. If you are not sympathetic, say nothing. If you are favorable, say so, and this will establish a bond.

Mention that you are a "spiritual Jew," but do not push it. Explain that you eat only clean foods and are a Sabbath-keeper. Unless your Jewish friend is religious, he might say something like: "You are more Jewish than I am."

It is better to say too little than too much. If you want to say something, but are uncertain if they are ready to hear it--wait. The Jews are very sensitive to the Gospel, and the wrong words could lose them forever.

Don't be quick to give them spirit of prophecy. While we know these books are divinely inspired, they contain concepts that the Jew is not ready to receive. Wait until they have had an experience with Jesus, and then start them

with Councils on Diets and Foods or Education.

Send them greeting cards on holidays like Passover, the Jewish New Year, and Hanukah.

The health message is perhaps our most powerful entering wedge to the Jew. Gradually introduce your friend to healthful living. Bring him home for a healthful meal. Bake a loaf of whole wheat bread for him. Invite him to a health lecture or a cooking school. Give him health literature provided it does not have the name of Jesus on it or a cross. Never give them literature with a cross on it.

If your friend expresses an interest in going to church, make sure you let the church members know in advance and give them some of these principles. An insensitive word, even by a well-meaning Adventist, could make your friend flee.

Many Jews do not differentiate between Gentiles: if you are not a Jew or a Moslem, you are a Christian, and they bitterly resent the violence done against them in the name of Christ. Hitler, Billy Graham, the leaders of the Crusades--they are not Jews; therefore they are all Christians.

The prophecies of Daniel could help change this misconception. If they will study, start out in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7. Show them that the Bible warned years ago that an apostate religious power would make "war against

the saints." Be sure to mention that among these saints were godly Jews. You might add: "Why even the Christian Scriptures warns about it, too." Then, if they agree, show them the prophecies of Revelation 13 which relate to the same religious power. They will be amazed that both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures warned about church persecution, and this will increase their faith in the Bible.

The Jews are extremely sensitive to anti-Semitism, and they are concerned about what is happening in the area of church-state relationships, the rise of the Christian right, school prayer, Sunday law issues, etc. Adventist understanding of these issues, especially concerning America's role in prophecy, can be very helpful. Jews can accept the concept of religious intolerance arising in America. Explain about the mark of the beast, the National Sunday law, and revived church intolerance. Even if he does not believe everything now, as these events unfold, your words will come back. As you teach, do not leave him without hope. Show him the assurances you have through the promises of God, despite the impending perils. It is important to give your friend hope, because he has none.

Order subscriptions to THE NEW ISRAELITE for yourself and your Jewish friends. The magazine is designed to teach truth without offending them. Also, the articles will give you concepts you can use when working with the Jews. You

can also write to NAMCO at the General Conference and ask for their packet on how to work for the Jews.

While patience and prayer are needed to win any soul, more is needed for the Jews. Do not rush. It might be months even before the subject of religion comes up. Meanwhile let the peace and love of Christ flow through you in irrepressible streams. They have no argument against love. Perhaps the best approach is what Jesus Himself used with the Jews thousands of years ago: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then he bade them, "Follow me."

MH143.

THE RIGHT APPROACH

Appropriate Terminology

DO USE

IMMERSE or IMMERSION

MESSIAH or YESHUA

SPIRIT of GOD

BELIEVER

MESSAGE

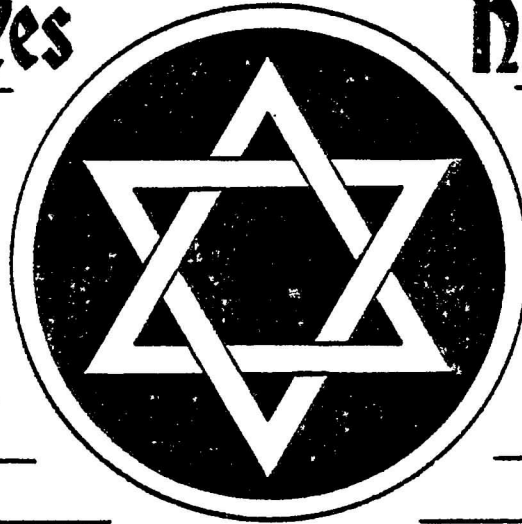
CONVINCED

REPRESENTATIVE

BIBLE or SCRIPTURES

HEADQUARTERS or OUR CENTER

Yes



DO NOT USE

BAPTIZE or BAPTISM

CHRIST or JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

CHRISTIAN

GOSPEL

CONVERTED

MISSIONARY

NEW or OLD TESTAMENT

MISSION or CHURCH BUILDING

No

Speaking the right words, in the right way, in the right place



Courtesy

Genuine COURTESY and a kind, friendly attitude will do more to remove barriers of reserve and to break down prejudice than any method man can devise. This can be developed by learning more about the spiritual and cultural backgrounds of the Jewish people.



Respect

There are many reasons why we should show RESPECT for our Jewish friends. Many of the truths we espouse were inherited from them. We must assure them that our church will never abolish the religion of Abraham. Instead we will do everything we can to enhance and glorify it.



Kindness

"If we would humble ourselves before God, and be KIND and COURTEOUS and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be ONE HUNDRED CONVERSIONS to the truth where there is now, only one."

—Welfare Ministry, p. 86



Tact

"TACT and good judgment increase the usefulness of the laborer a hundred fold. If he will speak the right words at the right time, and show the right spirit, this will exert a melting power on the heart of the one he is trying to help."

—Gospel Workers, p. 119