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# Union of American Hebrew Congregations

SERVING REFORM JUDAISM IN NORTH AMERICA

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION  
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## PACIFIC SOUTHWEST COUNCIL

Rabbi Lennard R. Thal  
*Director*

Rabbi Janet Ross Marder  
*Associate Director*

July 20, 1990

### M E M O R A N D U M

TO: REGIONAL DIRECTORS

FROM: JANET MARDER

"The Union of American Hebrew Congregations resolves to...embark upon a movement-wide program of heightened awareness and education to achieve the fuller acceptance of gay and lesbian Jews."  
(Adopted by the General Assembly of the UAHC, November 1989)

I imagine that all of us, in our own way, are trying to fulfill this mandate to educate our constituents about the gay and lesbian Jews among us. The CCAR's recent decision regarding the ordination of homosexuals makes our task all the more essential and, at the same time, more problematic. As the CCAR report states, "There is a great need for education and dialogue in our congregations."

You may remember from our meeting at the Nevele that I have been asked to provide some resources to facilitate that process. Here are some materials which I hope will prove helpful. Enclosed you'll find:

1. A list of speakers, organized by region, who have agreed to participate in this educational effort. They include straight colleagues who have special expertise in doing outreach to the gay community; gay and lesbian colleagues ( rabbis and one cantor); gay and lesbian Jews, some active in Reform synagogues, some not; and Jewish parents of homosexuals, some, but not all, involved in a synagogue.

It was much easier to locate speakers in some regions than in others. I apologize to those of you whose regions are under-represented on my list. I had many painful conversations with colleagues, parents and lesbian and gay Jews who strongly believed in the importance of this project but felt unable to "go public" at this time. I was also struck by the degree of alienation from the Jewish community that many homosexuals and parents expressed.

Note: Please look over the entire list, not only those speakers from your own region. Several speakers prefer to speak outside their own region, feeling that this will better protect their privacy. In addition, there are a few speakers on this list who offer such a unique and valuable perspective that it may be worth the expense to bring them in, even from another region.

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2. Copies of the UAHC resolutions on this topic from 1977, 1987 and 1989
3. Two sample sermons (by Yoel Kahn and Margaret Wenig) dealing with the obligation of "mainstream" synagogues to reach out to gay and lesbian Jews
4. Robert Kirschner's important article on "Halacha and Homosexuality," which provides a valuable overview of the Jewish textual materials as well as the latest psychological data. He also offers a rather appealing argument for departing from the traditional Jewish view of homosexuality.
5. A short piece on the Nazis' persecution of homosexuals, written by Richard Plant, author of Pink Triangle: The Nazi War on Homosexuals. Jews are often stunned by what they learn about this topic, and it provides a common bond between our two communities. I also include information about a film ("Pink Triangles") dealing with the general topic of homophobia.
6. A useful checklist, prepared by Maggie Wenig, which congregations can use to evaluate their ability to welcome gay and lesbian Jews. I also include an article from her temple newsletter describing a resolution in support of gay and lesbian Jews which was passed by the board of directors in the wake of our last Biennial. Finally, I include her temple's membership brochure, which is distinguished by its effort to be inclusive and welcoming. The outreach efforts undertaken by this congregation, which when Maggie arrived consisted mostly of retirees and widows, are truly remarkable. I hope you'll help to give them the attention they deserve.
7. Sample programs, sponsored by the PSW Council and Stephen Wise Temple in New York, which you might use as models for an educational forum
8. A powerful and moving essay by a lesbian rabbi that will surely inspire much reflection and discussion. The essay comes from Twice Blessed: Lesbian, Gay and Jewish, ed. Christine Balka and Andy Rose (Beacon Press, 1989). This is a fine anthology which I'd encourage you to have on sale at your biennial. Contact Andy Rose at (301)366-7327 to arrange for a display.

In addition to the enclosed resource materials, I'd recommend the following:

1. "Why Is My Child Gay?"

Brochure published by Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), Inc. P.O. Box 27605, Washington, D.C. 20038. It's a helpful short survey of scientific opinion about homosexuality in easy-to-understand language, and also includes a bibliography.

2. Griffin, Carolyn Welch; Wirth, Marian J. and Wirth, Arthur G. Beyond Acceptance. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1986). An excellent discussion by parents of lesbians and gays.

3. Two videotapes:

"Listening, Loving and Learning" --interview with several parents who have struggled to accept their children's homosexuality. Professionally done and quite moving. 38 min; cost--\$15, plus \$2.00 mailing charge. Available from: PFLAG, P.O. Box 145, Farmington, MI. 48332

"Parents Come Out"--Features discussions with parents who describe what it's like to have a gay or lesbian child. 30 min. For information regarding

sale or rental contact PFLAG, P.O. Box 27605, Washington, D.C. 20038 or call Adele Starr at (213) 472-4804.

I hope you will use these materials to develop study sessions for your regional board, congregational forums and seminars at your biennials. Possible topics include:

- a. "Reaching Out to Gay and Lesbian Jews"--focusing on why, and how, congregations should attempt to become more inclusive. If there is a "gay synagogue" in the community, congregations may feel that this lets them off the hook, freeing them from the necessity of doing any outreach. You might want to cover this topic in a general workshop on membership acquisition. One presenter could advocate outreach to lesbian and gay Jews as a membership-building technique.
- b. "Gays and Lesbians as Leaders in the Jewish Community"--This seminar would convey the message that gay and lesbian rabbis, cantors and educators can serve congregations successfully. If your region hasn't done much programming on homosexuality, you may want to stay away from this topic for a while.
- c. "Helping Synagogues Serve the Changing Jewish Family"--A speaker discussing gay and lesbian couples, with or without children, could be part of this panel, which might also describe other underserved constituencies (singles, the elderly, etc.) The overall goal of the program would be to promote the acceptance of diverse family configurations.
- d. "Teaching Jewish Kids About Sexuality and Family Life"--Could include a speaker (rabbi, educator or therapist) who can discuss the pain experienced by gay and lesbian young people, and about the need for our religious schools to teach about homosexuality (and sexuality in general) with sensitivity and fairness. I have a whole packet of materials on the subject of gay and lesbian youth; let me know if you're interested.

Our next biennial will feature a seminar entitled "The Challenge of Welcoming Gays and Lesbians in All Our Congregations."

It's particularly helpful to connect with any gay/lesbian Jewish groups in your region. You might try to set up dialogue sessions linking them with one or more mainstream congregations. These could be formal panel discussions or informal parlor meetings in someone's home. The important thing is to bring gay and straight Jews together so they begin to discard stereotypes and see one another as human beings. You might want to consider an approach the New York Federation has taken--namely, forming a regional task force to educate congregations about homosexuality. Allen Kaplan can give you details on this.

I know that several of you have been doing some excellent work in this area. Please share with me news of any programs you organize, and I'll distribute it so we can learn from one another.

Thanks for giving this subject your thoughtful consideration.

P.S. Watch for the Winter issue of Reform Judaism. It will feature an article by Yoel Kahn offering his personal perspective as a gay rabbi, and one by me analyzing the implications of the CCAR decision in Seattle.



REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON HOMOSEXUALITY  
AND  
THE RABBINATE  
ADOPTED BY THE  
CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS  
JUNE 25, 1990

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

Chair: Selig Salkowitz, Norman J. Cohen, A. Stanley Dreyfus (RPC), Joseph B. Glaser (CCAR), Walter Jacob, Yoel H. Kahn, Samuel E. Karff, Peter S. Knobel, Joseph Levine, Jack Stern, Richard S. Sternberger (UAHC), Ronald B. Sobel (RPC), Elliot L. Stevens (CCAR), Harvey M. Tattelbaum, Albert Vorspan (UAHC), Margaret M. Wenig, Gary Zola (HUC-JIR)

ORIGIN OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee was formed in response to a resolution proposed by Margaret Holub (then student Rabbi) and Margaret Wenig for the June, 1986, convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in Snowmass, Colorado. The proposed resolution dealt with the admissions policies of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and with the placement policy of the Rabbinical Placement Commission. The matter was referred for further study.

Given the seriousness of the issues and the broad implications for the Reform rabbinate and for the entire Movement, President Jack Stern appointed a broadly representative ad hoc committee and named Selig Salkowitz as its chair. The committee's first meeting took place in the Fall of 1986. Following that meeting, in order to insure adequate institutional participation, the committee invited the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the Rabbinical Placement Commission to appoint official representatives. The committee has met regularly during the past four years. Through extensive study and discussion, the committee has sought to arrive at a unified position on homosexuality and the rabbinate. From the outset, the committee was keenly aware of both the controversial nature and the complexity of the issues. The committee's deliberations have been characterized by vigorous debate carried on in a spirit of warm collegiality. All members found themselves profoundly moved. However, the committee did not achieve consensus on every issue, and recognized that there are legitimate differences of opinion. The committee calls upon members of the Conference to be sensitive to and accepting of those whose positions differ from their own.

The committee undertook a comprehensive investigation of the subject. Its members read studies on the origin and nature of sexual identity, and of homosexuality specifically, and reviewed some of the contemporary legal literature, and studied documents prepared by Christian groups grappling with the status of homosexuals and homosexuality within their own denominations with a specific focus on the question of ordination. Yoel H. Kahn prepared an extensive anthology of articles on Judaism and homosexuality which cut across denominational lines. The committee



commissioned Eugene B. Borowitz, Yoel H. Kahn, Robert S. Kirschner and Peter S. Knobel to prepare working papers.<sup>1</sup> Consultations were held with leaders of other Jewish streams. The committee solicited and received anonymous personal testimony from gay and lesbian rabbis and rabbinic students. It reviewed the admissions policies of the College-Institute and the Central Conference of American Rabbis as well as the placement policy of the Rabbinical Placement Commission. It read previous resolutions of the UAHC Biennial Conventions and the CCAR conventions, and related Reform Responsa. The work of previous committees was also reviewed. It convened a late night information session at the Tarpon Springs Convention of 1987; submitted a draft resolution to the CCAR Executive Board in 1988 (which was sent back to the committee for further consideration); sponsored a plenary session at the Centennial Convention in Cincinnati in 1988, at which Leonard S. Kravitz and Yoel H. Kahn presented papers<sup>2</sup> followed by workshops; held consultations at each of the regional CCAR Kallot and with MaRaM; requested that the UAHC sponsor workshops at upcoming regional biennials.

This document is meant to summarize the results of our deliberations, to indicate areas of agreement and disagreement and to encourage further discussion and understanding. It represents four years of struggle and growth. We hope that it will serve as a model for those who take up these matters upon which we have diligently and painstakingly deliberated.

#### CONCERN FOR GAY AND LESBIAN COLLEAGUES

The committee is acutely aware that the inability of most gay and lesbian rabbis to live openly as homosexuals is deeply painful. Therefore, the committee wishes to avoid any action which will cause greater distress to our colleagues. As a result, The committee has determined that a comprehensive report is in the best interest of our Conference and the Reform Movement as a whole.

Publicly acknowledging one's homosexuality is a personal

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<sup>1</sup> Homosexuality, the Rabbinate, and Liberal Judaism: Papers prepared for the Ad-Hoc Committee on Homosexuality and the Rabbinate. Selig Salkowitz, Chair. Halakhah and Homosexuality: A Reappraisal by Robert Kirschner. On Homosexuality and the Rabbinate, a Covenantal Response by Eugene B. Borowitz, Judaism and Homosexuality by Yoel H. Kahn. Homosexuality: A Liberal Jewish Theological and Ethical Reflection by Peter S. Knobel. Copies of these were distributed to the entire Central Conference of American Rabbis prior to the June, 1989 convention in Cincinnati. These papers should be consulted for a description of the range of positions considered by the Committee.

<sup>2</sup> Homosexuality and the Rabbinate. Yoel H. Kahn, The Kedusha of Homosexual Relationships and Leonard S. Kravitz, Address. The papers were distributed to the members of the Conference through the regional presidents as material for discussion at the regional kallot. They should be consulted for an understanding of the two different approaches to the subject of the religious status of homosexual relationships.



decision which can have grave professional consequences. Therefore, in the light of the limited ability of the Placement Commission or the Central Conference of American Rabbis to guarantee the tenure of the gay or lesbian rabbis who "come out of the closet," the committee does not want to encourage colleagues to put their careers at risk. Regrettably, a decision to declare oneself publicly can have potentially negative effects on a person's ability to serve a given community effectively. In addition, the committee is anxious to avoid a situation in which pulpit selection committees will request information on the sexual orientation of candidates. The Committee urges that all rabbis, regardless of sexual orientation, be accorded the opportunity to fulfill the sacred vocation which they have chosen.

#### CIVIL RIGHTS FOR GAYS AND LESBIANS

All human beings are created betselem elohim ("in the divine image"). Their personhood must therefore be accorded full dignity. Sexual orientation is irrelevant to the human worth of a person. Therefore, the Reform Movement has supported vigorously all efforts to eliminate discrimination in housing and employment<sup>3</sup>. The Committee unequivocally condemns verbal and physical abuse against gay men and lesbian women or those perceived to be gay or lesbian. We reject any implication that AIDS can be understood as God's punishment of homosexuals. We applaud the fine work of the gay and lesbian outreach synagogues, and we, along with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, call upon rabbis and congregations to treat with respect and to integrate fully all Jews into the life of the community regardless of sexual orientation.

#### ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SEXUAL IDENTITY

The committee's task was made particularly difficult because the specific origin of sexual identity and its etiology are still imperfectly understood.

Scholars are not likely to come to an agreement anytime soon about the causes of sexual orientation, or its nature. Various disciplines look at sexuality in different ways and rarely confront each other's ideas....Short of definitive evidence, which no theory has thus far received, the disagreement is likely to continue. Cognitive and normative pluralism will persist for the indefinite future.<sup>4</sup>

The lack of unanimity in the scientific community and the unanimous condemnation of homosexual behavior by Jewish tradition added to the complexity. It is clear, however, that for many people sexual orientation is not a matter of conscious choice but constitutional and therefore not subject to change. It is also true that for some, sexual orientation may be a matter of conscious

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<sup>3</sup> CCAR resolution 1977. UAHC resolutions 1975, 1985, 1987, 1989

<sup>4</sup> David Greenberg, The Construction of Homosexuality (Chicago, 1988) pp.480-481.



choice. The committee devoted considerable time in its discussion to the significance of conscious choice as a criterion for formulating a position on the religious status of homosexuality. The majority of the committee believes that the issue of choice is crucial. For some on the committee the issue of choice is not significant.

In Jewish tradition heterosexual, monogamous, procreative marriage is the ideal human relationship for the perpetuation of species, covenantal fulfillment and the preservation of the Jewish people. While acknowledging that there are other human relationships which possess ethical and spiritual value and that there are some people for whom heterosexual, monogamous, procreative marriage is not a viable option or possibility,<sup>5</sup> the majority of the committee reaffirms unequivocally the centrality of this ideal and its special status as kiddushin. To the extent that sexual orientation is a matter of choice, the majority of the committee affirms that heterosexuality is the only appropriate Jewish choice for fulfilling one's covenantal obligations.

A minority of the committee dissents, affirming the equal possibility of covenantal fulfillment in homosexual and heterosexual relationships. The relationship, not the gender, should determine its Jewish value - kiddushin.

The committee strongly endorses the view that all Jews are religiously equal regardless of their sexual orientation. We are aware of loving and committed relationships between people of the same sex. Issues such as the religious status of these relationships as well as the creation of special ceremonies are matters of continuing discussion and differences of opinion.

#### SEXUAL MORALITY AND THE RABBI

The general subject of sexual morality is important. The committee, in various stages of its deliberations, sought to discuss homosexuality within that larger framework. However, it concluded that while a comprehensive statement on sexuality and sexual morality was a desideratum, it was beyond the mandate of the committee.

Nevertheless, rabbis are both role models and exemplars. Therefore, the Committee calls upon all rabbis -- without regard to sexual orientation -- to conduct their private lives with discretion and with full regard for the mores and sensibilities of their communities, and in consonance with the preamble to the Central Conference of American Rabbis' Code of Ethics:

As teachers of Judaism, rabbis are expected to abide by the highest moral values of our religion: the virtues of family life, integrity and honorable social relationships. In their personal lives they are called upon to set an example of the ideals

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Gates of Mitzvah, p. 11, note at bottom of page.



they proclaim.

## OUR RELATIONSHIP TO KELAL YISRAEL AND THE NON-JEWISH COMMUNITY

The committee devoted considerable discussion to the effect of any statement on our relationship to Kelal Yisrael. The committee expressed deep concern about the reactions of the other Jewish movements and strongly urges that the dialogue continue with them on this issue. Nevertheless, it concluded that our decision should be governed by the principles and practices of Reform Judaism. Similarly the committee considered and discussed with the members of MaRaM the possible effects of a statement on Reform Judaism in Israel. Again, it concluded that while sensitivity was in order, the committee could only address the North American situation. In addition, the committee attempted to assess how various stands would affect our relationship with non-Jewish groups. Again, the committee was concerned but felt that it had to make its decision independent of that consideration.

## CONGREGATIONAL ISSUES

The acceptance by our congregations of gay and lesbian Jews as rabbis was a topic of discussion. We know that the majority of Reform Jews strongly support civil rights for gays and lesbians, but the unique position of the rabbi as spiritual leader and Judaic role model make the acceptance of gay or lesbian rabbis an intensely emotional and potentially divisive issue. While we acknowledge that there are gay and lesbian rabbis who are serving their communities effectively, with dignity, compassion and integrity, we believe that there is a great need for education and dialogue in our congregations.

## ADMISSIONS POLICY OF THE COLLEGE-INSTITUTE

One of the original issues which brought the committee into existence was a concern about the admissions policy of the College-Institute. President Alfred Gottschalk has recently set forth the admissions policy of HUC-JIR. The written guidelines state that the College-Institute considers sexual orientation of an applicant only within the context of a candidate's overall suitability for the rabbinate, his or her qualifications to serve the Jewish community effectively, and his or her capacity to find personal fulfillment within the rabbinate. The Committee agrees with this admissions policy of our College-Institute.

## MEMBERSHIP IN THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

The Central Conference of American Rabbis has always accepted into membership upon application all rabbinic graduates of the College-Institute.

The committee re-affirms this policy to admit upon application rabbinic graduates of the College - Institute.

## PLACEMENT

Since its inception, the Rabbinical Placement Commission has

provided placement services to all members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in good standing, in accordance with its rules.

The committee agrees with this policy of the Rabbinical Placement Commission which provides placement services to all members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in good standing, in accordance with the Commission's established rules.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair: Selig Salkowitz, Norman J. Cohen, A. Stanley Dreyfus (RPC), Joseph B. Glaser (CCAR), Walter Jacob, Yoel H. Kahn, Samuel E. Karff, Peter S. Knobel, Joseph Levine, Jack Stern, Richard S. Sternberger (UAHC), Ronald B. Sobel (RPC), Elliot L. Stevens (CCAR), Harvey M. Tattelbaum, Albert Vorspan (UAHC), Margaret M. Wenig, Gary Zola (HUC-JIR).

#### COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT

The committee expresses its sincere appreciation to the many members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis who communicated with it in writing and orally. We urge all rabbis to study and reflect on these critical issues in order to lead their congregations and other members of the Jewish community toward greater awareness and sensitivity through education and dialogue. The committee unanimously endorses this report as a fair reflection of four years of deliberation and urges its adoption.

*Handwritten signature*

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 2, 1990

FROM: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

TO: Rabbi Janet Marder

Thank you for sending me the packet directed to Regional Directors in an effort to fulfill the mandate of their resolution which was adopted by our Biennial. I am deeply grateful for what you are doing. As always, you are thorough in your approach.

I hope our colleagues will avail themselves of those resources which you provided. Would it not be a good idea if you were to call around to make certain that they do. I would hate to have this buried beneath a pile on their desk and not acted on. In other words, you ought to take an active role in seeing that every region does at least something in this area.

Why don't you send a copy of your packet to Allan Goldman with a covering memo indicating how it is that we are fulfilling the resolution which was adopted in this realm.

Again, my heartfelt thanks.



## SOUTHWEST COUNCIL

1. Dr. Arnold Drake  
1303 Calais Rd.  
Memphis, TN. 38120  
(901) 761-1444

Dr. Drake is very involved in Temple Beth Shalom (Conservative) and also knows Rabbi Harry Danziger well. He grew up in the Reform movement. A good speaker, parent of a gay son and active in PFLAG.

## MIDWEST COUNCIL

1. Fred Jacobs  
642 S. 2nd St. Apt. 1004  
Louisville, KY. 40202  
(502) 583-0528

Fred is a gay man, the father of three daughters, and a member of The Temple in Louisville. He has been an active member of the Jewish community all his life (youth group, etc.), and is very articulate.

2. Ted Ruskin  
4517 W. Ponds Circle  
Littleton, CO. 80123  
(303) 798-6566

Ted is an active member of Temple Sinai of Denver (serves on the board) and openly gay. He is affable, articulate and a committed Reform Jew. He attended the Biennial in New Orleans as part of the Sinai delegation.

3. Rabbi Marc Blumenthal  
Director, Community Chaplain Program  
Rose Medical Center  
4567 East Ninth Ave.  
Denver, CO. 80220  
(303) 320-2121

Marc is the rabbi who "came out" to his colleagues at the most recent MWARR convention. He is a fine, thoughtful speaker (he spoke on a panel at our last Sub-Regional convention) and makes an excellent impression.

4. Debora Gordon  
1127 W. 6th St.  
Bloomington, IN. 47404  
(812) 331-2708

Debora is a lesbian who works as High Holy Days hazzanit and Bar/Bat Mitzva tutor at Congregation Beth Shalom in Bloomington, Indiana. She also works for the Indianapolis BJE. She is interested in applying to rabbinic school at HUC. She grew up in the Reform movement, attended UAHC camps, and her grandfather was a Reform rabbi. She's a bright, thoughtful speaker.



1. Merry Silber  
(313)642-4371

Lives in the Detroit area. Parent of a gay child, an experienced speaker but not affiliated with a temple.

2. Harriet and Morris Arnowitz  
3250 Kenosha  
Oak Park, MI. 48237  
(313)545-1151

The Arnowitz's are parents of a gay child, members of PFLAG and experienced speakers. They are members of Congregation Beth Shalom (Conservative).

3. Jane Daroff  
14260 Larchmere  
Shaker Heights, OH. 44120  
(216)321-7413

First cousin of Allan B. Goldman. Jane is not a temple member, but "very Jewish." She is an articulate, active member of PFLAG.

4. Helen Binder  
(313)642-1960

Lives in the Detroit area. Helen is an unaffiliated mother of a gay son. I know her son, who is a member of Beth Chayim Chadashim in Los Angeles. She is a warm and experienced speaker who can discuss the stigma attached to being the parent of a homosexual in the Jewish community.

5. Dr. Trudy Baron  
7 Berkshire St.  
Rochester, N.Y. 14607  
(716)442-3363

Trudy is a psychologist who has led many workshops on homosexuality--an outstanding, warm and eloquent speaker. She is a lesbian and a mother; she and her companion are both active members of B'rith Kodesh in Rochester. In her talks, Dr. Baron stresses the notion that gay and straight people "are more alike than different," and explains the desire of gay and lesbian Jews to live a full Jewish life.

6. Scott Cohen  
Until October 15: 117 Hart Rd.  
Cherry Hills, N.J. 08034  
(609)779-9198  
  
After October 15: 10 Manhattan Square, Apt. 5  
Rochester, N.Y. 14607  
(617)546-1381

Scott is a gay man, an active member of B'rith Kodesh and a founder of Naim, a group of lesbian and gay Jews in Rochester. He is a very eloquent speaker. Incidentally, he is thinking about applying to rabbinic school.

7. Dr. Howard Epstein  
23897 Wimbleton Rd.  
Shaker Heights, OH. 44122  
(216)991-2612

NORTHEAST LAKES cont.

Howard is a physician at a university hospital in Cleveland. He grew up at Tiferet Israel and is now an active member of Hevrei Tikvah, Cleveland's gay/lesbian synagogue. He is a very committed Jew and an excellent speaker.

8. Greg (doesn't want last name used)  
(216)991-9304

Greg is Howard's partner. He teaches religious school in a Conservative congregation and is highly closeted at work (in a large corporation). Describes himself as traditionally-oriented Jew, but with a growing respect for Reform Judaism.

9. Rabbis Judea Miller and Judy Cohen-Rosenberg  
B'rith Kodesh , 2131 Elmwood Ave.  
Rochester, N.Y. 14618  
(716)244-7060

This congregation has made some remarkable steps at outreach to the gay/lesbian community. Both rabbis are happy to speak about their efforts in this direction. Judy is probably more outspoken on the subject; Judea would offer the perspective of someone whose views have altered gradually.





MID-ATLANTIC COUNCIL

1. Marcia (pronounced Mar-SEE-a) Solomon  
2417 Elkwood Circle  
Charlotte, NC. 28205  
(704)537-8001

Marcia has a gay son, is a member of PFLAG and is active in a Conservative synagogue. She's a very enthusiastic and articulate speaker.

2. Paulette Goodman  
911 Buckingham Dr.  
Silver Springs, MD. 20901  
(301)434-6309

National president of PFLAG and an experienced speaker. Describes herself as non-affiliated "but very Jewish." Lived through the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied France, and can speak powerfully about how the oppression she experienced as a Jew there helped her understand the pain of homosexuals living in the closet.

3. Andy Rose  
3106 Abell Ave.  
Baltimore, MD. 21218  
(301)366-7327

Gay man, an HUC-trained social worker and a marvelous, sensitive and very experienced speaker and workshop leader. Co-editor of Twice Blessed: On Being Lesbian, Gay and Jewish.



NEW YORK FEDERATION

1. Elaine and Lester Sharlach  
592 Haviland Rd.  
Stamford, CT. 06903  
(203)322-5380

Parents of a gay son, active in PFLAG. They are members of a traditional synagogue, but describe themselves as being "not very religious." Their straight son is active in a Reform congregation in Connecticut (but they said he wouldn't be interested in speaking). Both are excellent, experienced speakers.

2. John Hirsch  
95 Windsor Gate Dr.  
North Hills, N.Y. 11040  
(516)365-7445

John chairs the NYFRS's "Gay and Lesbian Jews Resource Committee," which provides speakers to all congregations in the region and also does outreach in the gay/lesbian community in order to bring Jews into mainstream congregations. He and Rabbi Margaret Wenig led a well-attended workshop at the region's annual Assembly of Delegates. A board member of Temple Beth-El in Great Neck, John and his partner were honored at Shabbat services on their 20th anniversary. He does a very eloquent and moving presentation. Incidentally, John designed the UAHC AIDS Committee's beautiful quilt panel in memory of all Jews lost to AIDS.

3. Rabbi Margaret Wenig  
Beth Am-The People's Temple  
178 Bennett Ave.  
New York, N.Y. 10040  
(212)927-2230

Maggie can speak about the extraordinary efforts her congregation has made to reach out to the gay/lesbian community. She has excellent ideas and materials to share with other congregations; I have included several examples in this packet. She is married and the mother of two daughters.

## NEW JERSEY FEDERATION

1. Jeff (prefers that his last name not be used) is a gay man active in Monmouth Reform Temple, who says he'd prefer to speak outside his own region. He knows Dan Freeland, so you might call Dan for more information about his effectiveness as a speaker. Jeff's home phone number is (201)583-2256.
2. Scott Cohen--will be in New Jersey until October 15 and would be a very effective speaker. See Northeast Lakes, #6 for information about him.





SOUTHEAST COUNCIL

1. Judy Colbs

684 Elmwood Dr. NE  
Atlanta, GA. 30306  
(404)875-9440

Has a lesbian daughter. Judy was raised as a Conservative Jew in a religious home; she is now unaffiliated, but knows Rabbi Sue Ann Wasserman well. She expresses herself well and is retired, so travel is not a problem. Her husband, Marvin, is also willing to speak.

2. Zena Silverman

10405 Sunrise Lake Bl.  
Sunrise, Florida 33322  
(305)741-3648

Has a gay son. She is unaffiliated, a very warm and genuine speaker, but rather inexperienced. Would prefer to speak together with Michael Greenspan (see below).

3. Michael Greenspan

2113 W. Davie Blvd. Apt. 246  
H (305)583-9477

Former president of Etz Hayim, Miami's congregation with special outreach to gay and lesbian Jews. Has served on the UAHC Regional Board and knows Frank Sundheim. Experienced speaker.



PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL

1. Dr. Lisa Schwartz  
1219 W. Wynnewood Rd., #515  
Wynnewood, PA. 19096  
(215) 896-8494 -H

Lisa has done extensive research on gay and lesbian youth, and can speak well about homophobia and the general topic of teaching young people about sexuality. Her dissertation deals with the attitudes and behavior of young homosexuals on the East Coast. As far as I know, she is straight. Lisa serves on the UAHC's AIDS Committee and belongs to Temple Shalom in Broomall.

2. Laura Gottfried  
Jewish Family and Children's Services  
1610 Spruce St.  
Phila, PA. 19103

Laura is a social worker at Jewish Family and Children's Services in Philadelphia, where she has led support groups for Jewish lesbians and bisexual women through their "Womenreach" program. She is not affiliated with a temple, but can speak effectively about issues of gay and lesbian involvement in the Jewish community.

3. Dr. Richard Friend  
2405 Grays Ferry Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA. 19146  
(215) 735-0476

Gay unaffiliated Jew on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania in the human sexuality program. Richard is a very experienced speaker and educator who has led training programs for the Philadelphia school system and the police department, designed to reduce homophobia. He says he was raised "very much as a Jew" and can speak effectively about his personal story of growing up gay and Jewish. He's a friend of Lisa Schwartz.

4. Ms. Ruth Gland  
1006 Afton Apt. 12  
Philadelphia, PA. 19111  
(215) 725-4836

Ruth lost her son to AIDS not long ago. Dan Freeland did the funeral and she is extremely fond of him (ask Dan about her effectiveness as a speaker). She is active in PFLAG and has done a good deal of speaking on their behalf. She is not a synagogue member, but expressed the wish of finding a supportive Jewish community.



GREAT LAKES COUNCIL/CHICAGO FEDERATION

1. Walter and Ina Hill  
1000 Deerfield Rd. Apt. 201  
Highland Park, IL. 60035  
(708)432-5605

The Hills have a gay son. They are members of Temple Beth Israel in Skokie and are experienced speakers, active in PFLAG.

2. Vivian and Mayer Channon  
4133 Greenwood  
Skokie, IL. 60076  
(708)674-4664

The Channons are active in Niles Township Congregation (Reconstructionist). They are active in PFLAG and have spoken on national television and radio. They are parents of a homosexual--I don't remember whether it's a son or daughter.

3. Dr. Floyd and Toby Mittleman  
2005 Techny  
Northbrook, IL. 60062  
(708)564-2496

Parents of a homosexual and members of PFLAG, active in Temple Bnai Chai of Northbrook.

4. Rabbi Stacy Offner  
Congregation Shir Tikvah  
345 St. Peter St., Suite 800  
St. Paul, MN. 55102  
(612)642-0952

One of the few openly lesbian rabbis in the country and an energetic, eloquent and effective speaker. Stacy's experience is unique in that she serves a congregation which is not primarily homosexual and yet she is able to be open about her own orientation.

5. Lisa Schlesinger  
1489 Lincoln Ave.  
St. Paul, MN. 55105  
(612)690-4482

Lisa is the immediate past president of Congregation Shir Tikvah (served by Rabbi Offner); she is married and the mother of three. A very fine and articulate speaker offering a valuable, unique perspective: a straight congregant's impression of what it's like to have an openly homosexual rabbi.

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST COUNCIL

1. Agnes Herman  
1537 El Paseo Dr.  
Lake San Marcos, CA. 92069  
(619)744-6878

Ag is the mother of a gay son and an experienced, extremely effective speaker. Her status as wife of a rabbi and former UAHC Regional Director helps make the whole subject respectable, and encourages other parents to "come out of the closet."

2. Adele Starr  
(213)472-4804

Founder and past national president of PFLAG. Has 5 children, one of whom is gay. She is a powerful, very experienced speaker and a member of University Synagogue in Los Angeles.

3. Elizabeth Savage  
1133 S. Wooster St. #201 (213)278-6556  
Los Angeles, CA. 90035

A Jew by Choice and an active member of Leo Baeck Temple. She and her partner were the first openly lesbian couple to apply for membership in the congregation. A thoughtful and articulate speaker. She is helping to coordinate Leo Baeck's involvement in the UAHC-sponsored AIDS Brunch program at County Hospital.

4. Bonnie Brown  
3650 First Ave. Apt. 301  
San Diego, CA. 92103  
W (619)543-6397  
H (619)260-1349

Bonnie is medical records supervisor at UCSD Medical Center. She has worked extensively with people with AIDS, and initiated Temple Emanu-El's outreach effort to gays and lesbians, organizing a social action dinner together with Yachad, San Diego's group for gay and lesbian Jews. Attended the "Justice and Judaism" seminar we held at Temple Emanu-El and serves on the temple's social action committee.

6. Rabbi Denise Eger  
Beth Chayim Chadashim  
6000 W. Pico Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA. 90035  
(213)931-7023

Rabbi of Los Angeles' gay/lesbian synagogue for the past two years, Denise recently became the first lesbian rabbi to "go public" with an article in the Los Angeles Times. She is a warm and dynamic speaker.



PACIFIC NORTHWEST COUNCIL

1. Cantor David Serkin  
Temple B'nai Torah  
6195 92nd Ave. SE  
Mercer Island, WA. 98040  
(206)232-7243

David is one of the only openly gay cantors in a Reform synagogue. He has an interesting story to tell and tells it extremely well. His presentation would provide reassuring evidence that a congregation can look to a gay religious leader as a mentsch and a role model.

2. Rabbi James Mirel  
same address and phone #

Jim can share the interesting and unusual experience of having guided his congregation through the difficult time of Cantor Serkin's "coming out." Ultimately the congregation proved very supportive of the cantor, and Jim's leadership was invaluable. Jim would prefer to speak outside his own region.



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COUNCIL

1. Ann and Dr. Julian Davidson  
963 Mears Court  
Stanford, CA. 94305  
(415)493-0997

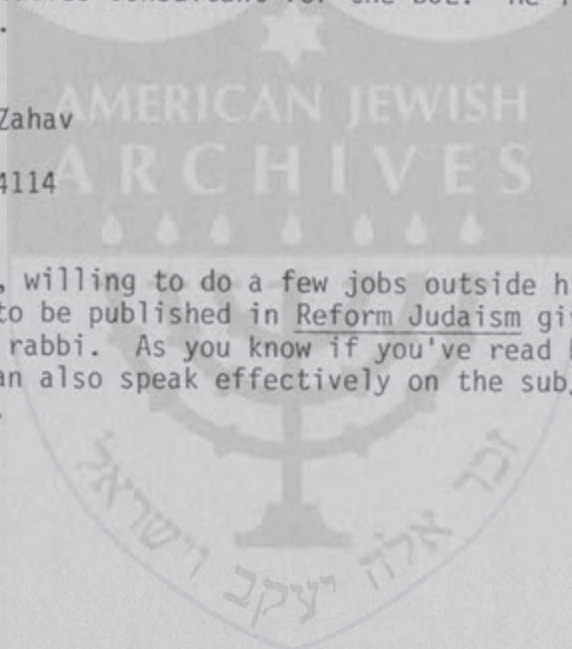
Parents of a gay son. Are unaffiliated, but proudly identify as Jews. Husband is professor of physiology at Stanford, specializing in human sexuality, hormones and reproduction. They are experienced speakers, active in PFLAG.

2. Rabbi Eric Weiss  
Bureau of Jewish Education  
639 14th Ave.  
San Francisco, CA. 94115  
(415)751-6983

Eric was openly gay during his days at HUC and continues to be in his present position as Judaic Studies Consultant for the BJE. He is a warm, low-key and very likable speaker.

3. Rabbi Yoel Kahn  
Congregation Sha'ar Zahav  
220 Danvers  
San Francisco, CA. 94114  
(415)861-6932

An excellent speaker, willing to do a few jobs outside his own region. He has a piece soon to be published in Reform Judaism giving his personal perspective as a gay rabbi. As you know if you've read his speech to the CCAR last year, he can also speak effectively on the subject of kiddushin for same-sex couples.





CANADIAN COUNCIL

1. Marlene Meyerson  
Temple Emanu-El  
120 Old Colony Road  
Willowdale, Ontario  
M2L 2K2 Canada  
(416)449-3880

I was not able to contact Marlene about being on this list, but I think she would be a fine speaker. She is a member of the UAHC AIDS Committee, and has spoken movingly at our meetings about how her view of homosexuality was changed when a colleague "came out" to her.

2. Rabbi John Moskowitz

Holy Blossom Temple

I was unable to make contact with John, but I've been informed that Holy Blossom has organized a support group for Jewish parents of gays and lesbians.



NORTHEAST COUNCIL

1. Hope Abramson  
49 Rogers Ave.  
Somerville, MA. 02144  
(617)625-0855

Lesbian active in Temple Bnai Brith of Somerville (Conservative). She has a partner and is a thoughtful, committed Jew.

2. Felice Yezkel  
433 Warren Wright Rd.  
Belchertown, MA. 01007  
(413)256-1868

Felice is a lesbian active in a mainstream non-affiliated synagogue. She is very experienced at teaching and leading workshops on homophobia in the Jewish community. She'd be interested in training congregants who want to become part of an "internal change team" that would work to diminish homophobia in their congregation. She works with Diversityworks, a consultant firm devoted to helping organizations reduce racism, sexism and homophobia within their ranks. Felice would expect a fee for personal consulting with a congregation, but would speak for free at a UAHC workshop.

3. Warren J. Blumenfeld  
136 Hancock St.  
Cambridge, MA. 02139  
(617)492-4639

Warren is co-author of Looking at Gay and Lesbian Life, a 416 page general reader on gay and lesbian experience; co-producer of the documentary film "Pink Triangles," which examines prejudice against lesbians and gay males, an instructor at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education and coordinator of the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Speakers Bureau of Boston. He holds dual Masters Degrees from Boston College. He is unaffiliated, but "very Jewish," (goes to services on the High Holy Days), and is comfortable telling his personal story of growing up Jewish and gay.





*Homosexual*

RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

August 1, 1990  
10 Av 5750

Rabbi Samuel Silver  
Temple Sinai  
2475 West Atlantic Avenue  
Delray Beach, FL 33445

Dear Sam:

Thank you for sending me Mr. Rosen's letter. Unhappily, I cannot agree with him. The truth of the matter is that both you and I know that there are scores of homosexual rabbis in the Reform rabbinate even now - that is equally true for the Conservatives and the Orthodox rabbinate, I am certain.

Be that as it may, there has not been one untoward incident affecting any of them. Quite to the contrary, men like Hillel Fine and Bob Goldberg served with honor and there has not been even the slightest hint or suspicion that the fact that they were homosexuals impaired their functioning as exemplary role models. As a matter of fact, I must say those of our colleagues whom I know to be homosexuals are exceptionally sensitive.

To all of this, I only want to add that the several congregations with Outreach to the homosexual community which we have accepted into our family of congregations have created meaningful and exciting programs. My daughter who lives in San Francisco, tells me that Yoel Kahn's is just about the best in the city. It is the most active, the most spiritual, the most effective.

Alas, at least in terms of the rabbinate, not the same thing can always be said of our heterosexual colleagues. Here, too, both you and I know that we have had plenty of problems along that line.

What I am really trying to say is that sexual preference should not be a factor in determining a rabbi's effectiveness and the many Reform Jews who happen to be gay or lesbian ought not to feel that there are limits to their spiritual aspirations.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

Harold J. Rosen  
3700 Red Maple Circle  
Delray Beach, Florida 33445

7/15/90

DEAR RABBI SILVER,

I FEEL THAT THE DECISION TO ACCEPT "GAY  
MEN" AS ORDAINED RABBIS IN REFORM JUDAISM  
IS A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.

IT IS AS EXTREME AT ONE END OF THE  
SPECTRUM, AS GIVING THE REINS OF ISRAEL TO  
THE ULTRA ORTHODOX FANATICS WOULD BE AT THE  
OTHER END OF THE SPECTRUM.

I HAVE KNOWN AND WORKED (IN THE  
FASHION INDUSTRY) WITH HOMOSEXUAL MEN MOST OF MY  
ADULT LIFE. YES, AS IN ALL GROUPS YOU WILL FIND  
GOOD, BAD AND EXCEPTIONAL INDIVIDUALS. HOWEVER,  
THE ONE COMMON THREAD OF SEXUAL DISORIENTATION  
DISQUALIFIES THEIR ACCEPTABILITY AS RABBIS.  
THEIR SEXUALITY, WHILE NOT ALWAYS APPARENT,  
IS ALMOST AN OBSESSION THAT NEGATES ANY  
CHANCE OF THEM BECOMING ROLL MODEL, OBJECTIVE  
THINKING RABBIS. I CANNOT CONCEIVE OF ANY  
HETEROSEXUAL CHILD, YOUNG PERSON, ADULT, OR  
COUPLE DEALING COMFORTABLY WITH A GAY RABBI  
IN TERMS OF COUNCIL AND ADVICE ON PERSONAL  
PROBLEMS. NOR COULD THESE SAME PEOPLE



Harold J. Rosen  
3700 Red Maple Circle  
Delray Beach, Florida 33445


ACCEPT SUCH RABBIS AS TEACHERS AND  
SPIRITUAL LEADERS OF TEMPLES AND CONGREGATIONS.  
IT IS DIFFICULT ENOUGH FOR A RABBI TO BE  
A "Solomon" WITHOUT THE ADDITIONAL  
EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS OF DEALING WITH HIS OWN  
HOMOSEXUALITY.

I SUBMIT THAT A MAJOR ERROR HAS  
BEEN MADE AND I HOPE THAT IT IS REVERSABLE.

I HONESTLY DOUBT IF I WANT TO REMAIN  
A PART OF THIS FINAL OUTCAST OF ORGANIZED  
JUDAISM IF THIS DECISION IS NOT RESCINDED.

THE STANDARDS WE SET FOR OURSELVES  
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF REFORM FLEXIBILITY  
MUST BE BASED ON "SACHEL". BLIND LIBERALISM,  
FOR ITS OWN SAKE, HAS NO PART IN ANY RELIGION.

THE FACT THAT ANY ANTI-SEMITIC GROUP  
COULD HAVE WITH THIS ISSUE, WHILE IMPORTANT,  
DID NOT INFLUENCE MY DECISION.

VERY TRULY YOURS  


# Temple Sinai

Of Palm Beach County

2475 West Atlantic Avenue, Delray Beach, Florida 33445

Telephone: 407-276-6161



A Reform Congregation  
member U.A.H.C.

#3

7/26/96

Dear ALEX

MR. ROSEN

ASKED ME TO  
FORWARD THIS

LETTER TO YOU AS

THE EXPRESSION OF

A CONCERNED LAYMAN.

MY BEST!

Yours

Sam Selig



COPY

*Handwritten signature*

November 15, 1990  
27 Heshvan 5751

Ms Sheila Wells  
7033 Stewart & Gray Road #6  
Downey, CA 90241

Dear Sheila:

Thank you so much for taking the time to write to share your thoughts concerning lesbian and gay rabbis. I want you to know that I agree with you fully and your stance is one which has long been that of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

We are on record for equality in employment opportunities and all phases of life for all, without concern for sexual preference.

Once again, thank you for writing as you did. With every good wish and kindest greetings, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

# Sheila Wells

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I agree with  
you fully  
+ that has been  
the union's  
stance

I am so disturbed by the article  
about "Gay" Rabbis that I had to sit down  
+ immediately write you.

We have Rabbis who are liars,  
cheats, uncaring, dishonest - I can go  
on indefinitely - Rabbis are "Human Beings"  
with all our vices + virtues. It is  
really no one's business what a  
Rabbi's sexual preference is or even anyone's  
sexual preference. Some of most  
famous people may do "interesting" things  
in their bedroom - who cares.

As Jews it is our responsibility  
to accept people as they are. We are not  
judges + jurors. A good person / Rabbi is a  
good person - time for us to be  
able to accept our likenesses +  
differences. I hope someday, somewhere  
we will "Love our neighbor"

Sincerely sent,  
Sheila Wells  
Temple Ner Tamid





יחידה  
אמריקאית  
התאחדות  
היהודית

# Union of American Hebrew Congregations

SERVING REFORM JUDAISM IN NORTH AMERICA

PATRON OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION  
6300 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SUITE 1475, LOS ANGELES, CA. 90048 (213) 653-9962 FAX (213) 653-9236

## PACIFIC SOUTHWEST COUNCIL

Rabbi Lennard R. Thal  
*Director*

Rabbi Janet Ross Marder  
*Associate Director*

September 24, 1990

Editor  
The Jewish Week  
1457 Broadway  
New York, N.Y. 10036

To the Editor:

Dennis Prager is correct (August 10, 1990): the Reform movement's recent decision to ordain homosexuals is "not about sympathy and compassion for homosexuals." It is, rather, about providing support and recognition for our gay and lesbian colleagues who are already serving in the rabbinate.

Anyone who knows these colleagues knows that they serve the Jewish people honorably and faithfully, and that they strive to conduct their public and private lives according to the highest ethical standards. To suggest otherwise is to slander some of the most gifted rabbis I know. I might add that gay rabbis serve in all four branches of Judaism, though nearly all, of course, are forced to keep their sexual orientation a secret.

Prager's lament over the Reform movement's "dropping the heterosexual ideal" seems motivated by a curious fear that the ordination of homosexuals will somehow unleash sexual anarchy in the world, leading to the disintegration of marriage, the family, and Western civilization. I'd like to allay his fears in two ways. First of all, no one will rush out and become a homosexual as a result of the CCAR vote. While Prager apparently has little regard for the intrinsic joys of heterosexual love and marriage, believing that men must be "taught to confine their erotic love to women, specifically to their wives," it seems abundantly clear that 20 years of the gay liberation movement have made heterosexuality and marriage no less popular. It is still only a small fraction of human beings (10% or less) who discover that their nature is homosexual.

Secondly, it should reassure Prager to know that HUC-JIR, the Reform seminary, holds all candidates for the rabbinate to the same rigorous standards. Homosexual or heterosexual, married or single, with or without children, rabbis must first and foremost be mentshn--people of honor and integrity, decent, caring and responsible human beings. Sexual libertines of any stripe, abusive, promiscuous or exploitative men and women are not acceptable candidates for the rabbinate.

This latest vote of the Reform rabbinate, thus, reflects no abandonment of the Jewish ideals of monogamy or family life--for anyone who

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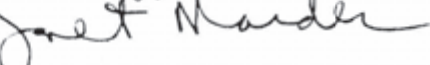
Maurice J. Klein  
Paul Kodimer

cc ABG, MM.  
Sol Friend

knows lesbian or gay couples knows they are capable of establishing faithful lifetime commitments and rearing children in stable, loving families.

I fail to see how acknowledging the human dignity and rabbinic competence of a homosexual endangers the family or undermines Western civilization. In fact, I view this decision as a step forward in the civilizing process, and look forward to the day when the fears, ignorance and bigotry expressed in Prager's article will be laid to rest.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Janet R. Marder  
Associate Director





# FOCUS

Comment/Opinion/Insight

## Will the Reform ruling on gay rabbis stand?

By DENNIS PRAGER

**T**HE RECENT DECISION of the Reform rabbinate to ordain declared homosexuals will be rescinded one day, and all those who care deeply about Reform Judaism must hope that it will do so before that decision harms the Reform movement.

Not since classical Reform Judaism's decision to declare the Jews a religion and not a people, which led to its early anti-Zionism, has Reform Judaism done something so antithetical to a foundation of Judaism. That is why, just as it later reversed itself and affirmed Jewish peoplehood, Reform Judaism will eventually reverse itself and reaffirm man-woman love, marriage and family.

For these are what this issue is all about. The issue is not about sympathy and compassion for homosexuals. Every decent person has compassion for homosexuals who are oppressed. And every one of us who knows the joy and profundity of loving and marrying feels compassion for people who feel incapable of making love to the opposite sex.

But compassion for the homosexual who has no choice is one thing, and dropping Judaism's heterosexual ideal is quite another.

The decision challenges one of the handful of truly essential values of Judaism and Western civilization. For three millennia, Judaism has fought to channel human sexuality into marriage. Do we continue this fight, or do we accept the notion that all non-coercive sexual activity is equally desirable?

I have spent a good part of the last half year researching and writing a 15,000-word manuscript, "Judaism, Homosexuality and Civilization," published this month in my quarterly journal, *Ultimate Issues*. In a lifetime of studying, writing and lecturing about Judaism I had never been so aware of the magnitude of Judaism's uniqueness. Except for its introduction of a universal, moral, supernatural God, nothing Judaism introduced into the world was as radically different, as unnatural and as anti-social as its prohibition of homosexuality.

My research opened my eyes to the incredible truth that historically it was not homosexuality but Judaism's prohibition of it that was truly deviant.

Man-boy love has been an accepted, even lauded feature of most civilizations. It dominated Greece, and has been an accepted norm in the Arab-Moslem world until the present century. Sir Richard Burton reported that the Chinese love of homosexuality was only equaled by their love of bestiality. Torah's prohibition of non-marital sex made the cre- of Western civilization possible. Societies that did not boundaries around sexuality remained undeveloped. Subsequent ascendancy of the Western world can, to a ant extent, be attributed to the sexual revolution initi- Judaism and later carried forward by Christianity.

**W**HEN JUDAISM SAID that the sexual instinct must be channeled into marriage, it literally changed history. When not channeled into marriage, sex dominated society and religion. Before Judaism, sex even dominated life. Throughout the world, the gods all had sex her gods and engaged in both heterosexual and homosexual relations with mortal men and women. Both homosexual and heterosexual relations were religious rituals in most of the world's religions until influenced by Western — that is, Christian — civilization.

of the most important consequences of Judaism's prohibition of homosexuality was the elevation of women. Wherever homosexuality was widely accepted, the position of women remained particularly low. Ancient Greece, Rome and all the classical scholars I read, held women in an inferior position, very much related to its celebration

Dennis Prager is coauthor of "The Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism" and "The Reason for Anti-Semitism." A commentator on KABC Radio in Los Angeles, he writes and lectures a quarterly journal on Judaism and society, *Ultimate Issues*. An expanded essay on "Judaism, Homosexuality and Civilization" appears in the latest issue. For information on joining it, write to *Ultimate Issues*, 6020 Washington Boulevard, Culver City, CA 90232.

## A radical break with Jewish morality

By PINCHAS STOLPER

**T**HE DECISION OF the Reform rabbinate to accept active homosexuals as rabbis has sent shock waves through the Jewish community. It represents a radical and irresponsible departure from Jewish morality and tradition, and will further exacerbate relationships between the Jewish community and the Reform movement.

This tragic move represents a radical tear in the fabric of the consensus of Jewishness, a propellant to further assimilation, a weak-kneed surrender to the basest and most destructive elements in American society. The inability of the Reform movement to resist the pressures of sexual libertarians manifests a lack of backbone and principle. The Reform compromise with homosexuality represents a break with Jewish tradition, placing Reform on an even steeper, more slippery slope that will lead to further dissolution and disintegration. The Torah's pronouncement, "Thou shalt not lie with a man as one lies with a woman: it is abomination," (Lev 18:22) has not and cannot be changed or abrogated.

It is the Torah that is the source of morality; it defines what is moral. The same Torah that forbids homosexuality also forbids adultery and perjury and advocates philanthropy, equal justice and respect for parents. If one accepts Judaism's moral law and intellectual honesty, then consistency requires acceptance of its more

Pinchas Stolper is executive vice president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

of male-male love. In Greece, as in much of the world, women were for procreation and boys were for sexual love. It was Judaism that initiated marital eroticism, and thereby singlehandedly made marriage more than a baby-producing arrangement.

That many feminists identify with gay liberation can only be explained by their lack of awareness as to how much women have suffered when men are not taught to control their erotic love to women, specifically to their wives. It is no coincidence that until the present era, the particularly low level of

**Compassion for the homosexual is one thing. Dropping Judaism's heterosexual ideal is quite another.**

women in the Arab and Moslem worlds has been accompanied by these cultures' widespread acceptance of male homosexuality.

So, too, it was Judaism that made the family the basic structure of society — and that is only possible when men and women are taught to confine their sexual behavior to their spouses. Marital sex is a Jewish ideal that made Western civilization possible, and family life has been one of the glories of Jewish history. It is sad beyond words that a normative Jewish movement has, with good intentions certainly, joined with those who no longer hold the marital sexual ideal.

The argument that homosexuals have no choice may be true in some cases: we simply do not know, as there is no evidence whatsoever that homosexuality is genetic. But even if a homosexual feels that he or she has no choice — and I honor that individual's feeling — the issue is irrelevant to the question of what ideal Judaism must uphold. Indeed, it is a Reform rabbi, Eugene Borowitz, who has stated it best: "To be a rabbi is not a Jewish right but a title bestowed as a special Jewish honor. [Rabbis] ought to set an example of Jewish ideals."

To cite a simple analogy, some overeaters have no choice

and less popular aspects alike.

The Reform movement long ago abandoned Halacha, the system of Jewish law based on the Torah that is the bedrock and foundation of Jewish life. They claimed that in place of the law, they would abide by "prophetic Judaism." But nothing is more basic to the message of the Prophets than the overarching values of family and sexual morality.

The Torah and the Prophets are filled with incidents and pronouncements, all of which instruct and sensitize to the repugnance with which the homosexual abomination is regarded. Anyone who purports to teach Judaism and be its spokesman and representative is obligated to uphold its standards, not publicly tear them down by flaunting their own immoral activity in the presence of the innocent.

The new Reform departure reflects moral bankruptcy and represents a betrayal of both the letter and spirit of Jewish tradition and morality. Its consequence will be to create a deeper rift between the Reform movement and all other Jews. It is one thing to be tolerant of a sinner in the hope that he will change his ways, but to set up role models, teachers and authorities who are themselves public violators of everything being Jewish stands for is a serious desecration.

Homosexual rabbis are a contradiction, an oxymoron. Such an individual and the movement that endorses him disregards principle and the eternal values Jews have regarded as sacred from time immemorial.

We know that Reform Jews want to be Jews. But being Jewish is more than a label — it calls for substance, responsibility, commitment and discipline.

but overeating, and we therefore certainly owe them our sympathy. But we do not need to hold that overeating is as good as eating healthfully. In the same way, we owe sympathy to homosexuals who have no choice (and this, too, I learned, is much more complex than generally believed — the majority of gay men and women have had sex with the opposite sex, and the many homosexuals who are bisexual obviously exercise sexual choice).

But we do not owe them agreement. Judaism has standards, and the moment you have standards some individuals will suffer. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" causes innumerable people who cannot have sex with their spouses to suffer. Shall we, then, drop the commandment against adultery? I have no desire to blame or attack these people who feel they have no choice but to engage in extramarital sex any more than I wish to blame or attack homosexuals who feel they have no choice. But in both instances I do want to retain Judaism's ideals.

And what will happen when a homosexual Reform rabbi brings his or her lover to temple on Shabbat? What will parents worshipping there tell their children when the children ask who that person is? Will the parents tell the truth? And, if so, aren't they then telling their children that Judaism finds homosexuality and sexual life outside of marriage perfectly ideal — ideal enough to be the way in which the rabbi acts? Or will the parents lie, and, if so, how can a movement ordain rabbis about whose lifestyles its members are ashamed to report to their children?

And what about incest? If loving sex between adults of the same sex is now Jewishly valid, why not loving sex between adult brothers and sisters? Once the heterosexual marital door is officially opened, where will it close?

With all good intentions, the Reform rabbinate voted to bestow the highest title in Judaism to Jews who publicly claim that same-sex love is as Jewish an ideal as man-woman love and marriage. That is, as many Reform rabbis who disagree with this decision have told me, the one great departure from Judaism in Reform life. It is not comparable to Reform Judaism's decision on patrilineal descent — that was a break with

(Continued on Page 35)





RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

September 13, 1990  
23 Elul 5750

Mrs. A. A. Friedman  
3040 Bransford Road  
Augusta GA 30909

Dear Mrs. Friedman:

It was good of you to share your concerns regarding gay and lesbian rabbis with me. While this was initially passed by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, our lead rabbinic organization, I must note that it is an issue and resolution with which I fully concur.

The headlines in the news and the report of the discussion really do not convey the heartfelt and extended study which went into this report and resolution. I am enclosing herewith a copy of the full report to the CCAR. I believe a careful reading will help you to understand the position taken by the Reform rabbinate. I do not know if this will change your mind, but I am certain that it will provide new insights into the thinking which went into this matter.

With kindest greetings and every good wish for the New Year, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



Mrs. A. A. Friedman  
3040 Bransford Rd.  
Augusta, Georgia 30909

August 30, 1990

Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
Attn: Rabbi Alexander Schindler, as President  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I have learned that there is a trend toward letting homosexuals who pass the required registration become rabbis. I am very strongly opposed to this trend.

A rabbi must be a leader and a spiritual guide. I, for one, cannot accept leadership from someone for whom I have no respect, and I have no respect for anyone who is a homosexual.

The Torah says that those whom we now-a-days know as homosexuals are to be cast out of the congregation. Certainly God did not intend for such people to become congregational leaders. God's word is constant -- it is the same now as in biblical times.

From various conversations, I feel a majority of Southeastern Jews, perhaps of American Jews, think as I do.

Sincerely,

(Mrs. A.A.) Betty Friedman

HEF/sgt

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RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

August 20, 1990  
29 Av 5750

State of Minnesota  
Governor's Task Force on Gay and Lesbian Minnesotans  
500 Bremer Tower  
7th Place and Minnesota St.  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Task Force Members:

In response to your letter of August 15, I am pleased to enclose herewith two resolutions passed by a General Assembly of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The first was passed in 1987, the second in 1989. I trust these will be of assistance to you.

In addition, I am enclosing herewith a copy of a speech which I delivered at a service for families and friends of people suffering from AIDS. I believe my words may be of interest to your group.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

encls.





# STATE OF MINNESOTA

## GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON GAY AND LESBIAN MINNESOTANS

ST PAUL 55101

August 15, 1990

Geraldine Sell, Chair.  
Aids Task Force Mpls Schools

Rev. Leo Treadway, Vice Chair  
Wingspan Ministry

Julie Andrzejewski, PhD.  
St. Cloud State University

Willie Bridges  
Hennepin County Attorney's Office

Stephen W. Cooper  
MN Department of Human Rights

Fr. Edward Flahaven  
Ramsey County Correctional Center

Mary M. Lofy  
Lofy Associates

Jane McWilliams  
MN League of Women Voters

Susan Mackay  
US West Communications

Frank S. Rhame, MD  
University of MN Hospitals & Clinic

Brian Rusche  
Joint Religious Legislative Coalition

Honorable Allan H. Spear  
MN State Senate

Lee Staples  
American Indian Services, Inc.

Dear Leader of the Religious Community,

As members of the Religious Community Subcommittee of Governor Rudy Perpich's Task Force on Gay and Lesbian Minnesotans, we are writing to you because we are aware of your organization's past supportive statements regarding Human Rights Legislation for Gay and Lesbian individuals or other sexual minorities.

In an effort to update our record of religious community support on this matter, it would help us greatly if you could send us any statements/resolutions/printed materials that you and/or your organization might have issued on this subject since 1983. Copies of the last known effort to gather such position statements in Minnesota are enclosed.

Many developments have occurred in the lives of Gay and Lesbian Minnesotans in the last seven years. We welcome all statements that relate to human rights, sodomy law repeal, domestic partners protection, custody and visitation rights, adoption rights, or any other topic pertinent to the lives of Gay and Lesbian Minnesotans.

In order to complete our mandate on schedule, we would need to hear from you by September 15. Thank you so much for your quick response. Your collective statements will go a long way in helping us assess the true needs of Gays and Lesbians in the Religious Community.

Sincerely,

Task Force Members: The Reverend Cathy Ann Beaty, The Reverend Edward Flahaven, William C. Hunt, Richard Angukcuaq LaFortune, Susan Mackay, Jane McWilliams, Rabbi Stacy Offner, and Brian Rusche.

Enclosures (2)

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# Wingspan

A Ministry With and On Behalf of Gay and Lesbian People.

## ENDORSEMENTS FOR "HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATION" FROM THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY REGARDING GAY and LESBIAN INDIVIDUALS:

### ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH:

- (1) National Federation of Priests' Councils (1974)
- (2) National Assembly of Religious Brothers (1977)
- (3) National Coalition of American Nuns (1974)
- (4) National Assembly of Women Religious (1978)
- (5) National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1975)
- (6) Archbishop John R. Roach, Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis (1978)
- (7) Priests' Senate of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis (1978)

### LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (LCA):

- (1) Lutheran Church in America, Social Statement: "Sex, Marriage, and Family" (1970)
- (2) Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom, Minnesota Synod, LCA, Pastoral Letter (1978)
- (3) Minnesota Synod Convention Resolutions (1978) and (1983)
- (4) Committee on Ministry To/With Gay and Lesbian Persons of the Minnesota Synod, LCA (1983)
- (5) Bishop Harold R. Lohr, Red River Valley Synod, LCA, Pastoral Letter (1983)

### AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH (ALC):

- (1) Bishop Elmo Agrimson, Southeastern Minnesota District, ALC, Pastoral Letters (1978) and (1983)
- (2) American Lutheran Church, Statement of Comment and Counsel: "Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior" (1980)

### EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MINNESOTA:

- (1) The Episcopal Church (1976)
- (2) Bishop Robert M. Anderson, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota, Pastoral Letter (1978)
- (3) Bishop Robert P. Varley, Assistant Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota, (1981)
- (4) Commission on Social Action and Advocacy, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota (1981)
- (5) Diocesan Sexuality Task Force, Final Report, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota (1982)

### MINNESOTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:

- (1) Social Principles Statement, The United Methodist Church (1976)
- (2) Bishop Wayne K. Clymer, (previous bishop) Minnesota Annual Conference, Pastoral Letter (1973)
- (3) Bishop Emerson Colaw, (current bishop) Minnesota Annual Conference, Radio Interview, "Point of View," (1983)



MINNESOTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (continued):

- (4) Statement by "Concerned United Methodist Clergy of Saint Paul" (1978)

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST:

- (1) Statement, 11th General Synod (1977)
- (2) Statement, 10th General Synod (1975)
- (3) Rev. Francis X. Pirazzina, (previous conference minister) Minnesota Conference, UCC, Pastoral Letter (1978)
- (4) Rev. Murdale C. Leysath (present conference minister) Minnesota Conference, UCC (1983)

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.:

- (1) 190th General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA (1978)
- (2) Rev. Donald R. White (previous vice-moderator), Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area (1978)

THE CHURCH OF THE BRETHERN:

- (1) Study Document (1980)

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST):

- (1) General Assembly, Division of Homeland Ministries Resolution (1977)

THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA:

- (1) Study Document (1978)

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS):

- (1) Yearly Meeting Minutes (1973) and (1974)
- (2) Minneapolis Friends Meeting, Society of Friends (1978) and (1983)

ASSOCIATED UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MINISTERS OF MINNESOTA:

- (1) Statement (1978)
- (2) Individual Statements (1983)

THE UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS (UAHC):

- (1) 54th Assembly (1977)
- (2) Individual Statements (1983)

AMERICAN BAPTISTS:

- (1) Rev. Wiley A. Kehrl, Field Minister, Regional Office, American Baptist Churches (1983)

Religious Community Endorsements

(Human Rights Legislation re: Gay and Lesbian Individuals)

NON-DENOMINATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

- (1) Minnesota Fellowship of Reconciliation (1978)
- (2) Minnesota Clergy and Laity Concerned (1978) and (1982)

GEOGRAPHICALLY IDENTIFIED RELIGIOUS BODIES/COUNCILS:

- (1) The National Council of the Churches of Christ (undated copy)
- (2) The Minnesota Council of Churches (1982)
- (3) The Social Justice Division, Greater Minneapolis Area Council of Churches (1983)

HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS:

- (1) The Saint Paul Human Rights Commission (1983)
- (2) The Minneapolis Human Rights Commission (1983)
- (3) The Twin Cities Area Human Rights Coalition (1983)

GAY and LESBIAN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS:

- (1) The Lesbian and Gay Interfaith Alliance, (a North American coalition), (1982)
- (2) The Lesbian and Gay Interfaith Council of Minnesota (1983)
- (3) Lutherans Concerned/North America, (national office) (1983)
- (4) Lutherans Concerned/Twin Cities Chapter (1983)
- (5) Integrity, Inc. (national office), (1983)
- (6) United Theological Seminary Gay and Lesbian Caucus (1983)
- (7) Wingspan: A Ministry With and On Behalf of Gay and Lesbian People (St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church) (1983)

GAY and LESBIAN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS (ACTING IN SUPPORT THROUGH THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE): . . . . . National Organizations

- (1) Dignity, Inc. (1982) (Roman Catholic)
- (2) The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (1982)
- (3) The Unitarian Universalist Lesbian and Gay Caucus (1982)
- (4) The United Church of Christ Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (1982)
- (5) The World Congress of Jews (1982)
- (6) Heverim (Independent Jewish Congregation) (1982)
- (7) The Unitarian Universalist Office of Lesbian/Gay Concerns (1982)
- (8) Affirmation (United Methodists) (1982)
- (9) New Ways Ministry (Roman Catholic) (1982)
- (10) Axios (Eastern and Orthodox Christians) (1982)
- (11) Pentecostal Coalition for Human Rights (1982)
- (12) Seventh Day Adventists: Kinship (1982)
- (13) Friends for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (Quakers) (1982)



LOCAL GAY and LESBIAN RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS (ACTING IN SUPPORT THROUGH THE INTERFAITH COUNCIL OF MINNESOTA):

- (1) Affirmation (United Methodists) (1983)
- (2) All God's Children Metropolitan Community Church (1983)
- (3) Beyt G-Vurah (1983)
- (4) Friends for Gay and Lesbian Concerns (Quakers) (1983)
- (5) Integrity, Inc. / Twin Cities Chapter (1983)
- (6) Presbyterians for Gay and Lesbian Concerns (1983)
- (7) Additional local gay/lesbian sensitive organizations:
  - (a) The United Christian Campus Center (Mankato, Minnesota) (1983)
  - (b) The Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities (Roman Catholic) (1983)

Prepared and updated by:  
Leo Treadway,  
Ministry Associate  
St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church  
(Wingspan Ministry)

December 1983





# Wingspan

A Ministry With and On Behalf of Gay and Lesbian People.

## ENDORSEMENT EXCERPTS FOR "HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATION" FROM THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY REGARDING GAY and LESBIAN INDIVIDUALS:

### (1) National Federation of Priests' Councils (March 1974):

"Whereas a significant minority in this country is homosexual in orientation and/or behavior; and whereas gay persons have been the target of severe discrimination by society and in particular by the legal branch and other arms of government. . . BE IT RESOLVED that the National Federation of Priests' Councils. . . express its opposition to homosexuality as such being the basis of discrimination in employment, governmental service, housing and child rearing involving natural or adoptive parents."

### (2) National Assembly of Religious Brothers (June 1977):

"BE IT RESOLVED that the National Assembly of Religious Brothers (NARB) support gay men and women in their struggle for human rights and dignity."

### (3) National Coalition of American Nuns (1974):

(Resolution) "It is immoral and should be illegal to discriminate against any person because of his or her sexual preference."

### (4) National Assembly of Women Religious (August 1978):

"Whereas: Members of NAWR identify with those struggling for human rights and for the recognition of the dignity of all persons; Homosexual men and women are being subjected to persecution and oppression at this time in the United States; Church teaching has been interpreted many times to support this oppression.

"BE IT RESOLVED: NAWR members, as persons of the Church, are resolved to commit ourselves to the struggle of people in sexual minorities who are discriminated against by society and alienated from the Church.

"IMPLEMENTATION: . . . (2) SUPPORT--We will endorse the efforts of groups working for their gay civil rights. . . through direct communication with their leadership."

### (5) National Conference of Catholic Bishops (November 1975):

"TO LIVE IN CHRIST JESUS" Some persons find themselves through no fault of their own



to have a homosexual orientation.

Homosexuals, like everyone else, should not suffer from prejudice against their basic human rights. They have the right to respect, friendship and justice. They should have an active role in the Christian community. Homosexual activity, however, as distinguished from homosexual orientation, is morally wrong."

(6) Archbishop John R. Roach, Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis (February 1978):

"...The Catholic Community Recognizes and affirms the human dignity and worth of homosexuals as persons, and accordingly calls for the protection of their basic human rights. . . Both the Christian Tradition and our American nation are committed to the inviolable dignity of the human person. Some persons find themselves to be homosexual in orientation through no fault of their own. It is a matter of injustice when, due to prejudice, they must suffer violation of their basic human rights. Like all persons they have a right to human respect, stable friendships, economic security, and social equality. Social isolation, ridicule and economic deprivation of homosexual behavior is not compatible with basic social justice. Consequently, both religious and civic leaders must seek ways to assure homosexuals every human and civil right which is their due as persons. . ."

(7) Bishop Paul F. Anderson, Diocese of Duluth (April 1980):

"To deny basic human rights to any individual is contrary to what our system stands for. No human being should be excluded from protection of human rights. . .It is in the spirit of the Gospel and in the tradition of the social teaching of the Catholic Church that I urge you to express concern for people who experience life on the forgotten fringes of society, and to pass this ordinance so that basic human rights will not be denied any citizen in Duluth."

(8) Priests' Senate of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis (1978):

"BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Priests' Senate of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, go on record as endorsing and supporting the present Human Rights Ordinance of St. Paul and supporting human and civil rights for all persons, regardless of affectional and sexual preference.

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the Priests' Senate of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, call upon our brother priests and all Catholics in the archdiocese, especially those in St. Paul, to support the present Human Rights Ordinance of St. Paul."

(9) Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland, Archdiocese of Milwaukee (March 1981):

"...in good conscience support this legislation insofar as it bans discrimination because of sexual orientation in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations. . .it has also been consistent with Catholic teaching that homosexuals should not be deprived of their basic human rights. . ."



(10) The Lutheran Church in America; Social Statement. . . "Sex, Marriage, and Family" (June 1970):

"However, they (homosexuals) are often the special and undeserving victims of prejudice and discrimination in law, law enforcement, cultural mores, and congregational life. In relation to this area of concern, the sexual behavior of freely consenting adults in private is not an appropriate subject for legislation or police action. It is essential to see such persons as entitled to understanding and justice in church and community."

"The Lutheran Church in America calls upon the church, both as a corporate body and as individual members, to witness to the civic community in behalf of just laws and policies affecting sex, marriage, and family, and in behalf of legislation that will improve the economic and social conditions which influence the lifestyles of people."

(11) Bishop Herbert W. Chilstrom, Minnesota Synod of The Lutheran Church in America (February 1978):

". . . I believe that we must be in the forefront of those who speak for the rights of every citizen of the community, regardless of their personal relationship with the organized Church."

"The issue is the civil rights of homosexuals. It must be clearly established that we are not dealing with the question of homosexuality, but with the basic rights of some people who are homosexuals. I would encourage you to support the maintenance of a strong civil rights law which gives equal rights to homosexuals. This is consistent with the support of our Church for the basic rights of all people."

". . . The Lutheran Church in America shares the opinion of most major denominations in expressing pastoral care and understanding for homosexuals. A part of that care should include a concern for their basic human rights."

(12) Bishop Harold R. Lohr, Red River Valley Synod of The Lutheran Church in America (April 1983):

". . . we are talking about justice and freedom, not about approval or disapproval of a lifestyle. Our nation is one that was formed with the intention that people should have equal rights before the law. As you well know, we have some frightening examples of how such idealism has been violated in practice."

"I support legislation that acts against discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, familial status, or affectional or sexual orientation. I am equally affirmative about legislation that will provide sanctions against people who exercise violence against others in any of these categories."

(13) Minnesota Synod Convention, The Lutheran Church in America (June 1978):

"Therefore, BE IT RESOLVED: that the Minnesota Synod publicly declares the injustice done by the recent repeals of civil rights ordinances as related to homosexual people; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call for the responsible use of all the scripture in the discussion of human rights; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the church call upon city and state governments to take measures to assure that the human rights of all people are protected. . ."



(14) Minnesota Synod Convention, The Lutheran Church in America (June 1983):

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Minnesota Synod wishes to reaffirm its support for such legislation and to add its collective voice to those of other religious bodies and leaders advocating that such legislation be adopted which specifically; (a) adds lesbian women and gay men to the list of protected classes in the Minnesota State Human Rights Statute; (b) repeals statutes which impose criminal constraints upon the private sexual behavior of freely-consenting adults, thereby eliminating arbitrary enforcement and entrapment procedures encouraged by such statutes; and (c) increases protection for lesbian women, gay men and other minorities from harassment, threats, and assaults by increasing the penalties against criminal action in those areas."

(15) Bishop Robert S. Wilch, Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Synod, The Lutheran Church in America (April 1981):

"...Along with the Bishops and leaders of other denominations I put my name on the following statement:

"We support equal protection of the law for all people, including full civil rights for persons of homosexual orientation. We support the recently passed Milwaukee ordinance banning discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation because it is consistent with such full legal protection and full civil rights for all people. As pastoral leaders in the community we ask for our constituencies to join us in this effort."

(16) The American Lutheran Church; A Statement on: "Human Sexuality and Sexual Behavior" (1980):

"...Laws express society's recognition that sexual behavior affects not only the participants but also the health, strength, and survival of the society itself. Christians must beware, however, of equating sin with crime. . . Their concern must be for laws that foster justice, mercy, equality of opportunity, and the protection of basic human rights."

"Truth, mercy, and justice should impel members of congregations of The American Lutheran Church to review their attitudes, words, and actions regarding homosexuality. Christians need to be more understanding and more sensitive to life as experienced by those who are homosexual. They need to take leadership roles in changing public opinion, civil laws, and prevailing practices that deny justice and opportunity to any persons, homosexual or heterosexual. We all need recognition and acceptance as human beings known to and loved by God."

(17) Bishop Elmo Agrimson, Minnesota Southeastern District, The American Lutheran Church (February 1978):

"...I think the ordinance as it now stands is a good one. It well defines what have long been held in America as central, basic human rights. . . I do not think that we should impose the complexities of religious and moral interpretation upon the issue of homosexuality in guaranteeing day to day human rights for a person seeking housing, employment, education and public accommodations. Amending the ordinance could become repressive, unloving and haphazard



in application. . . The American Lutheran Church has been specific in a commitment to uphold the rights of individuals regardless of the religious preference or lifestyle."

(18) Bishop A.C. Schumacher, Southern Wisconsin District, The American Lutheran Church (April 1981):

"...you may use the following which is the statement which Wisconsin Conference of Churches asked jurisdictions which care to support the Bill to so authorize. Our District Council concurs and asked me to indicate such support:

"Our District Council has authorized me to indicate support for Assembly Bill #70 (which grants human rights protection to lesbians and gay men--clarification added)."

(19) The Episcopal Church, General Convention (1976):

"...homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection of the laws with all other citizens" and the Convention further called upon "our society to see that such protection is provided in actuality."

"It is the sense of this General Convention that homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church."

(20) Bishop Robert M. Anderson, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota (March 1978):

"As your Bishop, with the advice and counsel of other clergy and lay people, I want to add my voice with other church leaders and make a clear public commitment to uphold the present Ordinance. The Ordinance is a good one and defines well the basic human rights that we all cherish as American citizens." (made in reference to the maintenance of the Saint Paul Human Rights Ordinance which included lesbians and gay men as one of the protected classes).

"...In any case, this is a highly emotional issue that tends to create heated controversy and deep misunderstanding and hurt on all sides. There will be the tendency to confuse the human rights issue with moral and theological issues. . . it seemed proper to me that I take a firm stand for the civil rights of all our citizens."

(21) Bishop Robert P. Varley, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota (November 1981):

"...the area of Gay Rights is a pressing issue. . . with legislation pending for 1982 there is a real need for input to support this legislation on the part of Church leaders."

(22) Commission on Social Action and Advocacy, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota (February 1981):

The Study Group on Homosexuality issued a report to the full Commission urging their support for (a) the inclusion of lesbians and gay men in the Minnesota Human Rights Act as a



protected class; and (b) the repeal of existing Minnesota Statutes relating to sodomy, fornication, and adultery. Both recommendations were APPROVED by the Commission at their meeting on 19 February 1981.

(23) Sexuality Task Force, Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota (February 1982):

From the Final Report of the Sexuality Task Force: "There remain several matters of injustice in the lives of homosexual persons, ranging from the abuse of civil rights to Minnesota Statutes (e.g. #609.293) which are grossly unfair. We recommend that the Commission on Social Action and Advocacy be charged to convey such issues to all Episcopalians, and that this diocese publicly do whatever is possible to support equal justice for all."

(24) Bishop Charles T. Gaskell, The Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee (February 1981):

"Our position on matters of non-discrimination because of sexual orientation reflects the traditional moral theology of this branch of Christendom, known as the Episcopal Church. And in our own Diocesan Councils in recent years we have affirmed the principle of non-discrimination in resolutions passed with regard to the pastoral approach to our brethren of this orientation. Please know that this bill has the fullest support, both of the Bishop of the Diocese and its constituency."

(25) Bishop William C. Wantland, The Episcopal Diocese of Eau Claire (March 1981):

"...the Church calls on all of us to protect the civil rights of all persons, regardless of sexual orientation. . .quoting the House of Bishops in their 1977 statement: 'With dismay and with shock we note the deprivation of civil rights and the development of mass hysteria in parts of the country directed against people known as homosexuals. The same Gospel which persuades us that homosexuality is not an acceptable practice for Christians also compels us to treat every person of any sexual orientation as a child of God, entitled to our pastoral concern and guaranteed his or her civil rights.'"

"In the light of this clear moral imperative, we urge your support. . .as a proper statement of Gospel teaching, consonant with the moral theology of Our Lord's Church, and acceptable to the proclaimed doctrine of the Church."

(26) The United Methodist Church; from The Book of Discipline (1976):

"Homosexuals no less than heterosexuals are persons of sacred worth, who need the ministry and guidance of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship which enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. Further, we insist that all persons are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured."



(27) Bishop Wayne K. Clymer, the Annual Conference of Minnesota, the United Methodist Church (February 1978):

"...I think that it is not necessary for me to reiterate the position of The United Methodist Church on this issue. The practice of homosexuality is rejected as normative sexual relations. But that is not at issue. It is exceedingly dangerous procedure to deny the civil rights of persons on the grounds that we disapprove of their manners. This is not only a violation of democracy; it is an affront to Christian respect for persons."

(28) Bishop Emerson Colaw, the Annual Conference of Minnesota, the United Methodist Church (1983):

"In most facets of society, they (homosexuals) have been persecuted. . .attacks on homosexuals have been used for fundraising appeals. I believe, however, that the Church must work to protect their legal and civil rights, because no group has more rights than those assured to the least minority. And if society can take away the rights of the gay and lesbian, they can take away your rights and mine. We do assure them (homosexuals) of our commitment to their civil rights, and an openness to dialogue as we search for the mind of Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit."

(29) Statement by "Concerned United Methodist Clergy of Saint Paul" (April 1978):

"You are not being asked to vote on whether or not you support a homosexual life style. The present ordinance does not condemn or promote the homosexual viewpoint. The issue before you is Civil Rights. The question you will be asked to decide is whether or not persons who are qualified for jobs or education or housing shall be discriminated against on the basis of "affectional or sexual preference".

(30) Bishop Marjorie S. Matthews, The United Methodist Church, Wisconsin Area (April 1981):

"...as an elected Bishop assigned to the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church, I personally support the proposed legislation (which would extend human rights protection to lesbians and gay men), and urge its consideration by members of the Wisconsin State Legislature."

(31) The United Church of Christ; A Statement (1977) Reaffirming an earlier Statement (1975):

"There is, in the United States, a significant minority of persons whose civil liberties, and whose right to equal protection under the law, are systematically and routinely violated. Discrimination related to affectional or sexual preference in employment, housing, public accommodations, and other civil liberties, has inflicted an incalculable burden of fear into the lives of persons in society and in the church whose affectional or sexual preference is towards persons of the same gender."



"Public revelation of even a single experience often results in the presumption that a person is same-gender-oriented and thus subject to social sanctions including violations of her or his civil liberties. Even the civil liberties of persons whose affectional or sexual preference is a well-guarded secret is vulnerable."

"In faithfulness to that biblical and historic mandate, we hold that, as a child of God, every person is endowed with worth and dignity that human judgment cannot set aside. Denial and violation of the civil liberties of the individual and her or his right to equal protection under the law defames that worth and dignity and is, therefore, morally wrong. Our Christian faith requires that we respond to the injustice in our society manifested in the denial and violation of the civil liberties of persons whose affectional or sexual preference is toward persons of the same gender."

". . . recognizing that a person's affectional or sexual preference is not legitimate grounds on which to deny her or his civil liberties, the Tenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ proclaims the Christian conviction that all persons are entitled to full civil liberties and equal protection under the law."

"Further, the Tenth General Synod declares its support for the enactment of legislation at the federal, state, and local levels of government that would guarantee the civil liberties of all persons without discrimination related to affectional or sexual preference."

"Further, the Tenth General Synod calls upon the congregations, Associations, Conferences, and Instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ to work for the enactment of such legislation at the federal, state, and local levels of government, and authorize the Secretary of the United Church of Christ to commend this Pronouncement to the Conferences for distribution by them to their respective state legislators and representatives in the Congress of the United States."

(32) Rev. Francis X. Pirazzini, Conference Minister, Minnesota Conference, The United Church of Christ (February 1978):

". . . the issue at stake in St. Paul is not the nature of homosexuality. . . the issue is one of civil rights and the recognition that the denial of the civil rights of homosexuals is rooted in prejudice. Quite apart from the Christian belief in the inestimable value of every person, there either is justice for all or there is justice for none. The preservation of democracy demands the defense of the basic human rights for all persons. . . It is never easy to stand for love and justice when fear and ignorance motivate persons to take unloving and unjust positions."

(33) Rev. Murdale C. Leysath, Conference Minister, Minnesota Conference, The United Church of Christ (March 1983):

"National level agencies in the U.C.C. have been consistent in their support of civil rights for all persons, including homosexuals. We are on record by those bodies in regard to employment opportunity "forbidding discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disabilities." "As a member of the United Church of Christ I support these actions and urge the Minnesota Legislature to pass the current legislation being considered on civil rights for gay and lesbian persons."



- (34) Rev. Ralph P. Ley, Conference Minister, Wisconsin Conference of The United Church of Christ (April 1981):

"While we may not condone or support some of the activities of certain sexual preferences of lifestyles, we do firmly insist on civil liberties and equal protection under the law for all citizens."

"The Commission of Social Concerns of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ has reaffirmed this stance of our denomination and urges the enactment of legislation that provides this civil liberty and equal protection under the law for all citizens of Wisconsin."

- (35) United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America; 190th General Assembly (1978):

"Therefore, the 190th General Assembly (1978) of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America offers the presbyteries the following directive guidance:

'13. Calls upon United Presbyterians to work for the passage of laws that prohibit discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodations based on the sexual orientation of a person.'"

- (36) Rev. Donald R. White, Vice-moderator of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area, The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (April 1978):

"Whatever may be the moral position of any Christian, Jew, or non church participant on homosexuality as a lifestyle, the issue before you is simply human rights. There are two basic moral principles that have been handed down to us by our national forebears: (a) No religious or moral point of view ought to be established and required of us all. (b) Each and every citizen ought to be accorded equal protection under law."

"It seems certain to me as a Christian minister and as an American citizen that the civil rights of homosexuals must be protected and that the St. Paul Human Rights ordinance, prohibiting discrimination in many ways, including and in this case especially affectional or sexual preference, must be continued. Too many have sacrificed too much in our national history to permit the rights of homosexuals to be abrogated by either our inaction or our confusion about the issue. . ."

- (37) Rev. Carl R. Simon, Executive Presbyter, The Presbytery of Milwaukee, The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (March 1981):

"Vigilance must be exercised to oppose federal, state, and local legislation that discriminates against persons on the basis of sexual orientation and to initiate and support federal, state, and local legislation that prohibits discrimination against persons on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, and public accommodations."



(38) Rev. Verne E. Sindlinger, Executive Presbyter, The Winnebago Presbytery, The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (August 1981):

"...the national judicatory of my denomination has taken the strong stand in support of legislation which would prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation of individuals in the areas of employment, housing and public accommodations."

"In addition to expressing the position of the United Presbyterian Church, I am expressing my own personal support for this legislation and requesting that you support it with your voice and your vote."

(39) The Church of The Brethern; Study Document (1980):

"Likewise, homophobia (irrational fear of or condemnation of homosexuals) is destructive of persons whom Gods loves. Homosexuals are human beings. Each of them is unique. They ought not to be stigmatized as a group and attacked en masse. Hostile attitudes in society and in the church create irrational fears, contempt, injustice and discrimination. Homosexuals are entitled to jobs, housing and other human rights."

(40) The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), General Assembly (October 1977):

"Therefore BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada meeting in Kansas City, Missouri, October 21-26, 1977, while neither approving of nor condemning homosexuality, urge the passage of legislation on local, state and national levels which will end the denial of civil rights and the violation of civil liberties for reasons of sexual orientation or preference, and calls upon its members to advocate and support the passage and maintenance of such legislation."

(41) The Reformed Church in America; Study Document (1978):

"Approval of the homosexual orientation or acts is not a prerequisite to firm support of basic civil rights for homosexual persons. While we cannot affirm homosexual behavior, at the same time we are convinced that the denial of human and civil rights to homosexuals is inconsistent with the biblical witness and Reformed theology."

(42) The Society of Friends (Quakers); Yearly Meeting Minutes:

"...wishes to minute its deep sense of outrage at the injustice being perpetrated against homophiles and homophile establishments." (1973 - Pacific)

"We urge Friends to put new energy into the struggle to end the oppression, often unconscious, that is imposed on people because of their sex or their sexual orientation. . .The myths about bisexuality and homosexuality, the myths that perpetuate deep rooted discrimination, need to be dispelled. . ." (1973 - Baltimore)

"Although we neither approve nor disapprove of homosexuality, the same standards under



the law which are applied to heterosexual activities should also be applied to homosexual activities."

"Since persons who engage in homosexual activities suffer serious discrimination in employment, housing, and the right to worship, we believe that civil rights laws should protect them. In particular we advocate the revision of all legislation imposing disabilities and penalties upon homosexual activities." (1973 - Philadelphia)

"Homosexual and bisexual people in this society are subject to serious discrimination in many areas. . . Civil rights should be extended to protect homosexuals and bisexual people just as they now protect other groups which suffer discrimination. We urge Friends and Friendly organizations to work for appropriate legislation." (1974 - Illinois)

"Three and one half years ago, the City of Saint Paul went on public record in support of human rights for all people, regardless of affectional or sexual preference. . . This ordinance has served as a deterrent against discrimination. . . Because of our belief in that of God in every person, Friends have historically affirmed the basic worth of all people, and have strived to achieve human rights for everyone. We believe that the current human rights ordinance reflects St. Paul's commitment to human rights, should be continued, and that its repeal would have a divisive effect on the entire Twin Cities community." (Minneapolis - 1978)

(43) Unitarian Universalist Association:

"The Associated Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Minnesota affirm the democratic principle of equal rights for all persons. We oppose repeal of any portion of St. Paul's Human Rights Ordinance. This ordinance forbids discrimination in employment, public accommodations and services, education, and housing, on the grounds of race, creed, religion, color, sex, national origin or ancestry, affectional or sexual preference, age, or disability. We hold that such discrimination is unconstitutional, immoral, and destructive of inherent human rights and dignity." (Minnesota - 1978)

"We as Unitarian Universalist ministers in the Milwaukee area, affirm our support for legislation that would ban discrimination in housing, employment, and public funding on the basis of sexual or affectional orientation." (Milwaukee - 1981)

(44) The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (November 1977):

"BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection of the law. We oppose discrimination against homosexuals in areas of opportunity, including employment and housing. We call upon our society to see that such protection is provided in actuality."

"Be it further resolved that we affirm our belief that private sexual acts between consenting adults are not the proper province of government and law enforcement agencies."

(45) Rabbi Leigh Lemer, Mount Zion Temple, Saint Paul (March 1983):

"I favor legislation which would make it a criminal act to discriminate against persons



on the basis of sexual preference. This is a logical and necessary extension of civil rights which our society must undertake to do today."

(46) Rabbi Norman M. Cohen, Temple Bet Shalom, St. Louis Park (March 1983):

"As a rabbi and religious leader, I feel compelled to lend my support to those who are making serious efforts to help effect legislative action in favor of human rights, against violence, and to protect the personal privacy of every individual."

"My tradition, Judaism, exhorts all human beings to do whatever is humanly possible to protect the dignity and value and quality of human life. Appropriate legislation can do more toward that end than many other vehicles combined."

(47) The National Council of Churches of Christ:

"Therefore every person is entitled to equal protection under the law. For this reason the National Council of the Churches of Christ has endeavored to insure for all persons regardless of race, class, sex, creed, or place of national origin their full civil rights. To this list the Governing Board now adds affectional or sexual preference. Discrimination based on any of those criteria is morally wrong. Many persons, including some of the members and pastors of some of our churches, have been and are being deprived of their civil rights and full and equal protection of the law because of their affectional or sexual preference."

"THEREFORE:

(1) The Governing Board reiterates the Christian conviction that all persons are entitled to full civil rights and equal protection and to the pastoral concern of the church.

(2) The Governing Board urges its member churches and their constituencies to work to ensure the enactment of legislation at the national, state, and local levels that would guarantee the civil rights of all persons without regard to their affectional or sexual preferences."

(48) The Minnesota Council of Churches: "Statement on Ministry To and With Gay and Lesbian Persons (September 1982):

"BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Minnesota Council of Churches publicly go on record urging that legislation be introduced into the Minnesota State Legislature which would provide human rights protection for lesbians and gay men in all the categories in which protection currently exists for other groups, and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT: The Minnesota Council of Churches utilize available channels and vehicles to encourage the adoption of such legislation, and the placement of such legislation on the agenda for the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition and Minnesota IMPACT."





*Handwritten signature: H. H. H.*

RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

September 24, 1990  
5 Tishri 5751

Solomon H. Friend  
Friend, Marks & Schluskel  
1010 Northern Boulevard  
Great Neck, NY 11021

Dear Sol:

I appreciate your lengthy response of September 14th.

I am afraid that this is an issue on which we will have to disagree agreeably.

As I told you, I wasn't at the Rabbinic Conference and so did not participate in its deliberations. Nor did I serve on the committee which had studied the matter over the past four years and whose report was finally accepted. I suspect though, had I been there I would have voted with what was the preponderant majority of our colleagues present.

To add just a few grains for the grist of your thought processes, not in the hope of changing your mind, but to help you understand me better.

1. With respect to the men and women who served on the committee and who grappled with this issue over the years. It was not a "stacked" committee by any manner or means. Many of its members began the process from a position not unlike yours and were ultimately swayed by what they learned. Their moral authority is something which sways me too.

2. I reject the notion that homosexuality is volitional and therefore I reject the idea that children can be persuaded to follow a homosexual lifestyle. Why is it that most of the children adopted by homosexual partners, be they male or female, turn out to be heterosexual in their orientation?



September 24, 1990

3. The view of rabbis as a role model is perforce narrow. No rabbi can represent in his being everything that we wish to convey to others. You say that Judaism stands for heterosexual relationships in which reproduction of the species is possible. True! But that leaves many rabbis who are not homosexuals also out of the model role. Single rabbis, divorced rabbis or rabbis whose wives are barren. Should they be excluded from consideration?

4. The forthcoming issue of Reform Judaism will carry an article by Janet Marder who attended the Conference session. It is an objective piece which will present precisely what transpired there. I urge you to read it with care.

Be all this as it may, I agree with your declaration that the ultimate test of friendship is that it can weather a divergence of views. You know of course that I, too, respect you, have always regarded you as a friend, and I am proud of the fact that you regard me as such.

Fondly,

Alexander M. Schindler

*Hamosxua*

✓

July 3, 1990  
10 Tammuz 5750

Mr. Mark Leggett  
2240 C Rome Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46208

Dear Mr. Leggett:

Thank you for your words of appreciation for the recent resolution passed by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. It was good of you to share your thoughts with me in this connection.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler





2240 C Rome Dr.  
Indianapolis, IN  
46208

President  
Union of American  
Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Ave.  
NY, NY 10021

6/29/90

Dear Friend-

I would like to applaud your group's recent decision to admit practicing homosexuals to the rabbinate. How refreshingly judicious and nurturing. I hope my Christian brethren will learn from you.

Peace,

Mark Leggett  
Mark Leggett

*Hansmann*

July 9, 1990  
16 Tammuz 5750

Mr. Lionel Friedman  
Bayt Hazon  
Kfar Hanoach, Israel

Dear Mr. Friedman:

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with me.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler





Bayt Hazon Kfar Harroch  
Israel  
June 25, 1990

My dear Dr. Schindler,

I had always believed that the 1's-nicks were hidden from mortal sight - until you discovered Mandela.

Henry Siegman, et al, rushed off ~~the~~<sup>to</sup> pre-conditions your hero, but failed despite Siegman's intense 'Gemorrah' background.

Marc Tannenbaum, with somewhat less Talmudic study, may yet nominate the Pope for #2 'cause he, too, hissed Arafat.

I had understood that Reform stressed social action over ritual but who has probed his (Mandel's) heart to find out why he openly supports those who help the A.N.C. despite their appalling human rights records. This is social justice? I acknowledge his heroic struggle + almost martyrdom for his people; but what about my people?

A neighbor asked me how you discovered the secret of the 1's. After all, reformers are for evolution not revelation.

On the radio '8en is learned each day: <sup>(9:20) was learned the day</sup> radio reported your church address...

20:25 IT is a snare for a man rashly to say.

Holy

And afterwards commitments to make inquiry

Sadly,  
Liesel Friedman

*Handwritten signature*

June 14, 1990  
21 Sivan 5750

Rabbi Frank Stern  
2625 North Tustin Avenue  
Santa Ana, CA 92705

Dear Frank:

I have your letter of June 5th. Unfortunately, I will not be in Seattle. I have to be in Israel attending the meetings of the Jewish Agency. Its grants for the movement in Israel are at stake, and as a consequences it is my prior obligation.

You ought to know, however, that I fully support the report of the CCAR Committee. It represents the culmination of four years of labor from people coming from disparate backgrounds, each of them anguishing over the problem, and I think that their position is fair and merits support.

This does not at all mean that it will be divisive. As a matter of fact, I raised this issue, at least marginally, in terms of congregations at our regional Biennial. I do not know if you were there or not, but I enclose a copy of my Presidential Address, and you might want to read my comments on this score.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

encl.



*bu tape*

RABBI FRANK STERN

2625 N. TUSTIN AVENUE  
SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA 92705

June 5, 1990

Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 5th Avenue  
New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex:

I am sending you the enclosed letter from one of the members of my congregation.

Making the issue of homosexuality in the rabbinate public has engendered considerable debate at Temple Beth Sholom. Most congregants respond negatively to the possibility that the homosexual should be regarded just like all other persons and should be ordained as rabbis.

I look forward to seeing you in Seattle. Perhaps we will find a way to deal with this issue in a fashion that is not so divisive.

Cordially,

*Frank Stern*  
Rabbi Frank Stern

RFS/zk

Encl.

Frederick Herzig  
700 North Rexford Drive  
Beverly Hills, California 90210  
May 26, 1990

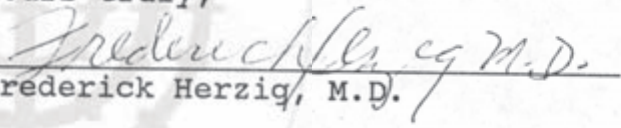
Rabbi Frank Stern, Ph.D.  
Temple Beth Sholom  
2625 Tustin Avenue  
Santa Ana, Ca. 92705

Dear Rabbi:

I was shocked to read that the Reform Movement is suggesting that homosexuals could be ordained as rabbis! The torah forbids this! Please use your influence among your colleagues to see that this is defeated. I sincerely feel this could greatly harm the reform movement.

I have enjoyed our past friendship, and hope this finds you well.

Yours truly,

  
Frederick Herzig, M.D.

Leviticus

Achre Mot: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind; it is an abomination."

P.S.: If Rabbi Alexander Schindler is still the head of the Reform Movement, and you think it would do any good, would you send him a copy of this letter?



*Homosexuals*

June 5, 1990  
12 Sivan 5750

Donald M. Pomeranz, D.D.S.  
Doctors Park  
Weymouth Rhymer Highway  
St. Thomas, VI 00802

Dear Dr. Pomeranz:

As Rabbi Schindler is out of the city for an extended period of time, I am responding to your letter of June 1. I know Rabbi Schindler will be grateful for your gracious comments concerning his address at the AIDS service held at Leo Baeck Temple some months ago. And, of course, he will certainly understand the inner struggle you are having in regard to the Ordination of homosexuals.

Your letter, however, should have been directed to the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the rabbinic arm of the Reform movement. The recent press report dealt with the work of a committee of the CCAR, not the UAHC. Thus, I am taking the liberty of forwarding your letter to the Executive Vice President of the Conference, Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser, so he is apprised of your concerns.

With kindest greetings and every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Edith J. Miller  
Assistant to the President

cc: Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser



# Doctors Park

Donald M. Pomeranz, D.D. & P.C.  
Doctors Park Weymouth Rhymer Highway St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00802

Kenneth J. Kliever, D.D. &  
Telephone (809) 775-1826

June 1, 1990

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

I write to you today with a problem and a heavy heart because I am in turmoil. I read in the newspaper recently about the Reform movement's consideration of allowing homosexuals to be in the Rabbinate.

It may sound trite but many people I know and enjoy as acquaintances and professionally, even members of my immediate family, are homosexual. These people have made a choice, and for some I imagine a painful choice in the beginning, to conduct their life as they wish. It is their life and their decision. I respect that.

Every person must draw their own lines and come to conclusions about what he or she thinks is right and wrong, morally, ethically, and professionally. I read your address at the Leo Baeck Temple for the service of remembrance for the people who died from AIDS or related complications. I was moved to tears and feel as you do that we should never give up hope and that we must "maintain a struggle for the integrity of selfhood."

I am deeply troubled by my negative reaction to the consideration before the committee of the UAHC. I am troubled because of my negativism. My initial gut reaction after reading the newspaper article then and now is a most definitive "no". This must not be allowed to happen.

I have had to finally draw my own line. Quite frankly I've never had to draw the line about homosexuality before. My terms for deciding this way are simplistic. I have always learned that a rabbi is a teacher. The rabbi is more than a teacher of Judaism but a teacher about life itself.

Defining normal is almost impossible. It does seem to me, however, that it is part of God's design, surely a design of



evolution that heterosexuality is the way life is intended to be. I think that a Rabbi must be heterosexual to be able to honestly teach our children what I consider to be normal sexual behavior. I know, "who am I to say what is normal sexual behavior?"

Our world is troubled enough. I do not think that we should show the world that homosexual preference should be allowed at the Rabbinic level of Reform Judaism. There are many other ways to fulfill one's life that a gifted, sensitive, intelligent Jewish person can dedicate his or her life to. I must agree with our Conservative and Orthodox brethren that the Rabbinate is not the position for the homosexual person to be in.

I urge you and your colleagues to consider as deeply as possible that there are probably a good number of Reform Jews who would not welcome a change in the Rabbinate. This letter has been difficult to write because many of my friends and family would be deeply hurt by my remarks. I feel, however, that this is the wrong direction for the Reform Movement to take. I have felt strongly enough about this to have taken pen in hand in spite of my conflict and let you know how I feel.

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES

Sincerely,

Donald M. Pomeranz



VALLEY PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES, P.A.

M. Larrie Blue, M.D.  
Boris L. O'Mansky, M.D.  
Michael D. Blum, M.D.  
Kirk D. Cylus, M.D.

*file (on this issue)*  
9199 Reisterstown Road  
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117  
(301) 363-6380

May 12, 1990

*Homosexual*  
Dear David,

It has been several weeks since Rabbi Schindler sent me the copy of the letter you sent him concerning the resolution on gay and lesbian Jews. I am sorry that it has taken me so long to respond, but I wanted to check a number of resources. The delay also allows me to respond to the correspondence between you and Mike Rankin. I was not involved in writing the resolution, but I did agree with the statistics when they were quoted to Rabbi Schindler at an earlier time.

I have done a literature search through the library at Sinai Hospital; contacted the National Institutes of Mental Health, The American Medical Association, The American Academy of Pediatrics, and The Gay and Lesbian National Task Force; and spoken to a number of people in, among other fields, psychology and adolescent medicine, and to Dr. John Money at Johns Hopkins Hospital, a highly respected physician in the field of human sexuality.

As you may imagine, statistics on the incidence of homosexuality are difficult to come by. Almost everyone approached uses a figure of ten percent for males and five percent for females and refers back to the work of Kinsey, published in 1948. Even though Kinsey's survey of more than 6,000 adolescents and adults was very carefully done, it is easy to understand that any error would be in under reporting of homosexuality.

Kinsey's data does reveal a figure of four percent of white males exclusively homosexual throughout their lives. It further states that eight percent of males are exclusively homosexual for at least three years between sixteen and fifty-five, and ten percent of males are more or less exclusively homosexual for at least three years between sixteen and fifty-five. Two other findings are of interest. Twenty-five percent of males have more than incidental homosexual experiences or reactions for at least three years between sixteen and fifty-five, and thirty-seven percent of males have at least some overt homosexual experience to the point of orgasm between adolescence and old age.

The ten percent figure for male homosexuality is probably low. Dr. Money states that he considers all bisexual men predominately homosexual. This is probably why those in the field give the ten percent figure. In our calculations, we used a figure of seven and a half percent, reflecting an incidence of ten percent for males and five



percent for females. We estimated the number of Reform Jews as one and one half million. The number of gay and lesbian Reform Jews would thus be one hundred and twelve thousand, five hundred, but we rounded it off to a lower figure. I see no reason not to include children because they have not yet become sexually active. Their numbers should be the same as others when they become active, and no one attempts to remove the large number of adults who are not sexually active due to age, chronic disease, personal choice, etc. Finally, there are no studies I could find to show that Jews are more or less likely to be homosexual.

Thus, after two weeks of research, I find no reason to change our figures. I do regret that you interpret Mike's letter to imply that there is justification for overstating numbers and that, therefore, he may have done this in his original correspondence to Rabbi Schindler. There is nothing that I have found in my extensive search to suggest that the figure for Reform Jews should be anything less than one hundred thousand. If a religious school class in our Movement is dealing with human sexuality, I believe that the figures of ten percent for males and five percent for females should be used.

I am a little disturbed, David, about your statement "to influence these young men and women to lead heterosexual lives", when talking about the youth of our Movement. I believe it is very important to understand that no one knows why some people are homosexual. There have been, and still are, many hypotheses. However, I do not know of any respected researcher who is stating that this is a matter of personal choice, and that one may decide whether to be homosexual or heterosexual. There are, of course, isolated reports from the past of people being "cured" of their homosexuality through intensive psychiatric care, but these probably represent men who claim to be "cured" to appease their family, and then go on to lead their homosexual life in private.

Now, as to actually influencing our young people to live heterosexual lives, I would like to offer three comments. 1. I do not know of anyone who claims to have developed an educational program that can influence the young person as to their sexual orientation. Since no one understands why an individual is homosexual, it seems unlikely that any such program could be developed. 2. Any educational program offered in our religious school that implies that heterosexuality is good and homosexuality is bad would be a total disaster for many reasons. There are many members of our congregations who have children or other close relatives who are homosexual. There are leaders of our Movement who have children who are homosexual. I am certain that they and many others would find this teaching to be most offensive. 3. Now I would like to offer what I consider to be the most important reason for not trying to teach that heterosexuality is good and homosexuality is bad, as your letter implies. I personally find this type of presentation to be morally reprehensible. I have never judged a person

by his/her sexual orientation, and hope that I never will. I do not know why a person is homosexual, but I find that to be of no importance. If one chooses to be he/she may read about the prohibition of homosexuality in Leviticus. However, just as in some other areas of literal readings of the Torah, most Reform Jews seem to have examined this passage and rejected it. I think you will find the previous UAHC resolutions on the topic of homosexuality most accepting. If at any time in the future someone tries to introduce a message to our young people in Reform Judaism that we must try to influence our young people to be heterosexual, I would fight it with every ounce of energy that I have. Knowing of your great caring and sensitivity, having served under you on the Outreach Commission, I would only hope someday in the future you would join with me in that fight.

I will be more than happy to meet with you in Seattle at any convenient time. I look forward to seeing you there.

c.c. Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
Robert Rankin, M.D.

Sincerely,  
Bo  
Bo O'Mansky







RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

May 18, 1990  
23 Iyar 5750

*H. Schindler*

Dr. Robert M. Rankin  
5 Red Rock Way  
San Francisco, CA

Dear Mike:

I really don't know what to say about David. He is an extremely difficult person, and stiffnecked. Once he gets hold of a particular issue, he tends not to let go.

Just the same, of course, he is very much devoted to many of the causes which we represent and is generous in lending not just his material resources, but his extraordinary gifts of heart and spirit.

Human relations are his main difficulty, and because of that his ability to advance to highest office both in the Union and in the World Union was frustrated, which is a pity because he really has so much to offer.

I think that it is important that you continue your conversations with him. I, too, felt that a four way meeting was not in order and I have already written him that I will be entirely too busy to make it. Too many things attendant upon the Board Meeting, etc. But you might have a brief chat with him since you both will be in Seattle, and continue the process of "education." I don't think it should be limited to written communication because in these things, establishing a personal relationship often is more effective in changing attitudes.

I look forward to seeing you in Seattle.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler





Department of  
Veterans Affairs

*for*

In Reply Refer to:

Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
Dr. Boris O'Mansky  
New York  
Pikesville

Dear Rabbi and Bo,

And so the dialogue continues.

I know it's important to reach out to individuals like David Belin. He is influential in Des Moines, and in Reform Judaism. Whether he knows it or not, there are gay men and lesbians in his city, his synagogue, possibly even in his law practice. I want them to be treated fairly and with respect, and this is the reason I want to keep the communication open. I'm not sure a formal meeting with the four of us present would be helpful. I'd rather we just get to know each other through these letters, and through our working together on Union committees and such. Maybe I can reach him, maybe not. But I'll keep trying. I'd welcome your advice and insights.

The dialogue is important, but in a way it's like arguing with the National Rifle Association, or the Council for Judaism in the 1950's. The answers are so obvious that one wonders why there has to be an argument at all. That's not the real world, though, is it.

My best to both of you. I'll see you in Seattle.

Sincerely,

*Mike*



5 Red Rock Way  
San Francisco, CA  
May 7, 1990

David W. Belin, Esq.  
2000 Financial Center  
Des Moines, IA

Dear Mr. Belin,

Thank you for your letter of May 4. I am afraid, however, that we are still in substantial disagreement on several points.

You say in paragraph one, Mr. Belin, that "experts with whom I have talked do not agree that these figures are accurate nor do they agree that they have been generally accepted by experts in the field, including psychoanalysts. They believe the figures are substantially lower." May I ask why they believe the figures to be substantially lower? If their figures are accurate, and their research sound, I will be convinced. Because I value the truth as much as you do, Mr. Belin, and it really doesn't matter to me whether the number is 10% or 5% or 1%. Could you share their writings with me, as I shared the work of Green and Bell and others with you?

Paragraph two: "anyone addressing the issue has to be accurate and objective in statements of fact--." On this we agree absolutely. I believe the statements in the resolution to be accurate and objective. Otherwise I would not have included them.

Regarding Rabbi Kirschner's statement about the "fluctuating nature of sexual orientation," I'm afraid I wasn't sufficiently articulate in my discussion of sexual orientation as a range, from exclusively homosexual to exclusively heterosexual, with degrees of bisexuality in between. In the Marine unit in which I served, sexual relations between men overseas were not that uncommon--certainly above 10%. As a medical officer I listened to their stories, and was able to assure most of them that they were predominately heterosexual, and would be able to prove it to themselves when they returned home. I suppose some of these men would be considered bisexuals. After all, even when no women were available, most men did not have sex with other men. But many did, and most of



those are happily married today. I get holiday cards from a number of them, with pictures of their wives and children. Maybe they still feel they have to "prove" their heterosexuality to me. Maybe they were just grateful for an empathetic listener in the heat of battle.

In the third paragraph, Mr. Belin, you state that it is important to encourage young Jewish children toward heterosexual inclinations. I'm not sure how one does that. We feel what we feel. If we teach our children that homosexuality is wrong, that they are to deny and repress any homosexual feelings they have, even if they are predominately heterosexual, are we not creating a generation of homophobes? Would it not be better to teach our children to live lives of decency and integrity, and to value others who do the same?

You say in the same paragraph that "it may be important that they have accurate information concerning the actual percentages of homosexual men and women in the adult population." I would hope all the information they have about everything is accurate. But are you suggesting that we can affect the way they feel about certain minorities, and about themselves, by looking at the number of those individuals in the population? If so, isn't the implicit message "the majority is always right, the minority usually wrong." And if that is so, what are we to tell our children who question why they should remain in the Jewish minority, instead of joining the Christian majority?

If I were the faculty advisor to the gay and lesbian student organization on the campus you mention, I would tell them to use figures which can be substantiated fairly and objectively, or use no figures at all. Because of course you are quite right--if one lies about one thing, one may lie about everything, or be reasonably suspected of doing so.

I do not agree that there has been a tendency to overstate the number of homosexuals--I believe the numbers I gave you are correct. And I think those who counseled honest reporting of the strength of the anti-war movement in the 1960's and '70's were correct. But I also believe the Jewish leadership was correct in allowing the British Foreign Office to overestimate Jewish strength and influence, and thus gain the Balfour Declaration. I wish to God they had been even more successful and achieved the establishment of the State of Israel in 1939. If that is situation ethics, so be it.

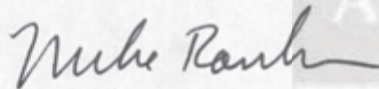
I am delighted that you are a "strong advocate of equal rights for every



individual, regardless of race, creed, color, or sexual preference (could we agree that a better word is "orientation"?). I would expect no less from a member of the Board of Trustees, or from any Jew within living memory of the Shoa. And we do agree that as Trustees we have "an obligation to give our constituency accurate facts on all issues that are brought to their attention, particularly when those issues are discussed in the course of debate where resolutions are proposed."

We have been honest and respectful of one another in our disagreement, Mr. Belin. I must now confess that in reading both your letters, I found myself asking what it would be like to be a gay or lesbian member of your law firm. Would I have been hired, all things being equal, had I informed you of my homosexuality in the initial interview? If I were being considered for full partnership, would that be granted, all things being equal, if my homosexuality were known? These are the real questions, Mr. Belin. I don't ask you to answer them--just to think about them.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Rankin, M.D.

c.c. Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
Dr. Bo O'Mansky





RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

*Homosexual*

May 11, 1990  
16 Iyar 5750

Mr. David W. Belin  
Belin, Harris, Helmick, et al  
2000 Financial Center  
Des Moines, IA 50309

Dear Dave:

Thank you for your letter May 4th.

Obviously, I continue to be interested in this issue and I agree with you that facts are important and they should not be stretched to make a political point. Incidentally, my time in Seattle is so pre-empted with the special meetings usually attendant upon Board Meetings - this time around we have some severe problems concerning our camps, divergent issues involving long discussions, so that my time in Seattle is fully taken both before and after the Board Meetings and even during the Meetings.

On the other hand, there is no reason at all why you and Bo O'Mansky and Bob Rankin should not meet. I will be interested in the results of your conversation.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



**BELIN HARRIS HELMICK  
TESDELL LAMSON McCORMICK**

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Of Counsel  
Lawrence E. Pope  
Bonnie J. Campbell

May 4, 1990

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York NY 10021

Re: Gay and Lesbian Jews

Dear Alex:

Enclosed is a copy of my correspondence to Dr. Robert Rankin, in response to his April 23 letter to me.

It appears that he recognizes that there has been an overstatement of the numbers of gay and lesbian Jews. I think this is very important, particularly if there are large numbers of young Jewish boys and girls who have homosexual tendencies and are subject to influence one way or the other. It seems to me that it is part of the Jewish tradition (as well as demographic common sense) to give high priority to influence these young men and women to live heterosexual lives.

I would be interested in your comments and observations in this area.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

David W. Belin

DWB:cs  
Encl.

c.c. Dr. Bo O'Mansky

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Of Counsel  
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Bonnie J. Campbell

May 4, 1990

*COPY*

Robert M. Rankin, M.D.  
Five Red Rock Way  
San Francisco CA 94131

Dear Dr. Rankin:

Thank you for your April 23 letter and the enclosed article by Rabbi Kirschner, which I read with great interest. I read the statements in the article by Alan Bell, edited by Richard Green, that at least 10% of the adult male and 5% of the adult female population appear to be predominantly homosexual and that these figures purportedly are the "generally accepted ones, and have been since the Kinsey studies of the 1940s." Experts with whom I have talked do not agree that these figures are accurate nor do they agree that they have been generally accepted by experts in the field, including psychoanalysts. They believe the figures are substantially lower.

You then ask the question, "Does it really matter?" It does not matter so far as justice and fairness are concerned. But it seems to me that anyone addressing the issue has to be accurate and objective in statements of fact, because when one begins to veer from the truth in the area of numbers, other questions can be raised whether that same person is veering from the truth in other statements.

Moreover, from the perspective of my position as a Trustee of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, I think that we have an obligation to provide accurate facts to our constituency in general and to young Jewish boys and girls in particular. It is my understanding that Jewish tradition discourages homosexuality. In part, this is probably linked to the biblical admonition of "be fruitful and multiply". But whatever the reason, it is important in educating our young boys and girls to know the truth. I would suggest that it is even more important if Rabbi Kirschner is accurate in his statement (pages 455-456, where he writes: "According to the Kinsey Report, sexual orientation fluctuates over a lifetime. Fifty percent of the male population is exclusively heterosexual throughout adulthood; 4% is exclusively homosexual; and 46% have both heterosexual and homosexual inclinations in the course of their adult lives. Among women, the incidence of homosexuality is from one-third to one-half less than among men.") To the extent that young Jewish children might have "both heterosexual and homosexual inclinations", I believe it is important to encourage them toward heterosexual inclinations, and as part of this encouragement, it may be important that they have accurate information concerning the actual percentages of homosexual men and women in the adult population.



Robert M. Rankin, M.D.  
May 4, 1990  
Page 2

Last year, I spoke at a university in the East, and I noticed on a student bulletin board a large poster announcing a meeting of gay and lesbian students, urging new freshmen to join the organization and asserting that 25% of the campus was gay and lesbian. I asked the dean of the college if this was accurate. He said it was very inaccurate, but it was part of an overall effort on the part of gay and lesbian students to attract membership by asserting that their sexual preference orientation was shared by a large percentage of the student population.

This leads to the second question that you discussed concerning the integrity of "gay advocacy". You seem to agree that there has been a tendency to overstate numbers, but suggest that on important issues (and you analogize to Vietnam) it is important to overstate numbers in order to gain the attention of the overall population.

I really believe the analogy to Vietnam is inappropriate. (I happen to be someone who also spoke out against Vietnam many years ago). Your argument seems to say that if a group perceives ends are very important, it can resort to misrepresentation in order to attract attention. I do not think that is sound public policy because it encourages all groups to misrepresent the truth on issues that they think are important. Moreover, I do not believe this is in the Jewish tradition.

I wholeheartedly agree that gay men and lesbians face discrimination and that it is important to seek to end that discrimination. But I do not agree that misrepresentation of facts is the right way to do this.

I do plan to be in Seattle but I do not know my schedule at that time. However, perhaps we can get together sometime Saturday on that weekend, if you would like to opportunity to continue our discourse. I would prefer doing this when Dr. O'Mansky and Rabbi Schindler were also present so that we could also get the benefit of their perspective.

In closing, I want you to know that I am a strong advocate of equal rights for every individual, regardless of race, creed, color, or sexual preference. But as a Trustee of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, I believe that there is an obligation to give our constituency accurate facts on all issues that are brought to their attention, particularly when those issues are discussed in the course of debate where resolutions are proposed. I hope that you would agree.

Sincerely,



David W. Belin

DWB:cs

c.c. Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
Dr. Bo O'Mansky



RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

*Handwritten signature: Hommes*

May 2, 1990  
7 Iyar 5750

Robert M. Rankin, M.D.  
5 Red Rock Way  
San Francisco, CA

Dear Mike:

Thank you so much for writing directly to David Belin and sharing your response with me and Bo. I appreciate the fullness of your comments to Mr. Belin.

Indeed, I am keeping all of this material on file as it will be very helpful for any future questions with regard to statistics.

I look forward to seeing you in Seattle. Until then, fondest regards from house to house.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



5 Red Rock Way  
San Francisco, CA  
23 April, 1990

Rabbi Alexander Schindler  
Dr. Boris O'Mansky  
New York and Baltimore,

Dear Rabbi and Bo,

Here's the letter I wrote to Mr. Belin, plus copies of the articles I sent him.

I remember very well when he went to the microphone in New Orleans, the anger in his voice, the challenge. Clearly this is a very important matter to him. I have no idea why this is so, and I doubt that my letter, or any letter, will change his mind in any significant way. But I hope he'll accept my invitation to talk about it. If I can learn why he is so troubled about homosexuality, I might be able to help. The least I can do is try.

All the best to both of you, and I'll see you in Seattle.

Sincerely,

*Mike*



5 Red Rock Way  
San Francisco, CA  
23 April, 1990

Mr. David W. Belin  
Belin, Harris, Helmick; et al  
2000 Financial Center  
Des Moines, IA 50309

Dear Mr. Belin,

Rabbi Schindler asked me to help him respond to your letter regarding the Resolution on Gay and Lesbian Jews, passed at our Biennial in New Orleans. I was one of the authors of the resolution.

I'll begin by thanking you for writing to the rabbi as you did. I hoped the resolution would stimulate thoughtful discussion, as well as inform. It clearly has done so.

It seems to me, Mr. Belin, that your letter reflects two main concerns. The first is the actual number of gay and lesbian Jews in the United States, and the second is the integrity of those who seek justice for lesbians and gay men in our society. I will answer each in turn, beginning with the question of numbers.

Nothing is more difficult than deciding who is a Jew. But deciding who is a homosexual is almost as hard, for a number of reasons. As you can see from Richard Green's introduction to the enclosed chapter by Alan Bell, at least 10% of the adult male, and 5% of the adult female population, in all societies, appear to be predominately homosexual. At least. Both Green and Bell say why this figure is probably an underestimation: fear of discrimination if one admits to being homosexual; sexuality as a continuum from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively gay; etc. As one who has done research requiring accurate incidence and prevalence data, I can tell you that these numbers are extremely difficult to obtain. But those quoted by Bell and Green are the generally accepted ones, and have been since the Kinsey studies of the 1940's.

In recent years we've learned a great deal more about the development of sexual orientation. Most researchers now believe it is fixed at birth, or shortly thereafter, not at age ten. The etiology is complex, but it appears to be considerably more "nature" than "nurture." The old myth that one became homosexual if one had a distant father and a smothering mother has been quietly put to rest, to the great relief of parents who asked



themselves what they "did wrong," even if their gay children were leading happy and productive lives.

We also know from current research that individuals cannot be forced or "seduced" into homosexuality, Helms' and Falwell's protestations notwithstanding. Of course the fact that one's sexual feelings are predominately for individuals of the same gender, does not mean that the feelings will be acted-upon. Where it is safe to do so, we generally seek partners who appeal to us, and who respond with like feelings. Where it is dangerous or prohibited, we repress the feelings to a degree, or sublimate them. But they remain, nonetheless. They are not eliminated by psychotherapy, or by force of law.

As a practical matter, the homosexual has three choices. He or she may seek a loving and nurturing relationship with another individual of the same gender; remain celibate; or enter into a heterosexual marriage, knowing that the tension felt in the bedroom will be reflected in every aspect of the marriage. The later choice works for some. It didn't work for me, and my former wife and I loved each other very much. As a matter of fact, we still do.

So much for the accuracy of numbers (by the way, Green's book is the one we use in our human sexuality course for medical students, both at U.C.S.F. and at U.C. Davis). Now I will pose a more basic question. Does it really matter? Why should we care whether 10% of all adults are homosexual, or 10% of all Jews; or 5%, or 1%? Is the issue not justice and fairness, rather than numbers? Even if there were only one or two gay men and lesbians in the entire world, would they not be entitled to be treated with dignity, their abilities and contributions recognized, their feelings acknowledged?

There is no evidence that there are more gay Jews than gay Catholics, gay Buddhists, or gay Free Will Baptists. But again, what if there were? We Jews are used to acknowledging our minority status, and we are perhaps a bit more fiesty than others. So those of us who are gay or lesbian might be more likely to say so to an interviewer.

In addition, many non-Jewish homosexuals have been so drawn to the beauties of Judaism, to our life-affirming faith and our passion of justice, that they have joined us as Jews by choice. I welcome them with open arms (no pun intended), but I doubt very much that this has skewed the distrubution in any significant way. But what if it did? If justice were meted out according to our numbers in the world, we Jews would find very little justice indeed.

If there is one Jewish teaching that should guide us in this, it is that every human being is precious, as an individual, not as a member of a



group, however large or small.

The second question you raise, Mr. Belin, has to do with the legitimacy and integrity of "gay advocacy." "--there is a general tendency on the part of advocates in the gay and lesbian community to overstate their numbers in an effort to show greater legitimacy," you said in your letter.

I'm not sure where you got this information, but you may well be correct. Every minority group seeking justice probably feels the need to exaggerate its strength, if the majority will grant justice only if confronted with a large and powerful opponent. That seems to be the way of this as yet unredeemed world, unfortunately. But the practice didn't start with homosexuals. Historians now believe we'd never have had the Balfour Declaration, had Chaim Weitzman not convinced the prime minister and the British Foreign Office that Jews were stronger and more influential than we actually were. Is there a Jew who doesn't praise Weitzman for what he did?

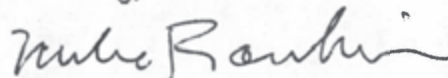
Twenty years ago this month, Mr. Belin, I returned from Vietnam. Like many of my comrades I was appalled by what I saw there, and was determined to do what I could to help get us out of that war before the carnage multiplied. There were many veterans like me, even in 1967, and we wanted to tell the public we represented the majority of those who had served in Vietnam. Wiser counsel prevailed. First of all it wasn't true, not then, and no one would believe it. Nor was it considered good strategy to say we'd lose 30,000 young Americans if we didn't end our involvement in Vietnam. Nobody would believe that either.

By 1970 we did represent the majority of Vietnam vets. And we lost more than 50,000, not 30,000. I spend much of my working day attempting to help heal those who returned. Were we wrong not to inflate our numbers in the early days of the movement? Would it have made a difference? God knows. All I know, and all we believed then, was that people were dying for nothing, and we had to stop it.

Gay men and lesbians face discrimination every day of their lives, Mr. Belin. Whatever the numbers, as Jews we have to stop it.

Again, thank you for writing as you did. I'll be at the Board of Trustees meeting in Seattle, as I'm sure you will. If you'd like to discuss this further, quietly and apart from the crowd, I'd welcome the opportunity. I think we'd both learn something, and we might even enjoy it.

Sincerely,



Robert M. Rankin, M.D.



P.S. I thought you'd find the article by Rabbi Kirschner interesting also.  
It's just one rabbi's opinion of course, but a rabbi with a generous heart  
and a first rate mind.

cc Rabbi Schindler  
Dr. O'Mansky



*Homosexual*

February 23, 1990  
28 Shevat 5750

Rabbi Fred N. Reiner  
Temple Sinai  
3100 Military Road, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20015

Dear Fred:

It was thoughtful of you to share with me your Kol Nidre sermon on homosexuality. I look forward to some quiet moments when I may study your words with care.

I am just back from meetings with the Jewish Agency in Israel, and a mountain of mail awaited my return. Following meetings of our Budget Committee next week, I am off again for Congregational visits on the West Coast. Thus, I cannot promise to share my reactions to your words in the immediate future.

With warm good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler



# Temple Sinai

3100 MILITARY ROAD, NORTHWEST, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20015 • (202) 363-4055  
RABBI FRED N. REINER

February 28, 1990

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
Union of American Hebrew Congregation  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex:

I am plesed to enclose a copy of my 5750 Kol Nidre sermon on homosexuality. I was guided by some of your work in my research and wanted you to have a copy.

I would be grateful for any reactions.

Best regards.

Cordially,

*Fred*  
Fred N. Reiner  
Rabbi

FNR:ld

Rabbi Fred N. Reiner  
Temple Sinai  
Washington, D.C.

Kol Nidre, 5750  
October 8, 1989

I have always been intrigued by the choice of the traditional Torah reading on Yom Kippur afternoon. The traditional Torah reading is not the magnificent Holiness Code from Leviticus 19 that we read at Temple Sinai, as do Reform congregations everywhere. Rather, it is in the simple list of the forbidden marriages and sexual immoralities listed in Leviticus 18. I often have asked myself, as others have before me, "Why has our people read a passage from the Torah dealing with laws against incest and sexual immorality on the holiest day of our year?"

The answer is not clear. Different authorities have offered explanations over the years: Max Arzt in his classic work, Justice and Mercy, offers the explanation that it is a warning to young men against selecting the wrong mate. Israel is warned, he says, to shun the licentious ways of the heathen. Abraham Epstein suggests a connection with other cultures. He points out that to primitive cultures the New Year brought a sense of abandon; we have here a warning to counter the earlier excesses. J.D. Eisenstein, writing in 1919, points out that on Yom Kippur even the greatest sinners come to the synagogue--those who do not come again for another year; therefore the largest number of people must be warned against illicit sexual relations. In the sixteenth century, the Italian commentator Sforzo said that it was the intention behind both the warning against sexual prohibitions and stating our ethical obligations that we be led to holiness, a theme of Yom Kippur. Thus in the minds of the rabbis selecting the Torah readings, the issues of sexual morality and Yom Kippur--sin and atonement--were linked.

We would hope that this list of arayot, or forbidden relationships, was largely irrelevant for most of the congregation. This was the conclusion of the Reform movement in rejecting this traditional Torah reading in favor of the chapter that follows it. Despite the irrelevancy, however, the sexual lives, the Jewish lives, the sin, and the atonement of the congregation all were linked. Most of these thirty verses do not speak to us today. We would not think of uncovering the nakedness of our aunts or uncles, nor of committing bestiality. But one verse in this chapter stands out and troubles us as modern liberal Jews: "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; it is an abhorrence." (18:22)

Should we understand this clear and unequivocal prohibition against homosexual behavior as it is written? Is this law--chosen as part of the traditional Yom Kippur afternoon Torah reading--part of the timeless verities of our tradition "do not murder" or "honor your parents"? Or is it a law to be interpreted and changed and possibly disregarded in subsequent ages, laws such as: "do not boil a kid in its mother's milk," do



not mix wool and linen," or the limitations of women in Jewish religious life, or the ordeal for accusing a wife of infidelity. How do we understand homosexuality in Reform Judaism today? Do we see it as a sin or a lifestyle? Do we regard it as a choice or a disease? Should our attitude be understanding, condemnation, sympathy, or openness?

As I see it, our attitude about homosexuality is the most troubling moral issue confronting the Reform movement today. For the past twenty years, our movement has been dealing--indeed struggling--with this question. In 1969, and again in 1973, Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof, the leading Reform authority on Jewish practice, upheld the view of Jewish law that homosexuality is sinful. In 1973, however, our Union of American Hebrew Congregations accepted the membership of Beth Chayim Chadashim, the first gay and lesbian synagogue, despite Rabbi Freehof's rabbinic opinion to the contrary. In 1975 and 1976, the UAHC and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) passed resolutions affirming the civil rights of homosexuals in the secular sphere.

While the UAHC passed an even stronger resolution in 1987 that called upon member congregations to develop educational programs and employ without discrimination, the CCAR remains deadlocked over a stronger stand. In 1986, a resolution was offered at the CCAR convention and referred to a new ad hoc Committee on Homosexuality in the Rabbinate. For a year, the committee studied and argued and researched the topic to determine what moral leadership the Reform rabbinate should offer. Given the profound differences of opinion among rabbis and within congregations and the organizations they serve, and given the conflict between halacha (as confirmed and interpreted by many of Reform's leading voices), and given the direction of the movement, a conclusion was difficult to reach. In 1987, the committee reached no conclusion and instead of issuing a report simply sponsored a late-night session at the convention. Two years later--this past June--there still was no resolution. Instead, four papers were distributed to colleagues and a discussion was held at the convention. This unresolved issue confounds the Reform rabbinate.

AIDS, on the other hand, is an issue we can deal with as a movement. As Reform Jews, we all agree that AIDS is a devastating and tragic disease. Those of us who witnessed the moving presentation of the AIDS Memorial Quilt in our city cannot help but share in the sorrow that AIDS has brought to so many. The quilt, with its 10,800 individual panels covering fourteen acres, represents only 18 percent of the AIDS deaths in the United States.

We can relate to AIDS sufferers as we can relate to all who suffer: with caring, empathy, and outreach. No one has contracted AIDS on purpose, and we can deal with their suffering without being judgmental. We Reform Jews can afford to be



liberal on AIDS, to make it a major issue for us, because in some ways it is safe.

I applaud our Reform movement for its important work through its Task Force on AIDS and its excellent materials. Its courageous advocacy and its excellent educational efforts demonstrate our commitment in this area. I applaud our own Social Action Committee here at Temple Sinai for its forum on AIDS and its important work in developing an AIDS policy for our congregation. The policy, currently in draft, is carefully wrought, grounded in Jewish concerns, and enlightened on medical issues. As we work on it and pass it, it will continue to place our congregation in the leadership role of our movement and in our city on this crucial and important issue.

But AIDS is not really the entire issue. AIDS is a touchstone for a larger issue, for our attitude as Reform Jews towards homosexuality. AIDS is a catalyst to help us begin discussing the moral issues and to help us with our anxieties, frustrations, and fears on many levels. But I am frankly concerned that AIDS has also led us to focus on a side issue, for our attitude toward AIDS and toward people with AIDS may be very different than our attitude and our moral conclusions about homosexuality.

The great problem is how we reconcile a liberal, accepting position with the clear prohibition in the Torah, in Jewish law, and among Reform interpreters. Or, on the other hand, how do we resolve a condemnatory position with our historical Reform position that all people are children of God, created in God's image?

Part of our problem is that we don't understand the nature of homosexuality. Medical scientists do not agree. Human behaviorists do not agree. Jewish sources and authorities do not agree. Even the homosexual community does not fully understand all the factors that go into the development of sexual preference. The old questions still go unanswered: Are the determinants a matter of disorder or lifestyle? Of genetics or of character development? We do not know. In the Reform movement I can't even tell you that the disagreement falls along the lines of traditionalists versus classical Reform advocates, or conservatives versus liberals. The only insight I have to offer is that the issue divides among rabbis along generational lines.

Where, then, can we find models to help our understanding? How can we sort out conflicting viewpoints and work toward reaching a Reform ethic?

In his article in the journal Judaism Rabbi Robert Kirschner of Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco offers a model of how halacha is capable of changing. He points out how modern rabbinic opinion recognizes the limits of ancient rabbinic



knowledge in his model of the heresh, or deaf-mute. In the Talmud, a heresh is deemed incompetent and is classed with minors, the mentally deficient, and others who cannot serve as witnesses. The heresh cannot be counted in a minyan, nor can he be married. The rabbis assumed that those who could not hear nor speak could not possibly know what they were doing.

This is a view we could hardly support. We now know better than to exclude from Jewish life individuals with any kind of disability. We now know so much more about deafness and communication that even Orthodox halachic authorities, beginning in the nineteenth century, came to understand that deaf mutes could communicate and were mentally competent. So, albeit hesitantly, they included them in Jewish life.

This is an apt analogy, especially considering the fact that we support congregations for the deaf and hearing impaired, and almost every liberal Jew would support the rights of the deaf to lead the fullest possible Jewish life.

But I have a problem with this model, for I do not think of homosexuality as a disability. I suggest a different model, and to begin I must tell you about my Uncle Joe.

My Uncle Joe and I--as different as we were in age and background--shared one special trait: we were both left-handed. Uncle Joe used to tell me how his left-handedness would get him into trouble as he grew up. He grew up in a generation when people didn't understand left-handedness. They thought it was inferior, unnatural, a lifelong trouble to be endured. So they went to great lengths to suppress the natural instincts and inclinations of left-handed children. Uncle Joe used to tell me horrible stories of how teachers would wrap his left hand in bandages so he couldn't use it to write. He told me how they would strike his left hand when he used it to pick up a pencil. All of these acts were meant to guide him to use his right hand, to develop an imposed right-handedness for writing and doing other tasks. So Uncle Joe wrote with his right hand and ate with his left hand.

Uncle Joe's teachers were participating in a well-established anti-left-handed tradition spanning many cultures and generations. In many places, it is considered an insult to extend one's left hand in greeting or to be placed at someone's left side. Left-handed people are thought of as "sinister" (hence the word), evil, wicked. We Jews also have participated in this tradition: our Bible calls the right hand (of both God and people) the hand of strength. Left-handedness is seen as a sign of weakness, even a malady. As Jacob blesses his two grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, his right hand clearly confers the greater blessing. The Talmud states that the right hand controls all mitzvot except tefillin, and that is only because tefillin are wrapped on the right arm and hand. The Midrash says that in heaven there is only the right side. So for Uncle Joe's



sake they bound and hit his left hand and forced him into conformity.

By the time I was growing up, most people knew better. I learned that left-handedness is a recessive genetic trait, transmitted at conception. Certainly it was no more connected with good or evil than the color of one's eyes or hair. Today, a generation later, scientists are even less certain: some authorities believe left-handedness is inherited; others believe that it is learned; still others believe it is determined during pregnancy. And it is possible that all three theories are in some way correct! New parents still eagerly await the day that they can tell which hand their child seems to favor and make the appropriate entry in the baby book. But we still do not understand left-handedness entirely: some people are able to use both hands, and we certainly know that genetic determination either can be encouraged or discouraged. Those of us who are left-handed have learned early to look for the left-handed corner of the table, to be careful in selecting scissors, and that it is easier and neater to write Hebrew than English.

But would we say for a moment that this left-handed 5 or 10 percent of the population is inferior, unnatural, evil? This is what people have said in one way or another for centuries and still do say in many countries. Not for a moment. We would read or reconstruct biblical stories and talmudic law that have an anti-left-handed bias to be sure that our religion includes all Jews, regardless of hand-persuasion.

As Reform Jews, we know how to recognize the ethical laws in the Torah and how to distinguish between the ethical and ritual precepts. When the Torah says, "a woman must not wear a man's clothing" (Deut. 22:5), how do we understand this? Orthodox law prohibits women from wearing pants, but we Reform Jews do not for a moment forbid it, even though the Torah calls it toevah--an abomination--the same word used to describe homosexual relations. We say instead that the law against women wearing men's clothes was a carry-over from ancient cultic practices. We are not troubled to see a woman wearing slacks or a suit, and we certainly do not view this as an issue of sexual ethics.

The Torah also tells us what parents should do in dealing with a wayward and defiant son they cannot discipline (Deut. 21:18). They are to take him to the town square and tell the elders of the community of their problem. Then all the men will stone this young man to death and all Israel will hear and be afraid. Not only would we never consider doing this; we are greatly relieved that one talmudic rabbi said this never happened and never will. Similarly when we read in Leviticus 20:13 that homosexual acts are capital offenses because they are abhorrent, I do not think we have any trouble rereading "abhorrent" as belonging to another place and time.



Our problem is in acceptance: of the different, of the threatening, of the unfamiliar, of people we don't quite understand. And our sin is in excluding and ostracizing and oppressing them.

I submit we find it easier to deal with black people, because we know we're not black and we can see the differences between us. We find it easier to deal with handicapped people because we know and understand those differences. We find it easier to press for equality of women and men because we know of the years of oppression, and we can understand this as a movement to unleash human potential.

But even we find it very hard to deal with the homosexual among us--that 10 percent, we think--because we do not understand and we cannot quite figure it out. Nor can we understand if we should respond to this problem with compassion (as with AIDS), or with caring, or with righteous indignation. I find it troubling that the movement that has pressed for equal treatment and openness--for all races, all immigrants, men and women, everyone with disabilities--finds itself stuck on the issue of sexual preference. But I believe that this issue is too close to home for many people and therefore too dangerous.

Let us understand that homosexuals are no longer "over there," on the other side of the sea. They are here: in our city, in our neighborhoods, in our families, in our midst. We cannot for a moment oppress nor segregate nor victimize these people, for they are creatures of God just as surely as you and I are. And just as we have been a movement concerned about all people--black and white, rich and poor, and especially the downtrodden and powerless and wanderer in exile--let us be concerned about these people too. As we read tomorrow morning that the Jewish people stand side by side before God--from the heads of tribes to the strangers in our midst--let us be concerned about all Jews standing in our midst.

I am not condoning promiscuity among homosexuals any more than among heterosexuals. I know better than to think that individuals of one sexual bent will be inclined to wantonness or loose morals or "recruiting" others.

Rather, I recognize that each of us must learn to deal with our own sexuality individually, as part of our maturation and growth. While there are many commonalities among people, this work is different for each person, part of the uniqueness within each of us, an expression of an important part of our lives. It must be guided by our Jewish tradition and by an ethical system.

So let our message this Yom Kippur be one of openness and honesty and understanding of people who may be different from us. As we appreciate people with different color skin and hair, of different backgrounds and abilities, of different languages and



cultures, of differences in self-expression, let us appreciate the spark of divinity that is in each of us. Each of us is a creature of God; each of us is struggling in our own way to be our own self; each of us is developing throughout our lives.

Let our sin this Yom Kippur be that there are many in our midst whom we have rejected, shunned, and denied. There are many whom we have feared without reason. When the time has come for honesty, we have been dishonest. When the time has come for welcoming, we have rejected. When the time has come for understanding, we have failed to listen.

Let us push our sin aside and do the introspection we need to do. Let us consider our responsibilities to others: to accept one another in openness, to welcome the stranger, to recognize that all of us are creatures of God. Let us bring these values to our homes, to our neighborhoods, to our congregation, to our families. In this way, let us seek holiness and find it within one another and within ourselves. Amen.





*Handwritten signature*

January 3, 1990  
6 Tevet 5750

Julian H. Preisler  
1409 Delaware Avenue  
Apt. 3-B  
Wilmington, DE 19806

Dear Mr. Preisler:

How gracious of you to write. I appreciate knowing of your involvement with Congregation Rodeph Shalom of Philadelphia. Of course, it delights me to know that you have found yet another place within our Reform Community to express and live your Judaism.

Rabbi Sternberger has been deeply involved with the work of the UAHC AIDS Committee. Of course, it is good to know that you have given time to work for our Mid-Atlantic Council and Temple Sinai of Washington. More and more of our congregations are following the path of Sinai and Rodeph Shalom welcoming all Jews who wish to be a part of the congregational family. After all, a temple is a community with people of every age, and interest and style. What joins us together is our Judaism and that must be the first criteria.

With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

December 26, 1989

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021-7064

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

I am a resident of Wilmington, Delaware and recently read an article in the local Jewish press, entitled "Reform Movement Urged to Accept Gay Members". With this letter I send to you heartfelt thanks. I am a 26 year old Gay male and I belong to Congregation Rodeph Shalom in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. One of the reasons for joining this particular Reform congregation was it's open involvement in dealing with the AIDS crisis in both the Jewish and non-Jewish community.

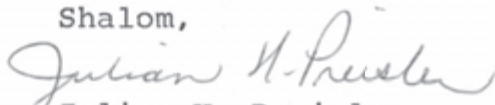
As a young person I had always felt somewhat of an outsider in the Jewish community because I felt I was "different". One can imagine the harshness that exists for a lesbian or gay person growing up in a anti-gay world. Many adult gays and lesbians find it very difficult to be part of the Jewish community because of anti-gay sentiments. As a result most do not join congregations and have very little to do with their religion. I was one of these people. Deep inside I had always had a love for my religion, but was unsure of how to express it as a gay person. After graduating from college, I decided that it was the right time to join a congregation. I searched for areas in the Jewish community that I felt were not anti-gay and hoped that I would fit in.

The Reform movement is to be commended for it's brave attempt to bring gay and lesbian Jews back into the fold and for it's attempt to abolish homophobia within the movements congregations. While living in Washington, DC, before moving to Delaware with my spouse, I became involved with Temple Sinai and also did some volunteer work for the Mid-Atlantic Council. Two rabbis in Washington that became dear friends are Rabbi Richard Sternberger and Rabbi Fred Reiner. Their understanding and friendship has made my journey back to my religion all the more happy.

My experience has been generally positive, but there is still much more to do in order for gay and lesbian Jews to feel at home in most congregations. Many rabbis are homophobic and their congregants much the same. If only they knew of the many people in the congregation who are in the closet. We gay people come in just as many varieties as heterosexual people. I look forward to a future when we will be judged by our actions and not bigotry.

The Reform movement is taking a bold stand against bigotry and intolerance. There is no room for homophobia in our temples and synagogues. Again, thank you for all you are doing.

Shalom,

  
Julian H. Preisler

1409 Delaware Ave., #3-B  
Wilmington, DE 19806



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\* N.Y., FLA. & MASS. BAR  
\* MASS. BAR ONLY

\*\* N.Y. & FLA. BAR

September 14, 1990

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

Dear Alex:

Thank you for sending me the speech you gave in Los Angeles at the Jewish Community Service In Support of People With AIDS. I read your speech carefully and with much interest.

I have never doubted for a moment your deep compassion for all people - Jew and non-Jew, including AIDS affected victims. I feel that same compassion and share with you your hope that research will bring a day of healing in the not too distant future.

However, I do not read your brilliant and eloquent statement in support of people with AIDS as a Jewish or even logical support for the CCAR report to the extent that it affirms the right and propriety of openly practicing gays and lesbians to be ordained as Rabbis.

Far be it from me to pry into or care about what happens in the privacy of one's bedroom, and I most vigorously oppose discrimination in any form based on sexual orientation or preference. However, being a Rabbi is something different and very special, for the Rabbi serves as a Judaic role model and exemplar with a unique opportunity, if not obligation, to teach and preach a central theme which has permeated the Judaic code from time immemorial, that the ideal human relationship for the preservation of the Jewish people and covenantal fulfillment is the monogamous, heterosexual, procreative marriage and family. In all ancient societies which have condoned, practiced or encouraged homosexuality, such as Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, and even Indian cultures, only Judaism shone as a lonely, but bright beacon of light in opposition to such practices. It is no mere coincidence, I believe, that while all of these ancient civilizations have long since perished from the face of the earth, only Judaism has survived with its fundamental principles largely intact.

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
September 17, 1990  
Page Two

And that is why I am so concerned about the implication of the CCAR report and the perception it has created amongst lay congregants. In the opinion of many commentators, such as Prager, Eugene Borowitz and even Rabbi Solomon Freehoff, a Rabbinical giant who wrote on the subject in the Reform Responsa, and other Rabbinical leaders of our Reform movement, the CCAR report, despite certain qualifications and veneer designed to provide a link to mainstream tradition, represents a fundamental break with a cornerstone of our faith.

Alex, you are a dear friend whose wisdom and courage I deeply respect, but on this issue I am not persuaded that it was either appropriate or necessary for the CCAR to declare, as a matter of national policy, that openly practicing homosexual Jews are entitled to ordination and all that the term "Rabbi" implies and carries with it. Just as not everyone can or should be an airplane pilot, not every Jew can or should be a Rabbi.

The test of friendship and mutual respect cannot always be measured when friends agree. Rather, the test of their friendship is better measured when they disagree. Despite our disagreement, you are and will always be my friend in respect and admiration.

L'Shana Tovah to you, Rhea and the family.

Cordially.



Solomon H. Friend

SHF:dr





## Beacon Press

25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108-2800

617-742-2110 FAX 617-723-3097

*Per Andy  
Signed.* ✓

*Harold Schulweis*

June 27, 1990

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 5th Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Dear Rabbi Schindler,

Enclosed you will find a copy of the letter concerning Twice Blessed, as you discussed with our author, Andy Rose. If it meets with your approval, please sign it, and then mail it to Rabbi Harold Schulweis in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

*Sara C. Lanslis for*

Laura Ayr  
Advertising and Promotion Manager





## Beacon Press

25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108-2800

617-742-2110 FAX 617-723-3097

July 2, 1990

9 Tammuz, 5750

Dear Colleague,

Of all the issues which challenge and sometime divide our Jewish communities, few are as poignant and frequently difficult as the issue of homosexuality. With the rising presence of Jews who identify openly as lesbian or gay and want to claim their place in our congregations and communal life, it has become more important than ever to shed new light on this ancient issue. We join together in writing to you about a new source of enlightenment, one which we believe will help all of us as we wrestle with our own beliefs, attitudes, and feelings.

**TWICE BLESSED: On Being Lesbian, Gay, and Jewish**, edited by Christie Balka and Andy Rose and published by Beacon Press, is a groundbreaking effort to articulate the experiences and perspectives of a broad spectrum of lesbian and gay Jews. These Jews, sometimes against great odds, refuse to accept the two customary options given to them: to participate in Jewish communal life while hiding large parts of themselves, or to exile themselves from Jewish life. These women and men claim both their identities as blessings, and strive toward building a Jewish community that is diverse and inclusive.

**TWICE BLESSED** includes personal stories, new interpretations of traditional Texts and Jewish history, and essays on various aspects of family life. Authors also address issues of liturgy, the establishment of congregations and chavurot with specific outreach to lesbians and gay men, and Jewish communal responses to lesbian/gay rights issues in general and AIDS in particular. The book includes an author who describes how she and her rabbi husband came to terms with their son's homosexuality; it also features a heterosexual rabbi's eloquent description of her process of learning and acceptance while serving a lesbian/gay-outreach congregation. Appendices include suggestions for Jewish educators, a workshop model for Jewish organizations attempting to deal with homophobia, and bibliographic materials.

We believe that this unusual and thoughtful book deserves to be read and discussed by rabbis, used as a resource in our religious schools, and given to individuals and families who are coming to terms with these issues, often silently and without rabbinic support. We do not pretend to have a consensus on all the issues raised by this book, even between the two of us, and assume that parts of **TWICE BLESSED** will challenge you and possibly make you uncomfortable. But that is all the more reason to take this refreshing book seriously.

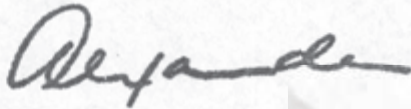
We realize that this letter is reaching you at a time when issues concerning homosexuality are rising to the fore of our organizational agendas, with the Rabbinical Assembly recently resolving to "call upon our synagogues and the arms of our Movement to increase our awareness, understanding and concern for our fellow Jews who are gay and lesbian" and the Central Conference of American Rabbis urging that "all rabbis, regardless of sexual orientation, be accorded the opportunity to fulfill the sacred vocation which they have chosen." We also realize that our message arrives as you are reflecting in advance of the High Holy days and deciding what is most crucial to address at that time. We hope that this book enters into your reflections and that you will consider delivering a sermon that addresses these issues.



**TWICE BLESSED** can be ordered directly through the publisher, using the enclosed form. You may want to order copies for your educators, bookstore, and library in addition to your own study. The editors, both of whom have longstanding commitments and serious involvements in Jewish life, are available for speaking engagements, as are many of the contributing authors. They can be contacted through Beacon Press.

In closing we quote our colleague, Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, who states in his book review in Hadassah Magazine, "**TWICE BLESSED** deserves to be celebrated by all: as a call to discussion and heightened communication, it may well be an agent for redemptive healing that will bring us one step closer to the messianic age." We commend this book to you, and thank you for your serious consideration of this letter.

Shalom,



Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
President of American Hebrew Congregations  
New York, NY

Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis  
Congregation Valley Beth Shalom  
Encino, CA



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Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

11/14/89

Rabbi Daniel B. Syme

RESOLUTION ON LESBIAN AND GAY JEWS

We had best have this matter discussed at a future Board meeting next year, unless the CCAR Committee pre-empts such a discussion on a Board level. If our leadership is not with us we can't take the matter to a Biennial.







RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

November 14, 1989  
16 Heshvan 5750

*A. M. Schindler*  
Mr. Stanley R. Loeb  
1546 S.W. Upland Drive  
Portland, OR 97221

Dear Stan:

Thank you for your thoughtful note.

I appreciate your concerns and as I tried to indicate in my speech, there was a time when I shared some of them.

Obviously, it is impossible to engage in an extended conversation on this subject by means of correspondence, that requires the kind of conversation on a leadership level which you seek and which we must have. Indeed, my comments were designed primarily to stimulate such a discussion.

Let's hold it until next we meet.

All good wishes.

Sincerely,

*A. M. Schindler*  
Alexander M. Schindler

Founded in 1889

# אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

## CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

192 LEXINGTON AVENUE

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016-6801

FAX (212) 689-1649 (212) 684-4990

October 25, 1989

BY FAX

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
UAHC, New York

Dear Alex

Since you and Joe are now on record by Fax with regard to what I am alleged to have said at the NJ kalla, I think it best to share with you my record, because there has been some misreporting and misunderstanding, and therefore, I think, some unnecessary anger.

After describing our process and the reasons of content why our committee felt that a resolution would not be the best means of addressing the many issues which had been raised in committee over its several years, I further described the current process, which insofar as it concerns homosexuality and the rabbinate has led the committee to the preparation of study and syllabus materials, for use at regional kallot, and based primarily and papers already written and circulated to members of the CCAR, and the speeches at our Cincinnati convention. One rabbi -- I think Howard Jaffe, called the CCAR approach "bullshit," and castigated the CCAR for not having the courage to take a stand and adopt a resolution, as a ringing affirmation of CCAR support, at least for those of its members who are homosexuals. Most others in the room applauded his comment, and one rabbi asked why the UAHC always seemed to take leadership on important issues, while the CCAR seemed to duck them, and what would Alex Schindler be saying at the Biennial? I answered that I had no idea what you would be saying at the Biennial, nor could anyone guarantee what you would or wouldn't say, but I understood that you had discussed your comments with Selig Salkowitz, whom I believed had written you on the subject, and you had also had discussions with Joe; and my understanding was that Selig, at least, had shared with you his hope that you would see fit to endorse the process in which we were engaged, rather than encouraging resolutions while our deliberations were still in process. That's all. I never mentioned Sam Karff, nor did I mention any attempts at pressure or attempts to dictate what you would say. I firmly believe that pressure is (in general) counterproductive and (in this case) out of place. Words like "brag" (your FAX) are totally out of place. I was very cautious and careful in what I said. Anyone who interpreted my remarks as "gloating" can only be investing their own emotional stake in the subject into their interpretation of what I said. It simply didn't happen that way. When you quote a draft in which "Joe and Sam assisted," Alex, that is simply untrue as well; as I state above, I never mentioned

OFFICERS: Sam at all.

I hope this clarifies and helps, and wish you well. *MS* Elliot L. Stevens

Rabbi Samuel E. Kaft, President  
Houston, TX

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Cincinnati, OH





RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

VIA FAX

October 25, 1989  
26 Tishri 5750

TO: Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser

I didn't hang up on you. Our conversation was over.

I made three more phone calls this morning. They confirm the substance of the reports which I received. Elliot even referred to the letter which Selig sent me and in whose drafting "Joe and Sam assisted."\*

I think it is a shame for Conference leaders to try to direct what I say in my Presidential Message and then have the temerity to brag about it to other colleagues.

I will not discuss this issue any more. What has happened convinces me that the UAHC Executive Committee meeting was orchestrated.

I'm not angry at all, I'm just bitterly disappointed that people like you and Sam, for whom I have the utmost respect, would attempt to censor a colleague and then gloat in public about it.

All the best.

\* WHO GAVE HIM THAT LETTER - HE WASN'T COPIED  
JUST YOU + SAM

I DIDN'T HEAR FROM ELLIOT YET -  
LITTLE WONDER.

1889 CCAR Centennial 1989

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

## CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

192 LEHINGTON AVENUE

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016-6801

(212) 684-4990

Office of the Executive Vice President

## JACSIMILE COVER SHEET

Date: October 25, 1989

Time: 10:30 A.M.

Total number of pages including this cover sheet: TWO

TO:

Name: Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler

Company: JAHC

Fax #: 570-0895

FROM:

Name: Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser

Fax #: (212) 689-1649

COMMENTS:

## OFFICERS

Rabbi Eugene J. Lipman, President  
 Chevy Chase, MD  
 Rabbi Samuel E. Karll, Vice President  
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 Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser, Executive Vice President  
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## CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

192 LEXINGTON AVENUE

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016-6801

FAX (212) 689-1649 (212) 684-4990

Office of the Executive Vice President

October 25, 1989

TO: ALEX SCHINDLER

Dear Alex:

I'm still stunned at what you had to say last night and a little offended that you hung up on me the way you did. You are obviously very angry, though at the very least prematurely so, and I'll overlook it.

Regardless of the outcome of your conversation with Elliot Stevens and whom you choose to believe, I must register my reaction to your conditional "all bets are off" and, when I asked you what that meant, your statement that you would now say what you really wanted to say.

I don't know what that means either. You wrote in no uncertain terms to Sam Karfi that you had no intention anywhere along the line of addressing the issue of the rabbinate and homosexuality. You then emphatically affirmed that in your meeting with me. Once I unraveled the tangle of misunderstanding as to who thought what, I told you I didn't see anything wrong with your saying whatever you wanted on the general subject of homosexuality and of AIDS. I really don't know what "bets are off" or what you were being prevented from saying to begin with.

I hope that you and Elliot Stevens straighten out the matter. What you said was reported to you just didn't sound like Elliot Stevens at all, and from what he told me when I asked him what transpired in New Jersey before I was able to reach you, I find his account thoroughly credible. Apparently a number of people said a lot of things during that session in New Jersey and my guess, as I went my way home Tuesday night after leaving the office at 9:30, is that a number of comments were twisted together and that some of the things Elliot told me were said by others were unfortunately attributed to Elliot.

I really wish you wouldn't get yourself into such a state. It isn't good for you.

Warm good wishes.



VIA FAX

## OFFICERS:

Rabbi Samuel E. Karf, President  
Houston, TX  
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Pittsburgh, PA  
Rabbi Joseph B. Glasser, Executive Vice President  
New York, NY

Rabbi Frederick C. Schwartz, Treasurer  
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Little Rock, AR  
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Brooklyn, NY

Rabbi Elliot L. Stevens, Administrative Secretary  
New York, NY  
Rabbi Sidney L. Repner, Executive Vice President Emeritus  
New York, NY  
Rabbi Jacob R. Marcus, Honorary President  
Cincinnati, OH

October 24, 1989  
26 Tishri 5750

MEMORANDUM

TO: Rabbi Joseph E. Glaser

Referring to your memo of October 18 to Sam Karff, with a copy to Selig Salkowitz, everything you have to say is correct -- barring only your last comment that "there will not even be a mention in Alex's President's Message of the issue of homosexuality and the rabbinate."

As I told you, I intend to make this my point of departure, that a committee of our Conference is working on it, that they have not reached a decision but that they have asked us, that is to say the Union, to undertake a Union-wide educational program on the subject of homosexuality, which I will initiate.

Now, that should not be a problem and as I indicated to you, I will certainly not introduce a resolution calling on the Conference to do so. Nor will I call on the CCAR to undertake such a step with the College-Institute.

I do hope you will understand where my vote on that subject will be should it ever reach the floor.

All good wishes.



Founded in 1889

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

192 LEXINGTON AVENUE

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016-6801

FAX (212) 689-1649 (212) 684-4990

Office of the Executive Vice President

October 18, 1989

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sam Karff

CC: Alex Schindler, Selig Salkowitz

I had a fine meeting with Alex on Monday and feel that it is necessary to report it among the four of us because there appears to have been a double misunderstanding.

The fact of the matter is that Alex really never did intend to raise the subject of homosexuality in the rabbinate at all, with or without a call for a resolution to be produced by the President's Message Committee then and there at the Biennial.

What he was thinking of doing was to call for some action on the general subject of homosexuality. He thought that we were even opposed to that, which is why he objected so fiercely.

I had to read his letter to you, Sam, five times before I began to get an inkling of all this, and then of course, my meeting with Alex cleared it up.

So: There will not even be a mention in Alex's President's Message of the issue of homosexuality and the rabbinate, nor was there ever any intention for such to be the case.

All the best.

*Joe*

*I will refer  
to the committee's  
+ its recommendation  
that*

OFFICERS:

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RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER • UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
PRESIDENT 838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249 0100

October 3, 1989  
4 Tishri 5750

Rabbi Samuel E. Karff  
• Temple Beth Israel  
5600 N. Braeswood Blvd.  
Houston, TX 77096

Dear Sam:

I am glad we had a chance to chat personally after the UAHC Executive Committee meeting, it took the edge off some of my anger. In any event, you ought to know that I never allow a divergence of view on any subject, however bitter, to affect my personal relationships.

Now, on to substance. To begin with, it was never my intention to introduce a resolution which would call on the CCAR to formally endorse the ordination of homosexual rabbis. I would vote within the CCAR for the issue but I would not ask the Union to direct the rabbinate along these lines.

It had been my intent merely to call on the congregations to study this issue and to sensitize our congregants on the broader subject of homophobia which - our affirmative resolutions to the contrary notwithstanding - is still widespread in our midst.

Frankly, I don't know what harm such a resolution would have done. When you discuss a resolution you engage in the sensitizing process and you initiate precisely the kind of program that I understand the CCAR Committee has endorsed, via Selig Salkowitz's most recent letter to me.

But since you and Joe and Fred joined in the chorus of "resolutions are counter-productive," I will defer to your request. What I expect to do, however, is to make a personal statement. My point of departure will be along the following lines: the Conference Committee has met to address the issue of homosexuals in the rabbinate and within synagogue life. It has not reached a conclusion. It has called upon the Union to engage in a process of study and sensitizing on a national, regional and local level. While I have no resolution to offer on this score, I



Rabbi Samuel E. Karff

October 3, 1989

Page -2-

know of no better way of initiating this process than to tell you where I stand -- and then go on from there.

I checked the record of the last Biennial and you are right, Selig asked the chairman whether the operative clause of the resolution, "congregations should not discriminate in employment on the basis of sexual preference," referred to rabbis and the answer coming from the chair was "no." You realize, of course, that following the rabbinic dictum, "once you specify, you exclude," the specific exclusion of the rabbinate thereby, by legislative intent, includes every other profession: not just janitors and secretaries but also administrators, educators, teachers and cantors.

My objection to a Joint Committee on Aids was on several grounds: a) I am, in principle, loath to multiplying structures. I would much prefer to contract. b) We already have an amplitude of rabbis on the committee and we would be willing to appoint others whom you would choose. c) I was mindful of the financial burdens which the joint approach imposes on the CCAR. When we invite rabbis their expenses are not paid, once the committee is joint, the CCAR obligates itself to pay their expenses.

In context with point a) above, you ought to know that I will discuss the dramatic increase in substance abuse (including alcohol) among our congregants, and especially teen-agers, during my sermon and I will recommend that our national responsibility be coordinated through the Task Force on Youth Suicide - Yad Tikvah. This is also a contraction as it were rather than a layering of committee upon committee which could drown us.

With warm regards and the hope you will, as the English say, be well over the fast, I am

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

cc: Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser  
Rabbi Selig Salkowitz

bcc: Allan B. Goldman, Esq.  
Rabbi Janet Marder  
Dr. Robert M. Rankin  
Albert Vorspan

Founded in 1889

אגוד הרבנים המתקדמים

# CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

192 LEXINGTON AVENUE

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016-6801

FAX (212) 689-1649 (212) 684-4990

September 25, 1989

Office of the President:  
Rabbi Samuel E. Karff  
Temple Beth Israel  
5600 N. Braeswood Blvd.  
Houston, TX 77096

Dear Alex:

I want to follow up on our all-too-brief conversation in New York.

I see no necessary connection between the sentiments exquisitely expressed in your Los Angeles talk and any particular stand on the formal endorsement of homosexual rabbis.

If you intend to draw on your Los Angeles address, I would hope you could expressly disclaim any intention to prejudge the latter issue, endorse the process of study and sensitization now in progress within the Conference, and commit the UAHC to share in it. I am confident that would be Selig Salkowitz's position as well.

Joe Glaser has reminded me that the Biennial resolution in Chicago to which you referred at the Board meeting explicitly excluded a judgment on homosexuality in the rabbinate. The delegates were told, prior to the vote, that the CCAR was studying the matter. Do you have a transcript that could clarify this important issue?

I did not have a chance to ask you about the proposal at our last Executive Board of the CCAR for a Joint Task Force with the UAHC on AIDS - rather than establish a separate CCAR Committee on AIDS. I understand that you do not favor this proposal. Is that discussable? There are already Rabbis on the UAHC Committee and I am reluctant to see us duplicate what the UAHC is doing.

## OFFICERS:

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New York, NY

Rabbi Jacob R. Marcus, Honorary President  
Cincinnati, OH



I would, of course, welcome a continuation  
of our dialogue by letter, phone, or panim-el-panim.

With every good wish to you and Rhea for  
the New Year, I am

Warmly,



Samuel E. Karff

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President  
UAHC  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10021

cc to: Rabbi Glaser  
Rabbi Salkowitz



STANLEY R. LOEB 11/7/89  
1546 S. W. UPLAND DR.  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97221

Rabbi Alex Schindler,  
President, UAHC  
838 Fifth Ave.,  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Alex,

It was a wonderful convention:  
educating, enlightening, motivating, uplifting.  
Multifaceted. And deeply religious.

Your speech on Saturday morning had  
all of these qualities as well. And I agreed  
and support 98 or 99 per cent of it. But I feel  
that I must write to you ( and talk to you)  
about the 2 per cent ( or 1 per cent) with which  
I disagree. Deeply.

It involves that portion of your address  
that involves gay and lesbian Jews. And it  
involves a matter of degree. I support that  
portion of the 1987 biennial resolution  
that welcomes gay and lesbian Jews into  
the congregation as all Jews are welcome  
into a congregation. But I could not then  
support that part of the resolution that  
urges congregations to accept practicing  
public homosexuals into positions of  
congregational leadership or in teaching  
roles. Those positions are role model  
positions. Filling those positions with  
assertive or militant gays or lesbian Jews  
involves an endorsement and validation  
of a value system and life style that  
is axiomatically inconsistent with  
Judaism as I understand it. This is true for  
all positions of sensitive leadership: teacher,  
trustee, officer, rabbi, cantor.



My feelings and opinions of 1987 have not changed over the last 2 years. Unfortunately, this issue is almost a bottom line issue. I have not seen or been told of any responsa that would support the 1987 resolution, let alone an extension of it. The analogy of the deaf-mute that you used is probably inapposite since those folks can communicate and participate in the religious community through technology (including the signers used during the biennial) and without the prohibited behavior that ultimately burdens gay and lesbian folk.

I guess that's the point: "prohibited behavior". If Reform Judaism believes that homosexual practice and life style is acceptable behavior for Jews, the 1987 resolution can stand in full and perhaps be extended. But to those Reform Jews who do not believe Reform Judaism to be capable of this, some aspects of the 1987 resolution are unacceptable, and should not be extended. Ever.

At the September executive committee meeting, you made a remark or two following Fred Gottshalk's report on HUC and the present dilemma it faces regarding this area. David Belin disputed the reach of the 1987 resolution, as you viewed it. And the matter was then tucked away. For a while.

But Alex, this deeply divisive issue will come up again. And the 1987 resolution will not resolve matters and will not be the basis for extending a things. If anything occurs, it may be a re-examination of that 1987 resolution. Worse, people may ignore it, even its many good parts.

Quite early this year, an article appeared in Reform Judaism supporting broad gay and lesbian Jewish rights and participation. It was a sensitive article - and a very aggressive one. I wrote a letter to the editor in response. It was a timely reply and expressed the position I've expressed above : involvement - yes, leadership - probably not. Unfortunately, my letter was not published - for whatever reason. Even though I took some pains to try to assure its publication. I think that I feel the way quite a few Reform Jews feel. I do not believe that the 1987 resolution represents a consensus of Reform opinion. And that resolution may never represent a consensus. And probably should not. And we would never want to suppress dissent to give the appearance of a consensus.

Perhaps then, this is a time to sound out UAHC leadership on this sensitive and basic issue.

With best regards,

Stan Leeb



*Handwritten: [Signature]*

Rabbi Joseph A. Edelheit

September 15, 1989  
15 Elul, 5749

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, President  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10021

Dear Alex:

Thank you very much for allowing me to be so open and candid with you. It was most helpful. I have had a conversation with Florence Katz, the new president of ARZA, who was quite upset that she would not be allowed to come; I tried to explain to her not to worry. I am most appreciative of your sensitivity and support as we try and pull the Congregation out of this near tailspin.

I also want you to know that after some consideration, I fear that I might have unwittingly been a part of Sam Karff's inappropriate manipulation at the Board meeting. I say this within the following context. Bo O'Mansky called me several weeks ago to inform me that the offer for the CCAR to join the AIDS Committee as a joint commission had been turned down by you and the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Goldman. While he was not fully clear why, certainly I didn't understand. Bo asked me to call Sam Karff, since it had been a committee meeting at the CCAR convention which had prompted the CCAR Executive Committee to ask to join on a joint commission level. In my conversation with Sam Karff, he asked my view of why the UAHC was not prepared to join the CCAR on this joint level regarding AIDS. I said I wasn't sure, due to the fact that the UAHC had taken the leadership role, and that in many ways had allowed the rabbinate to remain peripheral except for the leadership roles that a few of us have taken on the UAHC committee level. We both noted your very strong statement in your Erev Shabbat sermon in Cincinnati, and both of us were aware that in the area of AIDS as well as your supportiveness of the gay and lesbian community that the UAHC was certainly at a far different place than the Conference.

I hope that I in no way fostered his attempt to preempt your saying anything. Sam knows that I am very much opposed to the position that the Conference is taking with regard to homosexuality, most specifically with regard to homosexuality and the rabbinate. I apologize if in my conversation with Sam, I led him to a place where he has attempted to preempt you.

Let me move my presumption one step further regarding your decision about the AIDS Committee and the joint relationship with the Conference. If, as we both want, the UAHC position is to have a greater

*Handwritten notes:*  
✓  
All please return -  
Joe seems to  
think this was  
an indication to  
preempt.  
Yes, but I'm not sure - R

EMANUEL CONGREGATION

5959 North Sheridan Road

Chicago, Illinois 60660

(312) 561-5173 Study

impact on the Conference process and the HUC mentality, we have a place where we can begin, in my view, to create a broader strategy, that is to say, if you might reconsider putting the CCAR on a conjoint, co-equal basis of responsibility with regard to AIDS, we can then hold them responsible for what they have not yet done, including permanent curricular material at HUC on rabbinic literacy with regard both to AIDS and those gays who are suffering. That then opens the door for the UAHC to demand a co-equal role with regard to the CCAR's process with regard to homosexuality. Though Dick Sternberger sits on the CCAR Committee on Homosexuality, it seems to me the focus of that Committee and its position between now and Seattle or anything beyond should now be widened. It might be a point of negotiation that since the issue involves more than the rabbinate and that the UAHC was light years ahead of everyone in sponsoring congregations with special outreach to the gay and lesbian community, that the conversation regarding the school and the rabbinate should as a matter of course involve the laity.

Please excuse the presumption of pushing you on a decision that you have made, but it might be a new point of strategy with regard to our conversation yesterday. Once again, I thank you for your depth and understanding. I hope that the material that I sent under separate cover is helpful. The Kol Nidre sermon is simply an example of how one can deal with issues of homophobia and homosexuality in a broader sense. My best to you for the sweetest of New Years.

Most sincerely,

Joseph A. Edelheit  
Rabbi

JAEd/hmp

שלום וברכה  
בחדש שבט







## Beacon Press

25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108-2800

617-742-2110

*Handwritten signature*  
April 3, 1989

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler  
President  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Ave.  
New York, NY 10021

*Collected*  
*4/10/89*

Dear Rabbi Schindler:

Thank you very much for your superb comment. We will most certainly put it to very good use in advance publicity for the book as well as on the book jacket. For publicity purposes, we will probably have to trim it considerably. I have devised two abbreviated versions that I would like to run by you:

"TWICE BLESSED will bring healing to many."

and

"TWICE BLESSED reveals a deficiency in the Jewish community's immune system: that we are not so immune to the very process of stigmatization by which we as Jews have been shunned and persecuted and massacred...TWICE BLESSED will serve to repair this deficiency and thus bring healing to many."

*OK*

Are these OK? The first one would be used where we have great space limitations; the second where the allowable space is bigger. The entire quote will be used on the book jacket.

With regard to the talk you enclosed, I have passed it on to Christie Balka and Andy Rose. As you guessed, it is much too late to include your piece but I appreciate your sharing it with us.

Thanks again for all your help.

Sincerely,

*Joanne Wyckoff*  
Joanne Wyckoff  
Executive Editor



*Handwritten signature: Hanosomali*

RABBI ALEXANDER M. SCHINDLER  
PRESIDENT

UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS  
838 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK, N.Y. 10021 (212) 249-0100

March 28, 1989  
21 Adar II 5749

Ms. Joanne Wyckoff  
Executive Editor  
Beacon Press  
25 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Ms. Wyckoff:

I scanned the manuscript you sent me and I feel quite comfortable in making comments concerning this volume.

My comments are rather lengthy. Feel free to cut them down to proper size, but if you do, let me have a look at it before you finalize it.

"Twice Blessed reveals a deficiency in the Jewish community's immune system: that we are not so immune to the very process of stigmatization by which we as Jews have been shunned and persecuted and massacred. We have not extended our embrace to include gay and lesbian Jews, affirming that we all are family, that they and their relatives are our sons, our sisters, our neighbors, our fellow Jews. Hopefully, Twice Blessed will serve to repair this deficiency and thus bring healing to many."

Actually these comments are drawn from a talk I gave several weeks ago at a Jewish Community service in support of Jewish people with AIDS. I enclose a copy. It occurs to me that conceivably it could be an addition to this volume. But for that it is probably too late.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Schindler

enc.





## Beacon Press

25 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108-2800

617-742-2110

March 21, 1989

Rabbi Alexander Shindler  
Union of American Hebrew Congregations  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10021

Dear Rabbi Shindler:

At the suggestion of the editors, I am sending you the enclosed unedited manuscript of TWICE BLESSED: ON BEING LESBIAN, GAY, AND JEWISH. Beacon plans to publish this important anthology in November. Do you think you could supply us with an advance comment?

TWICE BLESSED is the first collection of writings (22 in all) by and about lesbian and gay Jews that proposes integration of the Jewish community with the lesbian and gay one. Showcasing a wealth of writings--personal testimonies, essays, oral histories, and liturgies--by some of the most important spokespeople--Judith Plaskow, Martha Ackelsberg, Eric Rofes, Linda Holtzman, Yoel Kahn, Evelyn Torton Beck--this book speaks to the possibilities of bringing lesbian and gay experience to bear on Jewish history and tradition, family, and community life.

Christie Balka, one of the editors, is a social change activist who has written and spoken on the Middle East, feminism, and lesbian and gay issues. She is a former national co-chair of New Jewish Agenda, and former Associate Director of The Shalom Center. She currently works for a small public foundation in Philadelphia where she lives with her partner and 2 children. She is active in her synagogue, and serves as an openly lesbian member of its board.

Andy Rose, the other editor, is a social worker and community activist in San Francisco. A founding member and national co-chair of New Jewish Agenda, he currently coordinates the Jewish community's AIDS Project in San Francisco. He also serves on the Union of American Hebrew Congregations AIDS Committee, is a Board member of the AIDS National Interfaith Network, and serves on the Advisory Board of the Lesbian and Gay Parenting Project in San Francisco.

If you could give us a comment on this unique volume I would be most grateful. Your comments, which we would use on the jacket and/or in publicity and promotion for the book, could help this work reach the wide audience it deserves. If you find that you cannot comment, please return the manuscript in the envelope provided.

Thanking you in advance for any attention you can give TWICE  
BLESSED, I look forward to hearing from you by April 3.

Sincerely,

*Joanne Wyckoff*  
Joanne Wyckoff  
Executive Editor

