

The Reform Advocate

Volume VII, Number 1: Winter 2015

THE SOCIETY FOR
CLASSICAL
REFORM
JUDAISM

Reclaiming & Renewing
Our Reform Jewish Heritage
for the 21st Century



A RESPONSE TO THE TERROR ATTACKS IN EUROPE

by Rabbi Howard A. Berman

The Society for Classical Reform Judaism expresses its sorrow in the face of the tragedies that have unfolded in Paris and Copenhagen in the past month, which follow similar episodes in other European cities.



Grand Synagogue, Rue Victoire, Paris

We join all people of conscience throughout the world in condemning the attacks on journalists, police officers, and the victims at the kosher supermarket and the Copenhagen synagogue, singled out for murder solely because they were Jews. Our hearts go out to their families and to all the people of France, Denmark and Belgium, of every faith and ethnicity.

In the face of the ongoing spread of violence and bigotry against our fellow Jews throughout Europe, we stand in

anguish and in solidarity. We pray for their safety and call upon the world's leaders to forcefully confront the spread of anti-Semitism emerging from whatever source - both native political extremists as well as radical Islamists. At the same time, as fellow children of Abraham, we affirm our ties to



Great Synagogue, Krystalgade, Copenhagen

the vast majority of Muslims who understand and live their religion as a force for peace and justice, and we seek to join with them in confronting and routing out the forces of extremism and racism that corrupt all of our religious traditions and are the true examples of blasphemy.

As American Jews who embrace the historic liberal, universalistic ideals of the Classical Reform tradition, we stand in witness to the vital importance of a progressive, inclusive vision of religious commitment in the face of all expressions of narrow, rigid, fundamentalism. We also particularly affirm

our conviction that the destiny and mission of the Jewish People is to observe our faith and contribute our gifts to all of the cultures and societies in which we live as loyal, committed citizens. While we are deeply supportive of the role of the State of Israel as a center of Jewish life and as a place of refuge for those of our brothers and sisters who suffer oppression and persecution in other lands, we believe that every nation in which we live is our home- and that there must be strong, vital and secure Jewish communities throughout the world. We particularly embrace the Jewish communities in the great historic centers such as France, which has had a thousand year legacy of Jewish life, learning and faith, and was the first

nation in Europe to grant Jews full civil rights – and in Denmark, which so heroically gave refuge to so many of our people during the Holocaust. We pray that the Jews of Europe, forcefully supported and protected by their governments and fellow citizens, will choose to remain in their home countries and bear witness to the victory of justice, human rights and democratic values over the dark forces of hatred and violence... and will continue to play a vital role in the distinctive contributions to European culture, art and thought that have characterized our people's place in western civilization.

“Grant us Peace...Your most precious gift...O Eternal Source of Peace...”

SCRJ HIGHLIGHTS SEVEN YEARS OF PROGRESS!

This issue of the Reform Advocate marks the Society's seventh anniversary! We are excited to share reports of the recent developments in our remarkable progress in the renewal of the Classical Reform presence in the worldwide Reform Movement!

DR. GARY P. ZOLA, INAUGURAL RECIPIENT of the Edward M. Ackerman Family Distinguished Professorship of the American Jewish Experience and Reform Jewish History Established at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati

With the facilitating support of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism and our Founding Board member, Edward M. Ackerman of Dallas, the Ackerman Family Distinguished Professorship of the American Jewish Experience and Reform Jewish History has been established at the Cincinnati campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion with a landmark gift from the Edward and Wilhelmina Ackerman Foundation. Dr. Gary P. Zola is the inaugural recipient of the Professorship, which was celebrated with a special convocation on December 10, 2014 at the Cincinnati campus. Dr. Zola is currently Professor of the American Jewish Experience at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati and



Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati - Classroom Building

Executive Director of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (AJA) on the Cincinnati campus. He became the AJA's second director in 1998, succeeding his teacher and mentor, Professor Jacob Rader Marcus (1896-1995), the prodigious scholar who founded the AJA in 1947 and defined the field of American Jewish history. Dr. Zola has been a friend and partner of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism from its inception.

This new faculty chair will coordinate the Society's ongoing programmatic initiatives that provide HUC-JIR with academic resources to bring the historical legacy of American Reform Judaism to students studying at the school's campuses in the United States and Jerusalem. The Ackerman Professorship will work with the SCRJ in conceptualizing and implementing these initiatives that will further illuminate the heritage of American Reform Judaism to HUC-JIR students, faculty, alumni, and the community at-large.

Rabbi Aaron Panken, Ph.D., HUC-JIR President, stated, "We are enormously grateful to Edward Ackerman for his generous support for this Professorship and new educational and programmatic initiatives on the history and heritage of Reform Judaism. Our commitment to sustaining this heritage has been significantly enriched by the College-Institute's partnership with the Society for Classical Reform Judaism (SCRJ). Jointly sponsored programs have highlighted the history and core values of American Reform Judaism and have promoted the development of a strong Reform Jewish identity among our students by emphasizing Reform Judaism's enduring contributions to America as well as to the American Jewish community."

Edward Ackerman said, "HUC-JIR will be capable of shedding new light on a shared heritage that belongs to all Reform Jews, while affirming the pluralism of interpretation and observance within the contemporary Reform Movement, by elucidating the core principles and liturgical traditions that continue to characterize the Classical tradition in American Reform Judaism."



Dr. Gary P. Zola

Rabbi Howard A. Berman, Executive Director of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism, will serve on the Advisory Council on Reform Jewish History and Heritage that will guide the development of programmatic opportunities. Rabbi Berman noted, "Since the inception of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism, our partnership with HUC-JIR has been a priority for our work and a major interest of our devoted Board member, Edward Ackerman. The relationships we have built and the impact we have made on our students over the past five years has enabled a new generation of our future leaders to affirm the diversity within our Movement today and to explore our shared heritage as Reform Jews. The Ackerman Chair and new programmatic initiatives illuminating the heritage of American Reform Judaism will further integrate the Society's programs into the culture, curriculum, and spiritual life of the College-Institute."

In 2011, President Barack Obama appointed Dr. Zola to serve as a member of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, an independent agency of the Federal government. Prior to joining the Commission, Dr. Zola served as the organizer and chair of the congressionally recognized Commission for Commemorating 350 Years of American Jewish History, a consortium of leading research institutions established to promote the study of American Jewish history during the 350th anniversary Jewish life in America (2004-2005). In

2006, Dr. Zola became the first American Jewish historian to receive an appointment to the Academic Advisory Council of the congressionally recognized Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

Dr. Zola has recently authored a new volume titled *We Called Him Rabbi Abraham: Lincoln and American*

Jewry, A Documentary History (Southern Illinois University Press, 2014), and he has co-edited with Marc Dollinger a volume titled *American Jewish History: A Source Reader* (Brandeis University Press, 2014). He also serves as editor of The Marcus Center's award-winning semi-annual publication, *The American Jewish Archives Journal*.



Hebrew Union College - Los Angeles

SCRJ EXPANDS PROGRAMS TO LOS ANGELES CAMPUS OF HEBREW UNION COLLEGE

After four successful years of partnership with the Cincinnati and Jerusalem campuses of Hebrew Union College, the major center of Higher Learning for American Reform Judaism, the Society has launched its new programs at the Los Angeles campus of HUC, with the inaugural SCRJ Institute, which was held on November 11-13, 2014. At the invitation and with the enthusiastic support of Dean Joshua Holo, Rabbinic School Director Rabbi Dvorah Weisberg, and Assistant Dean Madelyn Katz, Rabbi Howard A. Berman presented seminars introducing the rabbinic students to the mission and programs of the Society. He discussed the renewal of the Classical Reform voice in the national Movement as a resource for their own personal rabbinic identities and work in serving the needs of diverse congregations. A highlight of the three days of special programs

was the first use of the *Union Prayer Book - Sinai Edition, Revised* at the College's daily worship Services. These worship experiences were accompanied by the

dedication of the new digital keyboard organ in the Hillborn Synagogue, which was presented by the Society, sponsored by the Lasky Charitable Lead Trust. Rabbinic student Cantor Raina Sirotky led the music for these Services, drawing on the historic Reform repertoire.

These were the first Classical Reform Services at the Los Angeles campus in over 40 years, and they elicited spirited participation from the many students who experienced this part of their own heritage as Reform Jews for the first time. The next Society Institute will be offered in the Spring, with Rabbi Berman guest-teaching various classes in different academic disciplines, on the theme of the Prophetic ideals of Classical Reform. He will also continue to work with students and faculty in the integration of Classical Reform perspectives of liturgy in the regular worship of the campus.

SCRJ'S INTERNATIONAL REACH CONTINUES TO BROADEN

Since its founding, the Society has emerged as a major voice within the American Reform Movement in its advocacy for the preservation and creative renewal of our shared Classical Reform heritage. We have become increasingly active in spreading our message to Jewish communities abroad. Here are some recent developments in this exciting expansion of our work:

ISRAEL

The SCRJ's deep and collegial relationship with Har-El Congregation in Jerusalem, has continued to grow over the past three years. With the Society's support and the deep commitment of Rabbi Ada Zavidov and Cantor Evan Cohen, the synagogue is fulfilling its historic role as Israel's pioneer Progressive congregation, with its monthly Classical Reform Services. These experiences feature expanded music with choir, harp and piano accompaniment, featuring the great Reform repertoire, both historic and contemporary. They continue to be among the congregation's most well-attended worship Services, and an entire new generation of Reform Jews in Israel is being introduced to their own heritage.

Rabbi Berman's annual Shabbat visit was May 2-3, 2014, highlighted by his sermon on Friday evening, followed by a dinner with Rabbi Zavidov, Cantor Cohen, and the new President of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, Rabbi Danny Frelander. On Shabbat Morning, Rabbi Berman was honored

by the congregation, on behalf of the Society with a special presentation and blessing - followed by his annual lecture on Reform Heritage and a luncheon for the congregation. Over the past few months, the Society has been actively involved with Har-El's Liturgy Committee in the preparation of the new Worship Supplement that will feature Hebrew translations of the most important and popular Union Prayer Book texts - a striking reversal of the usual pattern, and a dramatic symbol of our partnership as American and Israeli Reform Jews!



Rabbi Zavidov and Cantor Cohen

The SCRJ's Israel programs will expand further in April of 2015, when Rabbi Berman will speak at the largest Progressive congregation in Israel, Beit-Daniel in Tel Aviv, at the invitation of Rabbi Meir Azari. In all of our work with the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism, we seek to encourage and support the continuing emergence of a distinctive expression of Reform grounded in the Israeli setting, but also inspired by the rich heritage and traditions of liberal Judaism in America and throughout the world.

GERMANY

The Society has embraced a connection with the Reform Movement in Germany since its inception. In 2010, we organized the most extensive commemoration of the 200th Anniversary of Reform Judaism by any American Jewish organization, with our “Roots of Reform” Pilgrimage to Berlin, Hamburg, and Seesen - the historic sites of the Movement’s founding, beginning in 1810. From December 18-21, 2014, we continued that special relationship with Rabbi Berman’s participation as a keynote speaker at the Lewis Lewandowski Festival in Berlin.

This festival is a three year old annual international gathering celebrating the musical heritage of the Reform Movement in Germany - sponsored by City of Berlin. On each night of

Chanukah, major Jewish choirs from around the world performed the great music of the German and American synagogue at churches and concert halls throughout the city, with Sabbath Services at Berlin’s two main synagogues, the newly restored sanctuaries of Pestalozzistrasse and Rykestrasse. Rabbi Berman’s lecture at the opening program focused on the Society’s work in fostering the renewal of this musical heritage in America, Israel and Poland. During his visit to Berlin, he also presented a seminar for the students of Abraham Geiger College, the major center for the training of a new generation of rabbis and cantors to serve the growing numbers of Reform congregations in Germany and throughout Europe.



Pestalozzistrasse Synagogue, Berlin

POLAND

One of the most moving symbols of the Society’s work to preserve and renew our Reform Jewish heritage around the world has been the inauguration of our partnership with Congregation Ec Chaim, the Progressive synagogue of the official Polish Jewish community. Through the co-sponsorship of the SCRJ and Abraham Geiger College in Berlin, this congregation is now offering regular Services in the Classical Reform tradition. We are working together to reclaim an important part of Polish Jewry’s own history. Contrary to popular misconception, Reform

Judaism had a strong presence in Poland prior to the Holocaust, centered in the famed Thomaski Street Synagogue - the largest in pre-War Warsaw.

Below is a glowing report from Rabbi Stas Wojciechowicz of Congregation Ec Chaim on the first Service, which was held in July. A highlight was the dedication of their new organ - purchased with a grant from the SCRJ - the first organ in a Polish synagogue since before the Holocaust.

Dear Rabbi Berman,

Our first Musical Shabbat in the spirit of Classical Reform Judaism was on July 18-19. The Society for Classical Reform Judaism is the major sponsor of this series at Ec Chaim synagogue, with professional assistance of the Abraham Geiger College in Berlin. Thanks to the Society's grant, our new electronic Viscount Cantorum VI organ was purchased and delivered to Warsaw from Berlin and was dedicated at this inaugural Service.

The announcement of these first Services was prominently advertised in all of the Polish Community's major digital and print media outlets. A special poster was designed acknowledging the SCRJ's sponsorship, and the support of Geiger College and the local music foundation. Thanks to this support and publicity I was able to appear on two major radio stations, including the nationally broadcast Polish Radio Channel Two, speaking live about the tradition of organ and choir music in the Reform synagogue. Selected pieces from the "Come O Sabbath Day" CD provided by the Society and Geiger College were broadcast. Also, we gave copies of the CD to listeners and invited them to the Services.

The musical and liturgical programs were arranged between me and Professor Ralph Selig from the Geiger College - for that purpose I had traveled to Berlin in mid-June. We designed a program for two services: Friday night and Shabbat morning. Of course, the pieces by Louis Lewandowski were the pearls in our services, especially taking into account his connection the Polish city of Poznan, formerly Posen in Prussia. Geiger College cantorial student

Assaf Levitin was asked to be our cantorial guest and he had kindly responded to our invitation. In addition to Assaf, our Jewish Community's choir "Shir Aviv" joined us for Friday night.

Invitations were sent to various dignitaries. Dieter Reinl, the Cultural Attaché of the Federal Republic of Germany was among several who attended. The number of people present was enormous. Our sanctuary seats up to 100 people and we had at least



Ec Chaim Congregation, Warsaw

120 present on Friday night. Some people had to sit on the floor and stand in the doorways. We don't get such a number even for Kol Nidrei! Shabbat morning also had more than 60 people present, which is a big number for Warsaw.

For the first time in the Warsaw Community's history since before the Shoah, an organ played in the synagogue and a mixed choir accompanied the service. Even the most skeptical members have said that the feeling and atmosphere were outstanding. The next SCRJ Musical Shabbat is planned for the weekend of Thanksgiving Day, with a festive Thanksgiving reception for American ex-pats in Warsaw.

*Respectfully,
Rabbi Stas Wojciechowicz*

(article continued on Page 10...)

Thank You To Our Donors!

We want to acknowledge and thank those who have supported
The Society for Classical Reform Judaism in recent months

Marcus Aaron
Greg and Rosemarie Abreu
Eddie Ackerman
Ackerman Foundation
Carlos Adame
Richard Adler
Robert and Judith Amdur
Elaine Amromin
Fanchon M. Apfel
Doris Baer
Jill Baker
Ann Lois Ballon
Donna Barrows
Herbert Barton
Joel Batalisky
Jost Baum
Lester Baum
Rabbi Leonard Beerman
(deceased)
Rabbi Sandra Bellush
Peter Bensinger
Andrew Berger
Rabbi Aaron Bisno
Megan Bladen Blinkoff
Rabbi Barry Block
Rabbi Lewis E. Bogage
Susan Bowman
Milton and Margaret Brown
Adam Brustein
Barclay Burns
Edmund Case
Frank Castronova
Elliot Chabot
Alexander Chingas
Rabbi Hillel Cohn
Rabbi Edward Cohn
Congregation B'nai Israel,
Little Rock, AR
Jennifer Coplon & Bob Frank
Annette and Jack Corman
Chuck Crush
Dallas Jewish Community
Foundation

Rabbi Benjamin David
Robert Davis
Richard and Carol Daynard
John E. Deimel
Bertram S. Devorsetz
Marianne Dreyfus
Donna White Dropkin
Thomas Drucker
Rabbi Denise Eger
Rabbi Bruce Ehrmann
Harold Eichenbaum, Jr.
Burton and Barbara Einspruch
Anne Elman
Jerry Ely
Roger Feffer
Phyllis Feibelman
Julian Feibelman
Ann Folz
Murray Frank
Frederick Frank
Barry Friedfertig
Gene Friedman
G & S Consultants
Jeffrey Gardner
Rabbi Stanley Garfein
Alan Garfinkle
Jim and Lori Gelbort
Louis and Judith Genesen
Rabbi Elliot Gertel
Foster Goldman
Richard Goldsmith
Lynn and Sharan Goldstein
David and Hanna Gradwohl
Janice Gradwohl
Maxine B. Greenberg
Edith Greenstone
Alan Gropman
Rabbi Robert Haas
Gloria and Myles Haffer
Rabbi Max Hausen
Lew and Jean Hecht
Werner Heim
Paul and Julie Herman

Rabbi and Mrs. Charles Herring
Michael Hess
Edith Hirsch
Emil Hirsch
Michele and Barry Hochstadt
Philip and Eileen Hoffman
Toby Hollenberg
Rabbi Peter Hyman
Franklin Harris Hytken
Herbert L. Isaac
Darius Jankowski
Kevin Jenkins
Bernard Joseph
Catherine Kahn
Joan Kahn
Naomi Kaminsky
Rabbi Kenneth Kanter
Cantor Aaron Kaplan
Rabbi and Mrs. Paul Kaplan
Doris and Ed Katten
Emily Keisler
Kate T. Kestnbaum
Andrea Kircher
Henry and Cookie Kohn
Aaron Krause
Charles Krohn
Rabbi David Kudan
James Lader
Hugh Lamensdorf
Edmund Landau
John Laping
Rabbi Devon Lerner
Miriam Letchinger
Morelle Levine
Marilyn Levitt &
Andy Friedland
Ursula Levy
Mary Lynne Levy
Mr. and Mrs. Bertram Levy
Margie and B.H. Levy, Jr.

OUR SUCCESS DEPENDS ON YOUR SUPPORT

Sue Lichten	Jeffrey Rosenbaum	Audrey Steuer
Rabbi Maura Linzer	Richard and Sydney Rosenberg	Dr. Arlene Stiffman
Eugene Lipstate	John Rothberg	Jan Stone
Dan Lissner	Vicki and Tom Samuels	James Stone
Jay Lorch	Nat Sandler	Susan and Errol Stone
Marc Lowenstein	Wolfgang and Donna Schaechter	Seth Streichler
Maxwell Lyons II	Lauren Scharf	Connie and Howard Sulkin
Harold Marcus	Mrs. Henry D. Schlinger	Rabbi Lance Sussman
Barbara Marks	Jan Schochet	The Pollock Foundation
Merle and Arthur Marquis	Schwab Charitable Fund	Max and Marilyn Tonkon
Ellen and Paul McIntosh	Rabbi Allan Schwartzman	Richard and Sherilee Trubitt
Marion Mendel	Myron Sholem	Victor Trubitt
Rabbi Stanley Miles	Rabbi Mark L. Shook	Charles and Ester Udell
Howard Millhauser	Stanley J. Shrager	Herbert and Teresa Victor
Richard Milstein	Stephen and Susan Sickle	Emily Vogel
Stephen and Shari Naman	Michael and Christine Sigman	Madeline Wallach
Rabbi Jacob Neusner	Jill and David Silverstein	Jane Wallerstein
Les Novitsky	Betty Simmons	Lyanne Wassermann
Caroline Panzer	Matthew Singer	Jonathan Wax
Richard and Frances Penn	Rabbi Nadia Siritsky	Thomas and Doris Weil
Thomas and Betty Philipsborn	Alex Slabosky	Tracy and Tony Weisman
Sonia E. Philipson	Richard Snyder	Ann Weisman & Robert Szurgot
Larry and Bonnie Pike	Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel	Debbie and Joe Welch
Doug and Seunhee Pike	Philip Solomons, Jr.	Susan Werbe
Claudia Plottel	Rabbi Samuel Stahl	Morris and Pat Wiener
Rabbi David Reiner	Pamela Stavinoga	Lois Wolfe
Rabbi Stanley Relkin	Donald and Claire Stein	Ann Wolff
Frederick Roden	Lawrence Steinberg	Robert and Anne Yudell
Harriett Rose	Nancy Sternoff	Edmond and Lois Zisook
		Dr. Gary Zola

While the Society for Classical Reform Judaism is based in the United States, we draw supporters from around the world. This list of donors includes individuals and foundations from 32 states and a number of countries.

HELP US CONTINUE OUR GROWTH AND SUCCESS BY MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TODAY!

Please consider making a gift in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special event. Provide their name and address and we will send an acknowledgement to the family. Use the enclosed envelope or send a check to The Society for Classical Reform Judaism, 15 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116, or contribute on our website at www.renewreform.org/donate

This list includes donors who made contributions in 2014.
Our sincerest apologies for any inadvertent omissions.

Rabbi Walter Holmolka, the rector of the Abraham Geiger College for the training of rabbis and a professor of Jewish Studies at Potsdam University in Germany, sent this subsequent report from the Service he attended on November 29:

Dear Howard,

This Friday night we celebrated a Classical Reform Musical Shabbat at the Ec Chaim Congregation in Warsaw.

We had over 100 people for the Service, including the new Israel Ambassador H.E. Anna Asari and her deputy, as well as the cultural attaché of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dieter Reinl. I was in attendance along with German guests from the Reform congregations of Berlin and Magdeburg. Also present were Pavel Spiwak, the director of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland and Professor Stanislaw Krajewski, who re-established Jewish life in this country after 1989. The guests were welcomed by Anna Chipczynska, the chairwoman of the Warsaw Jewish United Synagogue, of which Ec Chaim is a constituent.



Ec Chaim Choir, Warsaw

Besides Rabbi Stas Wojciechowicz, our student cantor Amnon Seelig officiated in a gown with a clergy tallit, accompanied by the synagogue's new seven person mixed choir. The SCRJ organ was played by Professor Ralph Selig from New Jersey. Music was chosen from the historic Sulzer and Lewandowski repertoire and was very well received.

I think the photos show that our shared project is developing successfully! Many thanks again for your support.

Sincerely
Rabbi Walter Homolka

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: TODAY'S CLASSICAL REFORM SUPPORTERS

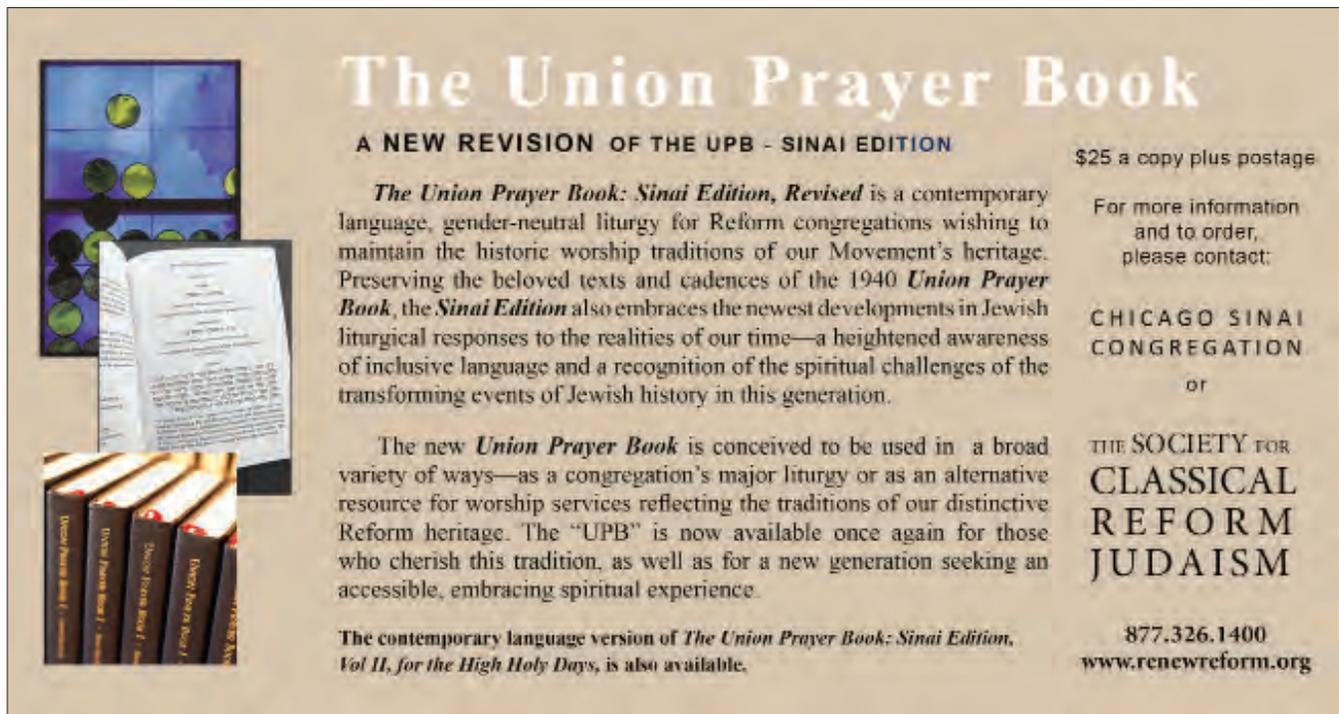
Why They Chose Classical Reform Judaism



A DECADES-LONG “UNOBSERVANT JEW” IN AN INTERFAITH MARRIAGE EMBRACES CLASSICAL REFORM JUDAISM

by Michael Sigman

I have been a member of Central Reform Temple (CRT) of Boston since the middle of 2010. I joined after many decades as an unobservant Jew and four years into an interfaith marriage. Before joining CRT, I had been discouraged by a round of “shul shopping” around town, where I found mostly a grudging “welcome” for my wife Christine, a dogmatic and



The Union Prayer Book

A NEW REVISION OF THE UPB - SINAI EDITION

The Union Prayer Book: Sinai Edition, Revised is a contemporary language, gender-neutral liturgy for Reform congregations wishing to maintain the historic worship traditions of our Movement's heritage. Preserving the beloved texts and cadences of the 1940 *Union Prayer Book*, the *Sinai Edition* also embraces the newest developments in Jewish liturgical responses to the realities of our time—a heightened awareness of inclusive language and a recognition of the spiritual challenges of the transforming events of Jewish history in this generation.

The new *Union Prayer Book* is conceived to be used in a broad variety of ways—as a congregation's major liturgy or as an alternative resource for worship services reflecting the traditions of our distinctive Reform heritage. The "UPB" is now available once again for those who cherish this tradition, as well as for a new generation seeking an accessible, embracing spiritual experience.

The contemporary language version of *The Union Prayer Book: Sinai Edition, Vol II, for the High Holy Days*, is also available.

\$25 a copy plus postage

For more information and to order, please contact:

CHICAGO SINAI CONGREGATION
or
THE SOCIETY FOR CLASSICAL REFORM JUDAISM

877.326.1400
www.renewreform.org

triumphal Zionism confused with religious ethics, and particular emphasis on Jewish separateness and religious ritual. I was looking for a Judaism that found its spiritual priorities elsewhere, in respect and recognition of all peoples, in laws that guide ethical conduct, in the embracing of modernity, and in an Israel more of the heart and of the mind than of the map.

Christine encouraged me to keep looking. On the advice of friends, Christine and I attended a service here at Central Reform. We immediately found an open and welcoming religious community that warmly accepted all seekers, including members of interfaith marriages and long-lapsed Jews (like me), LGBT people, and in general people with a wide variety of religious beliefs and knowledge. I also found a deeply committed congregation, steeped in the two centuries old tradition of Classical Reform Judaism.

Central Reform Temple and Classical Reform make no apology for applying the profundity of Jewish practice to the modern world, for modern congregants. This congregation fills its services with

a purposeful spirituality that I have rarely before experienced in other Temples. It also fills its seats with a large proportion of its membership at each service - a testament to its importance in our lives.

Rabbi Berman does not provide easy answers distilled from a potted version of the Tanakh, or any certainties regarding one's personal spiritual quest. He does, however, provide invaluable guidance on the parameters of Jewish belief that might guide that quest and help us find our own 'tree of life' in the forest of Jewish identity.

Our services remind us of the tragedy of our shared Jewish history, as well as the tragic histories of all Peoples. This martyrology, however, is not the ultimate point, as close as it remains to our hearts. It serves as a point of departure for a consideration of our obligation as Jews and ordinary human beings, neither "special" in a triumphal sense nor superior in our beliefs.

But how do we define ourselves? At the question-and-answer section of a recent High Holy Day Service we were asked about the degree to which we thought we could reject traditional forms and rituals... before we stopped being Jews. What

was essential to Jewish religious practice and what dispensable? I did not have an answer for him at that time, though I was fasting for the first time in many years, perhaps as a down payment on a fuller answer to that important question. In true Reform fashion, we were not provided with an absolute answer.

Our Rabbi did, however, provide his dry and piercing wit. After having encouraged us to contribute to our High Holy Day food drive for the needy, the Rabbi imagined the disapproving words of our Conservative and Orthodox co-religionists

on seeing us arrive in Temple with bags of food. “Ah, the Reform Jews,” the Rabbi imagined them saying. “Isn’t it just like them to bring their lunch to Yom Kippur services!” I think there was a serious message beneath: Tzedakah before appearances.

I hope that those of you who might be considering an investigation of your faith will explore what I found to be the depth and beauty of Classical Reform Judaism.

CORRECTION

In the last issue of *The Reform Advocate*, in Jamison Painter’s article, *My Spiritual Journey from Catholicism to Classical Reform Judaism*, we incorrectly edited his piece to say that he “never felt at home in the Catholic” or Anglican Church. Jamison did feel connected to these faith communities. In his own words, he said:

I was raised a Roman Catholic in Southern California, and attended a small Catholic university in that area. At age 19, I became an Anglican. After living abroad for two and one-half years I moved to Tennessee in 2002. It was there that I decided to become a Jew.



*Plum Street Temple Organ
Cincinnati, Ohio*

An Expanding SCRJ Resource!

CLASSICAL REFORM MUSIC CATALOGUE

Rediscovering Inspiring Liturgical Music

In the first half of the 20th century, Sabbath evening and morning worship Services included soaring classical compositions of familiar prayers and spirited congregational hymns. In the later half of the century, many Reform congregations started abandoning this music and replaced it with more informal contemporary pieces. The SCRJ encourages Reform congregations to revisit the “classics” and include them, along with today’s popular melodies, to add another inspiring dimension to the worship experience.

You can take an audio tour of many of these “classics,” by downloading our new Classical Reform Music Catalogue that lists Classical Reform Music albums and provides links to sites where you can sample clips from the sound tracks and purchase the music, if you desire. Go to our website, at www.renewreform.org and click on the Music menu. We will continue to add new listings to this catalogue - and welcome your suggestions. Stay tuned!

SPOTLIGHT ON REFORM JEWISH HISTORY



RABBI SALLY PRIESAND: FIRST WOMAN RABBI IN AMERICA

Rabbi Sally Priesand was the first woman to be ordained in the United States. Yet, to the surprise of many, she was not the first woman in the world to become a rabbi. Regina Jonas was the first woman rabbi in recorded history. She was privately ordained in 1935 in Germany, and died in Auschwitz in 1944. It wasn't until 37 years later, in 1972, that Hebrew



Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC - JIR) ordained Sally Priesand as the second woman rabbi in the world and the first to be ordained in America.

Priesand was born in 1946 in Cleveland, Ohio.

As a teenager at Beth Israel-West Temple, a Reform congregation on Cleveland's West Side, she was inspired by her Reform Jewish camp and youth group experiences. By the early 1960's, she set her sights on becoming a rabbi. This was long before the emerging women's liberation movement raised anew the call for women's access to traditionally male professions.

In 1964 Priesand entered the University of Cincinnati, which offered a joint undergraduate program with Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Anyone could participate in this program, including women. After graduating from the University of

Cincinnati 1968, and after much debate at HUC and in the Reform movement, she was admitted to HUC as a candidate for ordination.

As Priesand sought student pulpits, she discovered that many congregations either refused to interview her, or they interviewed her only for the novelty, claiming they could not hire a women rabbi. She ultimately served four student pulpits in four states, but it wasn't easy. She described that experience as "the unbelievable and almost unbearable pressure of being the first woman rabbi."

Temple boards used her gender as an excuse for not hiring her. Unable to secure a new position commensurate with her experience, she took a part time pulpit at temple Beth El in Elizabeth, New Jersey (1979-1981) and worked as a chaplain in Manhattan's Lenox Hill Hospital. It wasn't until 1981, nine years after her ordination that Priesand found a welcoming and supportive home at Monmouth Reform Temple in Trenton Falls, New Jersey.

In honor of her twenty-fifth anniversary in the rabbinate she received an honorary doctorate from the HUC-JIR. Her congregants also honored her by helping establish the Rabbi Sally J. Priesand Visiting Professorship in Jewish Women's Studies at the College-Institute. Since Priesand's ordination in 1972, the Hebrew Union College has ordained more than 600 women.

Read more about Rabbi Sally Priesand and the history of the ordination of women at the Jewish Women's Archive, www.jwa.org

*The ordination of women reflects our historic Classical Reform principles of equality and inclusion -
"...focusing on ethical action as the most important reflection of faith."*

**AVAILABLE FOR YOUR FAMILY OR
TEMPLE SEDER THIS YEAR!**

The New Union Haggadah, Revised Edition

Edited by Rabbi Howard A. Berman

*Published by the Central Conference of American Rabbis
with the sponsorship of the Society for Classical Reform Judaism*

Blends the best of the old and the new! This thoughtful update of this beloved Haggadah preserves the elegance and beauty of the original version while making it relevant to 21st Century families.

Originally published in 1923, *The Union Haggadah* served as the cherished seder companion for generations of American Jews. This new edition preserves the best of this classic Haggadah's approach to the Reform liturgical heritage, while providing accessible text and ritual for today's Jewish families and their guests. Parts of ritual that were excluded from the 1923 edition, like welcoming Elijah, have been reclaimed. Aspects of more recent ritual development, like Miriam's cup, have been added, along with new essays by leading contemporary scholars.

Not only does *The Union Haggadah, Revised Edition* preserve the literary beauty and the broad, universalistic spirit of the 1923 edition, it also creatively incorporates the beautiful original artwork. The revision has been created in cooperation with the Society for Classical Reform Judaism.

Special Features Include:

- Gender sensitive language
- Inclusive approach
- Full transliteration
- Miriam's Cup and Orange Ritual
- New essays by leading scholars

Hardcover, full color

Large print edition available in paperback

Price: \$18.00

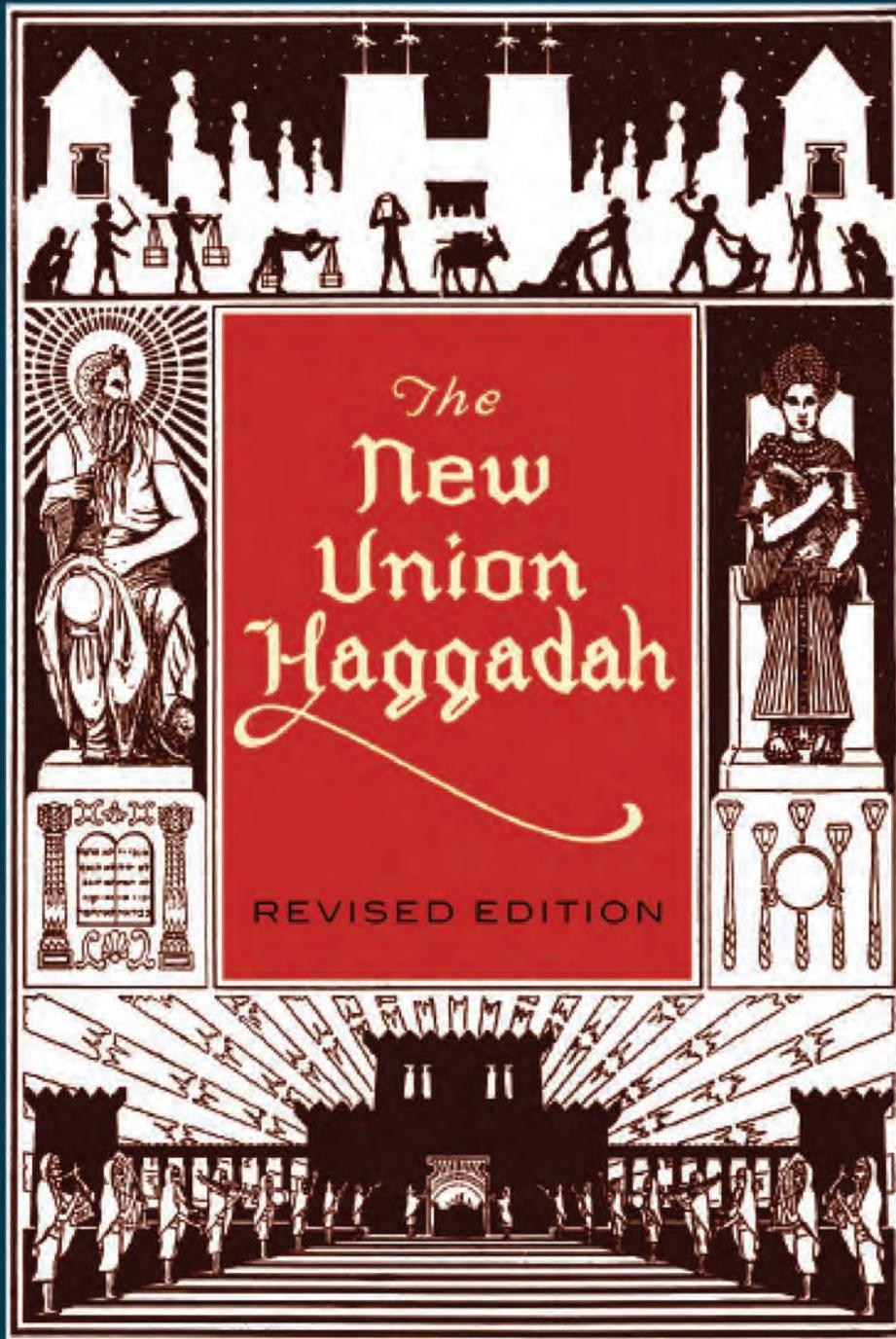
ISBN 978-0-88123-218-9

www.ccarpress.org

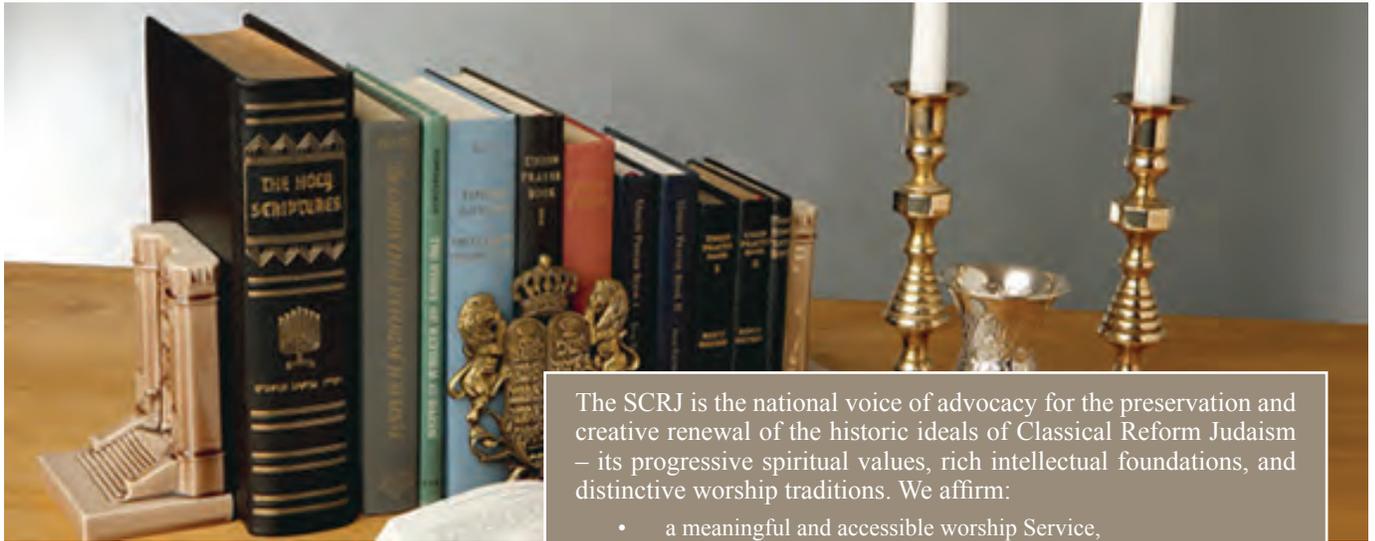
212-972-3636 x243



To order - contact the CCAR Press



CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS



The SCRJ is the national voice of advocacy for the preservation and creative renewal of the historic ideals of Classical Reform Judaism – its progressive spiritual values, rich intellectual foundations, and distinctive worship traditions. We affirm:

- a meaningful and accessible worship Service, primarily in English
- the ethical values, grounded in the timeless, universal vision of our Hebrew Prophets, that inspire our personal decision making and communal responsibility as primary expressions of our religious commitment as Jews
- the centrality of the American experience in our Jewish identity
- a warm, unconditional welcome and support for interfaith families

The integrity and inspiration of our Classical Reform heritage have continuing vitality and relevance for a new generation of Jews today.

THE SOCIETY FOR CLASSICAL REFORM JUDAISM

15 Newbury St. Boston, MA 02116

local: 617. 247. 4700 toll free: 877. 326. 1400

e-mail: info@renewreform.org

web site: www.RENEWREFORM.org

Rabbi Howard A. Berman
Executive Director

B. H. Levy, Jr.
President

Rabbi Devon Lerner
Program Coordinator

Board of Directors

B. H. Levy, Jr., President – *Savannah, Georgia*
 Rabbi Edward P. Cohn, Vice President – *Temple Sinai,
New Orleans, Louisiana*
 Victoria Woolner Samuels, Vice President – *Chicago, Illinois*
 Leslie J. Novitsky, Secretary – *Arlington, Virginia*
 Charles Udell, Treasurer – *Leawood, Kansas*
 Max Edward Tonkon, Board Chairman – *Dallas, Texas*
 Edward Ackerman – *Dallas, Texas*
 Eddie Ackerman – *Dallas, Texas*
 Rabbi Hillel Cohn – *Congregation Emanu-El, San Bernardino, California*
 Philip Hoffman – *Chicago, Illinois*

Cantor Aaron Kaplan – *Houston, Texas*
 Morelle Levine – *Los Angeles, California*
 Daniel Lissner – *Boston, Massachusetts*
 Douglas H. Pike – *Atlanta, Georgia*
 Larry Pike – *Atlanta, Georgia*
 Fred S. Roden – *New York, New York*
 Rabbi Nadia Siritsky – *Louisville, Kentucky*
 Jill S. Silverstein – *Boston, Massachusetts*
 Rabbi Ronald B. Sobel – *Congregation Emanu-El
of the City of New York, New York*
 Jan E. Stone – *Chicago, Illinois*