

CONSENSUS STATEMENT ON HOMOSEXUALITY

This paper was approved by the CJLS on March 25, 1992, by a vote of nineteen in favor, three opposed, and one abstaining (19-3-1). Voting in favor: Rabbis Kassel Abelson, Stanley Bramnick, Elliot N. Dorff, Richard L. Eisenberg, David Feldman, Samuel Frint, Arnold M. Goodman, Jan Caryl Kaufman, Reuven Kimelman, Aaron L. Mackler, Herbert Mandl, Lionel E. Moses, Mayer Rabinowitz, Avram Israel Reisner, Joel E. Rembaum, Chaim A. Rogoff, Joel Roth, Morris Shapiro, and Gerald Skolnik. Voting against: Rabbis Dov Peretz Elkins, Howard Handler and Gordon Tucker. Abstaining: Rabbi Ben Zion Bergman.

The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly provides guidance in matters of halakhah for the Conservative movement. The individual rabbi, however, is the authority for the interpretation and application of all matters of halakhah.

The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of The Rabbinical Assembly affirms the following policies:

- (A) We will not perform commitment ceremonies for gays or lesbians.
- (B) We will not knowingly admit avowed homosexuals to our rabbinical or cantorial schools or to the Rabbinical Assembly or the Cantors' Assembly. At the same time, we will not instigate witch hunts against those who are already members or students.
- (C) Whether homosexuals may function as teachers or youth leaders in our congregations and schools will be left to the rabbi authorized to make halakhic decisions for a given institution within the Conservative Movement. Presumably, in this as in all other matters, the rabbi will make such decisions taking into account the sensitivities of the people of his or her particular congregation or school. The rabbi's own reading of Jewish law on these issues, informed by the responsa written for the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards to date, will also be a determinative factor in these decisions.
- (D) Similarly, the rabbi of each Conservative institution, in consultation with its lay leaders, will be entrusted to formulate policies regarding the eligibility of homosexuals for honors within worship and for lay leadership positions.
- (E) In any case, in accordance with The Rabbinical Assembly and United Synagogue resolutions, we hereby affirm gays and lesbians are welcome in our congregations, youth groups, camps, and schools.

EDITORS' NOTE: The following papers from the CJLS deliberations on homosexuality, completed on March 25, 1992, were written mainly in reaction to a paper submitted by Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson. Rabbi Artson's paper is not included in this collection since it was not adopted by the Committee.