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Rabbis Daniel Nevins, Joel Pitkowsky, and Raysh Weiss

Dissent to “Hanukkat Habayit (Dedication of the Jewish Home) Ceremony for Couples Consisting of a Jewish Partner and a Non-Jewish Partner Who Have Decided to Build an Exclusively Jewish Home and Family Together”

This paper was submitted, in July 2026, as a dissent to section 6 of “Gateways Into Jewish Living.” Dissenting and concurring opinions are not official positions of the CJLS.

We agree with Rabbi Barton that rabbis should help their fellow Jews to fulfill the mitzvah of placing kosher *mezuzot* on their doorways, and also agree that a home dedication (*hanukkat habayit*) is an opportunity to encourage the family to invest their home with Jewish rituals and values. The fact that one or more members of the family are not Jewish does not exclude this home from serving as a vessel for Jewish life.

However, we object to the integration of Jewish wedding liturgy (*sameach tisamach*) into this ritual. That text comes from the sixth blessing under the chuppah, and is not called for here. Given that the RA standard of religious practice prohibits our clergy from reciting any liturgy at an interfaith marriage, it is inappropriate for them to recite this liturgy for the couple in a different setting.

The modified version of the blessing suggested here (ending *hatov v'hameitiv*) is taken from the CJLS 2012 wedding liturgy for same-sex Jewish couples, and is not authorized for interfaith marriages. This proposed use of the sixth wedding blessing is at the very least confusing, and it is an unsanctioned liturgy (*brakhah l'vatalah*).

One may recite the blessing over wine (*borei peri hagafen*) whenever wine is tasted, but the use here is again reminiscent of its use in the wedding and brit milah liturgies, and therefore inappropriate for this occasion. The appropriate blessing for this event (provided at the end of the proposal) is indeed "to attach the mezuzah" (*likboah mezuzah*) in fulfillment of the commandment, and then perhaps "*shehechianu*" for the dedication of a new home.

Kind words of blessing for the family are always appropriate, as is the hope that they will grow more attached to Jewish tradition. We commend Rabbi Barton for her call to treat intermarried couples with kindness and respect, and to keep the door open for deeper engagement with Judaism.