

# Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association RESOLUTION

## FULLER ACCEPTANCE OF GAY AND LESBIAN JEWS IN OUR COMMUNITY

1990

Whereas the first class to be admitted to the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College under that College's policy of non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is now approaching graduation and ordination; and

Whereas the Reconstructionist movement invests heavily in the education and training of its rabbis and can ill afford to lose the talent and leadership skills each Reconstructionist rabbi can contribute to the movement; and

Whereas our late colleague, Rabbi Hershel Jonah Matt (zichrono l'vracha), who taught us always to see the Image of the Divine in each human being, wrote (in Conservative Judaism, Vol. 39:3, Spring 1987, pp. 29-33) that "homosexuality, contrary to assumptions that have been widely accepted from biblical times to our very own day, involves not merely a single, overt act or a series of such acts, but usually reflects a profound inner condition and basic psychic orientation, involving the deepest levels of personality," arguing that traditional and current discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is based on a misunderstanding of what it means to be gay or lesbian; and

Whereas, there is precedent for, and Reconstructionist see an obligation for, the reversal of provisions and attitudes based on such misunderstandings, just as the Mishnaic legislation curtailing the role of the deaf-mute (Rosh Hashannah 3:8) based on a misunderstanding of what it means to be deaf could not fairly be applied today, and new attitudes towards the place and capabilities of women have led to new roles for them; and

Whereas it is estimated that as many as 500,000 Jews in North American are gay or lesbian, and the lives of many more friends and family members are touched by the issue; and

Whereas a commitment to tikkun olam is implicit in our vision of who we are as Reconstructionist in the Jewish community and of what Judaism is and should stand for in the world; and

Whereas we are encouraged by the establishment, on the part of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association and the Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot, of a joint commission to address the issue of the fuller acceptance of gay and lesbian Jews in our community;

Therefore we, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, resolve that:

1. The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association direct its representation on that joint commission addressing the issue of gay and lesbian acceptance to insist that the commission assemble written and programmatic educational resources in regards to the issue of gay and lesbian acceptance within the Jewish community and the Reconstructionist Jewish community in particular, and that these materials and resources be made readily available to all parts of the Reconstructionist movement; and
2. The Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association direct its representation on the Reconstructionist Placement Commission to insist that the Commission include in the FRCH-RRA Guidelines to Rabbinic-Congregational Relations the following statement:

The Reconstructionist movement expects all listing congregations to refrain from discrimination on the basis of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, birth-religion, age, race, national origin

or physical disability. We therefore encourage all congregations to sustain movement toward fully non-discriminatory policies in accordance with the highest ideals in the Reconstructionist understanding of Jewish civilization.