

**Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
RESOLUTION**

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN ISRAEL

1995

The Israeli Proclamation of Independence of May 14, 1948, states that full freedom of religion and conscience is to be granted to all citizens of Israel. For the past 46 years, Moslems, Christians and members of other non-Jewish religions have enjoyed freedom to practice their religions, and their clergy have been empowered to perform marriages and grant divorces. However, Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist Jews have had almost no religious right because their rabbis are not recognized under Israeli law and are prevented from performing basic life cycle functions. Furthermore, these Jews are often denied state support for their religious institutions. Thus, the theoretical right of equality for all Jews in the State of Israel is translated, in practicality, into second-class religious rights for the majority of Israeli Jews. The urgency of addressing the lack of religious pluralism in Israel is underscored by the periodic crises over the status of religion in Israel, crises in which the American Jewish community has become involved, and by the many Soviet and Ethiopian Olim who currently have trouble being able to marry in Israel.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association in conjunction with a similar resolution passed by the Central Conference of American Rabbis last week in Jerusalem, call for the Government and Knesset of Israel to extend full freedom of religion to all Jews in Israel, to end religious coercion, to end the religious monopoly granted to one segment of Jewry, and to repeal all laws which discriminate against Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist Jews; and

Be it further resolved, that the RRA undertake a concerted effort aimed at implementing full religious freedom for the sake of our people in the State of Israel and for Klal Yisrael; and

Be it further resolved, that the RRA begin to work with the organizations and individuals who are building a liberal Jewish alternative in Israel; and

Be it further resolved, that the RRA resolve to undertake to place this issue on the agenda of the Jewish community in North America through local Community Relations Committees, relevant Federation committees and in other organizational venues, local and national; and

Be it further resolved, that the RRA demand the formation of a clear, unequivocal policy that calls upon the State of Israel to

1. recognize in law the basic human right of marriage, especially for new immigrants and Jews by choice, and
2. grant legal recognition for the Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist movements, whose institutions will make religious pluralism a reality in Israel.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association joins with the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Rabbinical Assembly in a call to the Government and Knesset to recognize in law the right of the Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist movements, and to authorize their rabbis and institutions to function legally in ceremonies related to marriage, conversion and burial.