

14th July 2015
27th Tammuz 5775
Dear synagogue Chair,
We hope this finds you well.

We are writing to update you about a recent proposal made by the Assembly of Rabbis in response to requests from many communities (as well as our Youth Movement, RSY-Netzer) to consider our current approach to Jewish status. The Assembly were keen that we stay true to our core values, treasuring both Jewish tradition and Judaism's ability to evolve in response to the contemporary world, as well as being inclusive and egalitarian. After a suitably thorough process of study and discussion, they are proposing a new way of welcoming people into our communities, specifically where one parent is Jewish. It is a flexible framework to respond to a variety of needs.

Naturally, all the existing options for conversion remain available. The Assembly recognises, for example, that if a person has a Jewish father and a Jewish upbringing and wishes to embrace their Judaism through a Reform Synagogue, formal conversion may not be the most appropriate response. Instead, for someone with one Jewish parent who leads (will lead) a 'Jewish life' it will be possible to confirm Jewish status in a local process led by the person's rabbi and ratified by the Beit Din. The proposals are a natural evolution of our current practice, and as communities have done for centuries, respond to the needs of our members.

You will find more detail in the attached FAQs document. We are proud to offer these new ways of welcoming people to our communities, just as we were proud to lead on equal marriage and on calling women to the bimah. We anticipate that congregations will now, in consultation with their rabbis, discuss the details amongst themselves. We ask that you share this message with your communities and please use the enclosed FAQs document to answer questions that may arise. We are very happy to respond to any more detailed queries you or your members may have.

Warm regards,

Robert Weiner
Chair of Movement

Paul Freedman
Chair of Assembly

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