

Dear respondent to the JTS Study:

The three *teshuvot* accepted by the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards embrace a wide range of conclusions. They may be described succinctly in simplified form as follows:

- One *teshuva* reaffirmed the prior position of the CJLS, which denied ordination as clergy to active homosexuals and also prohibited same-sex commitment ceremonies or marriage.
- One *teshuva*, while retaining the Torah's explicit prohibition as understood by the rabbis banning male homosexual intercourse, argued for the full normalization of the status of gay and lesbian Jews. Under this ruling, gay and lesbian Jews may be ordained as clergy and their committed relationships may be recognized, although not as sanctified marriage.
- A third *teshuva* upheld the traditional prohibitions, argued that homosexuality is not a unitary condition, and urged the development of educational programs within the community to achieve understanding, compassion, and dignity for gays and lesbians.

Each of these positions is now valid within Conservative Judaism, and individual rabbis will choose which position to follow.

Please do complete this survey, and feel free to skip any questions which you do not wish to answer for any reason. Feel free to be in touch with me with any comments or questions. I can be reached at JTSSch@aol.com.

Professor Steven M. Cohen

Your Position in Conservative Judaism

Are you [CHECK ONE] ...

(If retired, please answer with respect to your major career during your working life.)

Clergy

A rabbi who is a Mara d'Atra of a Conservative congregation or institution

A rabbi serving in another congregational position

A rabbi serving in another capacity

A cantor

Other Jewish professionals

An educational administrator (in a Day or congregational school or informal education setting)

A classroom teacher

Camp Director

USY or Kadima youth group leader

Another Jewish educator (in a school or informal education setting)

An executive director of a congregation

Another Jewish communal professional

Jewish lay leaders and others

The president of a congregation

Another lay leader in a Conservative congregation or other body

Students

A rabbinical student at JTS

A cantorial student at JTS

Another type of student at JTS

A college student

A USY member

Other student

Others

All other

Are you a member of the Board of Directors of the USCJ? Yes No

Do you hold any positions of leadership with respect to JTS? Yes No

Your Views on the Issues

What are your views on the relevant issues, and related matters, recently addressed by the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards (CJLS)?

Favor Oppose Not sure

- Allowing the ordination of openly gay Conservative rabbis
- Allowing the investiture of openly gay and lesbian Conservative cantors
- Allowing the Conservative rabbis to perform same-sex commitment ceremonies
- Allowing Conservative rabbis to marry same-sex Jewish couples in a Jewish marriage ceremony
- Interpreting Jewish law as prohibiting “male homosexual intercourse”
- Banning all forms of homosexual physical intimacy
- Advocating “reparative therapy” for homosexuals

Your Initial Reactions

In which of the following ways did you react when you heard of the CJLS decisions?

Yes No Not sure

- I felt relieved
- I felt confused
- I felt marginalized in the Conservative movement
- I felt proud to be a Conservative Jew
- I felt I could not defend the stance of the Conservative movement
- I felt somewhat embarrassed by one or more of the CJLS decisions
- I felt the CJLS decisions did not go far enough in legitimizing gay relationships
- I was pleased that the Committee had endorsed multiple opposing opinions, and not just one or the other
- I felt that the decisions were an interim step toward full equality and acceptance of gays and lesbians in the Conservative Jewish community
- I felt that the decisions were an accommodation to political correctness

Your Views on the CJLS Decisions -- and Related Issues

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
("CJLS" = Committee on Jewish Law and Standards)

Agree **Somewhat** **Mixed,** **Somewhat** **Dis-**
Agree **Agree** **Not sure** **Disagree** **agree**

The CJLS decisions will help Conservative Judaism appeal to younger Jews

In the long run, the CJLS decisions will mean fewer committed Conservative Jews

My close friends seem to largely support the CJLS decision permitting ordaining gay & lesbian rabbis

My fellow congregants who are active in my congregation seem to largely oppose the CJLS decision permitting ordaining gay & lesbian rabbis

The CJLS decisions blur the boundary between Conservative and Reform Judaism

The CJLS decisions widen the gap between Conservatism and Orthodoxy

If my congregation employs gay and lesbian rabbis and cantors, I will join another Conservative synagogue

If my congregation employs gay and lesbian rabbis and cantors, I will join a synagogue of another movement

It doesn't matter to me if my rabbi or cantor would be openly gay or lesbian.

I would not attend a same-sex Jewish commitment ceremony

I hope the 4 rabbis who resigned from the CJLS will return

The CJLS should have publicly circulated the draft teshuvot for study by interested members of the Conservative movement

CJLS members who voted to liberalize the stance on gays and lesbians were strongly influenced by their family, friends, and congregants

CJLS members who voted to keep the previous stance on gay and lesbians were strongly influenced by their family, friends, and congregants

Homosexuality is in-born, not chosen voluntarily

With reparative therapy, many homosexuals can change their sexual orientation

The legal reasoning in the permissive paper that was approved by the CJLS was outside the pale of acceptability of halakhic reasoning

Those who walk to shul on Shabbat are really Orthodox

It was a mistake for the CJLS, years ago, to have legitimated driving to shul on Shabbat

Conservative Judaism, at this stage, would be better served if there were no centralized Law Committee

Conservative Judaism is a halakhic movement

Conservative Judaism should stop pretending it is a halakhic movement

The Torah was written by people and not by God or by Divine inspiration

I would not want a woman to serve as rabbi of my congregation

I would not want a woman to serve as cantor of my congregation

Conservative congregations that are not fully gender egalitarian should leave the movement

Conservative congregations that won't hire gay rabbis or cantors should leave the movement

Conservative Judaism should adopt "patrilineal descent," where the child of a Jewish father and non-Jewish mother would be considered Jewish

Conservative rabbis ought to be allowed to officiate at marriages between Jews and non-Jews

The Seminaries

Would you favor or oppose the following actions by three of the movement's training institutions?

Favor Oppose Not sure

Accepting openly gay and lesbian students at the JTS rabbinical school

Accepting openly gay and lesbian students at the UJ's Ziegler rabbinical school

Accepting openly gay and lesbian students at the Machon Schechter rabbinical school

Accepting openly gay and lesbian cantorial students at JTS

Gay and lesbian Jews in Positions of Conservative Leadership

Would you favor or oppose engaging an openly gay or lesbian person in the following positions?

Favor Oppose Not sure

Congregational rabbi

Cantor

Head of religious school

Executive director of a congregation

President of the congregation

Schechter principal

Schechter teacher of general studies

Ramah camp counselor

USY director

Your personal patterns of observance and belief

To better understand our answers, we need to get some understanding of your own philosophy and practice of Jewish life. First we start with some select indicators of observance ...

Yes No Not sure

Do you dine in restaurants without a kashrut certificate?

(If yes) Do you eat warmed food (e.g., fish) prepared at such restaurants?

(If yes) Do you eat cooked meat at such restaurants?

Do you keep kosher at home?

Do you fast at least part of the day on Tisha b'Av?

Do you say daily prayers at least 3 times a week?

Do you attend Shabbat services at least 3 times a month?

Do you refrain from shopping on Shabbat?

Do you refrain from turning lights on and off on Shabbat?

Do you refrain from riding to shul on Shabbat?

Do you engage in Jewish text study more than once a week, either on your own, with a hevruta, or in a class where you are a learner and not the teacher?

With respect to other Conservative leaders in a similar position or status as yourself, do you see yourself as ...

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|---------|
| Theologically ... | Conservative | Moderate/Centrist | Liberal |
| Observance ... | Conservative | Moderate/Centrist | Liberal |

Background Information

You are ... Male Female

Your age (drop-down menu)

You are Married Never married Divorced or separated Widowed

In a committed relationship with a person of the opposite sex

In a committed relationship with a person of the same sex

You live in ... The U.S. Canada Israel Elsewhere

(If the US) Your congregation's zip code _____

About how many families belong to the synagogue with which you are affiliated?

0-99 100-249 250-499 500-749 750-999 1000 or more

Yes No

Did you ever attend a Jewish Day School?

Did you ever attend Camp Ramah?

Were you ever active in USY or LTF?

Did you ever study for a summer or more in Israel?

Did you ever attend ... JTS

UJ

Machon Schechter

Of the following people, who are **openly and publicly** gay, lesbian, or bisexual?

Yes No Not sure

Any members of your extended family?

Any of your close friends?

Any of your friends' children, grandchildren, or parents?

And finally, are you openly and publicly gay, lesbian or bisexual?

THANK YOU