

Vision

WHY RECONSTRUCTIONISM NOW? Since Mordecai Kaplan's time, Reconstructionists and those we have influenced have understood that Judaism is about more than religion and that Jewishness is about more than biology: Being Jewish involves not only belief and status but also behavior and attitude. The primary goals of Reconstructionists, be we classical or contemporary, are to gather in Jews who are disengaged or disenfranchised and celebrate multiple paths toward Jewish engagement.

We seek ways to renew our communities so that the next generation joins us even after they have experienced rich alternatives. A Reconstructionist approach aspires to draw Jews to meaningful and values-driven Jewish living, diversely experienced, generated by Jews and their families in partnership with rabbis and other leaders. Fueled by a sense of ownership and responsibility, informed by optimism, we inquire, we learn, we experiment. We, the Jewish people, continue to reconstruct the Jewish civilization.

Foremost in my vision for the future is to realize the full potential of the movement restructuring that yielded the combined Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC) and Jewish Reconstructionist Communities (JRC), and, in so doing, to enhance the influence and impact of Reconstructionist Judaism. A first step is to leverage RRC/JRC as a vital educational center for the Reconstructionist movement and beyond, and to demonstrate that, in our educational mandate, we are contributing in meaningful ways to the well-being and prominence of the Reconstructionist movement.

This vision features a rabbinical program that is relevant to the current environment and attractive to potential candidates. It imagines new degree and certificate programs that are oriented toward our congregants and stakeholders (e.g., a mid-career certificate in mindful leadership) or professionals with spiritual inclinations (e.g., a certificate in spiritual care giving). In realizing this vision, we recognize that we will need to redeploy faculty toward service to the movement and educational programs beyond the rabbinical program.

A second priority is strengthening the Reconstructionist movement. A primary strategy is to provide congregational support to help communities succeed in their own communal work, which itself strengthens the Reconstructionist movement. The affiliate support team is already developing materials and services to aid congregations' efforts to bolster their viability. We will expand regional and virtual events, the capacity to share best practices across congregations, and visits from faculty members and leaders. Beyond congregations, I seek to establish RRC/JRC as an incubator or innovation lab to cultivate new models of Jewish life.

Another critical movement-building strategy is to reaffirm or establish energized and engaging relationships with Reconstructionist rabbis, to support them in efforts to establish entrepreneurial rabbinates, and to activate them as agents of, thinkers for, and representatives of the larger movement. The final priority is attaining financial and programmatic viability for the Reconstructionist movement. Through multiple strategies, we must engage more effectively with internal and external audiences and, we hope, translate our efforts effectively into greater support toward our mission.

In all of these activities, I am honored to partner with lay leaders and rabbis to build a vital future for the Reconstructionist movement, and excited to collaborate powerfully with leaders within and beyond the Jewish community.