

Why will I vote “Reform” at the upcoming WZC election?

Are you Jewish? Are you sure?

These are questions my cousin Oded was asked at a family bris in Israel last summer by a newly converted Orthodox distant relative. Oded was born in Israel 62 years ago and worked his whole life to turn a desert into a flourishing democratic economy. His father narrowly escaped being captured by the Nazis and fought in the French resistance. His grandfather was exterminated in a Nazi death camp. His mother was born catholic. His parents moved to Israel in 1952 with nothing but the hope that they could live in a place where Jews would be safe.

Today, Oded’s Judaism, his right to be a Jew in Israel is questioned.

How about you? Are you Jewish? Are you sure? Can you prove it? How do those questions make you feel?

- What happened to Oded makes me mad.
- The fact that my two gay cousins will not be able to get married in Israel surrounded by their friends and family makes me mad.
- The fact that I had to jostle for space to get close to the wailing wall in Jerusalem because the women’s area is tiny, makes me mad.
- The fact that my 14-year-old niece was asked to fully cover her legs before she was allowed to approach the wall, while men can wear whatever they please makes me mad.

I am a Temple B’nai Or congregant with three kids in Hebrew school. Those are only a handful of reasons why I can’t wait to vote Reform for the upcoming World Zionist Congress election. I want Israel to be a place where all Jews are part of the society, not just those Jews approved by the Orthodox rabbinate, where Jews can marry without needing the approval of the Orthodox rabbinate, where women and gays will have equal rights in their practice of the Jewish religion, where women don’t need their husbands’ and the Orthodox rabbinate’s permission to get a divorce. I want to vote Reform at the WZC election so that if and when my kids and grandkids need refuge and want to move to Israel, they will be welcomed because they identify as Jews, and not questioned about the purity of their Jewish ancestry.

What about you? Will you vote Reform at the upcoming election?

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