



## Rabbis Without Borders Student Retreat

# Re-Imagining Synagogues and the Rabbinate

There is a growing consensus that the institutions of American Jewish life are not changing rapidly enough to meet the needs of the Jewish community. Synagogues are often the target of the harshest criticism in this regard. If there is to be a vibrant Jewish future in America, it will have to be shaped by rabbis who have the creativity and the know-how to re-imagine, both the synagogue and the rabbinate. This retreat will introduce participants to some of the most innovative thinking in the field. It will also provide practical training for future rabbis who want to acquire the skills to help shape new approaches to American Jewish life.

**Date:** Nov. 7-10, 2013

**Place:** Pearlstone Retreat Center, Reisterstown, MD

**Faculty:** Rabbis Terry Bookman, Rachel Nussbaum and Sid Schwarz

*Five students per seminary will be nominated by their school.*

Registration is a \$100/student with a generous travel subsidy provided

For more information, contact Michelle Klahr at [mklahr@clal.org](mailto:mklahr@clal.org) or 212-779-3300 x126.

**Co-Sponsoring Seminaries:** Hebrew Union College (New York, Cincinnati, and Los Angeles), The Jewish Theological Seminary, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Rabbinical School at Hebrew College (Boston), Academy for Jewish Religion, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School, Yeshivat Maharat, International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism and ALEPH Rabbinic Program.

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## Faculty Bios

**Terry A. Bookman** has been the senior rabbi of Temple Beth Am in Miami since 1994. A graduate of HUC-JIR, he was a Fellow at the Center for Religion and Psychotherapy in Chicago, and has extensive pastoral counseling experience. Terry is the author of *The Busy Soul: Ten Minute Spiritual Workouts Drawn from Jewish TRADITION*, *God 101*, (both published by Putnam Press), *The Soul's Journey* and *This House We Build: Lessons for Healthy Synagogues and the People Who Dwell There* (Alban Institute). Together with Cantor Rachelle Nelson, he has written and produced three CD's, "Bless Our Days" and "Bless Our Years," and "Bless Our Holy Days." Terry is co-founder of *Eitzah*/The Center for Congregational Leadership, whose mission is to strengthen the capacities of congregational leaders, lay and professional, to create effective, vibrant synagogues through education, training, coaching, research, and organizational development.

**Rachel Nussbaum** is the Rabbi and Executive Director of the Kavana Cooperative, which she co-founded in Seattle, Washington in 2006. Kavana has been recognized multiple times by Slingshot as one of the 50 most innovative Jewish organizations in America, and by *Newsweek* as one of "America's 25 Most Vibrant Congregations." In addition, Rachel has been a recipient of the prestigious AVI CHAI Fellowship (the Jewish "genius award"), the Joshua Venture Fellowship (for Jewish social entrepreneurs), and the Wexner Graduate Fellowship. Rachel's passions include teaching rabbinic texts, leading spirited and musical prayer services, and challenging people to see Judaism as a catalyst for change. Rachel grew up in Charleston, South Carolina and received degrees from Duke University and the Jewish Theological Seminary. She and her husband Noam Pianko are the proud parents of three adorable children: Yona, Mia and Elisha.

**Sid Schwarz** founded and led PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values for 21 years. He is also the founding rabbi of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda, MD where he continues to teach and lead services. Dr. Schwarz holds a Ph.D. in Jewish history and is the author of two groundbreaking books--*Finding a Spiritual Home: How a New Generation of Jews Can Transform the American Synagogue* (Jewish Lights, 2000) and *Judaism and Justice: The Jewish Passion to Repair the World* (Jewish Lights, 2006). Currently, Sid serves as a senior fellow at Clal: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership where he directs the Clergy Leadership Incubator (CLI) a program that trains rabbis to be visionary spiritual leaders. Sid was awarded the prestigious Covenant Award for his pioneering work in the field of Jewish education and was named by *Newsweek* as one of the 50 most influential rabbis in North America. Sid's newest book is *Jewish Megatrends: Charting the Course of the American Jewish Future* (Jewish Lights, 2013).

## Comments from past participants

I did not anticipate the deep personal growth and my own gentle but consistent "demand" that I stretch, embrace, include, challenge and be challenged by the people and the atmosphere that permeated the RWB conference. I didn't realize how energizing and nourishing my engagement with these folks would be.

Amy Sands, Hebrew College

The RWB retreat offered an environment where rabbinical students of different backgrounds, but with the same goal of serving the Jewish people, came together to imagine and gain leadership skills with each other. Our similarities became much more important than our differences.

Elyssa Cohen, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

I never considered going into the congregational rabbinate. But the conversations I had with my peers and with the presenters challenged me to consider that option quite seriously and helped me to imagine new models of building community.

Lindsey Healey-Pollack, Jewish Theological Seminary

Many participants came to this conference "locked" into their denominational "bubbles" of similar thought patterns. But the wonderful diversity of the faculty and the students helped everyone have at least a few "breakthrough" moments that offered new ideas and new ways of thinking about the rabbinate.

Corinne Copnick, Academy of Jewish Religion-LA

Despite some initial concerns I had about compromises I would have to make, I was pleasantly surprised that there were many places where our theology overlapped with other, non-Orthodox students. We bonded so well with the students from Hebrew Union College that we plan to continue meeting on our own to further strengthen our connections.

Will Keller, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah