

# 2014: A Good Year For Religious Pluralism

As the dust settles from the mid-March Knesset elections in Israel and the negotiations are completed towards the establishment of a new government, this is a good opportunity to look back at the previous government and the several major victories that took place during its tenure for non-Orthodox Judaism.

1. State-funded rabbinical salaries: Following an eight-year legal battle, the state for the first time began paying salaries to rabbis representing the non-Orthodox movements, albeit only to rabbis serving in congregations within the purview of outlying, regional councils, rather than in major cities.

2. Presidential recognition: In his first few and very hectic months in office, Israel's new president, Reuven Rivlin, took the time to meet with North American leaders of both the Conservative and Reform movements. This is the same man who previously had referred to Reform Judaism as "idol worship and not Judaism."

3. Tiny Torah trick: For two months in a row, Women of the Wall were able to realize a 25-year-old dream of reading from a Torah scroll at the women's section of the Western Wall. They succeeded by sneaking in a tiny Torah scroll, measuring just 28 centimeters in length but deemed perfectly kosher.

4. State funding for youth movement: Noam, the Masorti Movement's youth movement, for the first time ever received state funding through the Ministry of Education. One of the smaller youth movements in the country, Noam has been active in Israel for 30 years but only now met the requirements for state funding with more than 2,000 members.

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**MERCAZ President Janet Tobin and Rita Wertlieb, former WLCJ President, speaking to Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy**

## It's Not Too Late to Vote for the Zionist Congress



### What You Need to Know About Voting

General registration and voting, which started on January 13th, ends on April 30th.

Registration and voting may be done either online or by mail. If begun online, it must be completed online; if begun by mail, it may be completed either by mail or online.

For those who are participating in the elections online, it is a one-step process to register and to vote. Once they have submitted the registration form with their email address and paid by credit card, they will get an email with a link to the voting site. They will receive an email confirmation of registration only after they have completed the voting process. Go to [www.mercazusa.org](http://www.mercazusa.org) and click "vote" to start the process.

Those who prefer using a mail-in paper registration form may opt to vote either by paper ballot or online voting, provided that their email address has been listed on the paper form. The registration form is available to download from the MERCAZ website in the "vote" section.

The deadline for receiving the mail-in form is April 15th in order to vote either by mail-in ballot or by online voting. Paper ballots have started being mailed out and will continue in scheduled waves until April 15th. Only those who first registered by mail may receive a paper ballot and vote by mail.

People who already registered by print form but who did not receive their mailed ballots should send an email to [azm@election-america.com](mailto:azm@election-america.com) or call (844) 413-2929 to request a ballot. During the voting period, if anyone requires a replacement mail ballot, he/she must call (844) 413-2929. If you have any questions about registering or voting, contact Election America at (844) 413-2929 or [azm@election-america.com](mailto:azm@election-america.com).

If you have any questions about MERCAZ USA, our slate of candidates or our platform, visit our website [www.mercazusa.org](http://www.mercazusa.org) or contact us at (212) 533-2061 or [info@mercazusa.org](mailto:info@mercazusa.org).

