



**AWP Action Learning Team: Leadership Intensive  
June 20, 2012**

**Case Study: The Reform Movement**

**The Union of Reform Judaism**

The URJ, which is the organizing body of the Reform Movement, recently hired Rabbi Rick Jacobs as its new President. Four additional men were selected alongside him to be the public face of the movement. The CFO and COO of the URJ are both women. These hires take place in a context where the other major arms of the movement are led by men (Hebrew Union College, the CCAR, and the Religious Action Center), and so currently the public face of the Reform Movement is entirely male. While this would have created a challenge for any organization, it is particularly striking in the Reform Movement, which has been, more than other streams of Judaism, associated with a “fear of feminization” and “male flight.” The Reform Movement has been ordaining female rabbis since 1973, and Rabbinical School classes have averaged 50-75% women for the last 10 years.

*What should the reform Movement’s goals be in addressing this issue? What strategies might they employ in aligning their actions with their egalitarian values? If you were hired as their organizational consultant, what would you recommend as their plan of action?*