

Rabbi Schweitzer's response to Gershon Gorenberg's article, "How Do You Prove You're a Jew?" (Sunday Magazine section, March 2, 2008)

The New York Times

Letters March 16, 2008

The fact that the Israeli ultra-Orthodox rabbinate has a pernicious stranglehold over matters of identity is not new to many in the Jewish community. Some would undoubtedly prefer that this unsavory embarrassment be kept out of the public eye. But Gorenberg does a service by bringing the issue out into the open.

Thousands of Israelis get married abroad each year to circumvent the Orthodox rabbinate. The solution to this problem will come by legally recognizing non-Orthodox rabbis to officiate at life-cycle events for Israelis. Let the Orthodox hold to their own definitions and requirements, but let Israelis have a choice befitting a democratic nation and the diversity of the Jewish people.

RABBI PETER H. SCHWEITZER

The City Congregation for Humanistic Judaism

New York