A Sinai Sea of Jews By Choice

To commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Reform Jewish Outreach during Shabbat services at the UAHC Biennial in December, 1999, Jews by choice were honored with an aliyah. Of the estimated 5000 Jewish leaders who worshipped together, 300 ascended the bimah, including Dr. Christina Ager.

We were a few rising
Hesitant at first
Moving forward.
Then we were a stream
Flowing toward Torah.
We looked at each other
Surprised overwhelmed;
We recognized ourselves
In the faces we saw.
We were Jews
By Choice.
The stream became a river.
We moved together
Up aisles of friends, teachers, lovers.
Up we flowed onto the bimah.
We were smiling weeping;
We knew each other
Though we had never met.
We stood amazed
Before the light
Of Torah.
We looked around;
The river became a sea.
We were numerous
As the crowd at Sinai.
We are Jews
By choice.
We are a blessing.
A gift to the people Israel,
Rabbi Schindler said it.
We felt it.
We belonged.
There, here.
We belong to Torah
As Torah belongs to us.
We kept coming
This sea of Jews
By Choice.
We said the blessing
Together, a Sinai sea strong.
Strangers who were not
Strangers anymore.
One of our own
Chanted Torah
We were proud
We were a stream,
A river, a sea
Of Jews
By Choice.
A stranger
Who was not a stranger
Wrapped me in her tallit.
We loved each other
We loved being Jews
Belonging.
We were called
And we came
This Sinai sea of Jews
By Choice.

Dr. Christina Ager is a member of Keneseth Israel in Elkins Park, PA.