

Eugene Borowitz, Reform Jewish leader, dies at 91

by [Celeste Kennel-Shank](#) in the [February 17, 2016](#) issue

Eugene B. Borowitz, a leader and theologian in Reform Judaism, died January 22 at age 91.

He was professor emeritus of education and Jewish religious thought at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. He authored 19 books, including *A Touch of the Sacred: A Theologian's Informal Guide to Jewish Belief* (2007); *Renewing the Covenant* (1991); and *Contemporary Christologies: A Jewish Response* (1980).

Reviewing the book *Renewing the Covenant* in the *Christian Century*, John T. Pawlikowski wrote that Borowitz “is remarkably well acquainted with Christian theological beliefs in their classical and contemporary formulations, and can enter sustained discussion on such central questions as Christology. At the same time he has devoted a considerable part of his professional life to articulating for the liberal Jew a sense of religious identity in which commitment to ethical living is rooted in a firm, personal relationship with the God of the covenant.”

In 1970 Borowitz founded the journal [Sh'ma: A Journal of Jewish Ideas](#) and was editor for 23 years. Borowitz also wrote for the *Century*, including pieces on the challenge of religious freedom.

“Like many religionists of both the left and the right, I believe that religion must play a far more significant role in the life of our culture than it has recently if our democracy is to regain its strong moral tone,” Borowitz wrote in 1987. “Few theological tasks could be as critical for our time as these: teaching us how, while loving freedom, to mandate high standards of behavior; and how, while maintaining God’s truth, to accommodate variety and dissent.”

*Editor's note: Logged-in magazine subscribers can search for articles from before 1998 via the EBSCOhost platform from [our archives page](#).*

*This article was edited on February 2, 2016.*