

MISSION STATEMENT

The World Union for Progressive Judaism

- Strengthens modern, pluralistic Jewish life throughout the world by establishing and supporting congregations and other communal institutions;
- Actively participates in building Israel as a democratic and pluralistic Jewish state;
- Unites Jewish religious tradition, inclusiveness, gender equality and individual autonomy;
- Advances social justice in the spirit of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world).



RABBI URI REGEV is the president of the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Formerly the executive director and counsel of the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC), he has led and won battles before the Israeli Supreme Court in cases involving "Who is a Jew?" and other issues of religion and state in Israel. Rabbi Regev received a law degree from Tel Aviv University in 1973 and was ordained by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem in 1986.

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THE WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM IS...



TO LEARN MORE about what's happening in the global community of Reform Jews, sign up for the World Union for Progressive Judaism e-newsletter, WUPJnews. To register, send a blank e-mail (no text or subject) to wupjnews-subscribe@wupj.org.il. From breaking news to developing stories, WUPJnews will keep you informed with weekly bulletins about Progressive and Reform communities in all corners of the globe, linking you with friends and families who share your values and beliefs.

YOUR GATEWAY TO THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF REFORM JEWS



The **WORLD UNION FOR PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM**, headquartered in Jerusalem, is the international umbrella organization of the Reform, Progressive, Liberal and Reconstructionist movements. It is the voice and soul of the largest body of religious Jews in the world, affecting the lives of millions who seek a traditional yet contemporary expression of their Jewish spiritual and cultural identity.



Quick Facts

- 42** countries with Progressive congregations*
- 1,200** Progressive, Liberal, Reform and Reconstructionist congregations around the world
- 1,500** youths participating in weekly activities in 60 youth clubs in the former Soviet Union
- 2,000** Jewish, Christian and Muslim families receiving pre-holiday food assistance in Israel
- 16,000** members of *Netzer Olami*, the World Union's international youth movement
- 45,000** family members reached through Progressive Judaism's pluralistic Jewish Studies program in Israeli public schools
- 1,700,000** people affiliated with the World Union's constituent movements globally
- \$54 million** the goal of the World Union's fund-raising campaign to support congregation building, youth activities, leadership training, education and social action

* Argentina, Aruba, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Curacao, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, France, Germany, Honduras, Hungary, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Latvia, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama, Poland, Puerto Rico, Russia, Saint Thomas, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Surinam, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States

On the cover:
First picture from the left: ©Marek Mrozowski, Warsaw, Poland
Second picture from the left: World Union headquarters in Jerusalem
Third picture from the left: ©Michael Fox Photography

Around the world, in neighborhoods large and small, the pulse of Jewish life beats through the many activities of the World Union:

Building Communities

There is no greater testament to the vibrancy of Reform Judaism* today than the growth and reemergence of congregations and communities around the world. The World Union is instrumental in this historic renewal, helping to build and support Reform communities through congregation and leadership development, inspirational youth programming and the promotion of Jewish values and ideals.

In the former Soviet Union and in central and eastern Europe, after nearly a century of religious oppression, the World Union is a driving force for growth among both new and existing congregations.

In Israel, the heartland of the Jewish people, the World Union answers the call for religious pluralism with Reform programs and institutions. The World Union presence grows in Latin America, Australia and countries throughout Asia as well.

Support for Reform community building also includes the purchase and construction of synagogues in order to provide permanent spiritual and physical homes for our Jewish communities worldwide.

* Reform Judaism is known outside of North America also as Progressive or Liberal Judaism



BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Providing Leadership

The key to securing Jewish continuity and strengthening Reform Judaism is high-level professional and lay leadership. The World Union partners with many Reform institutions in the training and placement of rabbis around the world. Rabbinic seminaries include the Leo Baeck College-Centre for Jewish Education in London, the Abraham Geiger College in Berlin and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in the United States and Israel.

The World Union also provides other avenues of training, most notably the Machon (Institute for Modern Jewish Studies) in Moscow, which trains native paraprofessional congregational leaders, and the Saltz International Education Center located at Mercaz Shimshon /Beit Shmuel, the World Union headquarters in Jerusalem. Here some of Israel's most accomplished scholars and teachers engage participants from all over the world in Jewish learning and living through a variety of programs, including the Beutel Leadership Training Seminar.

Connecting Lives

Jewish values and practices have their greatest meaning when they are shared. The World Union creates opportunities for members of its communities to connect with each other on many levels.

Congregational leaders exchange experiences and best practices throughout the year at meetings and conventions from Moscow to São Paulo, from Johannesburg to Jerusalem. Congregational missions and personal visits bring people together in Israel, Europe, the FSU and Latin America for shared religious and social experiences.

Synagogue twinning and the Torah loan program, "Guardians of Torah," enable Reform congregations to connect with their Liberal and Progressive counterparts around the world, while individual Bar and Bat Mitzvah youths pair with peers in foreign countries.

The World Union's *Yad b'Yad* ("Hand in Hand") task force, created in response to the economic crisis in Argentina, continues its work by supporting humanitarian and Jewish educational projects for a growing number of our Latin American neighbors.

Through online newsletters, Internet correspondence and the World Union's Web site, individuals connect daily to discuss a wide variety of matters – both religious and secular – all in pursuit of the common goals of the worldwide Reform movement.

Nurturing Youth

The future of Reform Judaism is in the hands of its youth, and the World Union focuses heavily on its large and rapidly growing Jewish youth movement, *Netzer Olami* (International Reform Zionist Youth).

Founded in 1979, *Netzer Olami* today brings together more than 16,000 young people in 18 countries and inspires them with a love of Israel, Jewish peoplehood and continuing traditions in the context of modern democracy and pluralism. *Netzer Olami* is the largest Jewish youth movement in the former Soviet Union, and with the recent affiliation of NFTY (North American Federation of Temple Youth), it is one of the largest in the world.

In 1996, *Netzer Olami* established TaMaR (*Tnuat Magshimim Reformit*), an organization for young adults aged 18 to 30, to continue their involvement in the global Reform community.

NURTURING YOUTH

Advocating Justice

Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) has been a core value of Reform Judaism throughout its history. The World Union seeks to mend, improve and bear responsibility for the global community we live in through local as well as international social action and by instilling the value of *tikkun olam* in our youth.

Feeding the hungry, helping victims of terrorism, settling new *olim* (immigrants) in Israel, fighting for gender equality and the preservation of our environment are all causes on the World Union's international humanitarian agenda.

As a leader in the struggle for the recognition and legitimacy of Reform and other non-Orthodox streams of Judaism, the World Union has had a significant impact on promoting social justice and pluralism in Israel and, by extension, around the world.

The World Union has also expanded the scope of its international advocacy by partnering on special initiatives with other nongovernmental organizations, such as the U.N., the Human Rights Commission and UNESCO. In these times of increasing extremism, the World Union's commitment to human dignity and tolerance make it a valued participant in the international interfaith dialog among Christians, Muslims and Jews.

ADVOCATING JUSTICE

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP

CONNECTING LIVES