

UNITED ISRAEL WORLD UNION BULLETIN



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United Israel World Union's Response to the Coronavirus

Shalom and greetings. I am writing you tonight from the United Israel Center South in Saint Francisville, Louisiana. I made it safely back from Israel last night and as of today I am back in the office working. I wanted to send out this brief update to cover a few points to members and friends of United Israel World Union during these troublesome and uncertain times. I pray that this note finds you healthy and otherwise minimally affected by the Coronavirus. I wanted to use this opportunity to communicate how we are trying, even in these times and under these circumstances, to serve you.

Recently, David and Patty Tyler participated in some faith leadership conferences in Washington, D.C. During these meetings they became acquainted with the Associate Director of the White House Office of Public Liaison. Acting on behalf of United Israel World Union, they were able to have the leadership team of our organization added to a list of approved faith leaders on the national level. As a result of this, and other connections with key leaders, I was invited to participate today in a National Faith Leaders

Coronavirus Conference Call with other faith leaders across the country. At the outset of the call, we were told that the call was not “on the record,” nor was it for press personnel. The primary purpose of the call was to reach out to leaders of American faith communities for help in providing accurate and timely information to members of every religious group. Participants on the call were briefed by several key people including:

- Stephen Pinkos, Senior Advisor, Office of the Vice President,
- Shannon Royce, Director of the Center for Faith and Opportunity, and
- Dr. Deborah Birx, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator & U.S. Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy.

These, as well as other noted officials, stressed the importance of relying on accurate information. In keeping with this, and based upon what I heard today, I want to provide you with my takeaways from the conference call as well as my own thoughts concerning the Coronavirus and our response thereto.

United Israel World Union is a **religious educational research organization** and none of our organizational leaders have the expertise to provide sound medical advice regarding the Coronavirus. Our only advice to our friends and membership is to seek out the best information from reputable sources and to avoid sharing and passing along misleading information. There is a lot of speculation and misinformation on the web and the worst thing we can do is to add to the confusion and thereby create even more distress during this time of uncertainty.

Medical professionals and specialists from many disciplines around the globe are working tirelessly to learn as much as they can, as fast as they can, about the Coronavirus and how best to deal with it and to minimize the impact of it.

What most of the experts agree on is that this virus is highly contagious and that the elderly, and those with underlying health conditions are more susceptible. President Trump’s team of experts recently released **The President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America**. These are available for download and I will upload a copy of these guidelines to our United Israel Facebook Group. I encourage everyone to carefully read these and to apply them immediately. Here is **the link**.

In compliance with these guidelines, we want to put the following into action:

- The official advice is to avoid social gatherings of more than 10 people. Thanks to David and Michael Cole we are able to provide all of our teachings via live stream, simulcasting to our **Facebook Page** and our **YouTube Channel**. We intend to go live every Saturday morning at 10:30 a.m. CST as usual, but I will be alone in the UI Center South and all of you will be safe in your own home. **This will continue until**

all of you will be safe in your own home. ~~THIS WILL CONTINUE UNTIL~~
further notice.

- A call participant asked about attending a Passover seder and the advice was to refer to the guidelines which is “to avoid social gatherings of more than 10 people.” I intend to host a virtual seder with me at the UI Center and all of you in your home watching online.
- We have cancelled our Annual Meeting and Conference for the last weekend of April. As a reminder, anyone who booked a room at the DoubleTree hotel needs to call and cancel their reservation. The direct phone number for the hotel is 704-364-2400. They are aware that the conference is cancelled but they require each person to cancel their own reservation.

We realize that some of our friends and members may be scared and concerned. These reactions are understandable. One point that was stressed in the call today was that during these times of advised social distancing, we should make every effort to ensure that our coreligionists do not feel isolated and alone. We will do everything we can to help you through the days ahead. In some ways we are better equipped to navigate through the coming days thanks to our long-standing online presence. Other religious groups who primarily meet in person in a building, are now forced to do what we have always done – resort to online fellowship. Years ago, I had an idea to create an online assembly. I called it the Synagogue Without Walls. The vision for the Synagogue Without Walls was to provide a virtual place of meeting for people who were separated by distance. Little did I know that this would prove necessary for reasons such as we now face. United Israel has a fully functional Synagogue Without Walls **for such a time as this.**

I also realize as I write this that there is a likelihood that some who read this will be affected in one way or another by the Coronavirus. I want to be there for those who are affected in whatever way I can be of assistance. This may be for prayer or for other reasons. I intend to publish accurate information that might assist our membership with other hardships resulting from the Coronavirus and will therefore seek out the best resources and information which I will then publish to our members.

During times of distress, people often look to religious leaders for comfort and support.

If you need prayer or spiritual guidance, I am more than happy to assist. For other matters outside of my area of expertise I will seek to connect you with an appropriate resource. Above all I want you to know that our leadership team cares for all of you and desires to serve you. We may be facing difficult days ahead. We are people of faith, but we also want to approach the Coronavirus with the best information available. If I can be of assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out **by email**. My commitment, and the commitment of the board and officers of United Israel World Union is to be there for all of you during the days ahead as we seek to navigate these troublesome times.

troublesome times.

Many blessings to all of you for good health. Follow the guidelines published by the experts and invite others to join us in our Synagogue Without Walls.

Thanks for your interest in, and support of, United Israel World Union!



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Bulletin Editor
United Israel World Union
2101 Sardis Rd North Suite 110
Charlotte, NC 28227

