



Pursuing Global Justice  
Through Grassroots Change

## Ruth W. Messinger

Ruth W. Messinger is president of American Jewish World Service (AJWS), an international development organization that supports human rights for marginalized people around the world. In addition to its grantmaking to over 375 grassroots organizations around the world, AJWS works within the American Jewish community to promote global citizenship and social justice through activism, volunteer service and education.

Ms. Messinger assumed this role in 1998 following a 20-year career in public service in New York City, where she served for 12 years on the New York City Council and eight as Manhattan borough president. She was the first woman to secure the Democratic Party's nomination for mayor in 1997. Ms. Messinger is continuing her lifelong pursuit of social justice at AJWS, helping people around the world improve the quality of their lives and their communities.

Considered a national leader in the movement to end the genocide in Sudan, Ms. Messinger has been called upon several times to advise President Obama about creating a sustainable path toward peace in that country. In recognition of her leadership, she has served on the Obama administration's Task Force on Global Poverty and Development and currently sits on the State Department's Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group.

Ms. Messinger has been honored for her inspirational efforts to deepen our people's commitment to *tikkun olam* by many national Jewish organizations, including the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the Women's Funding Network, the Union for Reform Judaism and the American Jewish Committee. She has also received honorary degrees from four major American rabbinical seminaries. In recognition of her work, Ruth has been named one of the *Forward's* "50 most influential Jews of the year" for 10 years and was recently included in the Jerusalem Post in its list of the "World's Most Influential Jews of 2011."

Ms. Messinger lectures widely on diverse social and global justice issues, and has served as a visiting professor at Hunter College and Hebrew Union College. She is an active member of her congregation, the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, and serves on the boards of CIFA (Center for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty), Hazon, the Jewish Foundation for Education of Women (emeritus), United to End Genocide, Interaction and Surprise Lake Camp. She is a member of the Leadership Council of Repair the World, and the Executive Committee of the Jewish Social Justice Roundtable.

Ms. Messinger graduated from Radcliffe College in 1962 and received a master's degree in social work from the University of Oklahoma in 1964. She began her professional career in public service in Oklahoma, running a child-welfare agency. Her husband, Andrew Lachman, directs an educational foundation in Connecticut, and she has three children, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

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