

SESSION 1

The Need for Progressive Jewish Communities to Reconstruct Themselves in This Era

Key ideas for discussion:

1. In the 20th century, the synagogue was the main “retail outlet” for Jewish communal life. In the 21st, there’s an innovation explosion, creating many different kinds of “retail outlets.” There are “rising modalities of Jewish identity and community,” especially among Millennials.
2. Younger Jews tend to be looking for two things from their religious communities: personal human flourishing and taking part in effecting social transformation.
3. Six sectors are currently changing the face of Jewish identity:
 - a. Social justice
 - b. Spiritual practice
 - c. Jewish learning
 - d. Eco-sustainability / food justice
 - e. Arts and culture
 - f. New models of spiritual community
4. Synagogues need to rethink their program mix. Tweaking Shabbat won’t cut it.



Rabbi Sid Schwarz, Ph.D.

Rabbi Sid Schwarz is the project director of the *Kenissa: Communities of Meaning Network*. He is a rabbi, educator and social entrepreneur who has successfully founded and led several Jewish organizations and national projects. He is also the director of the Clergy Leadership Incubator (CLI) a two year fellowship for rabbis on visionary leadership and change management. As the founder/president of PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values for 21 years, Rabbi Schwarz pioneered a methodology that integrated Jewish learning, Jewish values and social responsibility. Using his experience as the founding rabbi of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda, Md., he has played a leadership role in the synagogue transformation movement for close to 20 years. He is currently a Senior Fellow at Hazon and he blogs regularly at RabbiSid.org.

Connected Resources

Kenissa: Communities of Meaning Network: Kenissa.org

How We Gather: HowWeGather.org

Jewish Megatrends - Charting the Course of the American Jewish Future by Rabbi Sid Schwarz, Ph.D.

American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us by Robert D. Putnam