

Jewish Megatrends: Adapting to a Community in Transition **A Customized Program for Federation Leadership**

Jewish federations continue to be the central address of Jewish communities in North America. They continue to serve as the institutional hub of the organized Jewish community, raising and allocating funds, assessing community needs, organizing response in times of crisis and catastrophe and serving as the point of connection to the Jewish people and to the State of Israel.

Yet astute observers are aware that the Jewish federation system is also at some risk. Nationwide, campaigns (in inflation-adjusted dollars) have been flat for more than a decade. The financial crisis of 2008 created yet another setback to federation campaigns and few communities have been successful at returning to pre-crash fundraising levels. A cross-section of recent Jewish community studies and surveys suggest that the changing interests of Next Gen Jews will result in declining participation in the established institutions of Jewish communal life (e.g. federation campaigns, synagogues, JCCs and Jewish membership organizations).

These developments call, not for hand-wringing but for bold leadership on the part of both professionals and lay leaders. The new book by Rabbi Sid Schwarz, *Jewish Megatrends: Charting the Course of the American Jewish Future* (Jewish Lights), tackles these issues head-on. Not only does the book provide an analysis of how and why the market (Next Gen Jews) and the marketplace (American society) are changing in ways that threaten the Jewish community as we know it, but it also offers some practical proposals about how to meet the challenge head-on. Schwarz offers four principles that need to inform Jewish institutions that hope to have relevance in the next 20-30 years. The book also includes contributions from some of the leading professionals in the American Jewish community who use Schwarz's principles as they relate to their particular sectors of the community (e.g. federations, synagogues, JCCs, Jewish social justice organizations, Jewish cultural institutions, etc.).

With over 20 years of experience working with boards and Jewish communal professionals and over 10 years working on intensive institutional transformation strategies with synagogues based on the new paradigm outlined in his book *Finding a Spiritual Home: How a New Generation of Jews can Transform the American Synagogue* (2000), Sid Schwarz is now offering a program of learning and institutional renewal for federations that will help communal leadership craft a strategic plan to guide its future. The elements of the program include the following:

- An overview of changing trends in the Jewish community including the models that are at risk and models that suggest possible avenues for Jewish renaissance;
- An opportunity for the federation to convene a broad cross-section of Jewish communal leadership, both professionals and lay leaders, not only from the established sector of Jewish communal life but also from younger demographics that are experimenting with new models of Jewish engagement;
- An institutional change methodology that will guide the leadership of each participating institution through an assessment process and a visioning process;
- A facilitated conversation that will cut across institutional and generational boundaries that will help clarify how the community can make the best use of the resources available and impact on the optimal number of Jews for meaningful Jewish engagement;
- A final report/action plan that will chart out how the community can move in new directions, implement agreed upon initiatives and how it will deal with the inevitable challenges that will arise in implementing a new paradigm for the stewardship of their community.

The program can be implemented within a time frame ranging from six months to a year, depending on the needs of the community and it will include six visits from Sid Schwarz. The program's length and intensity can be modified upon consultation.

We know from both the private sector and from the non-profit sector that the most high performing institutions are those that are willing to look ahead, engage with the best critical thinking related to their respective fields and have the courage and discipline to modify their ways of doing business so as to insure their long term viability and growth. Leaders of Jewish federations need to be prepared for just this kind of thoughtful reflection, conversation and institutional transformation if they are going to remain relevant to American Jewish life.

For a consultation about a customized program of learning and organizational change and to discuss scheduling and costs, please be in touch with Rabbi Sid Schwarz at rabbisid2@gmail.com.



Rabbi Sid Schwarz has been a congregational rabbi, a social entrepreneur, an author and a political activist. He founded and led PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values for 21 years, an organization dedicated to inspiring, training and empowering Jewish youth to a life of leadership, activism and service. Dr. Schwarz previously served as the executive director of the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington D.C. (JCRC) where he oversaw the public affairs and community relations work for the Jewish community. He is the founding rabbi of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda, MD where he continues to teach and lead services. Dr. Schwarz holds a Ph.D. in Jewish history and is the author of over 100 articles and two groundbreaking books--*Finding a Spiritual Home: How a New Generation of Jews Can Transform the American Synagogue* (Jossey-Bass, 2000) and *Judaism and Justice: The Jewish Passion to Repair the World* (Jewish Lights, 2006).

Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, founder of CLAL and one of American Jewry's most notable leaders, has written about Sid: "Rabbi Sid Schwarz' life and career embody a unique mix of religious vision and an ability to implement that vision in the real world".

In 2002 Sid was awarded the prestigious Covenant Award for his pioneering work in the field of Jewish education. In 2007 Sid was named by *Newsweek* one of the 50 most influential rabbis in North America. Currently, Sid serves as a senior fellow at Clal: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership where he trains rabbis to be visionary spiritual leaders. His consulting work with synagogues and Jewish organizations around the United States included serving as the original project director for the Jewish Journey Project in Manhattan, a initiative to revolutionize supplementary Jewish education for children.

Sid's new book, *Jewish Megatrends: Charting the Course of the American Jewish Future* will be published by Jewish Lights in early 2013.

Rabbi Sid Schwarz References and Endorsements

Rabbi Sid Schwarz is a change agent, plain and simple. As a respected and accessible visionary, creator and teacher, he has the credibility to innovate from the inside of the Jewish world. Rabbi Sid is at his best bringing people and organizations together, as he did here in Minneapolis, creating an environment of trust and preparing for a future that both respects the past and charts an inspired and meaningful new course.

Steve Silberfarb, CEO, Minneapolis Jewish Federation

In my more than 25 years as a Jewish educator and CEO of the Jewish Federation, I have met very few who do what Rabbi Sid Schwarz does so well--he is visionary who has a remarkable ability to connect with any audience. His presentations to our Eder Leadership Institute fellows left them informed, energized and prepared to make the transformational change we need in our communities today. His new book, *Jewish Megatrends*, is thought-provoking and challenges some of the verities of American Jewish life today. We need visionaries like Rabbi Sid to help us chart the future. We can't wait to have him back in New Haven!

Sydney Perry, CEO, Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven

Rabbi Sid Schwarz was a key ingredient in our successful program to develop new leaders in the Tidewater Federation. He was able to masterfully convey to our participants important leadership lessons, enrich those lessons with Jewish values and share from his vast experience in Jewish communal life. We brought him back again and again.

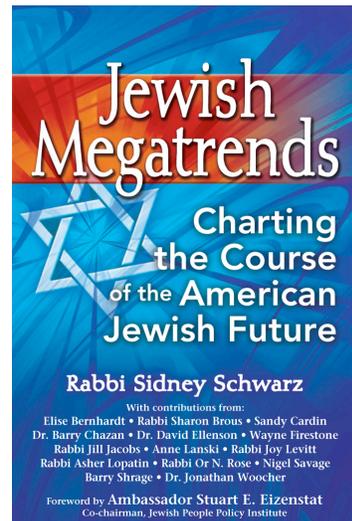
Dan Lepow, Jewish Federation of San Antonio

* * *

More than a decade ago, in *Finding a Spiritual Home*, Sid Schwarz changed the way we imagine synagogues. In *Jewish Megatrends*, Schwarz presents a compelling 21st-century case for a Judaism of four key value propositions - wisdom, social justice, community, and sacred purpose-- through the voices of some of American Jewry's most creative leaders.

Shawn Landres, co-founder, Jewish Jumpstart

Sid Schwarz has combined his remarkable institutional building experience, his extensive network of relationships with the best and the brightest in Jewish life, and his keen knowledge of the American religious landscape to produce a must read for those concerned with the genuine challenges of the next era in American Jewish life. *Jewish Megatrends* is neither apocalyptically despairing nor mindlessly naive - the twin weaknesses of contemporary writing on the Jewish future. Rather, this collection, framed insightfully and creatively by Schwarz, is sober and hopeful, realistic and idealistic, temperate and optimistic, pragmatic and visionary. This volume brims with the wisdom and confidence of an astute observer and innovative practitioner of Jewish life inviting readers to appreciate and even relish the opportunity of this moment in American Jewish history - that if we work hard, act authentically, and have faith we will indeed re-imagine a vital and vibrant Judaism for the 21st century.



Rabbi Irwin Kula, President, Clal: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership