

Why American Religion Broke and How to Fix It

Session 3

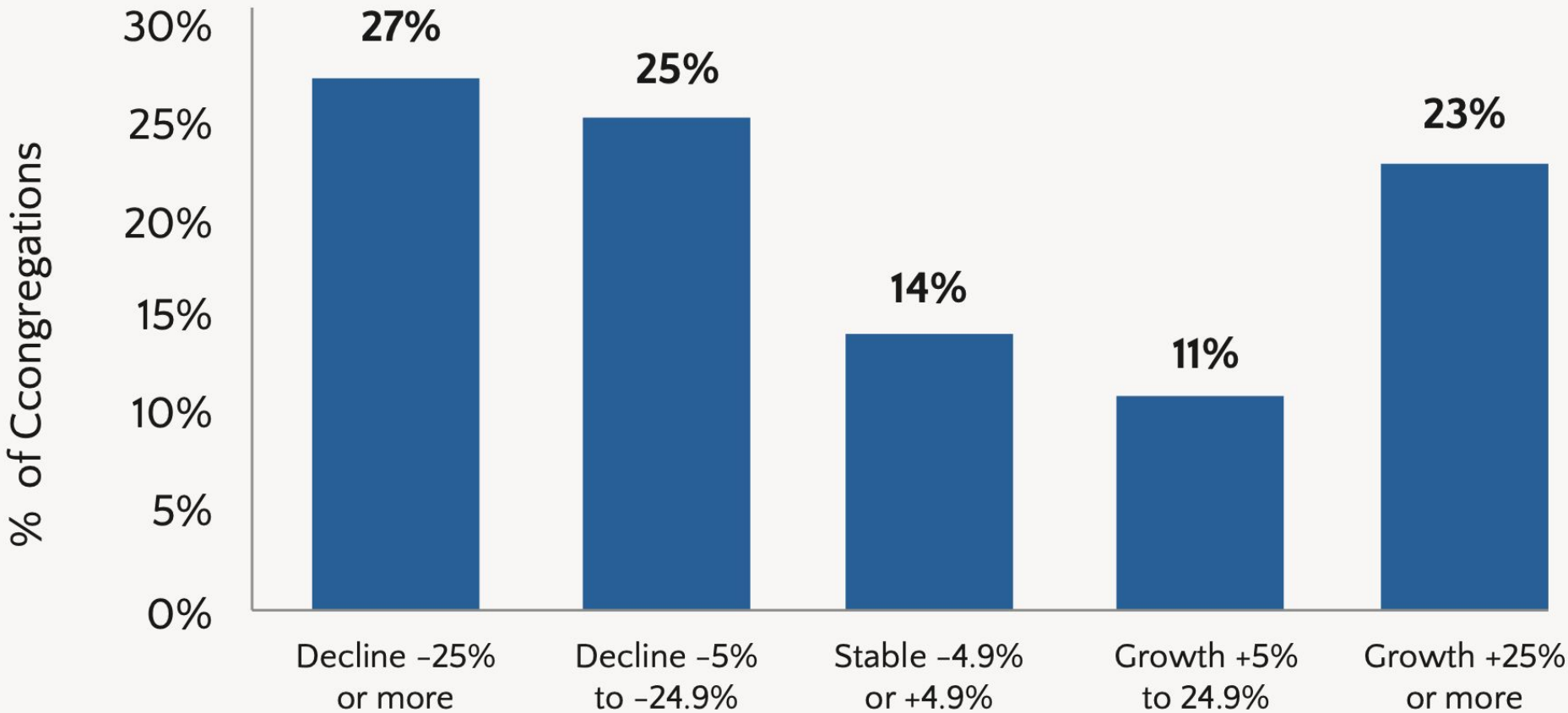
The Future of the American Synagogue

Rabbi Sid Schwarz

The “jobs” of religion

- Meaning making-The “why” of living
- Rituals to mark the calendar cycle and life-cycle transitions
- Communities of belonging
- Inspiration to “do the right thing” to others, one’s community and the world

**Not All Congregations Are in Decline:
A Third Grew in the Last 5 Years**



Source: 2020 Faith Communities Today survey, Hartford Institute for Religion Research

Figure 9

FCT-What makes for “flourishing” congregations

- Diversity of membership (e.g. age, ethnicity, LGBTQ, life status)
- Willingness to change
- Community involvement (internally and externally)
- Spiritual vitality
- Well understood mission/purpose

Historical Evolution of the American Synagogue

- Immigrant Synagogue
- Ethnic Synagogue
- Synagogue-Center
- *Covenantal Community* (emergent)

FINDING A SPIRITUAL HOME



HOW A NEW GENERATION OF JEWS
CAN TRANSFORM THE AMERICAN SYNAGOGUE

RABBI SIDNEY SCHWARZ

Covenantal Community

A group of people who intentionally enter into a mutual obligatory relationship in which they commit to:

- **a common mission**
- **give of their time and psychic energy to support the viability of the group and the material and spiritual needs of the members of the group.**

Four Principles of Covenantal Communities

- **Mission Driven and Program Aligned**
- **Maximalist (Authentic) Judaism**
- **Creating an Empowered and Re-Generating Organizational Culture**
- **The *Kedusha* Factor: Judaism as a Tool-Kit for Human Flourishing**

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March 1, 2020

V'AHAVTA: THE CARING COLLECTIVES OF TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

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In a world where people seem to be cold and cruel, I have witnessed my congregation's members demonstrate kindness, compassion, and concern time and time again. When I was 33-years old, my marriage ended and I became a single parent to a toddler, six months into a new job as the solo rabbi of Temple [...]

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February 2, 2020

A PLAYBOOK FOR LEGACY INSTITUTIONS THAT WANT TO STAY RELEVANT

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It's Shabbat morning in October 2018. On the other side of the river from our synagogue, Temple Israel of Boston, we're gathered for Shabbat brunch in a Cambridge co-working space to explore the question: What is a soul? The group of young adults have wandered through wisdom drawn from Shabbat morning liturgy (Elohai Neshama), Mumford [...]

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