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## Chief Rabbi Mirvis: 'We must adapt in order to entice millennials back to shul'

In address to Conference of European Rabbis in Antwerp, Ephraim Mirvis speaks about the need to work to re-engage younger people

By **JOE MILLIS IN ANTWERP**  
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Chief Rabbi Mirvis (Leivi Saltman Photography)

Orthodoxy has to adapt to how millennials interact with their Judaism to bring them back into the fold, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis warned senior European rabbis this week, writes Joe Millis in Antwerp.

However, Mirvis stressed that did not mean changing or reforming Orthodoxy, but looking how to bring them back.

Mirvis was addressing the 31st Convention of the Conference of European Rabbis in Antwerp, where the main theme was "Torah and Tradition in the Face of Contemporary Challenges".





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“With regard to synagogue services,” the Chief Rabbi said, “There is a greater desire among millennials to participate in energetic and inspiring services as opposed to attending a performance given by the chazzan or cantor in shul.”

Millennials, Mirvis said, are more autonomous. “We are seeing for example a weakening of loyalty to ‘the establishment’ and those regarded as being in positions of authority.”

“We are seeing the thinning out of the middle ground,” he added. “Fewer people are coming to shul unless they are observant and we should be concerned about that.”

Mirvis said there was a need to instill a feeling of community for people who no longer looked at the old ways with fondness.

“We need strong communities,” Mirvis said, “A place where if you’re not there on Shabbat, people will notice. A place where you are appreciated and valued, where young people can find meaning and joy.”

He noted that nowadays, with what he termed the “shtiebelisation” of the community “where younger people prefer a smaller scale minyan so that they can benefit from a more close-knit atmosphere.”

