

## Group E: *Thriving Boomers*

Upper-middle-class baby boomer-age couples living comfortable lifestyles settled in suburban homes

Resource: Mosaic 2021 by Experian.

### Common Church Presence

- History of church involvement
- More “spiritual” than “religious”
- Global perspectives
- Quest for quality
- Conflicted between self-absorption & social service
- Strong support for non-profits



### Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious perspective: *Reasonable religion, from privileged perspective, for a better world*  
 Spiritual Issues: *Feeling flawed and aging, anxieties over meaninglessness and death*

### Potential Influence

1 <sup>st</sup> Tier Group Compatibility	Family Group E <i>Thriving Boomers</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tier Group Compatibilities
C Booming with Confidence D Suburban Style L Blue Sky Boomers	E19 Consummate Consumers E20 No Place like Home E21 Unspoiled Splendor	B Flourishing Families H Bourgeois Melting Pot J Autumn Years

### Communication

Resource: *Mosaic E-Handbook* by Experian

Communication in Daily Living				Communication in Church Participation			
Broadcast/Streaming TV	Direct Mail		Radio	Live/Recorded Video	Print and Paper		Announcements or Visits
Mobile SMS	Email	x	Social Media	Text Message	Email	x	Social Media

### General Comments:

*Thriving Boomers* have a history of church involvement and have been the backbone of congregational leadership and denominational support. However, their confidence in the institutional church is waning. Many would describe themselves as more “spiritual” than “religious”. Religion tends to be personal and eclectic. Their personal religion often borrows from several religious traditions, educational gurus, artistic expressions, and natural science. They may still be loyal to institutional churches, serve on boards, and volunteer for outreach. But they are increasingly anxious that churches waste resources and denominations are drift to extremes. Their interests are shifting to support parachurches and faith-based non-profits, and educational and health care institutions.

While they may have drifted from the church as an institution, they still assume Christian values can be readily accommodated within generous capitalism. Declining optimism in the economic or social stability of society parallels declining optimism in the institutional church as a normative influence on cultural mores. Some households in this group are retreating from expanding urbanization and the noise, pollution, and crime that seem to follow. They have retreated into home improvement and/or relocated to safer small towns and rural areas. Others embrace

urbanization with liberal, urbane habits, and appreciation for lifestyle diversity. They are sampling the best of global cultures, but increasingly wary of dangers along the way. They continue read books, take classes, join prayer and meditation groups, and invest time in self-discovery. Some watch television channels for nature, classic movies, and local news. Their vision of the church preserves homogeneity, honors traditions, and protects harmony. They appreciate spiritual leaders who are both "wordsmiths" and "artists". Others watch channels for history, documentaries and national or global news. Their vision of the church values heterogeneity, shatters "sacred cows", and encourages diversity. They expect leaders to be "prophetic" and "visionary".

Their experience with religion is reminiscent of the dilemma of the "rich young ruler" described in Matthew 19:16-22. They have a strong sense of moral responsibility. They often say they "just want to make a difference". The church is where they have found hope for the future, and it has been a primary vehicle for philanthropy. They ask Jesus what good deeds they must do to have eternal life. Jesus' initial reply expresses the traditional wisdom of the religious institution: keep the commandments. They have always had good intentions, yet something is missing. There remains an emptiness within them. Then Jesus tells them that if they do want to be perfect, then they should sell all their possessions and give to the poor. The young man goes on his way in the horns of a dilemma, caught between the habit of self-love and the command to love one's neighbor.

Their quest for God is often motivated by regrets. Outwardly they reveal high self-esteem and pride of accomplishment, but inwardly they feel responsible for the state of the environment and a myriad of social evils. Their personal lives may be complicated by divorce and remarriage, alienation from children, or friendships broken on the path to success. Fear of aging can create a sense of desperation that drives frenetic travel or obsessions with single issues. They are self-aware and politically observant people who have striven to create loving relationships and a better world, but who are also aware of their personal flaws and social failures. They often seek to experience Christ as a promise-keeper and vindicator. Once they sang about love. Now they long for hope.

They maintain a paradoxical blend of self-indulgence and social justice. Some have distanced themselves from urban turmoil and the grit of survival by moving away to small towns, urban core condos, and spacious exurbs where they can enjoy a cultured activity, or live the quiet life, own larger properties, and surround themselves with nature. They own second homes, and plan to relocate to the beach, mountains, or desert. The church to be an "oasis" of harmony. Other households want to pursue big visions for a better world. They are passionate about social justice a clean environment. They support the political party most likely to deliver the promise of a better society and will lobby government for essential changes in public policy. Churches they attend participate in social service networks and emphasize ethical behavior. The church is better described as a "launching pad" for social change.

They gravitate to established churches with consensus management organizations. They expect clergy to embody and advocate the core values shared by the congregation. The church should combine a sense of history with sense of purpose. Preaching should connect scripture with both past and present. Worship has a performance quality to it, and musical expectations are high. They appreciate worship with upbeat music, but strong educational content. They find meaning aesthetically through nature and works of art. They can feel "at home" learning from an expository sermon or singing religious folk songs in beautiful natural surroundings. Attendance may be inconsistent. They may divide their church allegiance between summer and winter homes, and the churches may not be the same denomination. The intensity of their participation may ebb and flow depending on social crises and political events; or depending on unexpected disruptions to their personal plans. They may disappear for several weeks to cruise the Caribbean or Mediterranean, but they expect to have the same opportunities and influence when they return.

*Thriving Boomers* often have liberal arts educations and careers in public administration, education, law, and business. However, they often separate their professional experience from their church expectations. They take advantage of current technology at work but tend to be "low tech" when it comes to the church. They prefer religion to be simple and natural and may complain that technology blocks their experience of the Spirit. They navigate smoothly through bureaucracy and set high standards for personnel, but they prefer churches that flatten hierarchies, reduce the number of meetings, and emphasize acceptance over accountability. They often find themselves at the stressful edges of expanding urbanization. In the past, they tended to be managers and organizers who shaped public policies and advocated social reforms. In the future, they are discovering new roles as mentors, reconcilers, and bridge builders. They can identify and coach emerging leaders among younger generations, create empathy to overcome racial and economic discrimination, and build understanding between long-time residents and migrating newcomers.