

Segment C14:***Boomers and Boomerangs*****Baby boomer adults and their teenage and young adult children sharing suburban homes**

Resource: Mosaic 2021 by Experian.

Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious Perspective: *It's the right thing to do!*
 Common Spiritual Issues: *Feeling lost, lonely, or discarded*

Common Church Presence

- Consistent financial support
- Irregular worship attendance
- Active in small groups
- Cross generational communication
- Action-reflection learning methods
- Comfortable with virtual participation

**Potential Influence**

| Lifestyle Compatibility | Family Group C <i>Booming with Confidence</i> | Frequent Neighbors |
|--|---|---|
| D16 Settled in Suburbia L42 Rooted Flower Power H26 Progressive Assortment | C11 Sophisticated City Dwellers C12 Golf Carts and Gourmets C13 Philanthropic Sophisticates C14 Boomers and Boomerangs | B07 Across the Ages F22 Fast Track Couples D18 Suburban Nightlife |

General Comments:

Boomers and Boomerangs are part of a growing population of households with 20-something children living at home. Although they are disappointed not to have the immediate freedom of empty nesting, these households tend to be remarkably harmonious because family is as important as career. Parents and young adult children often share traditional lifestyles and right-of-center points of view. Their sense of wellbeing is tempered by money management concerns.

The generations represented in the household may well differ about the importance of church. The fact that 20-something children do *not* attend church means that their parents are apt to become *less involved* in church now that the kids are back home. The churches that sustain their interest are usually larger, resource size churches, or church plants. These churches tend to be more upbeat and informal in worship style but continue basically traditional worship structure. The senior clergy may be younger than the paid staff. Churches provide a wide variety of short-term activities and have a strong external focus for evangelism and/or social service. They have a “glocal” perspective and like to link local social action with global issues.

Boomers and Boomerangs usually prefer churches that can offer multiple options in every program area. Blending worship styles, learning methodologies, or other programs tends to leave everyone dissatisfied ... but they will gladly share the same fellowship experiences and then gravitate to whatever program suits their interests.

| | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Color Key | High Priority | Medium Priority | Low Priority |
|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|

High Priorities also marked with “X” for churches photocopying in black and white.

Leadership PreferencesResource: *Spiritual Leadership* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

| Traditional | | Progressive | | Radical | |
|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| | Caregiver | x | Discipler | x | Visionary |
| | Enabler | | Guru | | Mentor |
| | CEO | | | | Pilgrim |

Senior pastors are especially focused on the challenge to mature and multiply Christians. They model the DNA of the church and set high standards for spiritual life. Pastors manage a paid and/or unpaid team that defines measurable outcomes to change lives, grow Christians, call "ministers", equip volunteers, and send servants. They organize the church to move people from hospitality, through worship and spiritual growth, to serving in gifted and called ways in the world as conscientious Christians. Leaders focus on lay training and high accountability.

Leaders may or may not be certified by a seminary and ordained by a denomination. They may be good preachers but must be excellent coaches and mentors. Administrative tasks are often delegated to an Executive Minister. They need to understand lifestyle and demographic diversity and be sensitive to the anxieties that lie behind each generation's quest for meaning. They tend to avoid hasty generalizations about religious practices or worldviews and are good listeners. Their credibility is based on life experience as well as academic training.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Clergy often sustain weekly blogs, regularly upload sermons to websites, actively participate in social media. They use all the features of a smart phone, which is a constant companion. They are adept at video conferencing, participating in many meetings remotely. They often maintain and use an excellent home office, keeping limited hours at a church office.

Hospitality Preferences Resource: *Worship Ways* by Thomas Bandy and Lucinda Holmes (Abingdon Press)

| Traditional | | Modern | | Postmodern | |
|-------------|------------|--------|------------------|------------|----------|
| | The Basics | x | Multiple Choices | | Take-Out |
| | | | Healthy Choices | | |

Boomers and Boomerangs may drive separately to church and require extra parking. They expect informality, but greetings should be warm and sincere. A Welcome Center provides all the information they need to know. The pastor or priest may be in conversation with newcomers, but the musicians must mingle with members. They are considered "front line" evangelists for the church. They may attend different worship services, and they might "hang out" in the refreshment area while their family members are in the sanctuary. Refreshments are provided before, during, and after worship. Provide wireless environments and TV screens that allow them to watch religious programming from within or beyond the church.

People in this lifestyle segment are not content with basic coffee and donuts, but neither do they prioritize healthy foods. Offer multiple choices of food. Quality can vary from cold pizza to fresh apple pie. Always provide real cream for good coffee, with optional flavor shots. They are more likely to appreciate fair trade coffee and environmentally friendly foods, than more exclusive coffee brands and national grocery store chains.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Young adult children are tutoring parents on how to sustain intimacy online. Parents are tutoring young adult children to communicate clearly and respectfully online. Churches can offer coaching in both processes.

Worship Preferences Resource: *Worship Ways* by Thomas Bandy and Lucinda Holmes (Abingdon Press)

| Traditional | | Modern | | Postmodern | |
|-------------|---------------------|--------|--------------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| | Caregiving Worship | x | Inspirational Worship | | Mission-Connection Worship |
| | Educational Worship | | Transformational Worship | x | Coaching Worship |
| | Healing Worship | | | | |

Multiple generations tend to participate in blended inspirational/coaching worship that is contemporary in style and more traditional in structure. Worship is usually simple, and the order of service projected and rarely printed in full. The basic structure of approach, confession, thanksgiving, education, and commissioning is still discernible in worship, especially if Eucharist is included. Sermons are often thematic, topical, and practical. Music reflects the theme, and is supplemented by music video, live drama or video clip, or even occasional comedy. Preachers coach participants to live better Christian lives and align daily living to God's purpose. Scripture is a constant reference point and is used to give practical advice about moral behavior and problem solving. Eucharist may be important for some but may be celebrated informally like an Agape meal.

Worship is often characterized by upbeat, lyrical "praise music", but the tastes of this lifestyle segment are increasingly sophisticated, and the old 70s music no longer works. Contemporary music must be more *urban contemporary* with sounds and instruments associated with jazz, blues, rock, and rap. These people create their own playlists of preferred music. As church plants or establish churches grow, worship becomes more intentionally diversified. Generations may arrive in different vehicles, park in different parking lots, and attend different services occurring simultaneously in the building. However, worship options often follow similar themes and scripture lessons. The transition from blended to multi-option worship can be stressful, since this often requires different preachers and different sermons, and different music leaders and musical genres.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Both generations worship online, but their attention span is more limited. Sunday worship is often recorded and then edited to flow smoothly in less time. The goal is to create a "buzz" on social media each week to discuss the message. Worship often references outreach, and participants will follow hyperlinks to parallel service agencies.

Education Preferences Resource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

| Form | | Content | | Grouping | |
|------|--------------|---------|----------|----------|--------------|
| | Curricular | | Biblical | | Generational |
| x | Experiential | x | Topical | x | Peer Group |

The Sunday school may not be large in churches that bless *Boomers and Boomerangs* because there are fewer young children. Each Sunday school "class" tends to stand alone, and participants may be sporadic in their attendance (depending on the topic of the day ... and the sports venue anticipated in the afternoon). Young adults often prefer midweek small groups to Sunday school because they enjoy the night life on Saturdays and are less likely to get up early. If they attend, the class will function like a small affinity group.

Education is quite experiential. They prefer dialogue to reading and enjoy discussion topics of interest. The content may address a lifestyle topic or issue (like addiction recovery, faith in the workplace, interpersonal relationships, etc.), but it often focuses on specific missions or mission projects in which participants are actively involved. Outreach and education go together in action/reflection methodologies and ongoing mentoring.

Lifestyle Connectivity

These households are familiar with virtual education and enroll for online courses. Churches should create and update a virtual library of resources and provide numerous links to mission partners and social service agencies. The content for Sunday or midweek classes is often online, may be downloaded, but rarely printed.

Small Group Preferences

Resource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

| Leadership | | Focus | |
|------------|----------------|-------|------------------|
| x | Trained Leader | | Curriculum Study |
| | Rotate Leaders | x | Shared Affinity |

Boomers and Boomerangs have eclectic interests ... from fishing to motorcycling, and from bird watching to active sports. Almost any shared enthusiasm can become an affinity on which to base a small group. Small groups are attractive to this lifestyle segment because it provides an effective way for the two generations to interact. They can participate in a shared enthusiasm that includes prayer, significant conversation about life and faith, and Bible reading (or other devotional practices). Affinity groups can often be taken "on the road" to be part of a mission trip ... or be fun and innovative. Most groups are about discovering oneself or exploring one's relationship with God. Some more advanced groups mentor spiritual habits and coach personal mission. Others are shaped around active participation in a mission. Groups have strong interpersonal relationship goals. Be creative. Think outside the box.

The nature of leadership depends on the affinity. Some affinities require expertise, and others simply invite the expertise already shared by participants. If the real goal of small groups is fellowship, leaders may be rotated. If the real goal is spiritual growth, leaders are usually designated and trained. Leadership training and accountability is very important. A Small Group Developer is usually the next staff addition (after additional worship or music leadership). Group leaders need to be trained in processes that not only build trusting relationships (which overcome personality conflicts), but also faith formation processes (which are open to hard questions).

Lifestyle Connectivity

Small groups encourage additional conversation in social media. Groups may form their own chat rooms. Participants may meet online, or individuals participate virtually. Accountability, confidentiality, and trust are high priorities in the fast-paced digital world, and churches should emphasize core values and behavioral norms.

Outreach Preferences

Resource: *Strategic Thinking* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

| | Personal Need | Readiness to Volunteer |
|-----------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Basic Survival | | |
| Health and Wellness | | |
| Quality of Life | | x |
| Addiction Intervention | x | |
| Interpersonal Relationships | x | x |
| Human Potential | | x |
| Salvation and Human Destiny | | |

The gap between generations living under the same roof may not be as big as some might suppose. Parents and their young adult children often share similar values and worldviews. Nevertheless, they appreciate any ministry that helps them increase sensitivity between generations and learn how to work, play, and communicate with one another. They lead active lives, although fitness may not be their top priority. They often prefer hands-on missions endorsed by the church. They are not big financial donors but offer time and talent to short term projects.

The young adults are very interested in opportunities to explore personality types and spiritual gifts, expand, and deepen friendships, and develop careers. Their interest in addiction intervention ministries may combine a weeknight Recovery Worship service with various small groups for addiction intervention and mutual support. Small group affinities related to developing human potential are also welcome. The topics may include career choices and job skills, gifts discernment and personality typing, personal spiritual disciplines.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Outreach ministry always has a strong internet presence. This includes websites offering images, updates, and links to mission partners, and which identify decision-makers and investment strategies. Younger generations more active in hands-on mission will use various social media to communicate and coordinate.

Facility PreferencesResource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

| Property | | Technology | | Symbolism | |
|----------|----------------|------------|------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| | Ecclesiastical | x | Modern | x | Classic Christendom |
| x | Utilitarian | x | Postmodern | | Contemporary Post-Christendom |

Boomers and Boomerangs tend to be practical. They avoid ostentation and extravagance, although they value top-of-the-line technologies and facilities. They prefer multi-purpose facilities with spacious hospitality and activity rooms; worship centers that are more "concert style", with a versatile stage and curved rows of contemporary theater seating. The most visible technology in the worship center is usually not the organ, but the drum set (usually surrounded by an acoustical screen) and microphone stands. If there are cup holders beside each seat, so much the better! Education rooms may use craft tables rather than desks, and provide storage space for technology, sports equipment, and other "stuff". The property often includes a sports field or gym. The exterior of the building may resemble a high-quality entertainment venue, but the inside uses symbols and architecture that communicates spirituality. The images are easily recognized Christian symbols, along with pictures of their own people in acts of service.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Technology is a blend of modern and postmodern (easily accessible by either generation in this lifestyle segment). The facility is wireless with lots of space and electrical outlets for laptop computers, but it also has printed resources in abundance. Cameras and recording equipment are quite visible ... the object being symbols of spirituality in their own way.

Financial PreferencesResource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

| Giving Target | | Giving Method | |
|---------------|--|---------------|--|
| | Unified Budgets & General Funds | | Informed Philanthropy & Pledging |
| x | Designated Programs & Mission Projects | x | Lifestyle Coaching & Family Financial Planning |

Both the parents and young adults among *Boomers and Boomerangs* appreciate a stewardship program that offers lifestyle coaching. They want to know how to adjust their lifestyles to become more generous people. They are less concerned about percentage giving, but they can be very generous responding to emerging crises or natural disasters. Their generosity often combines financial giving with hands-on service.

Stewardship methods vary between generations. The parents may still prefer fall campaigns that include every member visitation and information meetings. The young adults tend to value a spring campaign that emphasizes mission giving. As trust levels for institutional churches go down, they are more likely to designate giving than donate to a unified budget. They don't need to know details. They give to big visions and visible change. The parents are more interested in receiving a tax receipt that gives them credit for their pledging. The young adults are more interested in getting coaching to spend (or tithe) their tax refund.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Parents will often donate through preauthorized withdrawals, but young adults in the same household are more likely to e-transfer funds to specific outreach ministries as needed.

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 | x | Email | Social Media |

Boomers and Boomerangs use a variety of media as different generations live, play, work, and worship together in the same household. Younger generations are educating older generations in the use of social media, but parents may not use all the features of a smartphone. They respond to images more than words.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Text the young adults, but phone the parents. Both generations may browse online newsfeeds, and the younger generation might follow blogs and podcasts. The most effective influencers today will offer combinations of blogs, online coaching, and e-books, merging media so that both generations can share informed conversation on the same topic.