

Segment **B07: Generational Soup**

Affluent couples and multi-generational families living in a wide range of lifestyles in suburbia

Resource: Mosaic by Experian.

Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious Perspective: *An Important Part of a Healthy Lifestyle*

Common Spiritual Issues: *Feeling broken or rejected, anxieties over guilt and displacement*

Potential Influence

Lifestyle Compatibility	Family Group B Flourishing Families	Frequent Neighbors
A01 American Royalty	B07: Generational Soup	C11 Aging of Aquarius
K37 Wired for Success	B08: Babies and Bliss	C13 Silver Sophisticates
O53 Colleges and Cafes	B09: Family Fun-tastic	A03 Kids and Cabernet
I32 Steadfast Conventionalists	B10: Cosmopolitan Achievers	F22 Fast Track Couples

General Comments

Generational Soup households often contain multiple generations, or older couples living close to children and grandchildren. Church membership is important, especially for life-cycle celebrations like baptism, confirmation, anniversaries, and special occasions like Christmas and Thanksgiving. However, regular church participation may be less important. Church competes with other family priorities as well as fitness, travel, and home-based or outdoor activities. Many have roots in the community where they have raised children, and they tend to be loyal to the same family-oriented church. They may have traditional family values, but they are usually open to other races and cultures, and may reflect multi-cultural and multi-lingual community transitions.

Generational Soup tend to be loyal to denominations, but often avoid extreme ideologies or radical program changes. The church mission statement is deliberately vague and generic in order to encompass a variety of religious points of view. You might expect interesting debates about religion, philosophies of life, and worship styles ... but harmony will be a high core value.

General Comments

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How do I, as a leader, perceive the spiritual expectations of people in our community?

How can we, as a board, research and understand our community better?

How can we, as a church, build closer relationships with this lifestyle segment?

Color Key

High Priority

Medium Priority

Low Priority

Leadership Preferences

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

THE CONSTANT LEADERS		THE ORGANIC LEADERS		THE EXTREME LEADERS	
	Caregiver		Discipler		Visionary
x	Enabler		Guru		Mentor
x	CEO				Pilgrim

Generational Soup may have been in residence 10 years or more and have deep community roots. They appreciate long term pastoral relationships. The pastor knows family names (if not first names), and welcomes 20-somethings returning home. The staffing strategy includes visitors and counselors, as well as educators and musicians. Senior pastors are approachable and sociable. They have versatile preaching skills, and can design different kinds of worship services. They are capable administrators and cautious financial managers. Pastors network locally especially with hospitals and nursing homes, and actively participate in denominational and ecumenical activities. If pastors are not too demanding, *Generational Soup* will support them through thick and thin. They will honor the day off and provide adequate budgets for vacation and continuing education.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your pastor now?

How might your pastor adapt to be more empathic in the future?

How can you equip, train, and/or support your pastor in any transition?

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		

Generational Soup value personal relationships and family ties. Provide lots of parking and hearty welcomes. Families may greet as a team. They must be very friendly, but generally refer questions to a welcome center or staff. The building and facilities must be accessible and child-friendly. It may be helpful to provide sheltered drop-off entrances and storage space for strollers, wheelchairs, etc.

Refreshment choices may be intentionally indulgent (lots of sugar and caffeine), but they are also health conscious. Provide allergen alerts. Coffee and tea need not be especially brewed, but flavor shots are welcome. Older generations may frown on taking food into the sanctuary or worship center, so expanded space in the back of the room is provided to stand or sit at tables. If there is more than one service Sunday morning, make sure that strong fellowship is offered in between. The church may be big, and generations of the same family may worship in different services, but everybody likes to reunite over refreshments. Repeat urgent announcements during coffee hour, or digitally update information in a Welcome Center.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your hospitality ministries now?

How should hospitality ministries change to be more relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What additional training do greeters, ushers, and servers need to be more empathic?

Worship Preferences

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

TRADITIONAL		MODERN		POSTMODERN	
	Care-giving Worship	x	Inspirational Worship		Mission-Connectional Worship
x	Educational Worship		Transformational Worship	x	Coaching Worship
	Healing Worship				

Generational Soup prefer to "blend" worship services, but increasingly there are different expectations for worship that go beyond musical style. One service may be more educational, with expository preaching and more formal liturgy. But another option may be more about coaching Christian lifestyles, and the space may be less formal to encourage interaction. Holy Communion may be simple and less ceremonial. *Generational Soup* tends to contrast worship options as "traditional" and "contemporary", but the interpretations of those terms vary considerably. All worship should be upbeat and inspirational, although this may challenge churches to provide quality options in music and image. Younger generations expect to emerge with practical tips for work, play, relationships, etc. Older generations expect to emerge with renewed energy and optimism.

Holy days and holidays like Christmas, New Year's Day, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Easter, and Thanksgiving are important family times when worship will bring families together. Baptism and Confirmation, along with other life-cycle celebrations, are important. Set aside budget for significant worship events.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your worship service(s) now?

How should you customize one or more worship services to be relevant to this segment?

What additional training do preachers, musicians, readers need to meet expectations?

Education Preferences

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

FORM		CONTENT		GROUPING	
x	Curricular	x	Biblical	x	Generational
x	Experiential	x	Topical	x	Peer Group

Generational Soup spans generations, topics, and learning methodologies. The best plan is to offer as many choices as possible. Maintain a strong Biblical reference point, but explore both practical and theoretical topics. Guest speakers and ecumenical cooperation are welcome. People in this lifestyle segment are well educated, and many have liberal arts experience as well as specialized training. Lay academies, seminars, lectures, and other forms of adult continuing education are possible. Build a lay continuing education budget to support volunteer training, and send people for training to camps, retreat centers, and other short term programs.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe children, youth, and adult education in your church now?

How would education strategies need to change to be relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What changes in leadership selection and training would make education more effective?

Small Group Preferences

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

LEADERSHIP		CONTENT	
x	Trained Leaders	x	Curriculum Study
x	Rotated Leaders	x	Shared Affinity

Generational Soup like variety. They respond well to small groups at diverse times, places, and contexts. Affinities may range from passive to active. At one time, groups tended to be long term and adults stay together, follow a Bible study or curriculum, and resist closure. Increasingly, groups tend to be short term and scheduled in the fall or winter months and participants expect clear start and finish times. Groups usually focus on building or deepening friendships and sharing some activity or topic, but they may be reluctant to achieve high expectations for personal growth and hesitant to practice rigorous accountability. Affinities related to hobbies, sports, crafts, music, sports, and technologies will be the easiest to start. Groups often tolerate eccentric behavior in order to avoid conflict that could have repercussions back home. Larger churches will deploy part or full time staff to manage small groups, train small group leaders, and intervene if things get out of hand.

Generational Soup believes that youth are the future of the church, and are often passionate about youth groups. Increasingly, multi-generational mission trips are central to the youth ministry. The single, large youth group is morphing into a variety of different kinds of small youth groups to match community diversity. Groups for younger participants usually require a trained (often paid) leader. But affinity groups for adults may well rotate leadership

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe the Small Group strategy in your church now?

How would Small Group strategies need to change to be relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What changes in leadership and content would make Small Groups more effective?

Outreach Preferences

Resource: Strategic Thinking by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

	PERSONAL NEED	READINESS TO VOLUNTEER
Basic Survival		X
Health and Wellness	X	
Quality of Life	X	
Addiction Intervention		
Interpersonal Relationships	X	
Human Potential		X
Salvation and Human Destiny		

Generational Soup spans generations, and any number of outreach ministries may capture their imagination. If there is a major, ongoing outreach ministry, it often involves discovering human potential (Family Christian Counseling, career development, gifts discernment, etc.) As consumers, people in this segment describe themselves as "green", so they are passionate about recycling and environmental issues. Many forms of "depot" ministries excite them (e.g. food banks, clothing redistribution, refinishing furniture, etc.)

People in this lifestyle segment are less likely to give money to any charity or outreach project in which they do not have some personal stake. Mission must have some local impact, even if it is on a global scale. The older generations may serve on governing boards, and occasionally advocate causes. Younger generations prefer to be involved hands-on in the implementation of mission.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What outreach categories does your church emphasize now?

What outreach categories would be more relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What outreach priorities and tactics should change for the church to bless this segment?

Facility Preferences

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

PROPERTY		TECHNOLOGY		SYMBOLISM	
x	Ecclesiastical		Modern	x	Classic Christendom
	Utilitarian	x	Postmodern		Contemporary Post–Christendom

According to *Experian* research, *Generational Soup* is a rare lifestyle segment that prefers conservative clothing and cutting edge technologies at the same time. Similarly, they tend to gravitate to traditional ecclesiastical facilities which incorporate post-modern technologies. The video screens and audio systems, seating options and special effects may sometimes jar traditional sensibilities, but the juxtaposition of old and new mirrors family structures that include old and young. A contemporary education wing might be grafted onto a 19th century sanctuary; or a historic manse might be converted into a modern pre-school center.

Nevertheless, the symbols are usually well known signs of Christendom. People in this lifestyle segment link status to family success. Therefore, they often pay for stained glass, renovated rooms, and other technologies as memorials for children or grandparents. Technologies to regulate heat and air conditioning, light and fresh air, and facilitate handicapped access are important. Despite a slow economy, people will dig deeper to make emergency repairs to the building. The interior is usually more important than the exterior. It is more important that members are honored and living space is familiar, than impressing strangers who happen to pass by.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What renovations and/or upgrades need to be made in our church facility?

What symbols of faith would be most relevant to this lifestyle segment?

If we started another site of ministry for this segment, how should we design it?

Financial Preferences

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

GIVING TARGET		GIVING METHOD	
x	Unified Budgets and General Funds	x	Informed Philanthropy & Pledging
	Designated Programs & Mission Projects		Lifestyle Coaching & Family Financial Planning

Generational Soup support the church as if it were an extended family. At home, most of the family members work and pool their incomes to support the household. At church, member households give to a unified budget to pay the overhead. They are low risk takers, and set aside money for emergencies. They invest in creative ideas only when there is a sound strategic plan. At best, they sustain excellent programs and reduce overhead costs. At worst, they allow finance committees to control the programs. Make sure that financial managers are also credible spiritual leaders and active participants. Be deliberate to include different age groups in financial management.

People in this lifestyle segment usually take stewardship very seriously. They have a year round plan that includes an every member visitation. Pledges may be made by individual and/or household. They prefer a stewardship program that goes beyond asking for money and coaches members to set lifestyle priorities and link philanthropic giving to Christian financial planning.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What options in giving methods and giving targets do we offer now?

How do we design our annual stewardship campaign(s) now?

How should we revise our financial strategy to be more relevant to this segment?

Communication

Resource: Mosaic E–Handbook by Experian

CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC COMMUNICATION				TRADITIONAL CHURCH COMMUNICATION							
	Direct Mail Receptive		Mobile Telephone		Online Computer	x	Newspaper		Corded Telephone		Verbal Announcements
	Email Receptive	x	Broadcast Cable TV	x	Internet Radio	x	Print		AM/FM Radio		Personal Visits

Experian suggests that lifestyle preferences for *Generational Soup* regarding communication are transitioning. They are increasingly online for banking, shopping, etc. They may not be very receptive to email, but social media is helpful to keep up with family. They read printed material, but are slowly gravitating to e-readers.

Communication preferences for the church are transitioning more slowly. A website is useful, but more for calendar updates and images than continuing education. Printed newsletters, worship bulletins, and reports are still important. Telephones may be corded or cellular and they probably rely on recording messages. However, they still prefer a real person than an answering machine at the church office, and prefer ready access to the pastor face-to-face. Verbal announcements can still be important (provided they don't take too much time). They may or may not be at home for a visit ... so call ahead and make an appointment.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How do we communicate among church participants now?

How do we communicate beyond our church to the community now?

How should we adapt communication strategies to be more effective for this segment?

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

POTENTIAL INFLUENCE

Lifestyle Compatibility	Daily behavioral habits overlap with common activities and similar priorities
Family Group	Grouping by key demographic factors like age, income, culture, family status, etc.
Frequent Neighbors	Often live near each other with shared recreational, health, or emergency services

LEADERSHIP

Constant Leaders	Traditional clergy focused on sustaining ministries & increasing members
Organic Leaders	Innovative leaders focused on church growth, new starts & multiplying followers
Extreme Leaders	Non-Institutional leaders focused on spiritual disciplines, high accountability, and pursuing perfection
Caregiver	Focus on visitation, counseling, pastoral prayer
Enabler	Focus on facilitating meetings, lay empowerment, mediation, liturgy
CEO	Focus on staff development, administration, fund raising, expository preaching
Discipler	Focus on seeker sensitivity, adult faith formation, guidance for Christian living
Guru	Focus on religious insight, holistic personal growth, spirituality, enlightenment
Visionary	Focus on big picture, major social change, motivational speaking
Mentor	Focus on self-awareness, individual meaning and purpose, vocational clarity
Pilgrim	Focus on cross-cultural sensitivity, inter-religious dialogue, strict spiritual discipline

HOSPITALITY

The Basics	Friendly untrained greeters, basic coffee and creamer, packaged food or sugary snacks
Multiple Choices	Trained greeters, multiple serving stations, great coffee, varieties of food
Healthy Choices	Trained greeters mirroring lifestyle diversity, healthy food options, allergen alerts
Take-Out	Coffee-to-go, bagged food, exit door hospitality, text message and social media

EDUCATION

Curricular	Printed books or study guides. Passive, intellectual, classroom. Maturity measured by acquired knowledge
Experiential	Activities. More music, images, movement, interaction. Maturity measured by behavior patterns, attitudes.
Biblical	Focuses on the Old and New Testaments. Maturity means Biblical literacy
Topical	Focuses on contemporary issues. Maturity means ethical integrity and enlightened behavior
Generational	Gathers people by age or grade in separate classrooms with age-appropriate resources.
Peer Group	Gathers people sharing affinities or common interests regardless of age.

SMALL GROUPS

Rotated Leaders	Participants take turns hosting and leading the group. Requires limited expertise and training.
Designated Leaders	Single leader guides the group from start to finish. Requires significant maturity and training.
Curriculum	Focus on a book, workbook, or structured program to guide structured discussion
Affinity	Focus on shared interest, enthusiasm, or activity to inspire informal discussion.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS (cont.)

WORSHIP

Educational	Consistent liturgy, expository preaching, focus on doctrine, ethics, and history
Inspirational	Uplifting music, motivational speaking, focus on joy, optimism, and encouragement
Transformational	Spontaneous, expectant, personal transformations, Higher Power interventions
Coaching	Informal, dialogical, topical, practical coaching on how to live better & faithfully
Caregiving	Slow, meditative, family–feel with pastoral prayer, children’s time, senior celebrations
Healing	Quiet, prayerful, expectant of physical, mental, relational healing and hope
Mission–Connectional	Unity of action/reflection, all about outreach, volunteer empowerment

OUTREACH

Survival	Basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, jobs, basic health care
Recovery	Addiction intervention, 12 step support, and counseling services
Health	Mental and physical fitness, disease prevention, rehabilitation, therapy
Quality of Life	Social wellbeing, neighborhood safety, environment, immigration, peacemaking
Human Potential	Personal/vocational fulfillment, education, career help, human rights advocacy
Interpersonal	Intimacy, sexuality, family & marriage counseling, healthy friendships
Human Destiny	Repentance, conversion, witnessing, alignment with God’s purposes

FACILITIES

Ecclesiastical	Facility must “look like a church” with traditional architecture and furnishings
Utilitarian	Facility must be “user–friendly” and multi–purpose for public use
Christendom	Indoor/outdoor symbols associated with church history or denominational identity
Contemporary	Indoor/outdoor symbols from nature, indigenous cultures, alternative spiritualities
Modern	Technology primarily enhances print and oral communication
Postmodern	Technology primarily enhances multi–sensory interaction, internet, social media

FINANCES

Unified Budgets	Stability first. Give to a single general fund to pay staff and manage overhead costs
Designated Giving	Effectiveness first. Give to specific funds or causes by personal preference
Informed Philanthropy	Informed, independent, confidential financial commitments for a tax benefit
Lifestyle Coaching	Individual & household coaching for Christian family financial management

COMMUNICATION

Direct Mail Receptive	Pay attention to mass mailings to postal addresses.
Email Receptive	Pay attention to information delivered digitally to personal email addresses.
Mobile Telephone	Regularly rely on cell phones and smart phones for calling, texting, surfing, banking etc.
Broadcast Cable TV	Regularly rely on cable television for news, advertising, and entertainment.
Online Computer	Regularly go online by personal computer to surf websites, shop, bank, and use other services.
Internet Radio	Regularly subscribe to internet services for music, sports, and topical discussions.
Newspaper	Pay attention to printed newspapers for updates about church news or local, national, global events.
Print	Pay attention to printed church newsletters, bulletin inserts, brochures, and other handouts.
Corded Telephone	Regularly use ordinary telephones to communicate from home.
AM/FM Radio	Regularly use traditional radio to listen to music, commercials, and talk.
Verbal Announcements	Always rely on verbal announcements from the pulpit about church events or items of interest.
Personal Visits	Always expect personal visits at home by a representative of the church to share information.