

Segment **C11: Aging of Aquarius**

Upscale boomer-aged couples living in city and close-in suburbs

Resource: Mosaic by Experian.

Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious Perspective: *It's the right thing to do!*

Common Spiritual Issues: *Feeling lost, lonely, or discarded*

Potential Influence

Lifestyle Compatibility	Family Group C Booming with Confidence	Frequent Neighbors
E19 Full Pockets Empty Nests	C11 Aging of Aquarius	B07 Generational Soup
E21 Unspoiled Splendor	C12 Golf Carts and Gourmets	D18 Suburban Attainment
J36 Settled and Sensible	C13 Silver Sophisticates	051 Digital Dependents
L42 Rooted Flower Power	C14 Boomers and Boomerangs	

General Comments

Aging of Aquarius generally have a more global than local perspective, with a high sense of well-being. They have planned lifestyles, are relatively liberal, and tend to connect with moderate or more liberal churches. *Aging of Aquarius* includes the first wave of baby boomers (age 50-65) who have had an "approach/avoidance" relationship with the church. As an ecclesiastical institution, the church has been part of the establishment and status quo against which this generation rebelled, but they have always had a high interest in spirituality. They explore a variety of religions and philosophies. In their later years, they have tended to lose interest in radical ideas. Protesters have become conformists in society, and many returned to the church for a second period of experimentation. Once again, many of them became frustrated with bureaucracy and dogmatism, and drifted away once more.

They still are passionate about various social and political causes, and tend to gravitate to churches that behave like non-profit social services. They consider themselves "spiritual persons", and are open to liturgical experimentation. They value the visual and performing arts in their practice of faith. Religion is mainly a personal matter, but they have a sense of duty to care for the world. Their choice of churches is eclectic. They may shop for churches, and often participate in more than one church (or faith-based organization) at a time. Religion, however, must still be balanced with their personal interests, health issues, grandchildren, travels, and careers.

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	x	Discipler	x	Visionary
	Enabler		Guru		Mentor
	CEO				Pilgrim

Aging of Aquarius looks for visionary leaders in politics, social reform, and the church. Spiritual leaders may or may not be classic church pastors, but they need to have a citywide, regional, or global purposefulness that is both spiritual and practical. Leaders discern "common denominators" of faith, trace a moral imperative through diverse cultures, and provide workable solutions to problems that cross racial, economic, and cultural boundaries. They are able to separate the essentials of faith from the tactics of any given institution.

Many of these people consider themselves "seekers" rather than "church members", and may not know basics of Christian history, scripture, religious practice, or theology. They look for a leader who can help them grow holistically. Many have again become disenchanted with the established church, and are experimenting with alternative forms of Christian community or broadly spiritual worldviews. They look for a leader who can help them build a universal perspective on the purpose of life and responsible daily living.

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
		x	Healthy Choices		

Aging of Aquarius values personal relationships, conversation, and sincerity. Greeters must model the core values and beliefs of the church. They should be ready to demonstrate friendship with warmth and judicious embraces. Always introduce visitors to a church leader personally and provide clear directions. They want to seat themselves, and will choose the location with the best sight lines and acoustics. Printed handouts help them focus and meditate.

Experian suggests that *Aging of Aquarius* like to dine out, enjoy gourmet foods, and sample foods from a variety of cultures. Provide excellent choices for specialty coffee, tea, and juice ... along with high quality deli-style foods. (Avoid home cooking and any food for which the ingredients or preparation may be ambiguous). Be sure to include vegetarian and decaffeinated choices. They are often impatient, so avoid long lines with multiple serving stations. They are increasingly health conscious, so provide a variety of high fibre or vitamin rich foods. Provide natural light. Recycle!

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		Coaching Worship
	Healing Worship				

Aging of Aquarius approaches worship as an extension of private devotion. Worship preferences can be eclectic, and may change week to week as mood or sense of urgency change. They look for worship that is both inspirational and educational. They want worship to awaken deeper sensitivity to God in their daily lives, and encourage optimism for the future. Preaching is less about explaining scripture, and more about resolving ethical dilemmas and spiritual ambiguities. Worship is not a classroom of students with a teacher who knows all the answers. It is a gathering of seekers who can receive guidance from someone a little further along in the spiritual journey. Eucharist can be very meaningful to people in this segment as a mystical event. Incarnation is powerful and intimate. However, people in this segment are less interested in the doctrinal or dogmatic aspects of the liturgy.

Worship is a combination of artistic expression and executive seminar. They may attend with their grandchildren (although not their children), and the Children's Story is important. They like to participate through applause, and occasionally enjoy the opportunity to ask questions of the speaker. Music is very important, and people in this lifestyle segment are open to many genres and instrumentations. Choirs and bands are both welcome, and music directors need to be versatile and professional.

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		Biblical		Generational
	Experiential	x	Topical	x	Peer Group

Aging of Aquarius believes that the youth are the future of the church, but their churches are often notable for the "missing middle" of 30-40 year olds. These churches often include their grandchildren. Sunday school for K - 6 is more important than nursery or preschool. Children's Sunday school tends to be experiential (rotating groups of children through learning centers with crafts, songs, puppets, stories, etc.) There may be a theme for the month. Topics tend to be related to moral behavior, lifecycle questions, and problem solving about daily living. Scripture supplements, but may not be central, to the teaching strategy.

If adults participate in Sunday school, classes resemble small affinity groups. Book studies are commonly about social issues, public policies, or ethical dilemmas. Bible studies tend to explore socio-economic history rather than doctrine. People come and go as their travel, vacation, and family plans allow. However, they usually stick with one group for an extended period of time.

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	
	Trained Leaders	x	Curriculum Study
x	Rotated Leaders	x	Shared Affinity

Midweek small groups are attractive to *Aging of Aquarius*. They are enthusiastic about personal growth, value interpersonal relationships, and learn through dialogue. Acceptance is an essential core value. Most groups gather around a shared interest, hobby, or enthusiasm (and occasionally around a shared need, health issue, or urgency for addiction intervention). The largest part of each gathering concerns fellowship and conversation and often involves food. Prayer and Bible reading may be less important.

Small group leadership is usually rotated among the members of the group, since each participant has high self-esteem and something to contribute. They often include video or speakers. Hosting is very important, and may require training. Groups tend to be short-term or seasonal, and some groups may orient around a cruise or a mission trip.

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		
Health and Wellness	x	
Quality of Life		x
Addiction Intervention		
Interpersonal Relationships	x	
Human Potential	x	x
Salvation and Human Destiny		

Aging of Aquarius can be very externally focused. They frequently volunteer in churches, non-profit social services, and health care agencies. Many will serve on the boards of service clubs and agencies. They are especially generous toward university alma maters, and participate in alumni gatherings. They are active for human rights, peace, environmental causes, and support medical research. As they grow older, their volunteer time may lessen, but they are likely to leave bequests to institutions that matter. However, the church must work harder to compete with these other institutions to receive their attention because people in this segment are turned away by waste, unnecessary bureaucracy, and denominational policies that are exclusive.

People in this lifestyle segment are generous with time and money ... but not necessarily sacrificial. They tend to shape outreach activities around their ongoing lifestyles, but do dramatically compromise their standard of living for the sake of mission. Always emphasize how mission can bring them personal fulfillment, as well as measureable benefits for society.

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	
	Ecclesiastical	x	Modern	x	Classic Christendom
x	Utilitarian		Postmodern		Contemporary Post–Christendom

Aging of Aquarius value people more than property. Facilities convey core values more than bedrock beliefs and combine beauty and utility. Worship centers are comfortable. Chancels tend to be contemporary and minimalist, so that musical ensembles, chancel dramas, and liturgical dance performances, and children's stories can be easily accommodated. Amplify the voices of children.

Architecture is tastefully spiritual. The cross will be common, but images of nature are welcome. Colored windows may be designed by local artists. Altars (communion tables) and baptismal fonts tend to be more contemporary and handcrafted. Technologies still tend to be modern. Although worship is often presentational, people in this lifestyle segment tend to associate video technology (from LCD screens to video clips) with "mere entertainment". Bibles, bulletins, and other hard copy will still be used. The spoken and written word will still be more important than images. Excellent acoustics and sound systems will be more important than LCD screens and PowerPoint slides.

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

Lingering institutional distrust, combined with anxieties over potential bureaucratic waste, means that people in this segment are cautious about unified budgets. They prefer to organize church finances into distinct capital pools and mission projects so that they have the option to designate their giving. If they like the mission results, they will give extra money to the operating budget of the church. Their practice of stewardship is often a tension between the desire for professionals to do ministry, and how much they are willing to spend on personnel.

Some people in this lifestyle segment prefer to receive detailed information about financial needs and outreach possibilities, and then decide the amount of their pledge. No personal visit is required or wanted. However, many in this lifestyle segment look forward to the relational aspects of a stewardship campaign. They like to talk personally with the ministry area leaders, dialogue about ministry goals and expectations. Their giving is motivated more by the credibility of leaders than actual financial needs. Year round fund raising strategies are important to sustain interest.

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

Aging of Aquarius uses internet for word processing and shopping, but have limited use for social media. They consider email and texting too impersonal. Gatherings (large groups or small groups) in which there is personal interaction and dialogue are important ways to communicate. Print is still very important. This lifestyle segment continues to frequent book stores and libraries, and is only slowly converting to e-readers. They tend to be literate and articulate, and sensitive to multiple layers of meaning in words. They still read printed newsletters, but verbal announcements interrupts inspirational worship.

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.