

# Segment **C13: Silver Sophisticates**

Mature, upscale couples and singles in suburban homes

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
K37 Wired for Success	C11 Aging of Aquarius	A01 American Royalty
F22 Fast Track Couples	C12 Golf Carts and Gourmets	B08 Babies and Bliss
G24 Status Seeking Singles	C13 Silver Sophisticates	E19 Full Pockets Empty Nests
	C14 Boomers and Boomerangs	

## General Comments

***Silver Sophisticates*** see the church as an important part of the educational and social service networks in the United States. Spiritual life and lifelong education are closely related, along with donations to charities and philanthropic activities. They join churches that prioritize education and the arts, and which have the resources to provide high quality worship. Their church usually supports at least one, major, ongoing "signature" outreach ministry that has a citywide or regional reach.

***Silver Sophisticates*** generally have a more global than local perspective, with a high sense of wellbeing. They are committed to their careers and have planned lifestyles. ***Silver Sophisticates*** are relatively liberal in their social views and tend to connect with moderate or more liberal churches. They may serve on church or non-profit boards, and often find satisfaction mentoring young protégés.

***Silver Sophisticates*** are over 65 and many are widowed or divorced. They are long-time residents in stylish homes of their neighborhood. They tend to be very loyal to their local church and denomination. The members are often old friends, although they may not socialize regularly during the week. They may make generous bequests to the church. The architecture, liturgy, and symbols of the church provide a strong sense of belonging.

***Silver Sophisticates*** often support the idea of family friendly, seeker sensitive, bi-racial, and culturally diverse churches ... but participation may challenge their comfort zones. They encourage church planting, but may not easily participate in new churches. Their ideals and skills make them the "back bone" for many large churches and denominations.

## **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

Senior pastors or priests are usually veteran ministers with years of experience. They are known and respected in the denomination, and have probably served on committees or staff in their regional judicatory. Pastors are expert in designing and leading worship and excellent preachers. They are knowledgeable about theology, ethics, or politics and often have an advanced degree. Pastors may occasionally teach at a retreat center or seminary, but are primarily available in the local church. Approachable and friendly, pastors facilitate committees, manage events, and provide sound and somewhat conservative administration for the church. They frequently oversee one or more program staff, and train a solid volunteer core of leaders on an administrative board.

Senior pastors usually delegate caregiving to other professional staff, and invest more time in networking across social service, business, government, health, and education sectors. They cast large visions for city-wide or regional service, and may strongly advocate particular community causes or denominational public policies. They may function as gurus who inspire and guide senior management leaders in other public sectors.

*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		

*Silver Sophisticates* make worship attendance a habit whenever they are not traveling. They arrive on time, but not early, and like to be greeted respectfully and by name. They usually have seating preferences, and ushers should be sensitive to special needs. They do not like to be the center of attention, but appreciate little acts of kindness. Occasionally they will have children and grandchildren visiting with them.

These people are careful about their health. They appreciate food without any added sugar; excellent coffee or herbal teas; fruit juices and water. If the core values of the church permit, they appreciate an excellent glass of wine after worship or on special occasions. Hospitality is on the same floor as the worship center, and the room is tastefully decorated, with natural lighting and air conditioning. Christian symbols and memorials are often visible.

Hospitality time is an opportunity to socialize, but also to talk seriously about issues, missions, controversies, or opportunities with their peers. Provide more than enough space for small groups to gather, and include areas with comfortable chairs and tables.

*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				

*Silver Sophisticates* appreciate worship that lifts the heart and challenges the mind. Inspirational worship is not necessarily loud or rhythmic. It may be dramatic or liturgical, with excellent musical performances, rich images, and eloquent speakers. Worship conveys a sense of history and tradition. Audio should be excellent. Make sure that all voices (including children) are amplified and acoustics are crisp. However, video may be a distraction, and they may worry that worship might become “mere entertainment.”

Preaching may be motivational, but its main intention is to educate. Preaching explains doctrinal or ethical points, reflects historical continuity, and exposit scripture. They prefer reasonable argument and gentle persuasion, but dislike pedantic lectures or ideological rants. Worship and preaching often reference the Christian year, and the Common Lectionary may interface with Sunday school and the private devotions of participants.

Baptism, Holy Communion, and Confirmation can be very important, and they may have strong views about how these rites should be celebrated. Recognition of life cycle changes can also be important (births, birthdays, anniversaries, and other memorials). Holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Mother's Day, and Easter can also be important times for church attendance, and they may invite friends or family to join them.

*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	x	Generational
	Experiential	x	Topical		Peer Group

*Silver Sophisticates* often have advanced degrees or specialized professional training. Their undergraduate training has often included a core curriculum in liberal arts. However, their careers have often been in business, science, law, or higher education. They tend to approach Christian education with a solid background in history and literature, but focus more on practical applications for strategic thinking or daily living.

They prefer Christian education that uses modern media (printed books and workbooks), although an increasing number may use e-readers. If they download resources, they are more likely to print and distribute them. Bible studies are often integrated with preaching and follow the Christian year, or they focus on historical background and contemporary social issues. They often do book studies, based on newsworthy current events, and occasional fiction.

Their children do not often attend worship or participate in Sunday school, but grandparents may bring grandchildren. Classes are usually organized generationally through pre-teen years. After that, education is organized around peer groups or friendship circles. They tend to see the youth as the future of the church, and education as the best means to shape their worldviews. They favor youth programs in almost any form, and will invest in professional leadership to design and lead youth 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
	Rotated Leaders	x	Shared Affinity

*Silver Sophisticates* are singles and couples over 65 and have been in residence 10 or more years. They readily welcome small groups into their homes. Some groups are organized around book studies, and may use DVD based curricula related to world religions, philosophy, history, and the arts. Other groups may form around affinities for cardio and low impact exercise (e.g. yoga), or mission awareness for the environment and global emergencies. Groups tend to be seasonal (allowing time for travel and seasonal homes) but also tend to last longer.

Many in this lifestyle segment have expertise in a variety of topics. However, they usually prefer a designated leader that brings expertise to the conversation, or one who accepts the burden of planning, hospitality and conversation. Group leaders are trained to be diplomatic to overcome personality conflicts and encourage shy people.

*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	X
Human Potential		X
Salvation and Human Destiny		

Many *Silver Sophisticates* are widowed or divorced, and empty-nest couples may live at a distance from children and relatives. They are always interested in opportunities to build friendships. They regard church dinners, dances, concerts, and other fellowship events as a form of mission. They are very concerned with healthy living, and interested in ministries related to physical and mental exercise.

*Silver Sophisticates* are more outward focused than their *Golf Carts and Gourmets* counterparts. They have strong philanthropic interests, and may contribute generously to universities, arts, environmental groups, veterans groups, and social welfare non-profits. They may underwrite special church outreach projects, and occasionally volunteer to be on an advisory or governing board. They consider themselves citizens in a global village, and are interested in improving the quality of life for others. They often support denominational missions for famine relief, peace and reconciliation, disease control, and emergency intervention.

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

*Silver Sophisticates* regard property as an important way to maintain continuity with the past. However, they may be open to contemporary innovations in architecture and interior decorating. Contemporary design must still be tasteful, proportional, clearly spiritual, and blend well with the shapes and colors of the traditional facility. Interior symbols will be classically Christian, but exterior symbols may broadly recognize other religious traditions. They make clear distinctions between “sacred” and “secular” space and time.

Technologies are in keeping with 19th and early 20th century norms. Organs (preferably pipe organs) will be the primary instrument of worship. However, people in this segment appreciate alternative musical genres and instrumentations, and the facility may be adaptable for jazz, blues, and even classic rock (provided these are used in a decidedly Christian ways like jazz Mass). They welcome padded pews and cathedral chairs if they are traditionally designed. The sanctuary must have an excellent sound system, but is usually devoid of LCD screens and projectors. Lighting is adjustable, and candles are often used to create an environment of quiet meditation.

*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

*Silver Sophisticates* instinctively trust the church institution (although this may be weakening as denominations address controversial public policy issues). They prefer detailed budgets, but give to only two or three distinct funds (operations, memorials, and missions). They like to maintain large financial reserves. They may consider debt, provided that it is for expanded mission and is well managed. They will underwrite special outreach projects, give to micro-charities, and support denominational missions. Their giving is sensitive to the core values and mission outcomes of any project, and the integrity of mission leadership is always a crucial consideration for their generosity.

They trust church staff and church boards to use the money wisely. The Finance Committee is a crucial power center of the church. They prefer late autumn stewardship campaigns. Some have a history of tithing, and most are committed to percentage giving. They want a careful record of their charitable giving for their tax returns. They can make very generous one-time donations when they are convinced that a capital campaign is justified. The degree of generosity is often motivated by the credibility of the pastor and spiritual leadership of the board. Therefore, they often scrutinize personnel costs (especially paid vacations, continuing education funds, and book allowances).

*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

The internet is still rather foreign to *Silver Sophisticates*. They probably do not rely on email or participate in social media beyond family on Facebook. They are increasingly open to new, user friendly technology that facilitate real-time chats with extended family or distant colleagues. They are often familiar with internet technology from their professional careers, and can participate in webinars, online interviews, and meetings. However, in their church participation they usually use the internet primarily to track financial giving to the church, and may authorize direct payments to the church. If the church has a website, it is primarily another form of advertising. If they go on line, the calendar of events is probably the most important piece on the home page.

They like to receive information via printed newsletters (newspapers, magazines, and books), and through the traditional telephone. Some will use mobile phones (although they may not use all the features for "Smart Phones"). They often rely on "telephone trees" for prayer concerns, and appreciate reminders by mail or phone about important meetings or coming events.

Repetitive oral communication can be important, but too many verbal announcements gets in the way of inspirational worship. Printed announcements in the bulletin are often repeated or highlighted in the worship service. Large gatherings often include shared "concerns" and reminders about coming events. They dislike answering machines and prefer to talk to "real people" who are expected to be friendly as well as efficient. They discourage uninvited visits from the pastor or church members, will often invite church leaders to their homes for intimate conversations or dialogue about congregational life.

*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

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

### LEADERSHIP

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

### HOSPITALITY

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

### EDUCATION

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

### SMALL GROUPS

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

## IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS (cont.)

### WORSHIP

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

### OUTREACH

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

### FACILITIES

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

### FINANCES

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

### COMMUNICATION

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