SEGMENT C11: AGING OF AQUARIUS

Mission Impact... Focusing your heartburst for the people around you

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

Resource: Mosaic by Experian

General Spiritual Insight:

Aging of Aquarius is part of the Lifestyle Group C (Booming With Confidence). Please refer to the description of Group C for the larger context of this segment's potential relationship with the church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Perspective:</th>
<th>&quot;It's The Right Thing To Do&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Behaviors:</td>
<td>Quiet Good Taste, Morality With Minimum Sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Impressions:</td>
<td>Inclination &amp; Attitudes: Global Perspective, Planned Lifestyles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mood &amp; Values: High Commitment to Career, High Sense of Well Being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comments:

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 have explored a variety of religions and philosophies. In their later years, they have tended to lose interest in radical ideas. Protesters have become more like 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 appreciate deep spirituality, 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 can 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. They can be spiritual dilettantes or serious seekers.
**Relevant Ministry Choices:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Hospitality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visionary, Pilgrim or Discipler</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Aging of Aquarius</em> looks for visionary leaders in politics, social reform, and the church. The spiritual leader may or may not be a classic church pastor, but he or she needs to have a citywide, regional, or global purposefulness that is both spiritual and practical. This leader discerns &quot;common denominators&quot; of faith, traces a moral imperative through diverse cultures, and provides 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. As the first wave of baby boomers returned to their roots and became more conformist, they sought out church leaders who were disciplers. Many of these people consider themselves &quot;seekers&quot; rather than &quot;church members&quot;, and do not know the very basics of Christian history, scripture, spiritual practice, or theology. They look for a leader who can help them grow and mature in faith. However, many of these baby boomers have again become disenchanted with the established church, and are experimenting with alternative forms of Christian community. These people look for spiritual leaders who are pilgrims in their faith (companion &quot;seekers&quot; who are further down the path of discernment), and who can mentor others in the next step of the journey.**</td>
<td><strong>Multiple Choices, Healthy Choices</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in this lifestyle segment value personal relationships, intimate interaction, and sincerity. Greeters should be trained to model the core values and beliefs of the church in their unrehearsed words and spontaneous deeds. 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. Give them something printed for reading or reflection. People in this lifestyle segment 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. These people are often impatient, so avoid long lines with multiple serving stations. These people are increasingly health conscious, so provide a variety of high fiber or vitamin rich foods. Avoid plastic and Styrofoam. Recycle!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Worship

Compelling Issues:
These empty-nesters rarely attend worship with their children, but may well attend worship with their grandchildren. A children’s story is an entertainment highlight, and re-assures grandparents that they are taking responsibility for the spiritual nurture and moral upbringing that may have been lacking with their children. A children’s sermon often makes more sense to the adult listeners as they become reacquainted with "basic Christianity".

Inspirational – Educational
People approach worship as an extension of private devotion. Worship preferences can be very eclectic overall, and may change week to week as the mood or sense of urgency changes. In general, however, they look for worship that is both inspirational and educational. They want worship to touch them emotionally, awakening deeper sensitivity to God in their private lives, and encouraging a sense of optimism for the future of society. Worship is often educational. Preaching is less about expositing 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 often a performance ... a combination of artistic expression and executive seminar. They like to participate through applause, and occasionally enjoy the opportunity to ask questions of the speaker. Primarily it is an event that engages heart and mind, and leads to animated conversation or action later.

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.

Education
Experiential, Topical, Peer Group
Churches that reach this lifestyle segment are often notable for the "missing middle" of 30-40 year olds who are the children of the empty-nesters who attend. However, these churches often include the grandchildren. The nursery and pre-school may be less important, but a Sunday school for Kindergarten through Grade 6 is important (young and older teens tend to drop out because their role models are parents rather than grandparents). The children’s Sunday school tends to be very experiential (rotating groups of children through learning centers with crafts, songs, puppets, stories, etc.) There may be a theme for the month, and topics tend to be related to moral behavior, lifecycle questions, and problem solving about daily living (e.g. how to cope with playground bullies, caring for God’s creation, etc.) Scripture supplements, but may not be central, to the teaching strategy.

If adults participate in Sunday school, the 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. Classes have very limited accountability, and 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.
Relevant Ministry Choices:

**Small Group**

**Rotated Leaders, Affinity**
Midweek small groups are attractive to people in this lifestyle segment. They are enthusiastic about personal growth, value interpersonal relationships, and learn through dialogue. 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 invite guests to speak to them. The hosting role 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.

**Small Group Compelling Issues:**
Small groups can become very intimate and build lasting relationships. The group often becomes the primary care giving resource for participants in the group.

**Outreach**

**Compelling Issues:**
Many in this segment are politically active, but they usually like to separate “church” and “politics”. Strong prophetic preaching may make them uncomfortable. On the other hand, they will sign petitions that advocate public policy directions.

**For Themselves:** Interpersonal Relationships, Health
**For Others:** Human Potential, Quality of Life

People in this lifestyle segment 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.

These people were once more concerned about process, grassroots consultation, and relationships. They are still very sensitive to trust issues, and trust is crucial in any outreach ministry. They expect institutions to delegate both responsibility and authority to take action, and not slow down mission for the sake of total consensus. Increasingly, they are results driven. They support outreach ministries that demonstrate practical, measurable, positive changes in society.
## Relevant Institutional Strategies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property and Technology</th>
<th>Stewardship/Financial Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Utilitarian, Contemporary, Modern</strong></td>
<td><strong>Designated Giving, Informed Philanthropy or Lifestyle Coaching</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Aging of Aquarius</em> value people more than property. Their homes may be expensive and well decorated, but they are built to maximize conversation areas and personal interests; and designed to communicate the core values and spiritual convictions of the owners. The same combination of beauty and usefulness will be true of church properties. These are utilitarian in that space is designed to build relationships. Hospitality and educational space is enlarged, and designed with conversation areas and seminar-style rooms. Worship centers are comfortable (flexible, padded seats) with broad aisles to facilitate wheelchairs and walkers. Chancels tend to be contemporary and minimalist, so that musical ensembles, chancel dramas, and liturgical dance performances can be easily accommodated. Buildings tend to use contemporary symbols of spirituality, rather than traditional symbols of Christendom. The cross will be common, but images of nature or new age spiritualities are also common. Colored windows will be contemporary as well, and may be designed by local artists. Altars (communion tables) and baptismal fonts, along with other sacramental accoutrements, will be more contemporary than medieval (and pottery rather than metal). Technologies, however, will still be more modern. Video screens and computers will be used in offices and classrooms, but these are often considered distractions in the worship center. Printed books, 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.</td>
<td>Lingering distrust of the established church institution, combined with anxieties over potential bureaucratic waste, means that people in this lifestyle segment are cautious about unified budgets. They prefer to see church finances divided 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 the church leaders than actual financial needs. The latter group welcomes coaching that helps them shape a more generous lifestyle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Download resources for your mission field through [www.missioninsite.com](http://www.missioninsite.com). Mission Impact Guide V2.0 © MissionInsight, LLC
**Relevant Institutional Strategies:**

**Property and Technology**  
**Compelling Issues:**
Although worship is often presentational, people in this lifestyle segment tend to associate video technology (from LCD screens to video clips) as "mere entertainment".

**Stewardship/Financial Mgmt.**  
**Compelling Issues:**
Prepare a year round strategy of fund raising. Include two annual stewardship campaigns (spring and fall) that provide multiple options for individuals or couples to participate. Promote pre-arranged, automatic withdrawals to support the church.

---

**Communication**

**Internet, Print, Gatherings**

The internet is a helpful tool of research, and people in this lifestyle segment will use it to store and share documents. However, they are skeptical of the internet as a means of fulfilling interpersonal relationships and 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, and even if they receive it as an email attachment they are likely to print it.

**Communication**

**Compelling Issues:**
Printed announcements in worship, flyers, and the occasional mass mailing are still effective ways to communicate information about special events.

---

**Resources:**

- Download the [MOSAIC Guide](http://www.experian.com) from Experian
- Explore the [Interactive MOSAIC Guide](http://www.experian.com) from Experian