Your Church’s Senior Adult Ministry Is About to Change

The declining number of folks from the Builder Generation will have a significant impact on local churches over the next decade.

Local churches and denominations have talked for a long time about the overwhelming numbers of senior adults that make up our congregations. Many churches have focused a significant portion of their ministry toward their senior saints.

This ministry is about to change, and some churches are already seeing those changes.

The Boomer Generation, of which I’m a part, has always held to our generational differences. This isn’t going to change just because we are getting older.

Many in my generation won’t even accept the term senior adult. Many of us simply don’t see ourselves that way.

For one thing, many of us do not do retirement well. Like me, many Boomers take early retirement, and then find something else to do.

I retired from a factory job at the age of 47, but at the time of my retirement, I was also a bivocational pastor and the owner/manager of a small business. All that retirement meant was that I had one less place to be each day.

In 2015, I retired again from a ministry position I had with our judicatory. But, a couple of years prior to that retirement I earned my auctioneer’s license.

Eight months after retirement I accepted the call to be the transitional pastor of a local church that was beginning the process of seeking a new pastor.

So, now I’m doing that and conducting auctions and working for other auctioneers in the area.

Boomers tend to not do retirement well. We may enjoy fishing and golfing and spending time with family, but for many of us we also want to stay active and
involved in doing things that we find worthwhile.

I don’t see a lot of Boomers interested in riding the church bus with their peers to Branson. We are more likely to be interested in taking a mission trip somewhere.

I was sharing that thought with another church leader recently, and he confirmed that they are already seeing that in their church.

The senior adults in the church take the church bus some place on a monthly basis for an enjoyable day of shopping or sightseeing. However, the boomers in the church are seldom interested in taking these trips and few do.

In the next 10 years, many churches will have to rethink their senior adult ministry and change it to reflect the realities of the way the Boomer Generation looks at itself and their interests.

This will also impact the men’s and women’s ministries in churches.

We find many of the associational men’s meetings are very poorly attended. The only thing that keeps them going are the men from the Builder Generation and some of the more senior members of the Boomer Generation.

Younger Boomers and later generations do not find the traditional men’s meeting interesting or compelling enough to attend.

The same is true of many women’s gatherings. One woman recently commented on the poor attendance at their state’s mission conference.

She was quick to point out that it was a good conference, but she was clearly disappointed at the attendance. Again, many younger women do not find such meetings a worthwhile use of their time.

Churches and denominations that are interested in growth need to take a serious look at how they can best engage the Boomer Generation as it replaces the Builder Generation as the senior saints in our churches.

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