

RECLAIMING THE BABY BOOMERS

by Rev. Thomas Soltis, SELC Stewardship Director

Boomer Background

The “Baby Boomers” (1946-1964) fall in between the “Traditionalists” (born before 1945) and “Generation X” (1965-1980). They got their name from the birth surge after World War II. Compared to the childhood of their parents, the Boomers grew up in better times. An economic boom and availability of material things produced a prosperous middle class. A goal of parents was to provide a better life for their children. Boomers were brought up on old time religion and taught to be polite, well groomed. The values of a good education and hard work were stressed as the avenue to success and a good life.

Boomer Rebellion

Despite the amenities surrounding them, many Boomers rebelled. Not all. There were exceptions. The rebels grew their hair long and abandoned the tenets of traditional religion in favor of free love, communes and drug abuse. They spawned a new subculture revolting against established moral and societal standards. Anti-establishment/government protests were frequent. Parents in the sixties never knew what hit them. Their well intended efforts of good upbringing backfired.

Boomer Influences

- > **Television** - The cultural impact of TV influenced their formative years.
- > **Affluence** - The American dream of “a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage” became a reality. Time and money were available for things (some undesirable) other than daily necessities.
- > **Vietnam War** - War time political issues spawned protests calling for “love not war”.
- > **Psychology** replaced theology for many as a source of values and guidance resulting in an emphasis on self truths rather than the Bible.

Self-centered Life Style

Daniel Yankelovich in his book, “New Morality”, describes Boomers’ new values as “*self-expression, self-exploitation, and personal satisfaction*”. They were more concerned about what they wanted than about fulfilling their parents’ expectations. “Do your own thing in the way you want to do it” became a lifestyle.



“Rebellion” by Thomas Soltis
One of four paintings (*“Tension”*,
“War” *“Escape”*) depicting *“The Sixties”*

Religious Impact

Boomers placed greater emphasis on establishing a self-styled relationship with God through personal opinions rather than the Scriptures. Haydon Shaw, in his book, “Generational IQ”, describes them as “*a ‘Me’ hyper-individualistic generation, searching for a faith ‘that works for me’ even if it meant skipping parts of the Bible.*” Denominations, saturated with “Form Criticism” theology, which declared portions of scripture “religious myth”, didn’t help matters any. Many Boomers lost their loyalty to the denomination in which they grew up. “Church hopping” took place. They sought religious community in groups catering to their self-styled inner spiritual feelings and life style.

Reclaiming Lapsed Boomers

Boomers still stuck in the mud of humanistic self-styled religious thought are living in the realm of foolishness. “*The wisdom of this world is foolishness*” writes St. Paul. (1 Cor. 3:19) Wise Solomon advises, “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*” (Prov. 3:5) God alone possesses absolute truth. He has revealed it in the Scriptures. Unbelieving Boomers should embrace understanding “*according to His Word*”. (Ps. 119:169) Christians have the responsibility to share God’s Word, especially the Gospel, to give Boomers wisdom to meet real life issues and receive eternal life through Christ. “*Go make disciples!*” (Mt.28:19) Evangelize!

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