

# Baby Boomers: A harvest waiting to take place

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ALLEN—The largest cohort of Americans also happens to be the one that's living longer than those who came before, providing churches unprecedented opportunities.



Amy Hanson said the Boomers believed they could change the world in their 20s and still believe it in retirement. That's no coincidence, Amy Hanson told a conference on ["Catching the Baby Boomer Wave,"](#) sponsored by Texas Baptists' Bible study/discipleship department, First Baptist Church in Allen, Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, LifeWay Christian Resources and the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

"I don't think that's by accident," she said. "I think God is up to something. He's raising up a generation."

As Baby Boomers continue to enter retirement years, they have the time to serve in a variety of ways, the experience to connect with others and the

resources to help, Hanson asserted. Baby Boomers are primed to have a significant impact for God's kingdom in their latter years—if the church can mobilize them, she insisted.

### **Churches should catch up with corporations**

Corporations already understand Baby Boomers' combination of time and resources well, Hanson noted. Industries have honed their message to Baby Boomers and are reaping the financial benefits.

"Where are we, church?" she asked. "Where are we in this conversation? We are about so much more than the dollar. We are about the soul."

Churches that recognize ministry possibilities to aging Boomers and seek to take on the challenge are plowing new ground, speakers told conference participants. The best way to approach ministry to aging Boomers still is being determined.

"This is cutting-edge stuff," Hanson said. "You are pioneers."

As congregations awaken to the opportunity to mobilize aging Christians, they see chances for a generation to be reached like never before, Hanson said. Boomers as a group are less committed to church than their parents, but they need to hear and embrace the gospel.

### **Great harvest possible**

"Many of the people in their 60s are Boomers," she said. "And many of them are not connected to church. If we invested energy and time and resources into reaching this generation, we would see a great harvest."

In some ways, the aging process helps churches have opportunities to reach out to Boomers, who are going through a variety of life changes. They're likely caring for aging parents. They also may be caring for grandchildren. Each time a person goes through pressure situations, the

church can help, Hanson noted.

As Boomers get older and retire, they seek meaning for their lives. While they want some relaxation, Boomers find a continuous search for pleasure in their latter years to be hollow. They want deep relationships with others and purpose for their lives.

“For 30 years, we’re just going to focus on leisure?” Hanson said. “I just can’t believe that’s what God wants for our lives.”

### **Looking for places to plug in**

Boomers are looking for places to plug in, Hanson insisted. They’re taking on part-time work completely different from their previous careers and seeking volunteer roles where they can use their skills.

Boomers believed they could change the world in their 20s. They believed it in middle age. Research indicates they still believe it in retirement, Hanson said. It’s up to churches to channel that desire by connecting them with God.

“They’re going to take that attitude to their older years: ‘We can do it. We can change this. We can make it better,’” she said.