



21st Century Seniors

By Rick Shrader

Baby Boomers (those born 1946-1964) became “seniors” in the year 2011. According to the Pew Research Center, Baby Boomers at this time in their lives are still 29% of the work force compared to 21% of the Silent Generation at the same time, and only 19% of the Great Generation. Though we are also retiring at a fast pace (28.6 million in 2020-high due to covid), we have stayed active longer than any generation born in the 20th century. Also, because 76% of Boomers identify themselves as Christian, we have stayed in church longer than any current generations.

I was born in 1950. I’ve always been glad for that even year because it has made it easy to figure how old I am! I will be 71 this year and am still pastoring full-time. I will attend my 50th Bible college class reunion and will see many of my classmates still either working in ministry or very involved. Health situations or other circumstances may have altered activity for some, but we Boomers are a hard lot to keep down. However, of the generation before us, the “Silent” generation (born 1928-1945), 84% still consider themselves Christian and, by my observation, are still some of the most faithful attenders to the church services.

Now, I’ll be realistic, our hair has turned white or fallen out, and we wear a lot hardware just to keep up daily functions, and our doctors seem to look a lot like our grandkids. I had a hard time accepting Medicare at 65 and then being forced to take Social Security at 70, I thought, this is for old people. My wife and I updated our living trust because the people who were supposed to take our kids if something happened to us, died years ago, and now no one wants to take responsibility for four middle-aged adults and their

families. When I turned 65, I changed my life’s verse from Eph. 6:10, “Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,” to Mark 8:18, “Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?”

Since we are the seniors of the 21st century, do we take our God-given responsibility seriously? Psalm 71 is titled in my study Bible, “A Prayer for the Aged.” Verse 18 reads, “Now also, when I am old and gray headed, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.” I have to ask if we are ready and able to meet that challenge? Psalm 78:4 reads, “We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done . . . That the generation to come might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare them to their children” (vs. 6).

As the family declines in our time, so does the influence that should be passed on from generation to generation. Our children have faced unprecedented obstacles in their lives and are now trying to raise children in even more dire circumstances. Our government, our schools, and even many churches, have become adversaries rather than adjuncts to the family. So it falls to our generation, to the grandfathers and grandmothers to be strong and pass on the faith which was once delivered to the saints. We can do this by being faithful to what we know, what we value, and what we worship. We’re not popular anymore nor do we need to be. We need to be godly and people of prayer and good counsel. If this is your desire, I hope you will continue to read this monthly column and join me in praying for one another and the generation to come.