

The Great Commission to Reach a New Generation

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Between the years 1977 and 1994 a tremendous upsurge in live births in America caught most demographers by surprise. Birth rates had declined precipitously during the “baby bust” of 1964 to 1976, and few people expected such a dramatic reversal of this trend. Indeed, this new baby boom was almost as large as the well-documented baby boom of 1946 to 1964.

This generation has been unnamed for the most part. In isolated articles some writers have referred to them as “the next boom,” “the echoboomers,” “the new boom,” “the vava boom” (because so many of the mothers of this generation had their first child later in life, usually in their thirties), and “the millennial generation.”

I have named this generation “the bridgers” for two reasons.¹ First and foremost, these 72 million will *bridge* two centuries and two millennia. Though their birth dates will have twentieth-century markings, their generation will be most influential during their adulthood in the twenty-first century.

A second reason for using the bridger nomenclature is one of hope and promise. While we are living in a time of upheaval and uncertainty, we are also paradoxically living in a time of unprecedented awakenings, prayer movements, and awareness of God. Indeed, the bridger generation is already being cited as a “religious” generation, though “religious” and “Christian” are hardly synonymous. But is it possible that this group of 72 million may be the *bridge* between the secular and the sacred?

In the twenty-first century the bridgers will shape the attitudes, values, economics, and lifestyles of America. They will be the dominant adult population group for at least the first half of the next century. In 1995, the bridgers accounted for 27.5 percent of the total United States population.² Though the boomer generation was slightly larger, it is the bridgers who will be moving into positions of power and influence in the twenty-first century. (See chart, page 50.)

Their Religious World

Perhaps more than any twentieth-century generation, the bridgers are a religious group. But “religious” is about as specific as one can get in describing their beliefs. The bridgers as a generation believe in almost any expression of a higher being or higher power. They resist any claim that one faith system is superior or exclusive. The church has an incredible challenge in sharing an exclusive gospel with a generation that resists absolutes of any type.

Much publicity has been given to America’s preoccupation with New Age religions. But the primary “competition” for the bridgers’ allegiance may come from a growing religious force in America—Muslims. A 1991 poll of 12-to-17-year-olds by George H. Gallup International Institute confirmed the increasing influence of Muslims in America. Almost three-fourths of the respondents said that they receive too little information at school about Muslims.³ They were actually ask-

ing for religious instruction in public schools, but the instruction they desired was not Christian.

The church in America has intentionally attempted to reach two earlier generations, the boomers and the busters. In terms of generational penetration, the efforts have largely been a failure. What can we learn from these earlier efforts as we try to reach the bridgers?

The Church: Learning from Past Failures

In both the boomer and the buster generations, the church did experience a season of success in reaching a large number from each group. But the success was ephemeral. The quick surge of church growth from these generations was almost equally matched by a quick exodus over three to seven years. Two primary factors explain this phenomenon in simplest terms.

The Eagerness To Accommodate

Church leaders of the seventies through the nineties were told that they and their churches were hopelessly out of date and out of touch. The forms and liturgies of worship, the ancient hymns, and fifties-style buildings were irrelevant to the unchurched generations. Many of the critics were right. The evangelical church had its figurative head in the sand and did not understand the culture it was trying to reach. Change was necessary.

But in the course of making necessary changes, some churches went overboard. For these churches, changes in style shifted to changes in substance. The user-friendly exuberance meant low expectations and subtle encouragement of biblical illiteracy. So the boomers and busters entered the church looking for something different. They were initially attracted by

the relevancy of the worship, the ability to remain anonymous, and the hope of the Christian faith. But they quietly left the church when they discovered it to be amazingly similar to the world they knew. They were looking for something different; what they found was often more worldly than heavenly. They were looking for a challenge; what they found was the lowest of expectations.

Waiting for Adulthood

A second major mistake made by many churches attempting to reach the boomers and busters is that they waited until these generations reached adulthood. Yet the most receptive time of a person's life to be reached for the gospel is when he or she is a child or teenager. Eighty-one percent of all persons who accept Christ become Christians before they turn twenty years old.⁴

The Challenge: An Amoral Generation

Many of the problems in the boomer generation were related to immoral behavior. They had behavioral patterns that were contrary to their parents' teachings. Many of them did wrong, but at least they knew that the behaviors were wrong.

The busters who followed were largely like the boomer predecessors. Most who engaged in wrongful behavior did so with a clear understanding of right and wrong. Some simply made immoral decisions rather than moral decisions.

In an ironic way, we can celebrate the concept of immorality among the boomers and the busters. At least the majority in the generation could define moral or immoral behavior, even if they chose immorality. At least they knew right from wrong. The bridgers know no such boundaries.

For the first time in American history, an entire generation will grow up without certain moral values. Look at some of these attitudes in a survey of older bridgers:⁵

- STATEMENT: What is right for one person in a given situation might not be right for another person in a similar situation.

AGREE: 91%
 DISAGREE: 8%
 UNCERTAIN: 1%

- STATEMENT: When it comes to matters of morals and ethics, truth means different things to different people; no one can be absolutely positive that they know the truth.

AGREE: 80%
 DISAGREE: 19%
 UNCERTAIN: 1%

- STATEMENT: Lying is sometimes necessary.

AGREE: 57%
 DISAGREE: 42%
 UNCERTAIN: 1%

- STATEMENT: The main purpose of life is enjoyment and personal fulfillment.

AGREE: 64%
 DISAGREE: 36%
 UNCERTAIN: 0%

The bridger generation clearly has no certainty of right and wrong. The reasons behind the growth of an amoral generation can best be understood in light of the development of moral standard of previous generations.

The builders, born before 1946, continue to accept the basic Judeo-Christian principles they were taught as children to

discern right from wrong. They believe that the Bible is a moral guide for life.

The builders' children, boomers and older busters, withdrew in large numbers from church and other Christian activities. Without the influence of the church, they began to engage in large numbers in activities clearly defined as immoral by their parents. They did have the absolute standards of their parents' morality, but they accepted them in theory rather than in practice.

But the bridger generation has neither a moral standard, such as the Bible, nor a moral example in their parents. Their understanding of right and wrong is fuzzy at best. An entire amoral generation will soon enter adulthood.

We could point to numerous examples of the consequences of amorality. For now let us look at the bridgers and their sexual activity. Recent data from the U. S. Center for Disease Control indicates that 40 percent of ninth graders have had sex; 48 percent of tenth graders, 57 percent of eleventh graders, and 72 percent of high school seniors have had sexual intercourse.⁶

These discouraging numbers become even more dismal when one examines the age at which kids become sexually active. High school boys who are sexually active report that they lost their virginity at an average age of 13.2, while sexually active girls indicated an age of 14.6 years.⁷ One doctor reported treating girls at age eight and nine years old for severe vaginal injuries resulting from sexual experimentation.⁸ And most early attempts at intercourse are typically preceded by other sexual activity such as fondling and oral sex.⁹

As a rule, these bridgers cannot give a clear reason why they should *not* be involved in such behavior. Amorality among these children will soon reap disastrous consequences.

A Greater Challenge: A Pluralistic Generation

The PBS series *Genesis* premiered in October, 1996 with a celebrated promotion called “The Resurgence of Faith.” The host, Bill Moyers, asked this question prior to the beginning of the series: “Can a pluralistic America avoid the bitter fruits of religion—intolerance, ignorance and murderous fanaticism—that have occurred throughout history when faith is used as wedge to drive people apart?”¹⁰ Then Moyers asked the question that is fast becoming the question of the bridger generation: “How can I hold *my* truth to be *the* truth when so many others see truth so differently?”¹¹

Such is the world of faith in which bridgers have been raised. It is a world that finally has room for God, but refuses to define God in precise terms. Pam Janis further explains this perspective of God by stating, “The God of pop culture is not necessarily a Judeo-Christian God. He (or she) can be any form of love and power.”¹²

The bridger generation has adopted this view of God. Even many bridgers in evangelical churches refuse to confine their understanding of God to the One who has been revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. When we speak of the bridgers’ religion, we cannot speak of their faith. For the vast majority we can describe it best as the *faiths* of the bridgers.

History may remember the bridger generation as the most religious group America has ever known. Their generation is being raised in a time when the Gallup Organization reports that religion is playing a more important role in the lives of Americans.¹³ Public confidence in both organized religion and the clergy has been renewed, despite the moral failures of many church leaders.¹⁴ Church attendance

has held steady for most age groups, but is increasing among the bridger generation.¹⁵ Moyers writes: “We shouldn’t be surprised by all this stirring. It’s a confusing time, marked by social and moral ambivalence and, for many, economic insecurity. People yearn for spiritual certainty and collective self-confidence.”¹⁶

But Moyers’s ideas about “spiritual certainty” are anything but certain. He celebrates “the resurgence of religion in America, and the arrival on our shores of so many believers of different faiths.”¹⁷ For him the different views do not bring confusion, but hope. The bridgers seem to be catching that same pluralistic fever. It does not matter what you believe as long as you believe something.

The bridgers are the first generation of Americans to be raised without the cultural presumption that they would become Christians or explore Christianity. Barna notes that they “take the best from each faith group they’re exposed to and combine those valued elements into a comfortable, customized religious smorgasbord.”¹⁸ They may even call themselves “Christians,” but the term is used generically. Barna found their belief system “is a combination of Christianity, pragmatism, Far Eastern traditions and utilitarianism.”¹⁹

Such descriptions do not mean that bridgers are not religious. To the contrary, they are more religious than the boomers ever were. But we cannot make religion synonymous with Christianity. The former has some general type of belief in God that may have many expressions. The latter believes only in God as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. The former is “tolerant” and open to many faiths. The latter is “narrow-minded” and sees only one way to God.

Where did the bridgers learn their lessons about faith? For the most part, their boomer parents created an environment of moral relativism and a world void of absolutes. An exclusive God through whom there is no other way to salvation and heaven simply does not fit in this “I’m okay, you’re okay” climate.

The Urgency of the Moment

The vast majority of bridgers today have not accepted Christ. In a recent and informal survey of 211 bridgers, only four percent responded that they were born-again Christians who had trusted in Christ alone for salvation.²⁰ In comparison with other generations, two-thirds of builders indicated they were Christians, as well as one-third of boomers and fifteen percent of busters.²¹ According to present trends, we are about to lose eternally the second largest generation in America’s history.

In a survey of approximately 1,300 Christians of various backgrounds and regions, our research team asked them at what age they had accepted Christ. The responses were amazing:²²

Age That You Became a Christian

Before age 6	6%
Ages 6-9	24%
Ages 10-12	26%
Ages 13-14	15%
Ages 15-19	10%
Ages 20 and over	19%

Over eighty percent of the respondents indicated that they had become a Christian before they turned twenty years old. And seventy-one percent said that they had accepted Christ before the age of fifteen. George Barna’s research seems to affirm our surveys. He comments that “one of the

most significant discoveries from our research among all age groups of the population has been that most people make their lifelong, faith-shaping choices when they are young.”²³

Our survey was focused on all of the teen years, so the question asked specific ages up to nineteen. Barna researched the specific ages up to age eighteen and found that “if a person is ever going to become a Christian, the chances are that he or she will do so before reaching the age of 18.”²⁴ Whereas eighty-one percent of our respondents became Christians before age nineteen, Barna found that “three quarters of all people who have consciously, intentionally, and personally chosen to embrace Jesus Christ as their Savior did so before their eighteenth birthday.”²⁵

My research and Barna’s research are very close in their conclusions. Over three-fourths of persons become Christians before they turn twenty-years old. Not many churches, unfortunately, are paying much attention to this reality.

The Church Responds

While Christians can understand the eternal importance of the church for the bridgers, it is interesting that the secular world is reaching that same conclusion, if for different reasons. “The link between religious participation and avoidance of drug abuse, alcoholism, crime, and other social pathologies is grist for new research,”²⁶ write *U. S. News & World Report* correspondants Joseph P. Shapiro and Andrea R. Wright. Brookings Institute political scientist John DiIulio comments, “It’s remarkable how much good empirical evidence there is that religious belief can make a positive difference.”²⁷ Shapiro and Wright cite a “survey by John Gartner of Loyola College of Maryland and David

Larson of Duke University Medical Center [which] found over thirty studies that show a correlation between religious participation and avoidance of crime and substance abuse."²⁸

Other statistics show the positive influence of church on all persons, particularly the bridgers:

- "The two most reliable predictors of teenage drug avoidance [are] optimism about the future and regular church attendance."²⁹
- "The divorce rate for regular churchgoers is 18 percent; for those who attend services less than once a year, 24 percent."³⁰
- "Frequent churchgoers are about 50 percent less likely to report psychological problems and 71 percent less likely to be alcoholics."³¹

The church is indeed a real and present hope for the bridgers. We already have evidence of Great Commission churches that are reaching and impacting this generation. Though the characteristics are not exhaustive, let us look at some traits of bridger-reaching churches.

A Community of Unconditional Love

The church cannot be a replacement for the nuclear family, but it can offer love and community that is like a family. Many of the bridgers have been rejected by their parents and peers. For them there is a powerful blessing in the knowledge that God accepts them in their sinfulness, that through Christ they will not face rejection from God.

But these young people must first see the love of Christ in the lives of the be-

lievers in the churches. For many believers such a challenge will be difficult. The bridgers are different than they are. They come from a different culture with a different vocabulary. They are not opposed to the culture of the church; they are simply ignorant of it. For too many years too many churches have accepted only those who are like them. Bridger-reaching churches must not fit that description.

Adult/Bridger Mentoring

Less than three-fourths of the bridgers have two parents at home.³² But in many of the two-parent homes, only one will be a biological parent. More bridgers live with never-married mothers than any previous generation.³³ Even in those homes where both biological parents are present, the likelihood is that both parents work. Parents are spending less and less time with their kids. One study found that working mothers spend an average of eleven minutes a day in meaningful time with their children on weekdays, and only thirty minutes a day on weekends. Working fathers did worse, averaging eight minutes a day with their kids on weekdays, and fourteen minutes a day on weekends.³⁴

The children and youth of the bridger generation are starved for adult attention and interaction. That need will not be met by a handful of adults standing before a large group of bridgers. They long for the one-on-one attention they are not receiving at home.

In two different studies of effective evangelistic churches across our nation, I noted a keen awareness of the need to reach young people before they reached adulthood. In many of the more effective churches, one-on-one mentoring and discipling was taking place between adults and youth. Indeed, in those churches that

were reaching bridgers, this approach seemed to be among the most effective.³⁵

Intentionally Evangelistic

My research team at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has studied over 1,000 churches that are reaching people for Christ. One consistent theme emanates from all of their ministries, activities, and programs: intentionality in evangelism. Churches can have a plethora of programs for bridgers, but without an explicit effort to reach them for Christ, the evangelistic results will be anemic. Evangelism is not a passive activity. Throughout Scripture, the emphases of evangelistic ministries are “go” and “tell.” Bridger-reaching churches of the twenty-first century will be intentional in their evangelistic efforts.

High Expectations

Church leaders shared with us on numerous occasions their weariness of low expectations that resulted in weak commitment. A Michigan pastor said, “I’ve been in churches all my life where church membership means no more than a group of people yelling ‘Amen’ after someone walks the aisle. That is nothing like the New Testament pattern of total commitment and discipleship. We have weak churches with apathetic members because we place no biblical expectations on them!”³⁶

Many churches have discovered that low expectations and the search for the greatest level of seeker comfort have backfired. Instead of filling churches with new members who are committed Christians, they have been left with persons who have a consumer mentality, typified by an attitude of “What has the church done for me lately?”

Many of the bridgers are in schools that have “dumbed down” their educational standards so that everyone can pass.

Many bridgers have parents who impose little or no discipline. They are hungry for a place that demonstrates unconditional love along with clear expectations. They are responding well to churches that demonstrate a belief that these kids are capable of meeting vigorous demands. They are just waiting for someone to tell them that they are smart enough to achieve something great. They will thrive in a church that teaches them that they can do anything in Christ’s power, but they will avoid or leave quickly those churches that have no expectations for them. That low-expectation world is the one they are trying to leave.

Biblical Preaching

In our study of 576 churches, we found an amazing correlation not only in preaching and evangelistic effectiveness, but also in preaching and reaching the bridgers.³⁷ Those pastors who gave a high priority to the preaching of God’s Word led their churches to see lives changed in all age groups, and the bridgers were no exception.

The pastors we interviewed had a high view of Scripture. They believed not only in the truthfulness of the totality of God’s Word, but they also believed that it had the power to change lives. Thus they preached with a sense of expectancy and urgency.

If we are to have any hope of reaching America’s second largest generation for Christ, we must provide them with teaching from God’s own Word. Many of the mainline denominations have lost young people because the kids fail to see what is unique about the faith of their parents. C. Peter Wagner notes, “Studies of the denominations that have been losing members have shown that one factor across the board has been their inability to persuade

their children to join their parents' churches."³⁸ It seems that children have not learned the essentials of their faith and how it makes a difference in this world, and because preaching has been diluted, minimized, and proclaimed without authority.

Prayer Ministries

Another correlative factor in churches that reach bridgers is an emphasis on corporate prayer ministries. These churches not only emphasize prayer in each believer's life, they stress that the church must pray *together!*

Many of these churches are including bridgers in the prayer ministry. I visited seven churches in our evangelistic churches' research project that had more young people than adults involved in their prayer ministries. Bridgers indeed respond better when asked to *do* ministry.

In our fascination with demographic trends, innovative methodologies, and culturally-sensitive ministries, we must not forget that only a sovereign God can send a revival to reach the bridgers. If past historical and biblical patterns can be projected into the future, prayer will be used by God to precipitate these revivals.

Teaching the Parents

The proportion of the bridger generation in the church today is less than all previous generations. We can therefore surmise that many of the members in our churches have bridger children who are not involved in the church.

We have the opportunity to teach the adults in our churches to have a positive influence on their bridger children. As a consequence, many bridgers may choose to come to church; others who are attending may choose to stay.

What can we adults learn that can make

a difference in the lives of our bridger children? When 100,000 children between the ages of eight and fourteen were asked what they wanted most in their parents, they listed these ten qualities:

1. Parents who do not argue in front of them.
2. Parents who treat each member of the family the same.
3. Parents who are honest.
4. Parents who welcome their friends to the home.
5. Parents who are tolerant of others.
6. Parents who build a team spirit with their children.
7. Parents who answer their questions.
8. Parents who are consistent.
9. Parents who concentrate on their good points instead of their weaknesses.
10. Parents who give punishment when needed, but not in front of others, especially their friends.⁴⁰

Godly Youth Leadership

Among the key leadership positions in churches today should be those who teach our children and our youth. We should commit our resources of time and money for those leaders to be able to reach the bridger generation. Barna is rather blunt about churches' failure to support youth leaders with adequate funding when he writes,

Churches spend the vast majority of their evangelistic dollars (more than 70 percent of it, by some of our preliminary research) trying to penetrate the adult market. After decades and decades of such toil, we can confidently announce the results: such efforts bear little fruit. On the other hand, the amount of money and effort we pour into reaching kids with

the gospel pays off rather handsomely. The fact demands that we ask why we don't concentrate evangelistic efforts on youth.⁴⁰

The churches that reach the bridgers in the twenty-first century will emphasize that some of the key positions of leadership, whether paid or volunteer, will be positions of youth and children's leadership. The churches should seek the most godly and dedicated persons to lead these ministries, and support them enthusiastically with money, time, and prayers.

Effective Bible Study

Churches are losing young people because these young people have not learned the essentials and distinctives of their faith. Like their adult predecessors, the bridgers are woefully ignorant of the Bible. How can we expect to impact the lives of the bridger generation unless they understand the book which is our guide and direct word from God?

Dean R. Hoge, Benton Johnson, and Donald Luidens, three sociologists of mainline religion, came to this honest and compelling conclusion about mainline churches: "Our findings show that belief is the single best predictor of church participation, but it is orthodox Christian belief, and not the trends of lay liberalism, that impels people to be involved in the church."⁴¹

Further, the sociologists stress that these beliefs *must* be communicated to the next generations: "Unless the *youth* are firmly socialized into its tenets and standards, the strength of the religious community will eventually ebb away."⁴² Sunday School has been among the key methodologies of the past two centuries to train adults *and* youth in the depths of the Bible. C. Peter Wagner agrees, writing, "Some may say, 'But Sunday School

is not part of our tradition.' This may be true, but if it is not, some functional substitute must be found."⁴³

Exclusivity

Bridger-reaching churches of the twenty-first century will be bold and uncompromising in their stand that Christ is the only way of salvation. Many bridgers will resist that rigidity, calling it narrow-minded and intolerant. But no bridger will be truly reached for Christ unless he or she comes through the Savior, believing Him to be the only way of salvation. Watch for this issue to be one of the most-debated theological issues of the early twenty-first century.

Involved Youth

Finally, a notable characteristic of bridger-reaching churches will be the involvement of the youth in ministry. These churches will not be satisfied to fill the pews with bridgers; they will make every effort to involve each young person in ministry.

Therefore Go: The Commission To Reach the Bridger Generation Now

The command of the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 is to reach all *peoples*. Missiologists often suggest that this mandate particularly refers to people groups, those with similar cultural traits. Though the bridger generation is by no means a monolithic cultural group, many of the 72 million do share common characteristics. And perhaps the most common trait is their rejection of the exclusivistic claims of Christ.

Our research is fallible. We may reach considerably more than the predicted four percent of the bridger generation, but we may reach less. Every day that passes,

however, is one less day to reach the second largest generation in America's history. If previous patterns prove true, the ability to reach the bridgers will become more difficult the older they get.

We who are believers in Jesus Christ cannot be complacent. Eternal matters are at stake. Our children currently are receptive to the gospel of Jesus Christ, but that moment of openness may soon pass.

We serve a risen Savior who has given us the hope of eternity. However, the large majority of bridgers do not yet have that hope. While the Great Commission was directed at billions of people beyond the bridger generation, it was certainly directed at these young people as well. The consequences of the churches' response are eternal. The urgency is great. We cannot wait.

ENDNOTES

¹ See Thom S. Rainer, *The Bridger Generation* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997), for a thorough investigation of this generation.

² Bureau of the Census, *Projections of the United States by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1992 to 2050*. The chart on page 50 was also derived from this publication.

³ Susan Mitchell, "The Next Baby Boom," *American Demographics*, 17/10 (October 1995) 23.

⁴ This phenomenon of receptivity at an early age became apparent in my research for *The Bridger Generation*. See chapter 10, "The Church Responds: Now, Not Later."

⁵ George Barna, *Generation Next* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1995) 32.

⁶ Cited in Walt Mueller, *Understanding Today's Youth Culture* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1994) 213.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Bill Moyers, "America's Religious Mosaic," *USA Weekend*, October 11-13, 1996, 5.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Moyers, 4.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Barna, 74.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰This survey was conducted in three states over a seven month period in 1995 and 1996 by the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

²¹Ibid.

²²This survey was conducted in seventeen states over a fifteen-month period in 1995 and 1996 by the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

²³Barna, 77.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Joseph P. Shapiro and Andrea R. Wright, "Can Churches Save America?" *U. S. News & World Report*, September 9, 1996, 50.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Mitchell, 24.

³³Ibid.

³⁴David Elkind, *Miseducation* (New York: Knopf, 1987) 24. Cited in Walt Mueller, 41.

³⁵See Thom S. Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996) and Thom S. Rainer, *High Expectation Churches* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, forthcoming, 1999).

³⁶Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches*, 174.

³⁷Ibid., see especially chapter 3.

³⁸C. Peter Wagner, *The Healthy Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1996) 146.

³⁹"Parental Behavior," *Coral Ridge Encounter*, April 1990, 41.

⁴⁰Barna, 77.

⁴¹Dean R. Hoge, Benton Johnson, and Donald A. Luidens, *Vanishing Boundaries: The Religion of Mainline Protestant Baby Boomers* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994) 185.

⁴²Ibid., 183.

⁴³Wagner, 147.

The Bridger's Share of the U. S. Population, 1995

Number	(thousands)	% of Total Population
Total (all age groups)	263,754	100.0
Bridgers (1977-1994)	72,176	27.5
Busters (1964-1976)	44,603	17.0
Boomers (1946-1964)	77,587 *	29.5
Builders (before 1946):		
Swing (1933-1945)	37,662	14.3
World War II (before 1933)	30,728	11.7

* The boomers are typically numbered at 76 million, which represents the number of live births in the U. S. for this generation. This higher number of over 77 million takes into account immigrants who were not born in the U. S.