

WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

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The various findings reported below are taken from:

Ammerman, Nancy Tatom and Roof, Clark Wade. 1995. Editors, Work, Family, and Religion in Contemporary Society. New York: Routledge.

-No single factor is more responsible for the shifts in the relationship among work, family, and religion than the massive entry of women into the workforce.

-Women working full-time are less involved in their church/religion than women working part-time. Part-time employment was found to be positively related to participation in organized religion.

-Of particular importance is the finding that full-time employment of married women is related to successively larger declines in their own and in husbands' attendance and strength of religious identity.

-The impact on organized religion of employment of married women provides the clearest support of the workforce hypothesis. By far the most significant challenge to organized religion lies in the work-related declines in membership and attendance attributable to full-time employment of married women.

-Full-time employment of men and women generally encourages their participation and their spouses' participation in *extrareligious* organizations, but full-time employment of wives very clearly discourages their own involvement, and . . . discourages their husbands' involvement as well.

-If more married women become more active in the workforce, there is basis to predict that more of them will become less active in organized religion, and that their husbands, too, are likely to join this exodus. Further, there is reason to believe that their children and consequently future generations of young adults will participate less than today's young adults.

-Most Common response of religious organizations (and Corporations) to women in the workforce is to start a day care center. In 1983, more than 50% of day care centers were housed in churches.

-So, how can parishes render services to or become more attractive to working women? Churches need to find ways to serve working women.

-In the workplace the family is no longer something left behind with a kiss at the door. There are moves toward more decentralized structures, greater participatory decision-making, more flexible hours and work rules, more leisure activities, facilities for physical exercise, child care, parental leaves, leaves for marriage, funerals, sick children, etc. Family friendliness ratings of corporations has become important.

-In parishes, small groups, small communities, etc. are an effort to dedifferentiate, to get home, work, and faith back together in an intimate community. Contemporary family structures have changed dramatically over the past 40 years so that today there are pluriform family structures or types. Strategic response of church is to specialize and personalize programming. Programming must diversify to fit the interests and needs of a variety of family forms (Special Purpose Groups).

-Parishes would also be wise to provide ministers to singles and divorced groups.

THE BABYBOOMERS

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The various findings reported below are taken from:

Briggs, Kenneth A. 1991. "Baby boomers: Boom or but for the Churches?" Progressions No. 4.
Coleman, John A. 1990. "Young Adults: A Look at the Demographics." Commonweal, Sept. 14.
Roof, Wade Clark. 1993. A Generation of Seekers. San Francisco, Harper.
Ammerman, Nancy Tatom and Roof, Wade Clark. 1995. Editors, Work, Family, and Religion in Contemporary Society. New York: Routledge.

The bulge was enormous. Between 1945 and 1965, about 75 million infants were added to the citizenship rolls. As they grew up, their whims and yearnings dominated everything, driving the engine of our holiest of institutions - the marketplace. They are members of what sociologists call the "lead generation" -- so as the boomers go, so goes the nation.

About 25% of boomers follow the traditional religious behavior pattern that goes something like this: Children went to church with their parents, absorbed the particular brand of Christianity offered there, avoided church while sowing wild oats during their late teens and 20s, then married, sobered up, had a family and, having returned to their senses, came back to Church with their little ones in tow.

Another 41-45% have remained connected to the church and approximately 30-34% have dropped out and stayed out.

Those who go back to church look for two things in particular: religious education for their children and some kind of religious experience that helps them make sense of their own lives. Implications for children's RCIA and for spirituality are clear.

Nevertheless, it is still the case that as people marry and produce offspring, they have been more likely to align themselves with religious organizations and values. This is true even today with the baby-boom generation.

With baby-boomers and many others, there has been a clear shift away from religion as collective-expressive toward more individualistic-expressive forms. The cultural forces of both utilitarian individualism and expressive individualism function to reorient institutional attachments.

Individualists: many boomers hold a deeply mystical conception of deity and privatized faith not dependent on organized religion for the most part. So many join small groups, some of which are loosely connected to a church and many that are not: 12 step groups, sharing groups, men's groups, goddess worship -- but anonymous settings (Wuthnow: Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America's new Quest for Community. Free Press: 1994).

Boomer returnees bring back with them the culture of choice from the secular world. They speak of a) getting my needs met, b) attending to my spiritual growth, c) exploring my faith, d) working on myself. All of which are themes in both journey theology and recovery theology or spirituality. Indeed, many researchers found that "spirituality" was one of the fundamental concerns that drive some boomers back to congregations.

Clear that spouse's active involvement in church is one of the strongest predictors of partner's involvement.