

Segment **D16: Settled in Suburbia**

Upper middle-class family units living comfortably in established suburbs

Resource: Mosaic by Experian.

Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious perspective: *“Generally speaking, God is often among our higher priorities”*

Common Spiritual Issues: *Feeling lost or lonely, anxieties over emptiness and meaninglessness*

Potential Influence

Lifestyle Compatibility	Family Group D Suburban Style	Frequent Neighbors
C14 Boomers and Boomerangs	D15 Sports Utility Families	C11 Aging in Place
E20 No Place Like Home	D16 Settled in Suburbia	C13 Silver Sophisticates
G24 Status Seeking Singles	D17 Cul de Sac Diversity	K37 Wired for Success
	D18 Suburban Attainment	

General Comments

Experian suggests that *Settled in Suburbia* are middle-of-the-road, relatively secure and content people striving for balanced living. They tend to participate in the church just enough to take advantage of its fellowship, reassurance, and hope ... but distance themselves enough from the church to escape excessive demands on time or money or extreme views. When they discuss their commitment to faith, they often segment their #1 priorities between God and family and personal development. The church is important, but they are modest risk-takers in and insist on manageable debt. They are average philanthropic givers, and divide their financial contributions between church and other community groups (especially charities related to veterans, education, and health).

Settled in Suburbia have often been members of a local church for some time, but are drifting toward larger mega-churches with more resources, multi-generational programs, and worship options. On the other hand, they often switch back to a smaller church because they miss the intimacy and care giving. They prefer churches with a strong sense of tradition and fine arts. They appreciate creativity, but do not want it to be too stressful to experience or too hard to accomplish. Favorite things about church include friends and fellowship, quiet times, and beautiful surroundings. They can be strong members of a management board, but clergy dependent for ministries.

Settled in Suburbia take special pride in being a “friendly church”, but they tend to stay close to their own friendship circles and newcomers may find it hard to be accepted. Nevertheless, they respond quickly to any personal, family, or community need, offering prayer and food and fellowship. Gossip can be a problem, but the truth is that they are very concerned about the wellbeing of others.

General Comments

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How do I, as a leader, perceive the spiritual expectations of people in our community?

How can we, as a board, research and understand our community better?

How can we, as a church, build closer relationships with this lifestyle segment?

Color Key

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
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Leadership Preferences

Resource: *Spiritual Leadership* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

THE CONSTANT LEADERS		THE ORGANIC LEADERS		THE EXTREME LEADERS	
	Caregiver	x	Discipler		Visionary
x	Enabler		Guru		Mentor
x	CEO				Pilgrim

Settled in Suburbia tend to be dependent on professional staff. They expect pastors to live up to professional standards of communication and counseling. The peers of the pastor tend to be social service and health care professionals, rather than business or political leaders. They prefer pastors who build consensus, rather than a pastors who make top down decisions. Pastors should preach well, manage committees, counsel adults through the stages of life, and visit in times of personal or family emergency. They often refer to a pastor from their childhood as a paradigm. Pastors should be sincere and relatively non-controversial; but also clear about faith and confident in God's presence and purpose.

Pastors are expected to be seminary trained and denominationally certified. Pastors are often a generalists when it comes to programming, partly because people in this lifestyle segment like to economize on salaried staff. If a second minister is added, this person is also a generalist or "associate pastor", rather than a specialist. Pastors need to be a team players, and lead more by influence and relationships than by institutional authority. If the pastor is a priest, they are expected to have expertise in liturgy and history, but still be approachable and readily available.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your pastor now?

How might your pastor adapt to be more empathic in the future?

How can you equip, train, and/or support your pastor in any transition?

Hospitality Preferences

Resource: *Worship Ways* by Thomas Bandy and Lucinda Holmes (Abingdon Press)

TRADITIONAL		MODERN		POSTMODERN	
X	The Basics	X	Multiple Choices		Take-Out
			Healthy Choices		

Settled in Suburbia has a high priority for family, and love to connect with a close circle of friends. They want to be greeted with warmth and sincerity at the door. Provide ample space for pre-worship conversations, but refreshments are not necessary. Once they enter the sanctuary, they usually talk in whispers to respect the meditations of participants. Always provide quiet, clearly Christian, background music as people gather. People are likely to linger in conversation after church ... but tend to unconsciously ignore newcomers. Provide trained greeters *after* worship who mingle, welcome, and introduce newcomers to others.

Refreshments do not need to be fancy, but there should be choices for flavoured coffees, herbal teas, and fruit juices ... plus several choices of dessert food purchased in bulk from a supermarket. Make sure it is reasonably fresh. Provide enough serving stations for shorter lines. Use multi-purpose space to sit or stand in small groups. Allow easy access to the kitchen. Support recycling.

The pastor is usually expected to shake hands at the door until everyone has left the sanctuary, and is often delayed for refreshments because of lingering conversations. Other staff, musicians, and small group leaders should intentionally circulate and mingle during the refreshment time.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your hospitality ministries now?

How should hospitality ministries change to be more relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What additional training do greeters, ushers, and servers need to be more empathic?

Worship Preferences

Resource: *Worship Ways* by Thomas Bandy and Lucinda Holmes (Abingdon Press)

TRADITIONAL		MODERN		POSTMODERN	
	Care-giving Worship	x	Inspirational Worship		Mission-Connectional Worship
x	Educational Worship		Transformational Worship	x	Coaching Worship
	Healing Worship				

Among *Settled in Suburbia*, church membership is often automatic, but worship attendance is often a weekly decision that weighs multiple options for family commitments and personal enjoyment. They attend special occasions like Christmas Eve and Thanksgiving, but leave early to be with family. They may take holidays in summer and winter. They prefer worship to be predictable, with few surprises; and traditional, with a strong continuity with their *personal* church history. That history may be denominational, but it is interpreted through their personal or local experience. People within the same denomination may have strong disagreements about what "tradition" looks like.

These are well educated people, but do not assume too much theological, historical, or literary knowledge. Preaching may be formal or informal, preaching or coaching, but should make very simple and clear points that are delivered within 20 minutes. They appreciate sound teaching that is applied to daily life and global experience, and are more likely to quarrel over music than message. Many volunteer for choirs and bands, and the quality is expected to be relatively high. People in this segment usually prefer a blend of the not-too-old (i.e. 18th-19th century) and the not-too-contemporary (i.e. easy listening praise music, smooth jazz, folk, or light rock).

Eucharist and other sacraments can be very important. For long time members, this provides continuity with past and present faith communities. For newcomers (especially those who are leaving bitter experiences of church controversy or extreme behavior from other churches), Eucharist provides a calming center of faith that is not driven by personalities and social policy debates.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your worship service(s) now?

How should you customize one or more worship services to be relevant to this segment?

What additional training do preachers, musicians, readers need to meet expectations?

Education Preferences

Resource: See, Know, and Serve by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

FORM		CONTENT		GROUPING	
x	Curricular	x	Biblical	x	Generational
	Experiential	x	Topical		Peer Group

Settled in Suburbia prefer structured, written curricula for Christian education (despite the fact that they are only selective readers and increasingly comfortable with the internet). These people tend to be "late adopters" when it comes to educational methodologies. Curriculum based education provides discussion guides and time to think.

Sunday school attendance may be sporadic. Plan to develop lessons in short term or seasonal themes. These themes are often Biblical, and may be tied to the lectionary and Christian Year. They may occasionally be topical, and usually related to Christian history, or issues of health and the environment. They tend to avoid controversial topics. Laughter is an important component to Christian education. Even when studying serious topics, inject a certain amount of humour, irony, or "just plain fun" to keep stress low and life on an even keel.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe children, youth, and adult education in your church now?

How would education strategies need to change to be relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What changes in leadership selection and training would make education more effective?

Small Group Preferences

Resource: See, Know, and Serve by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

LEADERSHIP		CONTENT	
x	Trained Leaders	x	Curriculum Study
x	Rotated Leaders		Shared Affinity

Groups tend to be more highly structured around a curriculum, which often has a strong Biblical reference. A workbook often provides a lesson, and then a structured exercise to repeat the points of the lesson. Groups can be organized for men, women, or couples; with a single or multiple generations. They don't like to stand out or claim to have special expertise about faith or Christian living, and expect special training and ongoing coaching to it well.

Do not demand much preparation between sessions. Leaders should recap past discussions at each session. They prefer short term or seasonal groups, although they may return to the same group over and over again. They like to build close circles of friends, and groups may stay together for a long period of time.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe the Small Group strategy in your church now?

How would Small Group strategies need to change to be relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What changes in leadership and content would make Small Groups more effective?

Outreach Preferences

Resource: Strategic Thinking by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

	PERSONAL NEED	READINESS TO VOLUNTEER
Basic Survival		X
Health and Wellness		X
Quality of Life	X	X
Addiction Intervention		
Interpersonal Relationships	X	X
Human Potential	X	X
Salvation and Human Destiny		

Settled in Suburbia want to live a balanced life. They are not going to make radical sacrifices for the sake of mission, although they will readily donate to, or participate in, mission as part of a holistically healthy lifestyle. They respond well to any outreach ministry that helps them improve quality of life and build interpersonal relationships. They strongly support youth or young adult ministries. Outreach might include fitness and diet classes, racial reconciliation, generation gap, world religions, and environmental causes.

Meanwhile, these people often have a big heart for anyone, anywhere, who is struggling to survive. They are strong supporters of "depot" ministries that collect food, clothing, and used furniture and kitchen utensils for distribution. They contribute money and time to support health clinics, vaccination programs, blood donations, and any supplemental care-giving program for people who are elderly or disabled.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What outreach categories does your church emphasize now?

What outreach categories would be more relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What outreach priorities and tactics should change for the church to bless this segment?

Facility Preferences

Resource: See, Know, and Serve by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

PROPERTY		TECHNOLOGY		SYMBOLISM	
x	Ecclesiastical	x	Modern	x	Classic Christendom
x	Utilitarian	x	Postmodern		Contemporary Post–Christendom

Settled in Suburbia usually prefer church buildings with traditional ecclesiastical architecture. The basic elements of "church" often include a steeple, gothic arches, stained or colored glass, pews, pulpits and altars, candles, etc. They value quality sound systems, and are increasingly including video systems. The education wings, however, are very utilitarian, with dated technologies. They preserve the church growth strategies of the 1950's and 60's that built simple structures on low budgets. *Settled in Suburbia* is more concerned that technology is "good enough" rather than "top of the line" for the church, while the opposite is true in their homes.

Christendom symbols dominate the interior and exterior of the building. Most of these symbols are easily recognized as clearly Christian, but some are ancient symbols for which the meaning may be obscure or mysterious. Architecture is itself a symbol, and symbols are often permanently fixed. Even banners remain in place for a considerable time, and seasonal banners are carefully stored for reuse.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What renovations and/or upgrades need to be made in our church facility?

What symbols of faith would be most relevant to this lifestyle segment?

If we started another site of ministry for this segment, how should we design it?

Financial Preferences

Resource: See, Know, and Serve by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

GIVING TARGET		GIVING METHOD	
x	Unified Budgets and General Funds	x	Informed Philanthropy & Pledging
	Designated Programs & Mission Projects		Lifestyle Coaching & Family Financial Planning

Settled in Suburbia usually trust the institution to invest and spend money wisely. However, they dislike high debts, and prefer large capital reserves. They scrutinize budgets line by line, and resist salary and maintenance increases. Most prefer a stewardship campaign that provides lots of financial details, but they need a clear vision or purpose with which to evaluate the alignment of expenses to mission. Consider guest speakers related to mission, seminars about Christian financial management, and resources about philanthropic giving. A home visit may not be necessary.

Keep their financial giving very confidential. Provide an average giving standard for leaders that can guide membership giving. Their commitment to the future of the church may be reflected in their bequests. Many denominations offer specific tools to help them make wills, and pass on some of their wealth to their church.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What options in giving methods and giving targets do we offer now?

How do we design our annual stewardship campaign(s) now?

How should we revise our financial strategy to be more relevant to this segment?

Communication

Resource: Mosaic E-Handbook by Experian

CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC COMMUNICATION				TRADITIONAL CHURCH COMMUNICATION							
x	Direct Mail Receptive		Mobile Telephone		Online Computer	x	Newspaper		Corded Telephone		Verbal Announcements
	Email Receptive	x	Broadcast Cable TV	x	Internet Radio		Print		AM/FM Radio		Personal Visits

Settled in Suburbia read newspapers and spreadsheets. Direct mail works well. Newsletters should be available in both print and digital versions, but avoid chatter, unnecessary acknowledgments, promotional ads for giving, and trivia. Concentrate on mission stories, calendar of upcoming events, fund raising progress, and strategic planning. Websites are less important, and focus mainly on calendar, inspiring image, and “About Us” information. Classes and small groups might maintain their own pages to recap conversations and provide exercises for those people who missed a session. Social media platforms are common. Try to extend the budget to advertise special events on news/talk stations, or stations that broadcast easy listening and classic rock music.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How do we communicate among church participants now?

How do we communicate beyond our church to the community now?

How should we adapt communication strategies to be more effective for this segment?

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

POTENTIAL INFLUENCE

Lifestyle Compatibility	Daily behavioral habits overlap with common activities and similar priorities
Family Group	Grouping by key demographic factors like age, income, culture, family status, etc.
Frequent Neighbors	Often live near each other with shared recreational, health, or emergency services

LEADERSHIP

Constant Leaders	Traditional clergy focused on sustaining ministries & increasing members
Organic Leaders	Innovative leaders focused on church growth, new starts & multiplying followers
Extreme Leaders	Non-Institutional leaders focused on spiritual disciplines, high accountability, and pursuing perfection
Caregiver	Focus on visitation, counseling, pastoral prayer
Enabler	Focus on facilitating meetings, lay empowerment, mediation, liturgy
CEO	Focus on staff development, administration, fund raising, expository preaching
Discipler	Focus on seeker sensitivity, adult faith formation, guidance for Christian living
Guru	Focus on religious insight, holistic personal growth, spirituality, enlightenment
Visionary	Focus on big picture, major social change, motivational speaking
Mentor	Focus on self-awareness, individual meaning and purpose, vocational clarity
Pilgrim	Focus on cross-cultural sensitivity, inter-religious dialogue, strict spiritual discipline

HOSPITALITY

The Basics	Friendly untrained greeters, basic coffee and creamer, packaged food or sugary snacks
Multiple Choices	Trained greeters, multiple serving stations, great coffee, varieties of food
Healthy Choices	Trained greeters mirroring lifestyle diversity, healthy food options, allergen alerts
Take-Out	Coffee-to-go, bagged food, exit door hospitality, text message and social media

EDUCATION

Curricular	Printed books or study guides. Passive, intellectual, classroom. Maturity measured by acquired knowledge
Experiential	Activities. More music, images, movement, interaction. Maturity measured by behavior patterns, attitudes.
Biblical	Focuses on the Old and New Testaments. Maturity means Biblical literacy
Topical	Focuses on contemporary issues. Maturity means ethical integrity and enlightened behavior
Generational	Gathers people by age or grade in separate classrooms with age-appropriate resources.
Peer Group	Gathers people sharing affinities or common interests regardless of age.

SMALL GROUPS

Rotated Leaders	Participants take turns hosting and leading the group. Requires limited expertise and training.
Designated Leaders	Single leader guides the group from start to finish. Requires significant maturity and training.
Curriculum	Focus on a book, workbook, or structured program to guide structured discussion
Affinity	Focus on shared interest, enthusiasm, or activity to inspire informal discussion.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS (cont.)

WORSHIP

Educational	Consistent liturgy, expository preaching, focus on doctrine, ethics, and history
Inspirational	Uplifting music, motivational speaking, focus on joy, optimism, and encouragement
Transformational	Spontaneous, expectant, personal transformations, Higher Power interventions
Coaching	Informal, dialogical, topical, practical coaching on how to live better & faithfully
Caregiving	Slow, meditative, family–feel with pastoral prayer, children’s time, senior celebrations
Healing	Quiet, prayerful, expectant of physical, mental, relational healing and hope
Mission–Connectional	Unity of action/reflection, all about outreach, volunteer empowerment

OUTREACH

Survival	Basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, jobs, basic health care
Recovery	Addiction intervention, 12 step support, and counseling services
Health	Mental and physical fitness, disease prevention, rehabilitation, therapy
Quality of Life	Social wellbeing, neighborhood safety, environment, immigration, peacemaking
Human Potential	Personal/vocational fulfillment, education, career help, human rights advocacy
Interpersonal	Intimacy, sexuality, family & marriage counseling, healthy friendships
Human Destiny	Repentance, conversion, witnessing, alignment with God’s purposes

FACILITIES

Ecclesiastical	Facility must “look like a church” with traditional architecture and furnishings
Utilitarian	Facility must be “user–friendly” and multi–purpose for public use
Christendom	Indoor/outdoor symbols associated with church history or denominational identity
Contemporary	Indoor/outdoor symbols from nature, indigenous cultures, alternative spiritualities
Modern	Technology primarily enhances print and oral communication
Postmodern	Technology primarily enhances multi–sensory interaction, internet, social media

FINANCES

Unified Budgets	Stability first. Give to a single general fund to pay staff and manage overhead costs
Designated Giving	Effectiveness first. Give to specific funds or causes by personal preference
Informed Philanthropy	Informed, independent, confidential financial commitments for a tax benefit
Lifestyle Coaching	Individual & household coaching for Christian family financial management

COMMUNICATION

Direct Mail Receptive	Pay attention to mass mailings to postal addresses.
Email Receptive	Pay attention to information delivered digitally to personal email addresses.
Mobile Telephone	Regularly rely on cell phones and smart phones for calling, texting, surfing, banking etc.
Broadcast Cable TV	Regularly rely on cable television for news, advertising, and entertainment.
Online Computer	Regularly go online by personal computer to surf websites, shop, bank, and use other services.
Internet Radio	Regularly subscribe to internet services for music, sports, and topical discussions.
Newspaper	Pay attention to printed newspapers for updates about church news or local, national, global events.
Print	Pay attention to printed church newsletters, bulletin inserts, brochures, and other handouts.
Corded Telephone	Regularly use ordinary telephones to communicate from home.
AM/FM Radio	Regularly use traditional radio to listen to music, commercials, and talk.
Verbal Announcements	Always rely on verbal announcements from the pulpit about church events or items of interest.
Personal Visits	Always expect personal visits at home by a representative of the church to share information.