

# Segment **D18: Suburban Attainment**

Upper middle-class couples and families living mainly in the expanding 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
B07 Generational Soup	D15 Sports Utility Families	F22 Fast Track Couples
H26 Progressive Potpourri	D16 Settled in Suburbia	N48 Rural Southern Bliss
I31 Blue Collar Comfort	D17 Cul de Sac Diversity	052 Urban Ambition
	D18 Suburban Attainment	

## General Comments

*Suburban Attainment* reflects the emerging bi-racial middle class. These educated, entrepreneurial, and upwardly mobile people tend to be religious and the church is an important part of their identity. They may preserve ties with a church in old neighborhoods, and may relocate to churches to their new neighborhoods. They may upgrade to buy larger, newer properties from churches that are migrating or closing, but are less likely to join a church plant. They see evangelism and social action as two sides of the same coin of discipleship.

These households consider the church as an extended or large family, and are anxious that the church not get too big. While they are open to other cultures and believe in tolerance, they tend to prefer culturally homogeneous churches. They gravitate to churches with sufficient resources to offer programs for all ages (especially youth and young adults). Churches usually have a high profile in the local community. The church hosts different agencies in the building, and/or collaborates closely with the social service networks of the community. *Experian* suggests that they are workaholics using smart phones as a virtual office. They may be difficult to recruit into church board leadership and other volunteer roles. They may multi-task in church meetings, and need reminders to follow through on church commitments.

## **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		Discipler	x	Visionary
	Enabler		Guru		Mentor
x	CEO				Pilgrim

**Suburban Attainment** look for leaders who cast a big city-wide vision for social change and spiritual renewal. Leaders tend to be "larger than life" as a personality, and are excellent communicators. They have visibility in the community through social services, business networks, and municipal government.

Pastors are usually seminary trained and denominationally accredited, but their life experience and spiritual presence is crucial for credibility. Pastors may come from a long line of pastors in the family; or may have experience in successfully managing a business. They speak articulately about their call to ministry, and model spiritual disciplines that set a benchmark for the rest of the church members. They are role models as well as teachers, CEO's as well as preachers.

Pastors self-consciously claim spiritual and organization authority in the life of the church. Support for the church is a direct measure of respect for the pastor. They set the direction for church life, and have administrative skills in fund raising and administration. Leadership succession is often a challenge.

*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	
	The Basics	x	Multiple Choices		Take-Out
			Healthy Choices		

*Suburban Attainment* want to experience deep relationships and have spiritual conversations in healthy contexts. Greeters should make an instant connection with visitors and worship participants before and after worship. Make sure every door is covered. Greeters should be representative of the mix of families, couples, and singles of the community. Provide warm welcomes, and make an instant spiritual connection (e.g. ask "How can I pray for you today?" as people enter and visibly keep track of their responses). During worship, provide more than sufficient time for people to greet one another. Spotlight selected small group leaders or key volunteers. Worship leaders, choir members, and pastor should circulate in the congregation to shake hands.

Refreshments may be basic, but offer variety. Food should be high quality and purchased from supermarkets (rather than homemade). Provide servers who are trained to smile, converse, and model core values of gentleness and acceptance. Always provide hospitality volunteers during worship outside the sanctuary. Make sure that refreshment areas, hallways, washrooms, and empty meeting rooms are safe and secure.

*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
	Educational Worship		Transformational Worship	x	Coaching Worship
	Healing Worship				

Among *Suburban Attainment*, worship rotates around three things. Inspirational singing is about 75% presentational by choirs, bands, ensembles, and soloists. Music crescendos to begin worship, then softens to create a mood of listening for the message. The message is strongly Biblical, but preaching follows relevant themes rather than a lectionary. The message is highly motivational and aims at the heart, but it also includes practical advice for both daring and spontaneous Christian living. Prayer emphasizes intercession for family and community situations. Mission stories are often shared. Volunteer leaders may be commissioned. The "altar call" of the past is usually by a call to serve, sacrifice, or give.

The music that is "traditional" for church members might be described as cultural or contemporary by observers. Gospel music is common, but Christian themes are also set to jazz, blues, hip hop, and rap. Musicians are often seen as the "front line" of evangelism. People observe their behavior, emotion, and intensity and often want to talk with them about faith. Musicians should always linger in the worship center and circulate in the refreshment area, ready to share faith or engage in significant conversations. Sincerity is a key issue of credibility for this lifestyle segment. These educated professionals are more sensitive to the blur between authentic spirituality and entertainment, and therefore scrutinize the spiritual depth and commitment of any leader involved in worship.

*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		Topical		Peer Group

Sunday school is a traditional and often important part of the Sunday morning experience for *Suburban Attainment*. It is often scheduled before or in between worship services so that all generations can participate in both education and worship. They still favor printed curricula for younger children, and supplement this with more interactive methodologies for older groups. Older adults often focus on direct Bible study, often guided by highly respected (often older) teachers, and then invite significant dialogue. Younger adults may focus on a practical theme that can be explored through scripture and other resources. They may incorporate video or use the internet to examine a particular issue or challenge that faces their families or communities.

Youth groups are a high priority for this lifestyle segment. These groups emphasize Christian values in fellowship and mission. They thrive when a core group of adult mentors is able to connect with young adults on a ratio of 3:1 or even lower. Youth groups often involve active recreation, spiritual conversation, and local mission projects. Youth Ministry demands professional training and is a significant staff position for the church.

*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		Curriculum Study
	Rotated Leaders	x	Shared Affinity

Small group ministry may be more difficult among *Suburban Attainment*. People tend to connect in larger groups based on generation, gender, and marital status. Nevertheless, there is increasing interest in small groups that tackle personal or family problems (e.g. addiction intervention, divorce recovery, grief groups, and parenting groups are common). Small groups that are intentional about personal support and accountable spiritual disciplines can also develop among adults engaged in a specific mission project. Small group attendance can be sporadic because the time and attention of participants may be diverted to family or work. It is best to keep small groups time limited, and make each session "stand alone" for personal support and insight. Recap the learning from session to session.

It may be difficult to find leaders ... especially younger leaders. Leaders need to be personally invited or chosen by the pastor (or program staff) based on gifts and callings. They are intentionally "called out" of the congregation. Basic training may be hard to arrange, so you need to provide 24/7 coaching to help group leaders resolve personality conflicts and solve emerging problems.

*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		
Health and Wellness		
Quality of Life	X	X
Addiction Intervention		
Interpersonal Relationships		
Human Potential	X	X
Salvation and Human Destiny		

**Suburban Attainment** people are building a career, not just earning a paycheck. Although they are self-confident, they worry about the future. Any program that helps them improve themselves will be attractive (including special lectures and seminars, peer mentoring groups, and networking opportunities). They look for opportunities to explore spiritual gifts and expand horizons. They also have strong views about a variety of social issues, and look for opportunities both to learn and express their feelings. These households tend to concentrate their attention on local concerns, rather than national or global challenges. They tend to support local organizations that promote safety and security, and combat racism and discrimination. They contribute time and money to make neighborhoods safe, clear up local environments, and provide sustainable housing. Motivation is often more important than information. Churches must compete for their time and energy in any mission project, and capture their attention through marketing a big, bold vision.

*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

***Suburban Attainment*** seek a compromise between effectiveness and significance. On the one hand, they want church facilities and technologies to be up-to-date, high quality, and useful. On the other hand, they value tradition and can be sentimental about the symbols and atmosphere of a church. They will go to great lengths to improve older buildings and may preserve the old fashioned character of sanctuaries. At the same time, they will make improvements for heating and air conditioning; accessibility; and equipping education and office space.

However, there is a limit to how far they will go to preserve a building. If they relocate the church, they will "trade up" to a new model that is more flexible but still preserves an identifiably Christian architecture. Digital and video technology may not be a priority in the sanctuary, but it will be more important in the office. The whole building may not be wireless, but video and internet may be added to the classrooms. Office electronics may wait longer to be updated, although the pastor and staff will carry the latest smart phones.

Exterior and interior symbols are clearly Christian. Windows, murals, and pictures will have a strong scriptural theme. Images are more realistic than abstract. The interior of the building is usually more important than the exterior. Parking lots may not be paved, and the landscaping will be maintained but not elaborate. There is often a gymnasium included in the building, or outside basketball court (with green space for outdoor sports and picnics).

***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)

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

***Suburban Attainment*** tend to be low risk-takers, and avoid a capital campaign unless it is clearly necessary for church growth or mission impact. They set aside large reserve funds for emergencies. However, they are usually more than fair paying salaries to the pastor and staff, and prioritize money for quality music leadership. Tithing may be expected for leaders. Stewardship campaigns follow tradition with an annual every-member canvass, pledging, and celebration Sunday. Fund raising is a natural and measurable sign of faithfulness. People in this segment are well educated and professional, workaholics and ambitious, but they are not necessarily expert in financial management. They appreciate coaching in Christian family financial planning, and like to deal with financial planners who are operate from overtly Christian values. They understand that generosity is really about lifestyle, rather than wealth, but need help to plan how to do it.

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

**Suburban Attainment** are tech savvy, but print is frequently used in churches. Print and digital communications are reinforced by verbal or text reminders. Be prepared to record your message. Outdoor signs are also a must. Churches are well advised to have large, illuminated, regularly updated signs that advertise coming events or communicate vital information on the corner of the property. Churches often pay for billboards, or distribute flyers and posters in the community. Much information is communicated by word-of-mouth.

It is increasingly important to build an email database. This is a primary means of communication, and it also protects ongoing communication because these households may relocate (usually in the same neighborhood or city). Websites are becoming more and more important, and will be accessed by computer (among older adults) and Smart phone (among younger adults). Technology is also a way to communicate status and success.

Personal visits are welcome, but these are often initiated by the church member than the church pastor. Visits may take place at the church, in the confidentiality of the pastor’s office, but also “on the fly” over coffee or lunch to accommodate busy schedules.

*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

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

### LEADERSHIP

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

### HOSPITALITY

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

### EDUCATION

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

### SMALL GROUPS

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

## IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS (cont.)

### WORSHIP

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

### OUTREACH

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

### FACILITIES

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

### FINANCES

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

### COMMUNICATION

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