

Segment **I31: Blue Collar Comfort**

Middle-class families in smaller cities and towns with solid blue-collar jobs

Resource: Mosaic by Experian.

Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious Perspective: *Religious practices cherish our past and can empower my future*

Common Spiritual Issues: *Feeling flawed and neglected, anxieties of estrangement and displacement*

Potential Influence

| Lifestyle Compatibility | Family Group I Family Union | Frequent Neighbors |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| H28 Everyday Moderates | I30 Stocks Cars and State Parks | J36 Settled and Sensible |
| L43 Homemade Happiness | I31 Blue Collar Comfort | J34 Aging in Place |
| M45 Diapers and Debit Cards | I32 Steadfast Conventionalists | L42 Rooted Flower Power |
| O52 Urban Ambition | I33 Balance and Harmony | Q65 Senior Discounts |
| | | |

General Comments

Blue Collar Comfort tends to be committed to the church, and prefer to join a church rather than be an adherent. They tend to connect with churches that have reasonable ... but not too high ... expectations for church membership. They enjoy the privileges of membership, and expect the church to offer free services (e.g. weddings for their older children), along with timely visitations from the clergy if they happen to be in the hospital. Seniority in church membership is important, and they often feel that their long-time resident preferences for worship and programming should have priority over those of relative newcomers.

Experian suggests that *Blue Collar Comfort* households are cost-conscious consumers. They shop around for the best prices, but prefer to “buy American” and settle for durability. They bring that same attitude to the church. People in this segment are apt to shop around for the best church that offers the most helpful programs, with the least financial overhead. They gravitate to churches that value patriotism as well as faith.

That said, people in this segment tend to be open-minded. If a creative idea is not too controversial or costly, they are willing to experiment. They have plenty of discretionary income to support special projects or to make capital improvements and technology updates. They often worry that a church might become *too large* and lose that sense of family and personal friendship that they value. They may leave a church if their feelings are hurt, or in order to avoid conflict; and they might join a church that will honor their preferences and guarantee harmony. One thing you can always say about their church is that it is *friendly*.

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 |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------|

Leadership Preferences

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

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

Blue Collar Comfort are open to different kinds of leadership styles. Denominations that deploy clergy have more room to deploy a variety of people in these churches, and they are usually warm and welcoming, and relatively flexible about the person, the gifts, and the priorities of the pastor. They prefer pastors who share their middle-of-the-road attitude toward public policies, and who preserves harmony. Pastors need to be sensitive to different generations, and meet the needs of each phase of life these long-time residents experience. The pastor is a friend, counselor, and facilitator. They are often motivational, rather than expository, preachers.

Pastors are usually trained in Bible College or Seminary, and ordained. They may be relatively inexperienced, but preferably a bit older, and second-career clergy often find these churches to be good beginning to their ministries. These clergy are always in good standing with their denominations and may be on various committees. They often network extensively among social service and health care non-profits, and may obtain additional training in non-profit executive leadership

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 | | |

Blue Collar Comfort expect warm welcomes and a friendly, low stress atmospheres. Parking lots and landscaping do not need to be perfect, but should be safe, accessible, and well lit. People are liable to enter by side entrances, so make sure greeters are at every door. The only training they need is to smile, pay attention, and aim visitors in the right direction. Take notes of personal and family celebrations or personal and family needs for the pastor to address later in the week. Greeters and ushers often ask for any prayer concerns.

People tend to arrive on time and visit quietly in the sanctuary (whether or not soft religious music is playing). They are honoring God by enjoying Christian community. After worship, they usually linger long enough to shake hands with the pastor, but they may need to be lured into a refreshment center because they are eager to enjoy the weekend. Refreshments should be more than basic, but do not need to be particularly healthy. Coffee with flavor shots, sugary treats from the supermarkets, and plenty of room to chat with their friends will keep them long enough for your leaders to mingle and engage in significant conversations.

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 | |
|-------------|---------------------|--------|--------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| x | Care-giving Worship | x | Inspirational Worship | | Mission-Connectional Worship |
| | Educational Worship | | Transformational Worship | x | Coaching Worship |
| | Healing Worship | | | | |

Blue Collar Comfort have predictable, orderly lives, and expect worship to be predictable and orderly as well. Worship may follow the Christian Year and a common lectionary, but anticipate and honor major holidays. (They usually prefer to sing Christmas carols during Advent.) Prayers are often printed and well known. Hymns tend to be traditional, but livelier and more upbeat. Organs and pianos may occasionally be supplemented with acoustical guitars and percussion. These people like sounds that range from classic country to rock, and annual pageants or cantatas that involve youth and choirs.

Smaller churches tend to emphasize a combination of expository and pastoral preaching. Worship educates about faith, and includes lots of intercessory prayers, family prayer concerns, passing the peace, and announcements. Larger churches tend to emphasize topical coaching about Christian lifestyles and relational problem solving. The message may be supplemented by video clips, and the key points of the sermon are projected on a screen. Participation wanes in late spring and summer, and waxes in fall and winter. Major holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve, Easter, and Mother's Day, are big occasions.

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 |

Blue Collar Comfort have a moderate, but open-minded perspective. They are curious about many topics (religious and otherwise), and capable of learning in different ways. Therefore, Sunday schools may use traditional printed curricula, or they may be trendier and rotate kids through activity centers. The focus may be on Bible stories and maxims, or on important topics or social issues. They are not too concerned to link the worship focus and the Sunday school focus week to week. Vacation Bible Schools can be very successful.

They tend to gather children and youth by age group. Generational classes may range through 16 or 17 years old, even when there are additional evening youth groups for Junior and Senior High students. Adult Sunday schools are often relatively strong (although these days many adults are shifting their CE emphasis to midweek small groups). Sunday school classes today are often designed for older adults who may have been together for many years. Sunday school attendance may be quite seasonal.

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 | |
|------------|-----------------|---------|------------------|
| | Trained Leaders | x | Curriculum Study |
| x | Rotated Leaders | x | Shared Affinity |

Many *Blue Collar Comfort* adults are shifting their CE initiatives to midweek small groups because Sundays are committed to sports, hobbies, travel, and family affairs. They may covenant for any day or time, but their orderly lives may dictate a specific evening (like Wednesdays) as a “small group night”. Groups tend to be seasonal, or about 3-8 weeks in duration. The primary purpose of a group is fellowship, although prayer and Bible reading will be serious and intentional. Theological discussion is an extra.

They are interested in a wide variety of topics. Affinities may focus on scripture, book studies, and spiritual gifts discernment; or on any enthusiasm or common interest one can imagine. Participants are likely to invite friends and neighbors to join, and this can become a primary method for churches to acquire new members. Small groups can be part of a larger system of spiritual growth, and they may be open to mentoring as they move through the system. Just don't make it too complicated or abstract.

Groups may appreciate designated, trained leaders. However, many groups prefer to rotate because the trained leader may bring expectations for spiritual disciplines that are too high or require too much work. Spiritual life is really important to people in this segment, but they may think it is artificial if one has to work so hard at it. Faith is an intensely personal experience, and unity is usually based on shared values rather than doctrinal agreements.

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 | | X |
| Interpersonal Relationships | | |
| Human Potential | | |
| Salvation and Human Destiny | X | |

Blue Collar Comfort is concerned about a wide variety of things. The church often has a number of special outreach projects occurring at the same time, and people probably prefer doing many short term projects rather than concentrating all their energy on a single ongoing outreach ministry. Opening the building to community groups is a form of mission. The building is often used by recovery groups, exercise and fitness groups, youth and children's events, food banks, and other agencies. Their communities and neighborhoods are increasingly multicultural, and the church may host a Hispanic, East Indian, or Southeast Asian congregation. Personally, they are interested in any outreach that will improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods (safety, crime prevention, environmental cleanups, health clinics, youth ministries, elder care ministries, etc.) They often partner with other churches or social agencies to develop depot and distribution ministries for food, clothing, furniture, and household items.

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 | | Postmodern | | Contemporary Post–Christendom |

Blue Collar Comfort like to see the church building used seven days a week, although not necessarily by their own church ministries. Facilities become community centers, and they may share space with day care and counseling centers. Space may be rented to outside groups, occasionally leading to tension with members who want to use the building on short notice. The building may get hard use, and maintenance and custodial issues may be a constant burden for the board. The reliability of volunteers to do regular maintenance may be a struggle, and the church may be challenged to pay for custodial and security professionals.

The building itself usually includes an ecclesiastical-looking sanctuary that may be used by another ethnic congregation. The sanctuary is usually a classic style with fixed pews and immovable chancel furniture, but it may be upgraded with better sound systems and video screens. The electrical supply will also be upgraded to allow amplified instruments and other electronics. There is often a larger, utilitarian wing to the building for classrooms and fellowship halls that can be used by outside groups, often including a gymnasium. The building may have security doors separating the more ecclesiastical worship space and church offices from the rest of the building.

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 | x | Lifestyle Coaching & Family Financial Planning |

Blue Collar Comfort are disposed to trust the board investing or disbursing money. They prefer to pledge to a unified budget, with only a few choices for operations, memorials, and debt relief. However, they are quite willing to support multiple fund raising initiatives for various missions through the year. Special offerings are common. People are generally comfortable with the concept of percentage giving, and some are prepared to tithe. They do appreciate stewardship programs that coach them to develop a lifestyle that helps them be more generous with their fairly discretionary spending.

Since people use credit and debit cards for their daily personal and family expenses, they are comfortable with some form of manageable debt. If a capital campaign is needed, they may well hire a professional fund raiser that has been recommended by the denomination or another church. Given the scandals of recent years, however, people are increasingly concerned about financial management. They expect detailed financial statements, and may review year end statements line by line. Still, they generally prefer to leave financial management to professionals.

Blue Collar Comfort are committed to a variety of social service and non-profit agencies in the community. Their plan for charitable giving will take that into consideration, and they may divide their giving among agencies beyond the church. Their giving to the church is not necessarily indicative of their overall generosity.

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

Blue Collar Comfort have rather traditional media preferences. *Experian* suggests that they will use home computers for email and websites to research products, shop, and bank. The church needs a basic website that is easily updated, and especially includes calendar and program information. It might also include space for images related to events or gatherings. *Blue Collar Comfort* may download sermons or devotional resources.

They read newspapers and magazines, and prefer church newsletters and stewardship information in print rather than digital formats. Verbal announcements in worship are helpful, but should be limited to essential or urgent news. Less important announcements can be printed in the bulletin or displayed on video screens. Telephone trees and telephone reminders are effective.

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. |