

# Segment **N46: True Grit Americans**

Middle-aged, lower middle-class households in town & country communities

Resource: Mosaic by Experian.

## Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious Perspective: *The Lord is My Shepherd*

Common Spiritual Issues: *Feelings of estrangement, anxieties about fate and emptiness*

## Potential Influence

Lifestyle Compatibility	Family Group N Pastoral Pride	Frequent Neighbors
E21 Unspoiled Splendor	N46 True Grit Americans	I30 Stockcars and State Parks
O55 Family Troopers	N47 Countrified Pragmatics	J35 Rural Escape
Q64 Town Elders	N48 Rural Southern Bliss	L43 Homemade Happiness
S68 Small Town Shallow Pockets	N49 Touch of Tradition	M44 Red White and Bluegrass

## General Comments

*True Grit Americans* are very spiritual and church-going is part of their weekly routine. Their casual lifestyles, conservative values, and parochial view of the world is reflected and even reinforced by the church. People come as they are, worship in predictable ways, sing very familiar hymns, apply scripture to their daily lives, and don't pay too much attention to what is happening elsewhere in the world.

*True Grit Americans* have deep roots in their communities where people know your first name and where you live. *Experian* suggests that they live in older homes that have been crafted, extended, and renovated over time ... often incorporating multiple styles and materials. Their properties are filled with boats, motorcycles, snowmobiles, and cars (some of which might be used for spare parts).

These are true individualists, and their church is primarily concerned with local affairs and the sorrows or joys of local families. They do not crave status or recognition, and their churches don't try to be big, popular, or competitive with other churches. These people assume that older is almost always better. They don't like change, and are not impressed by originality or novelty. The church exists to help you "straighten up and fly right", pass the peace among neighbors and friends, and take care of your eternal soul. The rest is up to you.

## **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

<b>High Priority</b>	<b>Medium Priority</b>	<b>Low Priority</b>
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## Leadership Preferences

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

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

*True Grit Americans* expect their pastors to be role models for Christian behavior and mentors for people who do not readily participate in structured programs or educational initiatives. The credibility of pastors depends less on ordinations and certifications, than on experience, spiritual discipline, clarity of faith, and fair dealing. Pastors need to be good preachers and confident worship leaders, but do not need to be particularly imaginative or creative. The pastor's words and actions before and after worship should reinforce the message, and vice versa, so that the sincerity and commitment of the pastor is beyond question.

Pastors are often “circuit riders” or regional ministers, and their local church may be one of a number of preaching points. This increases the challenge to build credibility in each preaching point. Pastors enable each local church to exercise care giving, and often train board or lay leaders to exercise pastoral leadership in their behalf (“deacons”, “shepherds”, etc.) Pastors may have cross-cultural experience and a wide international awareness, but compare everything to a normative viewpoint of religious orthodoxy and American values. Some pastors may have previous experience in farming, business, or military service.

*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		Multiple Choices	X	Take-Out
			Healthy Choices		

*True Grit Americans* don't stray very far from home. They are loyal to the local church of their extended family, and are regular in weekly attendance. They tend to spend at least half the day at church (arriving early for Sunday school, staying for worship, and lingering for refreshments or lunch) unless the fishing or hunting season keeps them away. No special greeters or ushers are needed, but they do expect the pastor to be able to greet them by first name and remember their extended family connections.

The pastor's schedule Sunday morning may be hectic, but people expect the pastor to spend quality time to interact with members as they rush between preaching points. Arrange for lay leaders to start or finish a worship service in one place, so that the pastor can linger longer at another place. Newcomers are welcome, but on probation. People will be invariably kind, but uninterested in outside opinions. Policy decisions are often made in five minutes over coffee and cake after worship, so the "secretary" may want to keep a notebook handy.

*True Grit Americans* are laid back, prefer informal environments, don't mind a messy kitchen, and prefer family recipes. Refreshments are pot luck, set out at random, and include both sugary delights and harvest from the garden. Leftovers are shared out and taken home ... although some may be frozen for the next Fowl Supper.

*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		Inspirational Worship		Mission-Connectional Worship
x	Educational Worship	x	Transformational Worship	x	Coaching Worship
	Healing Worship				

*True Grit Americans* find meaning in tradition, not innovation. On the other hand, they find meaning in spontaneity and the immediate experience of the Holy Spirit rather than standardized prayers or liturgies. Worship is simple and enthusiastic, but may or may not be predictable. Liturgy or unison prayers may be too conformist and restrictive. Pastoral prayers, combined with spontaneous prayers from individuals, make the service authentic. Hymns are well known and often memorized. They may be accompanied by traditional organ or piano, or sung without accompaniment. On special occasions, music might include country, bluegrass, and gospel songs with unamplified accompaniment.

Sermons apply scripture to everyday living and eternal hopes. Preachers rarely follow a lectionary, and often preach on a topic related to spiritual life or orthodox faith. They don't usually explore "hot button" social issues, international concerns, or theological ambiguities. There is often a call to repentance or renewal of faith, and people expect the Word to transform lives (convert to faith, redirect lifestyle, liberate from addiction, and generally lead people to be "born again" or "get a new lease on life"). Time is not a factor in worship. The sermon can be long and the prayers can continue for some time (if the spirit is moving or community issues are particularly poignant). Don't waste time making your point, but don't try to rush God.

*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
x	Experiential	x	Topical		Peer Group

*True Grit Americans* often work hard every day of the week, and on any given Sunday the attendance may be small. Going to church is an experience requiring at least half a day of attention. Sunday school and worship times may need to be adjusted for each church in a circuit, but the norm is usually to begin the morning with Sunday school for all ages. Children may be gathered in a “younger” and “older” group. The teacher is often an older, highly respected elder with one or two young assistants that they are mentoring. They often use workbooks or exercises that have been recycled over the years, and supplemented with extra activities the values of which have been proven over time.

Adults may gather by generation. The older classes may separate men and women, while younger classes (i.e. 45-50 year olds) can gather as couples. Classes often stay together ... and age together. They are strongly focused on Bible study, and may use no other resource than the Bible itself. Adults usually attend church with Bible in hand (often older versions with lots of personal notes and underlining). The leader is often a member of the board (deacon, elder, etc.) If the pastor is available, they always teach a Bible study group. The pastor usually does most of the teaching, and has the last word.

*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
	Rotated Leaders	x	Shared Affinity

*True Grit Americans* often gather in small groups around shared enthusiasms, interests, hobbies, and crafts. Some gather women or men, but some may bring couples together for quiet entertainment. Groups naturally include opportunities for intercessory prayer, Bible reading, and especially encourage intimate sharing. There may be a curriculum, but it is usually a very brief “devotional” that provides a scripture, thought-provoking reflection, and simple prayer. Recovery groups can be very important, especially in these hard economic times. The focus may be recovery from addictions to alcohol, or to prescription pain killers or illicit drugs. Recovery groups for gambling addictions may be a growing opportunity for ministry.

Groups may be seasonal, following the rhythm of daily life and nature. People tend to stay with the same group for a long time. Groups meet in private homes, and the hostess leads the group. Groups may also meet at local diners for an early breakfast, and the pastor or mature lay leader usually leads the group.

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

*True Grit Americans* are self-reliant individualists, but may need temporary help over a bad time. “Bad times” often involve periods of unemployment, health crises, or household disasters (e.g. storm damage, fires, etc.) Their concerns are very practical and functional, and they will appreciate depot and distribution ministries for food, clothing, house wares, and used furniture. They also connect with health clinics and parish nurse programs, and appreciate help to understand and use prescription medications. They are rapidly responsive and very sacrificial in response to natural disasters or sudden family emergencies. They will donate time and energy, or open their homes for temporary housing.

*True Grit Americans* do not feel compelled to live up to any particular status or gain any special social recognition. Community fellowship events, fairs, and pot luck suppers are great ways to socialize, but they are less interested in dances or dating. They may oppose corporate attempts to strip mine or quarry, or government initiatives to dam waterways or regulate game and land use, but they are less likely to advocate recycling or environmental protection. Many are concerned about issues of human destiny (e.g. personal salvation, faith, and hope for tomorrow). They sponsor crusades and revivals, and will participate in evangelization programs. They also support veterans groups, and help veterans re-establish themselves in civilian lifestyles.

*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

*True Grit Americans* value older, traditional buildings. They may be modest, but they look like churches. Typically, the building is rectangular, with a central doorway leading to a narrow narthex, center aisle, and traditional sanctuary with rows of unpadded pews. Glass may be colored, but is often clear. Pulpit, table, and chancel are simple hardwood, and floors may or may not be carpeted. These are buildings with a patina. There may not be any memorial plaques, but ancestors of the current worshippers may well be remembered to have built or repaired parts of the building. The narthex may contain tapestries, needlework, or original communion ware in a cabinet. Most church buildings sit on a large, relatively unimproved lot. There may be a shed or other structures to facilitate outdoor picnics, tent meetings, or revivals. Today these might store equipment for outdoor sports.

Some time ago, the innovations of electrical wiring, central heating, indoor plumbing, and upgraded kitchens may have been controversial, but now these technologies are normal. However, it is unlikely that these people will add audio and video systems, and they may be skeptical of an occasional overhead projector or acoustical guitar in the sanctuary. Occasionally there will be air conditioning, especially if the property is used for diverse community activities. The kitchen may be upgraded to include freezers, new ovens, and fire prevention equipment ... but there probably won't be any microwaves or fancy coffee makers.

*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		Informed Philanthropy & Pledging
	Designated Programs & Mission Projects	x	Lifestyle Coaching & Family Financial Planning

*True Grit Americans* are laid back about money and materialism. The church budget is pretty simple, and increased to keep up with inflation, but costs are kept to a minimum (including the pastor's salary). Many people voluntarily practice tithing, although this may not be a program of the church. The stewardship campaign is simple, and basically shares the costs and asks for help. People are more likely to give cash in the offering plate than use offering envelopes, and will not pre-authorize withdrawals. *True Grit Americans* need visible benchmarks for giving. Leaders lead! The individual or average giving of staff and board set a standard for members and adherents to follow.

Personal savings are not extensive in this lifestyle segment, although many will invest in low risk bonds. They will do special collections ... and don't be surprised if the plate is passed a second time during worship ... but will not use professionals for a capital campaign. They will give in-kind donations and their time and talent to keep the church and its basic ministries going. If they don't like the minister, or disagree with some denominational policy or innovation, they may reduce financial contributions to demonstrate their dissatisfaction. However, if the church has an emergency, they will respond generously.

*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

*True Grit Americans* rely on traditional media. Their reliance on print is generally limited to an older, hard copy version of the Bible and classic devotionals. They may or may not bother with printed orders of worship and written announcements. The words of hymns are important, so sing all the verses! They will read printed newsletters, receive mass mailings, and advertise with static billboards and outdoor signs.

AM Radio is an important media, and *True Grit Americans* follow talk shows, sports, weather, and news. They primarily share their views through group gatherings or individual conversations. Announcements about coming events, prayer concerns, or emerging issues usually are shared at any large or small gathering. Announcements are a part of worship, and a method of building community. These are reinforced by telephone trees using corded phones (probably not cell phones).

*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.