

Segment **N47: Countrified Pragmatics**

Lower middle-income couples and singles living rural casual lives

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
C11 Aging of Aquarius	N46 True Grit Americans	I30 Stockcars and State Parks
D15 Sports Utility Families	N47 Countrified Pragmatics	J35 Rural Escape
E21 Unspoiled Splendor	N48 Rural Southern Bliss	L43 Homemade Happiness
Q64 Town Elders	N49 Touch of Tradition	M44 Red White and Bluegrass

General Comments

Countrified Pragmatics are similar to *True Grit Americans* and have the same independent and self-reliant spirit, traditional family values, and outdoor lifestyles, but there are some differences relevant to church participation. *Countrified Pragmatics* are somewhat more mature and economically secure. Residencies have been longer. They may have more experience in church leadership, and are more likely provide lay leadership on boards and committees.

They still tend to gravitate to small churches with conservative values, traditional worship practices, and unambiguous doctrines. They enjoy the fellowship of a church, and are very sacrificial and generous toward their neighbors. Weekly church attendance is part of their weekly routine, but it is more likely linked with mid-week small groups and daily home-based spiritual practices.

The church is primarily concerned with local affairs and the ups and downs of family life. They may pay more attention to lifecycle celebrations like baptisms and christenings, birthdays and anniversaries, funerals and memorial services. National holidays have a religious significance, and religious holy days have cultural significance. They are cautious about change and more likely to support church “renewal” than church “transformation”. They may be more cautious about spontaneity, prefer more predictability, and invest more time to build consensus around any policy change.

They do not crave status or recognition, and their churches don't try to be big, popular, or competitive with other churches. However, the reputation of the church and church leaders in the local community

General Comments

is very important, and they expect the church to collaborate effectively with social and health care services. They may be cautious about ecumenical cooperation as a rule, but readily work side by side with Christians from different traditions whenever there is a shared community need. They can be more disciplined in their financial commitments to the church and generous in designated giving.

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	
x	Caregiver	x	Discipler		Visionary
x	Enabler		Guru		Mentor
	CEO				Pilgrim

Countrified Pragmatics expect their pastors to be strong enablers who facilitate committees and resource programs, and partner effectively with lay leaders. They are also strong care givers to church members and to community members in general. Pastors should be good preachers and teachers, absolutely sincere, and consistent in message and behavior. The pastor's natural assertiveness and authority should be tempered with diplomacy and good listening skills

The care giving role is probably more important than the mentoring role valued by their counterpart lifestyle segments. People in this segment may be more reliant on the counseling, visitation, and personal support ministries of the pastor, and less likely to appreciate it from their peers. They expect the pastor to know what is going on their lives, and be attentive when there are illnesses, milestones, emergencies, and difficulties in the family. They rely on the pastor to keep all this strictly confidential.

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		

Like their *True Grit American* counterparts, *Countrified Pragmatics* don't stray very far from home. They may be less intentional about spending half a day or more with the church on Sunday, and may arrive in time for Sunday school or just for worship. *Comfortable Pragmatics* value private time, and treat church events as special occasions. They take the trouble to look good in honor of the Lord's Day. Greetings may be a bit more formal and intentionally respectful.

Keep refreshments available all the time. Servers can also be a greeters. They may appreciate a television with religious DVD located in the refreshment area (if it doesn't intrude on ongoing Sunday school classes). The pastor's schedule Sunday morning may be hectic, but *Countrified Pragmatics* expect the pastor to spend quality time interacting with members. Newcomers are always warmly welcomed, but with a certain evaluative reservation. Train elders or board members to go out of their way to welcome them.

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
x	Educational Worship		Transformational Worship		Coaching Worship
	Healing Worship				

Countrified Pragmatics expect a prepared and insightful sermon. Preaching fits the flow of the season and public and religious holidays. 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.

Countrified Pragmatics tend to protect traditional worship practices. While the pastor may craft the sermon, the rest of the worship requires little innovation. Worship is blended to be both inspirational and care giving. There tends to be more music, but also longer prayers for individual and community needs. Many hymns are older and well known, but some will be more modern praise choruses. There might even be accompaniment by a non-amplified instrument like an acoustical guitar. Transformational worship might be unsettling, but occasional healing worship can very meaningful. It might include laying on hands, healing prayer, sacramental acts, quiet meditation, etc.

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

Countrified Pragmatics are, indeed, *pragmatic* about Christian education. They are prepared to do whatever works in combination with other rural churches on the circuit. 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 value of which have been proven over time.

Adults often gather by generation. 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

Countrified Pragmatics may prefer midweek small groups over Sunday morning classes. (Many live in the south, where weather is not as significant a factor for transportation). Small groups often gather around shared enthusiasms, interests, hobbies, and crafts. 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.

People may stay with the same group for a long time, and it often easier to start a new group than modify an existing group. Leadership may be rotated among the participants. They may meet in private homes or at local restaurants and diners. The pastor often monitors group progress, and is readily available for problem solving (usually regarding personality conflicts or religious disagreements).

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		
Interpersonal Relationships		X
Human Potential		
Salvation and Human Destiny		X

Countrified Pragmatics are self-reliant individualists, but may need temporary help over a bad time (especially related to marriage enrichment, parenting for older children and teens, grief, or chronic disease). Their concerns are usually local and practical. They will appreciate depot and distribution ministries for food, clothing, house wares, and used furniture. 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.

They also connect with support groups, health clinics and parish nurse programs, and appreciate help to understand and use prescription medications. They 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. Outreach related to building or deepening friendships are important. Community fellowship events, fairs, and pot luck suppers are great ways to socialize, but they are less interested in dances or dating.

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

Countrified Pragmatics prefers the church to be a practical, low maintenance building. It should be identifiable as a church (with a cross and steeple), and it may well be an older, traditional building. On the other hand, they don't want to maintain a heritage and are willing to replace historic buildings with utilitarian brick or cinder block structures. These buildings eliminate stairs and multiple entrances. Rather than a basement (which in the south may be damp and impractical), they may simply add kitchen and hall (that can be divided by movable partitions to form Sunday school rooms). The kitchen may be the most up to date room in the building. People in this segment tend to eat fast or frozen food, so there is often a freezer and microwave available.

The sanctuary may be eccentrically decorated and even a bit messy. People in this segment like to be offbeat an unconventional. Symbols are clearly Christian and often handmade. Hallways may be decorated with amateur murals depicting Biblical scenes (Moses crossing the Red Sea, Noah's Ark, Jesus with the Children, and so on). There is good storage for simple, stackable chairs and tables. There may be a simple, portable audio system than can be moved as needed from sanctuary to hall, and an overhead projector and screen. Video screens and computers are probably unnecessary frills and not affordable anyway. The church office is probably located in the pastor's home.

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

Countrified Pragmatics are laid back about money and materialism. The church budget is pretty simple, and increased to keep up with inflation. 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 may or may not pre-authorize withdrawals. **Countrified Pragmatics** 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 support special collections. Don't be surprised if the plate is passed a second time during worship. However, they 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

Countrified Pragmatics 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 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 *Countrified Pragmatics* 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 (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

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.