

Segment N46:***True Grit Americans***

Middle-aged, lower middle-class households in town and country communities located in the nation's midsection

Resource: Mosaic 2021 by Experian.

Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious Perspective:

The Lord is my shepherd

Spiritual Issues:

Feelings of estrangement, anxieties about fate and emptiness

Common Church Presence

- Church membership is important
- Children are the future of the church
- Church as a rock of stability in a changing world
- Church as a source for social services and education
- Seek moral clarity and spiritual certainty
- Concerned about personal destiny

**Potential Influence**

Lifestyle Compatibility	Family Group N <i>Pastoral Pride</i>	Frequent Neighbors
E20 No Place Like Home E21 Unspoiled Splendor O55 Family Troopers Q64 Established in Society	N46 True Grit Americans N47 Countrified Pragmatics N48 Rural Southern Bliss N49 Touch of Tradition	I30 Potlucks and the Great Outdoors J35 Rural Escape L43 Homemade Happiness M44 Creative Comfort

General Comments:

True Grit Americans value the church. Membership and participation are part of their lifestyle. Their casual lifestyles, conservative values, and parochial view of the world is reflected in, 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 interpret world events in the light of faith. These are true individualists, and their church is primarily concerned with local affairs and the sorrows or joys of local families. Tradition is important. They are cautious about change and unimpressed by originality or novelty. The church provides a stable sense of meaning and purpose.

As social services shift from rural areas to small cities, the church is increasingly important to their quality of life. They look for programs that enhance education, health, financial management, and quality of life. As urban attitudes encroach on rural areas, they look to the church to safeguard traditional mores and family values. Religion can be very personal and revealed through individual piety. While they respect clergy, they don't want the church to interfere too much in their personal preferences. They are more loyal to the local congregation than a large denomination. 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.

Color Key	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
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High Priorities also marked with "X" for churches photocopying in black and white.

Leadership Preferences

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

Traditional		Progressive		Radical	
x	Caregiver	x	Discipler		Visionary
x	Enabler		Guru		Mentor
	CEO				Pilgrim

True Grit Americans expect clergy to be role models for Christian behavior and mentors for people who do not readily participate in structured programs or educational initiatives. Their credibility depends less on ordinations and certifications, than on experience, spiritual discipline, clarity of faith, and fair dealing. Some clergy may have previous experience in farming, business, or military service. They compare everything to a normative viewpoint of religious orthodoxy and American values. They need to be good preachers and confident worship leaders, but do not need to be particularly imaginative or creative. The minister's words and actions before and after worship should reinforce the message, and vice versa, so that their sincerity and commitment is beyond question.

Clergy are often "circuit riders" or regional ministers, and the local church may be one of several preaching points. This increases the challenge to build credibility in each preaching point. They often need strong diplomatic skills. They carry print resources with them for worship and teaching. Pastors and priests enable each local church to exercise caregiving among themselves, and often train board or lay leaders to exercise pastoral leadership in their behalf ("deacons", "shepherds", etc.). They need to manage time and resources well.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Clergy must be mobile, and often work from home, counsel in multiple offices, and communicate while driving. They may rely on smartphones even if their constituents do not. Primarily, they work best face-to-face, communicate simply and clearly, are a reassuring presence in the home and community.

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 may spend 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 clergy to greet them by first name and remember their extended family connections. The Sunday morning may be hectic, but people expect the priest or 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 clergy 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 potluck, 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.

Lifestyle Connectivity

True Grit Americans celebrate lifecycle events and religious and some public holidays. This usually combines worship or singing with food, fellowship, and fun. Social media is unimportant. They build relationships person to person, often as they work together on church projects.

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

Traditional		Modern		Postmodern	
	Caregiving Worship		Inspirational Worship		Mission-Connection 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 with the expectation of personal renewal or transformation. 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.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Personal contact is essential to authentic worship. Livestreaming is neither practical nor desirable. They may make videos or take pictures during weddings and baptisms. Special music might be recorded to CD or DVD.

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 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 may use the same workbooks or exercises for several years, supplemented with extra activities the value of which have been proven over time. Adults may gather by generation. Older classes may separate men and women, but younger classes (under 50) may 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 may attend church with Bible or breviary in hand (often older versions with lots of personal notes and underlining). The leader is often a member of the board (deacon, elder). If clergy are present, they usually do most of the teaching and have the last word.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Create and update a small lending library with Bible Study and devotional resources. They are unlikely to download resources from a virtual library. Both children and adult classes often have printed handouts to take home.

Small Group Preferences Resource: *See, Know, and Serve* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

Leadership		Focus	
x	Trained Leader	x	Curriculum Study
x	Rotate 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 and 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 work and family life. People tend to stay with the same group for a long time. Groups meet in private homes but may also meet at local diners for an early breakfast. The pastor, priest, or a mature lay leader usually leads the group.

Lifestyle Connectivity

People remember conversations. They don’t use social media but may return to an idea or insight articulated weeks ago. Relationships of trust encourage remarkable openness and mutual support. Small groups can be a primary method of pastoral care.

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	x
Human Potential		
Salvation and Human Destiny		x

True Grit Americans are self-reliant but may need temporary help over a bad time. “Bad times” often involve periods of unemployment, health crises, or household disasters (storm damage, fires, etc.) 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. Their concerns are very practical. They will appreciate depot and distribution ministries for food, clothing, housewares, and used furniture. They also connect with health clinics and parish nurse programs and appreciate help to understand and use medical prescriptions. They also support veterans’ groups, and help veterans re-establish themselves in civilian lifestyles. 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 or personal salvation. They sponsor crusades and revivals and will participate in evangelization programs.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Community fellowship events, fairs, rodeos, and potluck suppers are great ways to socialize, but also an opportunity to share faith and hope. Outreach is planned on Sunday morning, and emergency responses are coordinated by cell phone.

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 unpadding pews. Glass may be colored but is often clear. Pulpit, table, and chancel are simple hardwood, and floors may or may not be carpeted. 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. These are buildings with a patina. Worship items and building additions may be memorials. 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.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Upgrades of electrical wiring, central heating, indoor plumbing, and kitchens were once controversial, but now normal. However, it is unlikely that they will add audio and video systems, and they may be skeptical of an occasional overhead projector or acoustical guitar in the sanctuary.

Financial Preferences

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

Giving Target		Giving Method	
x	Unified Budgets & General Funds		Informed Philanthropy & Pledging
	Designated Programs & Mission Projects	x	Lifestyle Coaching & Family Financial Planning

True Grit Americans minimalists. The church budget is simple, and increased to keep up with inflation, but costs are kept to a minimum (including the clergy'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. They will contribute to special collections even when the offering plate is passed a second time during worship. They will not rely on 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. *True Grit Americans* need visible benchmarks for giving. Leaders lead! Individual or average giving of staff and board set a standard for members and adherents to follow.

Lifestyle Connectivity

People are more likely to give cash in the offering plate than use offering envelopes and will probably not pre-authorize withdrawals. Cash flow is a chronic concern and there are frequent fundraisers.

Communication

Resource: *Mosaic E-Handbook* by Experian

Communication in Daily Living					Communication in Church Participation						
	Broadcast/Streaming TV	x	Direct Mail		Radio		Live/Recorded Video	x	Print and Paper	x	Announcements or Visits
	Mobile SMS		Email		Social Media		Text Message		Email		Social Media

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. Announcements about coming events, prayer concerns, or emerging issues usually are shared at any large or small gathering. This is part of worship, and a method of building community. They primarily share their views through group gatherings or individual conversations.

Lifestyle Connectivity

True Grit Americans may follow talk shows, sports, weather, and news on AM Radio. Reminders about coming events and coordination of volunteer activities are shared through telephone trees and cell phone calls. Repetition is important. They may not respond quickly to voicemail messages. If they phone the minister or church office, they prefer to talk with a live person rather than leave a message on a machine.