

Segment N49: *Touch of Tradition*

Working-class, middle-aged couples and singles living in rural homes

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 is important
- Preserve cultural and religious traditions
- Strong moral foundation
- Clear religious beliefs
- Local loyalties
- Ambivalent toward big institutions



Potential Influence

Lifestyle Compatibility	Family Group N <i>Pastoral Pride</i>	Frequent Neighbors
D15 Sports Utility Families E21 Unspoiled Splendor I30 Potlucks and the Great Outdoors M44 Creative Comfort	N46 True Grit Americans N47 Countrified Pragmatics N48 Rural Southern Bliss N49 Touch of Tradition	E20 No Place Like Home I31 Hard Working Values J36 Settled and Sensible L43 Homemade Happiness

General Comments:

Touch of Tradition participates in small, local churches that may or may not be denominationally affiliated. If they are, the church may be on a large regional circuit served by a team of clergy; if not they may be served by lay pastors. The church is important to focus spiritual life and preserve cultural and religious traditions. They may be anxious about encroaching urbanization. The church represents one of the last anchors for the identity and survival of many communities, and often provides the best opportunities for creative expression and quality relationships. The church building may be a learning, recreational, and health care center. Survival of a small community may depend on the survival of the church.

These are traditionalists who want to preserve a way of life. They are religiously and socially conservative, believing in the importance of family and a close circle of friends. These churches are enormously supportive to members, but slow to include newcomers. They may be active in support of a good cause or a grassroots movement, but are suspicious of big government, big corporations, and big denominations. They may prefer to get by without a pastor, or organize a series of guest lay preachers, before allowing the denominational head office to appoint a stranger to their pulpit. They are not particularly interested in innovative worship or theological debates. They are uncomfortable with ambiguities and focus on essential beliefs and strong moral character.

Color Key	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
------------------	----------------------	------------------------	---------------------

High Priorities also marked with "X" for churches photocopying in black and white.

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

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

Touch of Tradition seeks credible spiritual leaders who can guide spiritual life and anchor the family and community in traditional Christian values. The leader may or may not be ordained, and almost always works as part of a regional team. Leaders invest considerable energy building 1:1 relationships and teaching faith essentials. They do not need to be great preachers, administrators, or fundraisers. They do need to have good listening and social skills. Clergy and lay pastors are confident and clear about Christian faith. They model Christian behavior patterns and articulate simple and unambiguous beliefs. They may be bi-vocational, and part of their credibility is the ability to model Christian behavior at work. Leaders are often very creative. They may be gifted in music, visual arts, and traditional crafts. They may have a strong appreciation for local history and folk art. They practice bottom-up, consensus management, and do not behave in top-down or dictatorial ways. Their priorities are to help people live like Jesus (simply, ethically, and sincerely) and preserve an agrarian and small-town way of life. Clergy help the board develop its own strategic plan and implements their priorities to the best of their abilities. They do not have great ambitions for church growth. They want to influence regional development and personal growth. Leaders are often unique combinations of activists and mentors.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Clergy are always “on call”, but *Touch of Tradition* are more likely to call them directly or request a visit than spontaneously drop into the office. Clergy should always check voicemail and return calls promptly. Text messages may go unnoticed. They do not need a strong social media presence.

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

	Traditional		Modern		Postmodern
x	The Basics		Multiple Choices		Take-Out
			Healthy Choices		

Touch of Tradition are apt to arrive early for private meditation, and linger after worship for conversation with the pastor, friends, and neighbors. Everyone knows one another, so greeters and ushers are unnecessary. However, the minister or priest often greets everyone individually by name when they arrive. Appoint someone to intentionally welcome any visitors and introduce them to members. Policy decisions and strategic plans may be settled over refreshments, and it may be handy to have a place to sit and someone to take notes. Refreshments are simple. Generic coffee and tea (hot or cold) may be supplemented by lemonade and the occasional can of no-name soda. Food may be home made and contributed by whoever attends worship, or it may come from a bulk food store. People may gather in the basement or kitchen, or in a side room or the sanctuary itself. They may gather outside if weather permits, or in an adjoining barn or utility shed that has been cleaned and restored for that purpose.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Bulletin boards in the refreshment area provide updates about coming events, contact information for volunteering, and special prayer concerns. Follow up with visitors via personal letter, phone call, or visit. Email is too impersonal. Church websites provide directions for visitors but are treated like a bulletin board for members.

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

Traditional		Modern		Postmodern	
x	Caregiving Worship		Inspirational Worship		Mission-Connection Worship
	Educational Worship		Transformational Worship		Coaching Worship
x	Healing Worship				

Touch of Tradition prefer worship that is simple, sincere, and prayerful. The order of service will be informal, but loyal to whatever is the local tradition of the church. Prayer usually focuses on thanksgiving or intercession and may be preceded by lay witness or personal celebrations and concerns. Music often relies on an eclectic mix of instruments (fiddles, guitars, percussion, and maybe antique folk instruments.) Traditional hymns and some Gospel music may be sung from memory or using well-worn song books. Scripture readings will probably not follow a lectionary, and they are chosen by the person sharing the message. This may be a lay member (witness), lay preacher, or pastor, who may or may not be ordained, but leads a visibly Christian lifestyle. The message may be written and read, or extemporaneous, but it will always be very sincere. Preachers reveal their hearts, as well as sharing what is on their minds. Worship may occasionally celebrate Baptism and Holy Communion (if these sacramental traditions are a part of the local church history), but these will have a simple format and the action will involve everyone in the congregation.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Personal contact is very important. Streaming video is unwanted and, in many cases, impossible. Technology in worship is usually considered intrusive, although projection of scripture readings and liturgy is more common. Self-esteem and social recognition is often tied to opportunities for worship leadership.

Education Preferences

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

Form		Content		Grouping	
x	Curricular	x	Biblical		Generational
	Experiential		Topical	x	Peer Group

Touch of Tradition may live in rural areas, but they are usually well informed. The church may be the last remaining local source of education. They are ready to learn new things if this will be of practical help for spiritual life and daily living. The church can be an opportunity to teach children moral principles, fundamental faith, and relevant Bible stories, and to share insights and ideas with their peers. The goal of education is not to acquire information, but to embed traditional values, beliefs, and attitudes that shape daily living. Sunday school for all ages usually precedes worship. Children may gather in small clusters (younger and older) with a parent as teacher. Teaching may rotate among parents. The Bible-based curriculum may be dated, but is embellished with stories, music, or crafts to encourage participation by different ages. Adults may also gather in two or three groups with rotated leadership. The Bible Study resource kick starts discussion, and conversation follows the current interests and issues of the group rather than a prescribed agenda.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Although many parents have only a high school education, they may consider home schooling for children. Build a small library of resources for home-based Christian education and include resources that can be downloaded from the church website. Include coaching tips for parents as primary Christian educators.

Small Group Preferences

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

Leadership		Focus	
	Trained Leader		Curriculum Study
x	Rotate Leaders	x	Shared Affinity

Touch of Tradition may find regular small group participation difficult due to work schedules and long distances. However, fellowship is important, and people often gather in gender- or age-based groups for women, men, and youth. Women and men may gather to share crafts and special interests, entertain themselves, and hunt or fish as a team, and prayer and mutual support will be an extra benefit. Intentional prayer often happens naturally in any gathering, although conversation about faith may not. Education, friendship, and service often combine as groups gather around some tasks that benefit the community. Such groups are unstructured and do not usually follow intentional covenants for personal growth. The family unit is really the closest thing to a small group. Families will intentionally play together and pray together, read scripture together and labor together.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Relationships develop through personal interaction rather than social media. Cell phones are used to coordinate schedules, locations, and activities. Periodic large group gatherings (men, women, couples) enlarge the circle of relationships and may have more formal educational or devotional components.

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

Touch of Tradition 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.) Their concerns are very practical and functional, and 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 churches may provide “wellness centers” for people to connect with visiting doctors, therapists, and counsellors. They are very sacrificial in response to natural disasters or sudden family emergencies. They may open their homes for temporary housing. 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 support veterans’ groups, and help veteran re-establish themselves in civilian lifestyles. They are often concerned about issues of human destiny (personal salvation, faith, and hope for tomorrow). They may 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 opportunities to share faith and hope. Outreach projects are 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

Touch of Tradition rely on churches that are in older, traditional buildings set on enough land to include picnic tables, baseball diamonds, or open space. There may well be a cemetery attached to the property that is owned and maintained by the church. The sanctuary may be left open to allow people to pray any time. Owners of the nearby store will keep an eye on security. Fresh flowers are often regularly placed on the communion table or at

the entrance, just as they may also appear in the cemetery. There may also be crafted memorials, especially for members of the community lost in wars. The sanctuary or worship center may rely on folding chairs. This opens the building for multiple uses ... from clinics to bingo. The only permanent symbols may be a cross outside and inside, and possibly hand painted murals depicting Bible scenes. If the building is demolished for any reason, a utilitarian community center may be built on the same land (next to the cemetery).

Lifestyle Connectivity

The building is probably upgraded with electricity and indoor plumbing, but there may not be a telephone and the kitchen may only have essentials. Provide storage for hymnals, Bibles, and Sunday school supplies. Maintenance is usually free and done by volunteers.

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

Touch of Tradition trust the board or trustees to manage money. Donations are usually in cash. Some may tithe, but many will simply do the best they can to support the church. The budget is frugal, and people will give their time and talent to maintain the building and cemetery. The church rarely has financial reserves, although there may be contingency fund for a cemetery. They are confident that members will be generous in an emergency.

Lifestyle Connectivity

Make sure that Sunday offerings are secure and keep accurate records. Money is usually personally deposited in a local bank the next day.

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

Touch of Tradition will read church newsletters, printed sermons, and devotional guides that they pick up from church on Sunday morning. They may subscribe to local, rather than national, newspapers and they may subscribe to a few magazines (including religious publications). The television is their primary window on the world. They listen to both music and talk radio as they drive long distances. Churches mainly communicate through oral announcements, followed up by telephone reminders to the home phone.

Lifestyle Connectivity

In addition to the church, their small towns often have a service station, feed store, or general store (which might include a cafe). These become communication hubs. Occasional annual community events like county fairs and rodeos are opportunities for churches to do fund raising and evangelism, and members connect and catch up with each other and the work of the church.