

CONTRASTING CHURCH CULTURES

Large Suburban

2/3 generations
Boomers Led
Focus on Growing
Demand Excellence, Now
Upward Mobile Members
Male Dominated Ministry
Church In Debt
Evangelistic Focus Central
Hire help
50 year life cycle, probable
Narrow band of social class
Significant Turn over of members
Diversity of occupation
Members do knowledge work
Creating its story and culture
Members related selectively
Limited bonds in the congregation
See others mostly at church
Want led to the Promised land
Worship as praise
Did it help ME?
Focus on the event
Fashionable dress
Draw on wide resources
Spectator sports, buy cakes
Cosmopolitan perspective
Plant flowers
Drive SUVs
Use electronic instruments, strings, brass
Praise choruses
Pastor much like the members

Small Rural

4/5 generations
Builders Led
Focus on Maintaining
Make Do for Now
Stable Socio-economic Status for Members
Significant Female Roles, surprisingly
Debt Free
Ministry & Worship is actual focus
Do it yourself
Century or more and still ticking
Broad band of social class
Many with ancestors in the graveyard
Narrow band of vocations
Members do material manipulation
Living out of its history and culture
Broad involvement of members in programs
Multibonded ties among members
See others in day by day walk
Want to get back to Eden
Worship as proclamation
Was the FAMILY there?
Focus on relational elements
Frumpiness/ functional dress
Loyal to denominational materials and programs
Hunting, Fishing and making cakes
Local perspective
Make garden
Drive real pickup trucks
Piano
Southern Gospel
Pastor much like the members

what would you add?

This list was composed based on visits at two congregations. Some in each genre will vary from this listing. I have used it in conferences with bivocationalists with good response.

Gary Farley
Center for Rural Church Leadership
gfarley@pickens.net