



10 Intriguing ABF Model or ABF Principled Churches –August 04

This is not the 10 largest or best at ABF, but churches that are either ABF Churches or value the principles and have similarities with ABFs. And this list it is not even ten! It's more!

These churches have some, if not all of the core principles of ABF. Below is a capsule of principles that I loosely identify with the Adult Bible Fellowship philosophy of ministry:

- A name that reflects uniqueness (i.e. ABF, Communities, Bible Fellowship)
- Value's midsize groups as part of their strategy to reach and disciple adults (working w/ Small groups, Men's & Women's ministries, etc.)
- A synergy ministry approach – connecting ministries where strategically possible (ABFs w/ small groups, care, fellowship, outreaches, assimilation, missions, etc.)
- Is team ministry oriented, using a team within individual ABFs to lead & shepherd the group/members (The team meets regularly to plan, evaluate, pray, etc.)
- Committed to teaching God's Word (interactive rather than lecture only)
- Stronger group or community focused, more than just an academic "class" setting and feel

The Top 10, or should we say 10ish!

10. Bet you didn't know this popular communicator & author has ABFs

David Jeremiah's Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California.

9. BIG, BIG, BIG, BIG, and BIG!

Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas (Bible Fellowship)

Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tennessee (Bible Fellowship)

Germantown Baptist Church Germantown, Tennessee (ABF)

First Baptist of Jacksonville, Florida (Bible Fellowship)

Southland Christian Church in Lexington, Kentucky (ABF)

All BIG! ALL using some form of ABF Principles. Some would still consider themselves Sunday School based. I remember when Josh Hunt (Joshhunt.com) and I were both doing training at a church a while back. When Josh heard my description of Adult Bible Fellowship he said, "That's what good Sunday School is!" The problem is most Sunday Schools in large AND small churches especially in the east, north, midwest and western USA have lost the vision of group life, team ministry, true fellowship and outreach of these midsize groups. These adult Sunday Schools have been reduced to teaching electives with the same people present week after week with limited relationship and ministry happening.

8. The most popular cell or meta church 15-20 years ago adds ABFs to their strategy

New Hope Community Church in Portland, Oregon formerly pastored by Dale Galloway, became of the most prominent cell churches in America. Today they have strategically implemented the Adult Bible Fellowship model as part of their strategy.

7. A very unique concept of all their midsize groups in homes, with breakout gender based small groups

Xenos Fellowship in Columbus, Ohio, although not an ABF church does have some great "ABF" values! See Idea of the Month/January 04 for an overview of this very unique church. Struggling with space issues on your church campus? Here is one option.

6. An explosion of growth in Ozark, Missouri!

James River Assembly in Ozark, Missouri has grown from a handful of folks to approaching 6,000 people in less than 15 years. Their main discipleship tool has been ABFs. By this fall they could be over 40 ABFs in their brand new ABF wing!

5. A church that is geographically organized with integrated curriculum, also with breakout small groups out of their midsize communities

Pantego Bible Church in Fort Worth, Texas under the leadership of Pastor Randy Frazee has developed their own strategy called, "The Connecting Church". You can check it out at www.theconnectingchurch.org. Although, difficult for most existing churches in America to convert to a geographical based model, there is plenty to learn from this ministry and model that tracks with many ABF principles.

4. A Church that has and continues developing Curriculum for ABFs for purchase

Lakepointe Church in Rockwall, Texas near Dallas is a large church with over 80 ABFs. Their website states that they have 72% of their members in ABFs. They also have been developing their own curriculum for years and now make it available to other churches for purchase.

3. A Church for years, that when you mention ABF, you say The Chapel AND Southeast!

Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky has one of, if not the largest church campus in the country. It is needed make their 60+ ABFs function.

2. The Church with the pastor who pioneered the Adult Bible Fellowship philosophy

Knute Larson and The Chapel in Akron, Ohio have been the leader in ABFs for many years. (See Idea of the Month/June 04). They now have two campuses in the Akron area each hosting their ABFs with over 60+ total. Knute will be a main speaker at the 2004 ABF Conference

And number one...

1. A newer church in implementing the ABF way, they call them "Communities", but has taken on the task of organizing and hosting the 2004 ABF Conference on November 12 & 13.

Hope Church in Mason, Ohio near Cincinnati has moved from a small groups only church to a both/and as they have implemented the Adult Bible Fellowship philosophy of ministry.

Okay, as mentioned my list is more than ten if you count them, but all have a place. Plus, I left many out! What significant or intriguing churches do you think should be on this list and why?

WEBSITES:

10. www.shadowmountain.org
9. www.Prestonwood.org
www.bellevue.org
www.fbcjax.com
www.germantownbaptist.org
www.southlandchristian.org
8. www.newhopecommunitychurch.org
7. www.xenos.org
6. www.jamesriver.org
5. www.pantego.org
4. www.lakepointe.org
3. www.southeastchristian.org
2. www.the-chapel.org
1. www.hope-church.org

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