

The Chaplain Base Design Church (CBD)

1. Size: Worship attendance of less than 100.

2. Priority: focus on relationships over performance quality. (Quality relationships)

_____ % of young families are attracted to this church. (1994)

3. Pastoring: Small church attenders expect close personal relationships with the pastor and his or her family. *There is the desire for the pastor to spend his/her free time visiting in the homes of members on a regular basis.*

4. Personnel: Rely heavily on lay volunteers for getting things done.

5. Programming Small church attenders expect minimal programming, often consisting of worship, Sunday school, choir, youth activities, and a women's organization. (*Basics*)

6. Participation: Small church attenders expect everyone to participate in every gathering. Every absent member is a matter of concern, because a small church is in the individual caring business. Because it is small, it is obvious whenever someone is missing and members will contact those absent.

7. Procedures: Small church attenders expect their high involvement levels to give them strong ownership and control of decision-making procedures. Thus, the governing body meetings in small churches often have the emotional "feel" of a town hall gathering in a small New England village.

8. Property: Small church attenders expect people to treat the church building as they do their own home, with carefully followed traditions for room use, turning off the lights, and tidiness.

9. Pastoral Staff: One pastor who does it all.

10. Planning and Preparation: Minimal activities require little advance planning, usually less than 12 months in advance. Often changes can be made at the last minute.

11. System Model & Response to conflict: The model for the small church is the FAMILY. There may be lots of conflict and pain, but you don't leave because this is your family. You accept unpleasant people because they are family. *"You just have to understand Uncle Fred..."*

12. Leadership & Decisions: Decisions are made by influential laypeople who function as matriarch or patriarch of the church family. The pastor has little direct influence.

Question: Whose side are you on? (personalities)

13. Delegation & Supervision: Everybody knows everybody else's business, and everyone puts their two cents in. This is not interference, but just being helpful.

***If someone is not doing it right,
argue with them 'till they see the light.***

CBD:	708 churches	77%;	Att<100	27,041 total attendance - 810 baptisms, 1/33 attenders
Midsize	171 churches	19%;	Att	27,229 total attendance - 941 baptisms, 1/29 attenders
PBD:	39 churches	4.3%;	Att>300	20,161 total attendance - 611 baptisms, 1/33 attenders (IGRC Journal Yearbook 2006)

The Program Base Design Church (PBD)

1. Size: Worship attendance greater than 300.

2. Priorities: focus more on performance quality than on people relationships. (Quality Activities)

_____ % of young families are attracted to this church. (1994) .

3. Pastoring The majority of large church attenders expect to know their pastor primarily through large gatherings, such as worship, funerals, weddings, and fellowship dinners, and through what he or she writes in the newsletter. (*Very critical of lack of quality of performance.*)

4. Personnel: Large churches, by contrast, rely far more on paid professional staff, who give direction to lay leaders and members for accomplishing ministries.

5. Programming: Large church attenders, by contrast, expect a cafeteria of programming that meets the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of persons at every age and stage of development. (*Smorgasbord*)

6. Participation: Large church attenders, on the other hand, are expected to pick and choose the church activities in which they participate. Members who do not attend everything are not viewed as disloyal or alienated. (*Like a cafeteria line - take your pick*)

7. Procedures: Large church attenders expect to delegate a great deal of authority to the senior minister, staff and elected and appointed governing-board members. The large church attender expects a representative democracy in which leadership decisions are taken care of for us by people who know a great deal about what we should do because they have inside information.

8. Property Large church attenders expect people to treat the church building like a public institution through which much traffic flows for many different reasons. Their attenders do not expect everyone to take good care of the building, and they expect high maintenance costs.

9. Pastoral Staff: One professionally trained pastor for every one hundred members who attend worship PLUS paid specialists wherever needed to ensure quality.

10. Planning and Preparation: A complex congregational life requires a long time span for planning and preparation, often 36 months or more in advance.

11. System Model & Response to conflict

The model for the large church is a large club. People enjoy being a part when the club brings meaning to their life, positive relationships and enjoyable times. In the presence of conflict they first become passive, and then drop out. "*Life is too short to put up with this...*"

12. Leadership & Decisions: The professional staff leads the church because they have more information and are more able to keep the complexity running smoothly.

Question: Which side are you on? (issues)

13. Delegation & Supervision: Responsibility and power are delegated to lay leaders who supervise their areas with support from the staff. Policies & goals are approved, but methods are often determined by those doing the work.

TWO COMMON PATTERNS IN NORTH AMERICAN CHURCHES

A. Church size depends on the linking relationship between the “crowd” and a leadership core and upon the span of control in the leadership core. (Craig Kennet Miller, *NextChurch.Now: Creating New Faith Communities* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2000), 79-100.) ***Churches can be described by the way the Discipleship System links people together with their leaders.*** These linkages identify the network which controls all activities of the church outside of worship.

B. In a small church, each person in the crowd is directly linked by a relationship to someone in the leadership core. This limits the growth of the small church as only two layers are allowed: core and crowd. When the span of control is six, there can be one pastor, up to six leaders and thirty-six followers for a total of forty-three. When the span of control is twelve, as Jesus chose, there can be one pastor, up to twelve core leaders and 144 followers for a maximum total of 157. A systemic competency limit is often reached beyond this total. (For information on competency limit of the Rule of 150, see Kevin Martin, *The Myth of the 200 Barrier: How to Lead through Transitional Growth* (Nashville: Cokesbury, 2005), 39-42.)

C. Some form of organization in a larger church must link the crowd to the leadership core; the resulting form of organization can be used to identify five basic paradigms or “base designs” of churches.

Temple Base Design	TBD	(worship priority)
Chaplain Base Design	CBD	(nurture priority)
Academic Base Design	ABD	(learning priority)
Network Base Design	NBD	(connectional priority)
Program Base Design	PBD	(activity/program priority)

Cell Churches represent a Network Base Design. Chaplain Base Design churches usually have less than 100 in worship; Program Base Design churches usually have more than 300 in worship. Mid-size churches blend CBD and PBD traits in tension. Research reported by Herb Miller in 1994 indicates that mid-size churches in the United States are rapidly disappearing. My district superintendent indicated in 2002 that research by the Cabinet shows that the loss of average worship attendance in the Illinois Great Rivers Conference comes primarily from the mid-size church tier.

Illinois Great Rivers Conference Churches: 899 reporting attendance >0 in 2006.

Large churches >300	= 39 churches/4.3%	w/20,161 in worship	611 baptisms (1/33).
Mid-size tier 100-200	= 171 churches/19%	w/27,229 in worship	941 baptisms (1/29).
Small church tier <100	= 708 churches/77%	w/27,041 in worship	810 baptisms (1/33).

Sources: #1-9: Former *Net Results* publisher Herb Miller. ***These two descriptions of churches are used here for illustrative purposes; patterns from 1994 are still present in many churches that I encounter.*** This research is from Herb Miller’s 1994 seminar, “Midsize Church Leadership: Moving Toward God’s Vision When Worship Attendance is Between 100 and 300” (Net Results Resource Center, Kansas City, MO, April 20, 1994), 4. Since 1994 Herb Miller has continually updated this research and it is available from behavior descriptions of the twelve sizes of congregations in Herb Miller, *Church Personality Matters!* (St. Louis, Chalice Press, 1999) and from four volumes in the Herb Miller’s Nuggets Series: Volume #14, 25 Turnaround Strategies for Small Churches (2004); Volume #26, Moving toward God’s Vision in Large Churches (2006); Volume #27, Coaching Small Congregations toward Positive Change (2005); and Volume #28, Coaching Midsize Congregations toward Positive Change (2005). (All 29 volumes of this series are available from Herb Miller; e-mail HrbMiller@aol.com for free contents-descriptions of each volume and an order form.)

- Source: #10-13: Lyle Schaller, *The Middle Sized Church: Problems & Prescriptions*

- Recent research on large church growth supports the role of *lay excitement* as a cause of growth as in the *Center for Parish Development Church Growth Principle*. Scott Thumma, Dave Travis, and Warren Bird, *Megachurches Today 2005: Summary of Research Findings*, http://www.hartfordinstitute.org/megachurch/megastoday2005_summaryreport.html (accessed June 15, 2007)

- The *Program Base Design* is from Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church*, 10th Anniversary ed. (Houston: Touch Publications, 1990), 57-76. Neighbour’s paradigm label inspired the others.