NEW MEGACHURCH:
COEXISTENCE OF SACRED AND SECULAR

by

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Submitted to the Department of Architecture
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Fig 1. montage of a traditional cathedral

Fig 2. conceptual montage of new megachurch
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ABSTRACT

Protestants today seem to approach public worship with one or the other of two quite different  
attitudes. Many Protestants understand worship as primarily a matter of feelings; others see  
worship as basically work done in God's service. While there are glamorously designed churches  
emphasizing value of sacredness and its symbolism, there are also practical and temperate  
churches valuing people rather than the place. Whether the latter development of secular church  
forms were developed out of liturgical sincerity or as the result of Capitalism due to economic  
competition, it is most prevalent form of Protestant churches today.

Specifically on my site near Flushing, NY, with high density of Korean immigrant settlements who  
mostly serve on ethnic commercial and service business, many of informal church typology of pet  
architecture started to emerge. Its phenomena along the main artery of Korea Town in flushing are  
so predominant that there are multiple churches per every single block of city fabric on Northern  
Boulevard. One cannot distinguish a church from a commercial store if there was not a signboard  
indicating its name. Liturgical principle of religious space is completely ignored with invention of  
commercial churches.

The term megachurch generally refers to any Protestant congregation church with a sustained  
average weekly attendance of 2,000 or more in its worship services. With its high density of pet  
churches in Flushing, NY, average total attendance of weekly Korean Protestant worship easily  
exceed 10,000.

My thesis is about invention of typology of new megachurch. Rather than a giant space occupied  
by a single congregation, it is an infrastructure for agglomeration of religious spaces that can  
expand and contract based on its demand. Acknowledging abnormal high density of religious  
needs around Korean immigrant community and the importance of service industry, a new mutant  
typology of sacred and secular spaces in coexistence is proposed. Simply put, it is a shopping  
mall of churches offering their religious services in competition, which the exact situation is happen-  
ing in Flushing today.

Title: Assistant Professor of Architecture
Fig 3. new megachurch, physical model
CHAPTERS

1. The lineage of Megachurch

2. Its legacy and prosperity

3. Flushing, NY.

4. Sacredness and Secularity

5. Infrastructure for Coexistence
Fig 4. Joel Osteen’s Lakewood Megachurch with 43,500 weekly attendance
source: http://taylormarshall.com

Dualistic Spirituality

Private sphere
(sacred activities: worship, prayer, etc.)

Public sphere
(secular activities: work, play, family, politics, etc.)

GOD

MEGA CHURCH
the mediating institution

WORLD

sacred realm

secular realm

Dualistic Spirituality
A megachurch is widely defined as a church with weekly worship attendance exceeding 2,000 adults and children. Some of their distinctive characteristics include a charismatic and authoritative senior minister, a very active 7 day a week congregational community, a multitude of social and outreach ministries, and a complex differentiated organizational structure. The social role of megachurch as a new community center calls the rise of Protestant megachurches as important social phenomenon. With evangelical emphasize on function, informality, and reachability into general public, adopting secular form of architecture. While their intention on informality is clear, the resulting architecture form of megachurch has been driven by capitalism and desire for efficiency in its economic growth. What interests me the most is the complexity and multiplication of its supplementary programs that comprise megachurch. When looking at its typological progression, only haste means of physical expansion of main gathering space for mass congregation has been emphasized, while neglecting demand for extracurricular programs. My thesis intends to investigate new typology of megachurch that participate a collision between sacred and secular, both programmatically and spatially dismantling the barrier between the two.
LINEAGE OF MEGACHURCH

distribution of U.S. Protestant and Other Christian Churches by size

ATTENDANCE

PROPORTION

source: http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/database.html
Average Weekly Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>1,000-1,999</th>
<th>2,000-2,999</th>
<th>3,000-3,999</th>
<th>4,000-4,999</th>
<th>5,000-5,999</th>
<th>10,000-plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Racial Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Caucasian</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Megachurches</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastors</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Population (2010 US Census Data)</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEGACHURCH FOUNDING DATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949 or earlier</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1969</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1989</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-2011</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

source: http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/database.html
THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

- Evangelical: 71%
- Pentecostal: 8%
- Seeker: 5%
- Charismatic: 5%
- Moderate: 4%
- Missional: 4%
- Fundamentalist: 1%
- Other: 1%
- Liberal: 0%

PARTICIPANT AGE GROUPS

- Age 65 and over: 11%
- Age 50 - 64: 16%
- Age 35 - 49: 28%
- Age 19 - 34: 28%
- Age 0 - 17: 22%
THE MEETING HOUSE

17th century meetinghouses built by the New England Puritans. Their utilitarian, plain-style structures embodied functionalist aesthetic that became the hallmark of evangelical architecture in the 19th and 20th centuries.

BUILDING FOR REVIVALISM

The revival structures used by evangelists in the late 18th and early 19th century to reach the unchurched and unconverted in frontier areas, villages and towns. They held their revival meetings in nonchurch structures: open-air campgrounds, tents, and, especially in the large cities, commercial buildings, including music halls and theaters.

THE AUDITORIUM CHURCH

The large, often sumptuous auditorium churches built by white and African American mainline evangelical congregations from the mid-19th century into 20th century.
The Multipurpose Church

The multipurpose facilities including educational, social, recreational, community welfare programs were built addition to the auditorium churches.

LINEAGE OF MEGACHURCH
from meeting house to megachurch precedent typology

The Multipurpose Church

Broadway Tabernacle (1860)

Church and Sunday-School Building (1920)

Billy Sunday Tabernacle (1920)

MEGACHURCH
BUILDING FOR MASS EVANGELISM

THE MULTIPURPOSE CHURCH

THE AUDITORIUM CHURCH

1900
2000

Garden Grove Community Church (1962)

Lakewood Church (2003)
MEGA in MEGACHURCH
Transition from Physical to Virtual Space: Technology

INFORMALITY

The camp meeting
- simple & utilitarian
- ability to reach into poor population
- not a sacred place

ENTERTAINMENT

Theaters
- great acoustics
- sermons to the “affections” or emotions

MEGA-STURCTURE

Stadium/ Arena
- secular structure as a model for a revival meeting in place
- Ex) Lakewood Church using former sports arena of the Houston Rockets

BROADCASTING

Video + Internet Technology
- live broadcast of sermons worldwide.
- copies of the service for members who missed.
- no need for physical attendance.
MOBILITY

Tabernacle
- mobility
- accommodate large aggregation at cheap cost
- reference in Exodus: tabernacle in the wilderness

Drive-In Church
- automobility
- no need for physical building structure
- informality
- convenience

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social Network
- ability to reach out in virtual space
- no need for physical attendance with easier accessability with technology.

Typology of Megachurch has evolved with adaptation to new technology.
How will current technology of social networking will transform definition of “MEGA” church?
What is next forthcoming “MEGA”?
2. Its Legacy and Prosperity

The number of Korean Churches in the U.S. is a staggering 4,096 as of December 2011. As a result, the ratio of Koreans to Korean churches in the U.S. is far greater than the ratio in South Korea. There is 1 Korean church for every 350 Koreans in the US; in South Korea, there is 1 church for every 1,000. Various reasons have affected the growth of the Korean ethnic church in the United States from 1902 to today. Two main sociological factors include United States’ immigration policies and the simple fact that Koreans want to be with other Koreans. But sociological factors alone cannot adequately explain the growth of the Korean ethnic church since we know that other immigrant groups have experienced similar sociological phenomena but not similar church growth.

Confucian values that emphasize filial piety, family ties, the patriarchal family order, and children’s education have powerful effect on the family system in South Korea – and they continue to exert an influence on Korean immigrant families in the United States. Korean immigrants are more successful than other Asian immigrant groups in maintaining their pre-migration culture because of their strong ethnic networks, including ethnic churches, and economic segregation.

Churches in Korean immigrant communities are not only place of religion, but also cultural and spiritual shelter for people enduring their laborious struggle toward “American Dream.” Immigrants want to be part of an ethnic church, including the American born Korean Americans. Since churches are social institutions as well as religious ones, the ethnic factor seems to predominate in determining one’s place of worship. There is a growing struggle between the 1st and 2nd generations due to language barrier and cultural miscommunication, but various programs in church including maintenance of cultural tradition and social services play important role as an
arbitrator of cultural and social conflicts between the generations. Because Korean immigrants see themselves as outsiders in American mainstream society, the church plays an important role in gratifying their need for inclusion, significance, social status, respect and power.

A megachurch is a church having 2,000 or more in average weekend attendance. There are more than 1,300 such Protestant churches in the United States. While generally associated with the United States, the phenomenon has spread worldwide. In 2007, five of the ten largest Protestant churches were in South Korea.
A Positive Outlook

How large churches are preparing financially for 2013, based on surveys of 729 leaders.

1,600 The number of churches in North America with a worship attendance of at least 2,000 adults + children.

83% of megachurches expect to meet budget this year.

79% of megachurches are growing.

Among all Protestant churches across North America, only about 20% are growing.

In sharp contrast a much higher percent of megachurches are growing. Of the churches in the study, 79% report attendance growth between 2010 & 2012. Within that 79%, 27% are reporting growth at a double digit rate.

81% of megachurches are planning to increase salaries at the next review point.

source: http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/database.html
75% are adding new staff members in the coming year.

55% are adding between 1-4 new staff.
13% are adding between 5-9 new staff.

70% of churches with attendance of 2,000 or more saw an increase in offerings from 2011 to 2012

18% saw more than a 10% increase.
28% saw a 6 - 10% increase.

96% of church’s budget comes from individual donations.

78% of churches receive up to a third of their giving electronically.

As church attendance increases, giving per person decreases.

The overall average of churches with worship attendances from 1,000 to over 10,000 was $29 / person / week. That’s the same as $1,492 / person / year.

84% of churches give 10% or more of their budget to ministry beyond their own congregation.
MEGACHURCH SALARY

Salary = total cash compensation (including cash toward housing)

The Larger the Church Budget, The Higher the Senior Leadership’s Salary

source: http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/database.html
Megachurch Salaries Grow Gradually as Church Size Increases

Worshipper-to-Staff Ratios Hold Even Until Attendance Reaches 10,000
LINEAGE OF MEGACHURCH
Largest Megachurches in the U.S. today

Fig 5. Size comparison maps of the 10 largest megachurches in U.S. with MIT campus
Typology 1 _ URBAN EXPANSION

First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, FL
Membership = 28,000

- original building
- expansion 1
- expansion 2
- elevated rapid transit system
- sky bridge
- parking

Fig 6. Program diagram of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, FL
While many of churches moved to the suburbs, First Baptist Church of Jacksonville decided to remain downtown taking advantage of the metropolitan expressway system and reinvented itself as a regional church. An elevated rapid transit system with a stop at First Baptist, promised to provide another convenient mode of transportation to the church. The church also made it easy for congregants to park their cars and find their way around the church complex and into the auditorium. By the mid 1990s it had built three large parking garages featuring elevated walkways that linked them to the various buildings in the church complex.

Urban Density / Adjacent Expansion / Transit Infrastructure / Sky Bridge
Main Auditorium

Exterior view showing sky bridge connection with parking garage
Fig 7. Program diagram of Faith Community Church in West Covina, CA
The origins of Faith Community Church is linked with the shopping mall. The previous church building had been a remodeled Dollar Saver supermarket. In the mid 1990s, the congregation bought a building where Hughes Aircraft had once manufactured torpedoes and flight simulators for Stealth Bombers. Beside the low price, ample space (165,000 sq ft), and parking for eleven hundred cars, another attractive feature of the building was its location, accessible from four freeways.

Remodeling Commercial / Freeway Infrastructure / Large Parking Lot
Typical Dollar Saver Supermarket
Typology 3 - INFLUENCE OF THE SHOPPING MALL

A Community Church of Joy in Glendale, Arizona
Membership = 12,000

- Auditorium
- Classroom / multipurpose room
- Recreational area
- Parking
- Freeway

Fig 8. Program diagram of A Community Church of Joy in Glendale, Arizona
The influence of the shopping mall style is prevalent in a Community of Joy in Arizona. It looks like a toy or children's clothing store than religious building. A multipurpose conference/banquet center resembles a ten screen mall movie theater. It is an example of a "themed environment." Just as amusement parks and restaurants used architecture and decor to create a "themed space," the Joy church not only looked like a shopping mall but also offered its "customers" the experiences they enjoyed in the mall: consumption, entertainment, and community.

Themed Environment / Freeway Infrastructure / Shopping Mall Decor
Welcome to Joy
BECOMING GOD'S FAMILY
TO BLESS THE WORLD

Shopping mall-like parking map

Legend
1 Worship Center
2 Kid Country Children & Preschool
3 Joy Christian High School
4 Church Offices
5 Church Offices & Counselors
6 Multipurpose Classrooms
7 The Wave & Multipurpose
8-11 Joy Christian School Classrooms
12 Caterina & Arts Classrooms
13 Joy Christian School Offices
14 Child Care Ministry Offices & Multipurpose
& Common Grounds Coffee House
15 Arrowhead Memorial Gardens Offices
16 Maintenance Building
17 The Bridge Youth Center
18 Joy Christian School Gym & Recreation Center
19 20 Restrooms
21 Handicapped Parking
Childcare & Preschool, A Community of Joy

Conference / banquet center
Typology 4  _ RE-USE OF MEGA STRUCTURE

Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas
Membership = 44,000

- Lakewood Church
- parking
- freeway

Fig 9. Program diagram of Lakewood Church in Houston, TX
The 16,000 seat sanctuary of Lakewood Church in Houston is the nation’s largest nondenominational congregation. It has theater seats instead of wooden pews, a stage instead of an altar, and video projection screens instead of stained-glass windows. Hardly a classic place of worship, although the expansive expression of religious community in the vast space is impressive. It is a converted sports arena of the Compaq Center, once home to the Houston Rockets. The desire of congregations to make their place of worship a part of everyday life rather than a sacred place, they avoided the traditional ecclesiastical symbols and emphasized its austerity.
3. Flushing, NY

Fig 10. Mapping of Megachurch and Korean church in Metropolitan NYC area
Fig 10. Mapping of different church typology in Flushing, NY
Fig 11. Massing diagram of different church typology in Flushing, NY
Fig 12. New megachurch growth scenario with different scale of churches
4. Sacredness and Secularity

Fig 13. Montage of traditional cathedral space
Fig 14. Montage of new megachurch arcade space
Fig 15. Analysis of historical church plans

PROTESTANT WORSHIP AND CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

A _ altar-table
P _ pulpit
L _ lectern
D _ reading desk
F _ font
C _ choir

- early and medieval patterns
- reformation experiments
- behind the current stalemate
- recent experiments
Fig 16. Visual of different church typology in Flushing, NY
5. Infrastructure for coexistence

Fig 17. Sketch model of penetrating volume

Fig 18. Sketch model of massing
Fig 19. Concept model of distributed church massing

Fig 20. Structure model

Fig 21. Negative massing model of crucifix
Fig 23. Ground floor plan
Fig 27. XL Church interior rendering
Fig 28. L Church interior rendering
Fig 29. Exterior terrace rendering
Fig 30. Main arcade rendering
Fig 31. Folded section perspectives
Bibliography


