Rice University

Any Given Sunday

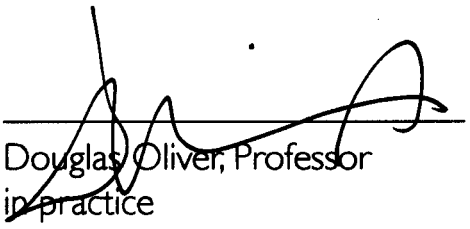
by

Eric Hughes

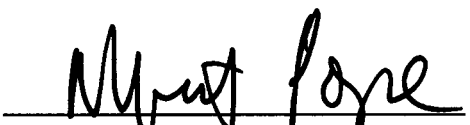
A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Masters of Architecture

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE:



Douglas Oliver, Professor
in practice



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Abstract

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Eric Hughes

The megachurch is the ultimate convert in a family typology which finds its ancestors within the very origin of architecture. It thrives as a collector of "seekers", creating enticing venues that capitalize on disconnected suburban environments to form a micro-city of services (gym, daycare, support groups, etc.) offered by the church. Currently, megachurches conservatively follow the organizational model of malls while restricting ownership to a single anchor church offering all services/products. This thesis forces a break which favors full inclusion of multiple tenant churches while maintaining a coop of services. As an evolution of a prevalent form in suburban Houston, this megachurch is recast as vertical urban infrastructure that re-contextualizes the mall section as a programmatic procession/filter of programs offered to the community. Exploiting the opposing time and scale of this daily/service based urbanism with the weekly event, it redefines the relationship of worship spectacle to anti-spectacle to community services.

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There are 1,210+ Protestant churches in the United States classified as Megachurches.

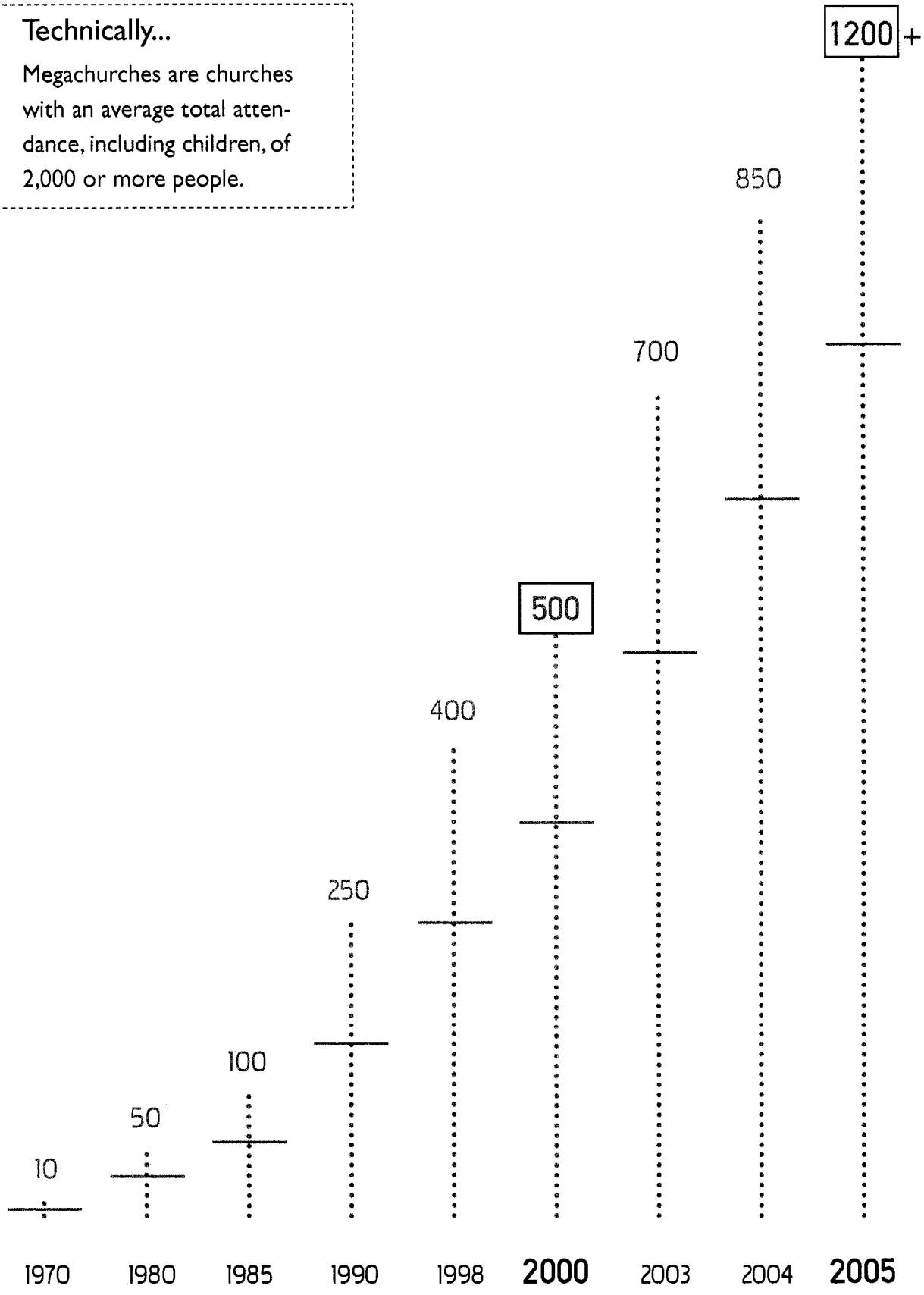
Over double the number that existed just 5 years ago

Hartford Institute for Religion Research and Leadership Network

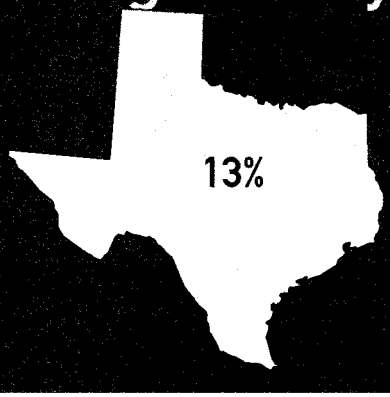
Lakewood Church, Houston, TX / 16,500 seats

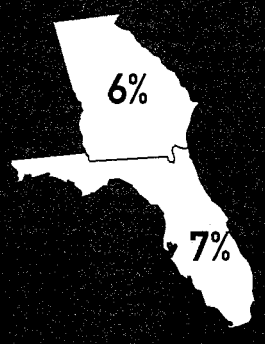
Technically...

Megachurches are churches with an average total attendance, including children, of 2,000 or more people.



California (178) Texas (157) Florida (85) Georgia (73) Illinois (46) Tennessee (44) Ohio (44) Michigan (43) North Carolina (39) Indiana (31) Maryland (31) Washington (30) Oklahoma (28) Colorado (26) Pennsylvania (26) Virginia (25) Minnesota (24) Arizona (24) Missouri (22) New York (22) South Carolina (21) Alabama (20) Oregon (18) New Jersey (16) Louisiana (15) Kentucky (14) Kansas (11) Nebraska (10) Arkansas (10) Mississippi (9) Wisconsin (8) Nevada (8) Washington, DC (7) Massachusetts (7) New Mexico (5) Hawaii (4) Idaho (4) Alaska (3) Iowa (3) Connecticut (3) Delaware (1) North Dakota (2) Montana (1) Utah (1) The following states do not have megachurches on record: Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming





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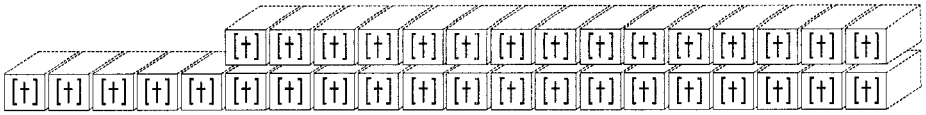

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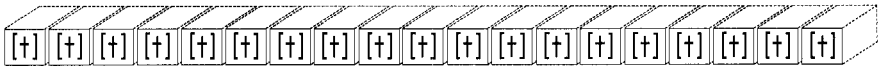

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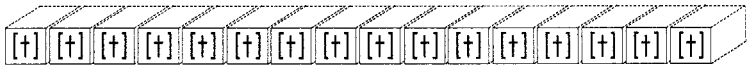

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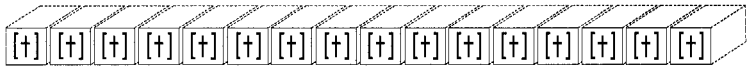

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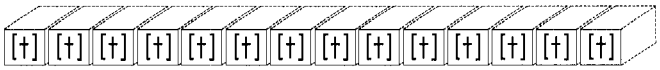

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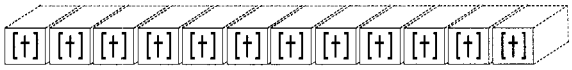

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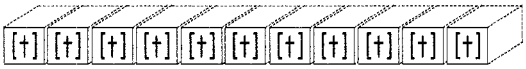

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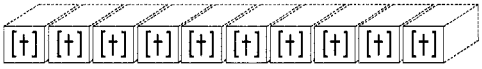

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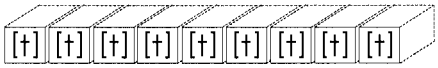

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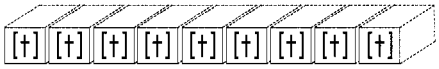

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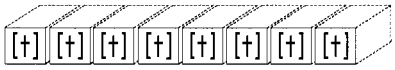

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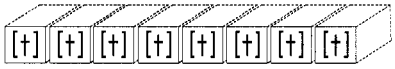
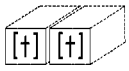
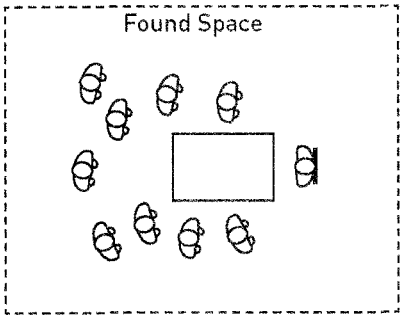


2 New York



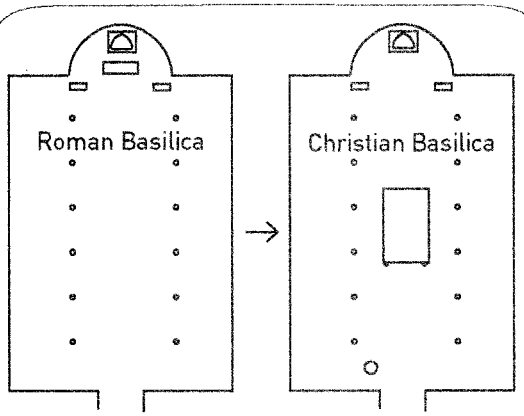
100 A.D. 300 A.D.

SIZE IS NEGLIGIBLE

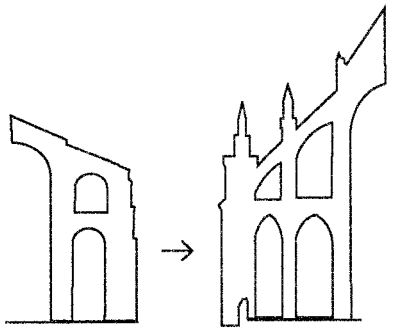


Due to persecution, early worship made use of improvised space, most often a dining room.

SIZE THROUGH REPLICATION

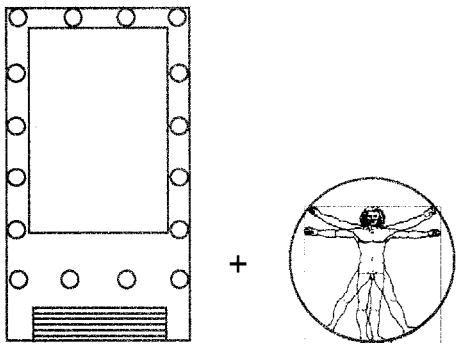


Once allowed to erect permanent buildings, Christians created replicas of the pagan Roman basillica.



More efficient methods for load transfer were developed and boasted through church architecture.

SIZE = ENGINEERING EXPLOIT



A return to the temples of Pagan Rome as precedence for a return to classical order and proportions.

SIZE BY CLASSICAL ORDER

1100 A.D. 1400 A.D.

Negligible: Due to persecution, early worship made use of improvised space, most often a dining room. Archaeological evidence suggests that there were only two items of furniture provided: a chair for the presiding elder and a table for the Lord's Supper. They usually met in a dining room, the only large room in the house, frequently occupying the entire top floor.

Replication: When the Emperor Constantine made Christianity an official religion, Christians were able to erect permanent buildings. They did so on the plan of the most common architectural design of public buildings in the Empire, the Basilica, which was used primarily as a law court. Christian basilicas were structural replicas of their predecessors.

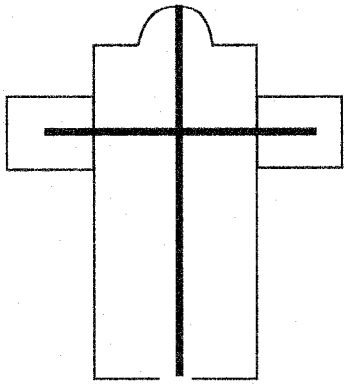
Divinity: The church assumes a didactic significance as formal resolution begins to relay an understanding of divine significance. The church becomes a biblical narrative as the act of occupying the space and reflecting on the building links to the act of worship.

Power: Eleventh-century Normandy held an aggressive and competitive mentality in which the aristocracy went to great lengths to build bigger and better monasteries, abbeys and churches than their rivals. Despite the limitations imposed by contemporary building technology, Norman architecture conveyed power through sheer size., and the construction of a cathedral usually went hand in hand with the establishment of a castle, emphasizing the dominance of the new Norman regime over the conquered people.

900 A.D. on

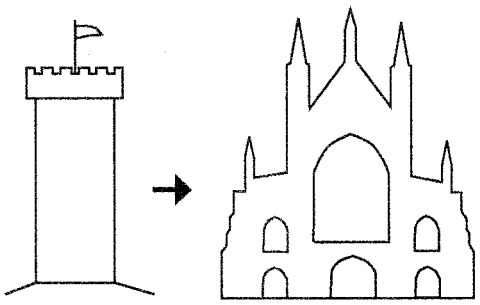
1000 A.D.

SIZE REFLECTS DIVINITY



The form relays an understanding of divine significance as the church becomes a biblical narrative.

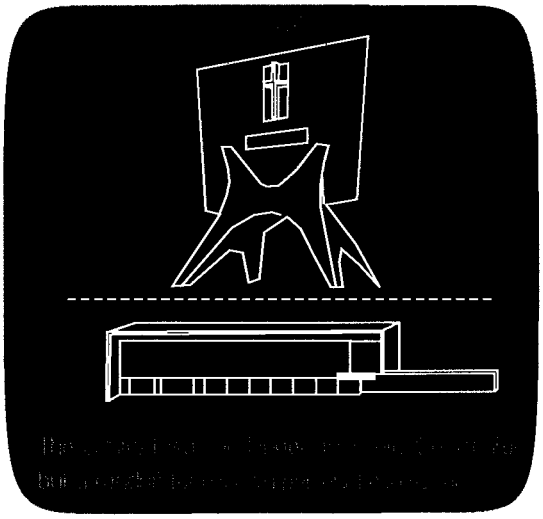
SIZE = POWER



Eleventh-century aristocracy built churches hand in hand with castles, bigger than their rivals, conveying power through sheer size

Little change in the typology of a sacred space for worship

Rapid change



CONCEPTUAL EXPRESSION

1950

ENGINEERING EXPLOIT: The period from the Norman Conquest to the advent of the Reformation the sixteenth century saw an unequalled development in church architecture. More efficient methods for load transfer were developed and boasted through church architecture in thinner walls, flying buttresses, taller towers, and larger unsupported spaces. "Hardly had such towers risen on all sides; never had such timber roofs and screens been hewn and carved"

CLASSICAL ORDER: The Roman Catholic church diverged from protestant design during the Renaissance and used the temples of Pagan Rome as precedence for a return to classical order and proportions. Long vaulted naves and aisles were substituted by a centralized plan in which the act of seeing was emphasized as churches looked to the theatre and opera for inspiration.

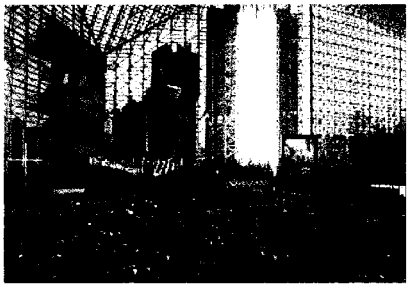
CONCEPTUAL EXPRESSION: From the Roman Basilica to the neo Gothic churches of the early 1900s there is relatively little change in the typological conception of a sacred space for worship. The first major revolution in this typology occurs during modernism when it becomes okay to analyze traditional typologies and then subvert or remix them.

The church building was no longer seen as a teacher, minister, or evangelist but rather as a space for functional assembly. The architect was no longer an inspired co-creator but a conduit for his own personal expression.

The 3 Big Influences

..for subversion and removal of historic typological precedence to establish a new model.

1980 Crystal Cathedral

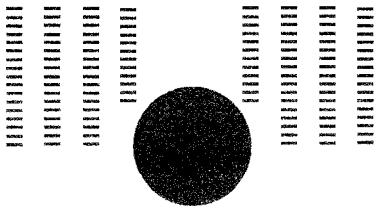


1981 Willow Creek

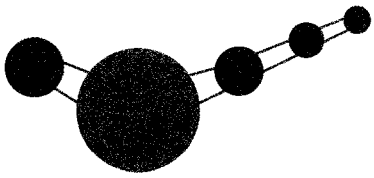
1981 Saddleback

Willow Creek and Saddleback Church were listed as the two most influential churches in a 2005 survey sent to 2000 churches. However, they also represent a distinct break or transition in the ideology of church design. Their models of development has been mimicked for the last 20 years. The Willow Creek Association of 11,500 churches and the "purpose-driven church" (Saddleback) of 30,000 are testaments to this.

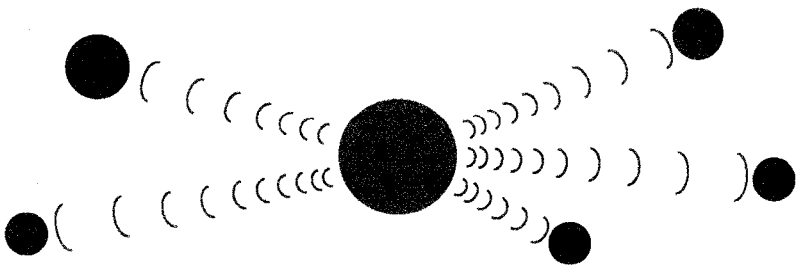
Organizational strategies



Monument in a field of parking.



Auxillary Program Campus with theatre/ church at center.



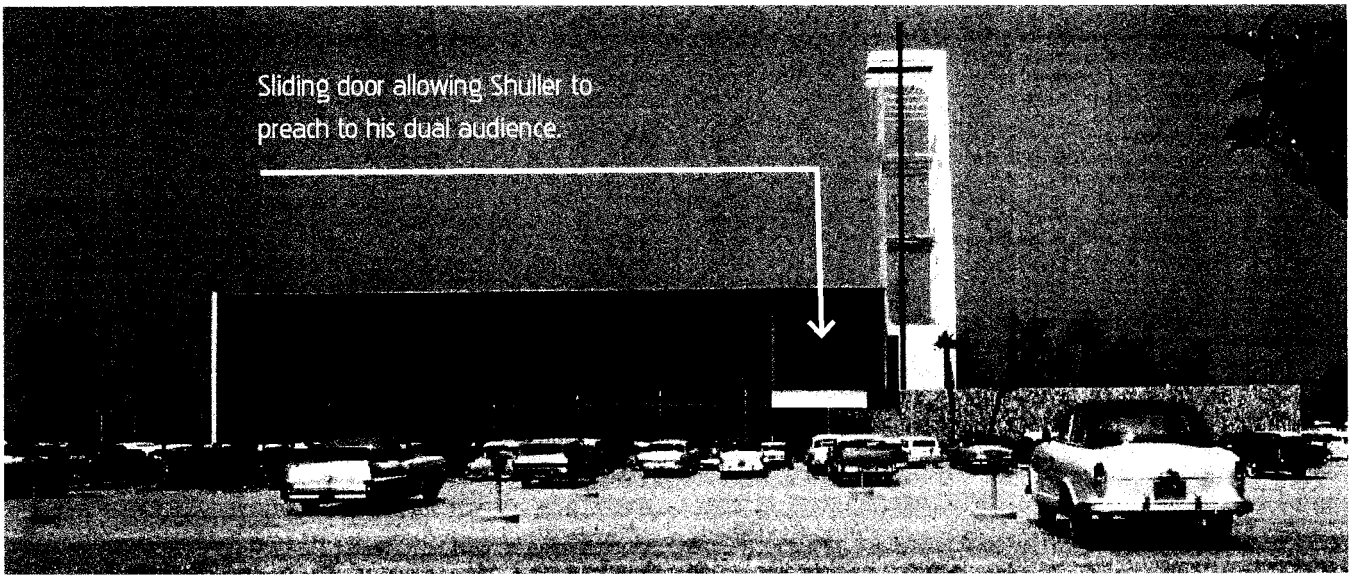
Fragmented Venues with virtual connection.

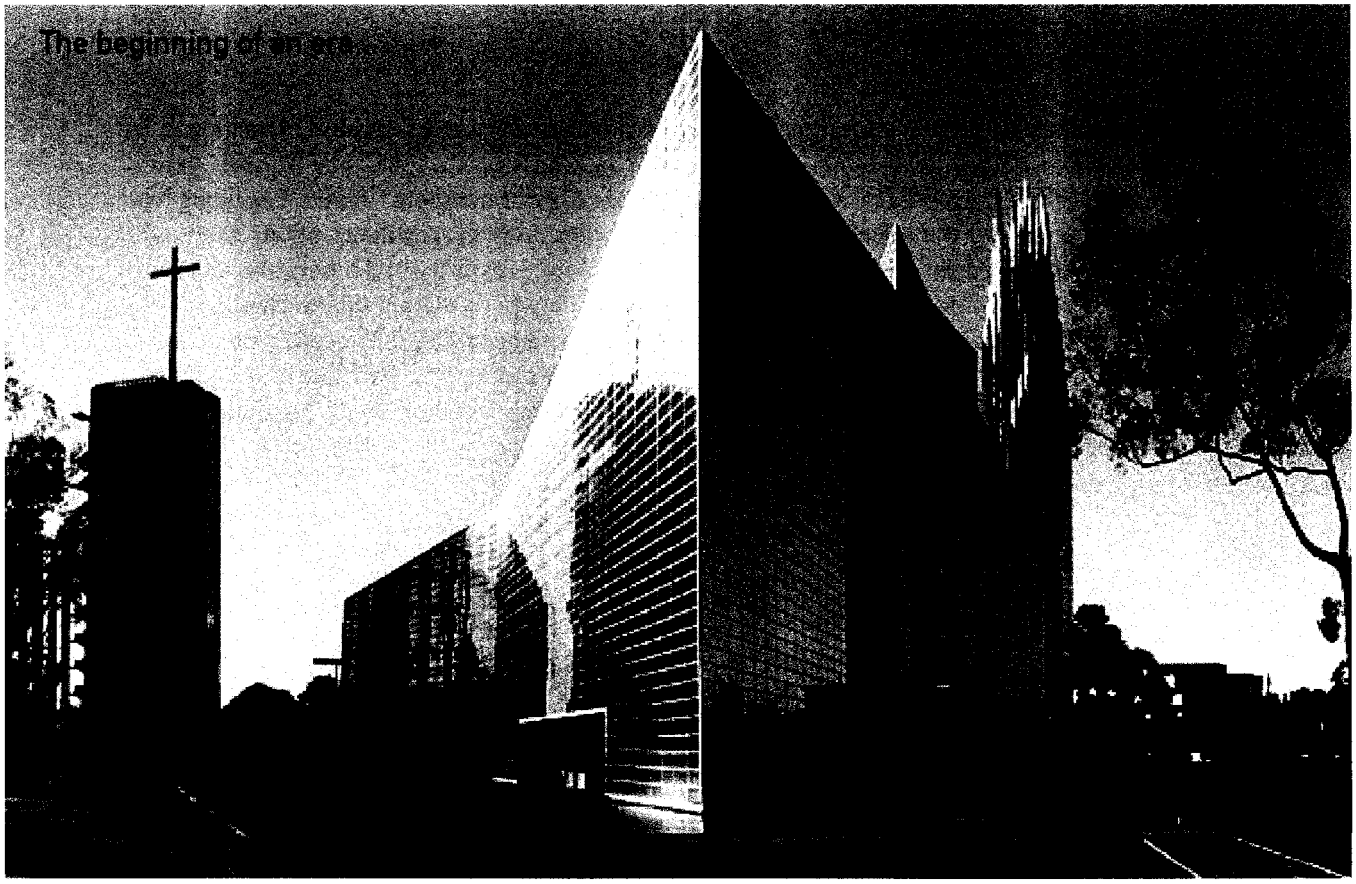
Crystal Cathedral

The first radical subversion of the typology for sacred space is found in the evolution of America's first megachurch [as we have come to understand the term today]. The notion of the drive-in church presents the notion of adapting a worship space to the convenience of popular culture in order to attract a new audience of church goer's.

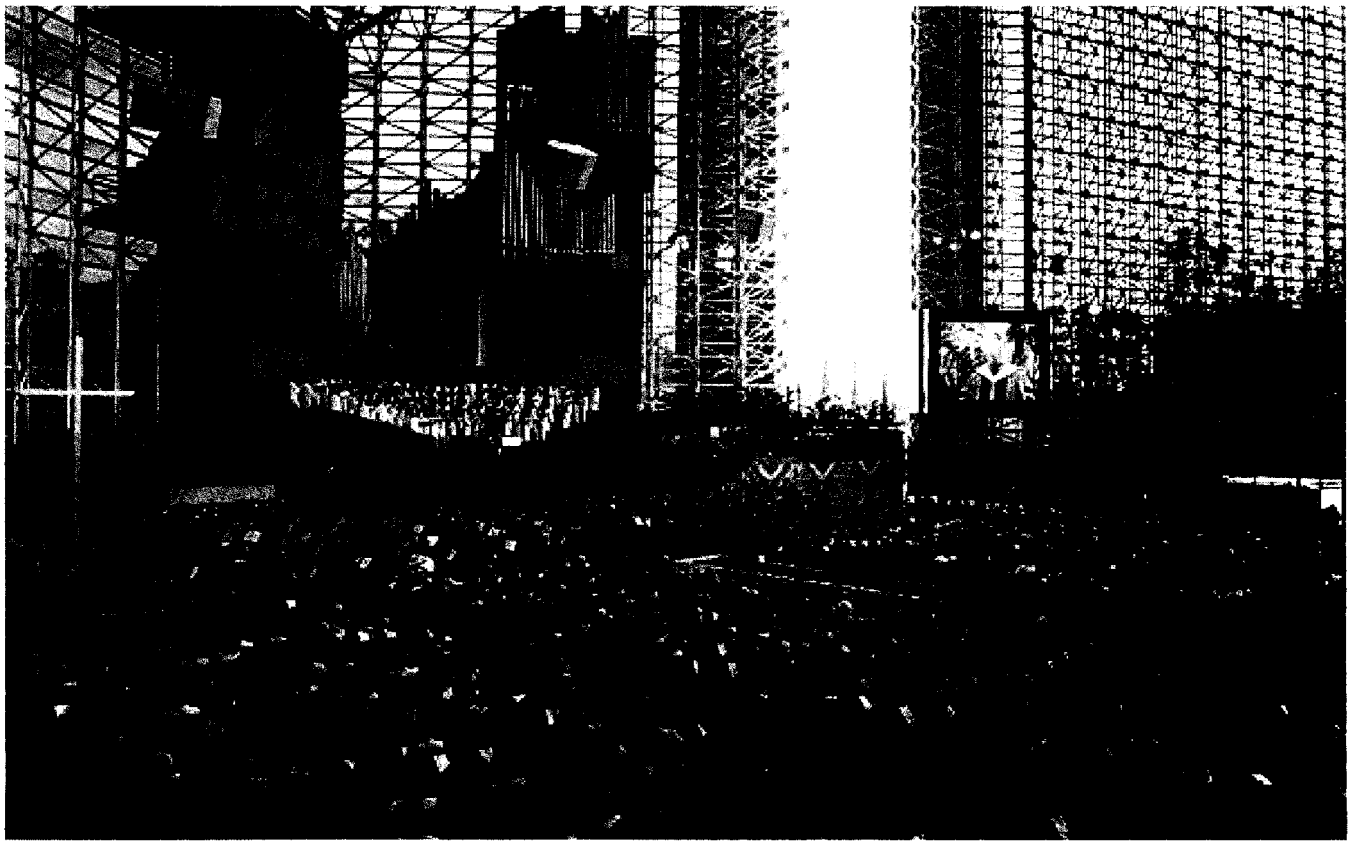
March 26, 1955: Robert Schuller utilizes the roof of a drive-in theatre for his pulpit.

1961: Shuller asks Richard Neutra to design the first walk in - drive in church for a congregation that now exceeded 4000.





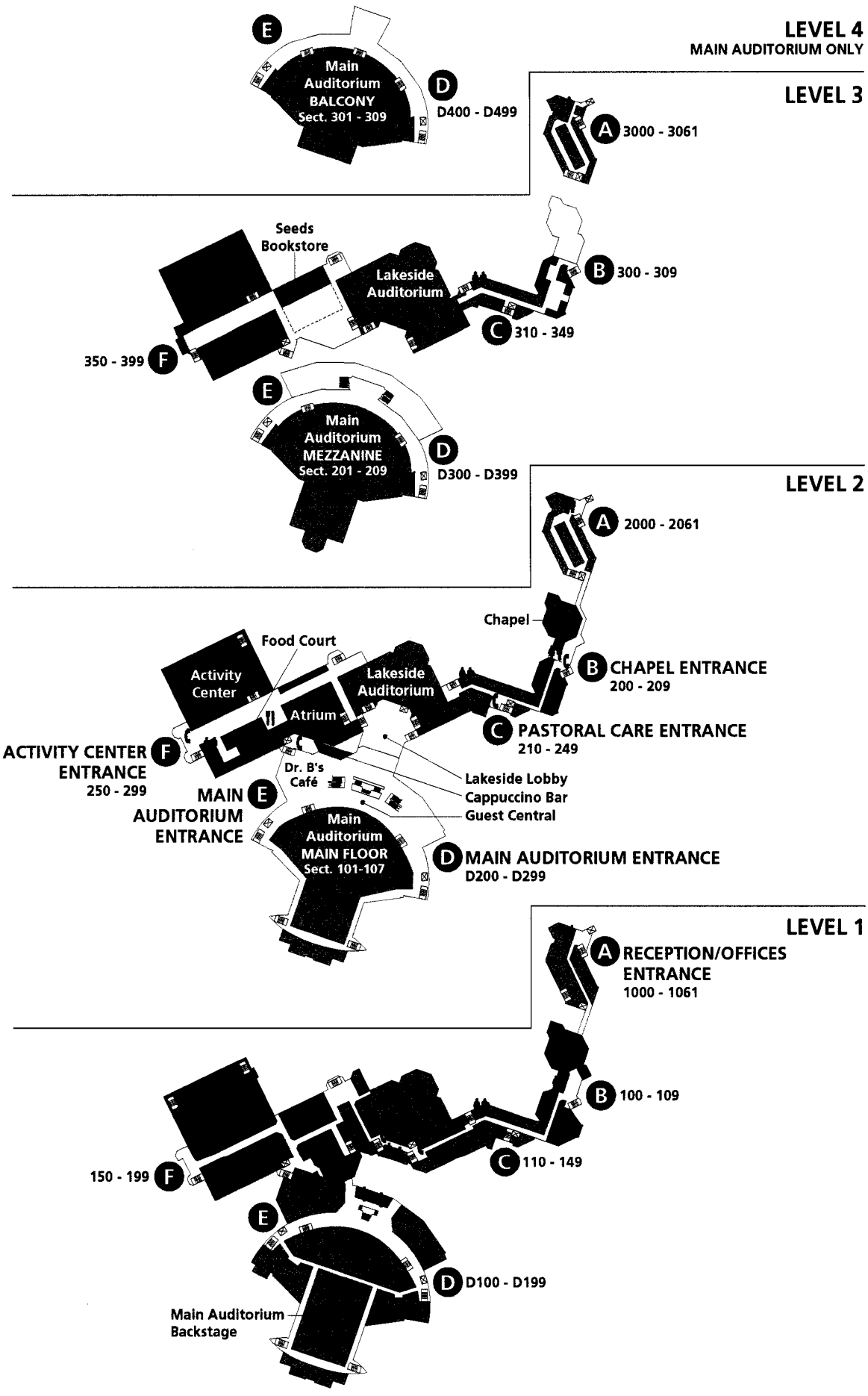
1980: Philip Johnson's Crystal Cathedral is finished. Greenery takes the place of sacred symbols, and the dominate view is of the parking lot where two 90 foot tall doors open to the outside.



Willow Creek Community Church

Willow Creek Community Church is intentionally vague with its typological association. The pastor, Bill Hybels set out to create a church that eliminated any fear or intimidation that the baby boomer generation had of their parent's church by removing all traditional religious symbols. Before beginning his church, Bill Hybels went around the exurb of South Barrington interviewing residents, asking them what they wanted out of a church. After discovering that an overwhelming majority had a negative church experience that led to religious disdain he sought to create a space where people did not feel out of their element. Located in South Barrington, an exurb of Chicago, the sprawling 155 acre campus has two sanctuaries, a gymnasium/activity center, bookstore, food court, and cappuccino bar. The church finds its relation somewhere between performing-arts center/community college/corporate headquarters. It becomes the first large church to fully embrace and promote contemporary suburban living.

Church as an extension of culture or culture as an extension of church... the promotion of the experience economy.

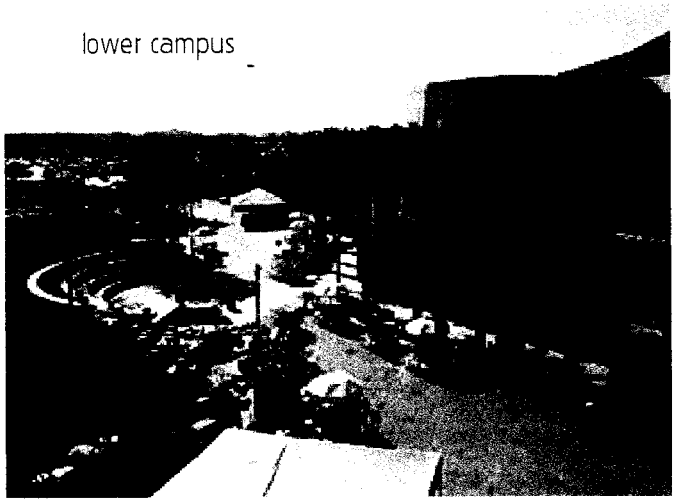

LEVEL 4
MAIN AUDITORIUM ONLY
LEVEL 3
E
Main Auditorium BALCONY Sect. 301 - 309
D
D400 - D499
A
3000 - 3061
Seeds Bookstore
Lakeside Auditorium
B
300 - 309
C
310 - 349
350 - 399
F
E
Main Auditorium MEZZANINE Sect. 201 - 209
D
D300 - D399
LEVEL 2
A
2000 - 2061
Chapel
Food Court
Activity Center
Lakeside Auditorium
Atrium
B
CHAPEL ENTRANCE
200 - 209
C
PASTORAL CARE ENTRANCE
210 - 249
ACTIVITY CENTER ENTRANCE
F
250 - 299
Dr. B's Café
Lakeside Lobby
Cappuccino Bar
Guest Central
MAIN AUDITORIUM ENTRANCE
E
Main Auditorium MAIN FLOOR Sect. 101-107
D
MAIN AUDITORIUM ENTRANCE
D200 - D299
LEVEL 1
A
RECEPTION/OFFICES ENTRANCE
1000 - 1061
B
100 - 109
C
110 - 149
150 - 199
F
E
D
D100 - D199
Main Auditorium Backstage

Saddleback Church

If Willow Creek capitalizes upon the experience it offers through a rejection of the traditional and a focus on the comfort of popular culture, then Saddleback church takes this experience to the next level through an overemphasis on individual desire. On weekends 20,000 members and attenders choose from services at six different times and 10 different venues around the campus — some with live speakers, some on closed-circuit TV — offering the ultimate in worship and musical preference ranging from "unplugged" to roof-raising gospel singing. The venues are linked to the 3,200 seat worship center where the main message is delivered and transmitted to the various venues. Four of these venues are in Sprung tents.

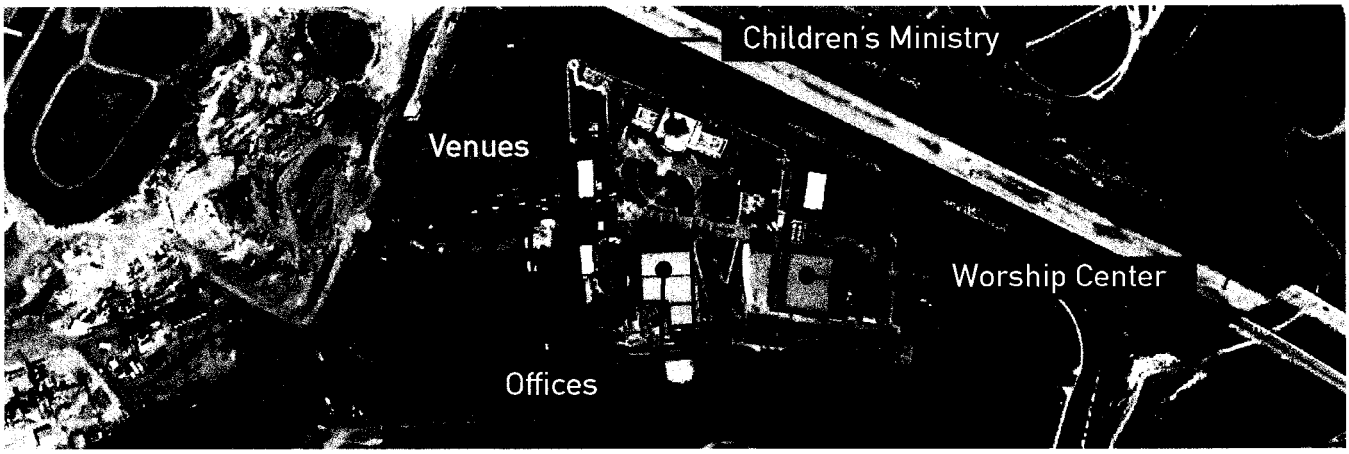
Saddleback has an annual operating budget of more than $21 million, and now sits on an a 120-acre campus, designed by planners for Disney's theme parks, in the composed Orange County community of Lake Forest, 65 miles south of Los Angeles. In booths outside, ministry leaders promote church workshops on marriage enhancement, parenting, budget planning and addiction recovery. At the "state-of-the-art" Children's Center, Sunday school meets Fantasyland with a biblical-themed playground. Teens hang out at the student zone's beach cafe. It's all managed by the two-story semblance of a corporate office, where 400 paid staff members and 5,000 volunteers handle the church's missions, ministries and programs.

lower campus



"Sprung is springing up all over. A unique new structure called a Sprung building is gaining popularity among innovative and growing churches as an alternative for creating temporary space quickly. ..they do virtually spring to life in a matter of days in all sorts of locations."

www.baptiststandard.com/.../popupchurch.html



Saddleback Venues:

Overdrive: "Rockers, this is your venue. Can you say 'Loud & Lights?' Worship in a Rock & Roll concert-like setting."

Praise: "Gospel music that moves the heart and often the feet! For a big choir worship experience, this is it!"

Terrace Cafe: "Enjoy a snack & drink while watching the live service on four big screens."

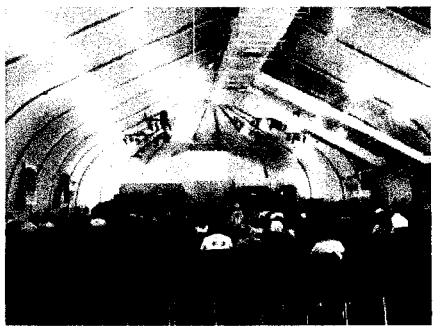
E1-Elevation: "Single adults who like current Christian radio hits & great light effects."

E1-Basic: "An introspective approach to praise & worship for young single adults."

Ohana: "Get away to the islands with hula & island-style music."

Passion: "An intimate atmosphere for encountering God. The service has an all-around younger feel."

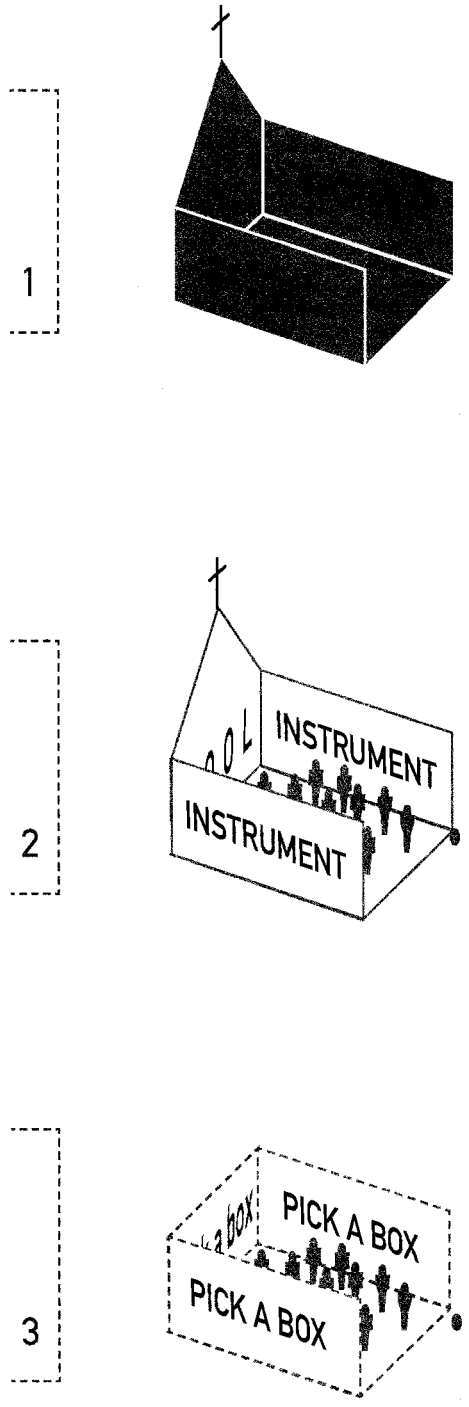
El Encuentro: "The music is in Spanish and then you choose either Spanish or English for the message."



1980's

Removal of sacred

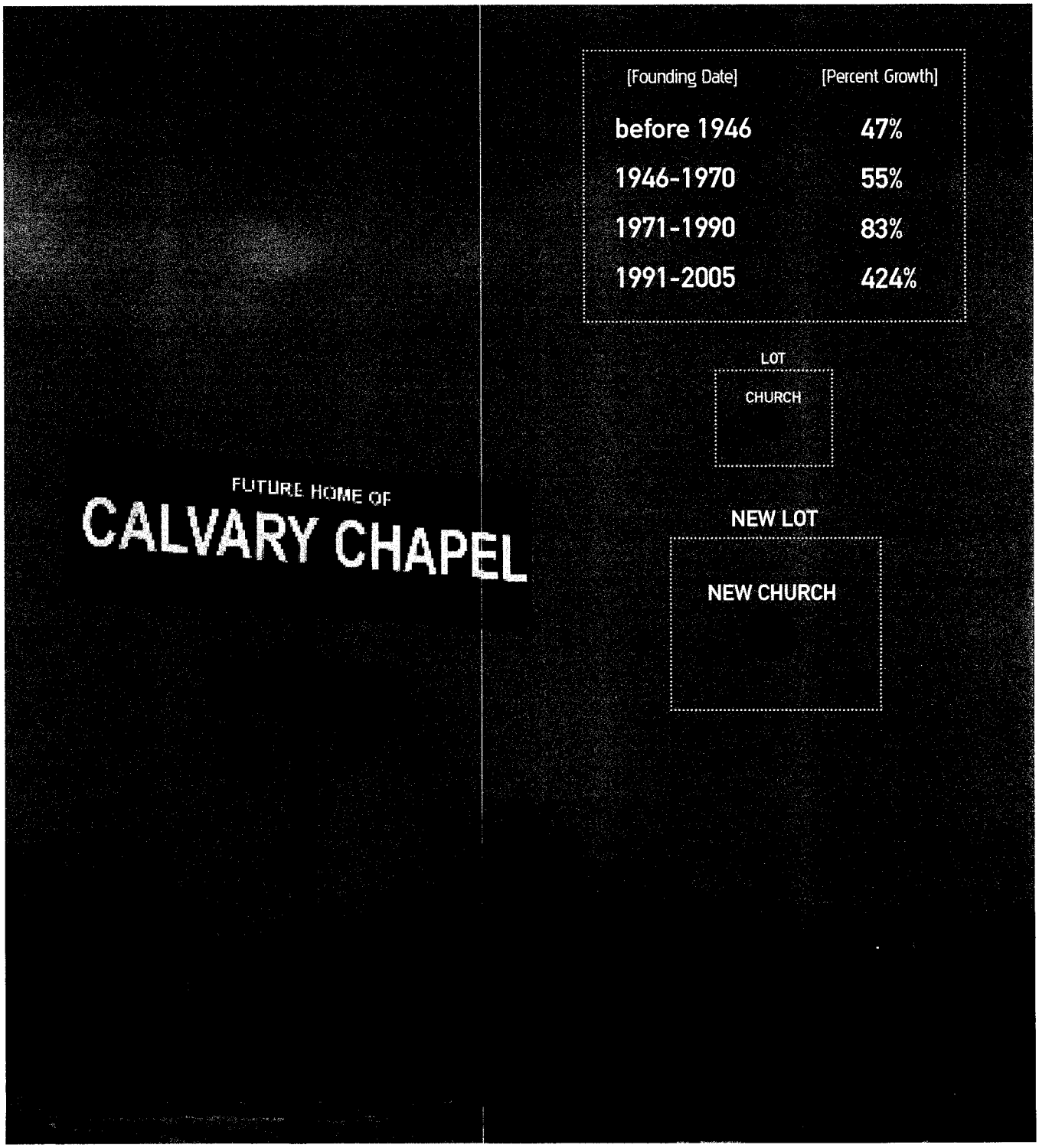
Before this period, Church and Architecture coexist in the notion of sacred space. At this point there is a seperation of architecture and sacred(1). Sacred is now transfered to the collective gathering and the activities conducted(2). The significance of this transformation can not be overlooked. It is what makes all big box church "architecture" possible(3). When the church is just an instrument or shed for gathering then its form, program, and urban relationship can be reworked.



Dramatically altered form...

(low-end)

Rapid growth in megachurches means that congregations quickly outgrow their buildings and have little money available for an upgrade.



Dramatically altered form and program...

(high-end)

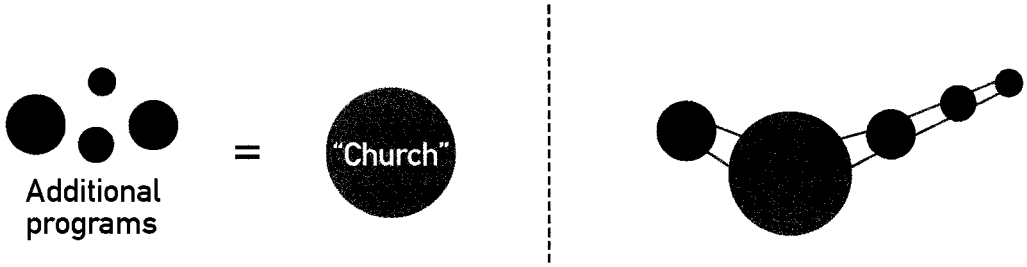
Fellowship of the Woodlands, Houston

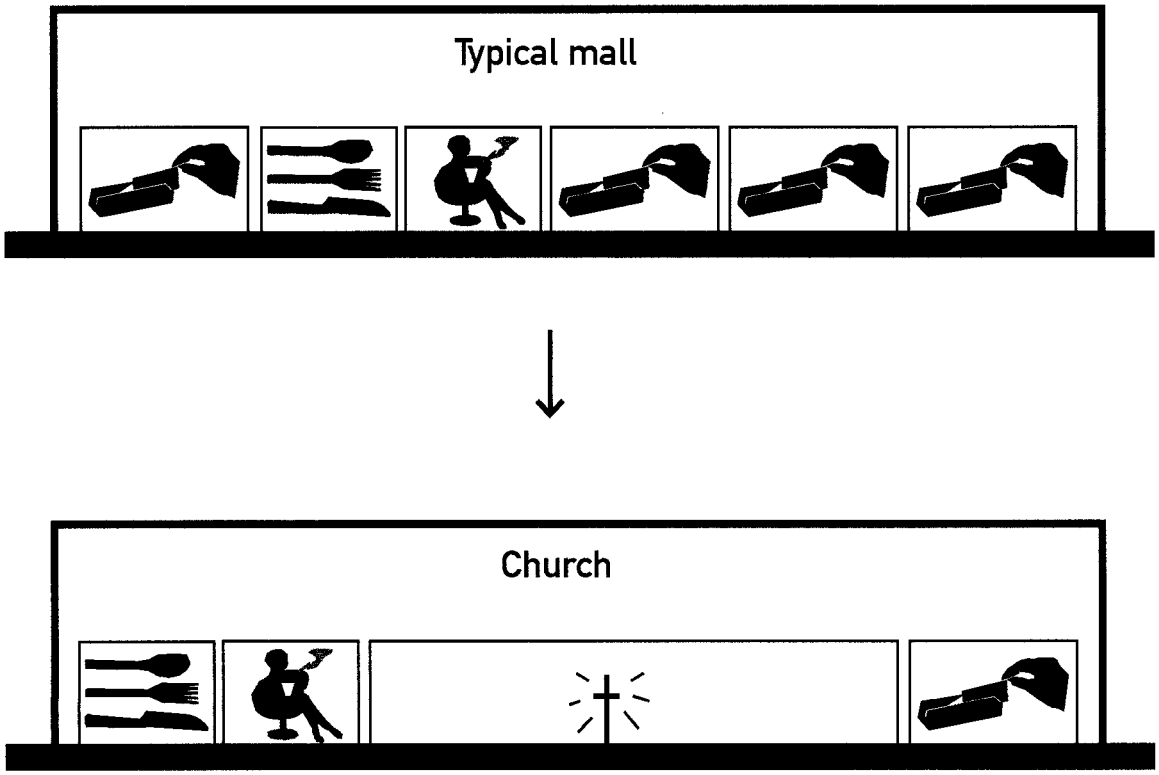
Willow Creek Church Chicago

Re programming

...a new desire to introduce popular culture, the experience economy, and secular programming.

To both plan and structure their burgeoning matrix of ministries, church leaderships looked to one of the most prevalent institutional realities in the neighborhood, the shopping mall. Consciously or unintentionally, the mall concept became the organizational style for ordering and presenting a diverse array of educational, support, political, fitness, and religious programs, all under one roof. These individual shops examined secular service organizations for their inspirations of what "sold" among consumers, but also to find out what the needs were that they had to address.





MEGAFAITH URBANISM

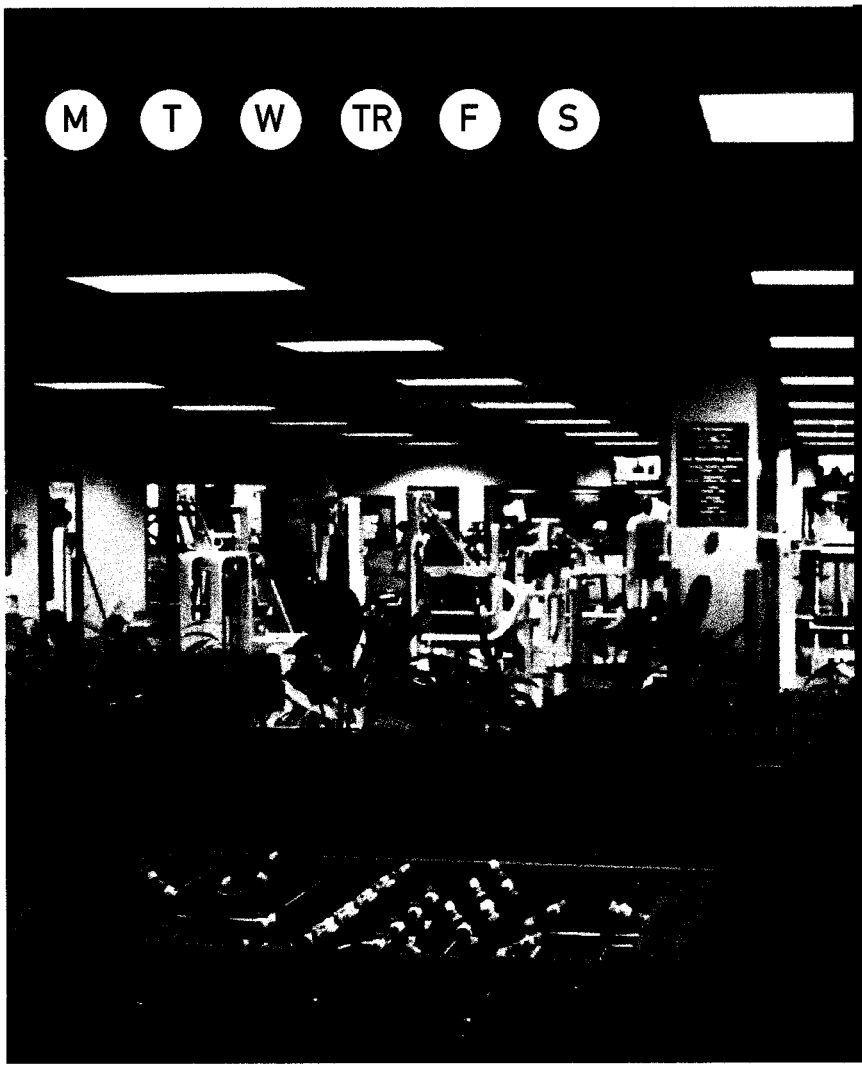
The megachurch operates on two separate time scales.

Place is defined not by plugging in to an existing community but through the placement of a building in no man's land which then creates a draw through offered services.

Church imitating the city.

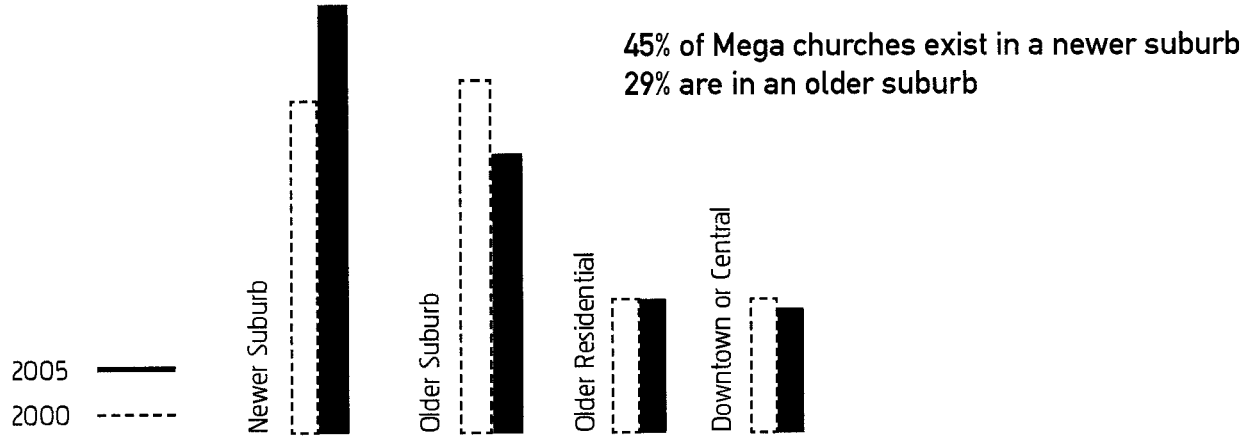
Urbanism as SERVICES:

[Example of services offered by various megachurches]



Automotive Service
Accounting
Addiction Support
Bank
Bookstore
Child Care
Climbing Wall
Coffee Shop
Computer Support
Counseling
Gymnasium
Playground
Recovery
Restaurant
Medical Equipment Lending
Meeting Rooms
Pharmacy
Real Estate
Theatre
Mortgage Broker
Martial Arts
School
Wal-Mart (Austin, TX)

Influencing/Influenced Urbanism

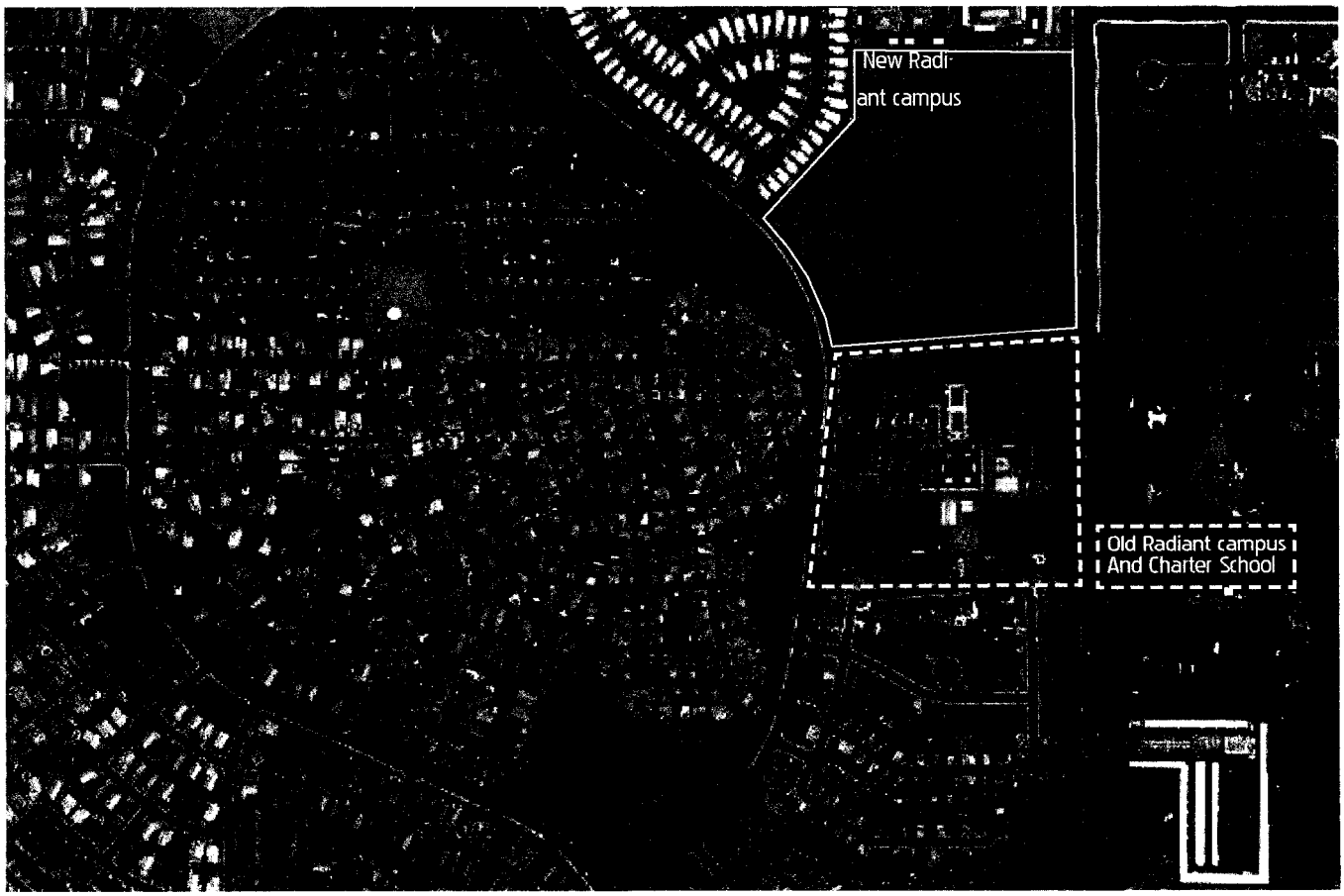


"This is not the megachurch of the 1980's, where baby boomers turned up once a week to passively take in a 45-minute service ...the new breed of megachurches has more in common with the frontier churches of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which served as gathering places for pioneers who had gone West in search of opportunity. In sprawling, decentralized exurbs like Surprise, where housing developments rarely include porches, parks, stoops or any of the other features that have historically brought neighbors together, megachurches provide a locus for community. In many places, they operate almost like surrogate governments, offering residents day care, athletic facilities, counseling, even schools." [Mahler]

Surprise, Arizona: a Radiant exurb

Finding a niche and serving the disconnected exurb..

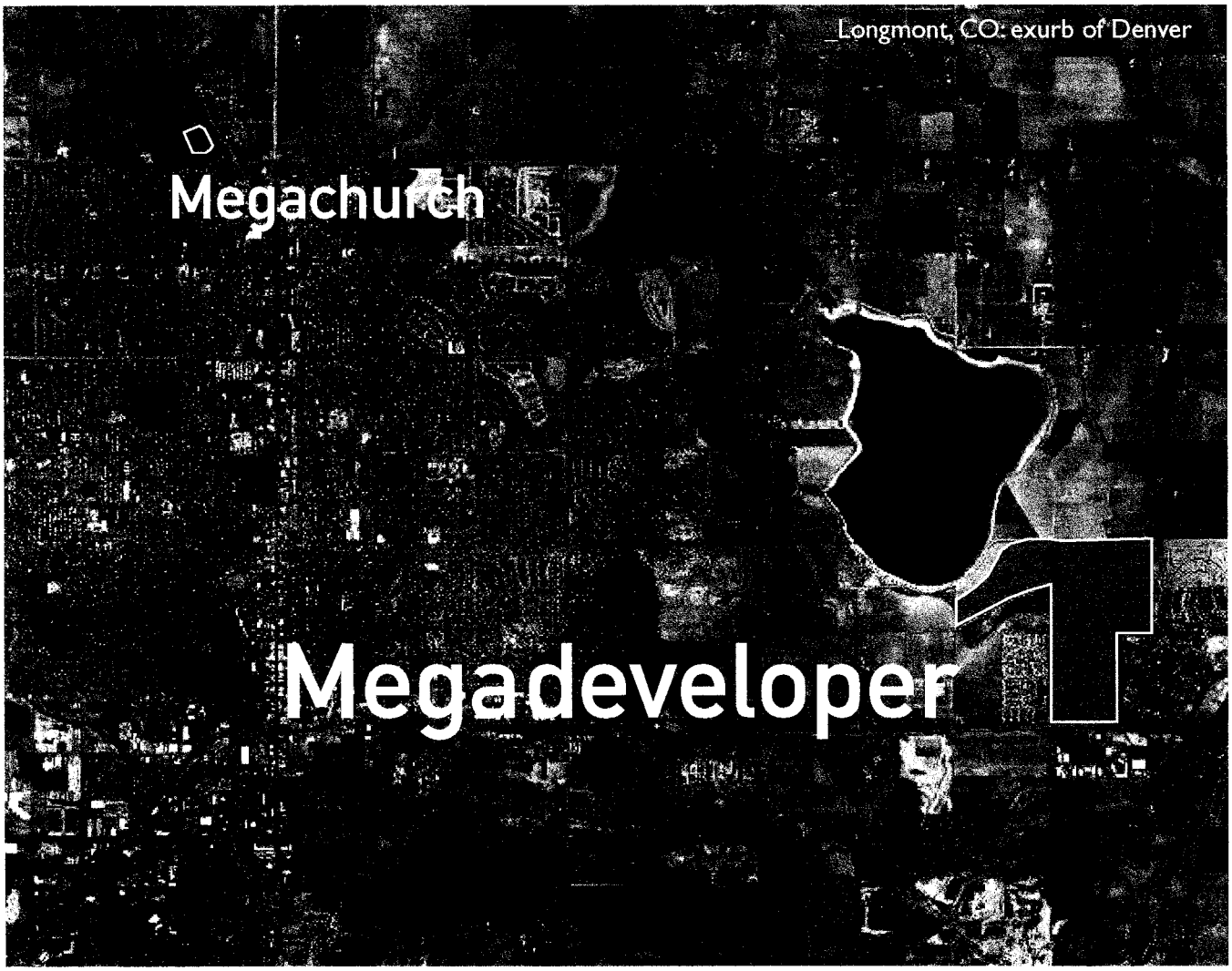
The first problem Lee McFarland, the lead pastor of Radiant, set out to solve was that of the public schools. The newly arriving parents told him they were terrible. So in the summer of 1998, less than a year after he'd started offering Sunday services, McFarland rented a trailer, strung up a banner and began signing up children for an as-yet-unbuilt charter school, Paradise Education Center; C.E.O., Lee McFarland. "We had nothing to show them." "Literally there was just land here." It was a measure of just how desperate parents were for an alternative to the public schools that the parents of 225 children turned up, vaccination records in hand, and registered them. Today the school, a ring of single-story white stucco buildings directly across the street from Radiant's massive worship center, is thriving. It has more than 1,000 children, and a waiting list close to 200.



Lifebridge ...church?

Project Lifebridge is a 313 acre subdivision with Lifebridge church playing the role of developer.

In addition: LifeBridge and a group of Denver-based investors have proposed turning their current Longmont church campus, on Colo. Highway 66 west of Main Street, and adjacent fields into a 360-acre neighborhood, complete with a convention center, movie theater and shopping district to partially fund their project east of the city.



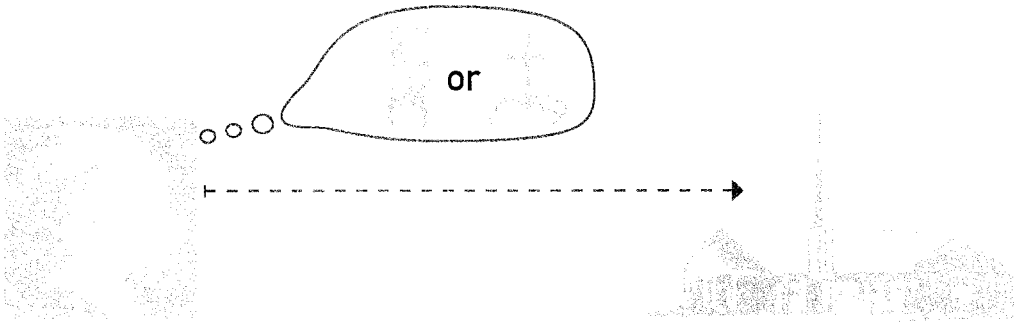
Church leaders, he added, will make sure outside clubs and agencies - regardless of their beliefs - keep facilities like the planned 6,000-person worship auditorium occupied not just on Sundays but all week long. "A village will be created; we just happen to be in the middle of that village," Rusaw said. "We're not looking for (homeowners and store owners) who have similar values that we have."

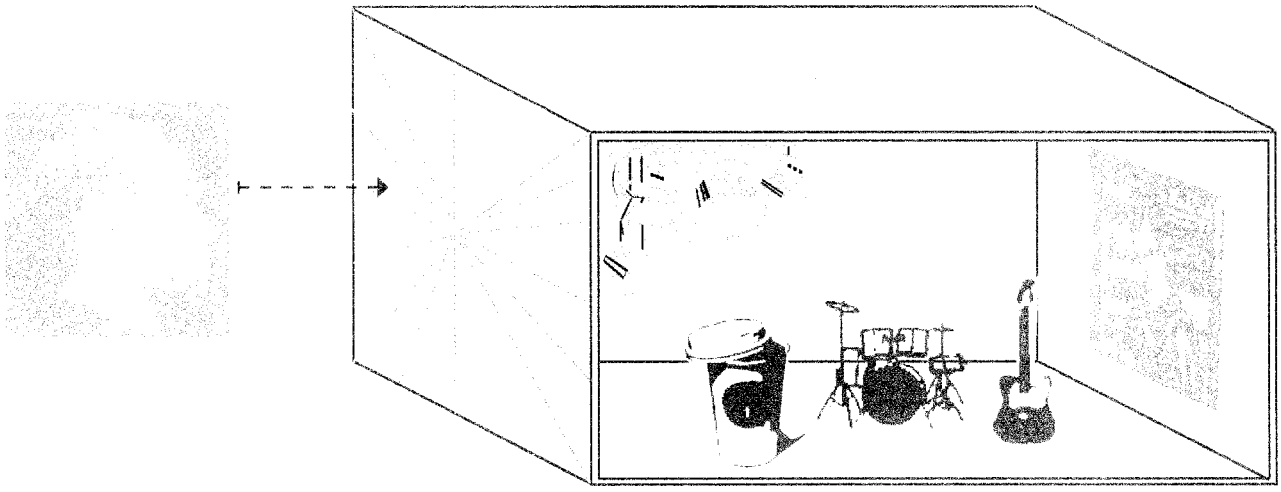
According to Rusaw, the philosophy behind LifeBridge's community service ministry has been to contribute to existing institutions instead of starting their own ministries, to partner rather than create. "If our ministry only gets focused to this campus, we've blown it," Rusaw said. "We're not looking to create a holy-huddle place or Christian enclave," he added later. They expect funding for the project's initial phases to come from three sources: at least $12 million in contributions from LifeBridge families; partnerships with shared facilities on the future campus, such as possible classrooms and offices with Aims Community College, Regis or Colorado Christian Universities; and profits from property sales where houses will be built.

Rick Rusaw, LifeBridge's senior minister, summarized his hope for the project on Colo. Highway 119, just southeast of Union Reservoir, with a question: "How can the church be everywhere and nowhere on this campus?" "This is the way we work, live play and worship — developed into a village concept," Rusaw said. This concept includes a pedestrian-friendly design plan with a special focus on intergenerational living. It features senior housing and assisted- living facilities, educational facilities, parks, theaters, halls, three worship auditoriums, a community center and shops. "I've always been skeptical of churches," Rusaw said, but LifeBridge isn't a traditional "big C" church.

The establishment of the branded church:

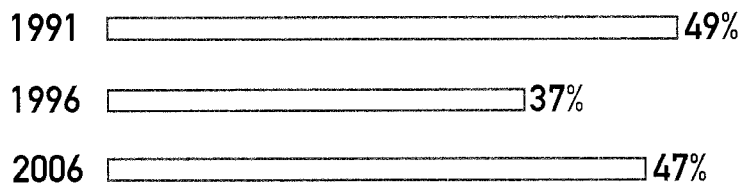
megachurch as packaging machine





Baby boomers are turned off by fire and brimstone preaching and other negative church experiences. As a result many avoid all associations of the traditional church.

Percentage of adults (18+) who attend church in a typical week



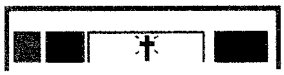
The Barna Group: released April 3, 2006

An analysis is made of the potential attenders as consumers that need to be appeased. The solution is to create a new experience. The steps that the church took to create this experience, altering the perception of the person entering the building marks a distinct change in its operation.

Through history the church adapted to cultural changes, but now it has made a purposeful evaluation of experinces offered by pop culture that can be cross-bread into the service and ambience of the building. This allows us a new criteria for evaluation.

1 **Crowd response**
ex. Lakewood

2 **Multiple activities in a non-descript box**



3 **High energy spectacle**

7 **Prosperity gospel**

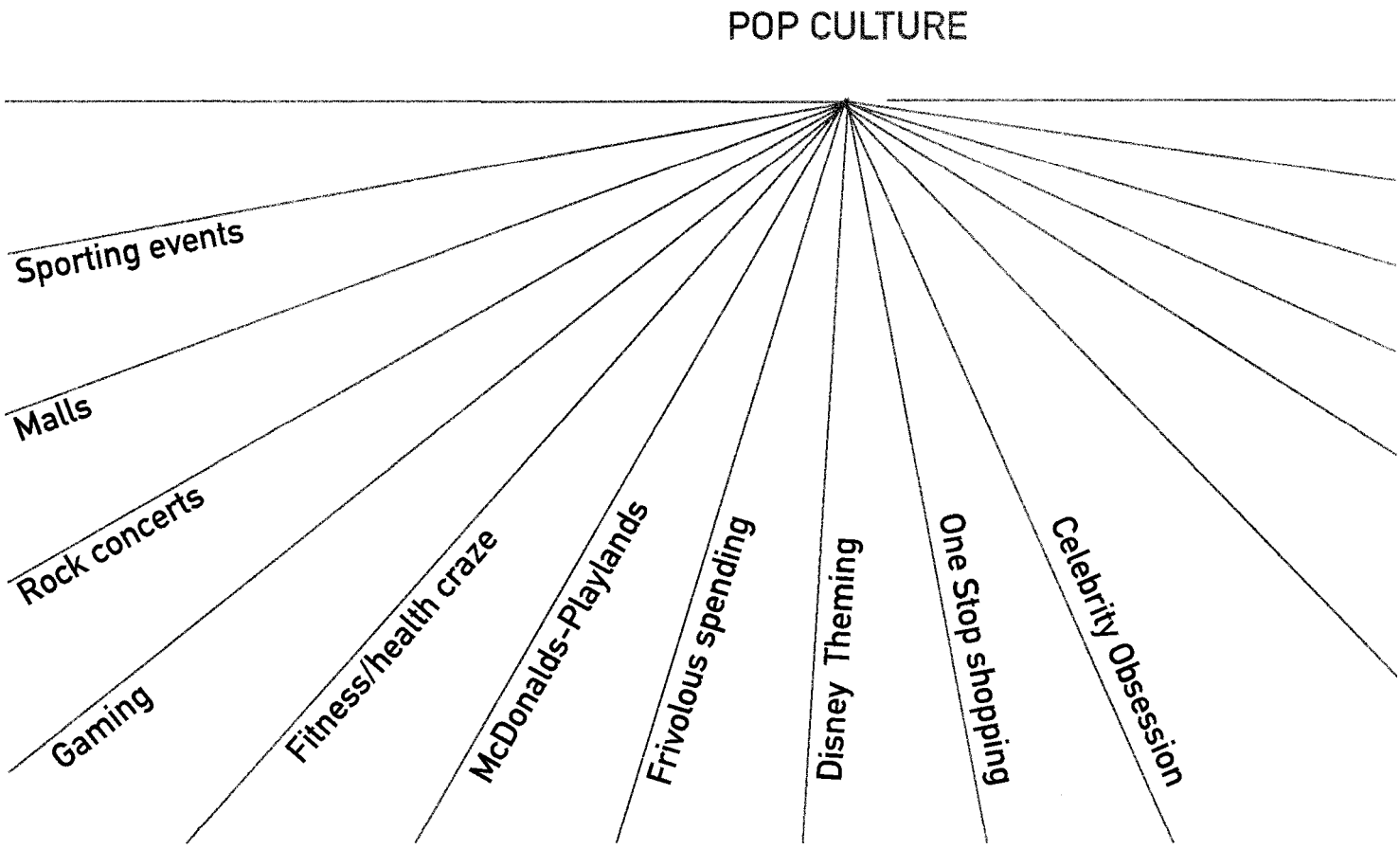
$= blessing
[prayer of Jabez]

8 **Themed buildings**

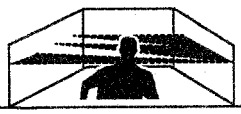
The Ride
THE EDGE
Smalltown
[Fellowship of the Woodlands]

9 **Venues**

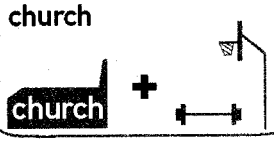
mom & dad → hymns
child 1 → pop
child 2 → [redacted]



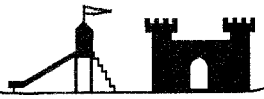
4 **interactive immersion**



5 **Get healthy and go to church**



6 **Children's fantasy land**



10 **Famous Preachers**

11 **Excellence in production, highly scripted w/ exciting transitions.**

3 2 1 ...cue

12 **"Third place" creation**

1.home.... ....2.work

3. marketing for a social "extra" space

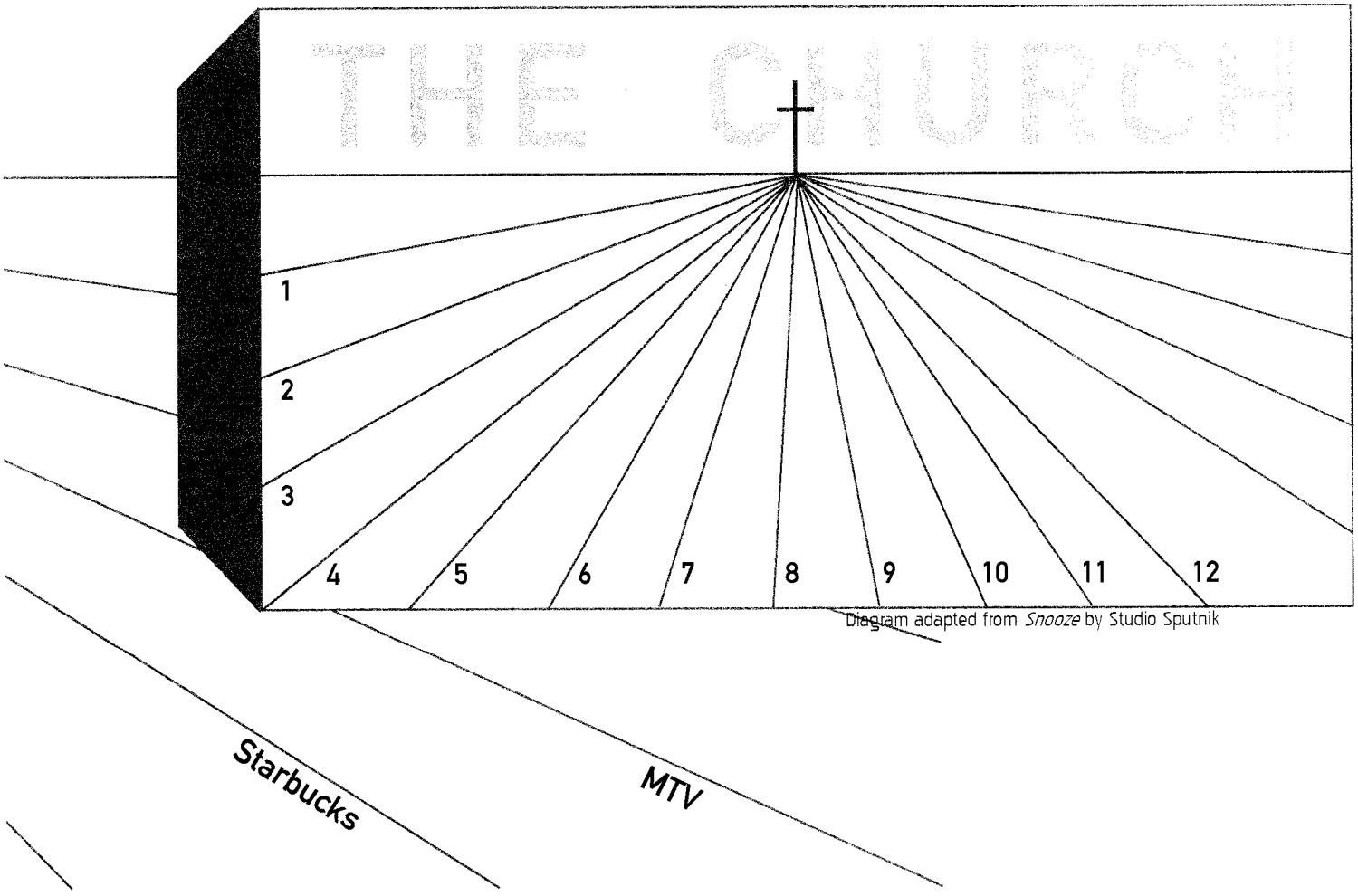
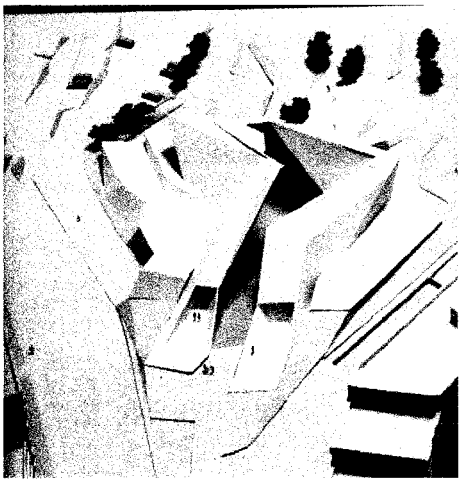


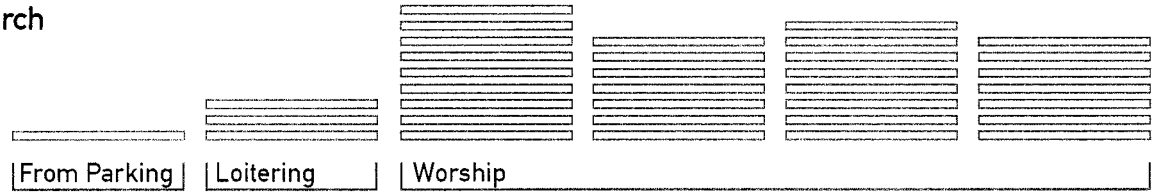
Diagram adapted from *Snooze* by Studio Sputnik



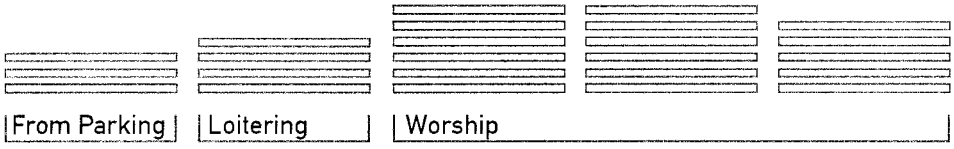
Peter Eisenman, in his "Church for the year 2000" (left image) proposal critiques the act of going to church. In an age where technology permits services to be televised or streamed via internet why is it that people do not stay home for their weekly church service? Eisenman suggested that the act of going to church, a pilgrimage, had become just as significant as the service itself. I believe that the pilgrimage is part of a larger category which sustains packed buildings on Sundays, the creation of an experience. That experience ranges from the interaction, support, and encouragement of like-minded individuals to the sensorial high energy activity that occurs during a worship service. The act of going to church has been an experience for some time but recently that experience has been amped via technology to proportions that the church has never seen.

1 Full Service

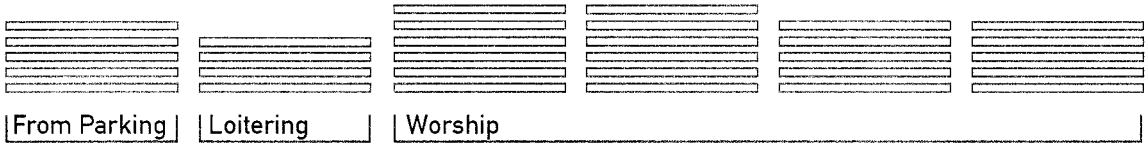
Lakewood Church

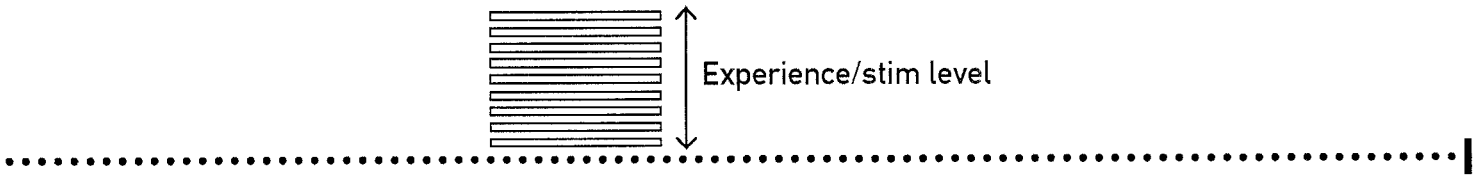


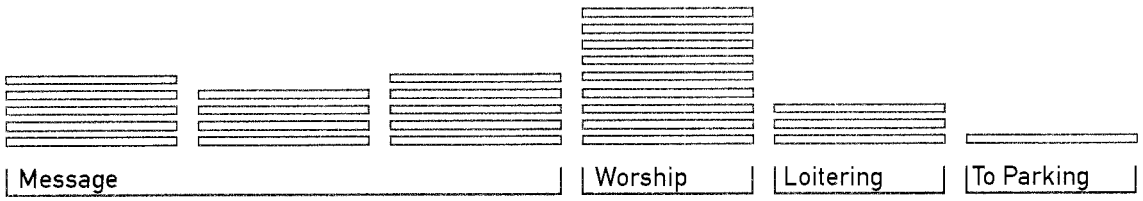
Second Baptist

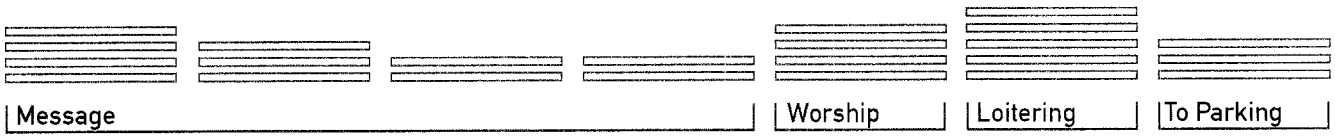


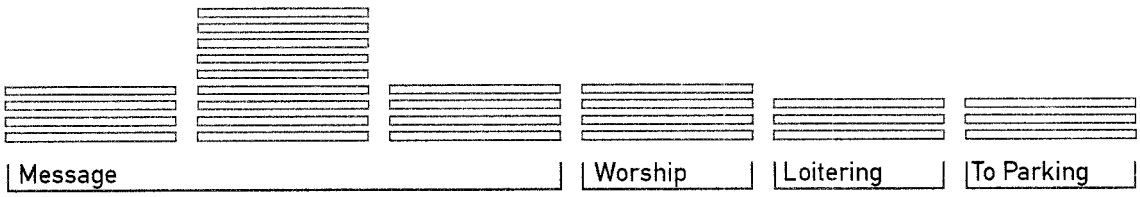
Fellowship of the Woodlands



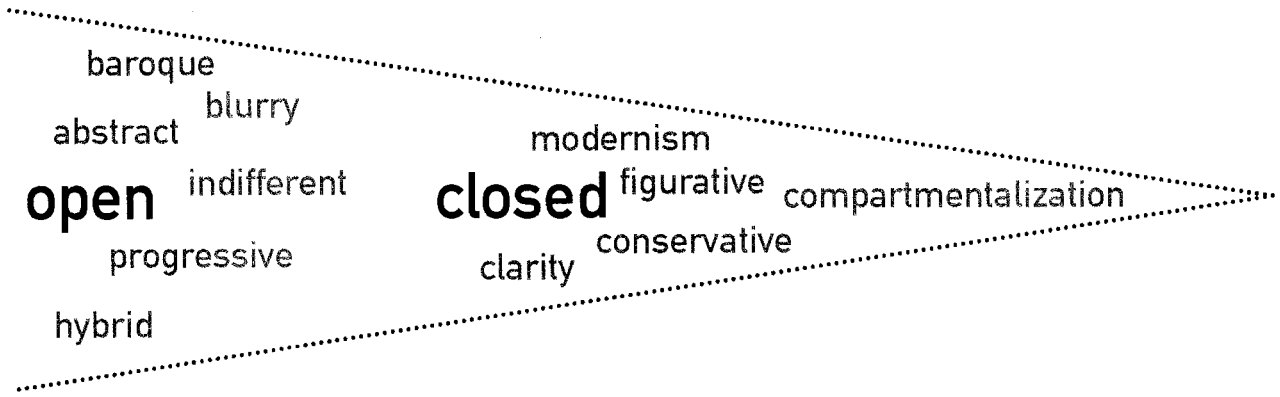

Experience/stim level


Message
Worship
Loitering
To Parking


Message
Worship
Loitering
To Parking

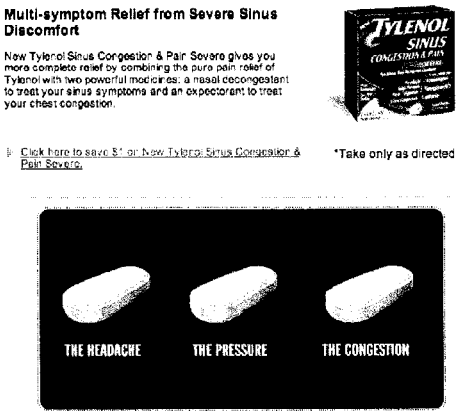

Message
Worship
Loitering
To Parking

Establishing the "seeker sensitive" mega church as a machine for packaging experinces allows us a tool used for the evaluation of a brand. In an economy that thrives on the creation and consumption of an experience two categories can be assigned for the classification and/or triggering of the experience, open specific and closed specific. Closed specific experiences are pre-determined and manufactured to evoke a specific response, the inventor prescribes the output. Open specific experiences rely on the creation of an ambiance or general atmosphere in which any experience is possible, the inventor provides the envelope or brand without the contents. Closed specificity appeases, open specificity is indifferent. (*Snooze*, Studio Sputnik)



Diesel

Tylenol

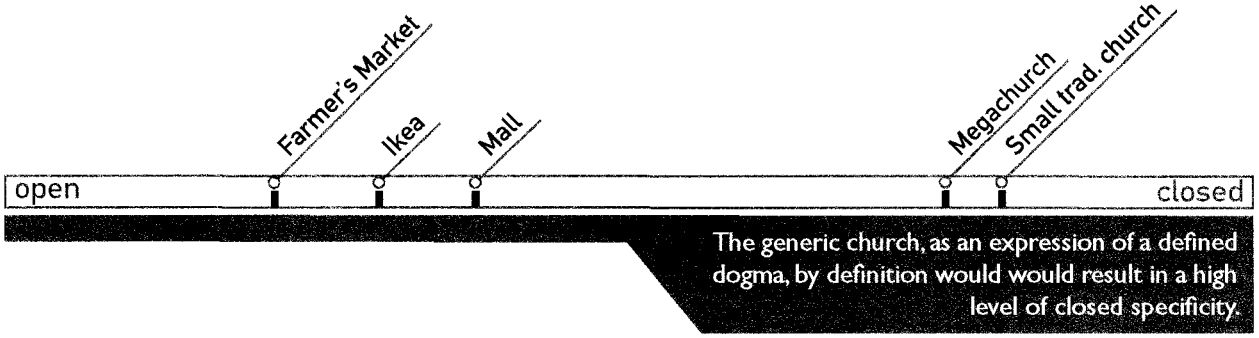


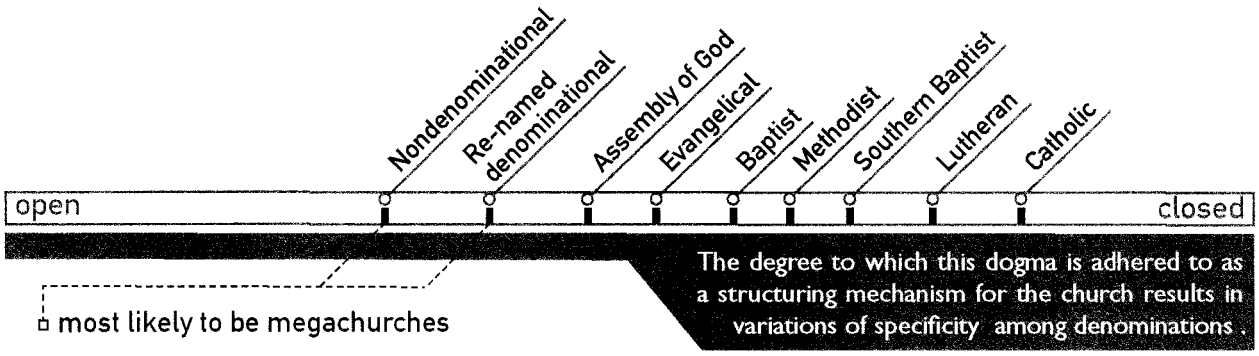
The experience generated by the "seeker sensitive" church is closed specific.

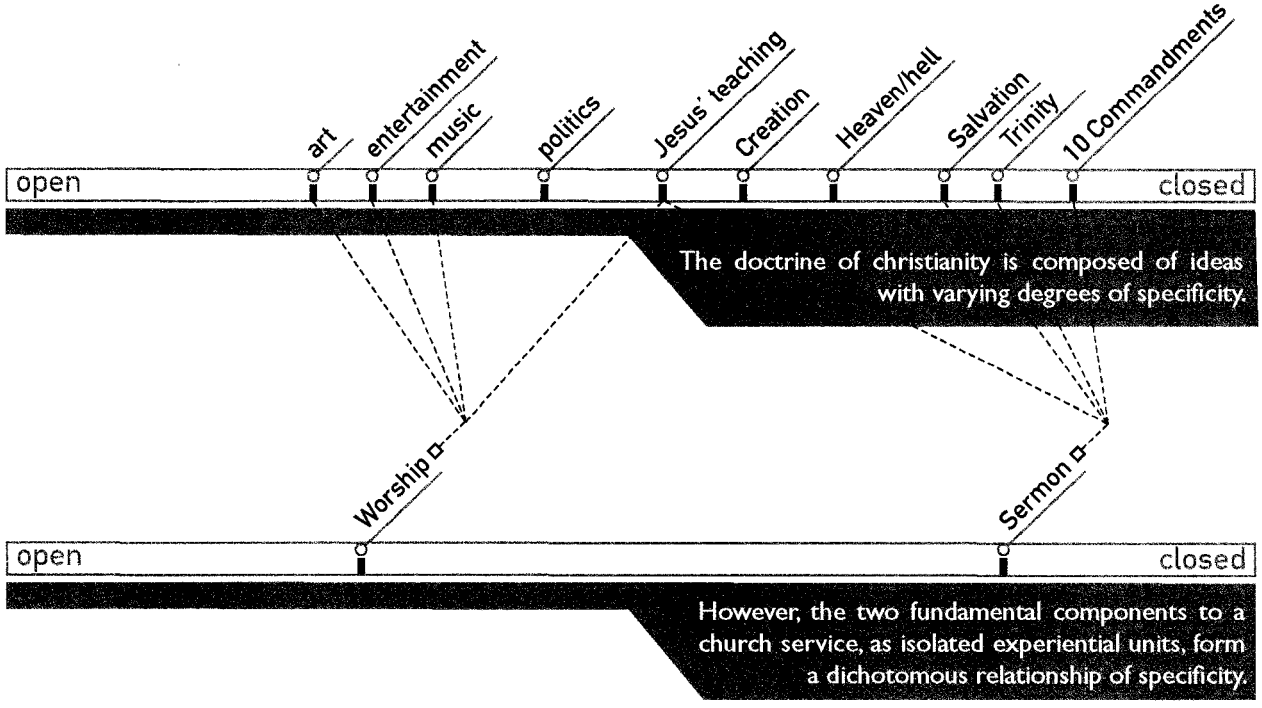
"Open specificity is the collective term for concepts expressed without impeding subjective interpretive freedom. Open-specific concepts are open and provide space; their specificity is liberating."

"Closed specificity is specific with a predetermined intent. In closed specificity, everything hinges on the intent. The specificity of closed specific concepts therefore has a suffocating effect; there is no room for any interpretations of this form of specificity that have not been pre-defined."

[Studio Sputnik]


Farmer's Market
Ikea
Mall
Megachurch
Small trad. church
open
closed
The generic church, as an expression of a defined dogma, by definition would would result in a high level of closed specificity.


Nondenominational
Re-named denominational
Assembly of God
Evangelical
Baptist
Methodist
Southern Baptist
Lutheran
Catholic
open
closed
The degree to which this dogma is adhered to as a structuring mechanism for the church results in variations of specificity among denominations.
most likely to be megachurches


art
entertainment
music
politics
Jesus' teaching
Creation
Heaven/hell
Salvation
Trinity
10 Commandments
open
closed
The doctrine of christianity is composed of ideas with varying degrees of specificity.
Worship
Sermon
open
closed
However, the two fundamental components to a church service, as isolated experiential units, form a dichotomous relationship of specificity.

The basic fundamentals of Christianity are strictly adhered to in nearly all Christian churches with variations in doctrine. However, ambiguous biblical information regarding style based activities such as worship leaves mega churches open to capitalize upon these and tailor them to consumer demand, branding their identity.

Sermon

1 man/woman speaking: gospel, fire and brimstone, prosperity gospel, evangelism, morality, hermeneutics, visual aids, video,

Worship

Types:
music, drama, skit, atmoshpere, performance, equipment, intensity

singing, reading, writing, chanting, standing, sitting, jumping, moshing, waving hands, clapping, swaying, interactive, passive, video, choir, hymnal, projection, loud, soft, organ, piano, a cappella, electric, dancing, painting, hip hop, rock, alternative, indie, acoustic, heavy metal, contemporary, strobe, candles, stage set, drums, bangos...

Typology distortion

church ?

Rise in non-denominational
Now 34% of all megachurches
next largest is southern Baptist with 16%

Name Changing to avoid association with actual denomination.

Kingdom Builders

Creating "third-place environments" [ie. cofee shop]

Creation of community centers, gyms, workout facilities

church +

Every religion relies to varying extents upon a given dogma. The degree to which this doctrine is allowed to permeate the church forms a reciprocal relationship to the level of open/closed specificity allowed within the church. For this reason, it is difficult to imagine open specificity as a contdition existing within a religious institution.

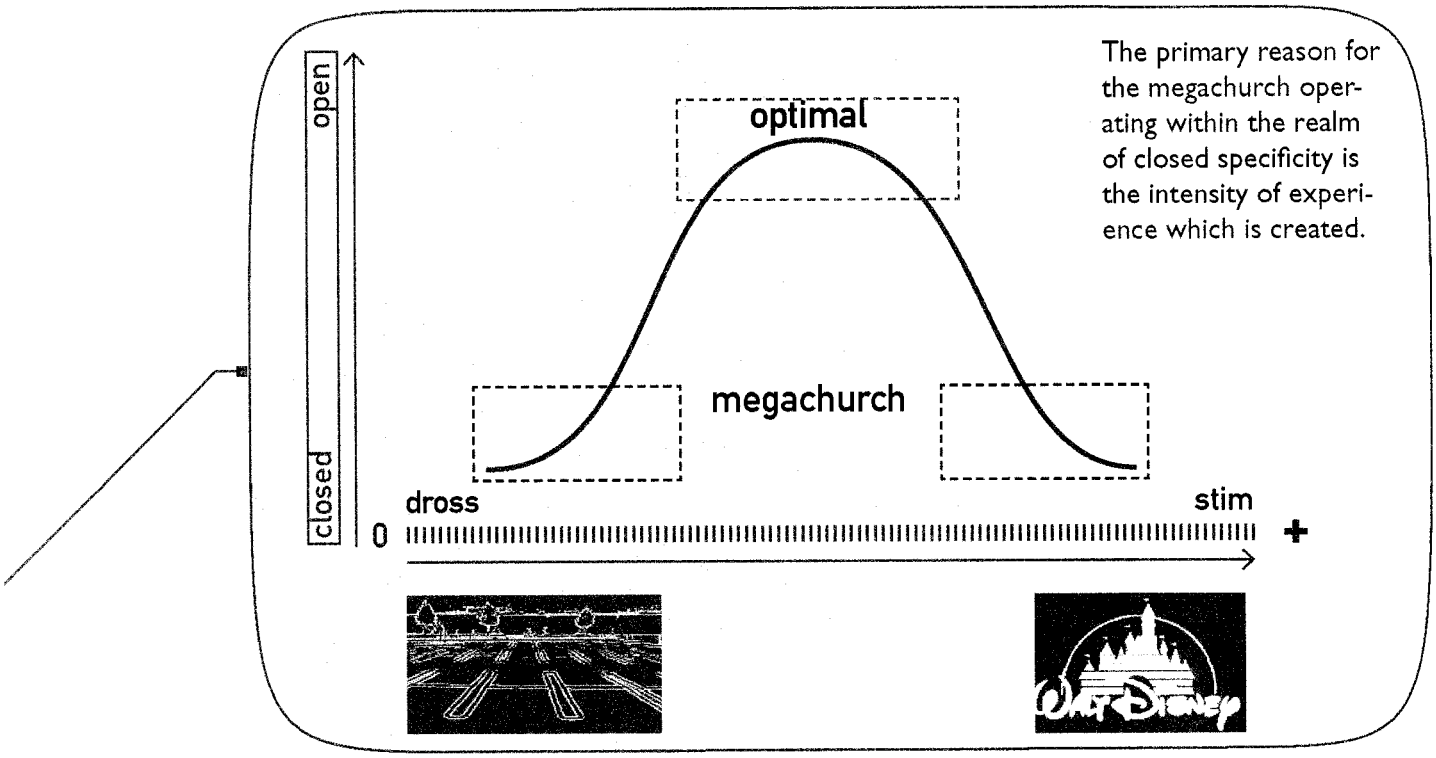
Yet, Megachurches are attempting to project open specific experiences.

These intentions will fail because:

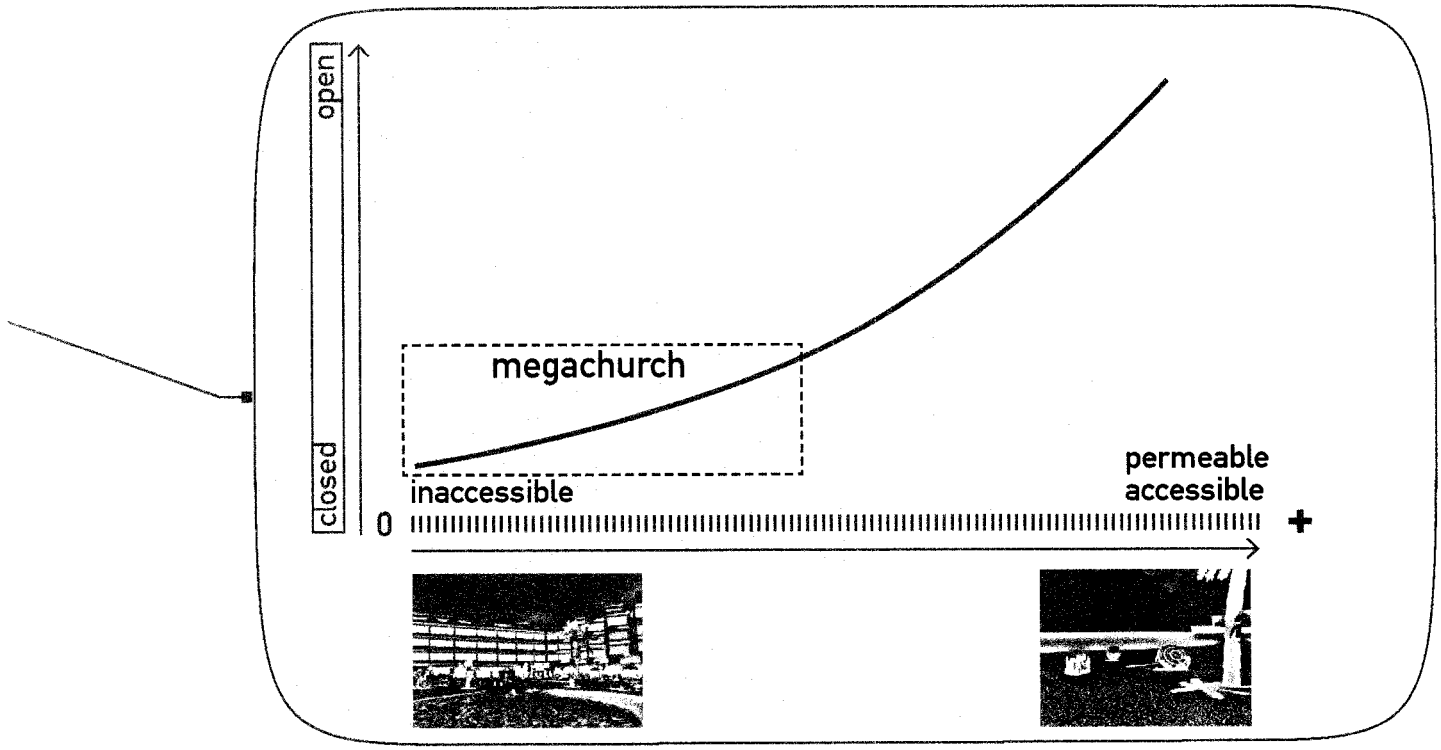
Megachurches operate within a binary system where stimulation is either nonexistent or forced immersion with maximum stim.

Megachurches disconnect relationships to urban infrastructure and predominantly create suburban islands. Community based activities are confined by "members only" priviledges.

Despite attempts to open up to the community, the agenda of the megachurch is often inward seeking. Community outreach is also marketing to increase church numbers and not necessarily just for the sake of helping the community



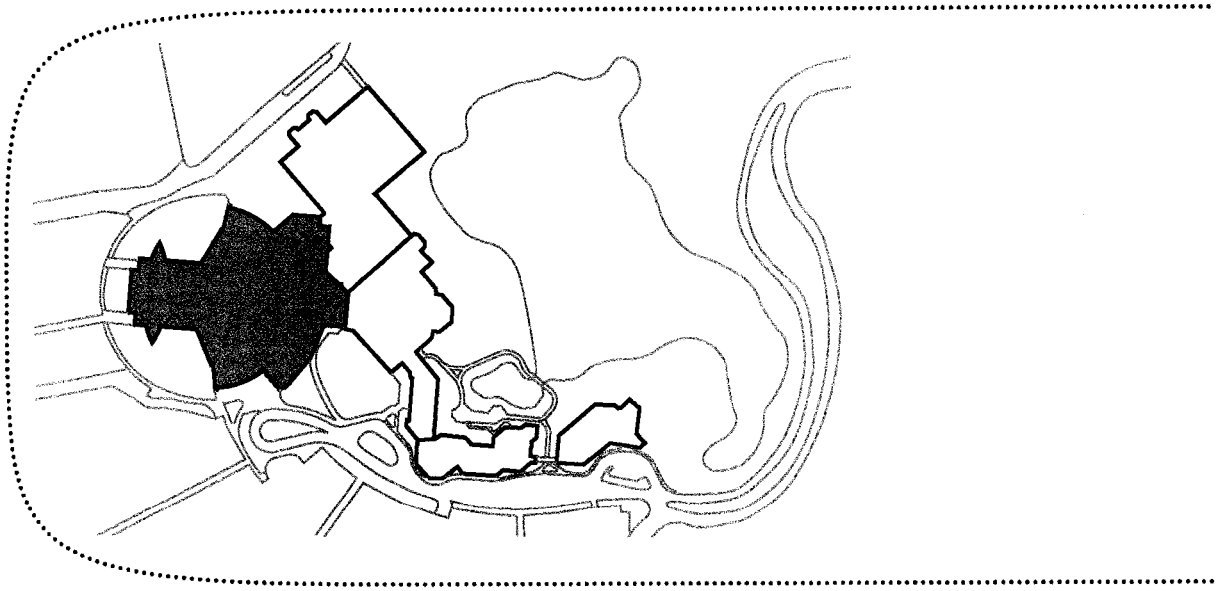
The primary reason for the megachurch operating within the realm of closed specificity is the intensity of experience which is created.



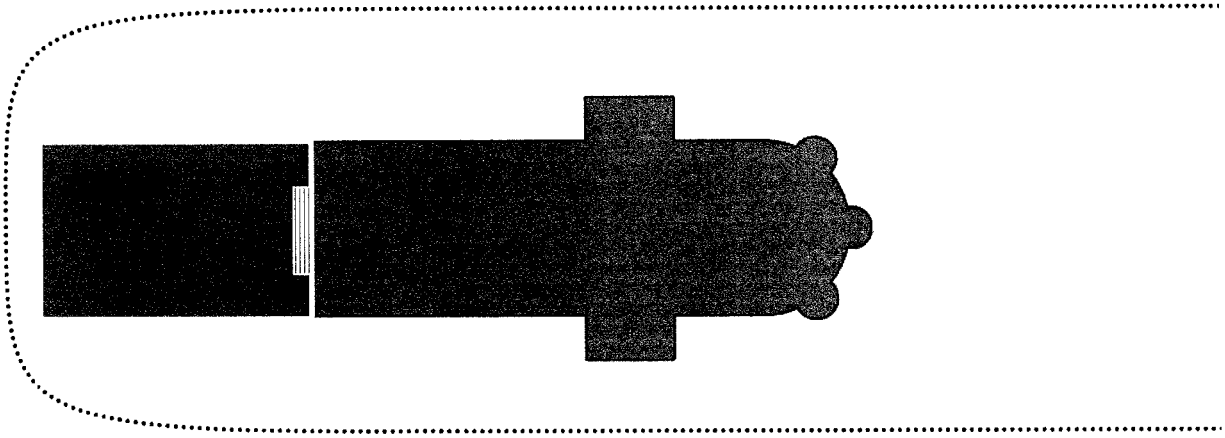
The church's attempted push towards open specificity provides a window of opportunity.

Urban [daily] scale:

The ability to diverge from closed systems...

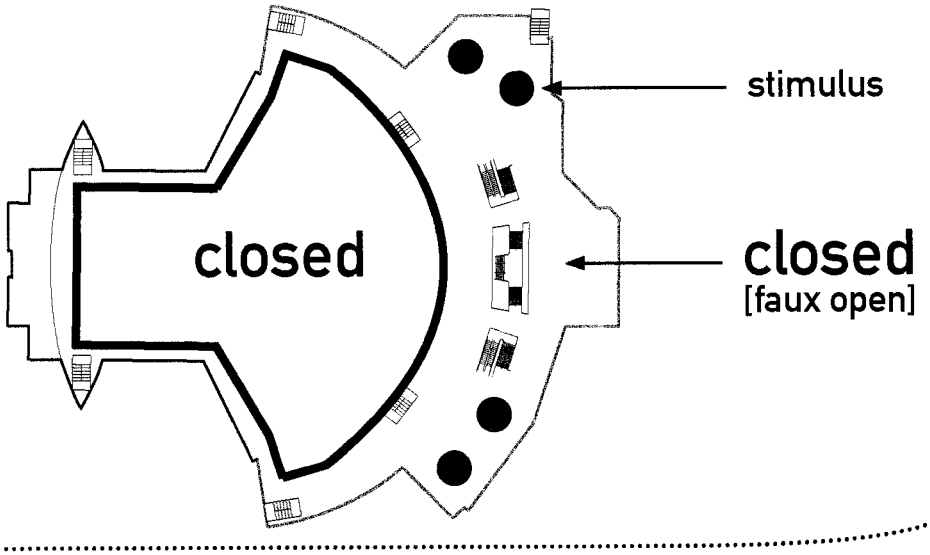


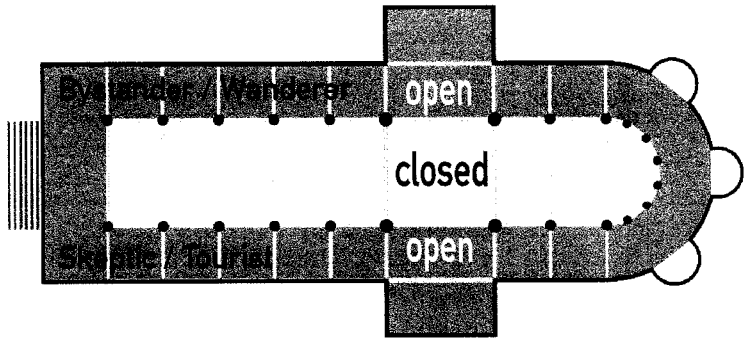
And recover what once existed.



The cathedral plaza provided an open specific space that extended into the cathedral. The ambulatory provided an open specific space, in as much as there could be at that time, where one could disengage from the formulaic structure of the service.

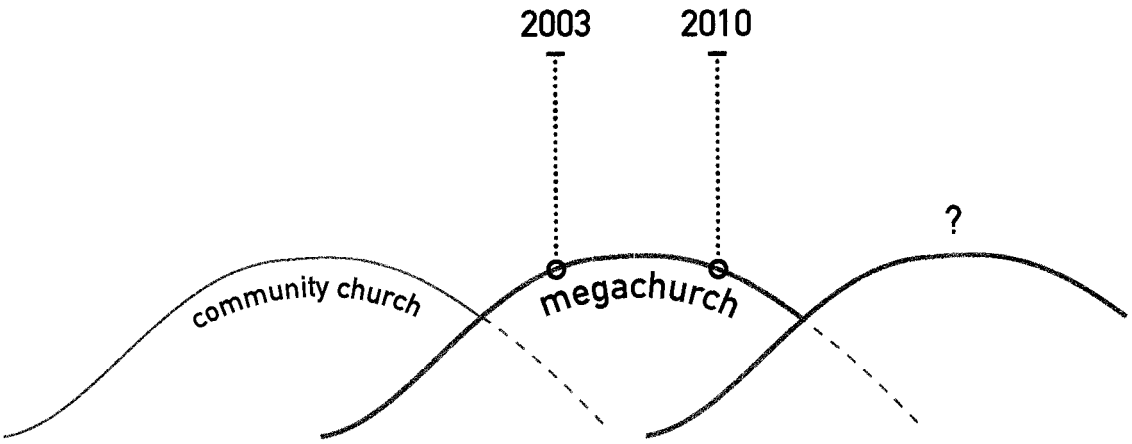
Event [weekly] scale:



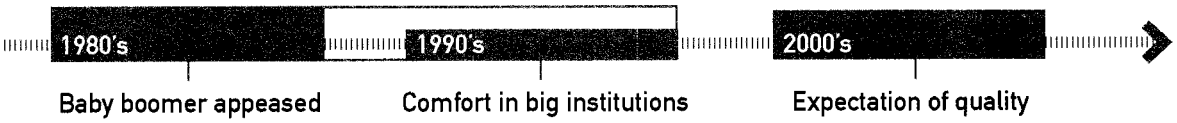


Given that our society is increasingly investing more in experience based commodities rather than material necessities, and the fact that a large number of mega churches have directly or indirectly sought to establish an experience based service has repurcussions for the entire church community. The church is now vulnerable to the fluctuation of trend markets. Trends thrive on a strategy of "one-up", that is they seek to continuously better the previous trend. This is confirmed by Hartford Seminary's report which says that the churches growing the most quickly are those that welcome innovation and change. Initial megachurch appeal was the result of catering to baby boomers and a certain comfort found in big institutions. Now megachurches must embrace the latest trends in audio visual equipment, performance, graphics, and video editing to stay popular. Hollywood, commercials, MTV, video games, etc. have set standards that the megachurch must now meet or the performance appears subpar.

The question for the megachurch is what's next? Statistics point towards a continual increase in megachurches while many argue that it has reached its peak and Lakewood was the climax. Will the megachurch continue to evolve to meet the latest technological fetish or will it give way to a restructuring of the church?

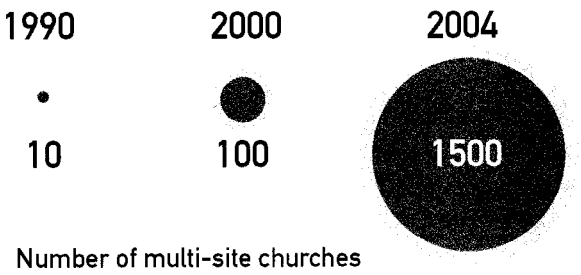


Megachurch appeal



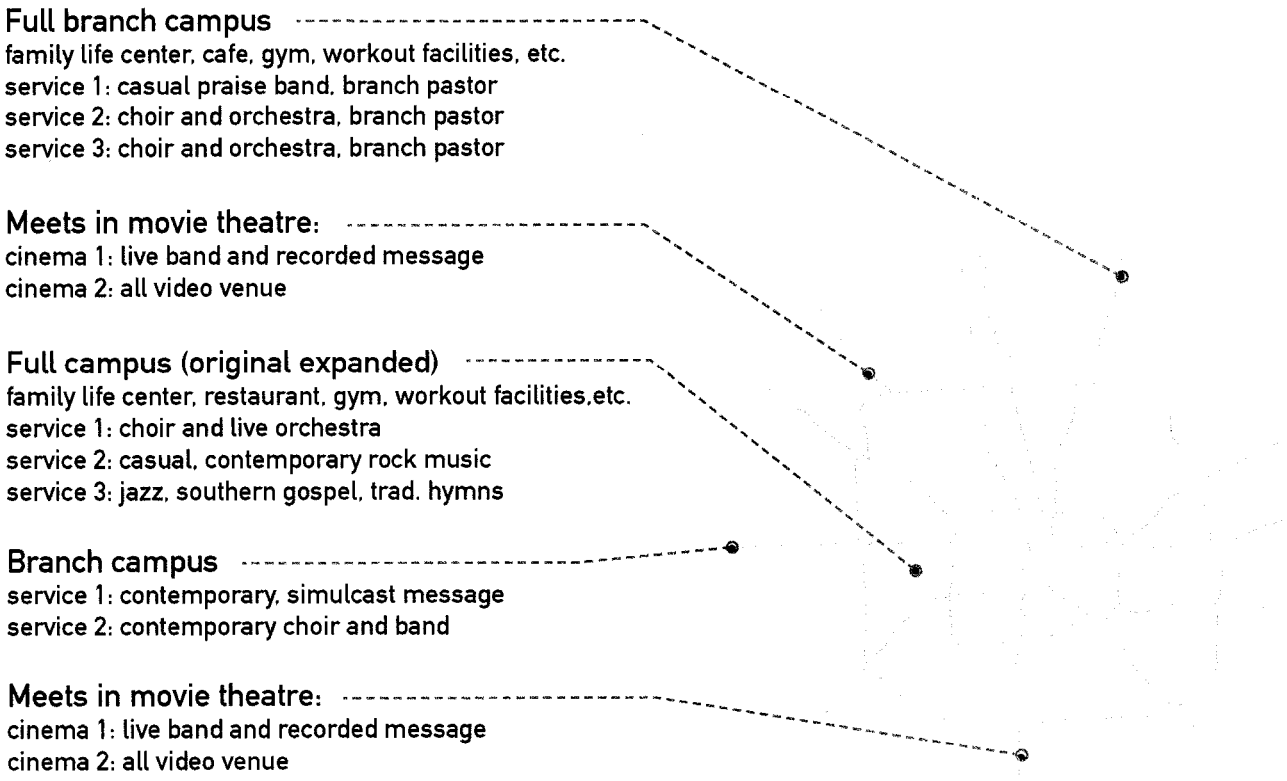
Transformation of the megachurch...

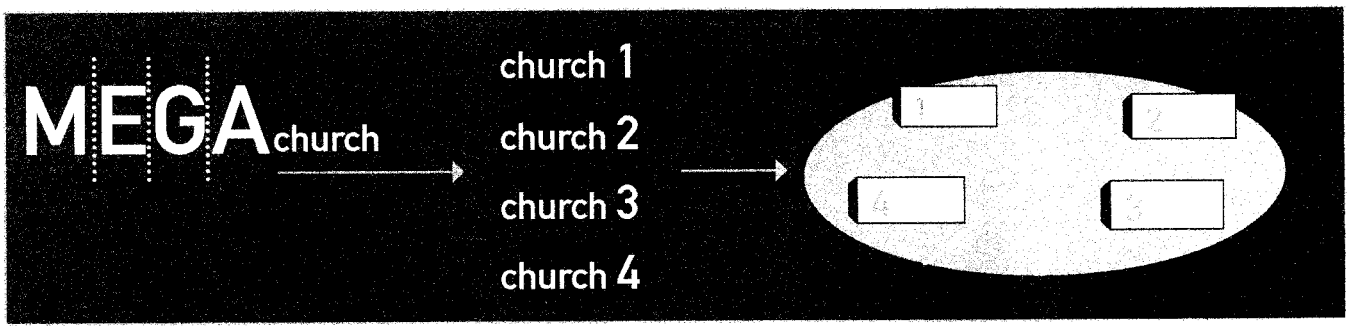
The Multi-site Church



Second Baptist Houston, the third largest church in the U.S., has five multi-site locations as of 2006.

In 2006 Second Baptist pledged $84, 800,000 over two years and a cash offering of $21,300,000 to fund the multi-site campaign.





Partnerships

Some multi-site churches seek partnerships with groups who share similiar vision.

EX 1: Some of the YMCAs in Dayton Ohio partnered with churches to maintain their tax status

EX 2: Dying churches seek partners to keep them alive, many exploring cross-denominational partnerships.

Locations

Most multi-site churches do not have their own campuses. Some seek to be nomadic.

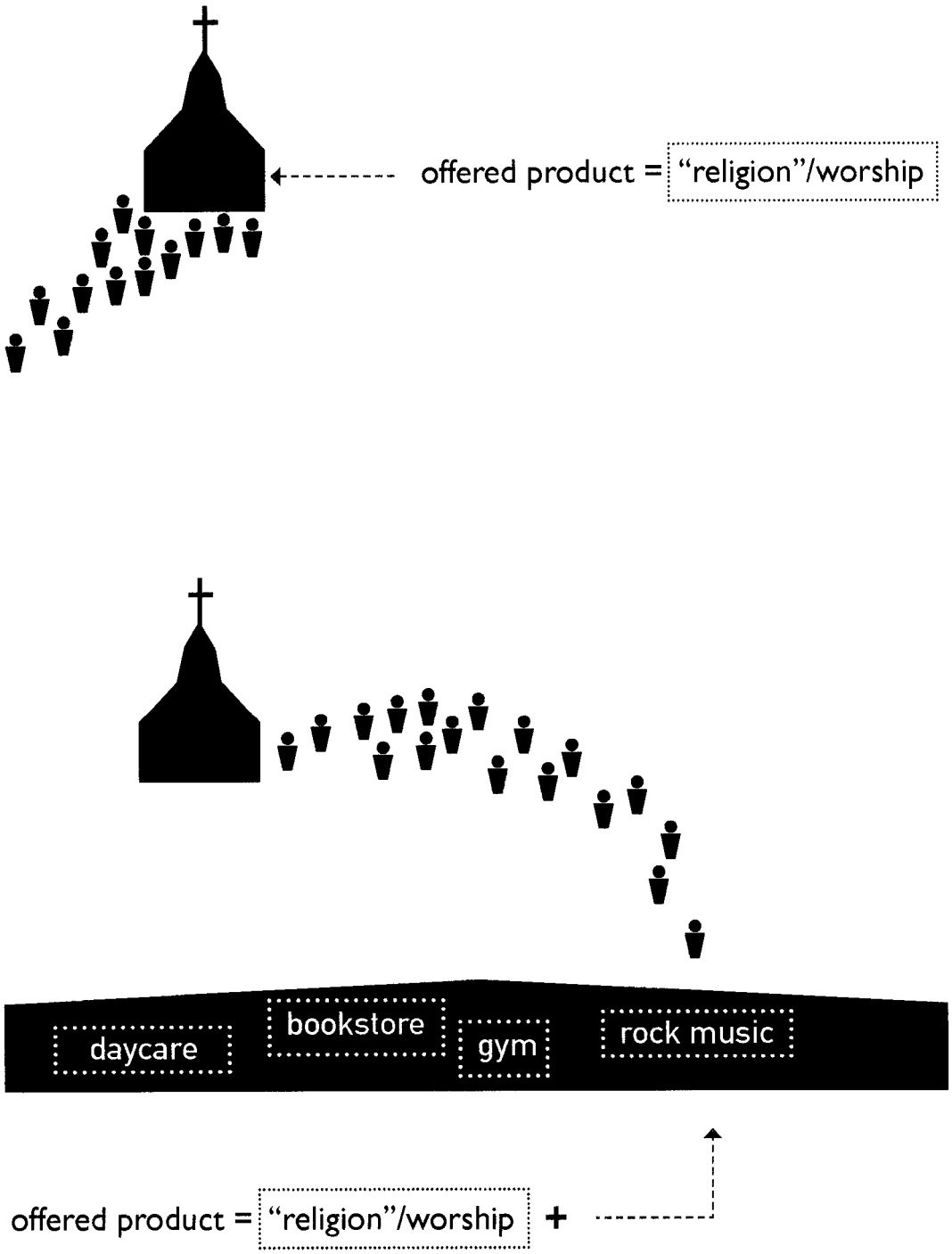
45% Schools
13% Movie Theaters
10% YMCA or community center
10% Industrial parks
10% Former church buildings
7% Restaurant or bar

"There are two things I love about the multiple video venue approach. First, it allows multiple options in styles and times of services. Second, and more important, it allows the larger growing church to feel smaller. The truth is pastors are the only people who like huge services! Members put up with the large size because of the teaching, programs, and ministry opportunities offered. If they could find them in a smaller church they would."

Rick Warren, pastor to Saddleback church, voted America's second most influential church

The aftermath of the MEGACHURCH:

For every megachurch that opens there are over 100 small churches that close.



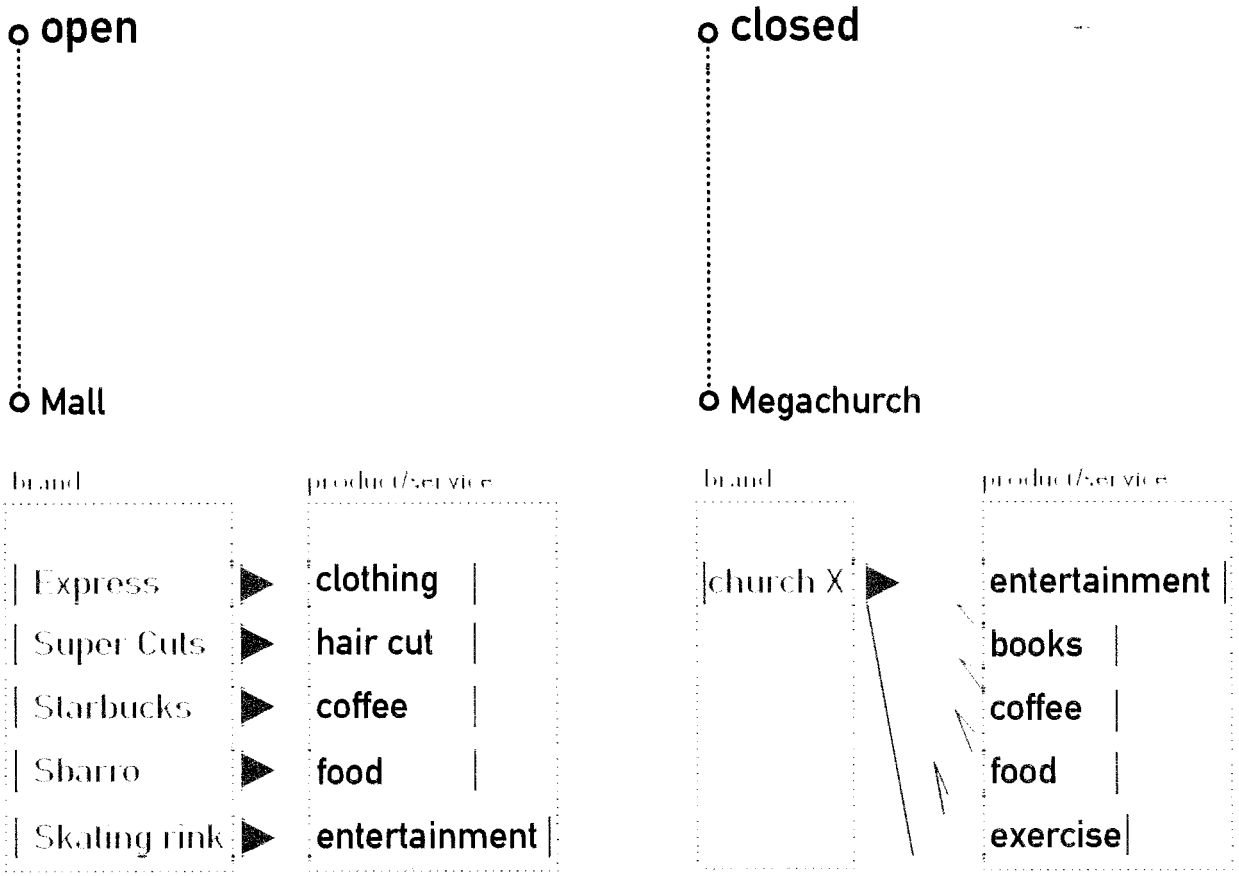
number of megachurches
in Houston = 35 +

There must be a better
methodology....

Consolidating:

A new strategy for dealing with the MEGA in church.

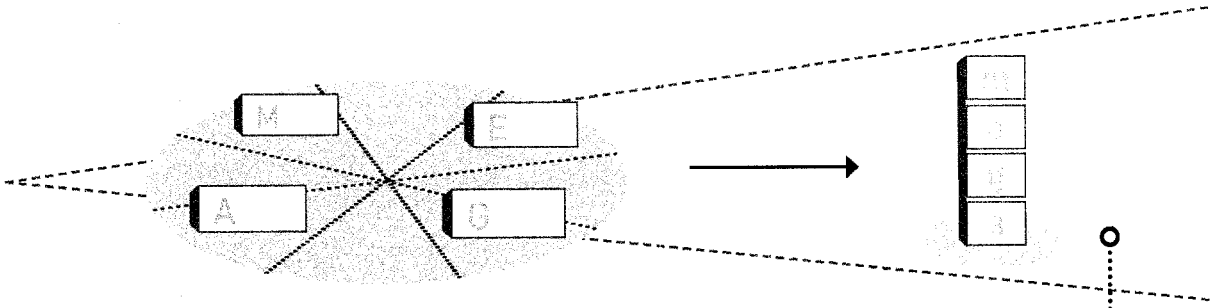
Mall marketing uses a simple extremely potent principle called the Gruen transfer (named after the architect of the first self contained mall) which is based on the fact that bunching up similiar brands increases rather than decreases consumption. The megachurch attempts to mimic this model, but in reality its structure is quite different. The Megachurch is actually mimicking the product/service structure of the mall, however the brand remains exclusively the church. This relationship mirrors the closed system of wal-mart rather than the open one of the mall.



Rather than build another massive megachurch with 5,000 + seating capacity, I propose capitalizing upon the trend towards multiple site churches by creating a building which would house four or more megachurch branches.

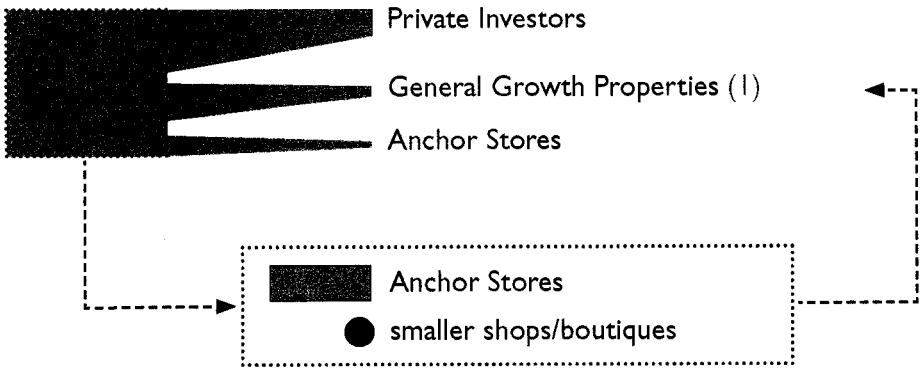
The overall ownership is through a nonprofit community based group - who oversees the community services. The individual churches purchase / rent a floor level w/ auditoriom and church members volunteer for the service groups

Houston has 8 of the top 100 fastest growing churches in the U.S. (Outreach, 22), demonstrating the increasing necessity for more space.

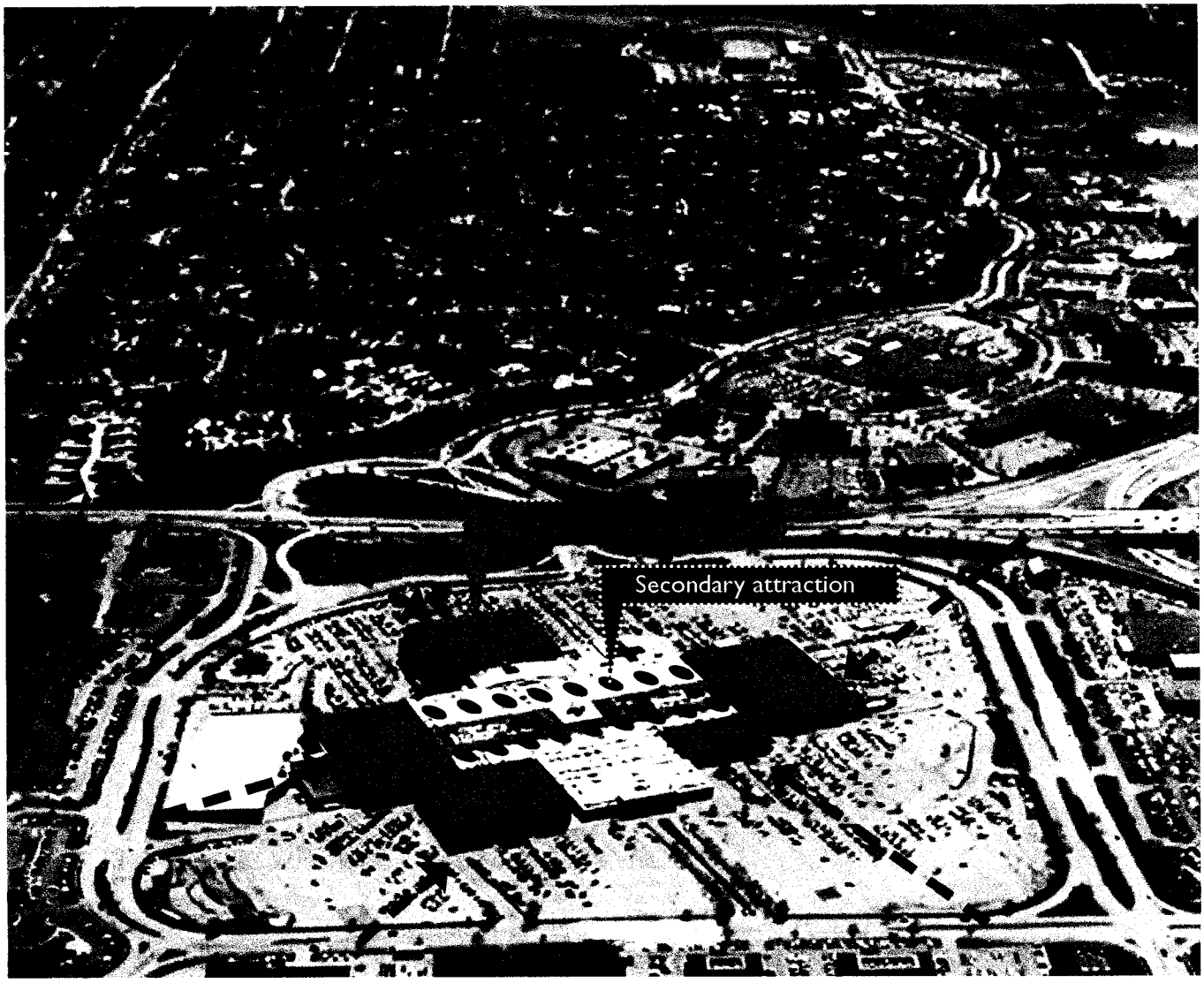


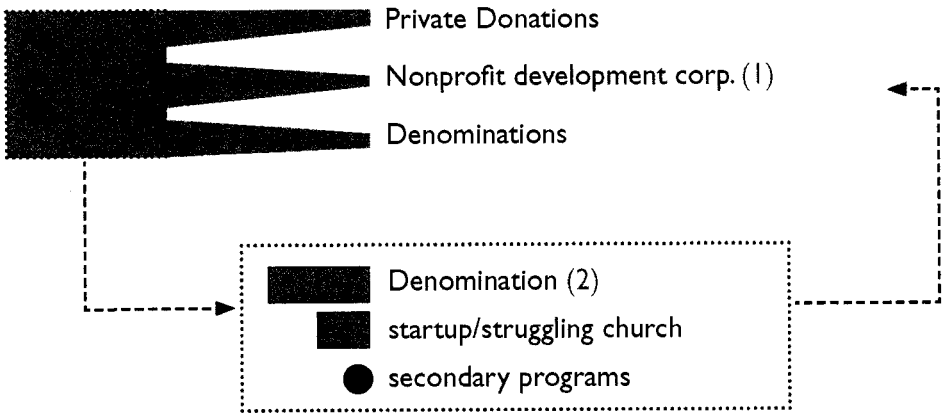
Multi-church

brand	product/service
church M	entertainment
church E	books
church G	coffee
church A	food



(1) Leases to mall tenants and manages facilities

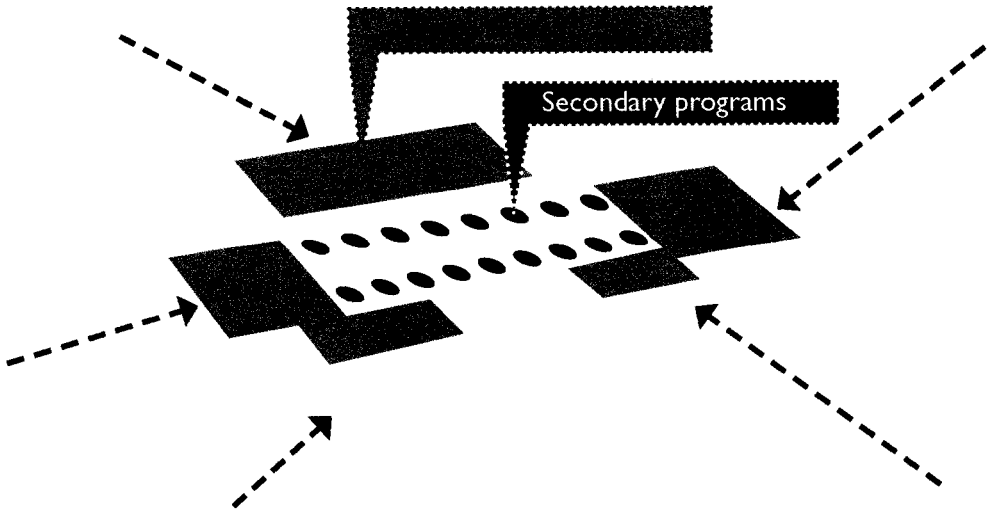




(1) Leases to church tenants and manages facilities

(1) An example of this is Pyramid Development Corporation in Houston. They own and manage the Power Center, an old Kmart converted to a facility for small business retail with one large conference center used by Windsor Village United Methodist church on Sundays.

(2) North American Mission Board (Southern Baptist Convention)
Southwest church planting network (Presbyterian church in America)
Assembly of God USA (Assembly of God Financial)

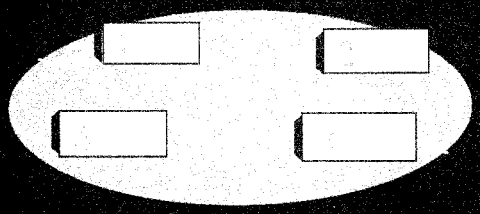


Why the multi-church will work...

Multi-site movement

MEGA church

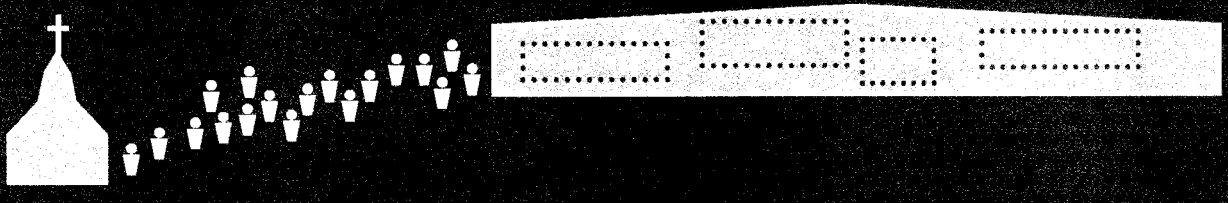
church 1
church 2
church 3
church 4



+

Small church decay

offered product = "religion"/worship



"People are willing to try different churches and shop around. They aren't as brand-conscious as they once were, even in the church world." -Lee Strobel communications director of Willow Creek (voted most influential church last year)

"We see more than 500 people join our church each year, but we are not growing. Our back door is as big as our front door." -anonymous Megachurch pastor citing a common trend

"We will do anything short of sin to reach people for Christ" -Pastor Craig Groechel of Lifechurch, one of the largest and fastest growing churches in the country

Advantages...

-- Pushes toward an open system for services offered to the community (rather than members only priviledges)

-- Allows each church to focus on fewer activities

-- Greater attraction for each church (competition increases consumption)

-- Community creation because foremost

-- Rejects one worship style environment

Hypothetical tenants:

500 seats

First Baptist of Houston
wants to jump on the success Second Baptist has with their 5 multi site churches.

500 seats

Fellowship of the Woodlands'
rapid growth allows the church to open a satellite location.

500 seats

Ecclesia
is a small emergent church growing quickly with its alternative worship techniques. They would rather open another branch then compromise the intimacy of the current setting.

1500 seats

Grace Lutheran's
"embrace everyone" approach has helped attendance, but it's still unable to compete with Houston's mega-churches, which can support a diverse array of activities and programs.

2000 seats

Braeswood Assembly of God's
passion for Hispanic outreach leads them to plant a Hispanic church within the loop to reach the underepresented demographic.

Houston's First Baptist Church

"The best hour of your week"

ENTER WEBSITE

Grace is not your average Lutheran church.

At Grace, we embrace everyone, regardless of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. You see, we are a Reconciling in Christ Lutheran church, joyfully following God's call to love one another without judgment, without fear, and without discrimination.

Walk with Grace to faith, hope, and love. We're not your average Lutheran church. You don't even have to be Lutheran to be part of our family!

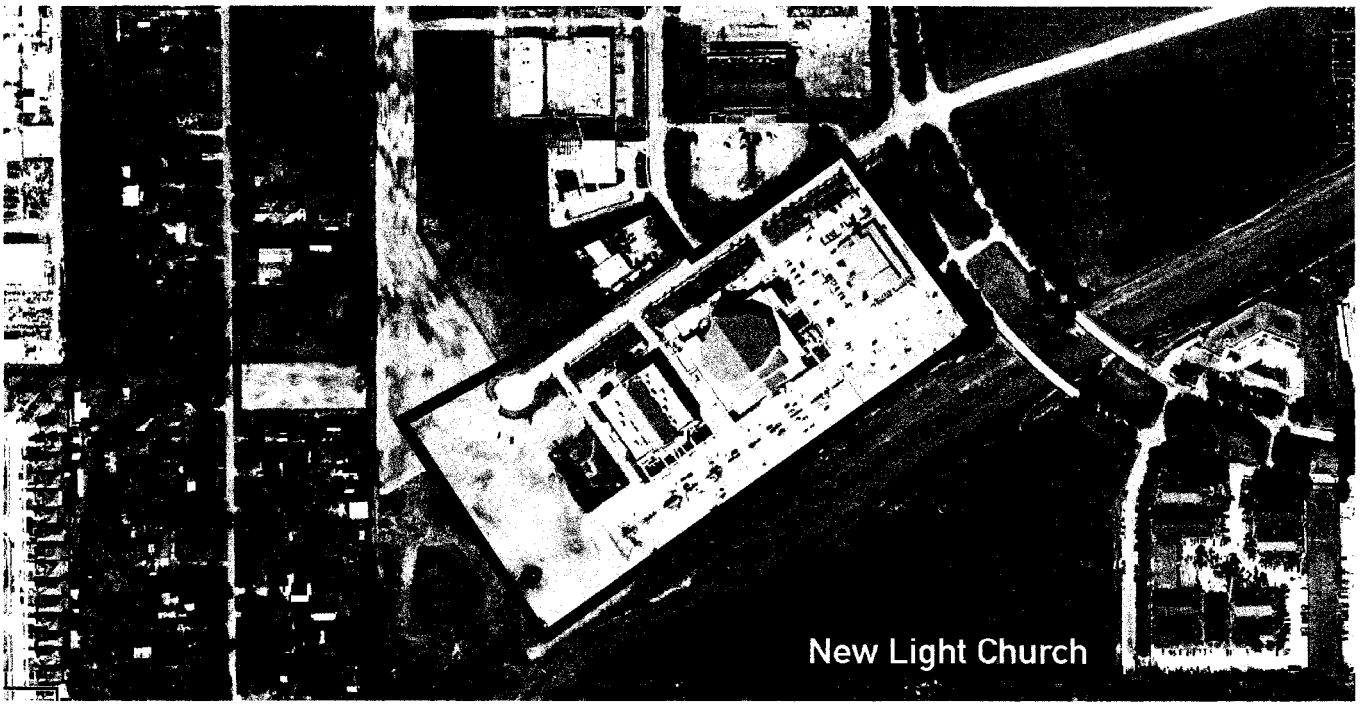
BRAESWOOD ASSEMBLY OF GOD

strengthening our community

A place for the multi-church...

Suburban:

The typical megachurch setting in low density neighborhood.



Low density = Drive-to attraction / Main Attraction = anchor store = "church"

Result:

Community services become church community services and the members only church club / enclave is formed.

closed

Urban:

High density (for Houston) multi family housing and commercial.

High density = Walk-to attraction / Main Attraction = church or community services, depending on day of week.

Result:

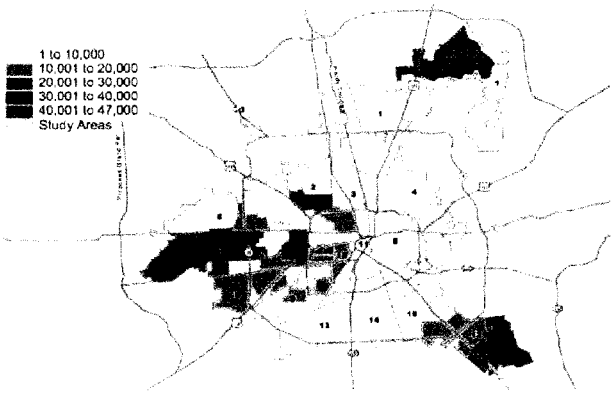
Community Services used by general public

In 2005 56% of megachurches said they were making efforts to become intentionally multi-ethnic.

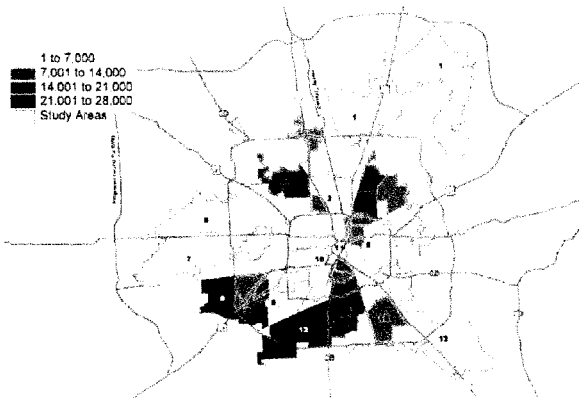
While one can not force ratial integration, this proposal seeks to identify a site which makes it more feasible and a building that more readily allows for it. (as a location for multiple churches)

What to avoid...

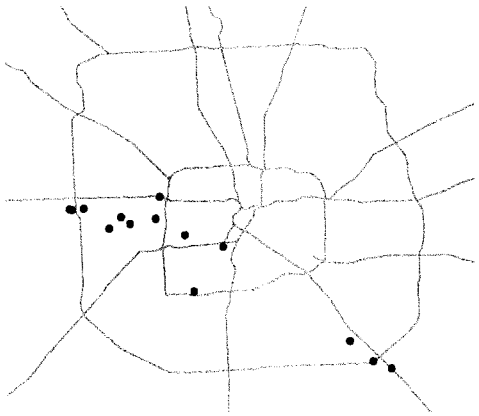
White population



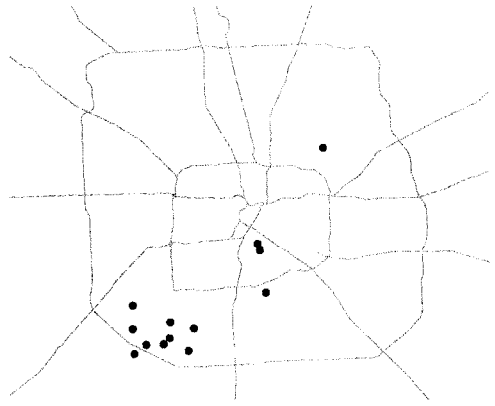
Black population

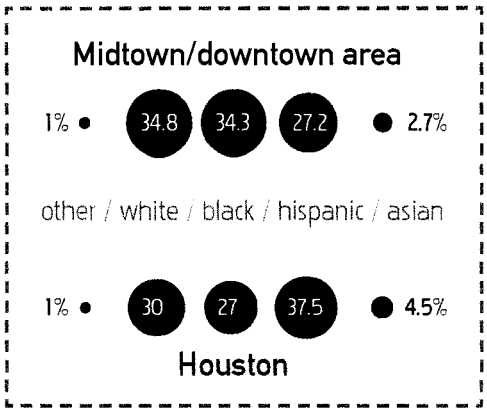


White megachurches (within white population)



Black megachurches (within black population)

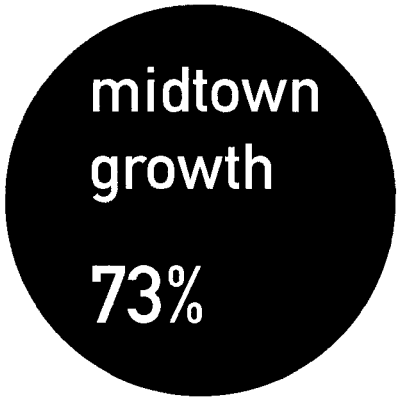




What to promote _ A Case for Midtown...

Houston megachurches maintain clear racial divisions. Providing a multiple church facility within a melting pot allows churches which are seeking a more multi-ethnic congregation the needed opportunity.

(Percent change in growth from 1990 to 2000)



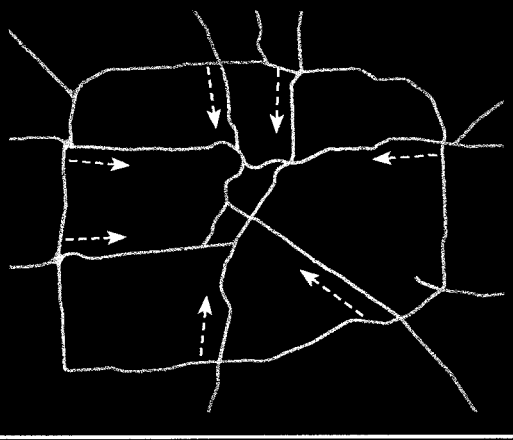
Midtown is the only neighborhood classified within the very high growth category.

The incoming midtown population has had high levels of education and income. This new population is also of working age and consists of smaller households. Yet, a substantial population with low educational attainment and low income remains in the area.

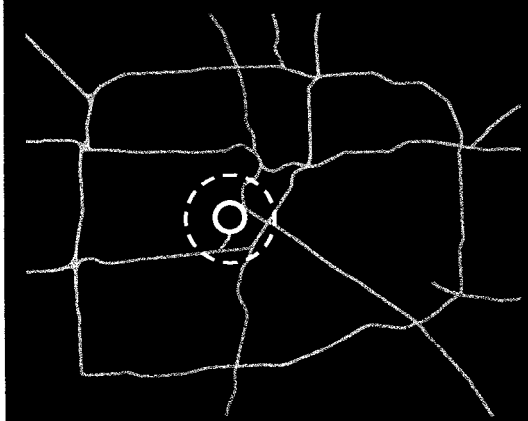
Two time scales vs. proximity to event.

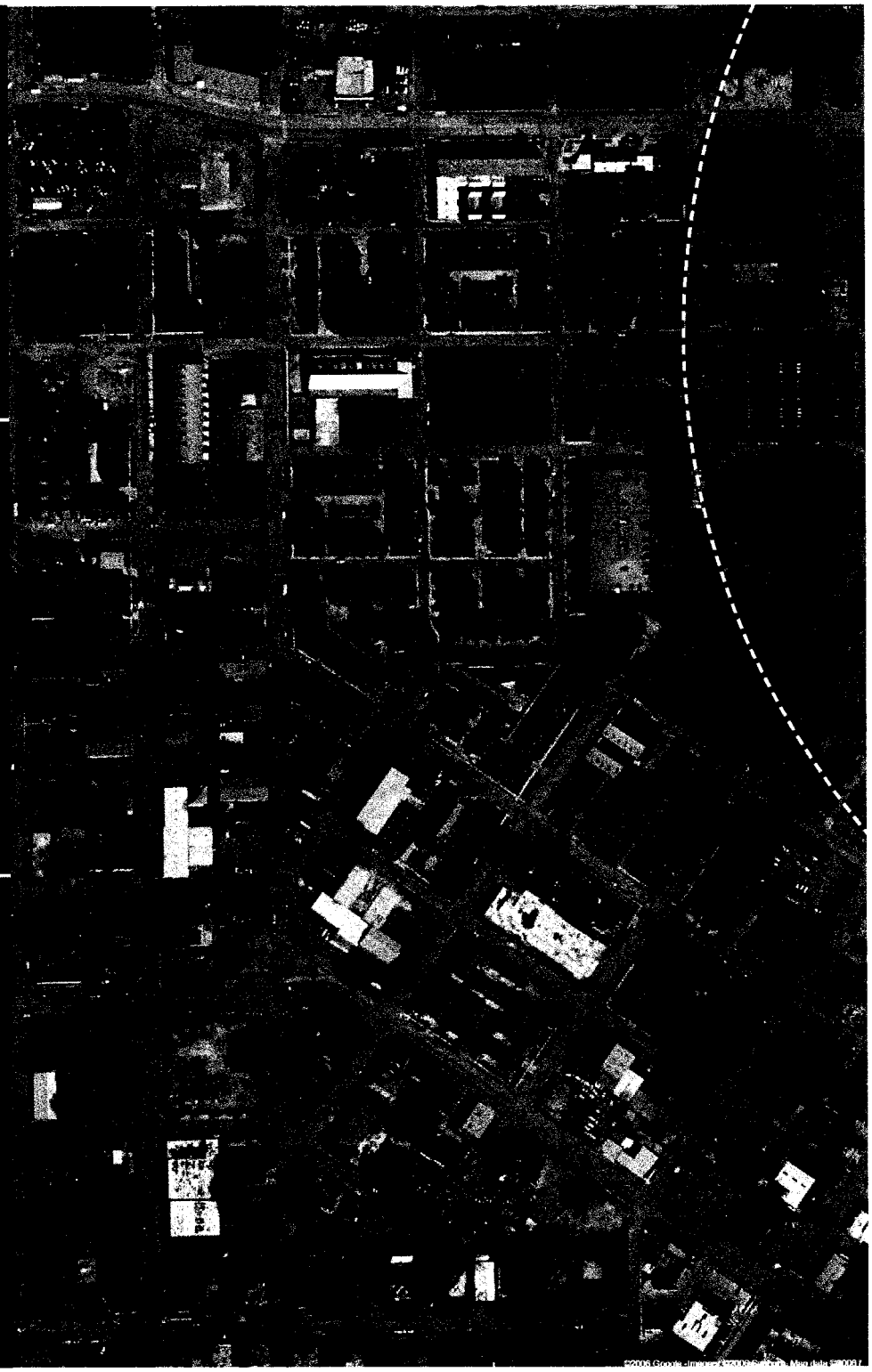
Midtown is becoming increasingly dense with multi-family housing and apartment complexes. It has been shown that Houstonians will rarely walk more than a couple of blocks to reach a desired location. This requires the megachurch to be sited within range of mega apartment complexes to provide sufficient use during the week.

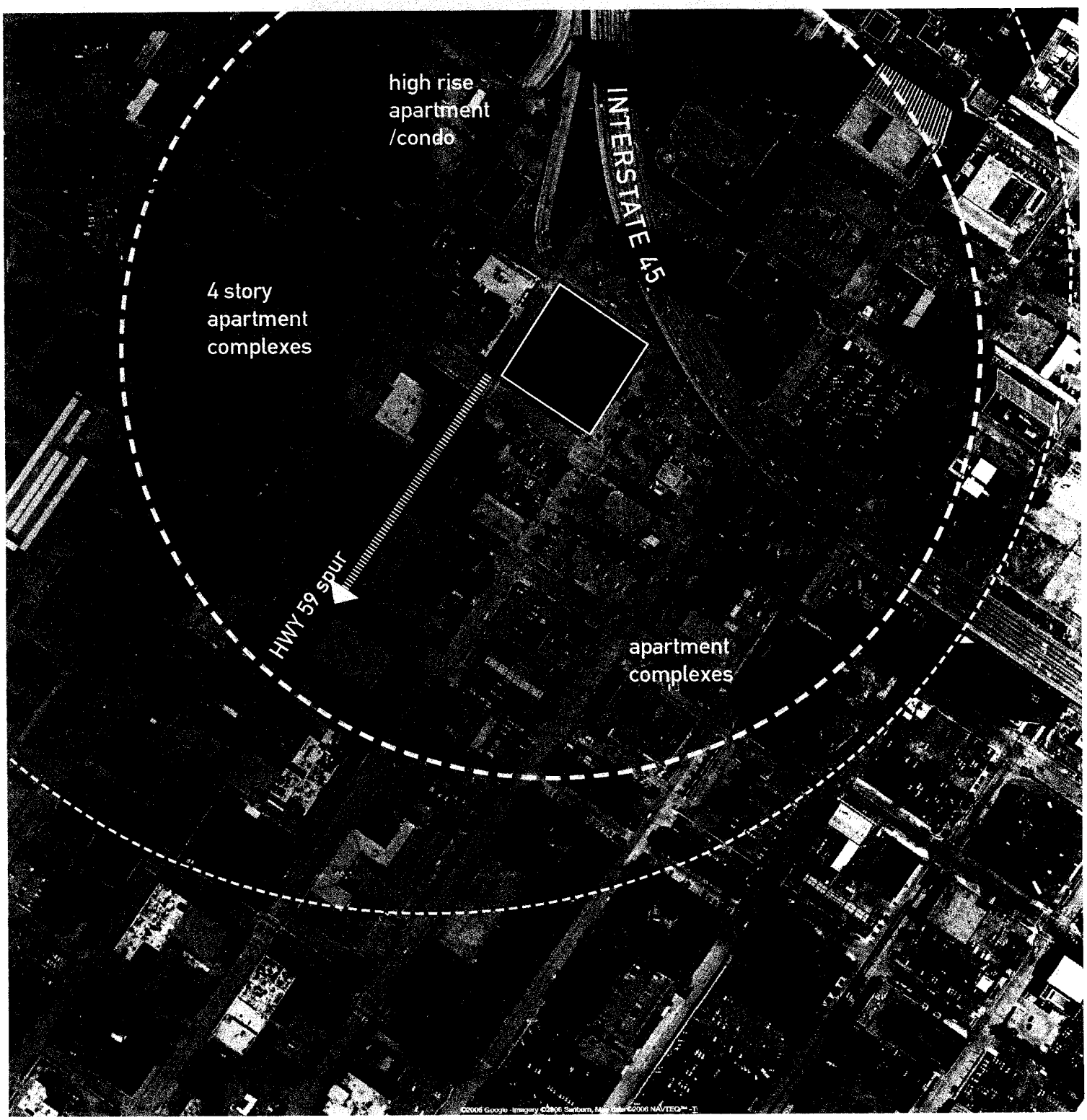
Weekend Draw



Weekday Draw






high rise
apartment
/condo
INTERSTATE 45
4 story
apartment
complexes
HWY 59 spur
apartment
complexes

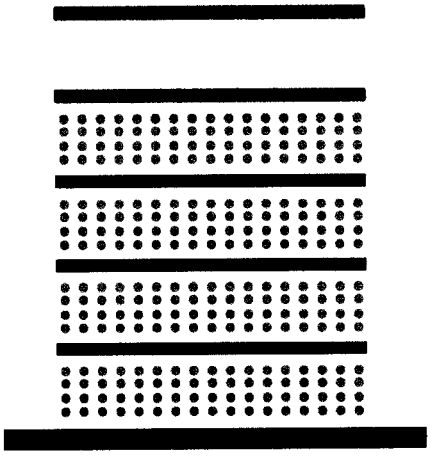
A new typology: the vertical church

The project proposes moving the megachurch to an urban setting. In the traditional church/ cathedral the form was vertical but the spatial organization and program was horizontal (A). The suburban megachurch created the horizontal church (B). The megachurch gone urban will require a return to verticality as a result of programming constraints (C).

(A) (B) (C)

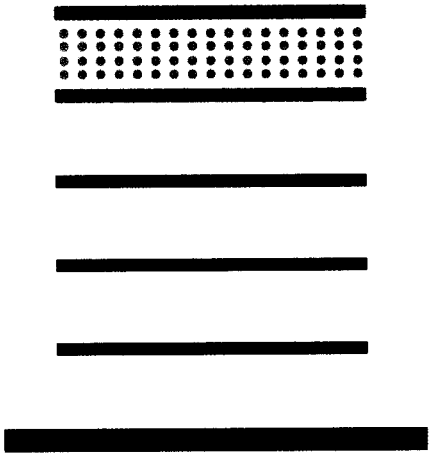
In order to push this open system the programs will be seperated into community services and "church"

Mon. Through Sat. Use



Services

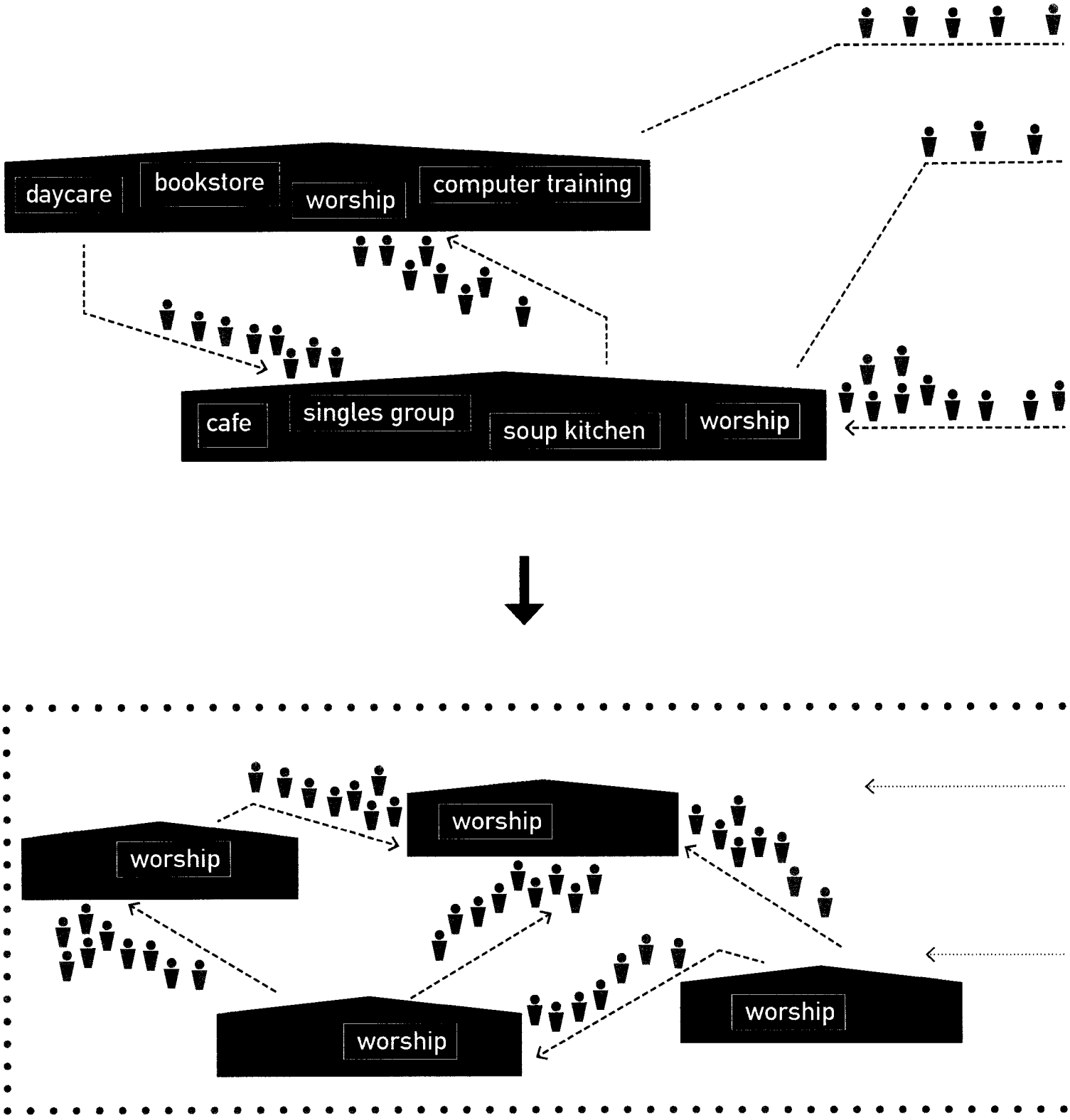
Sunday Use

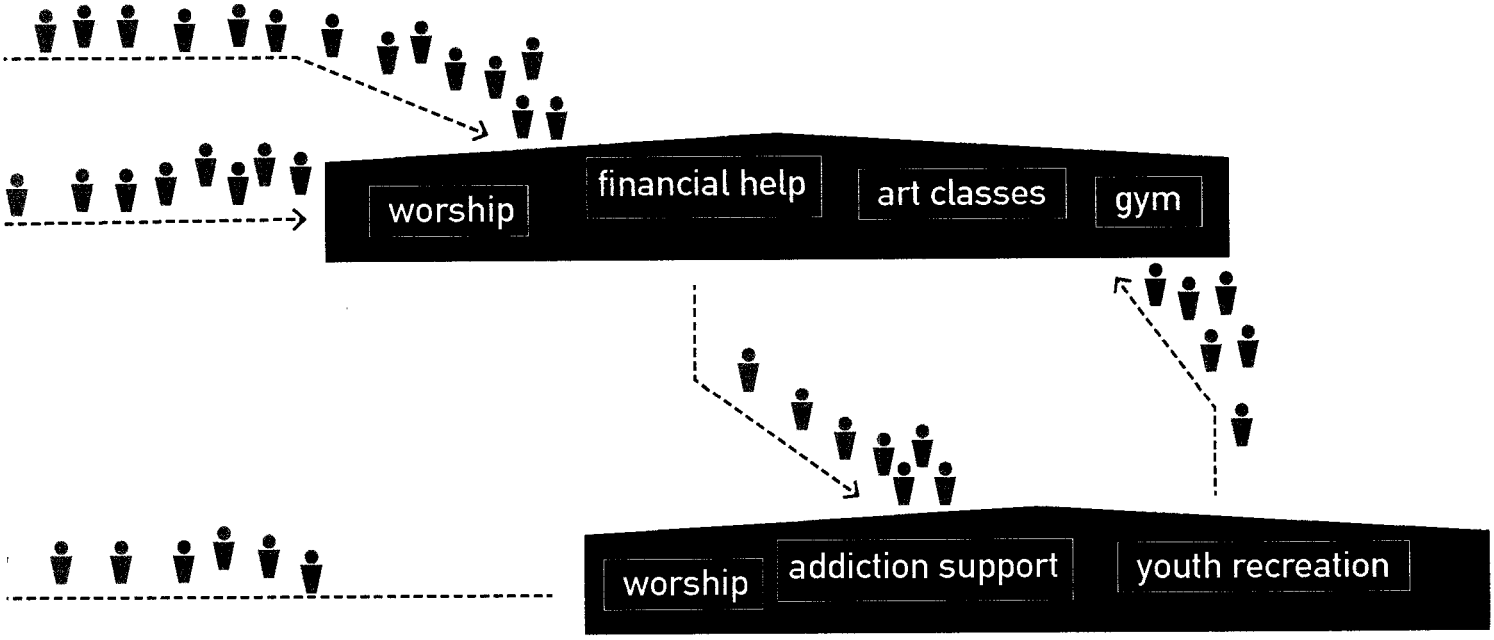


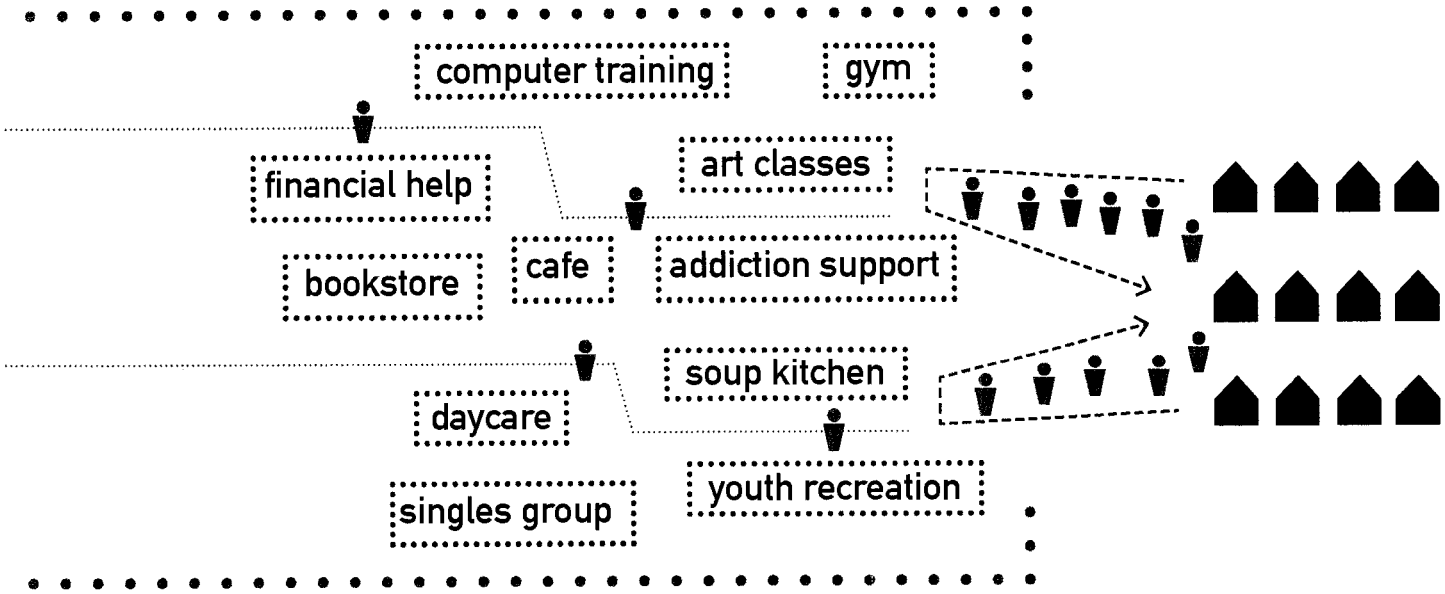
Church

Restructuring the Megachurch:

Allowing church-shopping while maintaining community services

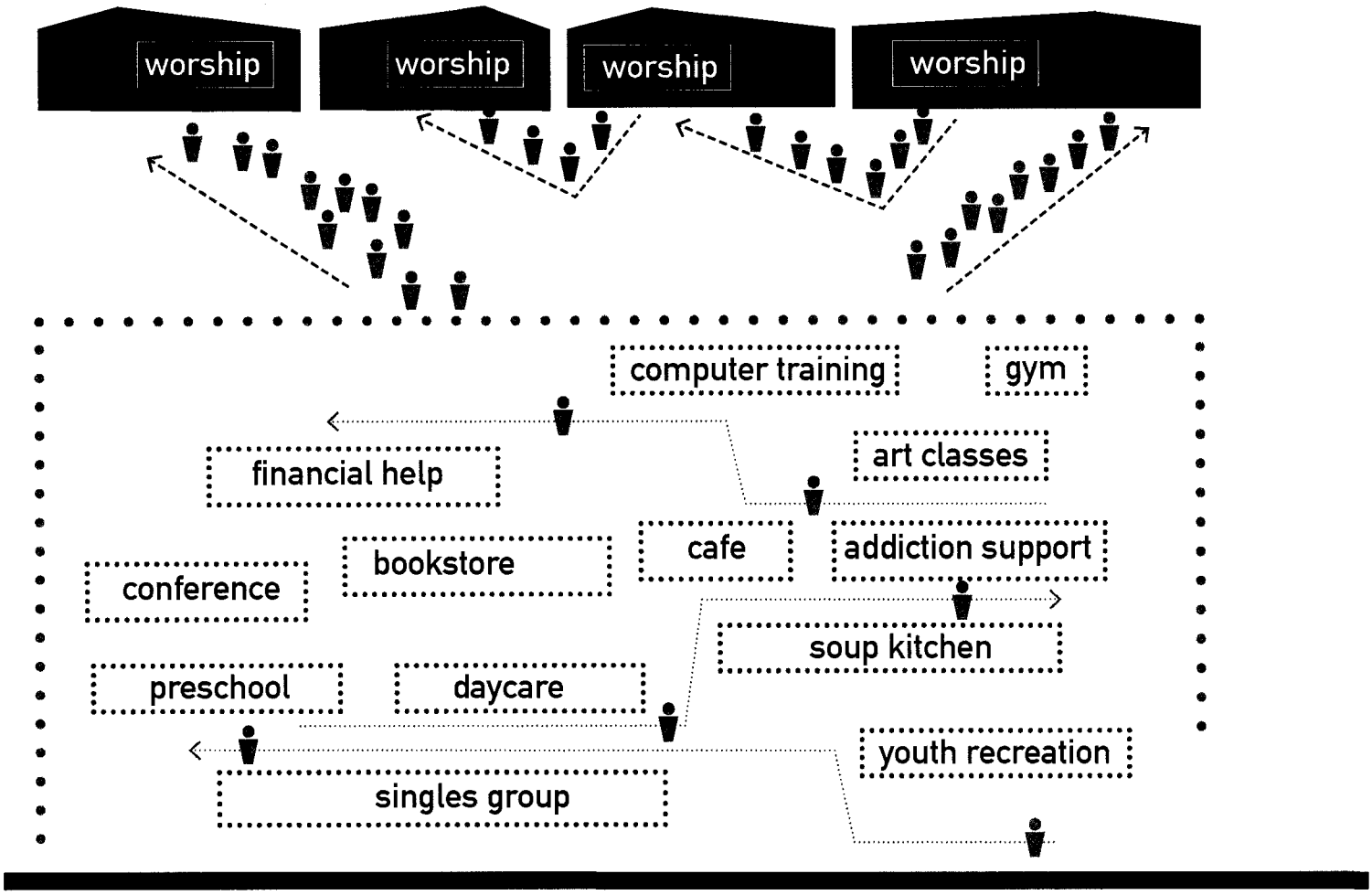


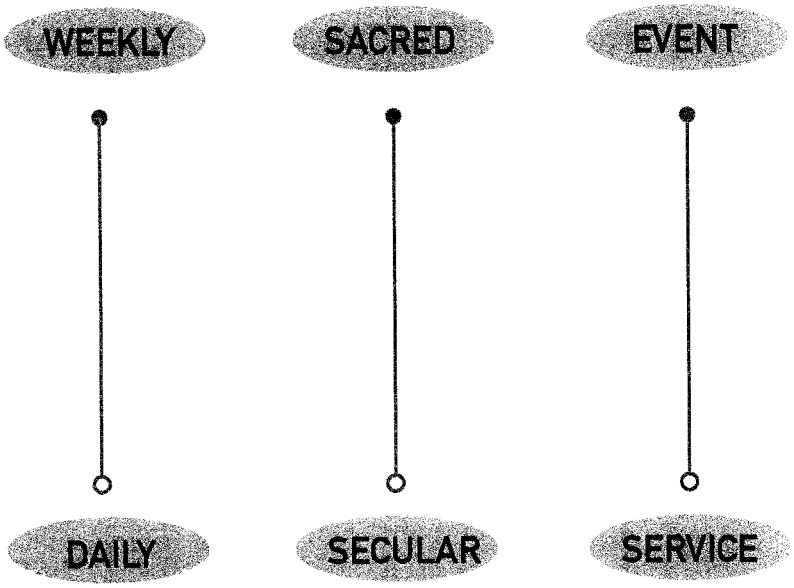

worship
financial help
art classes
gym
worship
addiction support
youth recreation


computer training
gym
financial help
art classes
bookstore
cafe
addiction support
soup kitchen
daycare
youth recreation
singles group

Restructuring the Megachurch:

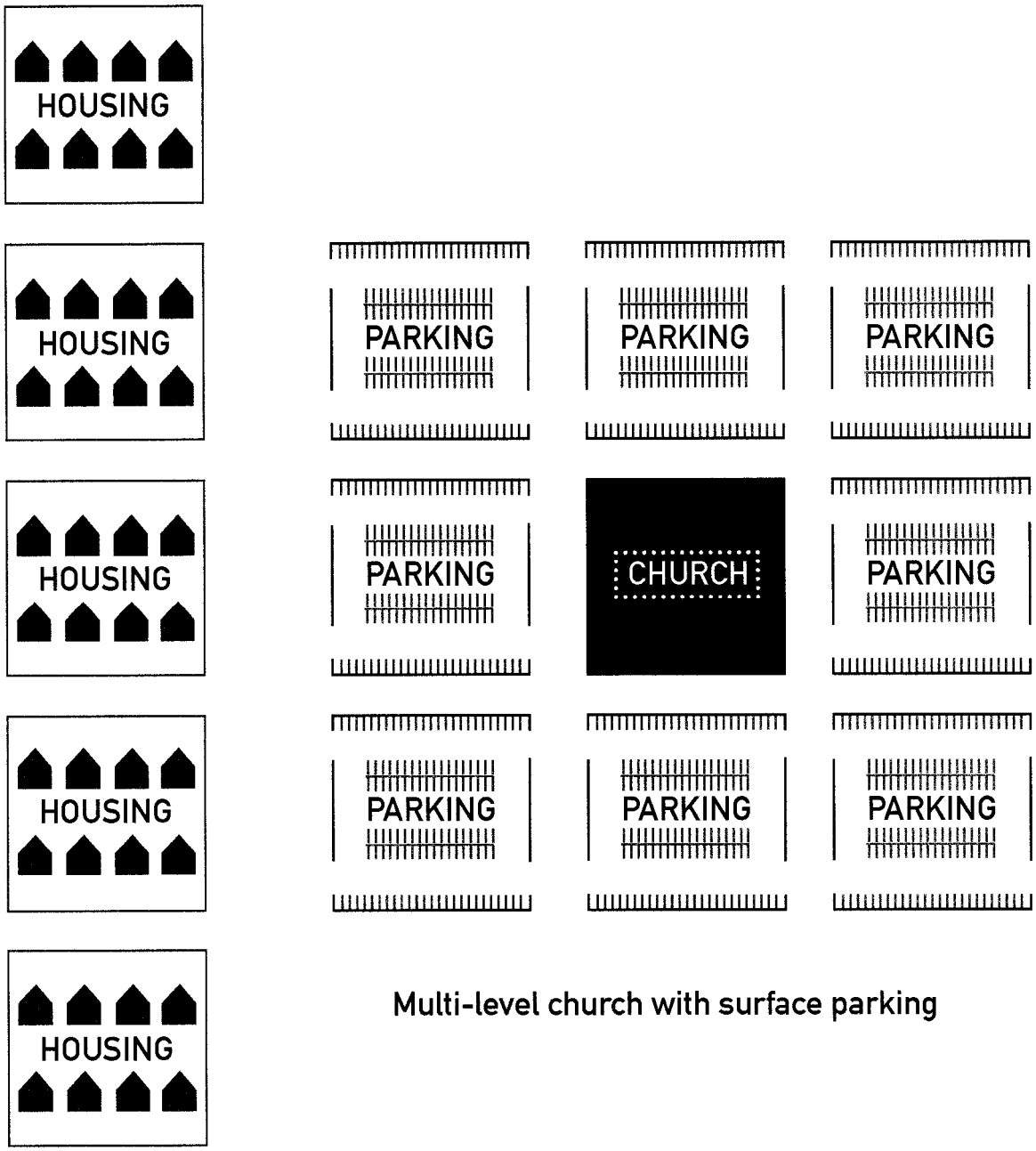
Vertical zoning through a filter of services




WEEKLY
SACRED
EVENT
DAILY
SECULAR
SERVICE

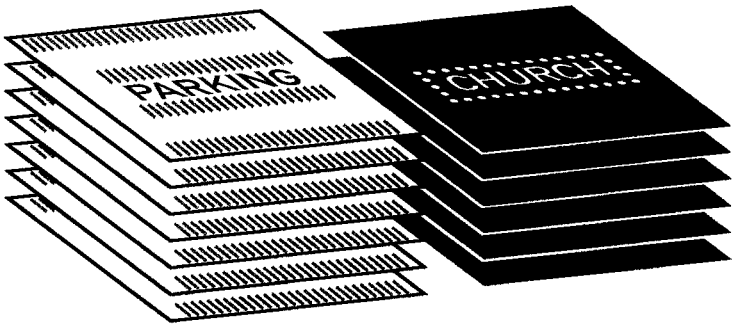
Church in an island of parking:

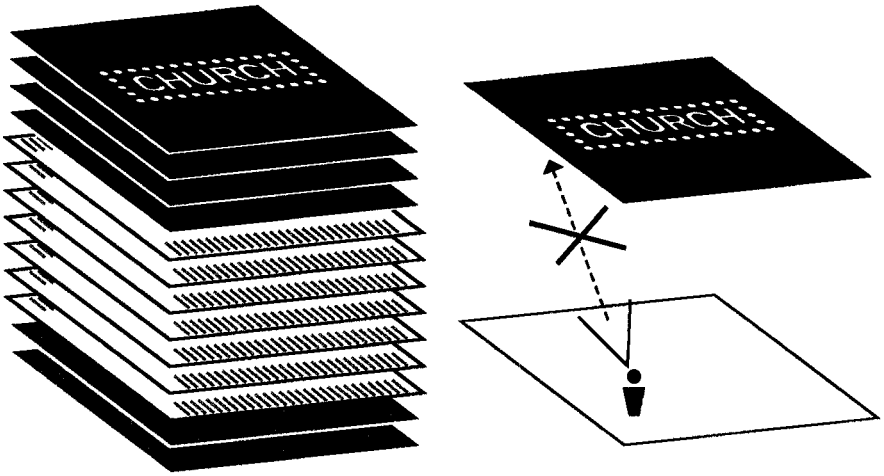
One of the large contributors to the the megachurch becoming a closed typology is parking. Surface parking requires lots over 5x the footprint of the building.



Multi-level church with surface parking

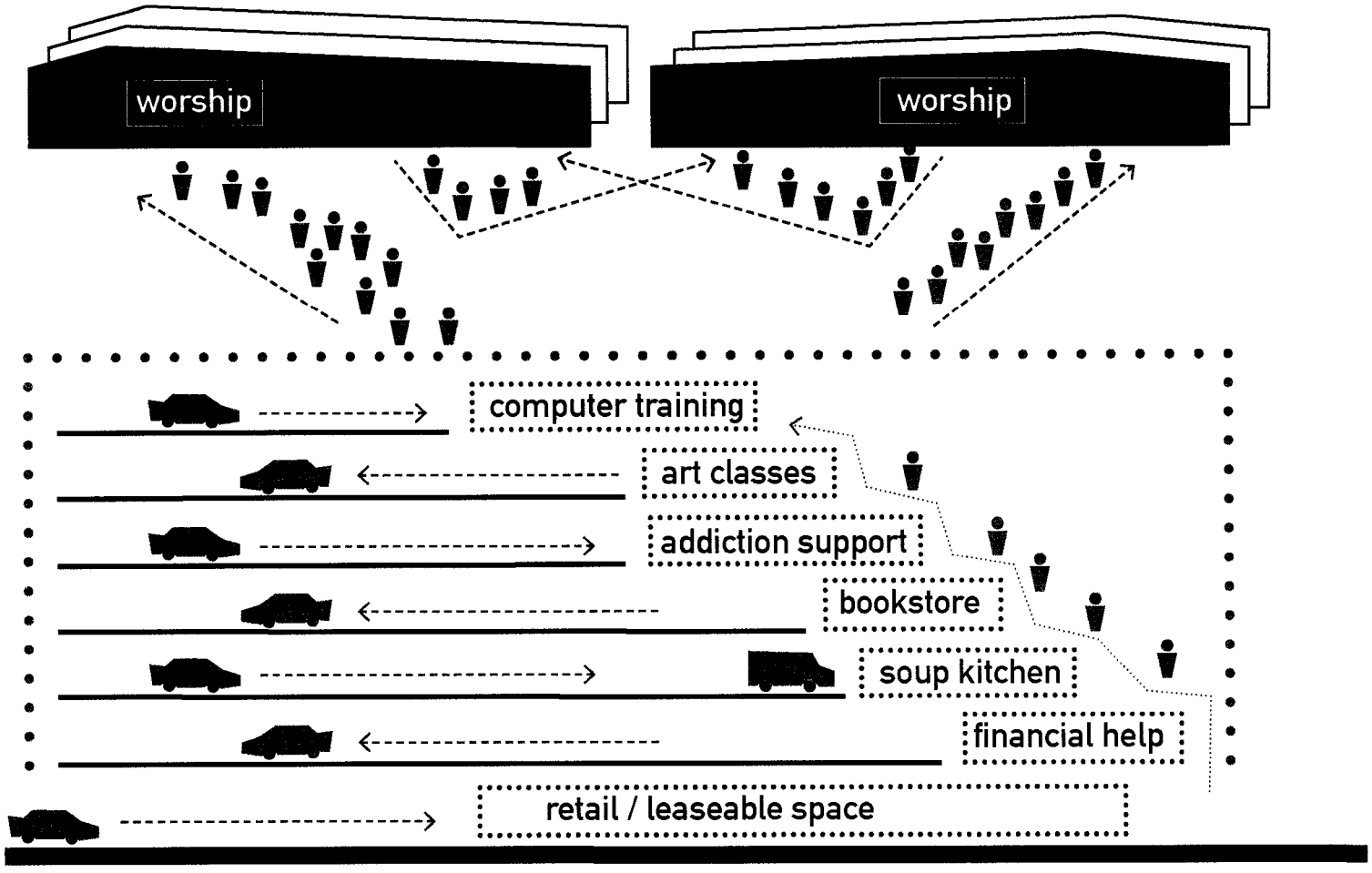
$

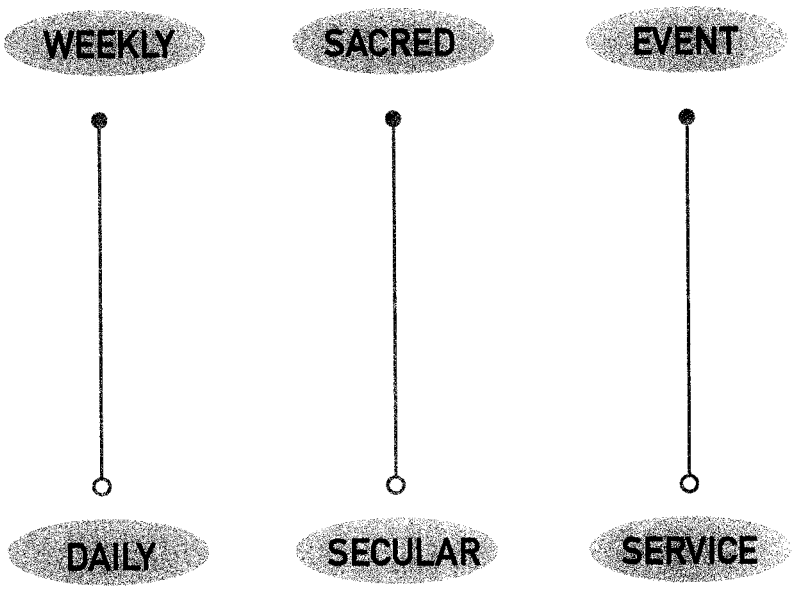

PARKING
CHURCH


CHURCH
CHURCH

Redistributing program:

Parking facilitates the mall section / creating the atrium




WEEKLY
SACRED
EVENT
DAILY
SECULAR
SERVICE

Megachurch assemblage:

A_ Churches

B_ Preview

C_ Anti-spectacle

D_ Informal Event

E_ Small services / gathering

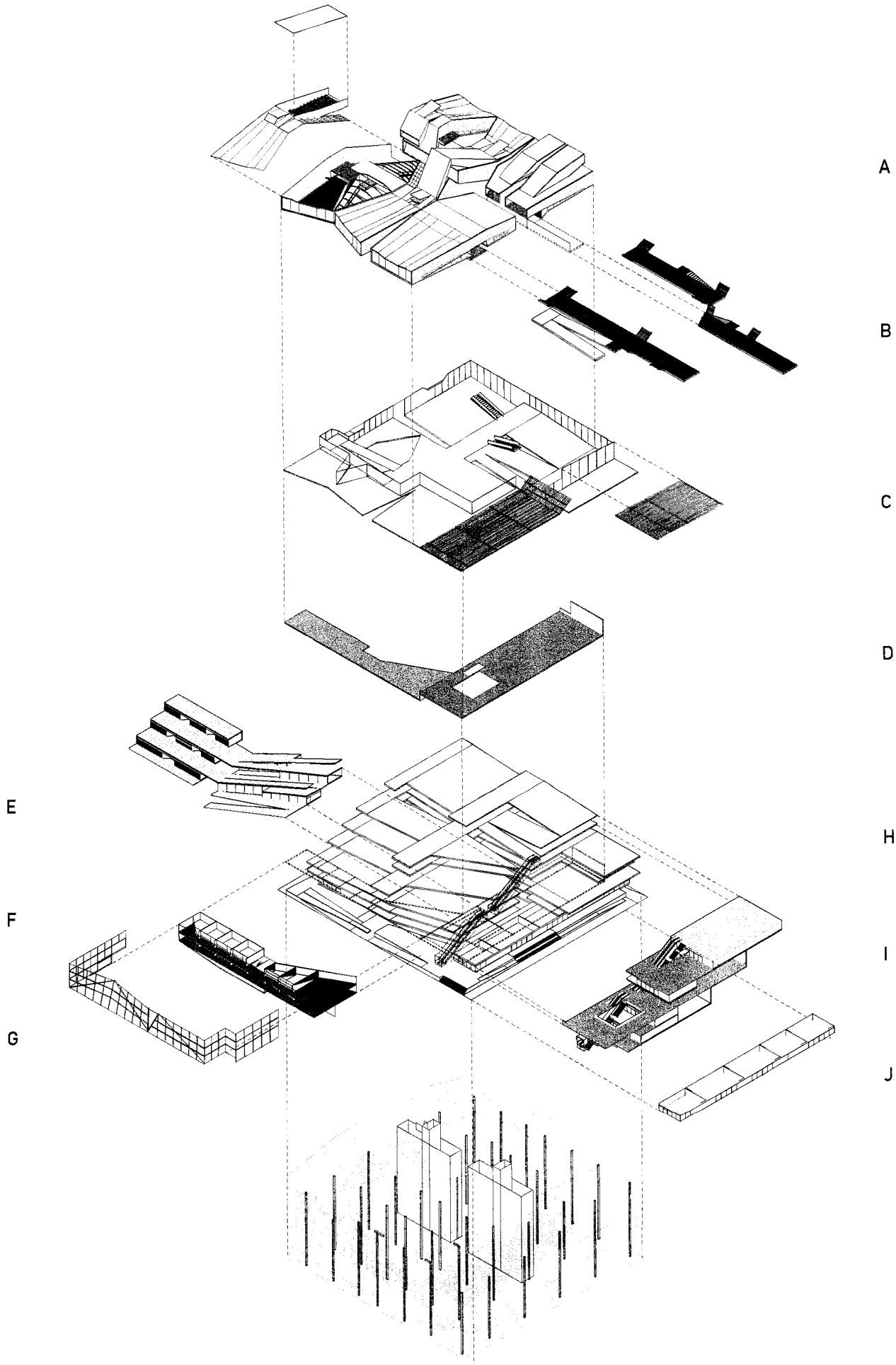
F_ Classrooms

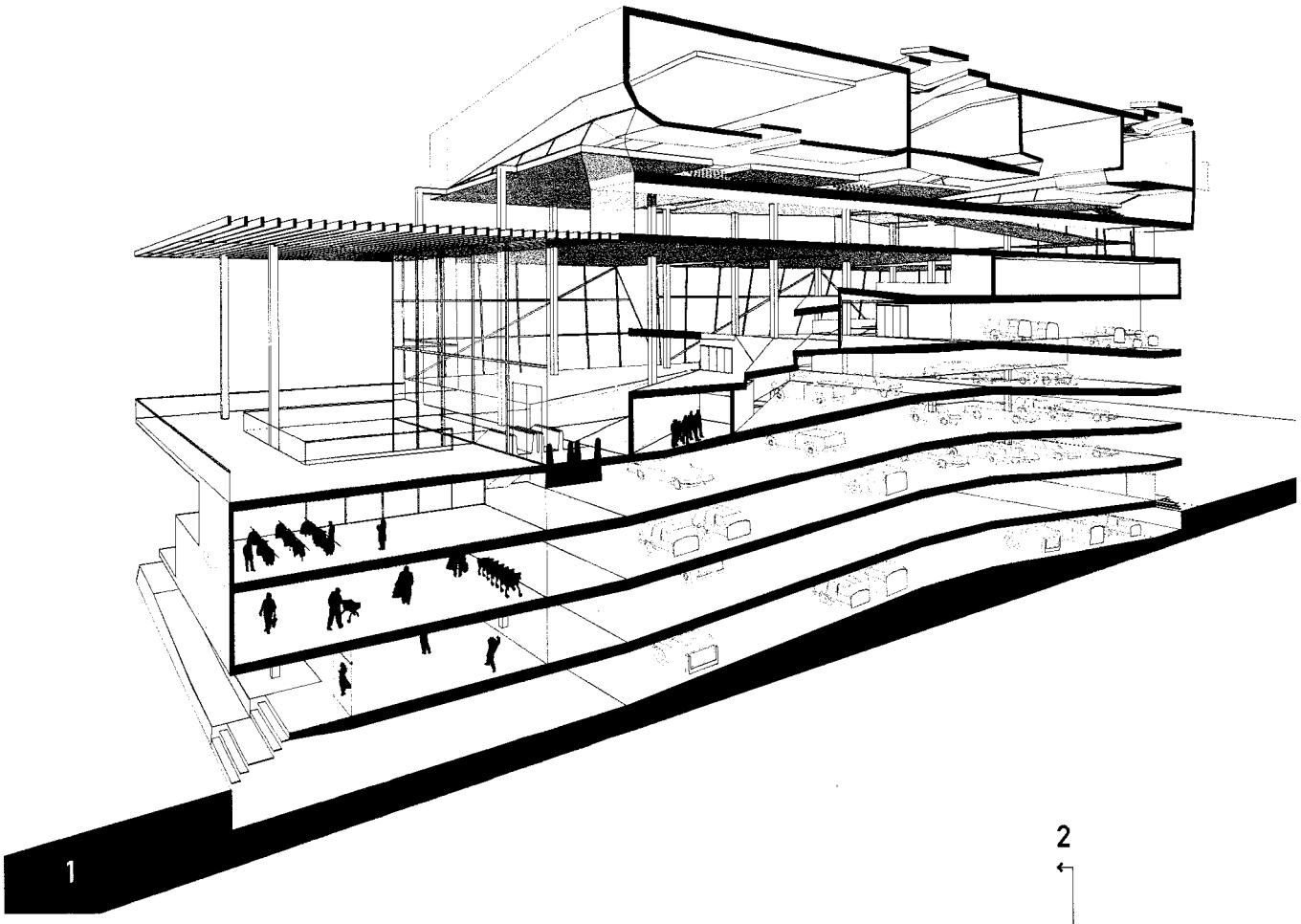
G_ Atrium

H_ Parking

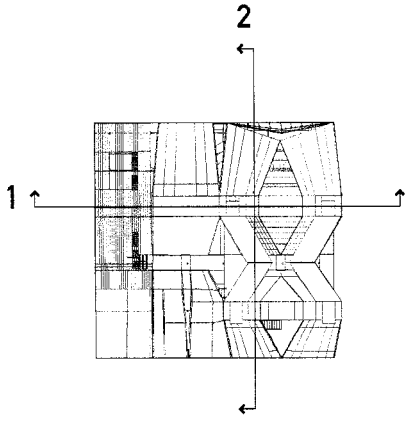
I_ Large Services

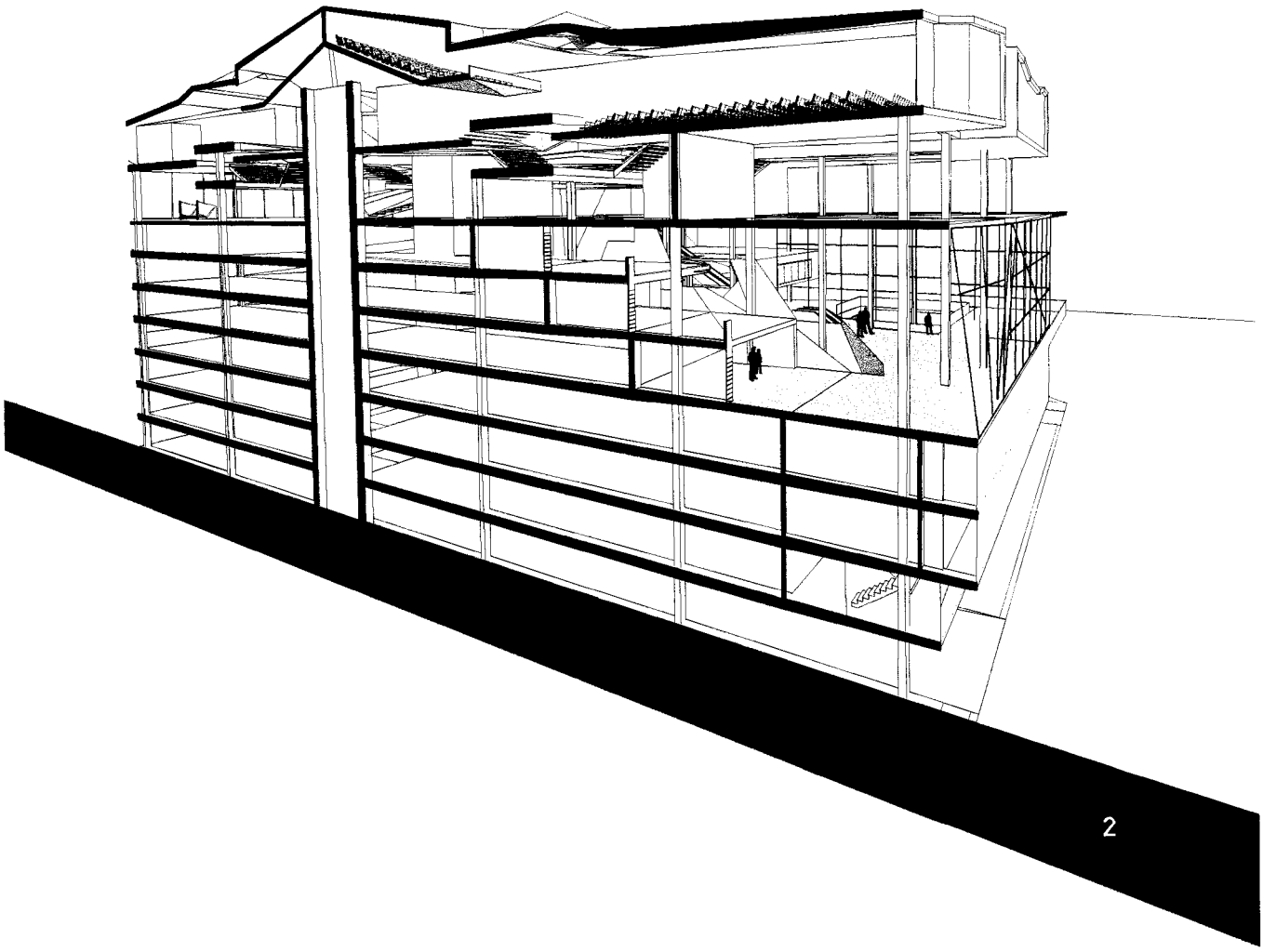
J_ Lease / Commercial


A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J

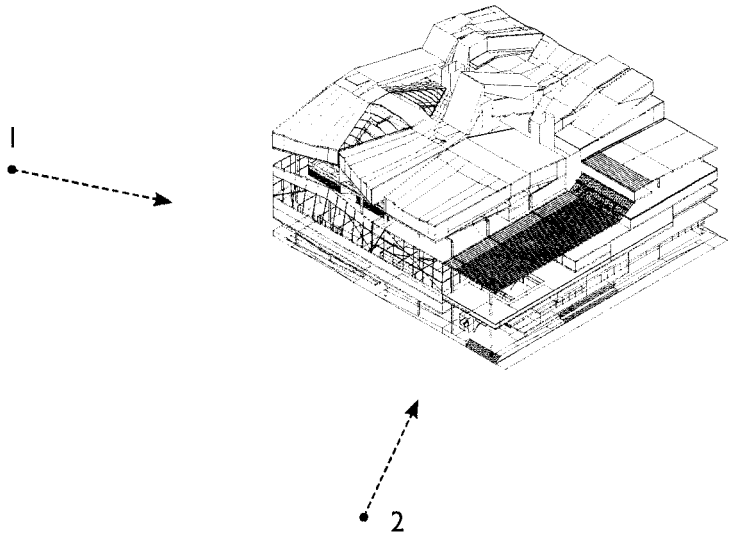


1



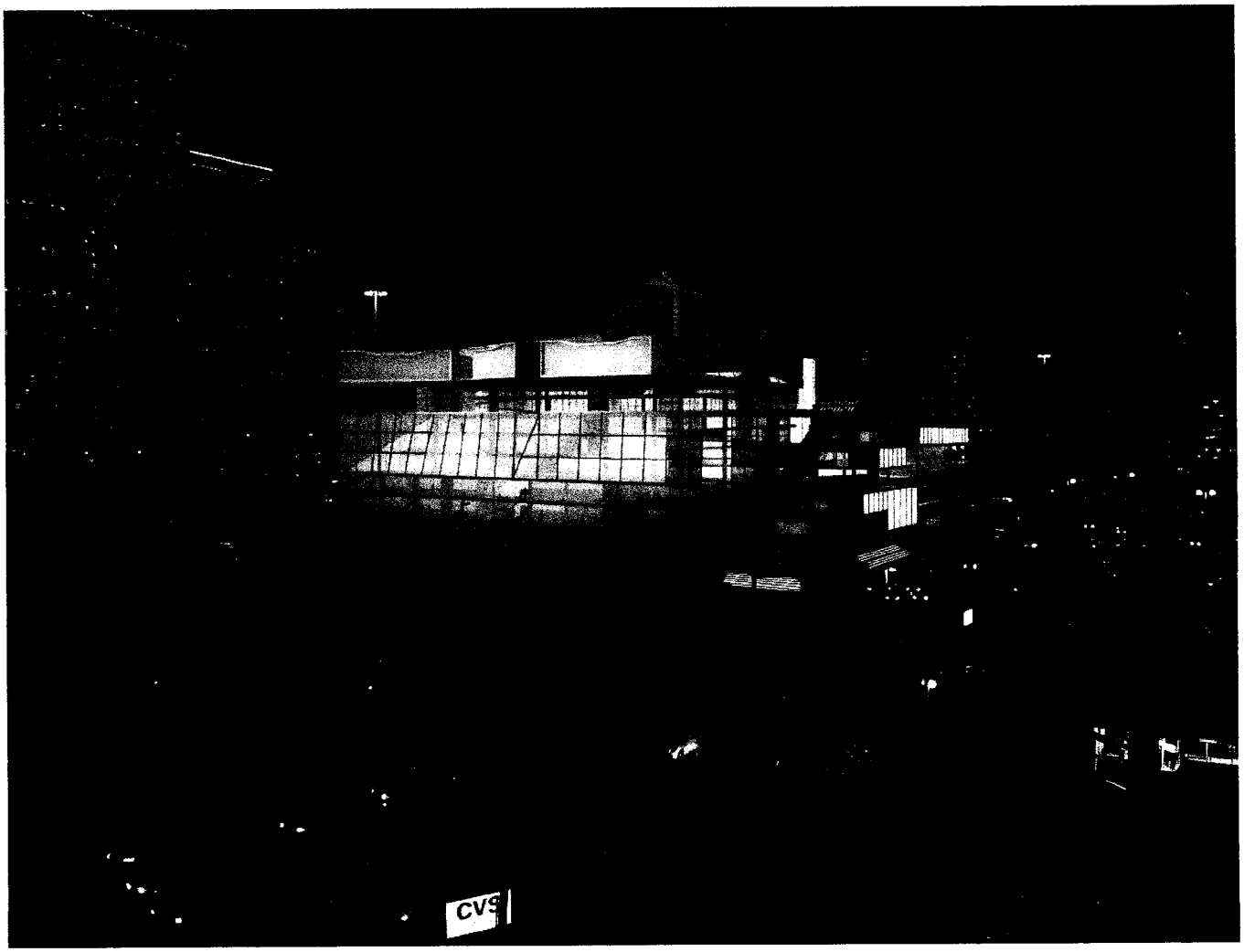


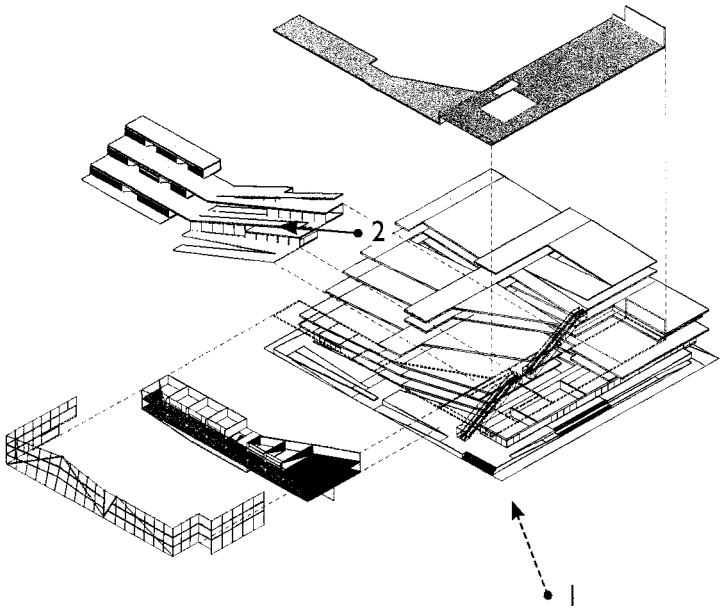
2



1. View at exit ramp from I-45

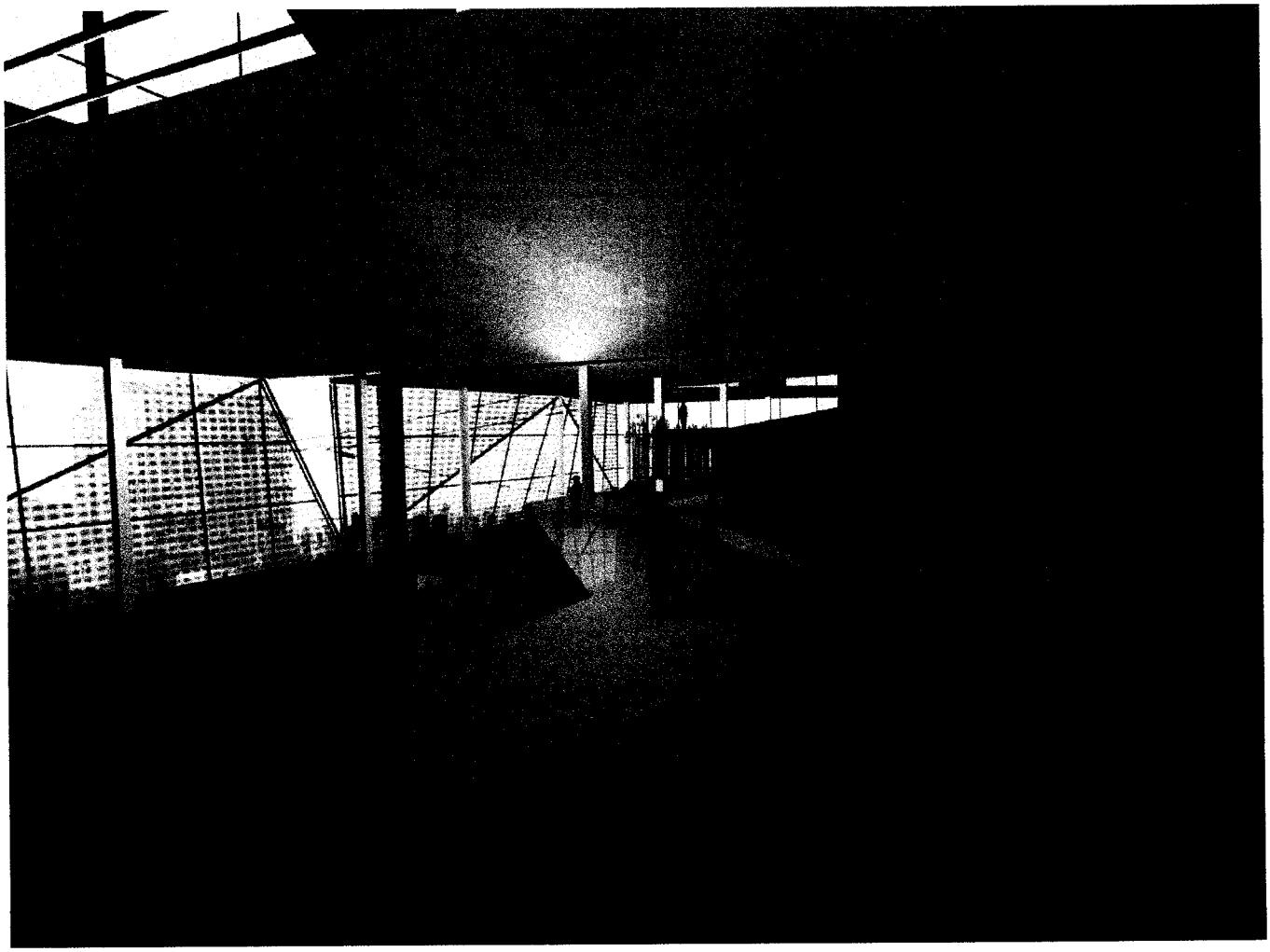
2. View from Midtown apartments

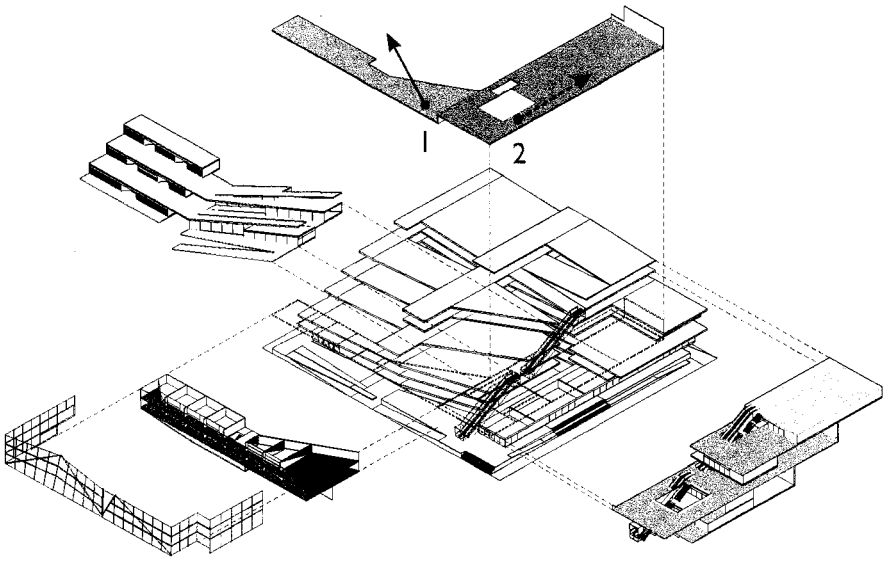




1. View across Gray St. at CVS pharmacy

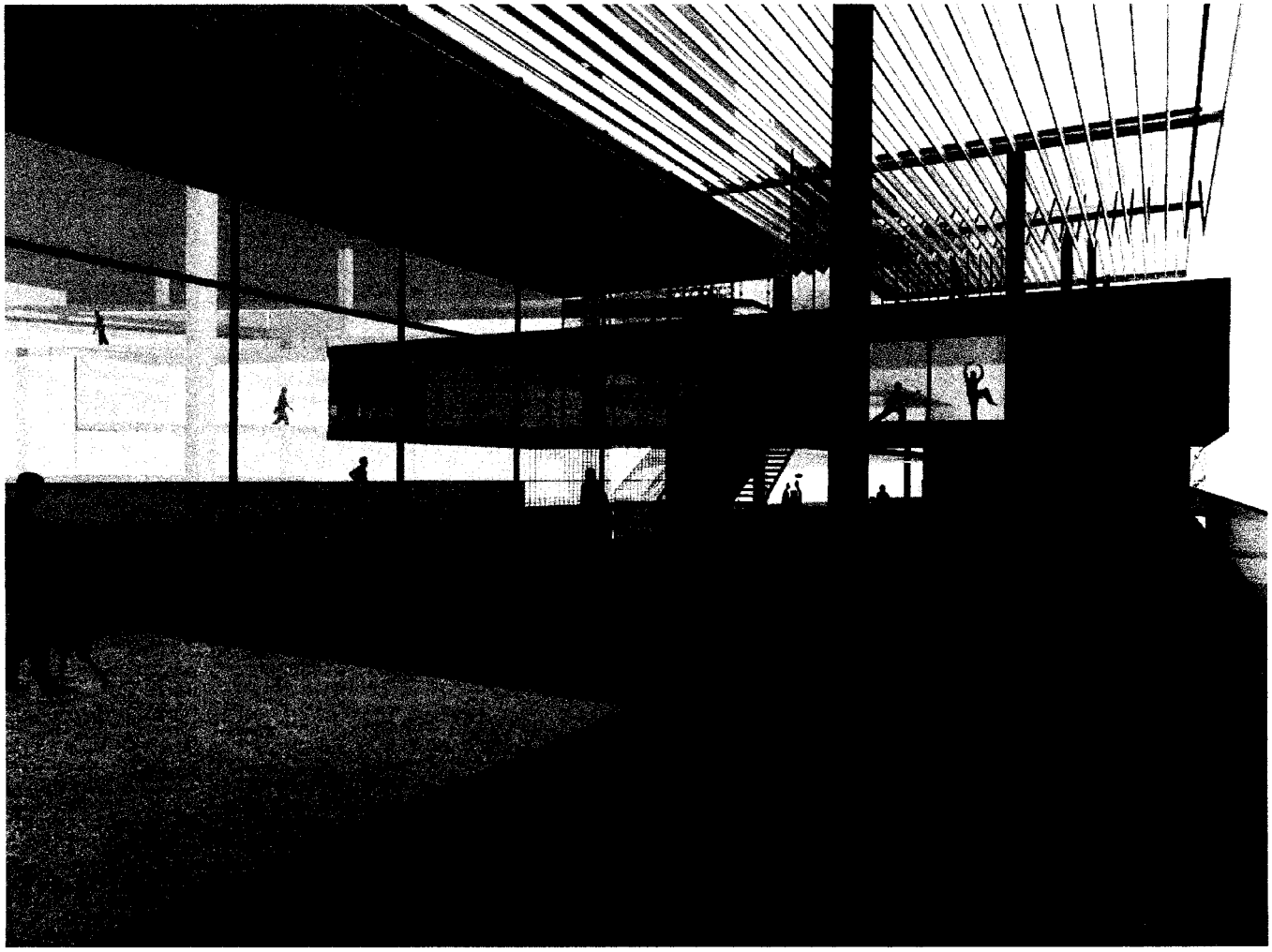
2. View inside atrium on small services/gathering (E)

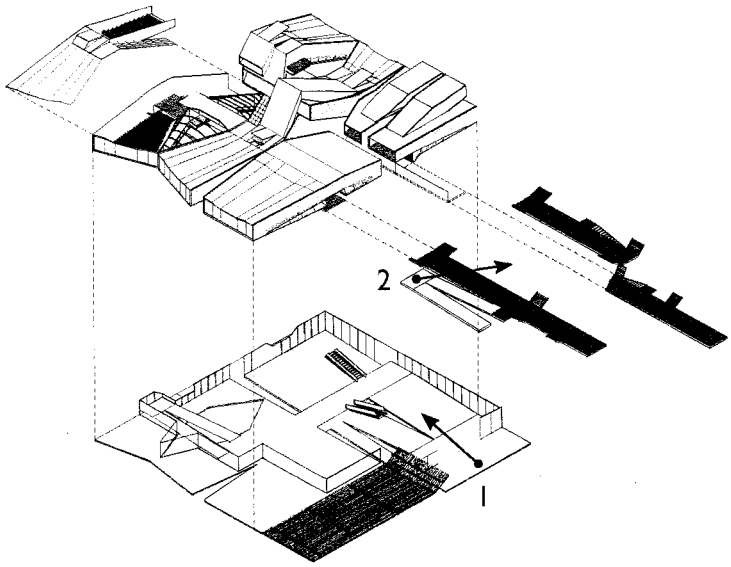




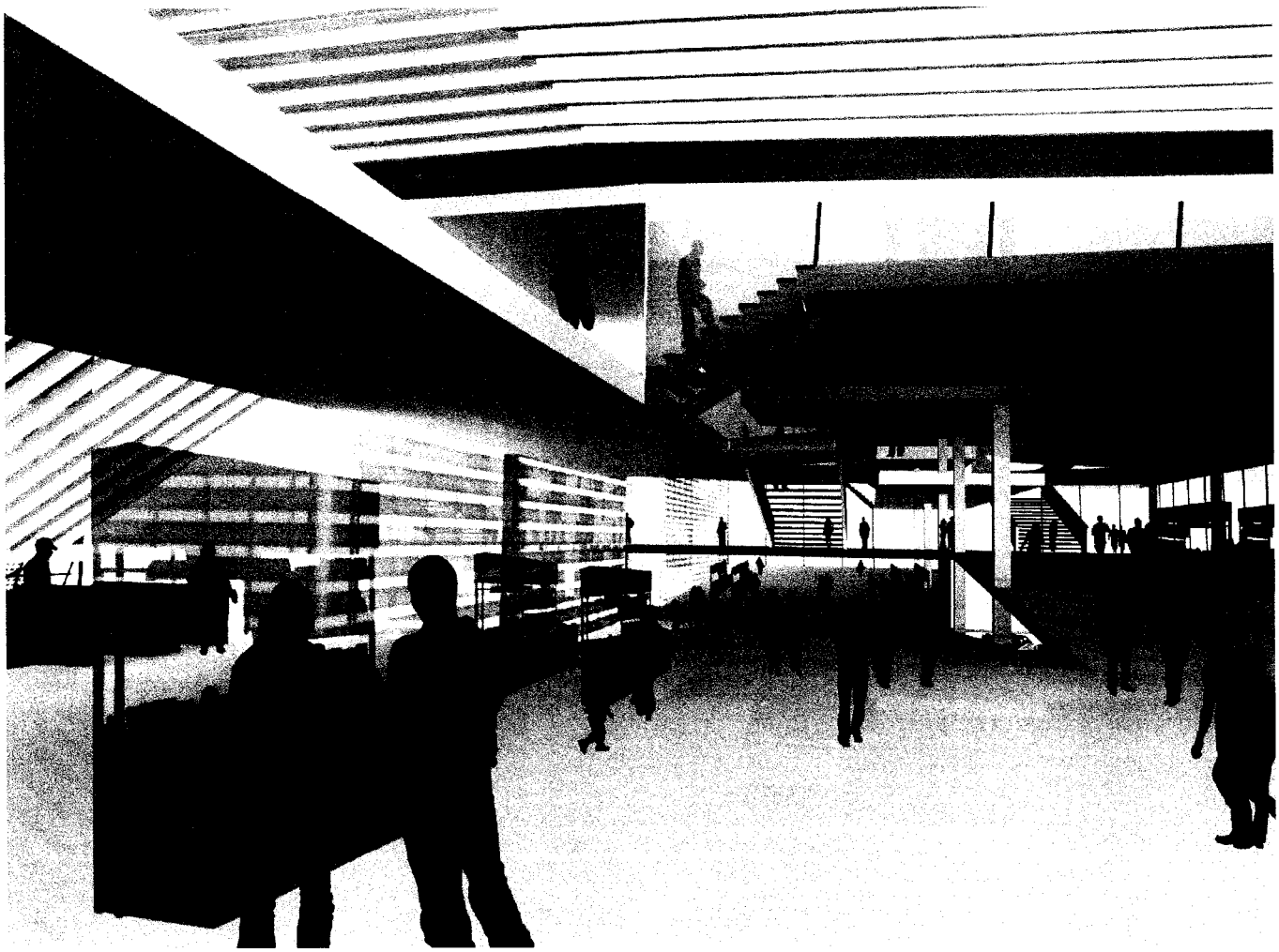
1. View above classrooms (F) on informal event level (D)

2. View on exterior informal event level (D)

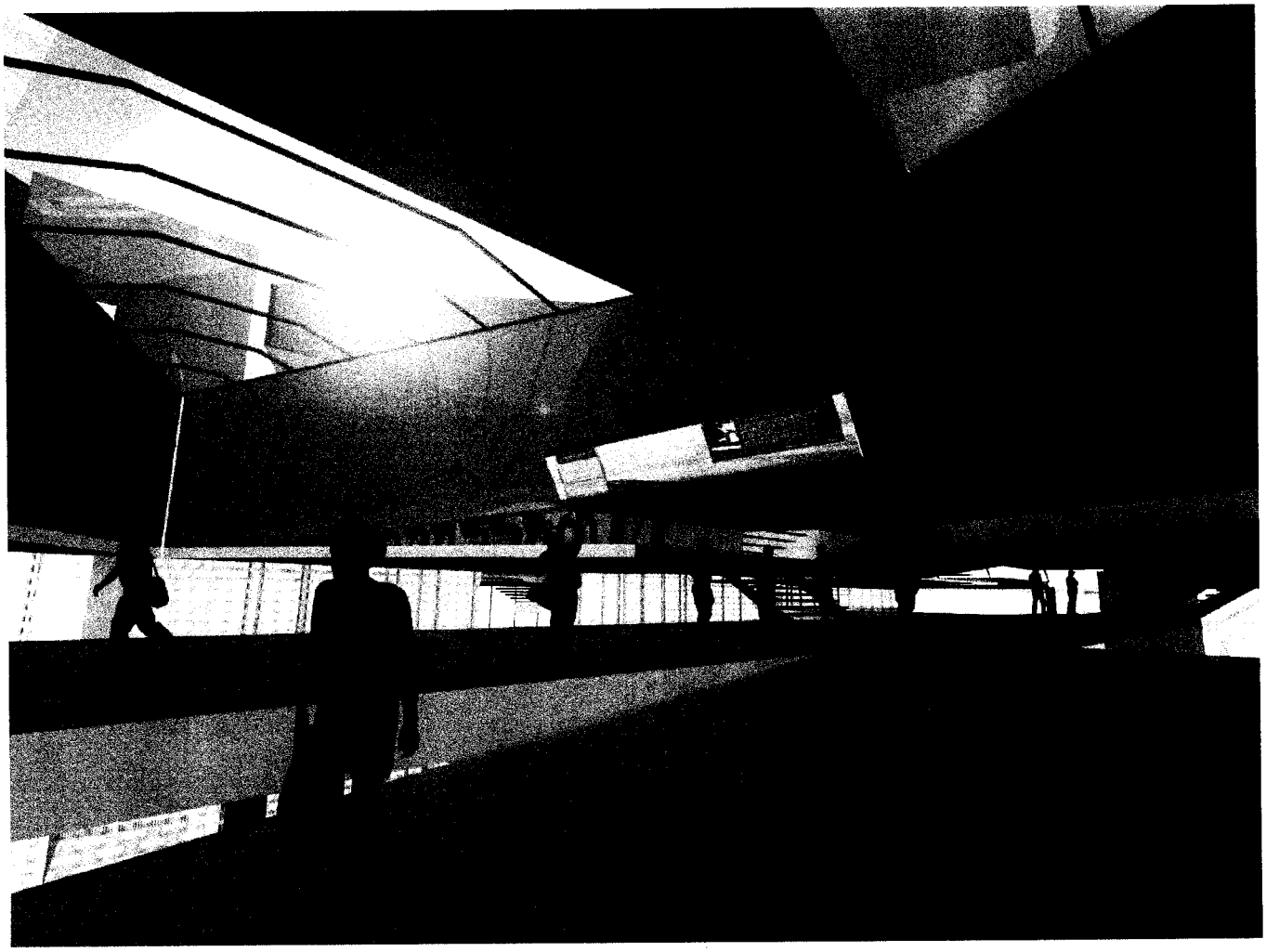


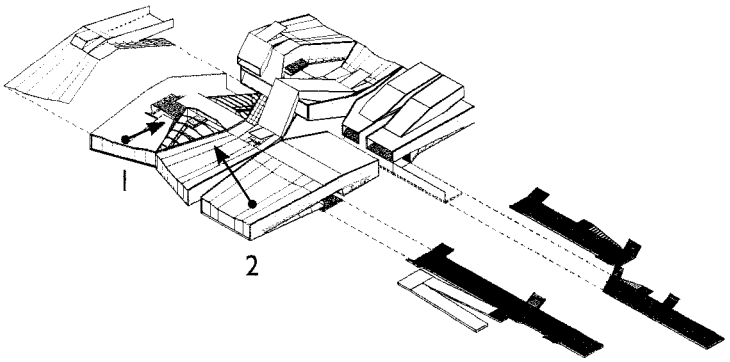


1. View at anti-spectacle level (C)

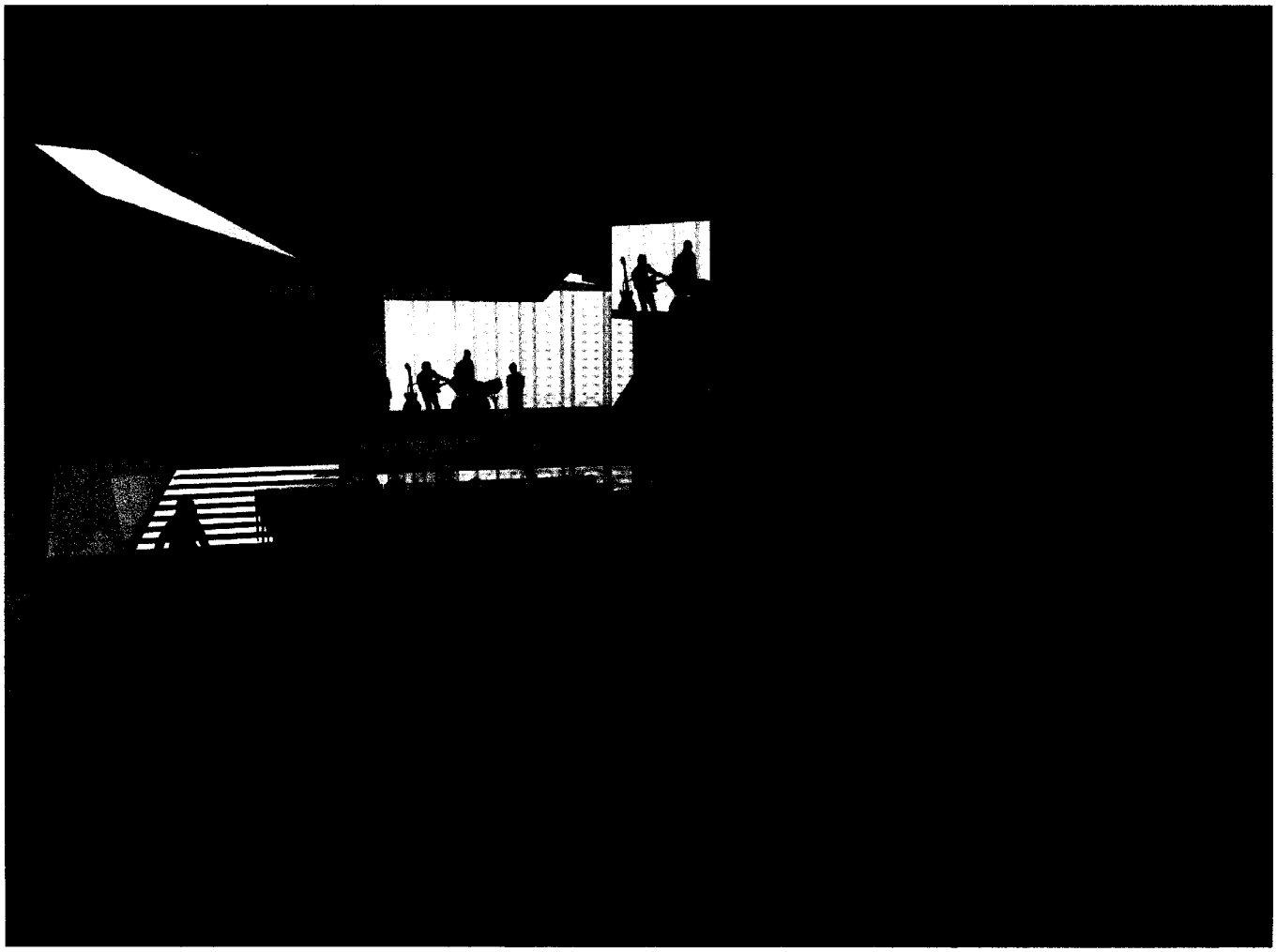


2. View at preview level (B) towards church

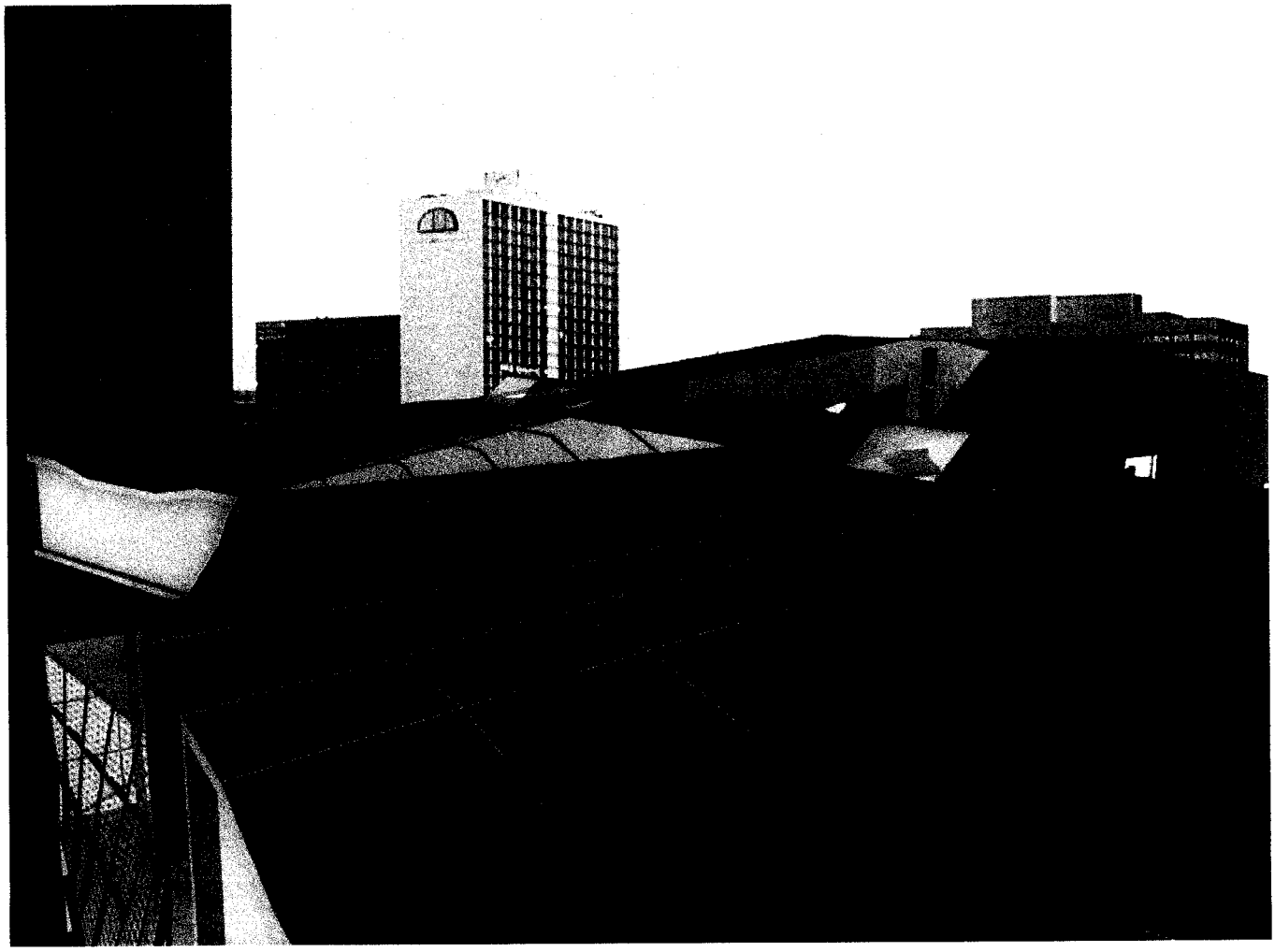




1. View inside one of the seven churches



2. View at roof level above churches



The Phenomena:

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An extensive research work expanding upon a former study done in 1999-2000. All known megachurches were given a survey that lead to an in-depth sociological report of their characteristics. This report sought to better understand this heated topic and debunks multiple popular myths -political association, homogeneity, denomination...

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America's most successful churches are modelling themselves on business. Elaborates on strategies for growth, using Willow Creek as a prime model for community outreach strategies.

Rybczynski, Witold. An Anatomy of Megachurches. The new look for places of worship. Slate 2005.
http://www.slate.com/id/2127615/
Brief photo essay illustrating the lack of design in megachurches.

Sharlet, Jeff. Soldiers of Christ, Inside America's most powerful me gachurch. Harper's Magazine. May, 2005.
New Life Church in Colorado Springs has become a dominant landmark and way of life. Located within site of the Air Force base this church, like the majoity of its relation, became mega very quickly. The article discusses the notions of church branding, exurban isolation, and market economics as strategies for the church.

Thumma, Scott. Exploring the megachurch Phenomena: their characteristics and cultural context.
http://hirr.hartsem.edu/bookshelf/thumma_article2.html#top
Written in conjunction with PhD research, this paper relies exclusively on a sociological perspective. It offers insight and comments on trends discovered though the Hartford's Institute's survey. The megachurch is analyzed as an extension of a larger framework of institutional organizational structures that have become a familiar part of every day American life.

Twitchell, James B. Branded Nation: The Marketing of Megachurch, College inc., and Museum World. Simon and Schuster. 2005.

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Steptoe, Sonja. The Man With The Purpose, Rick Warren's plan for spiritual fulfillment is making him America's most influential spiritual leader. Time. March 29, 2004

Vaughan, Dr. John. Top 50 Most Influential Churches. The Church Report. April 5, 2006.
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Based on a survey given to 2,000 church leaders, this study names Saddleback church and Willow Creek church as the two most influential. Lakewood is number five.

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Studio Sputnik. Spikjer, Jaakko van t. Lerup, Lars. Snooze: Immersing Architecture in Mass Culture.
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Julia travels the U.S. to catalogue the manner in which communities re-use the abandoned big box.

Kahn, Eve. Thinking Inside the Big Box. The New York Times. May 12, 2005
Discussion of big box conversion from retail to non-profit or church gathering space. Special attention is given to Wal Mart and their business policy that prevents other retailers from using their space once vacated

Kolinski, Gregory. The Church Report. Considering Business Park Sites for Your Growing Church. April 5, 2006.
Discusses the "advantages" of building a church in a business park. -Lack of weekend activity, cost, traffic, expansion, multi-use.

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http://www.christianstandard.com/articledisplay.asp?id=97
Describes "third place" church communities that are bridging the gap between community life and the use of their building.

LifeBridge gets OK to build new campus. Daily Times-Call.
http://www.longmontfyi.com/Local-Story.asp?ID=4568

Church vision for all. Daily Times-Call.
http://www.longmontfyi.com/Local-Story.asp?ID=5308

Planners approve church project. Daily Times-Call.

Newspaper articles discussing the progress of Lifebridge church's community development plan.

MAHLER, Jonathan. The Soul of the New Exurb. The New York Times. March 27, 2005.
http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/27/magazine/327MEGACHURCH.html?ex=1140584400&en=4928bfe914de0376&ei=5070
Chronicles the growth of radiant church in Surprise Arizona. Emphasis is given to its function within this disconnected exurb as a service to the community [founding of a charter school]. It then relates this notion to a larger trend of megachurch placement within disconnected communities. This method for evangelical outreach is thought to be influenced by the writings of Donald McGavran through a methodology of coming to people on their own terms.

Wal-Mart Supercenter planned for Hyde Park. Hyde Park Neighborhood Association.
http://www.austinhydepark.org/2004/200404NL.html
Hyde park Baptist Church in Austin, TX plans to sell their 5 story parking garage to Wal-Mart for conversion to the "Wal-Bap Worshopping Supercenter"