



Mid-Cities Community Church

BY FRANCES PUTMAN

Mid-Cities Community Church sits on a major thoroughfare connecting the two Texas towns of Midland and Odessa and reaches out into both communities.

“It’s a landmark coming from either direction,” said Buddy Siebenlist of Siebenlist Architects, Inc. in Tyler, Texas.

Before 2001, the church operated out of a classic, strip center-style, metal building. But they wanted to put on a striking face, something that would ap-

peal to the many people who drive by each day. They wanted something in the style called Texas Gothic—traditional, with an old-world feel. They wanted arches and curves and heavy wood, balanced with stained glass and lots of natural light. And the church didn’t want to do away with that metal strip building on the property, as they still needed it for additional space.

“We wanted to add the new building on the campus and have it blend with the older building,” Siebenlist said. “For

the best value for the money, we wanted to put as much money as possible into the new facility.”

Rather than upgrading or updating the existing building, Siebenlist designed a plan that would conceal the older building from direct sight.

“They are connected, but the older building is obscured,” he said.

The new facility was built only about 20 feet away from the old building, with the two connected by a walkway. An interior courtyard was created, using

fast facts

CHURCH: MID-CITIES COMMUNITY CHURCH

LOCATION: MIDLAND, TEXAS

DENOMINATION: NON-DENOMINATIONAL, AFFILIATED WITH THE MORNINGSTAR ORGANIZATION

ARCHITECT: BUDDY SIEBENLIST OF SIEBENLIST ARCHITECTS, INC., TYLER, TEXAS

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: 20,000-SQUARE-FOOT, 1,100-SEAT WORSHIP CENTER WITH MULTI-PURPOSE

AREAS, ALL CONNECTING WITH EXISTING METAL SIDING AND BRICK BUILDING

COST: \$3.2 MILLION

THE CHALLENGE: CREATING A TRADITIONAL-STYLE FACILITY THAT WOULD STILL ACCOMMODATE THE CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGIES USED WITHIN THE CHURCH



brick pavers, benches and lampposts to obscure the plain façade of the older building. The brick used to cover the old building was picked up and used in the new building, offering continuity.

Siebenlist said the project itself—which included a worship center, nursery classrooms and a parlor/conservatory—was not extensive. However, church leaders, who had been planning for a building project for some

time, had very definite ideas about the style and feel they wanted for the new facility.

It's a given in west Texas that the materials chosen for a building project have to be able to stand up to the heat and dry conditions. In addition to the brick chosen to match the existing building, Siebenlist used other materials, like synthetic stone and synthetic stucco. It's all topped with a combination of com-

posite and standing-seam roofing.

To create the dramatic interior, the architect teamed with a high-profile designer who previously had worked with the Dallas Cowboys on design projects.

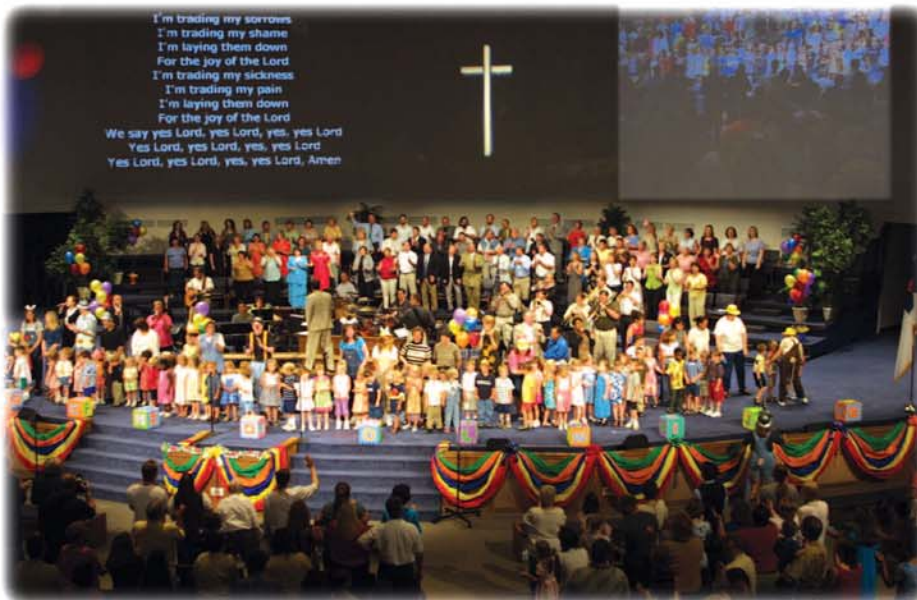
An impressive, four-story atrium-style foyer entrance, highlighted with quadrifoil stained-glass windows, leads into the worship center. Little touches that shape and create the old-world feel include a cut and patterned, stained

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concrete floor. Old world-style lighting fixtures and heavy, hammered-iron door hardware add to the castle style.

"We used very heavy, exposed timber trusses on the sanctuary interior," Siebenlist said. "And, quadrifoil stained glass behind the baptistery is a focal point."

The irony of the project, he said, is that this church, which chose such a traditional design, actually has a very young congregation and is progressive in its worship style.

State-of-the-art audio and video productions are part of many worship services. The church uses a wide range of highly technical equipment to add laser lights, smoke, pyrotechnics and special effects to its services.

"We designed an envelope within the sanctuary to reflect the very powerful equipment," Siebenlist said. "We had to support that."

Stained glass and natural light is essential to the Texas Gothic style, he



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Bethany Baptist Church, Somerdale, New Jersey



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added, but many churches that rely heavily on audio-visual equipment have opted for stained glass accents with artificial backlighting.

Since natural lighting was important to this church, concealed blackout curtains were installed, preset to lighting levels.

"They can program for this (curtain) to open and close," Siebenlist said.

Guest speakers from around the world have come to Mid-Cities Community Church for services, and couples are signing up months in advance to hold weddings in the new facility.

"It's the hottest church in west Texas, in terms of weddings," Siebenlist said.

And, that was a hope of the church's when the new facility was designed. Spacious and attractive brides' and grooms' rooms are appreciated by those planning a wedding.

The project, he added, highlights how many options are available for churches considering a building project.

"A lot of churches think there's a right way and a wrong way to design a new facility," he said. "But, in putting a building project together, anything is possible, including marrying an old-world, 500-year-old design style with contemporary, cutting-edge church services. The church building should reflect the personality of the church body. Each project should be unique."

RPN

*Siebenlist Architects, Inc.,
www.siebenlist.com, is an
architectural and construction
management firm in Tyler, Texas,
that works exclusively with church
projects nationwide.*