

Site Inventory Form
State Historical Society of Iowa
 (November 2005)

State Inventory No. 77-06470

New Supplemental

Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) _____

Relationship: Contributing Noncontributing

Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries

National Register Status:(any that apply) Listed De-listed NHL DOE

9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance (R&C) Number _____

Non-Extant (enter year) _____

FEB 23 2010

ELIGIBLE

1. Name of Property

historic name First Church of Christ, Scientist

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 3750 Grand Ave.

city or town Des Moines

vicinity, county Polk

Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name _____

Township No. _____

Range No. _____

Section _____ Quarter of Quarter _____

(If Urban) Subdivision Mason Place

Block(s) see continuation sheet

Lot(s) _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]

4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]

5. Classification

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

If Non-Eligible Property

Enter number of:

— buildings
 — sites
 — structures
 — objects
 — Total

If Eligible Property, enter number of:

Contributing Noncontributing

1 — buildings
 — — sites
 — — structures
 — — objects
 — — Total

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).

Title
N/A

Historical Architectural Data Base Number _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

06A01 Church

06A01 Church

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

04B Gothic Revival

foundation

03 brick, 10 reinforced concrete

Early English with Norman and Spanish elements

walls (visible material)

04C limestone, 03brick, haydite, plaster, 02wood

09D02 Gable roof 09G04 Side Steeple

roof

04E slate shingle, 05B copper gutters and spire

other

04D Travertine marble, 04C Lannon stone

Narrative Description (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

- Yes No More Research Recommended
- Yes No More Research Recommended
- Yes No More Research Recommended
- Yes No More Research Recommended

- A Property is associated with significant events.
- B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.
- C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.
- D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.

County Polk
City Des Moines

Address 3750 Grand Ave.

Site Number 77-06470
District Number

Criteria Considerations

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B Removed from its original location.
- C A birthplace or grave.
- D A cemetery
- E A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F A commemorative property.
- G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

02

Significant Dates

Construction date
1931 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates, including renovation

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Architect
Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas Architects
Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

10. Geographic Data

UTM References (OPTIONAL)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>15</u>	<u>444280</u>			
		<u>4603786</u>	2		
3			4		

See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shannon Schaefer, intern
organization Historical Society of Iowa
street & number 600 E. Locust St.
city or town Des Moines state Iowa date February 2010
telephone 515-451-1464 zip code 50319-0290

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)

FOR ALL PROPERTIES

- Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
- Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
- Photographs:** representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

Roll/slide sheet #	_____	Frame/slot #	_____	Date Taken	_____
Roll/slide sheet #	_____	Frame/slot #	_____	Date Taken	_____
Roll/slide sheet #	_____	Frame/slot #	_____	Date Taken	_____

- See continuation sheet or attached *photo & slide catalog sheet* for list of photo roll or slide entries.
- Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL

- Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or noncontributing status)
- Barn:**
 - A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
 - A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
 - A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line

Concur with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility: Yes No More Research Recommended
 This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments: _____

Evaluated by (name/title): Paula Moran, architectural historian Date: 03/02/2010

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Related District Number

Page 1

First Church of Christ, Scientist

Polk

Name of Property

County

3750 Grand Ave.

Des Moines

Address

City

Iowa Site Inventory Form: Continuation Sheet

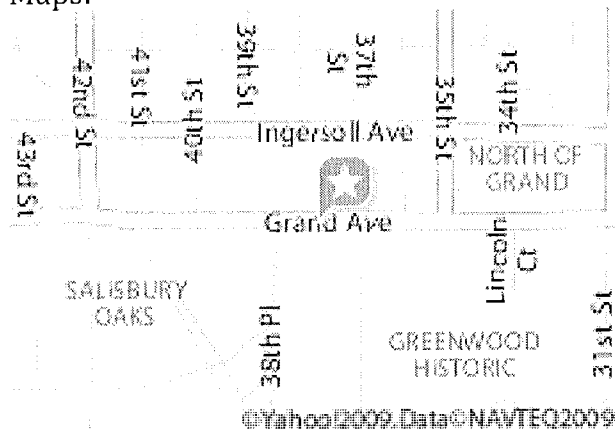
Prepared by Shannon N. Schaefer

First Church of Christ, Scientist
3750 Grand Ave.
Des Moines, Iowa 50312-2806
Polk

Section 2:

Legal Description (Urban): LTS 2,3,4 & 5 &-EX S55F- LTS 11,12,13 & 14 Mason Place

Maps:



Physical Description of the First Church of Christ, Scientist

In 1931 the significant Lannon stone edifice was built and is still occupied by the First Church of Christ, Scientist¹. Approaching the Gothic Revival church from Grand Avenue the first element seen when looking up is the copper spire which tops the square stone tower. The roof still contains the slate shingles (Fig. 1). The church sits along Grand Avenue approximately 25 blocks west of downtown Des Moines, and only a few blocks west of Des Moines University. Greenwood Elementary School backs up to the church on its south side of the parking lot. Adjacent to the Church on the east is the state PEO office, a woman's organization. Turning down the narrow drive which hugs the east side of the building, it leads to the parking lot added to the church grounds in 1934.² This side now contains the main entrance to the church with easier access from the parking lot (Fig. 2). The landscape around the church consists of grass, a straight pathway leading to the courtyard, shrubs and bushes, and large old trees shading the grounds. The structure emerging from the surrounding trees reveals the colossal durable stones stacked, layer upon layer exposing a 1930s modern interpretation of a medieval church (Fig. 3).

Walking towards the building the two front wings project out toward the street, creating a welcoming courtyard space (Fig. 4, 5). The plan of the building is organized into three main sections, which correlate to the church's three functional needs: education, worship and administration. The west wing accommodates the first functional area of the Church, the Sunday School and Nursery. The front door in the courtyard began as the main entrance for members, leading into the foyer and lobby, which lead to the Auditorium, the second functional space for the church (Fig. 6).³ The east wing houses the Church's third functional space for the Committees of the Church and their activities⁴. This side of the courtyard is made up of semi-pointed arched arcades, protecting the windows, lighting the Committee area (Fig. 7). Each section will be discussed in further detail as the descriptive tour proceeds through the building.

The north-side entrance is set off by two heavy wooden doors faced with metal strap work (Fig. 8, 9) and are placed within the stonework that dominates the façade. Between the two doors is a single column signaling the Early English characteristic style with Norman and Spanish elements throughout the building⁵. Etched into this slender column are angular pointed lines along its length. Its capital is made up of curving lines with Ionic-like volutes topped by a simple Doric-like crown (Fig. 10). Above the doors are thin vertical stained glass windows and above

¹ First Church of Christ, Scientist. *A History of First Church of Christ, Scientist Des Moines, Iowa, 1892-1992*. Centennial Celebration. (Des Moines, Iowa: 19,20 Sep. 1992), 2.

² Jones, Whitten. Chairman of the Board of Committees at the First Church of Christ, Scientist. Personal Interview. (Des Moines, IA: 16 Oct. 2009).

³ Ibid.

⁴ First Church of Christ, Scientist. *History of First Church of Christ, Scientist Des Moines, Iowa*. Organized by Neva Cornwell. (Des Moines, Iowa: 1932), 11.

⁵ First Church of Christ, Scientist. *A History of First Church of Christ, Scientist Des Moines, Iowa, 1892-1992*. Centennial Celebration. (Des Moines, Iowa: 19,20 Sep. 1992), 2.

that is the engraving, "First Church of Christ Scientist", all enclosed by a round arch (Fig. 11, 12). Higher up on this section of the façade is another set of thin stained glass windows, and then the stone comes to a peaked gable. From the entrance looking west, the cornerstone was placed on the façade in 1931 during the cornerstone ceremony in which church members moved the original cornerstone from their first location in Des Moines on 8th street to their new spacious location (Fig. 13 and 14)⁶. Moving away from the courtyard one notices the same detailed copper lamps in the courtyard also appear on each corner of the wings (Fig. 15 and 16). The north facing, east wing window reveals the room where the committees hold board meetings and duals as a reading room (Fig. 17). Heading toward the parking lot to the current entrance of the church on the east side, one observes two wooden doors with less metal strapping as the north entrance. These doors are also divided by a single column, but much simpler in detail (Fig. 18). The doors are topped by a collection of thin vertical stained glass windows coming to a peak.

Upon entering the building, one steps onto the original Travertine marble from Italy covering the entire foyer floor (Fig. 19, 20, 21).⁷ The white walls create a bright entrance space. The light fixtures and furniture in the church appear to be original and designed specifically for the building (Fig. 22, 23, 24, 25).⁸ A permanent fixture in the foyer placed on a table for all to see, is the original model from 1931, encased in a plexi-glass box (Fig. 26, 27, 28). This model was created so as to allow the church members to see fully the design that would become their Church.⁹ Moving from the foyer into the lobby area, a change occurs in the wall covering, of dark stained Douglas Fir wood panels fitted with nickel plated strips between each wood panel (Fig. 29 and 30).¹⁰ This lobby area has uniquely designed benches for this room as well.¹¹

Entering through the two wooden doors into a main functional space of the Church, one is greeted by a large room called the Auditorium (Fig. 31, 32). Here there are rows of the original fold down theater-type seats, with wire hat holders on the underside (Fig. 33, 34). Each side of the auditorium is lined with stained glass windows on the outer walls (Fig. 35, 36), leading up to the main stage space on the south side, where the speakers stand and read during church gatherings (Fig. 37). Behind the stage are private rooms for the readers to prepare before their services, as well as a flower preparing station. There is also radio device cabinets that were originally here when church services were broadcast over a radio station beginning in the 1930s.¹²

⁶ First Church of Christ, Scientist. *History of First Church of Christ, Scientist Des Moines, Iowa*. Organized by Neva Cornwell. (Des Moines, Iowa: 1932).

⁷ Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas Architects. Specifications for General Construction of the First Church of Christ, Scientist. (Des Moines, Iowa: April 1931), 92.

⁸ Jones, Whitten. Personal Interview. 2009.

⁹ First Church of Christ, Scientist. *History of First Church of Christ, Scientist Des Moines, Iowa*. Organized by Neva Cornwell. (Des Moines, Iowa: 1932).

¹⁰ Proudfoot Architects. Specifications for General Construction. (1931), 74.

¹¹ Jones, Whitten. Personal Interview.

¹² Ibid.

Back in the main auditorium space, each row of seats contains hearing devices put in place at some point in the Church's history, for those members with hearing problems (Fig. 38).¹³ On the south wall to the left of the stage, there is a quote by Jesus Christ (Fig. 39) and to the right of the stage the wall contains a quote by Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of The Church of Christ, Scientist (Fig. 40). Surrounding the stage area there is gold-toned paneling with intricate details (Fig. 41). On the stage there is still the Church's original organ that traveled with them from their first location in Des Moines on 8th street (Fig. 42). The truss roof is ornamented with chandeliers lining the large room (Fig. 43). The side aisles contain more stained glass windows specifically designed for the church (Fig. 44). The outer wall construction is made up of the interior plaster, followed by brick, then the exterior Lannon Stone.¹⁴ The walls of the side aisle are exposed brick (Fig. 45).

To get to the balcony space, one has to take steps off the foyer area. The seats here consist of long benches for additional seating in the Auditorium (Fig. 46); the church accommodated up to 1,100 people at one time in the early church history.¹⁵ The covering for the floor space in the Auditorium was originally planned to be carpet for acoustical purposes, but the original carpet designed for the Church was replaced in the mid-70s.¹⁶ The original carpet can still be seen in the Sunday School room, and the pattern mimics the stained glass windows throughout the church.¹⁷

On either side of the lobby there are doors for the original restrooms complete with original porcelain toilets and tiling; one for the men, called the "Men's Retiring Room" (Fig. 47) and one for the women, called the "Women's Retiring Room" (Fig. 48).

Adjacent to the west side of the foyer there is a large open vertical space, which is the interior of the tower and spire (Fig. 49, 50, 51). This space contains a stained glass window and hanging light fixture. From this space one enters the first functional space according to the church, the wing containing the Sunday School room and Nursery. The Sunday School room is surrounded by brick walls with stained glass windows and three levels of classroom space divided by wooden half-walls. These wooden walls are strapped by rod-iron rods dressed with curtains, and when swung out create individual classrooms for different age groups (Fig. 52, 53). The Sunday School ritual begins with all the children gathering and facing toward a smaller version of a stage as in the Auditorium (Fig. 54, 55) and reading along in their Christian Science Hymnal (Fig. 56).¹⁸ The stage contains the original carpet designed for the church that once covered the floors of the Auditorium (Fig. 57). The altar-like piece on the stage was moved from their original 8th Street location,

¹³ Jones, Whitten. Personal Interview. 2009.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ 1892-1992: First Church of Christ, Scientist. Pamphlet. (Des Moines, IA: 1992), 5.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

and contains the symbol of Christian Science, a crown with a cross (Fig. 58).¹⁹ The wall behind the stage contains the words, "God is Love" with four small square stained glass windows (Fig. 59). The truss roof is covered by wooden paneling and has chandeliers similar to the Auditorium (Fig. 60). Towards the north end of the room away from the entrance of the foyer, there is a bell that is rung during the Sunday School sessions (Fig. 61).²⁰

Walking north away from the Sunday School room, an open space used by the teachers of the Sunday School leads to two doors that open to the courtyard. In this area as well, access to the Nursery is also found. The Nursery was renovated around 1990 to accommodate the current needs of caring for children too young to attend Sunday School.²¹ These updates include newer carpeting, and closing of a half-wall to eliminate noise from the young children in the Nursery.²²

Continuing on to the opposite wing of the building on the east side, this is next to the current entrance on the parking lot side. This wing houses a once large coat storage space, that was reduced in 2002, to allow for more working space for church committee members.²³ Windows let in light from the courtyard area (Fig. 62). This wing also contains office space for the Director of the Board Committee, and a fireproof storage space, which contains all the Church's records and files. At the end of the wing there is a reading room which duals as the Board's meeting room (Fig. 17). This room contains a collection of Christian Science literature started by the woman at the beginning of the Church's formation.²⁴ A staircase, with original metal railings (Fig. 63), leads to a room above the Committee room where the ushers gather before each church gathering.²⁵

There is a basement level, which is reached through a fireproof metal door on the east side of the building. The basement contains access to the tunnels throughout the Church's lower level allowing for airflow (Fig. 64). Also the heater is housed here as well as the air conditioner, which was added to the building soon after it was completed in the late 1930s.²⁶ The heating and air conditioning units were replaced in 1962.²⁷

An overall view of the building commissioned by the members of the First Church of Christ, Scientist can be seen in the floor plans designed by the commissioned architectural firm, Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas (Fig. 65, 66).

¹⁹ 1892-1992: First Church of Christ, Scientist. Pamphlet. (Des Moines, IA: 1992), 5.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Whitten Jones. Personal Interview, 2009.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ 1892-1992: First Church of Christ, Scientist. Pamphlet. (Des Moines, IA: 1992), 5.

Historical Significance of the First Church of Christ, Scientist

History of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Des Moines

The First Church of Christ, Scientist began in 1879 by founder, Mary Baker Eddy in Boston.²⁸ Teachings are based on those of Jesus Christ, interpreted by Mrs. Eddy.²⁹ One main belief of this religion is the healing of sins, sickness, and any other source of "evil" through "prayer and without the intervention of drugs or other material means."³⁰ This new, truly American religion began to spread throughout the country. In the 1880s a literary study group in Des Moines, Iowa received a copy of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*.³¹ Unable to fully understand the material of this new way of thinking but interested to know more, a group arranged a speaker from Chicago to come to Des Moines and explain the message.³² Interest in the message resulted and more people wanted to learn of this new American religion. In 1886 Mary E. Harris, C.S.D. of Hartford Connecticut, a pupil of Mrs. Eddy, came to Des Moines to teach a class of six.³³ Small groups held church services after these classes in private homes until 1890 then public services were held in the High Street Baptist Church.³⁴ The Des Moines group filed paperwork in 1892, forming the official organization of "Church of Christ, Scientist", a branch of The Mother Church in Boston.³⁵

Once an official branch of the Church of Christ Scientist, the Des Moines group held church services in many Des Moines locations in the early years. These locations included, "The Equitable Building, Lehman Hall, the Redhead Building and the YMCA auditorium."³⁶ Then in 1900 their branch name was changed to "First Church of Christ, Scientist, Des Moines" and they purchased a lot at 927 8th Street in Des Moines. Construction began soon after and was completed in 1903, finally dedicated in 1908.³⁷ Their first official church sat 700 members, which their congregation outgrew quickly. By 1928 they had to move out of their building and temporarily into the Des Moines Women's Club while searching for a new location to build on.³⁸ Finally the purchase of 38th Place and Grand Avenue lot at \$16,500, would allow for the building of a structure that would accommodate their growing congregation.³⁹ This is where the Church remained until December 2009.⁴⁰ The Church is currently

²⁸ Jane Boulware. "The Bastion of Christian Science-What it is, How it came to be-39 churches in Iowa." Des Moines Tribune. (Des Moines, Iowa: 29 Jan 1972).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ *History of First Church of Christ, Scientist*, Des Moines, Iowa. Assembled by Mrs. Neva Cornwell. 1932, (C.S. Sentinel Feb. 15, 1908, p. 469 vol. X No. 24. Des Moines, Iowa), F-1.

³¹ Ibid., 1.

³² 1892-1992: First Church of Christ, Scientist. Pamphlet. (Des Moines, IA: 1992), 1.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ *History of First Church of Christ, Scientist*, Des Moines, Iowa. Assembled by Mrs. Neva Cornwell. 1932, 3.

³⁹ 1892-1992: First Church of Christ, Scientist. Pamphlet. (Des Moines, IA: 1992), 1.

⁴⁰ Whitten Jones. Personal Interview, 2009.

remodeling and will soon move into their new location at 801 Grand Ave., in West Des Moines.⁴¹

A Building Committee and Metaphysical Committee of the church appointed the Des Moines Architectural firm of Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas on August 4, 1930.⁴² Mr. Clark Souers was made the chief architect on the project, possibly due to one of his relatives being a member of the church.⁴³ Souers and a representative church member, Mr. H.T. Rollins chairman of the church building committee, visited other Christian Science churches.⁴⁴ The other churches selected by the church committee and were studied to help determine what elements were desired by this congregation and were knowledgeable of the most modern ideas for Christian Science churches.⁴⁵ Souers considered the needs of the church, along with what they observed in their survey, and came up with two main plans.⁴⁶ The functional needs of the Church were divided up into three; first for the Sunday School accommodating the needs of the children; second for the Church to allow for Sunday services, Wednesday meetings and any other gatherings of the entire church community; third for the Committee providing space for the Board, ushers, storing of Literature, and meetings for any church business.⁴⁷ Each of Souers' plans contained space for each of these functional needs, one within a Colonial or Classical type plan, which was similar to their first location in Des Moines as well as many other Christian Science Churches, and the other option was what they called "the group plan", a Gothic Revival style.⁴⁸ Souers favored "the group plan" because it lent itself more to the needs of the church; it also was the more economical choice and eventually became the choice of the Church as well in January 1931.⁴⁹

A Building Fund was set up among the Church members in order to finance the new church.⁵⁰ Finding more cost effective ways to build the church such as the use of cheaper yet stronger Lannon Limestone instead of Indiana Limestone, along with this building fund, ground was finally broke on April 20, 1931. The cornerstone from the 8th street location was laid on July 9th, 1931.⁵¹ Due to Church customs, the structure could not be dedicated until all debt was paid off. Though services were held in the Church starting in May 1932, the Church paid off the full cost of \$227,000 and the dedication ceremony was held on September 24, 1944.⁵² Though the Des Moines Register indicated this cost for the building, the church recorded another

⁴¹ Whitten Jones. Personal Interview, 2010.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ 1892-1992: First Church of Christ, Scientist. Pamphlet. (Des Moines, IA: 1992), 1.

⁴⁴ *History of First Church of Christ, Scientist*, Des Moines, Iowa. Assembled by Mrs. Neva Cornwell. 1932, 10.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ 1892-1992: First Church of Christ, Scientist. Pamphlet. (Des Moines, IA: 1992), 2.

⁵² "Celebrate End of Church Debt." *The Des Moines Register*, 25 Sept 1944.

cost for their building as \$950,000.⁵³ Further research would need to be conducted to reconcile this discrepancy.

The members of the Church not only gave up money to fund the construction, but also gave their time and talents in aiding the needs of the Church. Some helped in donating tables, binding books for the services, and other such talents.⁵⁴ The people of the Church not only helped the Church itself, but the new structure in the neighborhood aided the entire community in this area of Des Moines. For example, two homes nearby which were vacant became occupied, as well as surrounding neighbors who were opposed to the Church construction at first expressed joy for the church addition to their neighborhood.⁵⁵

History of Christian Science Architecture in the United States

The first Christian Science church was dedicated in Boston in 1895, which spurred the building boom of the expanding religion across America up through the early 1930s.⁵⁶ Christian Science "was a rapidly expanding home-grown American religion that didn't need to consider its own historical traditions in church architecture since it had none."⁵⁷ Due to this lack of precedent of a building style, when congregations were to build a church many early ones were built in a classical style to convey strength and legitimacy.⁵⁸ Classical revival was a popular style in the late 19th century due to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, symbolizing the power of institutionalism.⁵⁹ An important factor of the style chosen for Christian Science churches was the fact that decisions were left up to each individual congregation, in how they wanted to portray themselves to the public.⁶⁰ The leaders of the Mother Church had no control over the branches.⁶¹ Many of these churches were built in urban areas where the most members lived. The typical urban Christian Science church relied on a central-plan with a classical column porch façade to create an authoritative presence.⁶² The interior also typically reflected this classical detailing, with functional space for the Auditorium and a Sunday School underneath, along with office space for church business on the main floor.⁶³ The interior was not elaborate in decoration or ornamentation.⁶⁴ Along with a new type of architecture emerging, Christian Science also aimed their building projects to be a source of urban renewal, meeting the needs and stimulating renewal within

⁵³ Whitten Jones. Personal Interview, 2010.

⁵⁴ *History of First Church of Christ, Scientist, Des Moines, Iowa*. Assembled by Mrs. Neva Cornwell. 1932, 26.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Paul Eli Ivey. *Prayers in Stone: Christian Science Architecture in the United States 1894-1930*. University of Illinois Press (Urbana and Chicago, IL: 1999), 1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

American cities.⁶⁵ It was believed by Christian Scientists and architects of these churches that this architectural style “not only represented the new institution but also contributed broadly to a new American architecture.”⁶⁶

As time went on in the history of this new religion debates began over the style to be used for the construction of Christian Science churches. On one side people argued the use of classical architecture because it “represented a restoration of a perfected architecture associated with the time of primitive Christianity” which aligned with the church’s belief in ways of the primitive Gospel.⁶⁷ Others argued the point of the religion’s relationship with ecclesiastical Christendom, and as a “completion of historical and traditional Christianity: a church should be recognizable as a church, that is, Romanesque or Gothic in style.”⁶⁸ The choices between the two competing styles within the booming Christian Science building period remained and were both used by congregations. The use of one style over the other was “indicative of a congregation’s ideals of religious association, social appeal, and public reform.”⁶⁹ One aspect that both architectural styles had in common was the urge to portray the religion’s strong belief in modernism, the practices of a primitive faith in the modern world.

The spread of Christian Science architecture touched Iowa with 39 churches throughout the state in 1972.⁷⁰ An example of a Christian Science church once appeared in Marshalltown, Iowa built in 1902-3 in a Prairie School style, with honest materials and function.⁷¹ Two other examples just within Des Moines in the 1970s, though only one remains today, which has stood at 3750 Grand Avenue since 1931.⁷² The original church location for the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Des Moines was on 8th Street, and was designed by the architectural firm of Hallett & Rawson in a classical style, of stone and with a column portico façade in 1903.⁷³ The church in this site inventory report, the First Church of Christ, Scientist at 38th Place and Grand Avenue, was the second location of the congregation, a Gothic Revival style by the Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas architectural firm.⁷⁴ Even throughout Iowa the use of different styles were employed by the congregations of Christian Scientists. All are worthy of distinction in their own right.

⁶⁵ Paul Eli Ivey. *Prayers in Stone: Christian Science Architecture in the United States 1894-1930*. University of Illinois Press (Urbana and Chicago, IL: 1999), 6.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁷⁰ Jane Boulware. “The Bastion of Christian Science-What it is, How it came to be-39 churches in Iowa.” *Des Moines Tribune*. (Des Moines, Iowa: 29 Jan 1972).

⁷¹ Paul Eli Ivey. *Prayers in Stone*, 178.

⁷² Jane Boulware. “The Bastion of Christian Science” *Des Moines Tribune*. 1972.

⁷³ *History of First Church of Christ, Scientist*, Des Moines, Iowa. Assembled by Mrs. Neva Cornwell. 1932, (C.S. Sentinel July 31, 1902, p. 772 Vol. IV No. 48), D-1.

⁷⁴ 1892-1992: First Church of Christ, Scientist. Pamphlet. (Des Moines, IA: 1992), 2.

Proudfoot, Bird, Rawson, Souers & Thomas Architectural Heritage in Iowa

William Thomas Proudfoot with George W. Bird established one of the finest architectural firms in Des Moines, Iowa in the early twentieth century.⁷⁵ Harry D. Rawson soon joined the firm that was lead by Proudfoot, and was known for their high quality designs, professional competence and many commissions.⁷⁶ The Proudfoot and Bird firm was set up in Des Moines around 1896, among many architectural firms already established and with more training, but they still became a prevalent firm in Iowa as well as its capitol city.⁷⁷

Proudfoot was born in Warren County near Indianola, and became engrossed in architecture early on and devoted his life to his profession.⁷⁸ Bird was born in New Jersey, trained through apprenticeships, and came to Des Moines for an unknown reason, but is listed as an architect in 1882.⁷⁹ Bird came into contact with Proudfoot while in Des Moines, and later on they collaborated on projects.⁸⁰ Bird joined Proudfoot's firm in Wichita, Kansas and developed a substantial practice together until the end of the century.⁸¹ They moved their practice to Des Moines, and in 1898 won a competition for a new building (Schaeffer Hall) on the campus of the State University of Iowa, known today as University of Iowa.⁸² In 1900 Proudfoot and Bird won another competition on an Iowa college campus, that of Engineering Hall (Marston Hall) at Iowa State College (Iowa State University).⁸³ After this second college building commission the firm became the architects for major buildings on the three state college campuses.⁸⁴ The firm also began gaining commissions in Des Moines around the beginning of the century, such as the Polk County Courthouse.⁸⁵

Harry D. Rawson joined the Proudfoot and Bird firm in 1910, and the commissions increased dramatically with Rawson on the team.⁸⁶ Rawson was born in Des Moines. His father was the founder of Iowa Pipe and Tile Company and had other business interests as well. Rawson had three brothers who were industrialists, politicians, and businessmen. Rawson joined George E. Hallett's Des Moines firm in 1898, and they had many commissions from Rawson's social connections, until 1910 when Hallett retired and Rawson joined the Proudfoot and Bird firm.⁸⁷ It is interesting to note that one such commission of Hallett & Rawson in 1903 was the First Church of Christ, Scientist at the 8th Street location in Des Moines. With Rawson's family social

⁷⁵ Wesley I. Shank. *Iowa's Historical Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. University of Iowa Press (Iowa City, IA: 1999), 127.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 25.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 26.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 129.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 138.

connections and his own professional achievements, he was a lucrative addition to the Proudfoot & Bird firm.⁸⁸ The Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson firm received many more commissions than they had previous to Rawson's addition.⁸⁹ Barbara B. Long studied the firm at this time and concluded the firm was "the foremost architectural firm in the state."⁹⁰

Henry Clark Souers received his architectural education through classes at Iowa State College and Columbia University, then working for a firm in New York City.⁹¹ The firm Souers worked for was the Frank M. Andrews Company, led by architect, Andrews who was born in Des Moines, went to Iowa State College and studied architecture at Columbia University.⁹² In 1914, Souers left New York and came back to Des Moines, Iowa to join Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, as a designer.⁹³ Souers married a local millionaire, which provided him the means to pay his way into becoming a partner in the firm, for \$50,000.⁹⁴ In 1925 the firm became Proudfoot, Rawson & Souers, with Bird having retired from the firm in 1913.⁹⁵ The financial depression in Iowa in the early 1920s made the money Souers offered ideal since commissions had dwindled.⁹⁶ The addition of Souers as a partner instead of a designer, John W. Brooks, a future partner of the firm, heard Rawson mention, "the firm had lost a good designer-draftsman."⁹⁷ Souers stayed with the firm until 1933, when he left for Arizona.⁹⁸ Before he left, the firm became Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas (Oren Thomas) in 1930, despite Proudfoot having died in 1928.⁹⁹ Also in 1930 the commission of the First Church of Christ, Scientist at 38th Place and Grand Ave. was awarded to Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas, with Souers as chief architect.¹⁰⁰ There are no specific indications of why Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas received the commission of the First Church of Christ, Scientist at 3750 Grand Avenue, among other prominent Des Moines architectural firms. There are however the connections of Rawson being a part of the firm that designed the congregation's first church at the 8th Street location, as well as Souers relative being a member of the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Des Moines.

The Proudfoot firm and partners over the years sustained an architectural philosophy which,

⁸⁸ Wesley I. Shank. *Iowa's Historical Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. University of Iowa Press (Iowa City, IA: 1999), 138.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 153.

⁹² Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970) 20.

⁹³ Wesley I. Shank. *Iowa's Historical Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. University of Iowa Press (Iowa City, IA: 1999), 153.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 26, 154.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 154.

⁹⁷ Wesley I. Shank. *Iowa's Historical Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. University of Iowa Press (Iowa City, IA: 1999), 154.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 130.

¹⁰⁰ 1892-1992: First Church of Christ, Scientist. Pamphlet. (Des Moines, IA: 1992), 1, 2.

“may be characterized as conservative both in design and attention to cost. Their designs reflected those who commissioned them.... they provided a solid body of design within the self-imposed limitations of the demands of their clients and accepted architectural styles for the period.”¹⁰¹

The firm’s prestige, many commissions throughout Iowa, and reputation among Iowa architects as well as Iowa society, made this young firm well established in the community. This firm built a church for a religion that symbolized a truly new American religious faith, as well as building a piece of Iowa Architectural history.

In 1932 the firm became Proudfoot, Rawson, Brooks & Brog, Architects.¹⁰² In 1934 Rawson passed away, so in 1945 the firm became Brook-Brog, Architects-Engineers.¹⁰³ The successor firm is still a working architectural firm in Des Moines, Iowa, as Brooks Borg Skiles Architecture-Engineering.¹⁰⁴ This architectural firm has been a Des Moines native since the late nineteenth century. Spreading their architectural influence at Iowa’s state colleges, small towns, and Des Moines-the capitol, largest city and headquarters for the firm. The Proudfoot & Bird firm began a legacy in the built environment across Iowa. Not all buildings from the firm and its successors remain standing today; for the ones remaining in the twenty-first century, it would be tearing out the pages in a history book if the buildings of this long-standing firm were torn down. The National Register report on “The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot & Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940” states “The experience of the firm offers opportunity to learn about architectural practice in Iowa from the late nineteenth century through the 1930’s.”¹⁰⁵

The Proudfoot & Bird direct descendent, Brooks Borg Skiles Architecture-Engineering firm in Des Moines, was in 1995 the largest architectural design firm, and is still one of the largest in Des Moines.¹⁰⁶ The firm houses many of the original plans from the beginning of the Proudfoot & Bird building legacy.¹⁰⁷ The present architects hold onto Proudfoot’s philosophy of his architectural practice, the “desire for quality work at reasonable prices.”¹⁰⁸ With an architectural practice that has remained for the most part true to the origins of it’s founder, and has a tremendous reign over the current built environment in Iowa, especially in Des Moines, it is vital

¹⁰¹ “The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot & Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940.” National Register of Historic Places: Multiple Property Documentation Form. United States Department of the Interior: National Park Service. (Iowa: 1988), Sec. F, pg. 1.

¹⁰² Wesley I. Shank. *Iowa’s Historical Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. University of Iowa Press (Iowa City, IA: 1999), 130.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ “The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot & Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940.” National Register of Historic Places: Multiple Property Doc. Form. (Iowa:1988), F-2.

¹⁰⁶ David Elbert. “Architecture firm builds on tradition.” *The Des Moines Register: Metro Business*. (Des Moines, Iowa: 31 July 1995), 4B.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ David Elbert. “Architecture firm builds on tradition.” *The Des Moines Register: Metro Business*. (Des Moines, Iowa: 31 July 1995), 5B.

to preserve architecture that reveals an almost pristine example of the architecture from the firm's building history.

Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas: First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1931

The First Church of Christ, Scientist at 3750 Grand Avenue in Des Moines, is a testament to the legacy of the Proudfoot firm. Still standing in 2010, the exterior as well as the interior remains almost unaltered from the original touch of chief architect, Mr. Souers. The extraordinary character of this architecture was realized by the congregation and welcomed with open arms to maintain it as close to its initial construction.¹⁰⁹ This piece of architectural history conveys the fashion of architecture in the early twentieth century in America, with a movement toward modernizing medieval buildings.¹¹⁰ To modernize medieval architecture, the importance of "plain, uninterrupted wall surfaces; in a reduction of the building's volume to basic geometric forms" as well as use of the horizontal, was utilized to counter the medieval fashions of dominating vertical façades, and highly ornamented surfaces.¹¹¹ The 1931 First Church of Christ, Scientist conveys these modernizing techniques placed on the Gothic style chosen for this church. The wall surfaces place an emphasis on horizontal lines, even the tower, which rises upward, is a low rectangular shape, with a small spire compared to the size of the tower (Fig. 3).¹¹² Also, the ornamentation that does appear is abstracted and adds to the suggestion of a plain quality. The typical Gothic style characteristics, such as the pointed arch, are replaced with an inverted V-shape for prominent windows, and the round arched doors are traded for round shapes cut into the stone around the straight rectangular doors (Fig. 8).¹¹³ In 1939 the Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas' First Church of Christ, Scientist, was voted "as the 'most noteworthy example' of recent architecture in Des Moines."¹¹⁴ Today this noteworthy example continues to be a tribute to the Proudfoot & Bird legacy of Des Moines.

¹⁰⁹ Whitten, Jones. Personal Interview, 2009.

¹¹⁰ David Gebhard & Gerald Mansheim. *Buildings of Iowa*. Society of Architectural Historians: Buildings of the United States. Oxford University Press. (New York, Oxford: 1993), 220.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Bibliography

- Boulware, Jane. "The Bastion of Christian Science-What it is, How it came to be-39 churches in Iowa." *Des Moines Tribune*. Des Moines, Iowa: 29 Jan 1972.
- "Celebrate End of Church Debt." *The Des Moines Register*. 25 Sept 1944.
- Elbert, David. "Architecture firm builds on tradition." *The Des Moines Register: Metro Business*. Des Moines, Iowa: 31 July 1995: 4B.
- First Church of Christ, Scientist. *A History of First Church of Christ, Scientist Des Moines, Iowa, 1892-1992*. Centennial Celebration. Pamphlet. Des Moines, Iowa: 19,20 Sep. 1992.
- First Church of Christ, Scientist. *History of First Church of Christ, Scientist Des Moines, Iowa*. Assembled by Mrs. Neva Cornwell. Des Moines, Iowa: 1932.
- First Church of Christ, Scientist. *History of First Church of Christ, Scientist, Des Moines, Iowa*. (C.S. Sentinel Feb. 15, 1908, p. 469 vol. X No. 24. Des Moines, Iowa, p. F-1 and C.S. Sentinel July 31, 1902, p. 772 Vol. IV No. 48, p. D-1). Assembled by Mrs. Neva Cornwell. Des Moines, Iowa: 1932.
- Gebhard, David & Gerald Mansheim. *Buildings of Iowa*. Society of Architectural Historians: Buildings of the United States. Oxford University Press. New York, Oxford: 1993.
- Ivey, Paul Eli. *Prayers in Stone: Christian Science Architecture in the United States 1894-1930*. University of Illinois Press. Urbana and Chicago, Illinois: 1999.
- Jones, Whitten. Chairman of the Board of Committees at the First Church of Christ, Scientist. Personal Interview. Des Moines, Iowa: 16 Oct. 2009.

Bibliography Continued

Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers & Thomas Architects. Specifications for General

Construction of the First Church of Christ, Scientist. Des Moines, Iowa: April
1931.

Schaefer, Shannon Noelle. Photographs of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, 3750

Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa. Photographer. 16 Oct. 2009.

Shank, Wesley I. *Iowa's Historical Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. University of

Iowa Press. Iowa City, Iowa: 1999.

"The Architectural Legacy of Proudfoot & Bird in Iowa, 1882-1940." National

Register of Historic Places: Multiple Property Documentation Form. United

States Department of the Interior: National Park Service. Sec. F-1. Iowa: 1988.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American*

Architects (Deceased). Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., Los Angeles: 1970.

Photograph Reference Page:

**First Church of Christ, Scientist
3750 Grand Ave.
Des Moines, Iowa 50312-2806
Site Number: 77-06470**

On October 16, 2009 Shannon Noelle Schaefer created the following photographs, (unless indicated as a scanned record), for the State Historical Society of Iowa to complete the Site Inventory form for site 77-06470.

Note: These photographs were created by Shannon N. Schaefer as of October 16, 2009. Use of these images in any form without written permission from the photographer is strictly prohibited, with the exception for the initial purpose of the photographs to aid the Iowa Site Inventory form for site number 77-06470.

Fig. 1: Slated Shingle Roof, West side



Fig. 2: West Facade, driveway to parking lot



Fig. 3: First Church of Christ, Scientist, North Facade



Fig. 4: North side along Grand Ave., front walkway to the church



Fig. 5: North Facade, courtyard



Fig. 6: North Facade; Original front entrance



Fig. 7: East Wing for the Committee of the Church; Semi-pointed arched arcade



Fig. 8: North entrance, heavy wooden doors with metal strap work

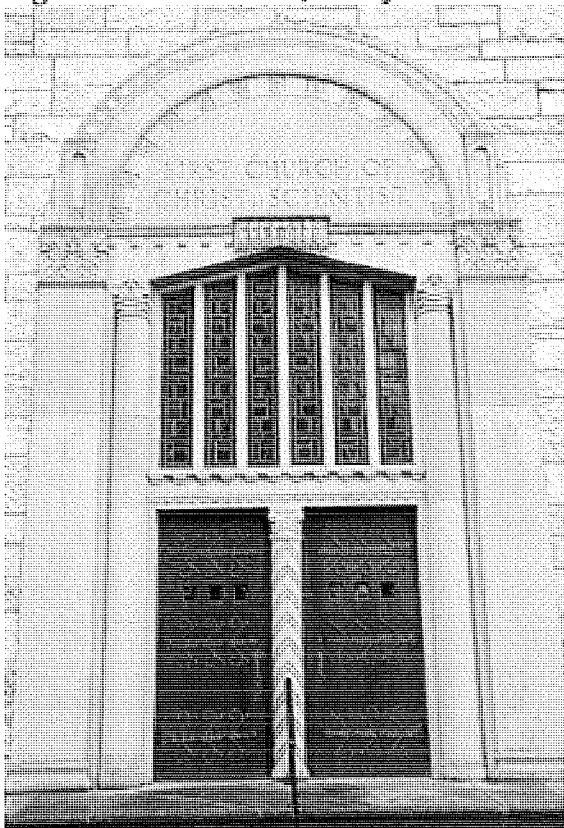


Fig. 9: North door, metal strap work



Fig. 10: Single column between north entrance doors; angular pointed lines, Ionic-like volutes, simple Doric-like crown

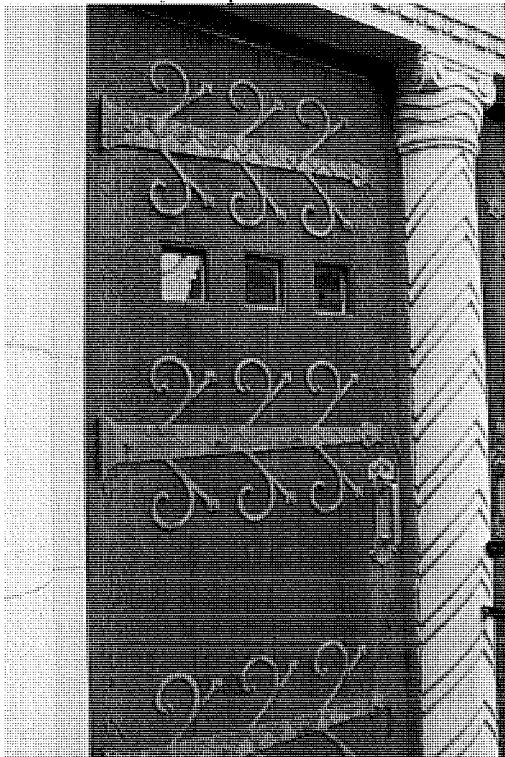


Fig. 11: Above north entrance doors, engraving "First Church of Christ, Scientist"



Fig. 12: Vertical stained glassed windows above north entrance door, Interior view



Fig. 13: Cornerstone, to the right of the North entrance



Fig. 14: Original cornerstone from first location on 927 8th Street in Des Moines, moved to 3750 Grand Ave. (Scanned photograph from church records).

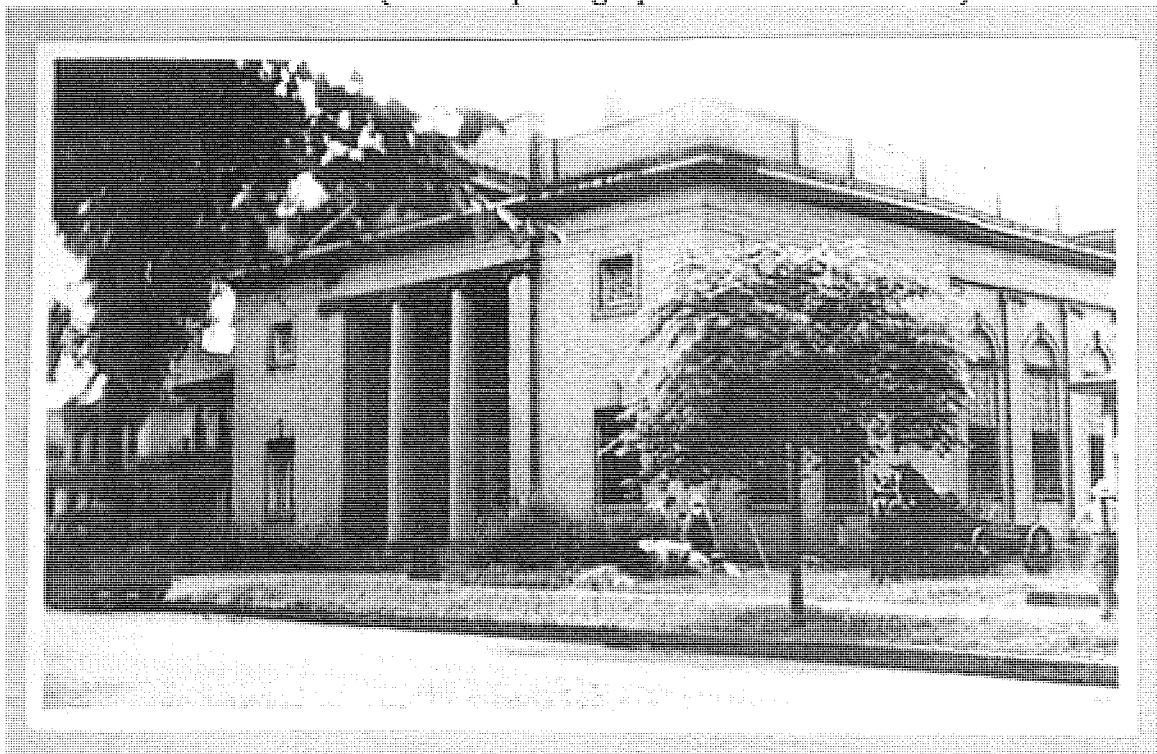


Fig. 15: Courtyard copper lamps



Fig. 16: Copper lamps also appear on the corners of the church

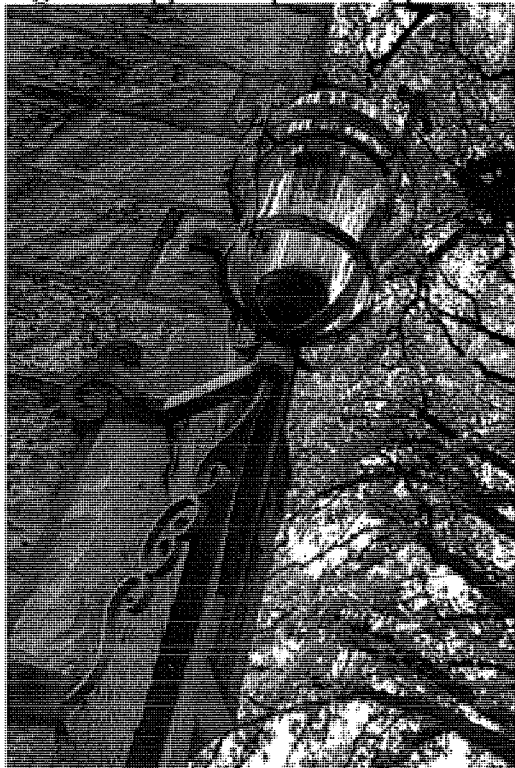


Fig. 17: View into the window at the end of the East wing: Committee meeting room/Reading Room



Fig. 18: East side entrance from parking lot; simpler in detail than North entrance

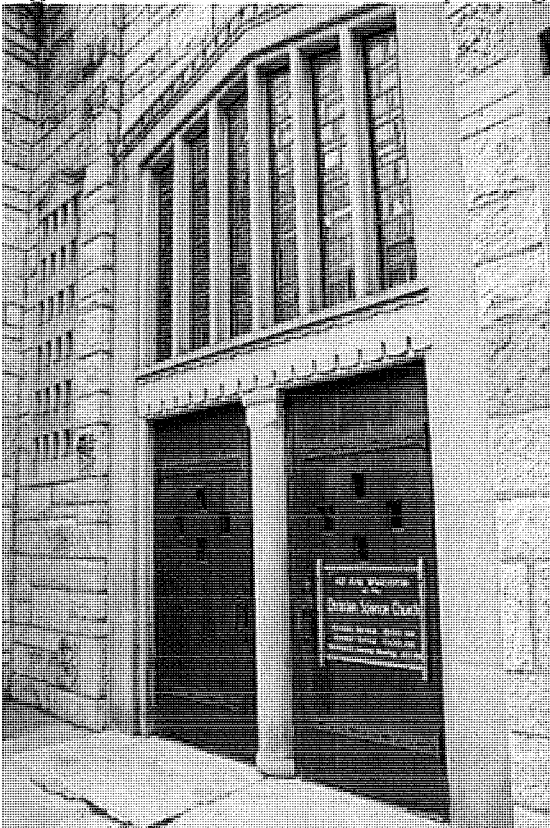


Fig. 19: Interior Foyer; view of North entrance doors

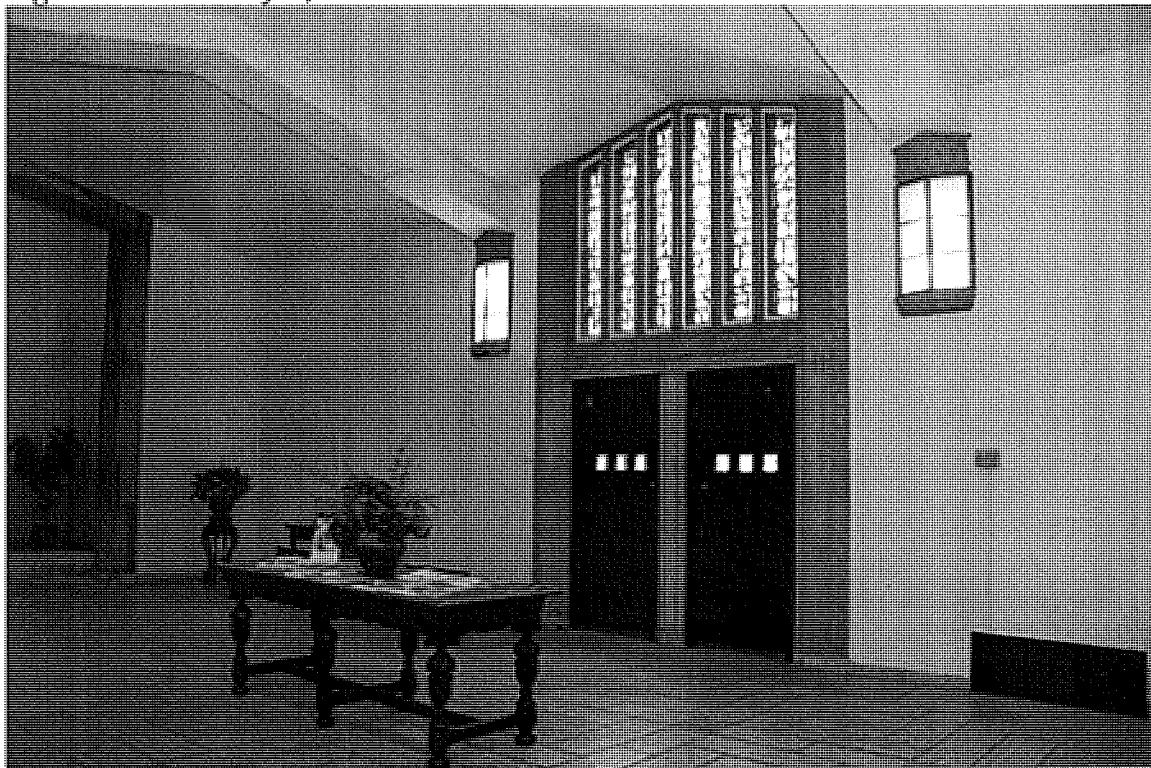


Fig. 20: Foyer; view toward East entrance

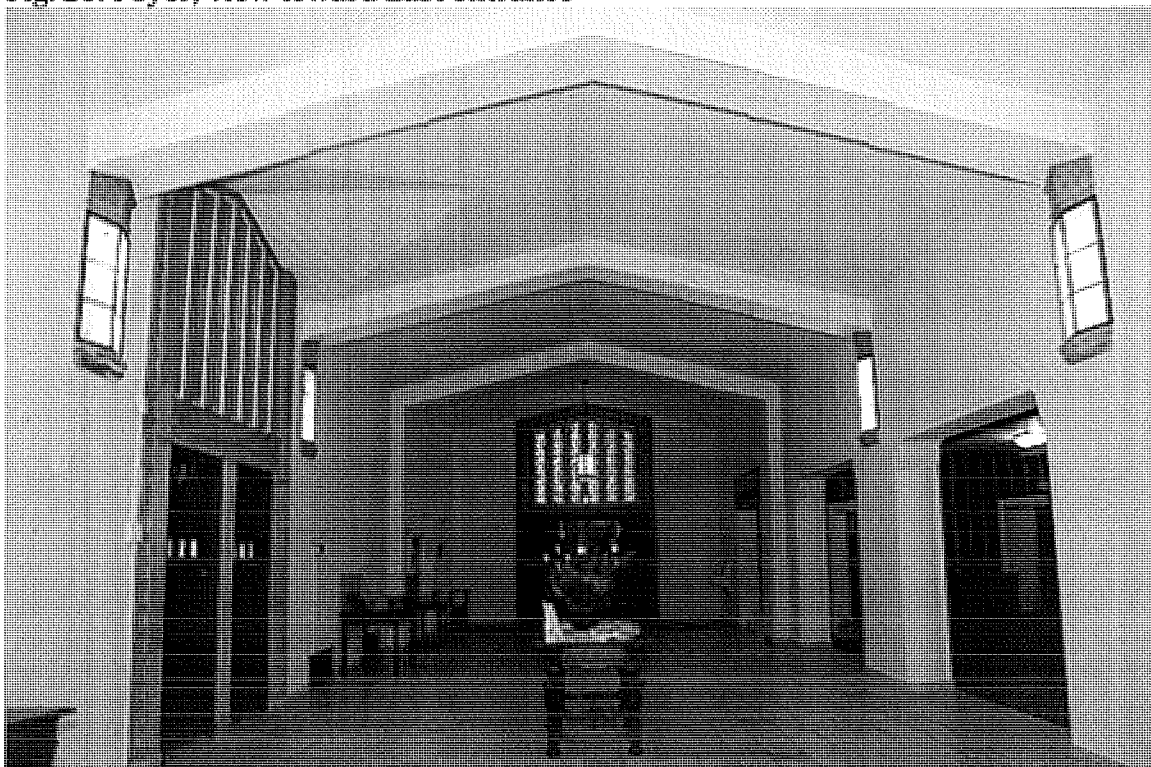


Fig. 21: View of East entrance door



Fig. 22: Church Furniture in Auditorium, on the stage



Fig. 23: Chandelier in Auditorium

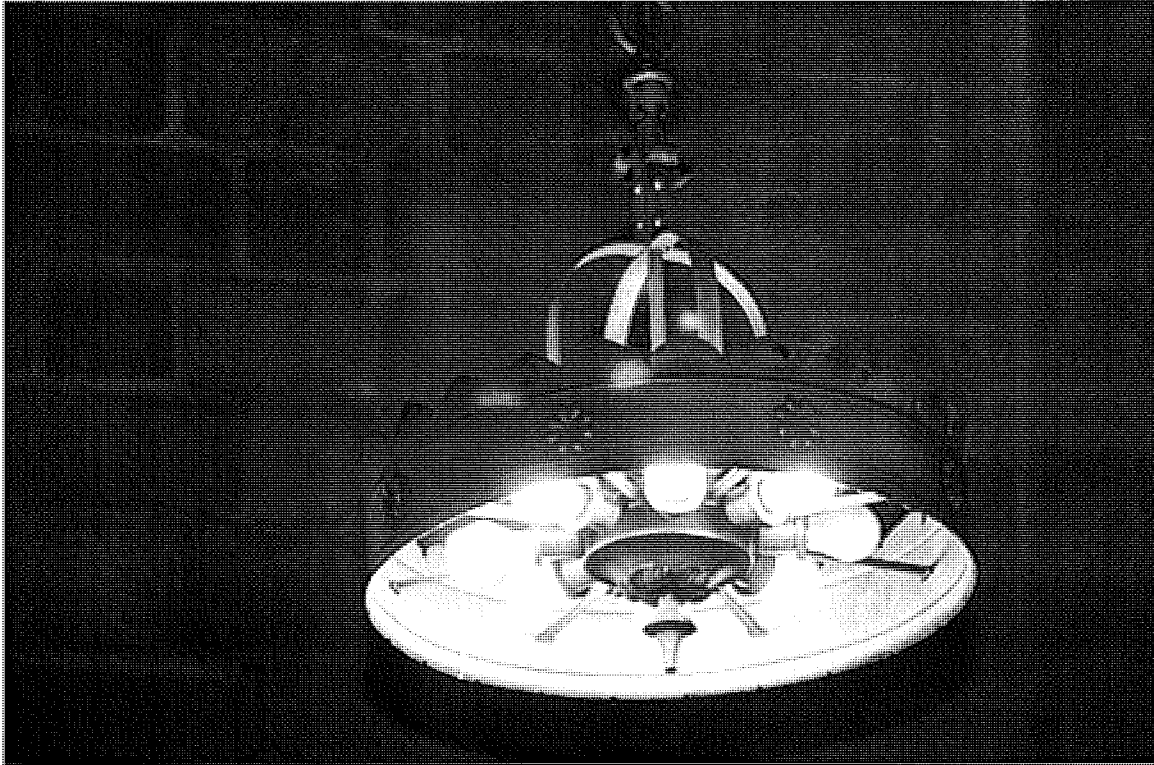


Fig. 24: Wall light fixture in Auditorium, side aisle

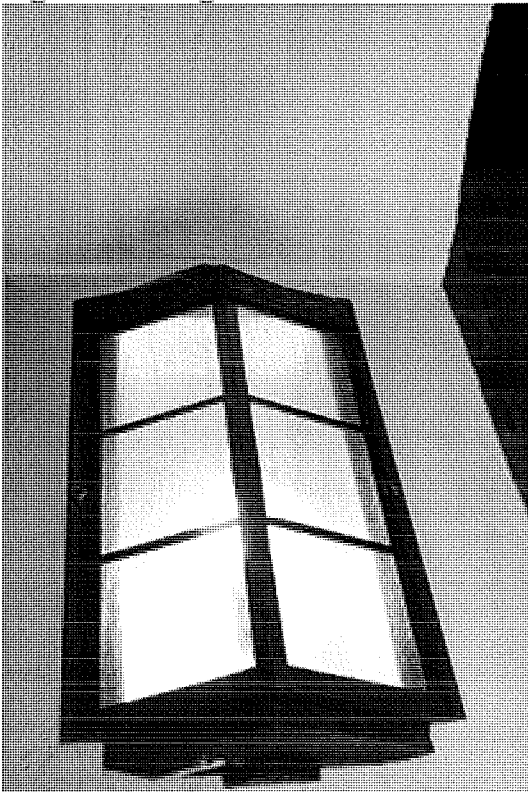


Fig. 25: Ceiling lamp; side walkway connecting Lobby area to side aisle of the Auditorium

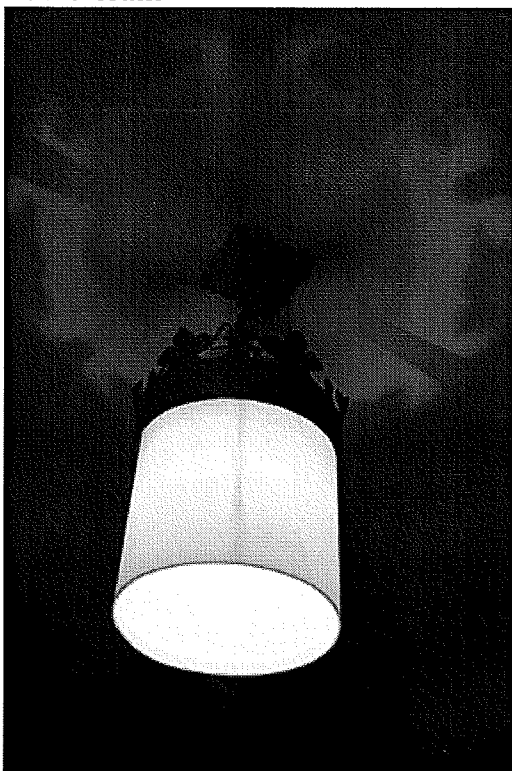


Fig. 26: Model of First Church of Christ, Scientist, created at the beginning of construction



Fig. 27: Model of First Church of Christ, Scientist

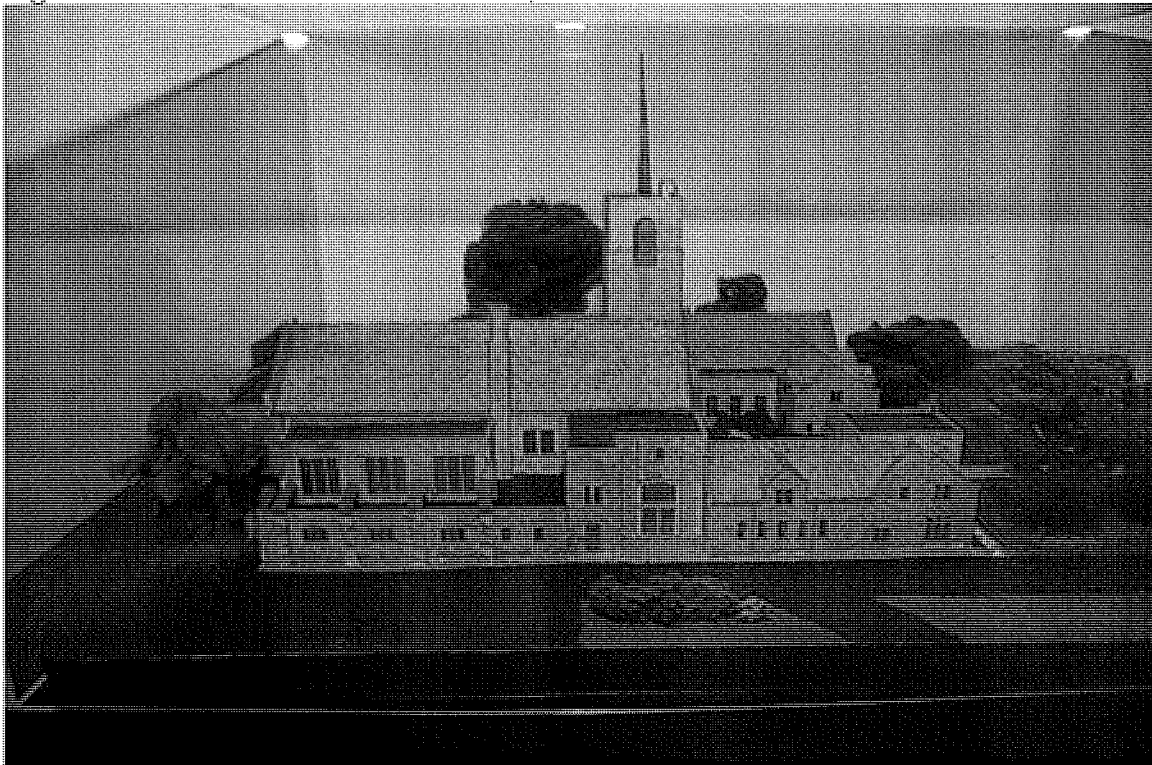


Fig. 28: Model of First Church of Christ, Scientist



Fig. 29: Lobby area; dark stained Douglas Fir wood panels fitted with nickel plated strips between each panel; looking at doors that lead to the Auditorium



Fig. 30: Lobby area, looking east



Fig. 31: Lobby area; View into Auditorium



Fig. 32: View into Auditorium, South end



Fig. 33: Auditorium; Original fold down theater-type seats, with metal hat holders on the underside



Fig. 34: Auditorium; View of seats, East wall and side aisle



Fig. 35: Auditorium upper wall lined with stained glass windows

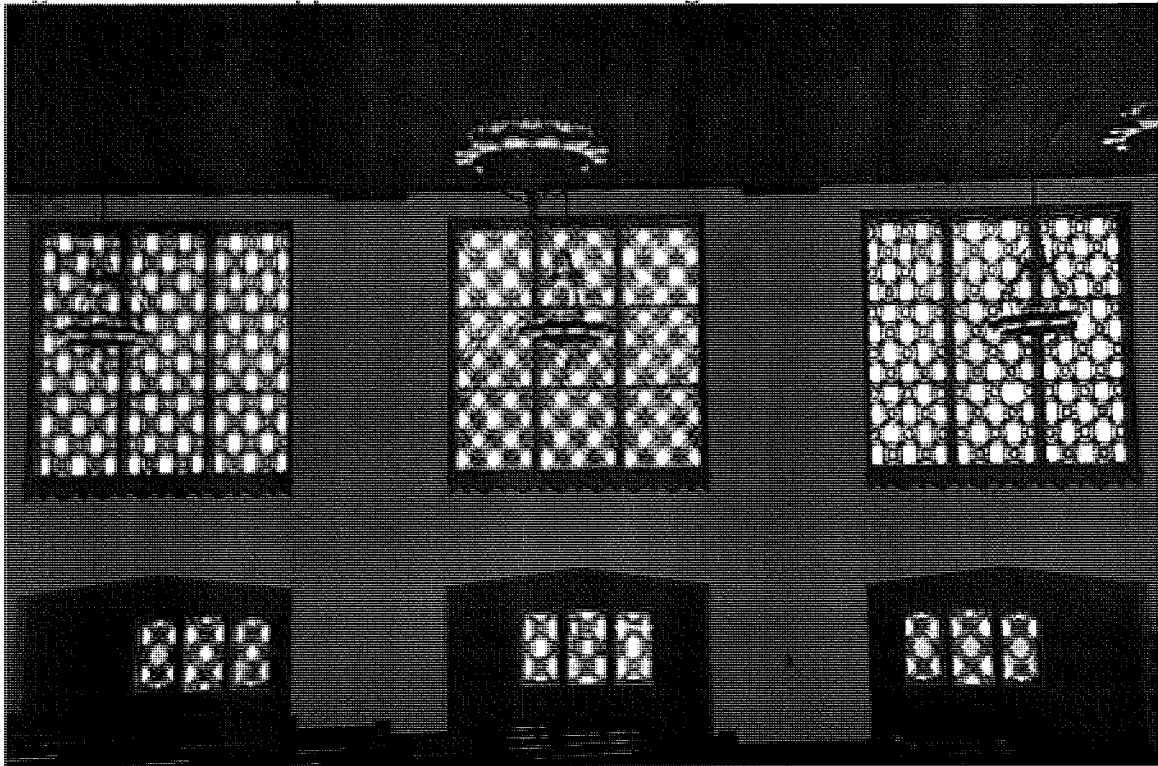


Fig. 36: Auditorium; Stained glass windows



Fig. 37: Auditorium; View of South end Stage

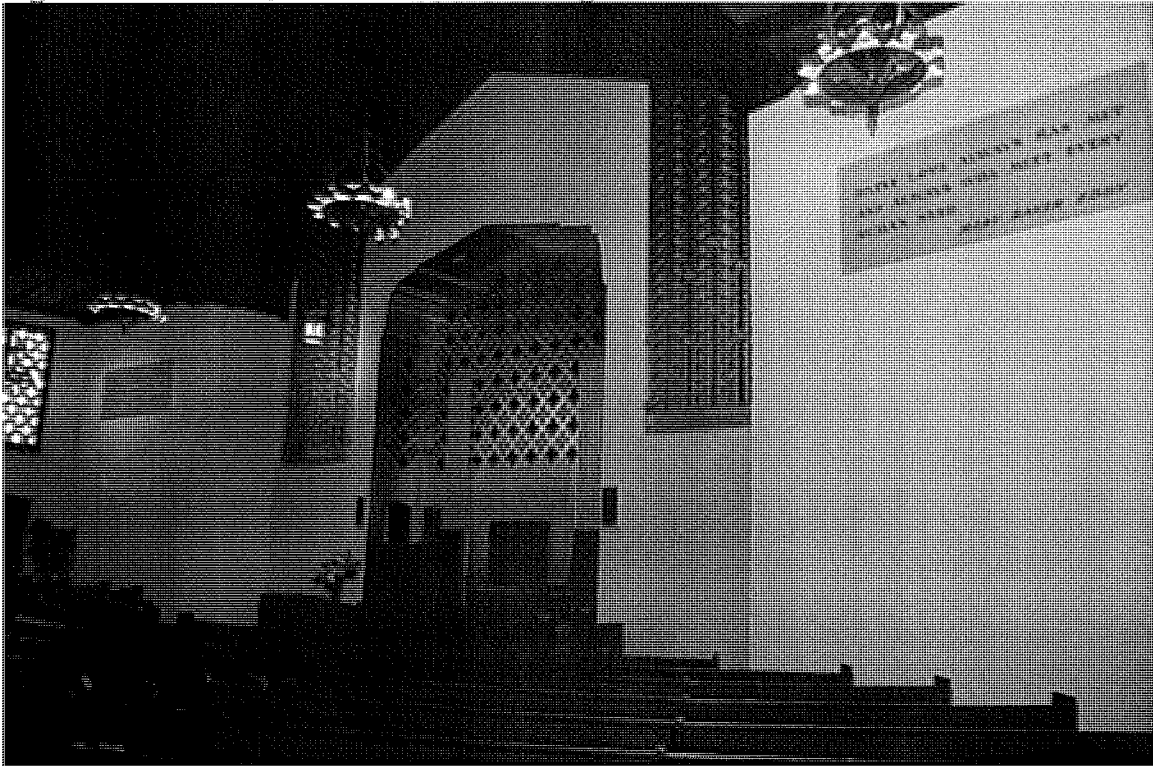


Fig. 38: Hearing devices for members with hearing problems, in the space in front of each seat

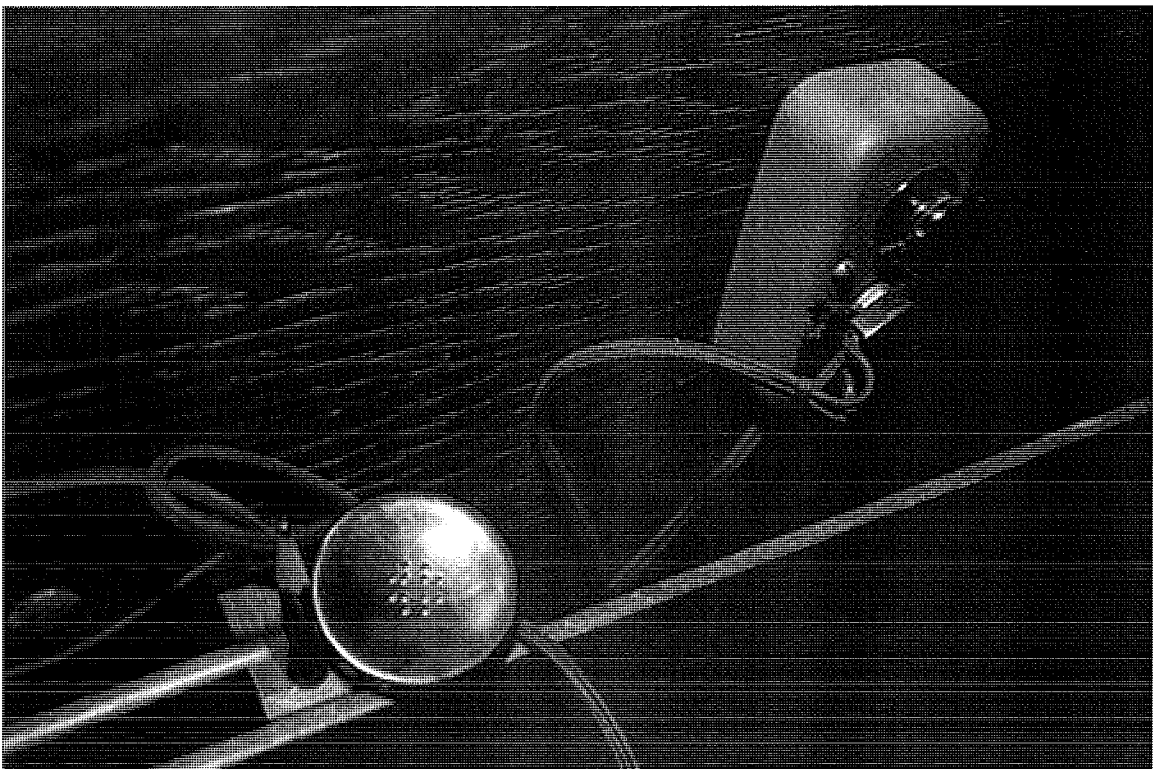


Fig. 39: Auditorium; South wall, left of the stage

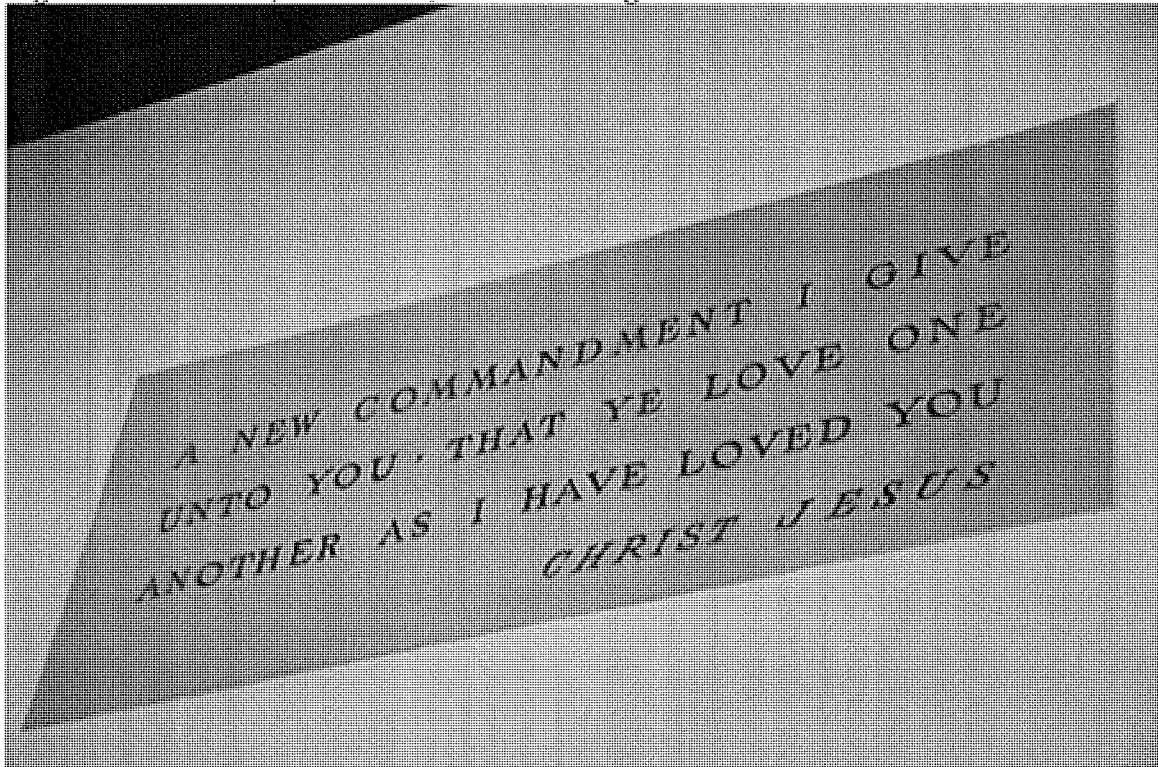


Fig. 40: Auditorium; South wall right of the stage

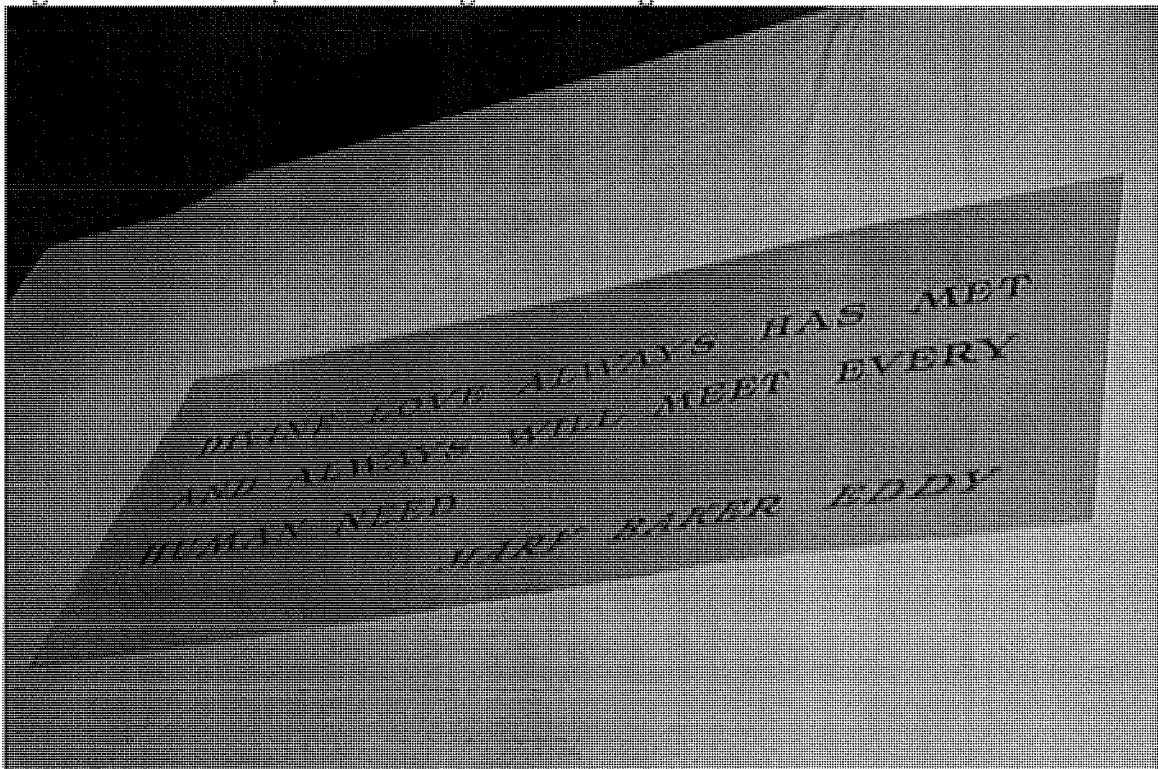


Fig. 41: View of Auditorium from Balcony; Gold-toned paneling of South wall



Fig. 42: Church's organ moved from first 8th St. location in Des Moines

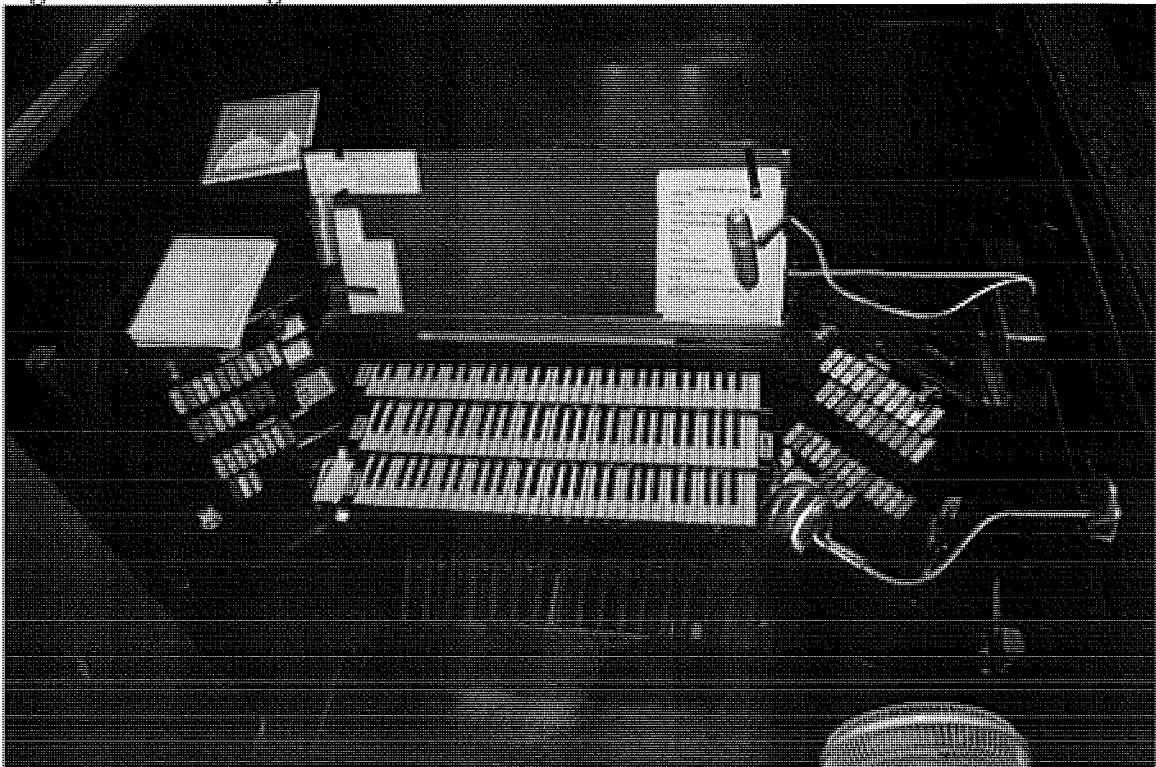


Fig. 43: Auditorium; Truss roof lined with chandeliers



Fig. 44: Auditorium side aisles, lined with smaller stained glass windows



Fig. 45: Side aisle, exposed brick wall surface

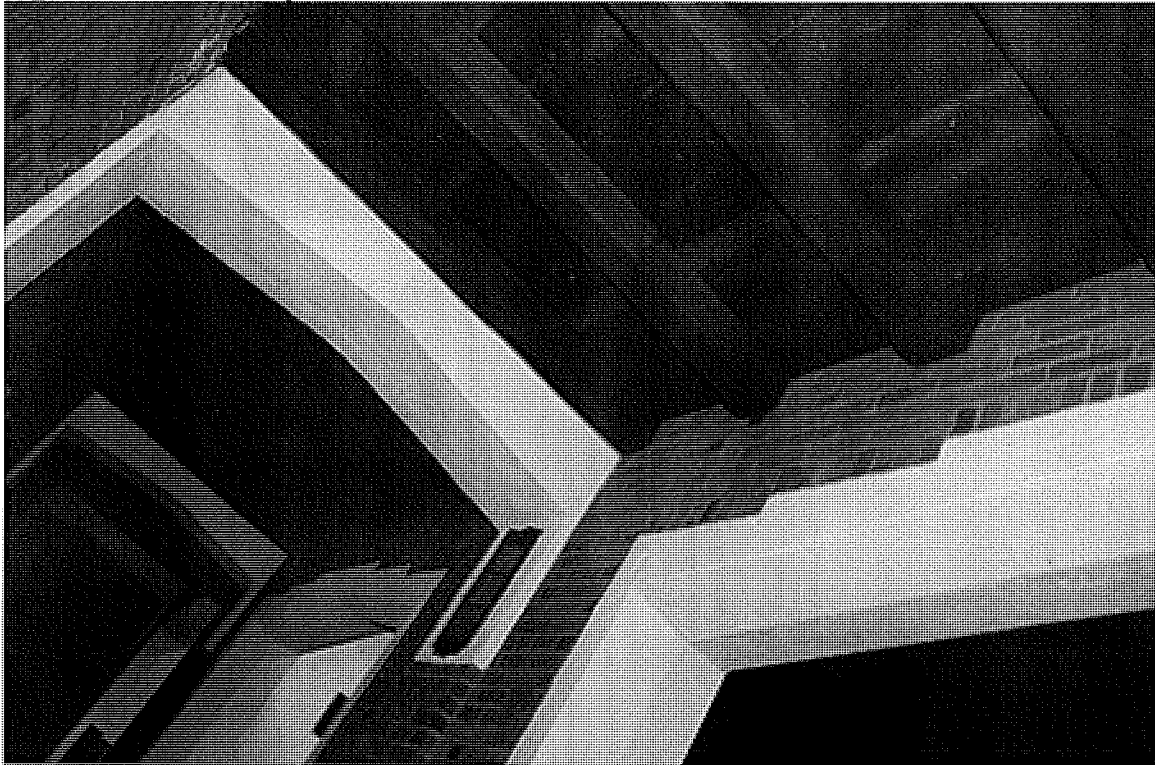


Fig. 46: Auditorium balcony space

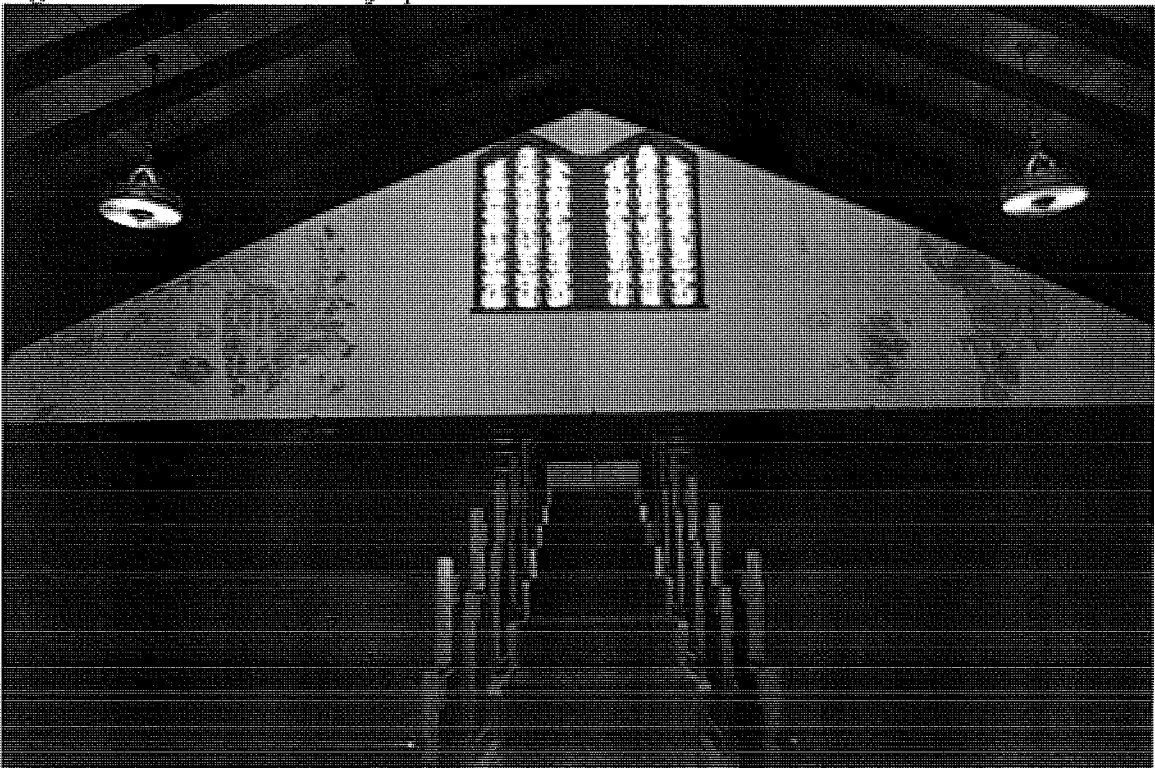


Fig. 47: "Men's Retiring Room", original restroom door, left of Lobby



Fig. 48: "Women's Retiring Room", original restroom door, right of Lobby



Fig. 49: West of Foyer space, open vertical space of the Tower and Spire

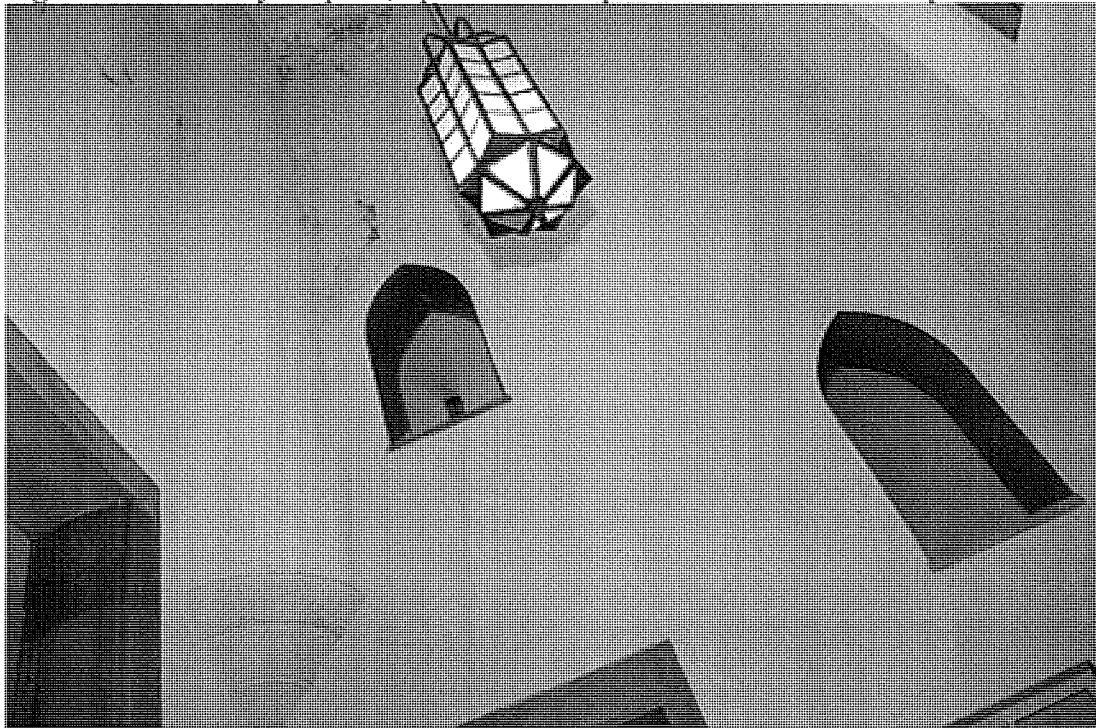


Fig. 50: Vertical interior view into the tower space

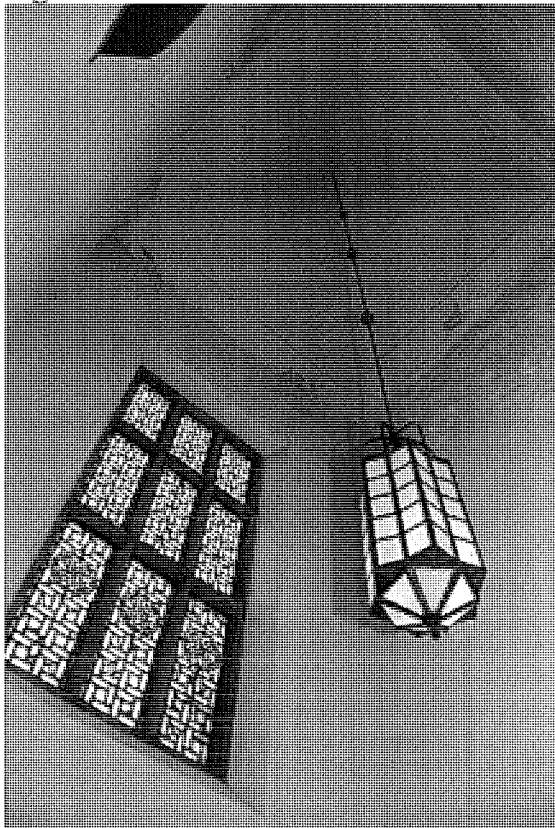


Fig. 51: Exterior view of Tower and Spire

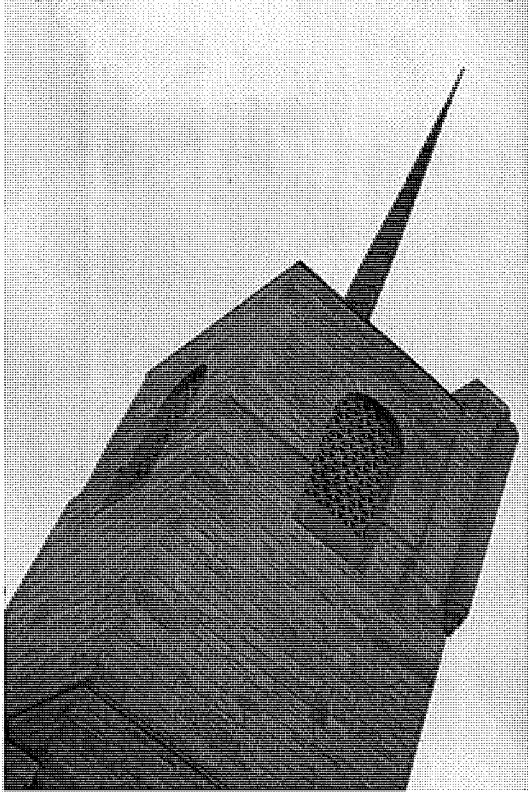


Fig. 52: Sunday School Room; North wall with stained glass window

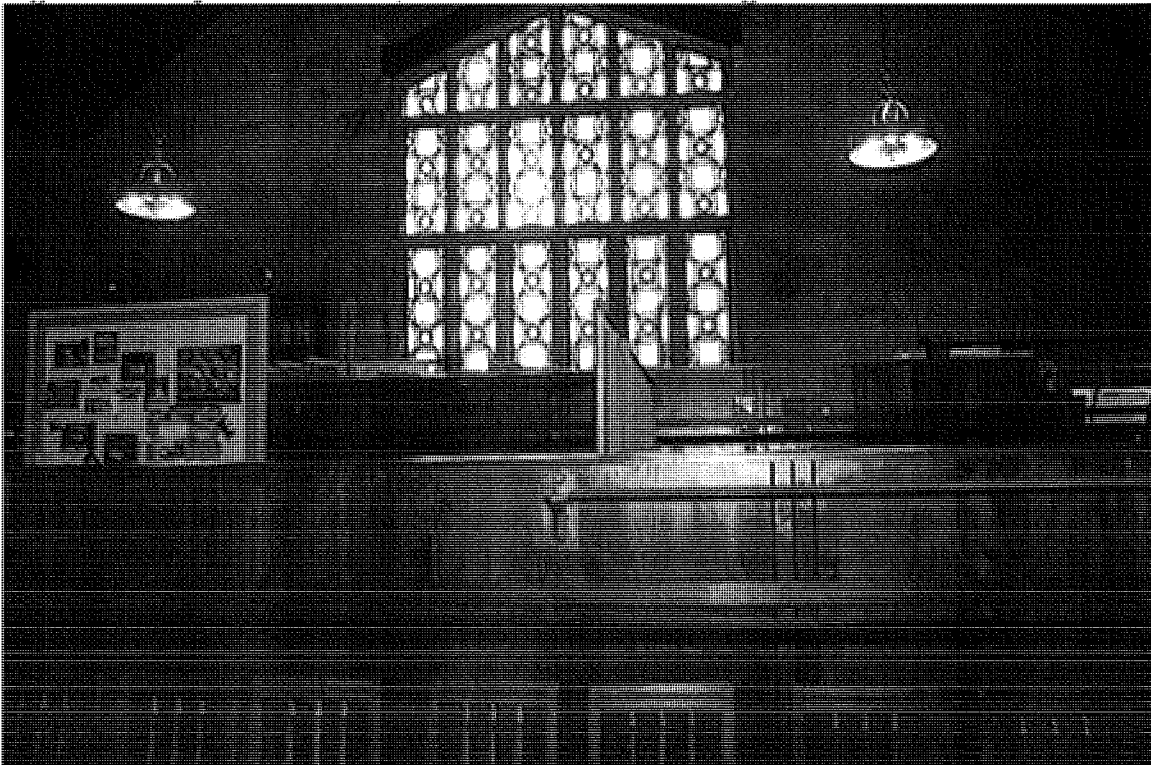


Fig. 53: Sunday School Room; South end view



Fig. 54: Sunday School Room; lower level, where children gather and face the stage



Fig. 55: Sunday School Room, West wall, smaller version of the stage space of the auditorium

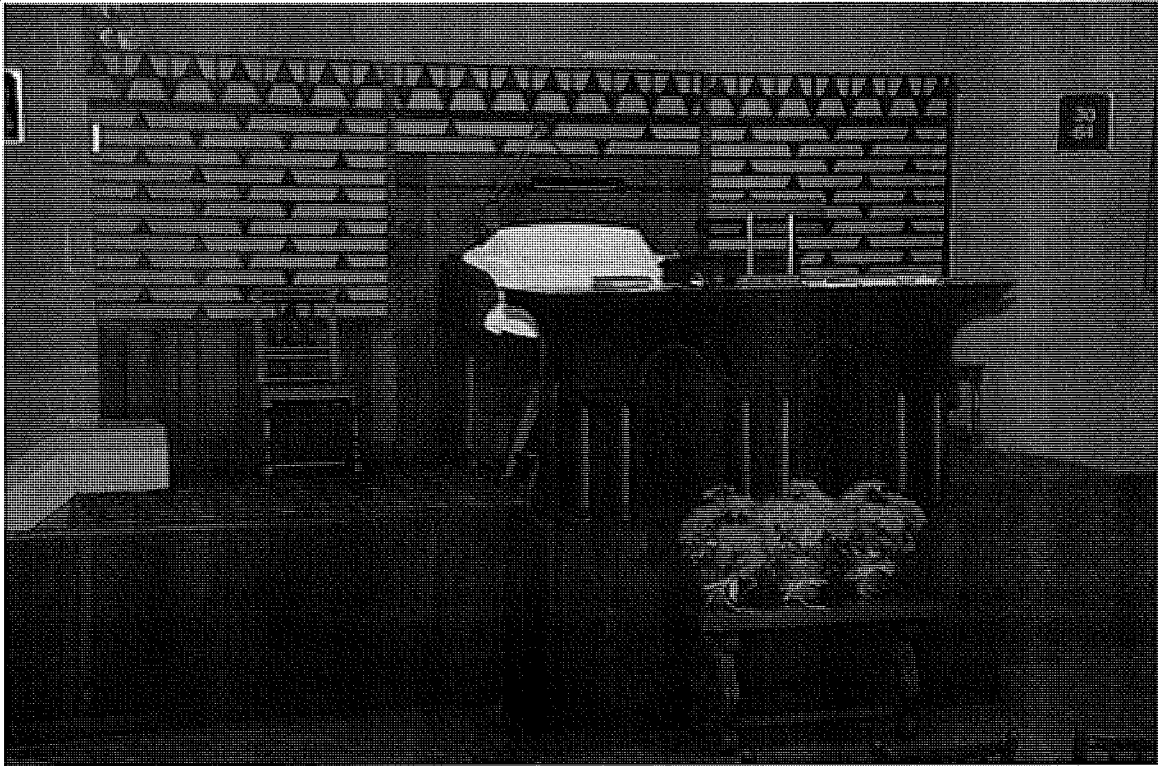


Fig. 56: Sunday School Room, Chair with the Christian Science Hymnal book

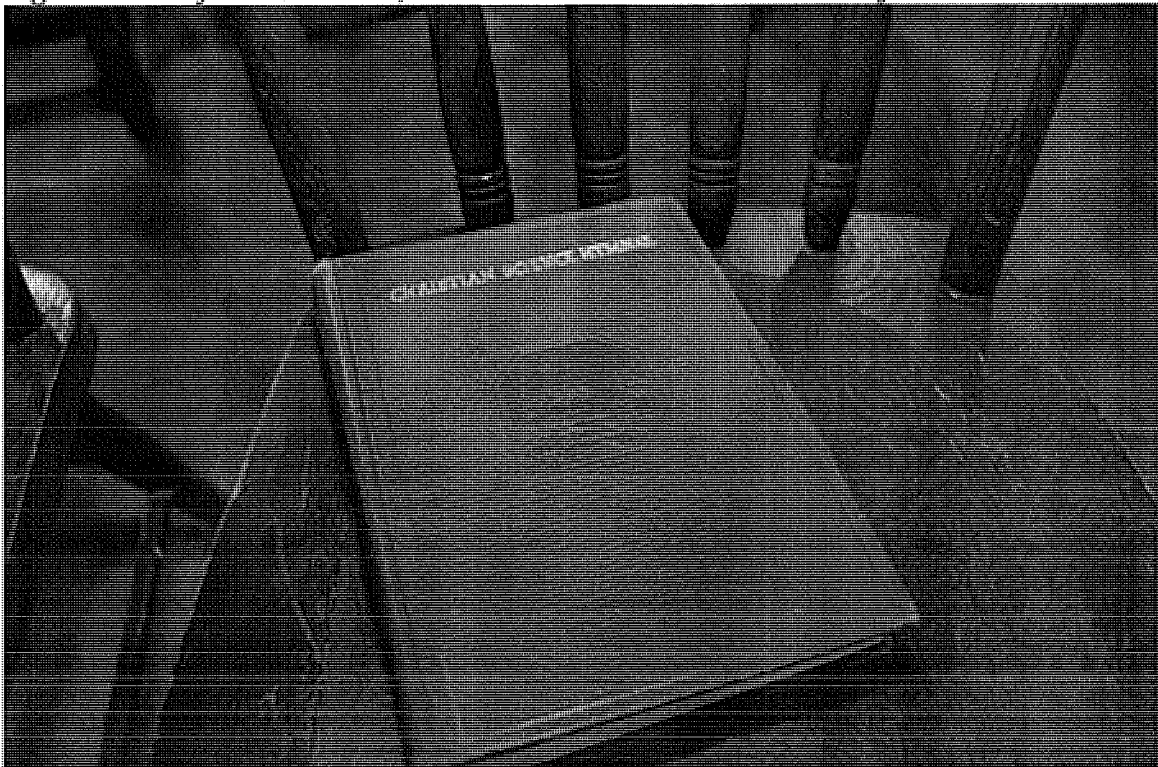


Fig. 57: Sunday School Room, Carpet design originally used throughout the church



Fig. 58: Sunday School Room, Altar-like piece moved from first location in Des Moines on 8th St.



Fig. 59: Sunday School Room, West Wall above stage space



Fig. 60: Sunday School Room; Truss Roof and chandeliers

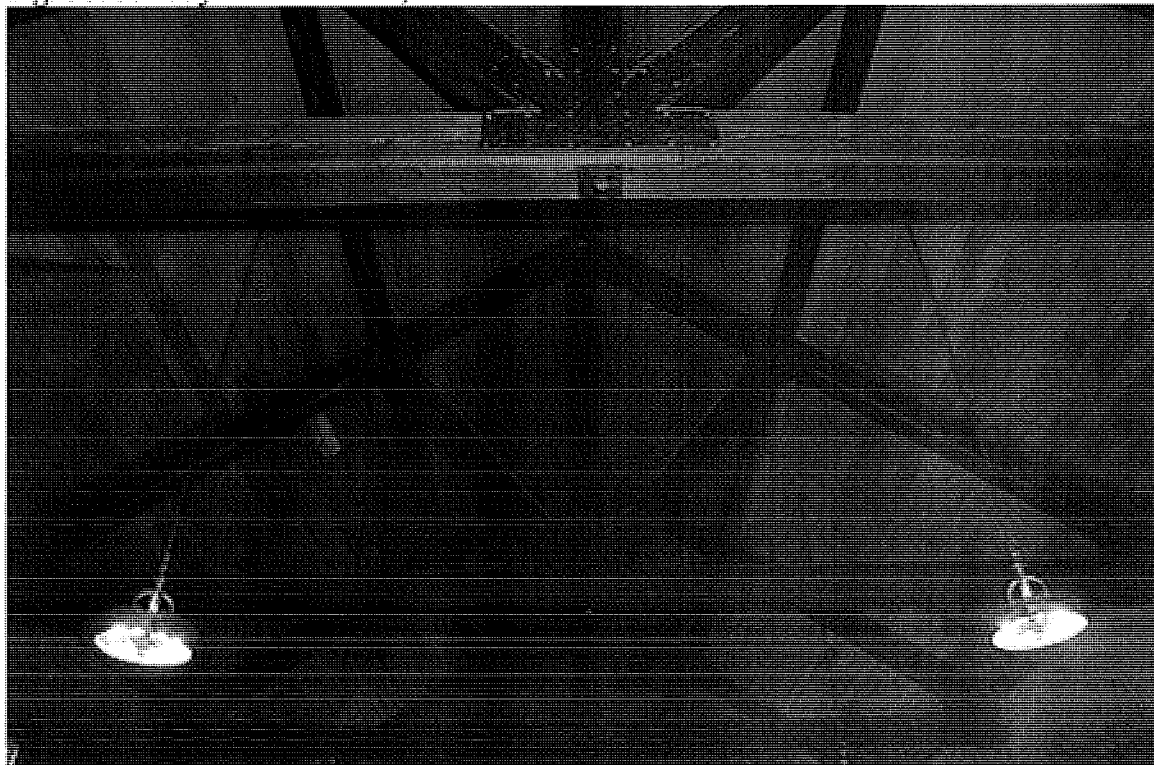


Fig. 61: Sunday School Room; Bell rung during school sessions

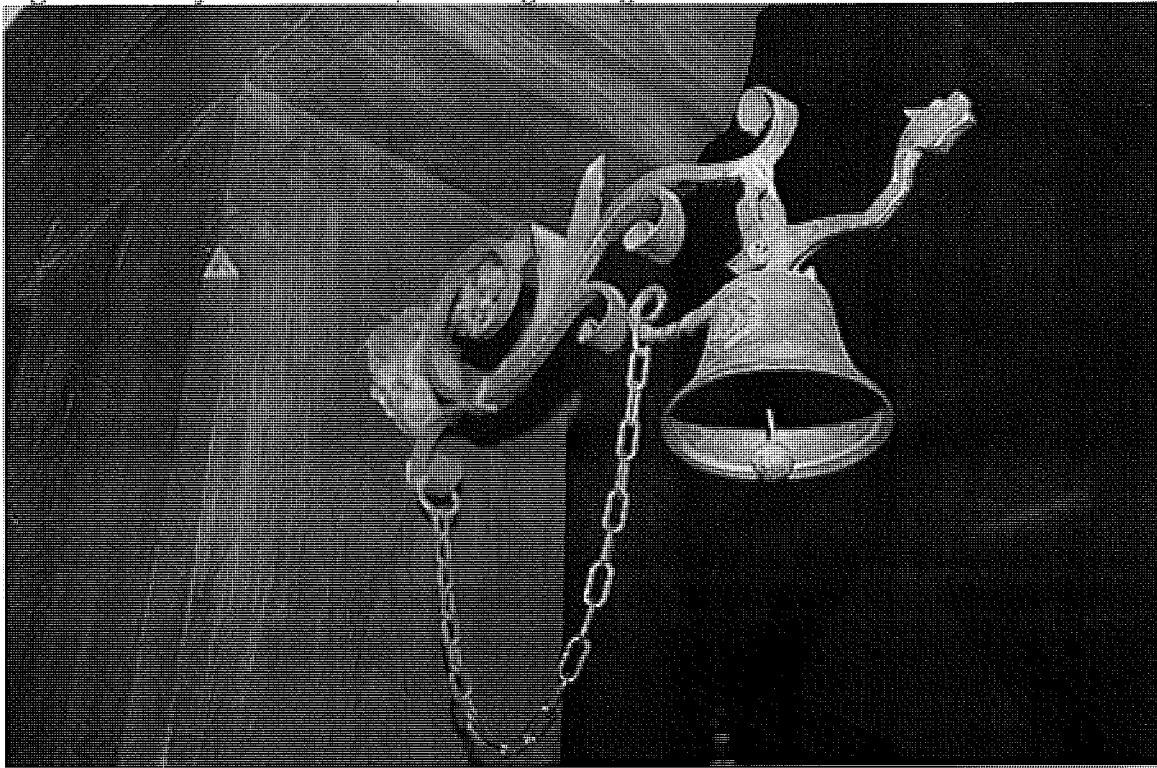


Fig. 62: East Wing for Committees of the Church; View into the Courtyard



Fig. 63: East Wing, Staircase, metal railing detail

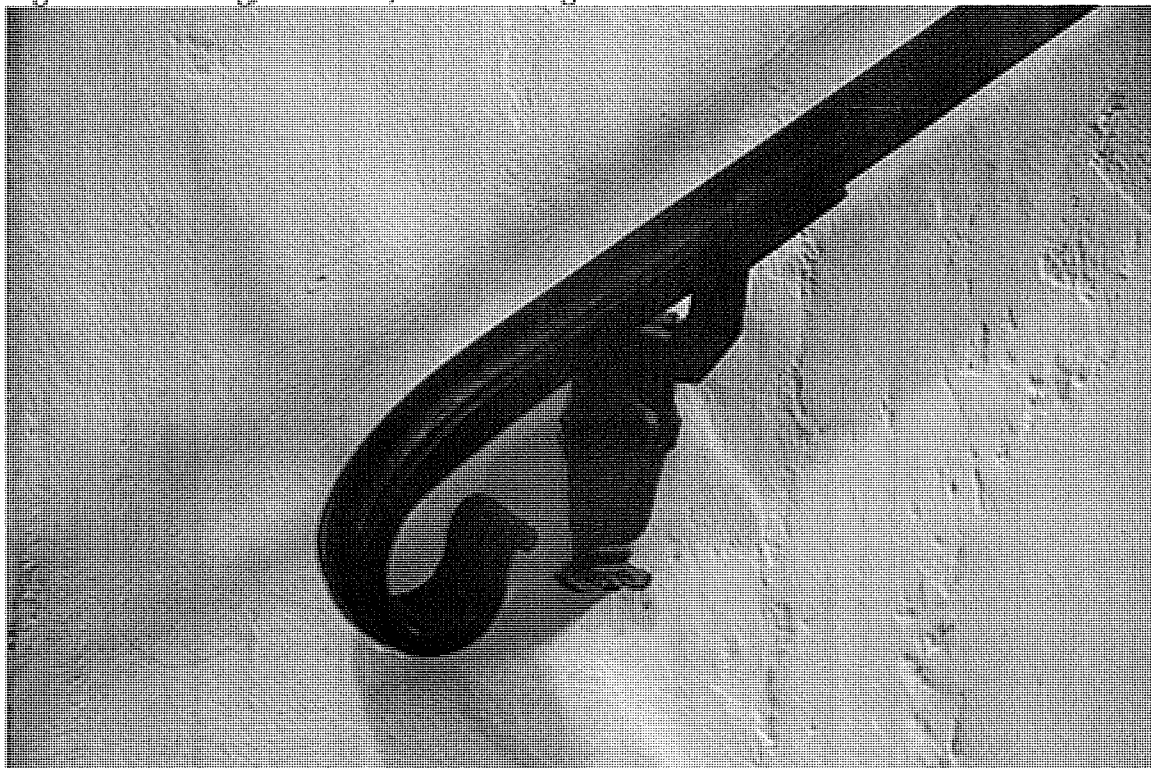


Fig. 64: Scanned Architectural drawing of the Basement Tunnel Floor plan
(Obtained from church documents)

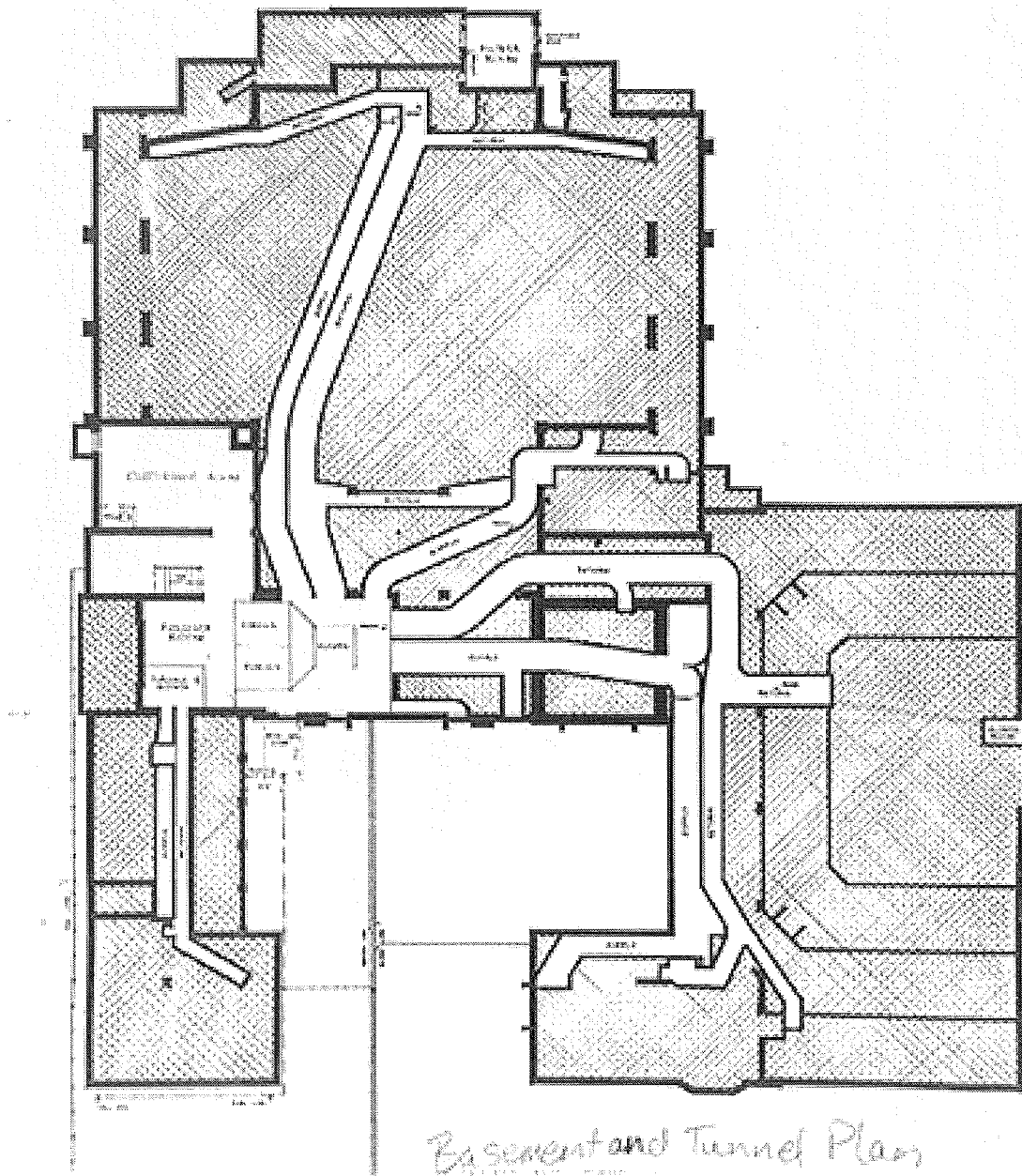


Fig. 65: Scanned Architectural drawing of the First Floor Plan (Obtained from church documents)

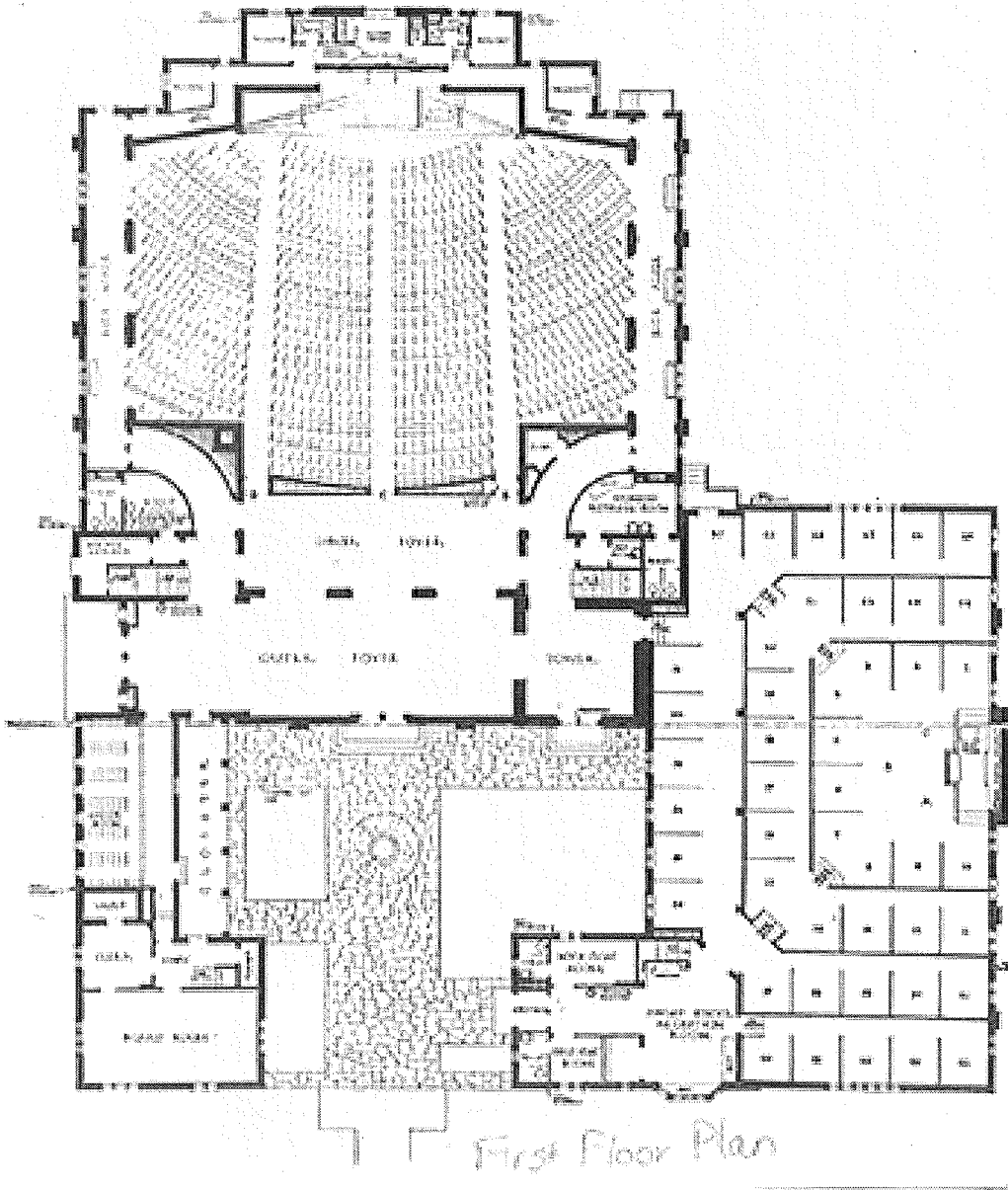
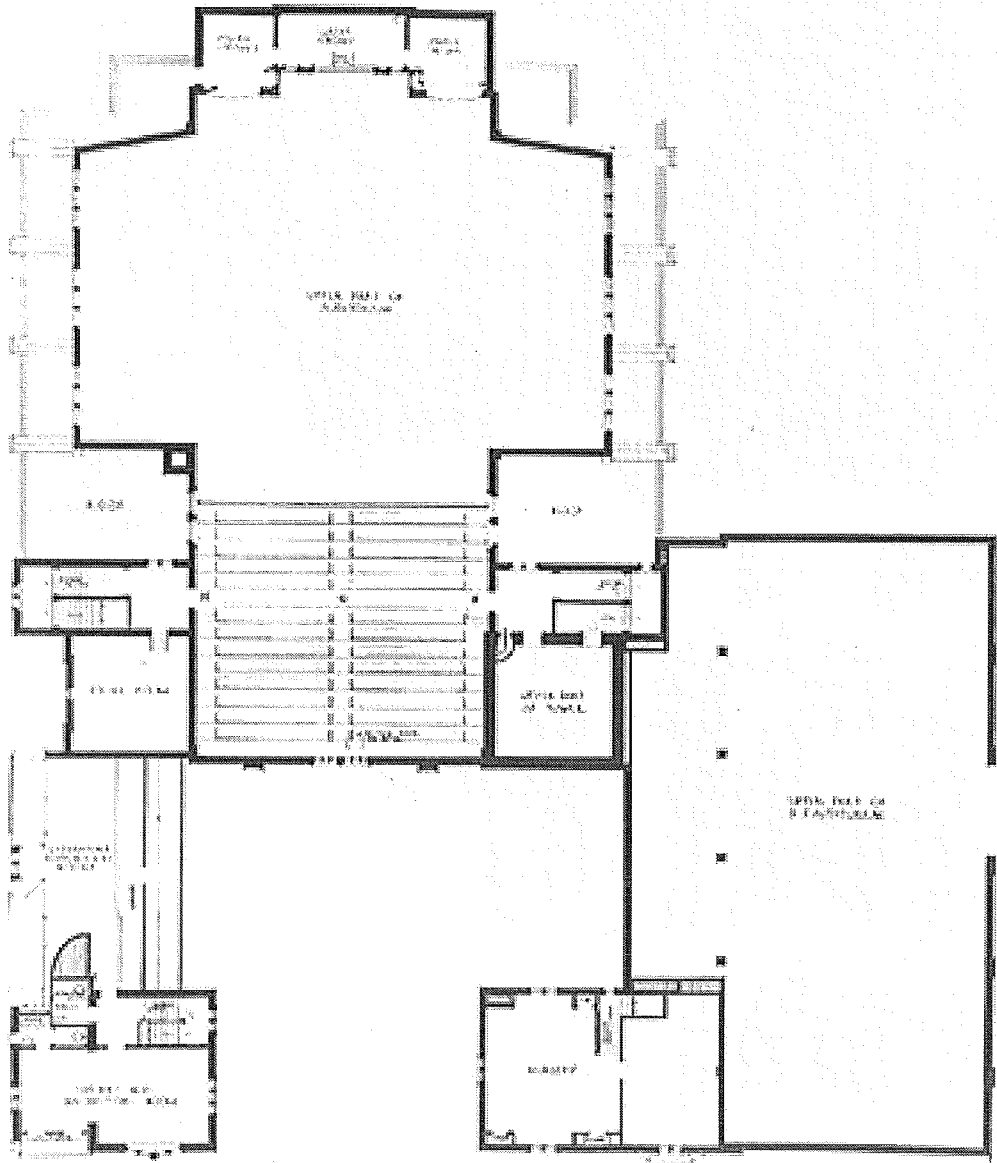


Fig. 66: Scanned Architectural drawing of the Second Floor Plan (Obtained from church documents)



Second Floor Plan