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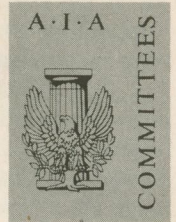
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A Guide for Planning Church Buildings for the Churches of Christ

CHARLES J. BETTS FAIA

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Robert L. Durham FAIA, Chairman

Committee on Religious Buildings
Kenneth E. Richardson AIA, Chairman



The thirteenth in a series of reports prepared by the AIA Committee on Religious Buildings intended to serve as guides for the architect faced with planning a building for a faith other than his own

Historical Background

Members of the Church of Christ do not conceive of themselves as a new church started near the beginning of the nineteenth century. Rather, the whole movement is designed to reproduce in contemporary times the church originally established on Pentecost, AD 30. The strength of the appeal lies in the restoration of Christ's original church.

James O'Kelly of the Methodist Episcopal Church was an early leader in the Restoration Movement. In 1793 he withdrew from the Baltimore Conference of his church and called upon others to join him in taking the Bible as the only creed. His influence was largely felt in Virginia and North Carolina where history records that some seven thousand communicants followed his leadership toward a return to primitive New Testament Christianity.

In 1802 a similar movement among the Baptists in New England was led by Abner Jones and Elias Smith. They were concerned about "denominational names and creeds" and decided to wear only the name Christian, taking the Bible as their only guide. In 1804, in the western frontier state of Kentucky, Barton Stone and several other Presbyterian preachers took similar action declaring that they would take the Bible as the "only sure guide to heaven." Thomas Campbell, and his more illustrious son, Alexander Campbell, took similar steps in the year 1809 in what is now the state of West Virginia. They contended that nothing should be bound upon

Christians as a matter of doctrine which is not as old as the New Testament. Although these four movements were completely independent in their beginnings eventually they became one strong "restoration" movement because of their common purpose and plea. These men did not advocate the starting of a new church, but rather a return to Christ's church as described in the Bible.

Since the last decade of the eighteenth century, the Church of Christ has grown to 2,250,000 members with 16,000 congregations in the United States. It is one of the fastest-growing religious groups in the United States. The strongest concentration of members is in the Southwest.

Basic Beliefs

The autographs of the 66 books which make up the Bible are considered to have been divinely inspired, by which it is meant that they are infallible and authoritative. However, the basic textbook of the church and the basis for all its preaching is the Bible as it is known today. Reference to the scriptures is made in settling every religious question. A pronouncement from the scriptures is considered the final word.

Christ is accepted as the only-begotten Son of God, uniting in His person perfect divinity and perfect manhood, and born of virgin birth, as described in Isaiah.

It is believed that God is not a respecter of persons, but that each man determines his own destiny by deciding to either accept Christ's will or reject it.

The word baptize comes from the Greek and literally means, "to dip, to immerse, to plunge." In addition to the literal meaning of the word, immersion is practiced because the members believe it was the practice of the church in apostolic times.



day meeting, held March 2 and 3, where experts from ten disciplines began the work to promote an extensive research project on religious buildings for Catholic, Jewish and Protestant faiths.

Automated Information Study—An exploration by an AIA task force and consultants of the use and benefits of automation for retrieval and assembly of the vast amounts of architectural and building information. The premise is that current methods will soon be obsolete.

Planning Second Columbia University Conference—Preparation for a conference (similar to the original Press Conference) to educate the editors of consumer magazines and TV producers to better coverage of architecture.

Reprint Church Guides—Assembled reprints of the *AIA Journal* series of Church Planning Guides to foster better design in this building type.

Library Architecture Reprint Show—A traveling exhibition of the winners of the Library Competition of 1963 and 1964 to encourage better design.

Architectural Researchers Conference—A first meeting of national experts in this field to unify their collaboration with the Institute's Research Programs.

Reprint School Plant Studies—Assembled reprints of the *AIA Journal* Series to promote better design of schools.

Fund for Reprints—A revolving fund to finance reprints of *Journal* articles to be used by the profession in educating clients. W.H.S.

MASTER PROJECT CHART

Survey of the Profession
Survey of Member Motivation

AIA Structure and Services 1964
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\$15,545

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Design Capability
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Education and Research
\$44,400

Survey of Research and Researchers
Researchers Conference
Interfaith Research Seminar
Automated Information Study
Pre-Registration Training Program
Regional Convention Seminars

Educate the Press
\$11,500

Regional Press Conferences
Plan Second Columbia Conference

Educate the Public
\$17,000

(plus \$8000 from film fund)
AIA Film for Adults
Pilot Survey of Profession's Public Image

Educate Clients
\$12,000

PHA Procedures Study
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Other Public Relations Projects
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(not supplemental dues)
Secondary Education Filmstrip (third in a series)
Feature Article and Speech Kit for Chapters
Editorial Clipsheet for Newspapers
"Selection and Use of an Architect,"
a New Booklet

Still further, only immersion conforms to the description of baptism as given by the Apostle Paul in Romans where he speaks of it as a burial and a resurrection.

Only those who have reached the "age of accountability" are accepted for baptism. It is pointed out that the examples given in the New Testament are always of those who have heard the gospel preached and have believed it. Faith must always precede baptism, so only those old enough to understand and believe the gospel are considered fit subjects for baptism.

Ministers or evangelists of the church have no special prerogatives. They do not bear the title of "Reverend" or "Father," but are addressed simply by the term "Brother" as are all other men of the church. Along with elders and others they do counsel and advise those seeking help.

It is expected that all members will assemble for worship on each Lord's Day (Sunday). A central part of the worship is the eating of the Lord's Supper. Unless providentially hindered, each member considers this weekly appointment as binding. In many instances, as in the case of illness, the Lord's Supper is carried to those who are hindered from attending the worship. (The Lord's Supper consists of the bread and the wine.)

As a result of the distinctive plea of the church—a return to New Testament faith and practice—a cappella singing is the only music used in the worship. This singing, unaccompanied by mechanical instruments of music, conforms to the music used in the apostolic church and for several centuries thereafter. Because it is felt that there is no authority for engaging in acts of worship not found in the New Testament, this eliminates the use of instrumental music, along with the use of candles, incense and other similar elements.

It is believed that after death each man must come before God in judgment and that he will be judged according to the deeds done while he lived. After judgment is pronounced he will spend eternity either in heaven or hell.

Each first day of the week the members of the church "lay by in store as they have been prospered" (1 Cor. 16:2). This is the church's means of financial support. The amount of any individual gift is generally known only to the one who gave it and to the Lord. This freewill offering is the only call which the church makes. No assessments or other levies are made. No money-making activities are engaged in.

The Church of Christ has no creed in the usually accepted meaning of the term. The belief of the church is stated fully and completely in the Bible. There is no other manual or discipline to which the members of the Church of Christ give their allegiance. The Bible is considered as the only infallible guide to heaven.

In the salvation of man's soul there are two necessary parts: God's part and man's part. God's part is the big part, "For by grace ye have been saved through faith, and not of yourselves; it is the

gift of God, not of works, that no man should glory" (Eph. 2:8-9). The love which God felt for man led him to send Christ into the world to redeem man. The life and teaching of Jesus, the sacrifice on the cross, and the proclaiming of the gospel to men constitute God's part in salvation. Though God's part is the big part, man's part is also necessary if a man is to reach heaven. Man must comply with the conditions of pardon which the Lord has announced. Man's part can be clearly set forth in the following steps (used by all Churches of Christ to explain their doctrinal emphasis):

1) *Hear the Gospel.* "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14)

2) *Believe.* "And without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him." (Heb. 11:16)

3) *Repent of Past Sins.* "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent." (Acts 17:30)

4) *Confess Jesus as Lord.* "Behold here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believe with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." (Acts 8:36-37)

5) *Be Baptized for the Remission of Sins.* "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

6) *Live a Christian Life.*

Church Government and Sequence of Authority

Congregations are independent. They are organized congregationally with local scripturally qualified men appointed to oversee the work of the local church. These men are sometimes called bishops, more often elders. Other men who meet the biblical qualifications are appointed to serve as deacons. These serve under the elders and are generally assigned specific tasks such as directing singing, serving as church treasurer and teaching Bible classes. *There is no earthly authority in matters of the church superior to the elders of the local church.*

Following the plan of organization found in the New Testament, Churches of Christ are autonomous. Their common faith in the Bible and adherence to its teaching are the chief ties which bind them together. There is no central headquarters of the church and no organization superior to the elders of each local congregation. Congregations do cooperate voluntarily in supporting the orphans and the aged, in preaching the gospel in new fields and in other similar works. There are no conventions or official publications. The "tie that binds" is a common loyalty to the principles of the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

Buildings

Since the Churches of Christ are independent of one another, the type of structure which houses them is also an independent decision. There is no architectural tradition nor heritage which is binding. In most instances, the individual churches appoint a certain group of men from their own congregation to act as their building committee, who in turn choose the architects.

1) The worship services are conducted in a very simple manner. The service consists of prayer, singing (a cappella), preaching and the Communion (or Lord's Supper as it is sometimes referred to). All this is done on the Lord's Day, both morning and evening. There are mid-week services usually conducted morning and evening, also. The pulpit is usually (not always) centered on the nave.

2) Men in the local congregations serve as attendants for the Communion, by passing it to the members who are seated. There is no certain order or time during the service for doing this. A communion table is required and is usually, not always, located in the center front of the nave. The communion emblems may be prepared in the church or at a member's home.

3) The baptistry is one for the immersion of a person—its placement is left to the discretion of the architect and his client—but typically is located in the front of the nave and usually centered.

4) The choir, if any, is grouped together as part of the congregation.

5) The buildings usually have an educational wing, which the congregation uses for their Bible study or Sunday School. This wing is usually broken down into the various classrooms.

6) There are usually provisions made for an office or study for the minister.

7) Some of the larger churches try to provide a library, etc, where any of its members may do study or research.

8) Some of the congregations provide for kitchens, which are used at times for fellowship gatherings.

Other Planning Considerations:

1) Acoustics: Since musical instruments are not used in worship services, the frequencies of the human voice alone determine the optimum reverberation time.

2) Pews or seats should have aisles on both sides in order to allow men to pass the Communion.

3) Churches of Christ encourage even very young children to sit with their parents at worship services; however, a soundproof cry-room, with full view of the pulpit, is often required.

Bibliography

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"Introducing the Church of Christ," by Delton Haun

ALFRED BENDINER FAIA 1899-1964



HOW SAD TO HEAR that Al Bendiner has left us.

Al Bendiner saw through the Martini Glass clearly and cheerfully—never darkly. It was in reality a gay crystal ball that he was reading, and often slyly revealing to us what he saw there of our pompous foibles and stuffy styles.

His was a buoyant heart; he enjoyed life, architects and architecture; he had the light touch and his pinpricks at our profundity were too pertinent to brush away but rather to be pondered as we paused in our dreary double-talk. Double-talk often came from those on the dais, ensconced in elegant sem-

inar lounge chairs. He was amused by double-talk whether written or spoken.

Our Northwest Regional Meeting was under way on Columbus Day in 1962 when Oregon's worst blowdown broke upon us. The evening gatherings were carried on by candlelight. We had personalities from afar for that pow-wow, but none will be remembered as long as will Al and Betty Bendiner. We had a grand time as Al carried on with the blow at our backs and the spray of the Pacific Ocean in our faces.

His perception and treatment of our little egos was as amusing, pungent and pertinent as ever. He had a wonderful way of revealing the truth about man and man's environs and habits. I do not remember any of the great who brought us messages of considered concern, but I shall always remember Al's and Betty's visit among us.

He will live long in the hearts of those who find architecture a gay and exciting adventure, a thrilling and useful way of life.

We shall miss him, for who can hope to tilt again with his droll skill and buoyant spirit? The Martini Glass may be gone and the crystal ball clouded for a time, but his memory will continue to sparkle and cheer us for many a year. For that we are thankful.

GLENN STANTON FAIA