

BARN AGAIN: A CASE STUDY  
OF CONGREGATIONAL REFORMATION AS EXPRESSED THROUGH  
THE RHETORIC OF CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

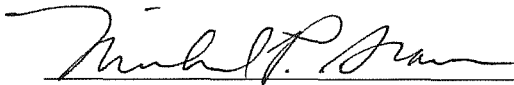
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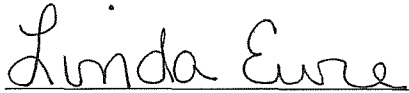
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by  
Karen Elizabeth Burch  
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 5/1/06  
Michael P. Graves, Ph. D., Chairman      Date

 5/1/06  
Linda Eure, Ph. D., Reader      Date

 5/1/06  
Todd Smith, M. F. A., Reader      Date

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## ABSTRACT

Understanding the way in which church architecture functions rhetorically to communicate identity formation, monumentality, and meaning was the focus of this study.

Ronald C. Arnett's interpersonal praxis is used as a starting point to understand how the architectural rhetoric of reformation happens. It includes the integration of three concepts: faith narrative, or worldview; historicity, the presence of history in a place; and metaphor, or symbol. I argue that it is through an understanding of an integration of these terms as applied to visual communication that architectural communication can be understood.

Sonja Foss's schema for the evaluation of visual imagery was used to further understanding of the symbolic element of this architecture, but also contributed in some ways to discerning the historicity and faith narrative.

The building analyzed was a church designed by the architectural firm Metz, Thornton, and Smith under the guidance of Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church. The narrative context of the building was explored, followed by identification and evaluation of the architectural elements of the building, then Foss's schema was applied and the functions of the building were judged and conclusions drawn.

**KEY WORDS:** Church; Architecture; Visual Rhetoric; Visual Communication; Sonja K. Foss; Ronald C. Arnett; Narrative; Historicity; Metaphor; Transparency; Symbol.

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## GLOSSARY

**Apse.** The circular, or multi-angular termination of a church sanctuary, traditionally at the East end, often absent in Nonconformist churches. It is at the West end in the Barn church.

**Arts and Crafts (Craftsman) Style.** See note in text.

**Atrium.** A large open space often several stories high with a glazed roof and or large windows, usually located just beyond the main doors. They give buildings a feeling of space and light.

**Board and Batten siding.** Siding that consists of wide boards or plywood sheets set vertically whose joints are covered by narrow strips of wood (battens) over joints or cracks.

**Chancel.** The space around the principal altar of the church for the clergy and choir often separated by a screen or railing from the body of the church. It includes the sanctuary, which is the immediate area around the principal altar (holy of holies). From the Latin cancellus: meaning a screen or to cancel—as in the place where the debt of sin is canceled.

**Clerestory.** An upper story row of windows, or the highest level of windows lighting the Nave.

**Cruciform.** Cross-shaped.

**Crux.** The spaces beneath the transept on either side of the post or Nave portion of the cruciform.

**Cupola.** A spherical roof placed like an inverted cup over a circular, square or multi-angular apartment. A dome, usually small, that tops a roof or turret (sometimes with a lantern on top). Belvedere cupolas are small (usually square) lookout towers on the roof of a house.

**Dormer.** A window in a sloping roof; it can have a variety of roof styles: hipped, gabled, shed, arched, round, oval, pedimented, eyebrow, or through-the-cornice.

**Gable.** The triangular portion of the wall between the enclosing lines of a sloping roof; the part of the wall immediately under the end of a pitched roof, cut into a triangular shape by the sloping sides of the roof.

**Gabled roof.** A pitched roof having gables at either end

**Gothic Arch.** A pointed arch, typical of the window design of many church buildings.

Historicality. The presence of a historical moment, in a place (topos) or time (chronos); *Kairos* in *Chronos* simultaneously in *topos* and *chora*; a transcendent integration of place, time, and history.

Metaphor. Symbol.

Narrative. World View, the historical narrative, value laden and driven perspective from which individuals view and understand the world, and through which can be understood.

Narthex. The entrance hall leading to the nave of the church.

Nave. The central aisle, the part of the church located between the chief entrance and the chancel, and separated from the aisles by piers or columns. From Navis: ship, an early symbol of the church connected to the biblical Arks: Noah's Ark, Moses found in an ark, and the Ark of the Covenant; or the main part of the church where the congregation sits.

Post and Beam. A type of construction that uses a skeleton of posts and crossbeams interlinked and secured with wooden pegs to frame a structure—hand-crafted.

Sanctuary. The holiest part of a church, where the altar is located.

Shed Roof. A roof shape with a single sloping plane.

Transept. The crosswise, horizontal, portion of the cruciform church; it may cross the nave at right angles.

Vestibule. A small entrance hall or passage located between the outer door and the interior of a house or building.

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And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that, good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Romans 12:2, KJV

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of the Christian Church to preach the gospel, to make dedicated students of its understanding—disciples, and to create a community of singular identity in Jesus Christ—accomplished through the baptism of the disciples in a ceremony symbolizing rebirth and fostering identity with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The identity of the Church argues for the validity of this regenerating gospel. This identity has historically been closely connected to its architecture. From the Catholic cathedrals of the great cities to the Puritan meetinghouses and reformed church structures, the “church-house” has acted as a metaphoric skin for the Church body. A prime example of this phenomenon can be seen in the Barn Church-house of Plainfield, New Hampshire where the body of Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church<sup>1</sup> gathers and grows together.

In this thesis I will argue that The Barn Church creates and evokes meaning as it: (1) establishes and exhibits historicity, (2) visually communicates the gospel message utilizing architectural metaphors, or symbols, and (3) accomplishes these functions within the context of the re-formed faith narrative, or worldview, of Connecticut Valley Christ

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<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church is the legal name of the incorporation of the church. However, “Connecticut Valley” was added to the name only after it was discovered that there was already a Christ Community Church in the state of New Hampshire, and its members seldom include the first two terms of its legal name when referring to it. In the interest of brevity I will hereafter refer to the church as *CCC*.

Community Church (CCC). The Barn Church-house is a prime example of the functional visual communication of church architecture.

The concepts of narrative, historicity, and metaphor are central to this thesis. Walter Fisher asserts that human beings are “*homo narrans*,” story-telling beings.<sup>2</sup> Visually and verbally we communicate our stories to others through symbols that hold meaning for us. Narrative is significant because it indicates a worldview and thus serves as a context for understanding the meaning communicated by the architecture. In this case it is the narrative of a religious community. Therefore, it is the religious or faith narrative of CCC, a Christian worldview, that serves as the context for this analysis. This faith narrative is one of reformation, of change within the larger Nonconformist Christian metanarrative.

To convey a Christian worldview “the immediate situation and what you are trying to do must be kept in mind.”<sup>3</sup> Ronald Arnett argues: “To initiate change requires admitting where one is located; only when the historical moment is met, rather than ignored is it possible to invite change as a contemporary possibility.”<sup>4</sup> Ellen Oberkotter, charter member of CCC says that the people had to first see where they were in order to move forward and reform the congregation.<sup>5</sup> The historical moment that called for reformation is an integral part of the rhetoric of the Barn Church-house. Historicity is

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<sup>2</sup> Walter Fisher, “Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument,” *Communication Monographs* 51 (March 1984): 6-7.

<sup>3</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *Art & The Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973): 55-56.

<sup>4</sup> Ronald C. Arnett, “Interpersonal Praxis: The Interplay of Religious Narrative, Historicity, and Metaphor,” *Journal of Communication and Religion* 21 (September 1998): 143.

<sup>5</sup> Charter member Ellen Oberkotter of CCC, interview by author, 31 December 2005, Cornish, digital audio recording, home of Bob and Ellen Oberkotter, Cornish, New Hampshire.

the sense of presence exhibited by a historical moment. To understand the rhetoric of the Barn Church house we must understand its historicity, how the birth of CCC met a congregation's needs in that historical moment and is now present in the architectural rhetoric of the Barn Church-house.

As time moves forward, meanings connected with a symbol change, as do the identities of those who interpret that meaning. "Architecture is the mother art."<sup>6</sup> Francis Schaffer argues: "an art form or style that is no longer able to carry content [meaning] cannot be used to give the Christian message."<sup>7</sup> Metaphor, or symbol, is central to this thesis because it is via metaphor that we communicate and understand meaning. Arnett proposes that metaphors [symbols] are the key to "meeting the changing historical moment in which we live;" it is the metaphors that must change if they are to appropriately connect faith narrative and historical moment in such a way that the meaning can be communicated.<sup>8</sup>

#### Justification of the Study

The Barn Church-house, of Plainfield, New Hampshire is a unique piece of visual rhetoric,<sup>9</sup> worthy of critical examination. There are several reasons for the selection of "the Barn Church" as an artifact for critical examination.

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<sup>6</sup> Scott Joseph Berman, "Public Buildings as Public Relations: Ideas about the Theory and Practice of Strategic Architectural Communication," *Public Relations Quarterly* 44 (Spring 1999): 20.

<sup>7</sup> Schaeffer, 54.

<sup>8</sup> Arnett, 143-44.

<sup>9</sup> By rhetoric I mean the inherently persuasive communication of meaning through culturally and historically relevant symbols.

There are two particular reasons, which reveal a response to an idea of philosophical or historical importance. First, CCC is a faith community conceived in the broader Puritan tradition, which has constructed a church-house, and which contributes to the ongoing, divisive debate over the use of visual rhetoric in a context of worship. Second, the artifact reveals a unique understanding of the independent church movement; it is through its commentary on the idea of community, both external and internal, that the Barn Church reveals this understanding.

The use of visual images in the construction of the Jewish Tabernacle and in Solomon's Temple is reported in the Old Testament of the Bible in great detail.<sup>10</sup> The history of the Catholic Church is full of the use of visual imagery in its architecture and décor "...designed to convert the sacred into a visual experience" and create a "piety of looking."<sup>11</sup> Its symbolism is related directly to the biblical architecture of the Jewish Tabernacle and Temple.<sup>12</sup> Much visual imagery and grandeur in church architecture is associated by Protestants with a history of Papal abuse of authority over an illiterate people. On the other side of the debate, many Puritan groups have left behind visual imagery as a thing of null importance,<sup>13</sup> due to a varying understanding of the events of the New Testament in light of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost, the Jewish holiday at which the law is given annually to the people in oral form at the temple, which before Christ's crucifixion, represented the means of spiritual regeneration and eternal

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<sup>10</sup> Schaeffer, 12-18.

<sup>11</sup> David Morgan, *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998): 60. Also see Frank E. Wilson, *An Outline of Christian Symbolism* (New York: Morehouse-Barlow Co., 1961); and Andre Bieler, *Architecture in Worship: The Christian Place of Worship*, trans. Odette and Donald Elliott (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965).

<sup>12</sup> Bieler, 6-11.

<sup>13</sup> Wilson, 6.

security for man. Pentecost, following Jesus Christ's resurrection and ascension, is the day Christians mark the giving of the Holy Spirit to the followers of Jesus Christ, the transcription of the law fulfilled upon the hearts of those who follow Christ—meaning no human priest is now needed to stand between God and those followers. This in addition to a reading of the Biblical text that emphasizes the centrality of the whole Word of God over the Mass and an understanding of an emphasis on the internal versus external piety is reason for the lack of visual imagery in much Nonconformist church architecture. Many churches in other traditions continue the use of the visual as a mode of communication.

The Barn Church-house is in some respects removed from the visual tradition of the Catholic Church. One of the purposes of the formation of CCC was to break from established Church traditions and attempt to form a cultural identity aligned with the biblical truths of scripture and their collective identity in Christ. However, in forming its own identity, CCC included a great deal of metaphorical imagery in the architecture and décor of the Barn Church-house.

The Barn Church-house is unique because it can be seen to identify with both sides of the argument—visual Catholic and sparse Puritan; it houses a puritanical faith community intent on moving away from human tradition, which has reclaimed the use of visual rhetoric in the architecture and décor of its place of worship. The faith community; born of a church split, in an effort to remove itself from a shallow, seeker friendly, disjointed church community with which it could no longer identify, found itself meeting in a post and beam style barn fit with recycled pews salvaged from renovations of their previous place of worship and a lectern constructed from scraps left over from the barn's

construction. The group thought it a fitting place for meeting, since their God was born in a barn. When it came time to build a worship center, the artists and craftsmen of the church community were entrusted with the design. The Barn Church-house was the result of their careful considerations.

The choice of the Barn Church to embrace the independent church movement and join in it as they crafted a new identity fundamentally impacted their choices in facility construction. The Independent Church movement is a movement in response to frustrations with the possibly outdated, ineffective manner of conducting corporate worship. Each of these churches is an independent entity, whose aim it is to build a community of faith and attract others in the community to become part of an authentic Christian community. The constitutions of these churches differ from community to community along with manner and style of worship.

The architecture of the Barn Church-house addresses the issue of community in that it fits into the local New England culture. New England is known for its pastoral settings rife with country churches and red barns. The Barn Church-house identifies with and contributes to this culture. In addition, the structure was designed to be utilized as an emergency shelter for the surrounding community; this is significant to the Barn Church's history, in that the original barn in which the congregation met was a haven in the midst of an emotional and spiritual storm.

The many classrooms, the youth room, fellowship hall, which includes a massive fireplace and a coffee station, large kitchen, library, and open design of the auditorium encourage congregation and fellowship within the building. The auditorium has a great deal in common with a more traditional Gothic style sanctuary. From the size of the Barn

Church's auditorium, it is obvious that it has not been designed to become a mega-church as so many contemporary churches have become; but rather its focus on authentic community has kept it small. The community in which it is set, rural Plainfield, New Hampshire, is relatively small compared to the setting of other community churches: the suburban Chicago Willow Creek Community Church, or Rick Warren's Saddleback Church. Nevertheless, the architecture and design of the Barn Church-house enforces its identity as a part of the modern Independent Church movement.

A second criterion for selection is that the Barn Church-house has garnered a critical response from its contemporaries. This can be seen in various local and even somewhat broader media. Both the Valley News and Eagle Times, local newspapers, have published articles commenting on the church building.<sup>14</sup> One author, Donald Maurice Kreis, in "Mixing the Sacred and the Mundane," subjected the Barn Church-house's architecture to scrutiny, in addition to two other local church structures. The project was highlighted in *MetalMag*, in an article entitled "Creating Churches and Religious Facilities: It's more than the Structure," written by Marge O'Conner. The building has been recognized for the design of its metal roof, its designers: Metz, Thornton & Smith won the Metal Architecture's 2002 Design Award in the metal roofing

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<sup>14</sup> Donald Maurice Kreis, "Mixing the Sacred and the Mundane: on Architecture," *Valley News*, 11 September 2004, C1+; J. Tobias Moore, "Plainfield Church Almost Done," *Eagle Times*, 14 May 2001, 1; Aaron Nobel, "Church Won't Pay Plainfield: How Does a 54-member Church Afford a \$3.7 Million Building?" *Eagle Times*, 6 May 2002: A1+; Ruth Rollins, "Congregation Planning New Church in Plainfield," *Eagle Times*, October 2000; Jodie Tillman, "New Church Going Up in Plainfield," *Valley News*, 21 January 2001: A1+.



category.<sup>15</sup> Currently, an article is being written addressing the design of the building's sprinkler system.<sup>16</sup>

A third and final criterion of selection is that the artifact reveals rhetorical significance. I believe that the artifact has rhetorical significance in at least three areas of thought and practice. The artifact possesses rhetorical significance in that it may be viewed as a significant contribution to better understanding of rhetorical artifacts from the visual perspective. The Barn Church is an example of metaphoric architecture, similar to Michael Graves Portland building as discussed by Maria Kanengieter-Wildeson.<sup>17</sup> The artifact can be analyzed from this perspective in light of its historical context and the identity of the community. Within the realm of metaphor, the interior design can also be examined in the same light, as an aspect of visual piety: identifying iconic images, which act as signs rather than symbols.<sup>18</sup> Such an examination might reveal a particular cultural ideology held by CCC, and potentially held by other communities in the independent church movement. The Barn Church is a case study in metaphorical architecture and visual piety.

The Barn Church-house functions as a memorial, or monument, which stands as testimony to the faith and history of the Barn Church. The function of a memorial is to encapsulate the memory of an event and the sacrifices made for, so that others may have

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<sup>15</sup> Bob Fittro, "Iowa Project Voted Best Overall in 2002 Design Awards Contest," *Metal Architecture*, August 2002: 8-11.

<sup>16</sup> Associate Pastor Craig Johnson of Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church, interview by author, 27 December 2005, Plainfield, Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church, Plainfield, New Hampshire.

<sup>17</sup> Maria Kanengieter-Wildeson, "Architectural Metaphor as Subversion: The Portland Building," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*. Ed. Sonja K. Foss. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2004): 325-327.

<sup>18</sup> Madeline L'Engle, *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1980): 28.

the hope of a future life.<sup>19</sup> The practice of erecting memorials is a historical one. There are instances in scripture where the Israelites left a pile of stones to signify a particular event, so that it would not be forgotten. The concept of church as memorial is also not new; many catholic cathedrals have been built in memoriam to a particular saint or church leader. Memorials mark history and act as time capsules, history speaks to us if we will only listen. The Barn Church-house is exemplary of this phenomenon, embodying the historical identification of CCC, and standing in the congregation's perception of God's leading the community out of its former place.

The artifact may be viewed as an instance of identification. The Barn Church-house is an important artifact in that it can be identified in many ways with the Puritan Church. Yet, it also maintains many visual elements, which can be identified with the traditional historic roots of the visual culture of the Catholic Church. Its members carefully conceived the design and construction of the Barn Church-house; many of the elements of architecture and décor were intentionally crafted with the purpose of being iconic or metaphoric in nature. The design and construction of the Barn Church reflects the identity of the community who meets there. In sum the artifact is of interest to the study of rhetorical theory.

Certainly, there are other criteria for selection that may apply to the artifact in question. However, the three that I have presented here argue strongly that the Barn Church is a worthy object for scrutiny.

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<sup>19</sup> See William R. Lethaby, "Architecture as Form in Civilization," *Form in Civilization: Collected Papers on Art & Labor* (London: Oxford University Press, 1922).

## Research Question

### Method

For this exploration of architectural rhetoric I will employ the text in context approach to the historical critical method utilizing elements of Ronald C. Arnett's "Interpersonal Praxis: The interplay of Narrative, Historicity, and Metaphor."<sup>20</sup> The analysis of the text will draw on and be informed by Sonja K. Foss's "Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery."<sup>21</sup>

Ronald C. Arnett argues: metaphors must change as history progresses, to meet the needs of each new historical moment. He opens with an in-depth discussion of the definitions and relationship of religious narrative, historicity and metaphor.<sup>22</sup> He then discusses how the differing narratives of Adolf Hitler (Aryan) and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (discipleship) in Nazi Germany functioned, why the Aryan narrative and connected metaphors resonated with the people more so than the discipleship narrative—the Aryan narrative and metaphors “met the moment.”<sup>23</sup> Arnett then proposes a web of metaphors that might meet the historical moment of today.<sup>24</sup> Arnett applies this interplay specifically to interpersonal communication. I will apply it to visual communication. I will not deal with Arnett's metaphors chosen to meet the present moment, but rather I will employ the interplay or integration of narrative [Nonconformist Christian

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<sup>20</sup> Ronald C. Arnett, "Interpersonal Praxis: The Interplay of Religious Narrative, Historicity, and Metaphor," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 21 (September 1998): 141-163.

<sup>21</sup> Sonja K. Foss, "A Rhetorical Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery," *Communication Studies* 45 (Fall 1994): 213-24.

<sup>22</sup> Arnett, 141-153.

<sup>23</sup> Arnett, 147-149.

<sup>24</sup> Arnett, 153-161.

worldview], historicity and metaphor [symbol] to understand the meaning conveyed by the Barn Church-house.

Foss proposes a schema for evaluating visual images using “three primary kinds of judgments:” “identification of a function communicated in the image accomplished through the critics analysis of the image itself; ...assessment of how well that function is communicated and the support available for that function in the image; ...and scrutiny of the function itself—reflection of its legitimacy or soundness, determined by the implications and consequences of the function...according to the critic’s initial reasons for analyzing the image.”<sup>25</sup> Valerie Peterson makes the point that humans perceive images in pieces before recognizing the whole; and as such, the critic should first examine the visual elements of the image and then examine the whole image for a more accurate interpretation of its function.<sup>26</sup> Both of these authors invite us to critically examine the form of visual communication to aide us in understanding its rhetorical function. When applied to the case of the Barn Church-house, they encourage us to ask how the elements of each part of the Barn Church-house’s design evokes meaning (in particular as visual symbol), which reinforces the functional communication of the architecture within its narrative and physical contexts.

#### Artifact

The Barn Church-house was conceived of by a number of members who found themselves in want of a “new” church body after divorcing from a previous church

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<sup>25</sup> Foss, 216-217.

<sup>26</sup> Valerie V. Peterson, “The Rhetorical Criticism of Visual Elements: An Alternative to Foss’s Schema,” *Southern Communication Journal* 67 (Fall 2001): 21-23.

community for irreconcilable differences. One of the members' families, the Oberkotter family, had recently completed construction on a large traditional New England post and beam barn, and offered it as a place for meeting. It was noted that Jesus Christ was born in a barn; therefore a barn was a good a meeting place as any for the church. It was mid-spring, early summer, and the large doors could be rolled open to reveal the pastoral New Hampshire landscape without, while a fresh breeze blew through. It had a soul restoring effect for the emotionally taxed members.

When winter arrived the pews remained while everything else was transported to a basement space owned by Biebel Builders in Windsor, Vermont, associated with another member's family. The walls were lined with planks to maintain the barn atmosphere and folding chairs were set up as seating for the body. It was during this time period that the body registered their name as "Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church," but the local community continued to refer to them as "The Barn Church," a name gained while they were meeting in the Oberkotter's barn. So, when the time came to build a more functional meetinghouse the congregation decided to model their place after the barn. Built in the functional tradition of Gothic church architecture, but in the form of a traditional New England post and beam barn.

### Literature Review

Several areas of architecture have been examined in the field of communication. Architecture of the home, public architecture, memorial architecture, and church architecture are four categories in to which the literature falls. A small body of this literature is devoted specifically to the symbolic aspect of architecture as communication.

A good portion of the literature specifically addresses the rhetorical nature of architecture.

#### Architecture of the Home

Andrea T. Tange looks at the architectural rhetoric of the home in “Envisioning Domesticity, Locating Identity: Constructing the Victorian Middle Class Through Images of Home.” She discusses how personal home architecture and design created divisions of gender and class according to the accepted ideology of the day, as well as how certain décor reflected the identity of the individuals who lived there. Ethel S. Goodstein also examines the architectural rhetoric of the home in an examination of the “built environments” depicted in the television program *Designing Women*. She points out the identification of the architecture of “Sugarbaker’s,” a Victorian style home which is the environment in which most of the narrative takes place, with the culture of the “South” and the southern belle. Both authors address feminine issues connected with the architecture and design of the home, and what it communicates about the identity and position of women in society, according to the era.

#### Public Architecture

Business communication and architecture is one of many perspectives used to examine the evolution of bank architecture and its changing rhetoric. Rodney D. Parker and Herbert W. Hildebrandt discuss how bank architecture has acted and acts persuasively, to previously communicate images of power, financial dominance, and for some banks today the image of towering over the competition is projected; else, the

image of the guilt free temple—an offering is brought, potential blessings in the form of interest may be assured, and yet no guilt is involved in the exchange.

Maria Kanengieter-Wildeson uses the perspective of metaphoric criticism to argue that the rhetoric of a new building can subvert an old image through metaphor. She examines the Portland Building, designed by architect Michael Graves. Kanengieter-Wildeson argues that the façade of the building may be interpreted two ways: it resembles a toy, and it looks like a person as well. These two metaphors subvert the image of the austere and removed governmental building and create a more approachable image for the public. Scholars have examined other pieces of Oregon's architecture: Scott Berman uses the Guggenheim and downtown Milwaukee to illustrate how architecture can function as public relations, the success of which can be measured by what buildings are torn down and which remain.

Eric Jarosinski looks at the architecture of a specific building within the context of its city and other examples of a use of glass in architecture. Sir Norman Foster's Reichstag cupola is an addition to the Reichstag, Berlin, which houses the German Parliament. Jarosinski examines its rhetoric in terms of the metaphors that the architectural concept of transparency evokes: namely the use of glass in the construction of the cupola as an intentional metaphor that expresses wishes the new Berlin government to appear transparent, rather than covert, in its political work. However, the actual spectrally oriented (or ghostlike) meaning evoked by the metaphor serves rather to remind the people of their identity as defined by the context of their past.

Minoru Yamasaki's Pruitt-Igoe is another example of ghost-like architecture, but for different reasons. Pruitt-Igoe was built to replace the slums, giving hope to the people

and fostering a more complete sense of community among its residents. However, a loss of funding due to desegregation altered the original design so much that the building became almost prison-like—a monument to the despair of its impoverished black residents and a sign of the “failure of modern architecture.”<sup>27</sup> Elizabeth Birmingham looks closely at the reasons that Pruitt-Igoe failed, citing that the building did not fail because the people could not understand the intended meaning (a lack of identification), but rather that they read the meaning correctly as an urban reservation with implications for “structural racism within built environments;” she further argues that the political-economic and social context of the project were major factors in the failure of the architecture.<sup>28</sup> A close reading of the original plans for the buildings, and the actual structures interior and exterior construction supports her arguments.

Greg Dickinson and Casey M. Maugh examine the visual rhetoric of the Wild Oats Market in “Placing Visual Rhetoric: Material Comfort in Wild Oats Market.” Through a close read, they look at the physical and social contexts of the building, its exterior elements, and its interior as well. For most American’s, visiting the grocery store is a ritual part of everyday life. However, for those patrons of Wild Oats Market, one of several grocery store chains that orient themselves toward a particular environmentally and organic focused American subculture, others are Trader Joe’s and Whole Foods, the experience is more than just a trip for supplies. These stores foster a sense of community, projecting an image in tune with the specific subculture that it identifies with and helping its patrons to negotiate the postmodern world. The authors argue that Wild Oats Market

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<sup>27</sup> Elizabeth Birmingham, “Reframing the Ruins: Pruitt-Igoe, Structural Racism, and African American Rhetoric as a Space for Cultural Critique,” *Western Journal of Communication* 63 (Summer 1999): 292.

<sup>28</sup> Birmingham, 293.



provides a comforting sense of place where individuals can go to escape the terrors of the world and combat the “alienation and anomie that is characteristic of consumer postmodern culture.”<sup>29</sup>

Sonja K. Foss conducts a similar, but much briefer, analysis of a Burger King in her “Rhetoric and the Visual Image: A Resource Unit.” She uses Kenneth Burke’s concept of form: conventional, repetitive, progressive syllogistic; and “critical methods agon analysis,” which reveals conflict between ideas, terms, or characters for her analysis. Foss finds that each of these angles reveals something about the character of the restaurant. The visual rhetoric communicates that all Burger Kings are essentially the same: they are efficient and food can be obtained quickly, the food eaten there will be tasty, but prepared with economy, efficiency, and uniformity.<sup>30</sup> Burger King appears to be committed to environmental issues, but at the same time produces huge amounts of trash from the packaging of its food.<sup>31</sup> Burger King also appears to be concerned with meeting individual customer needs, but belies this appearance by its commitment to efficiency.<sup>32</sup>

There is a fairly large body of communication research devoted to memorial architecture, primarily the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial. Cheree Carlson and John E. Hocking, Laura Seneschal Carney, Peter Ehrenhaus, Sonja K. Foss, Harry W. Haines, Charles G. Griswold, Carole Blair, Marsha J. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci Jr. are a few of

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<sup>29</sup> Dickinson, Greg, and Casey M. Maugh, “Placing Visual Rhetoric: Material Comfort in Wild Oats Market,” in *Defining Visual Rhetorics*. Eds. Charles A. Hill and Marguerite Helmers (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2004): 270.

<sup>30</sup> Sonja Foss, “Rhetoric and the Visual Image: A Resource Unit,” *Communication Education* 31 (January 1982): 60-61.

<sup>31</sup> Foss, 61.

<sup>32</sup> Foss, 61.

the scholars who have evaluated the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and its influence on public memorializing since 1982, when the memorial was dedicated. Alison English evaluated the Clark County (Alabama) War Memorial, which commemorates five wars, she also makes mention of other memorials worthy of analysis including the Vietnam Women's Memorial.<sup>33</sup> The memorial is a kind of rhetoric that has a much more conscious affect on individuals than do other types of public architecture, such as: schools, government buildings, prisons, museums, banks, grocery or retail stores, restaurants, housing complexes, and individually owned homes, but with visual communication being a fairly new focus for the rhetorical scholar very little communication research has yet to focus on the rhetoric and criticism of architecture.

#### Church Architecture

In terms of church architecture the literature is wide and varied, composed primarily of theses and dissertations.<sup>34</sup> Leland Griffin argues that rhetoric makes

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<sup>33</sup> Allison English, "The Clark County (Alabama) War Memorial: Kairos and Chronos United in the Sacred Commemoration and Contemplation of Five Wars," *The Journal of American Culture* 27 (December 2004): 384-405.

<sup>34</sup> Patricia Brace, "A Rhetorical Study of Coventry Cathedral and Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem" Revealing the Tropes of Metonymy, Metaphor and Irony," (Ph. D. diss. Ohio University, 1993), abstract, DAI 54: 06A; Aileen Bulsig, "Architects' and Laypeople's Perceptions of Interaction Environments," (thesis. University of Arizona, 1991), abstract, MAI 30: 02; Gregory Caicco, "Ethics and Poetics: The Architectural Vision of Saint Francis of Assisi (Italy)," (Ph. D. diss. McGill University, 1999), abstract, DAI 61: 06A; Kenneth J. Conant, "The Expression of Religion in Architecture," in *The Arts and Religion*, Ed. Albert E. Bailey. (New York: Macmillan, 1944); Gary Gelfenbeil, "Spheres of Light: Light as the Common Element of the Byzantine East and the Gothic West," (Ph. D. diss. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1987), abstract DAI 48: 11A; H. Gary Gillespie "Japan's Ise Shrine and Selected Norwegian Stave Churches: An Examination of the Definition of Vernacular Architecture," (Thesis. West Virginia University, 2001), abstract, MAI 40: 06; Jeanne Kilde, "Spiritual Armories: A Social and Architectural History of Neo-Medieval Auditorium Churches in the United States, 1869-1910," (Ph. D. diss. University of Minnesota, 1991), abstract, DAI 52: 06A; Vicki G.

architecture; architecture makes civilization; and that rhetoric makes, indeed is, civilization.<sup>35</sup> He also argues that architecture as rhetoric exists “as acts or entities,” an idea strongly related to that of the memorial. Griffin lists the Greek temple, a gothic church and the tower of Babel as examples of powerful public discourse, before moving on to discuss the “edifice metaphor” employed in oratory.<sup>36</sup> Darryl Hattenhauer also makes brief mention of the church among a list of examples of architecture types for which architects can predict the behaviors that the design will produce; others mentioned in the list are commercial architecture, restaurants, educational institutions, and prisons. Hattenhauer argues: “architecture that represents values and beliefs is rhetorical, because it induces ritual behavior...reminding us of our identity and place in the cosmos, community, family, and workplace... [and] the clearest examples take place in religious architecture” in the stained glass windows that symbolize the Bible, in the icons, a cross, and the candles—which if seen from the Puritan perspective may “signify idolatry and corruption.”<sup>37</sup> David Morgan, in his book *Visual Piety*, discusses the use of visual

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Lumpkin, “Church Architecture as Text: A Model for the Theological Interpretation of Baptist Worship Space.” (Ph.D. diss. Presbyterian School of Christian Education, 1999), abstract, DAI 60: 06A; Jennifer Ossman, “Reconstructing a National Image: The State, War and Navy Building and the Politics of Federal Design, 1866-1890.” (Ph. D. diss. University of Virginia, 1996), abstract, DAI 57: 08A; Iakovos Potamianos, “Light Into Architecture: Evocative Aspects of Natural Light as Related to Liturgy in Byzantine Churches,” (Ph. D. diss. University of Michigan, 1996) abstract, DAI 57: 03A; Aaron M. Zephir, ““God is in the Details”: Architectural Evangelism in South Baltimore.” (Thesis. University of Maryland, 2005), abstract. MAI 43: 06.

<sup>35</sup> Leland M. Griffin, “The Edifice Metaphor in Rhetorical Theory,” *Speech Monographs* 27 (November 1960): 279.

<sup>36</sup> Griffin, 280-281.

<sup>37</sup> Darryl Hattenhauer, “The Rhetoric of Architecture: A Semiotic Approach,” *Communication Quarterly* 32 (Winter 1984): 74.

imagery displayed in church buildings through history and the functions it served for people of faith.<sup>38</sup>

Carolyn Valone discusses architecture as a public voice for women in sixteenth-century Rome. Many of the women used their own money to “adorn the city with buildings which spoke about the issues that concerned them.”<sup>39</sup> In particular, Valone discusses their role as patrons in the construction of church buildings and in their design, which frequently included visual art depicting women of the Bible with which women of the sixteenth-century could identify.

Charles Altman, in his article about the Medieval Marquee, explores the visual rhetoric of church decoration. He begins his analysis by presenting an argument for the existence of popular culture in the medieval period. He argues “the popular text panders to the people’s supposed preferences, reaffirming their values, encouraging their dreams, playing to their fantasies.”<sup>40</sup> The popular text serves the distributing “institution’s vested interests, in particular the institution’s drive for survival. The popular text thus always functions as an advertisement for the institution which produced it...[for its] values and services.”<sup>41</sup> He focuses his analysis on the church portal art as a form of popular culture, a kind of advertisement to the secular public of the life to be found within the church building. The narrative of the portal art becomes magically symbolic...altar art is intended

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<sup>38</sup> David Morgan, *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>39</sup> Carolyn Valone, “Architecture as a Public Voice for Women in Sixteenth-Century Rome,” *Renaissance Studies* 15 (2001): 301.

<sup>40</sup> Charles F. Altman, “The Medieval Marques: Church Portal Sculpture as Publicity,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 14 (Summer 1980): 38.

<sup>41</sup> Altman, 38-39.

for the Sunday experience while the portal art “becomes a part of the townspeople’s daily lives.”<sup>42</sup>

### Structure of the Thesis

In this chapter I have provided an introduction to the study, including definitions of key concepts, justification of the study, and description of the method. I have also provided a literature review of studies dealing with various types of architecture in the field of communication, primarily from the rhetorical standpoint.

Chapter two provides the reader with narrative background information on the Barn Church—CCC and the church-house. Chapter three is a detailed description of the Barn Church-house in Plainfield, New Hampshire in the physical context of its location. Chapter four constitutes analysis of the Barn Church-house itself using Foss’s schema. Chapter five is a summary and conclusion that includes limitations of study as well as suggestions for future research.

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<sup>42</sup> Altman 40.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FAITH NARRATIVE CONTEXT OF THE BARN CHURCH<sup>43</sup>

Even now, on this winter morning, as construction workers crunch unceremoniously through muddy snow, the massive skeleton of the 30, 000 – square-foot church along 12A suggests a project that will change the Plainfield Village landscape.<sup>44</sup>

A testament to wood and Christ and family values called the Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church.... the church exudes a feeling of permanence. It's not going anywhere, and it seems to have always been there.<sup>45</sup>

When CCC decided to build their new church-house in Plainfield, New Hampshire, area journalists and a few local politicians sat up and took notice. They could hardly help it; the building is immense compared to other local church meetinghouses. The community it was built in has changed little in the past fifty years, and it took some effort to obtain the proper permits. From start to finish, no fewer than five articles in five publications have been written thus far with the Barn church as their sole subject matter<sup>46</sup> and three others have referred to it as an example.<sup>47</sup> The narrative

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<sup>43</sup> The details of this narrative are compiled from the personal memories of the author, interviews with other charter members of CCC conducted by the author, information from newspaper articles—dating from the beginning of the buildings construction to the present, and various church documents included in the appendices.

<sup>44</sup> Jodie Tillman, “New Church Going up in Plainfield,” *Valley News*, 21 Jan. 2001: A1.

<sup>45</sup> Aaron Nobel, “A Big Piece of Heaven: Plainfield’s Christ Community Church is a Whopper,” *Buzz*, 20 March 2002: 6.

<sup>46</sup> Moore, 1, 8. Aaron Nobel, “A Big Piece of Heaven: Plainfield’s Christ Community Church is a Whopper” 6-8; ---, “Church Won’t Pay Plainfield: How does a 54-Member Church Afford a \$3.7 Million Building?” *Eagle Times* 6 May 2002: A1, 14; Ruth Rollins, “Congregation Building New Church in Plainfield,” *Eagle Times* Oct. 2000: n.p. Jodie Tillman, A1, 6.

behind the construction of the building is referred to by each of these articles' authors, a characteristic of good journalism. Narrative is the context for understanding communication events. In the case of the Barn Church the narrative is a narrative of faith.<sup>48</sup> In this chapter, I will provide a history of the Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church and of the design and construction of the Barn Church building: a faith narrative that will provide a context for a rhetorical analysis of the communication potential of the building.

### Beginnings

Art communicates a worldview.<sup>49</sup> Architecture is the mother art; it is the mother art because it is the first creation of man after the hearth, built to contain and preserve life.<sup>50</sup> Church architecture communicates the Christian worldview, the faith narrative of a particular congregation at the time it was first conceived, just as the Jewish tabernacle,

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<sup>47</sup> Bob Fittro, ed. "Iowa Project Voted Best Overall in 2002 Design Awards Contest," *Metal Architecture* 18, Aug. 2002: 8-9 & 30-31, the building is pictured on the cover, in the index, announced in print and pictured as the first place design award recipient for its metal roof design, pictured again with a short write up on the details of the building and highlighted further in a full page advertisement for the metal roofing company. Donald M. Kreis, "Mixing the Sacred with the Mundane," *Valley News* 11 Sep. 2004: C1-6, Kreis examines three area churches characterized by recent construction with connections to the phrase "God is in the details." He addresses the supernatural ability of these groups to fund such elaborate buildings. Marge O'Connor, "Creating Churches & Religious Facilities: It's More Than the Structure," *Metalmag* May/June 2002: 36-50, the Barn Church is pictured on pages 36-37, the title page with project details: the name and place, the metal roof installer and architect, and specs for its metal roof.

<sup>48</sup> Ronald C. Arnett, "Interpersonal Praxis: The Interplay of Religious Narrative, Historicity, and Metaphor," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 21 (1998): 141-163. And Walter Fisher, "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument," *Communication Monographs* 51 (March 1984): 1-22.

<sup>49</sup> Schaeffer, 37-38.

<sup>50</sup> Stephen Frith, "A Primitive Exchange: On Rhetoric and Architectural Symbol," *Architectural Research Quarterly* 8 (2004): 39-41.

temple, and synagogue communicate the faith narrative of Israel.<sup>51</sup> Architectural style, as with all types of style, change over time.<sup>52</sup> “Styles are developed as symbol systems or vehicles for certain worldviews or messages.”<sup>53</sup> An art form or style no longer able to carry content, i.e. its intended meaning, cannot be used to give the Christian message.<sup>54</sup> When a congregation reforms, its architectural style must also reform and often does, though occasionally a reformed congregation will simply imitate previously successful architecture that carries some loose connection to their worldview. However “the form in which the worldview is communicated can either weaken or strengthen the content,” i.e. the meaning conveyed.<sup>55</sup>

Church forms have several historic connections:<sup>56</sup> The earliest churches were house-like. Many European churches and Cathedrals take their form from the Roman catacombs. As mentioned above, the medieval church took much of its form from the biblical descriptions of the temple and other Jewish symbols. Many churches, including early American church buildings, took their form from ships. Hence the term “nave,” related to naval, meaning ship as the name for the area where the people sit. Early American congregants had traveled ark like from the old world to the new and this was a particularly apt connection for them. Other, nonconformist groups eschewed all church symbolism, but ironically developed their own as they met in sparser accommodations, little more than barns. Wilson remarks “the Quakers wore their hats in church and kept

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<sup>51</sup> Bieler, 6-11.

<sup>52</sup> Schaeffer, 49.

<sup>53</sup> Schaeffer, 52.

<sup>54</sup> Schaeffer, 54.

<sup>55</sup> Schaeffer, 55.

<sup>56</sup> Bieler, 6-75; Fern Sears, *Let me Speak: Christian Symbols*, Kansas City, Missouri: Brown-White-Lowell Press, 1953): 1-4; Wilson, 1-23.



silence as symbols of their contempt for symbolism and dispensed with the sacraments in order to impart sacramental significance to “thee” and “thou.” Outward forms were eschewed and complete reliance was placed on the Holy Scriptures, apparently forgetful of the fact that the Bible itself is an outward form.”<sup>57</sup> “The church is the outward expression of [its] theological understanding of the community’s relationship to God.”<sup>58</sup>

At one time every part of the church building had an attributed significance, a deep meaning related to the history of the church, its persecution and to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Over time these meanings have been lost and have rather come to represent an empty, mechanical religion. One aspect of the church over the years has been to attract or repel the World by Truth. In an illiterate society a great deal of symbolism was needed, after the Reformation and distribution of the Bible in the languages of the people the great majority of symbolism became nonessential to the life and meaning of the Church.

The contemporary church has taken on several new forms stripped almost entirely of those original symbolic elements: The steel framed warehouse or storefront place of a completely utilitarian nature. The theater auditorium style building used to present dramatic entertainment based meaning. The carbon copy—modeled after those buildings in which the congregants were raised in the spirit of tradition. And the unique structure—often related to the architecture of the day and the area.

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<sup>57</sup> Wilson, 1-8.

<sup>58</sup> Bieler, 2.

## A House Divided Will Not Stand

I remember getting up on Sunday morning and eating pancakes for breakfast that my mother had made, dressing in my Sunday clothes, and riding in our car with my sisters, and later brothers too, to Sunday School and church, the gathering of common believers. My father always drove slowly on those particular mornings and there was just a light edge of tension in the air wondering if we would make it on time. Down the winding road and over the longest two-span covered bridge in the world to Windsor, Vermont—the birthplace of Vermont. There, several blocks up Main Street nearly at the other end, was a middling sized, red brick building with a large red deck and a double doors width of tinted glass; large panes reaching all the way up to the peaked gable of the roof line. A narrower column of glass to the left looked more like a window, though it extended up to the roofline as well.

We would ascend the tall staircase at the building's front, or sometimes use the handicap ramp on the backside of the deck facing the nearby Stoughton House rest home, to get to the front doors. To the right of the glass were hung letters and a large Roman cross; the letters spelled Trinity Evangelical Free Church. There was also a sign down at the sidewalk level that proclaimed the name of the pastor and the hours of operation for the building. Sometimes banners would be hung over the railing announcing vacation Bible School or some other upcoming event. There was also a basement door below, at street level, beneath the sign, but we exited there more often than entered on Sundays. The main doors opened outward and led to a large open space that everyone called the foyer, it was where they all stood around visiting before and after the service. Wall-to-wall gold carpet seemed to be everywhere, upstairs and down, minus the space of floor

underneath the pews in the sanctuary and the concrete of the fellowship hall in the basement. The infant nurseries to the left of the foyer always had lots of babies in them.

A bulletin board spanned most of the rest of that wall and a stairway in that back corner led up to the balcony, the bell pull, and a classroom where the four and five year olds met to learn about Jesus. On the other side of the staircase wall in a corner was a coat rack. In winter rows of wet boots would be lined up beneath the hems of hanging Sunday coats. Behind it a door opened to a second stairwell, which led down to the bathrooms, toddler nurseries, church offices, and a large fellowship hall area with a big kitchen. Later we added a library room in the back and better vinyl curtain partitions to make more classrooms for Sunday school. We also hold AWANA clubs down there, which was a device to get kids to memorize Bible verses and compete in Olympic-like games (something I did but never really liked) witnessed by the unusual painted square on the concrete floor.

The main part of the structure was typical of a traditional Baptist church, after all it had been a Baptist church first, a cornerstone denoting it as such can almost be touched in the stairwell leading down to the basement level. The change to the Evangelical Free Church denomination had come when I was just a babe. The First Baptist Church was grandfathered into the Evangelical Free Church of America, giving the congregation more authority to decide the direction of the church. They did, however, maintain adult baptism by emersion as a membership requirement and a few other vestiges of their

former Baptist heritage in doctrine—only three Evangelical Free Churches include this membership requirement in their constitution.<sup>59</sup>

Back upstairs three carpeted steps and an access ramp led up to the original church entrance doors. I remember particularly the exposed brickwork and the grey keystone that was different from all of the others. The entryway beneath the bell tower housed a small vestibule. A portrait of Warner Sallman's *Christ at Heart's Door* hung on the left over a high table covered with pamphlets. The Gothic arched wooden door reminded me of a castle. Inside, four pine beams supported the balcony above. Folding metal chairs lined the back wall where many of the elderly residents of the nursing home next door would sit; it guaranteed them a quick exit if the preacher went over time in his sermonizing. Lunch at Stoughton House was served promptly at noon. The balcony was small, just spanning the width of the room, deep enough for two rows of pews. Gothic-arched stained-glass windows, similar in shape to the main door of the sanctuary, were set at intervals in the two exterior walls of the room in addition to two in the back wall. A small section of each window bore the name of a now deceased donor.

Two rows of thinly cushioned pews were positioned in the sanctuary creating side aisles and a clear center aisle, which once led to a semi-ornate altar table that held flowers and an oversized Bible, every Sunday except the first of the month reserved for communion. At the front, offices on both right and left narrowed the chancel; both provided side access to the baptistry and were used as classrooms and offices as needed. Columns and a proscenium arch framed the dais, on which was set a very heavy and

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<sup>59</sup> Secretary Melony Burch of CCC, Interview by author, 13 Sept. 2005, Plainfield, phone interview.

ornately decorated movable pulpit. Behind it sat six chairs, two ornate throne-like chairs with gold upholstered seats and four less ornate gold upholstered chairs that four elders sat in on communion Sundays. A railing and choir area separated this area from the baptistry. The chancel was lined with a knotty pine wainscoting and at the very back was a tall curtained window that hid the baptistry. Above this window was a small bare Roman cross. The room was painted white with a fairly high knotty pine ceiling above. Banners with Bible verses were hung above the office doors at the east end. A baby grand piano sat to the left at the front and an organ on the right side of the dais. Hymnals and Bibles filled racks in the backs of the pews. Two murals on side panels were painted at balcony level on either side of the rail facing the chancel and a clock positioned there centrally to keep the preacher sensitive to the needs of the elderly.

When I reached junior high a new pastor arrived with his family and a few years later, in 1995, renovations began to expand the space: additional classrooms, storage space, a quilter's loft, and library were added. The chancel was redesigned, the choir, no longer in use was removed completely along with the knotty pine and the cross. A quilt now hangs as alternate decoration to cover the baptistry window. The side offices have been done away with and became part of the new wing. The columns that had supported the proscenium arch are now free standing and the piano moved onto the dais. The organ found its way into the balcony. The pews were exchanged for mobile pew-chairs, allowing for a variety of seating configurations. Offering boxes were installed at the back of the sanctuary, and over time the passing of the offering plate was phased out. The pulpit was frequently absented and the altar table only appeared on those communion Sundays. As many vestiges of the knotty pine and Baptist-like decoration were removed

as possible. New paint and carpet were installed, variegated greens and blues and pinks. The building was transformed into a contemporary style church-house with slightly more attention paid to utility than aesthetics—identified with the more ecumenical philosophy of the pastor and many other local pastors; the problem was this ecumenical philosophy and identity were not relative to the philosophy of the congregation.

#### Letter of Concern and Declaration of Independence

In 1999, Trinity Evangelical Free Church of Windsor, Vermont met for an annual business meeting. One matter of business was a proposal to amend the church constitution. The proposal to remove the requirement of adult baptism for membership in the church had been brought before the congregation and defeated twice over the course of ten years. This time was no different: the motion failed, the requirement remained. The circumstances surrounding this issue troubled many of the members of the church and other issues of sensitivity had been coming to light of late, thus a group of the congregates got together to pray about these matters.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Charter and building committee member Stephen Burch, and charter member and secretary Melony Burch of CCC, interview by author, 31 December, 2005, Cornish, digital audio recording, home of Stephen and Melony Burch, Cornish, New Hampshire; Charter and building committee member Karen Caple of CCC, interview by author, 30 December 2004, Plainfield, digital audio recording, home of Lynn and Karen Caple, Plainfield, New Hampshire; Charter member and former church secretary Lynn Caple of CCC, interview by author, 30 December 2004, Plainfield, digital audio recording, home of Lynn and Karen Caple, Plainfield, New Hampshire; Charter member Kim Fillian of CCC, interview by author, 29 December 2005, Windsor, digital audio recording, home of Rick and Kim Fillian, Windsor, Vermont; Charter member and Barn Church project foreman Rick Fillian of CCC, interview by author, 29 December 2005, Windsor, digital audio recording, home of Rick and Kim Fillian, Windsor, Vermont; Charter member Ellen Oberkotter of CCC, interview by author, 31 December 2005, Cornish, digital audio recording, home of Bob and Ellen Oberkotter, Cornish, New Hampshire; Charter and building committee member Robert (Bob) Oberkotter of CCC, interview by author, 31

On March 9, 1999, after several weeks of prayer meetings, the group drafted a letter of concern addressed to “the Elder Board of Trinity Evangelical Free Church,” outlining six specific areas of concern with explanations as evidence that things were “out of order:” inappropriate discipline, baptism vote, breaches of confidence, weakened presentation of the Gospel, standards of leadership, and conduct at the business meeting of 2/9/99.<sup>61</sup> Thirty individuals, representing seventeen households, signed the letter. Other members of the group chose not to sign for fear of further pain and censure.

The act sparked an unintended chaos that began a grave and painful time in the lives of many congregants. A mediator was called in to resolve the matter through a series of meetings, but this process ended without much success.<sup>62</sup> In the end most of those who had signed the letter sorrowfully withdrew their membership and began the process of finding another church home. Those who left represented the core membership of Trinity—most had attended Trinity since birth, raised children and grandchildren in the faith there, and been faithful and active in servant leadership there.

### Reformation

One thing the group had learned in the process described above was that the Evangelical Free Church denomination, with its almost nondenominational doctrinal stances, was not a good match for their beliefs. The common beliefs and identification of the group were a unifying factor and acted as an anchor in the midst of the storm of

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December 2005, Cornish, digital audio recording, home of Bob and Ellen Oberkotter, Cornish, New Hampshire.

<sup>61</sup> For the full text of the letter, see Appendix A.

<sup>62</sup> Ellen Oberkotter, Karen Caple, Lynn Caple, Rick Fillian, Kim Fillian, Stephen Burch interviews.

tragedy. During the proceedings that led to the church split, a number of the group remarked on its composition—that with such a variety of gifts and talents among them they believed they could form a new church on their own, apart from Trinity.<sup>63</sup> Former elders, deacons and deaconesses, musicians, artists and craftsmen, an electrician, a logger, builders and entrepreneurs, a lawyer, individuals from the Christian education and the missions boards were all there. The group members knew each other well. Children and grandchildren grew up together; they considered each other family and had little desire to leave one another, going off to various churches in the area. It had not been the intention of the group to leave Trinity, rather the goal had been to address issues of concern and explore options for a hopeful resolution in accordance with the congregational style of church government.<sup>64</sup> So, it was decided to stay together.

The Oberkotter's home had always been a welcoming place for the members of Trinity: a site for weddings, church picnics, and holiday celebrations. Many hours were spent in the large kitchen and sitting area by a fireplace in each other's company. For the group, this place was a safe haven, where guards could be let down in the presence of one another. So, when Bob Oberkotter offered his recently constructed New England post and beam barn as a church meeting place, it just seemed natural.<sup>65</sup>

The congregation had just completed the renovation and expansion of its church building, at Trinity and many of the long time members who had signed the letter of concern had purchased the pews. With those pews, the old hymnals had also been

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<sup>63</sup> Karen Caple, Rick Fillian interviews.

<sup>64</sup> Lynn Caple, Ellen Oberkotter interviews.

<sup>65</sup> Karen Caple, Lynn Caple, Rick Fillian, Ellen Oberkotter, Bob Oberkotter interviews.



replaced and many in the group now had them in their possession also.<sup>66</sup> So, after clearing and cleaning most of the main floor of the Oberkotter's barn, the pews were installed in two rows, fixed to the rough wooden floor with screws. And the building that was a barn became a sanctuary in the old way, the way that Trinity was before renovations.<sup>67</sup>

Musical instruments were brought into the barn, a drum kit, guitars, and a piano from the house—a sound system was one of the group's first purchases.<sup>68</sup> A coffee station was set up in a back corner—complements of Mr. Oberkotter. The presence of coffee had become a characteristic of the group's fellowship while they were at Trinity. A couple of the men with carpentry skills constructed a makeshift lectern from a beam remnant of the barn's construction and a few other scraps and one of the artists in the group tacked a small carved wooden marriage cross to its front. The quilters in the group went in to Mrs. Oberkotter's kitchen and constructed a banner, a purple cross on a white background to be hung from the loft above at the front of the space. Bulletin boards with sign-up sheets were posted on a large tri-fold screen constructed by some of the group: rotations for nursery workers, Sunday school teachers, preaching, call to worship, scripture reading, worship team, communion preparation, and coffee making were established.<sup>69</sup>

Sunday morning worship services began at ten A.M. with announcements, prayer, and corporate singing. Elders had been elected from the men in the group and they took

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<sup>66</sup> Karen Caple, Lynn Caple, Rick Fillian, Bob Oberkotter, Ellen Oberkotter interviews.

<sup>67</sup> Paul Thiry, Richard M. Bennett, and Henry L. Kamphoefner, *Churches & Temples*. (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1953), 4P, tell us that historically many nonconformist groups found their beginnings in the barns of Europe and England.

<sup>68</sup> Rick Fillian interview

<sup>69</sup> Karen Caple, Rick Fillian interviews.

turns preaching. Communion was served weekly, deviating from the once a month tradition of Trinity and so many Protestant denominations. On warm mornings the massive side doors of the barn would be rolled back revealing the wooded hills of New Hampshire and letting the breeze blow through the makeshift sanctuary. Worship in the context of God's creation, took place in a barn—a place where Jesus Christ had been born.<sup>70</sup> The service ended with prayer. Many Sundays after the service, the congregation would have lunch together.<sup>71</sup> Mrs. Oberkotter would break out the grill and people would pull coolers of food to share from their cars. Occasionally, the congregation would drive or walk up the road to the Heim's, one of the families of the congregation, swimming pool for a baptism or two. Tuesday evenings were designated for weekly business and prayer meetings and held at Biebel Builders office space in Windsor where several of the group members worked, and one family lived in an apartment upstairs.

Individuals who had left Trinity feeling wounded, prior to the letter, were invited to join the reformed and many did. One such individual counseled the group to seek information about denominations they might align with, and got them thinking more directly about the organizational aspect of the church. They contacted Dr. John Aker, a former pastor who had directed them well in the past, for advice on how to proceed. At one point Dr. Aker was asked and accepted an invitation to pastor the group. He resigned his position at a large independent community church in Tucson, Arizona and prepared for the move back to New England, but at the last possible moment his mother fell ill and

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<sup>70</sup> This was noted by several of the members individually and acted as an anchor, an element of collective identification for the group.

<sup>71</sup> Lynn Caple, Rick Fillian, Ellen Oberkotter interviews.

he was unable to move.<sup>72</sup> He did, however, come and advise the congregation on several Biblical matters, including forgiveness and organization of church government—the elder-led congregationally affirmed model was quickly adopted over both predominant congregational and catholic-episcopal models.

Committees were formed and a new identity began to emerge. One committee, the constitution committee, began searching scripture for a Biblical model of what the church should be. Dr. Aker directed the group toward the recent independent community church movement, of which he had most recently been a part. The committee examined the constitution given them by a local independent community church, attended by family member of one of the congregants, to aid this identity formation.<sup>73</sup> The group brainstormed, prayed, and discussed and decided to name this new church Christ Community Church.<sup>74</sup> First, Christ: because Jesus Christ is the head of the church and the source of salvation. Without His redemption there is no church. Second, Community because CCC is a local community of Christians whose loyalty is to Christ alone, autonomous from any denomination who are called to communicate the character of Christ to the larger community beyond the walls of the church-house. Finally, Church, because the Greek word, “ecclesia,” translated church means congregation set apart to share the Truth with the world. The term “Connecticut Valley” was added to the front of the name to differentiate it from another incorporated Christ Community Church in the state of New Hampshire and to indicate the area of ministry that the congregation has chosen to reach versus the town of Plainfield, or those towns in New Hampshire only.

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<sup>72</sup> Rick Fillian, Melony Burch interviews.

<sup>73</sup> Rick Fillian interview.

<sup>74</sup> A more detailed etymology of the church’s name can be found on their website at <http://www.cvccc.org/WhoWeAre.html> and is included in appendix B.

The name was carefully chosen to reflect the identity of the congregation, so that visitors could not be confused as they were with Trinity's Baptist roots.<sup>75</sup> The church was chartered on 21 May 2000.<sup>76</sup>

As the seasons changed, the group was forced to move from the Oberkotter barn to a warmer place. Paul Biebel offered the basement of his office building, Biebel Builders, as a space for the church to congregate. The congregation had come to be known as the Barn Church in the surrounding communities and worked to create the same atmosphere in the basement that they experienced in the Oberkotter barn.<sup>77</sup>

The meeting space was L shaped. Unfinished boards were affixed to the walls to evoke a craftsman-oriented atmosphere. The coffee bar was installed along one wall and a table set up near the entrance with information outlining the basic beliefs of the congregation as developed thus far by the constitution committee. The charter members posted written testimonies of faith conversion on a wall nearby for visitors to read. The lectern was brought over from the barn and placed in the crux of the room with the keyboard, drums, and guitars in the corner behind. The sound system purchased for the barn space was little needed in the smaller space, but employed anyway.

Many visitors had found their way to the barn and later Biebel Builders in those first months. Some came just for curiosity's sake, others because they were seeking something. Some stayed and some didn't, but the congregation grew in number. The elders compiled a list of pastoral candidates from recommended seminaries and began to narrow their list. When they had a list of ten potentials, they were asked to rank the

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<sup>75</sup> Lynn Caple, Rick Fillian interviews.

<sup>76</sup> A copy of the charter is included in Appendix C.

<sup>77</sup> Rick Fillian interview.

remaining candidates and bring the results to the next elders meeting. After praying through the list, the top recommendation was unanimous. Every elder came back with Pastor Brian Sayers listed as first choice. Brian (as he insisted upon being called) was invited to come and candidate for the position. After visiting in September 2000, and interviewing with the elders, he and his family decided to leave their home in California to lead the New England congregation.<sup>78</sup> The elders asked Brian to start with the basics, to go back to the beginning and train the congregation to be disciples of Jesus Christ according to the Bible.<sup>79</sup>

After several months the congregation was close to outgrowing their space. A committee was formed to scout the land for an appropriate site to build a functional facility. After a few unsuccessful attempts on the Vermont side of the river, a site was located in Plainfield, New Hampshire—also called Mast Lands.<sup>80</sup> The property already had a steel frame building set on it that looked as though it could easily and inexpensively be converted into a church facility. However, upon further inspection rotten frost barrier and fire damage were discovered such that the existing building had to be demolished.<sup>81</sup> A new building had to be designed and built in its place; so, a building committee was formed.

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<sup>78</sup> Karen Caple, Lynn Caple, Rick Fillian, Ellen Oberkotter interviews

<sup>79</sup> Lynn Caple interview

<sup>80</sup> 'Mast Lands' was an early name for the town, so called because many of the masts built for the King's tall ships prior to the revolution came from here. Stands of trees bearing the King's mark still remain in among the woods of the town and many of the residents still refer to the town by this name.

<sup>81</sup> Stephen Burch, Karen Caple, Lynn Caple, Kim Fillian, Rick Fillian, Bob Oberkotter, Ellen Oberkotter interviews.

The committee was made up of members of the congregation who had knowledge about building and design; the church acted as general contractor of the project.<sup>82</sup> Rick Fillian and Reg Jacquith of Biebel Builders were given leave to devote their full time to the project as foremen. Rick was in charge of hiring the subcontractors and overseeing their payment, Reg oversaw the work of the subcontractors. They were chosen to lead the project for their technical and administrative knowledge of building. Bob Oberkotter, an artist, was chosen for his artistic knowledge of architecture and design. Karen Caple was also chosen for artistic knowledge in interior design and decorating. Rich Heim, a logger, was chosen for his knowledge of the land and of timber, since the building was to be a post-and-beam structure. Steve Burch was chosen as an electrician and deacon for the financial interests of the church. Finally, Kathie Biebel kept the books. The congregation was welcome to make suggestions and give criticisms for the committee's consideration.

Marge O'Connor says, "Designing and building a facility for the religious market requires an approach like no other in terms of decision making and commitment. It takes a deep understanding of how churches and religious organizations function."<sup>83</sup> It is essential for church architects to work closely with building committees to understand the identity of the church in order to effectively design a facility that truly reflects who they are and aids them in accomplishing their mission.<sup>84</sup> The architects and builders chosen for the job were the same who had worked with the Oberkotters to design the original

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<sup>82</sup> Stephen Burch, Karen Caple, Lynn Caple, Kim Fillian, Rick Fillian, Bob Oberkotter, Ellen Oberkotter interviews

<sup>83</sup> O'Connor, 37.

<sup>84</sup> O'Connor, 37.

barn in which the congregation had first met.<sup>85</sup> Bob Oberkotter commented that they were almost more trouble than they were worth. In June 21, 2000 the first shovel of earth was turned and the building began. LaValley Building Supply was contracted to build the contemporary/traditional sections of the building, while Benjamin Builders of Bradford, Vermont constructed the post-and-beam portions.<sup>86</sup>

The sanctuary and offices of the facility were built on the footprint of the old building. The fellowship areas and an entry way were added on. With the new design the ratio of building to land exceeded the allowable space and the church had to seek out owners of the surrounding acreage to see if it could be purchased.<sup>87</sup> The committee located the owner and went to speak to him about purchasing the land. Another individual had approached the owner's son with an offer at about the same time, because the owner was terminally ill. The son was in favor of taking the second offer, but the owner favored the church. He wanted the land to go to be used for the greater good of the community. Just a few days before the deal was supposed to close the owner died. It seemed a miracle, when the son came to the building committee and told them that the last thing his father had done before he passed was to sign the paperwork giving the land to the church.<sup>88</sup>

It was similar with the land where the King's trees for the enormous framing post and beams were harvested. Saint Gauden's National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire wanted a green belt around the property since many people had purchased

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<sup>85</sup> Karen Caple, Lynn Caple, Rick Fillian, Bob Oberkotter interviews.

<sup>86</sup> Karen Caple, Lynn Caple, Kim Fillian, Rick Fillian interviews.

<sup>87</sup> Stephen Burch, Karen Caple, Lynn Caple, Kim Fillian, Rick Fillian, Bob Oberkotter interviews

<sup>88</sup> Karen Caple, Lynn Caple, Kim Fillian, Rick Fillian interviews.

property nearby and begun developing it. A certain gentleman approached Saint Gauden's with the proposition to donate part of an adjacent piece he owned to the green belt on the Mast Lands side. The organization refused the offer and demanded he donate the whole parcel. The owner withdrew the offer in response to the offense. He heard about the unique post-and-beam Barn Church and offered the section to the church as a donation instead.<sup>89</sup>

This type of event became common as the group moved forward in faith with the project, as did the provision of funds for the building. Brian Sayers remarked: "As it's been needed it's been there."<sup>90</sup> Most of the cost was covered by six or eight major donations within and without the church congregation. In addition, local artists, craftsmen, and church members donated their time and skills to the project.<sup>91</sup> A very small mortgage was taken out to pay for some of the furniture, but otherwise the costs to the small congregation were very manageable.

The congregation held its first service in the new building on 9 August 2001. Dr. John Aker came and spoke at a special dedication service, where he emphasized the responsibilities of the church and the hope that the pews would one day be filled with true followers of Jesus Christ not just numbers. Canadian musician Steve Bell, another friend of the congregation, led a worship service one evening to mark the event.<sup>92</sup>

The congregation's commitment to honestly and clearly communicating their Protestant identity without compromise was central to the congregation. The architecture

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<sup>89</sup> Karen Caple, Lynn Caple, Kim Fillian, Rick Fillian interviews.

<sup>90</sup> Brian Sayers quoted in Tillman, A6.

<sup>91</sup> See Tillman, A6. Aaron Nobel twice reported the rumor that Bob Oberkotter was one of the donors mentioned in several of the articles—he was not.

<sup>92</sup> Melony Burch, Karen Caple, Lynn Caple, Rick Fillian interviews.



of the completed Barn Church-house reflects their identity as a Nonconformist Christian congregation in connection to a reformation characterized by beginnings in a barn and independence from tradition. Their focus on alignment with the content of the Bible is also reflected in the buildings construction. Many elements of the building were intentionally symbolic as most church architecture, but in connection to the unique identity of Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church and the historical moment of its conception.

The church relates to the New England agricultural Puritan heritage, characterized by strong independence. The “Live Free or Die” mentality is evidenced in their split from Trinity, yet the value of community is also recognized by the group in its refusal to divide and spread into other church congregations. The reacquisition of many symbolic elements lost in the renovations of Trinity further supports this communal identity—pews, a lectern not so easily removed, presence of a Roman cross at the front of the sanctuary, and passing of the offering plate. In addition elements of service in response to the issues of concern: refocus on the centrality of the Word in services, frequent unadulterated presentation of the Gospel message, inclusion of a process for dealing with issues of church discipline in the constitution,<sup>93</sup> singing the old hymns, and the requirement of baptism for congregational membership reflect the uncompromising identity of the group. The Nonconformist character of the group is evidenced in their focus on the Word of God, the Bible, as a guidebook to the development and growth in identity, as is a lack of altar and position of baptismal tank and cross as the symbolic goal of the Christian in its place. Frank E. Wilson discusses the symbolism of the center aisle

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<sup>93</sup> CCC’s constitution is included in Appendix B.

as “the Way of Life” and how in the Catholic church the Eucharist, altar, and priest are the means by which the believer can enter into the sanctuary of the presence of God.<sup>94</sup> The Protestant recognizes that the heart of the believer transformed by the living Word of God and symbolized through baptism—symbolic rebirth—is the “Way of Life” evidenced by the design of the Barn Church-house.

In summary, the worldview or faith narrative of CCC may be understood as an authentic independent Nonconformist New England Protestant Christian church of the Puritan tradition. The next chapter will describe the location and design of the Barn-Church house in detail as a physical context for the analysis to follow.

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<sup>94</sup> Wilson, 13.

CHAPTER III  
PHYSICAL LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF  
THE BARN CHURCH-HOUSE

Located on route 12-A in the small town of Plainfield or “Mast Lands,”<sup>95</sup> New Hampshire, The Barn Church—reminiscent of a massive New England post and beam style red barn—sits on a wooded lot on the edge of town surrounded by the Plainfield town fire station to the west, a small foreign car dealership to the south, the town to the north and the wooded hills of New Hampshire to the East. My description of the location and building will move from exterior to interior, where I will focus primarily on the main floor, the most public areas of the building: primarily the sanctuary and fellowship hall areas. Photographs of both the exterior and interior and drafts of the building are included in the appendices.<sup>96</sup>

Location

The small town of Plainfield, New Hampshire has only a handful of buildings along its main street. It is about two miles from the longest two-span covered bridge in the world, a bridge that spans the Connecticut River, linking the towns of Cornish, New Hampshire and Windsor, Vermont. The stretch of route 12-A between the bridge and the

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<sup>95</sup> The trees harvested to construct the post and beams of the barn church were King’s trees marked to be used as masts for the king of England’s tall ships after which the town was once called.

<sup>96</sup> Most of the information included in this description was gathered in December 2005. I filmed and photographed the building and spoke with a few of its charter members about the design process and building of the church house.

Barn Church building follows the river and is almost completely lined with trees and some rock faces that have been sheered off to make way for the road. Travelers pass the meeting place of the Cornish Art Colony, Blow Me Down Mill and the Entrance to St. Gauden's National Historic Site; also, along the way are a CASE Townline Equipment Outlet, a used car dealer and four or five houses. Coming into town up a long hill, a boxy volunteer fire station sits on the left-hand side of the road on a cleared lot just across from the church building. On the right is a vintage car dealership, which has a shared right of way with the church to give access to its parking lot from the road. Further up the road, route 12-A really turns into Main Street, which provides a country store, a grange, the town hall, a brick church building, small library, and a large auction house. A line of evergreen trees dividing it from the highway, behind which are a horseshoe drive and a large parking lot fronts the Barn Church property. A basketball court is painted on the asphalt behind the building and a two bay garage sits off to one side to house maintenance equipment. To the left of the space and behind framing the building are walls of woods, and to the right as well beyond a field and the small car dealership. A view of Ascutney Mountain in the distance is visible through a break in the trees, beyond a field behind the dealership.

### Exterior

Designed by the architectural firm, Metz, Thornton and Smith, and built by the Robert Benjamin Construction company out of Bradford, Vermont, the building consists of two primary sections comprising approximately 27,000 square feet: a cruciform "church" section of the building and a "house" section. A silo and porte-cochere are

positioned at the foot of the cruciform “church” section of the building, highlighting one of fourteen entry points. A 40,000 square foot roof and three cupolas top the church-house. In the following section, I will address each of these portions individually—(1) the rooftop, and (2) church-house—paying special attention to materials, colors, shapes, and measurements of the elements involved.

### Rooftop

The first component of the exterior is the rooftop—an award winning 40,000 square feet of standing-seam metal, 26-gauge galvalume-coated steel<sup>97</sup> covers the church-house. The gabled roof is Hartford green, with nine dormers and three belvedere style cupolas atop the church section of the building. One section of roof over the “house” section is shed style; specifically this section tops the house section of the room nestled within the crux of the sanctuary section. The house extension is topped with a cape style gabled roof. The sanctuary and transept are topped with a more complex gabled roof, interrupted by cupolas and dormers, and a section of roof covering a vestibule that connects the porte-cochere and silo to the main building.

Five shed dormers with band windows are set in the roof of the transept: four facing the road and one on the opposite side facing the silo entrance. Two small gabled dormers rest in the roof on opposite sides just behind the silo, and four larger ones are situated in the space below and between the cupolas on either side of the sanctuary roof. The cupolas are topped with uncoated metal roofing that reflects the sunlight. The central

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<sup>97</sup> The roof is highlighted in “Metal Architecture” August 2002. It was the metal roofing category winner of the 2002 Design Awards for Metal Architecture. The building is pictured and described in writing on page 30 of the magazine.

cupola is larger than the other three, those on the ends are constructed with two by two windows, while the third is three by three and adorned with a custom made, hand-crafted weathervane<sup>98</sup> composed of the vertical rod in the form of a tall cross, three “C’s” for Christ Community Church, are affixed to it—the middle “C,” smaller than the ones above and below, is centered within a “Christian” fish: the rotating ornament. The fixed globes and directionals indicate the orientation of the building, not quite in line with the customary orientation of church buildings.

### The Church-House

Viewing the building from the road, one might assume they are looking at a renovated barn that has been in its setting for years beyond reckoning. It is only upon closer inspection that one notices the details that suggest this building is more than it first appears. Very few barns have gothic style windows and you will see even fewer with porte-cocheres shaped like a New England covered bridge. Its appearance of the cruciform shape also clues the viewer in to its intended function. The fact that form does not seem to follow function in this case gives rise to viewer curiosity.

The two story church house is designed in the Arts and Crafts style.<sup>99</sup> Like many buildings of this style the second story is a loft space rather than a framed full story,

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<sup>98</sup> Alfred H. Denninger and Beth R. Denninger. “What is a Weather Vane?” *The Weather Vane Home Page* (Middletown, NY: Denninger Weather Vanes & Finials, 26 February 1996) 2 March 2006 <<http://www.denninger.com/whatis.htm>>

<sup>99</sup> Arts and Crafts and Craftsman are terms used interchangeably to describe this style of architecture. Characteristics include: informality, asymmetry, use of natural materials, low pitched gabled roof, often exposed roof rafters, decorative beams or braces added under gables, one and a half stories. The style began in 19<sup>th</sup> century England as an “outraged response to the industrial revolution, which was threatening time-honored manual crafts with extinction. The movement was also one of political and social

fitting for a barn. Exposed beams are also typical of the style, the double-door entrance on the west side of the building facing the road hints of this type of construction.

The largest part of the visible building is the church section, comprised of two parts: the post or vertical section, which typically houses the sanctuary and the beam or horizontal section—also called the transept in church architecture, often part of the traditional sanctuary with additional seating or it may house small prayer chapels. In the lower crux of the cruciform building, beneath the right arm of the transept is a second section of the building—the house section. This section extends beyond the foot of the cruciform section with a structure that, from the East end of the building, looks almost detached from the cruciform. A parking lot surrounds the building on three sides: west, south, and east.<sup>100</sup>

Barn red board and batten siding typical of so many New England barns is interrupted by 14 paned glass doors and an aesthetically balanced arrangement of 96 paned glass windows of various Craftsman style shapes and sizes: square, band, and rectangular. The five gothic arched windows run along the clerestory of one outer wall, positioned directly above two of the door and three windows facing the south. These 96 do not include the windows in the cupolas and dormers atop the roof, or the ten in the porte-cochere or the eight of an octagonal cupola atop the silo.

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reform.” See the Buffalo University Architectural dictionary for a full history of the movement at <<http://ah.bfn.org/a/archsty/a-c/hp/index.html>>

<sup>100</sup>It is interesting to note that most church buildings face the opposite direction of the barn church, with the main entrance at the foot of the cruciform oriented west. It may be argued that this connects with the Nonconformist orientation of the group, however, it was the footprint of the building which stood in its place that primarily dictated the orientation of the Barn Church-house. Trinity’s building was also oriented “backwards.”

The building has fourteen doors, and it is difficult to tell which is the main entrance;<sup>101</sup> however, steps were taken by the architect to highlight some of them. A viewer could very likely designate the central portal of the building on the west side as the main entrance. Its covered stoop is framed with exposed posts and beams in an aesthetically pleasing manner reminiscent of Tudor style or of Viking halls. A second door in the west Facing wall also sports a covered stoop, this one painted red, reminiscent of front stoops, but simplified—it is painted the same barn red as the rest of the building. A twin to this door is located at the southern end of the transept; a small sign next to it reads “Church Offices.” A similar sign is located at the East end of the building, which reads “Rear Entrance.” The door at this entrance opens into the house section of the building. The next ten doors are located throughout the building in accordance with local fire codes. The last entryway I will discuss is the entrance highlighted by a silo and porte-cochere.

On the south side one entrance has been highlighted with a porte-cochere in the form of a covered bridge. The door located at this entrance leads the observer into the foyer or narthex area of the “church” section through a genuine wooden silo constructed by Mark Hyney out of New York, the last wooden silo builder in the United States.

The silo appears to anchor the building in its place. It is not red like the rest of the building, but rather the wood is bare, its raw natural color enhanced only with a good coat of varnish. Nine circular metal bands hold its cylindrical shape. The metal roof of the house-church extends over this entryway, built around the silo; it connects the porte-

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<sup>101</sup> Rick Fillian, (Windsor, VT: 29 December 2005) member of the building committee and general contractor for the project said that had he to do it all over again one of the things he would do would be to include a main entrance. “It [the building] has no front entrance,” he says.



cochere to the building. The roof of the silo is uncoated metal. Its octagonal cupola is topped with a lightning-rod, a middling sized metal spire that points the viewer towards the sky.

In Summary, The church-house section if the building is composed of an arts and crafts style cruciform structure, a house extension, a silo, and a covered bridge shaped porte-cochere topped with a metal roof. The church, house and porte-cochere are composed of the same materials, shapes and colors—Hartford green gabled and shed metal roofs; red board and batten wood siding; and craftsman style paned glass windows. The silo shares many of the same elements found in the church house and porte-cochere—wooden siding, craftsman style paned glass windows, and a metal roof; however, an absence of color on the wooden exterior and metal roof sets it apart from the rest of the building.

### Interior<sup>102</sup>

As individuals walk from the parking lot to the bridge they are prepared to enter the building, the porte-cochere is artistically framed post and beam after the same manner as the church. An outward opening double door allows entry to the church via the wooden silo. This silo is empty and functions as the atrium of the church building. Square grey polished granite tiles create a random square pattern on the floor.<sup>103</sup> Stepping through the doors, one is surrounded by warm golden wood that almost glows, reflecting

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<sup>102</sup> The difficulty with describing The Barn Church comes with the ambiguity of its main entrance.

<sup>103</sup> Bedrosians: Ceramic Tile and Stone Home Page, Floor Tile Patterns: Patterns-group 3, 13 Mar 2006 <<http://www.bedrosians.com/flrpatt4.htm>> New Hampshire is sometimes referred to as the Granite State, the granite used in the construction of the barn church was quarried locally from a quarry that was closing.

the light from above. Upon entry the gaze is drawn up, up to the ceiling high above, where the eye is met with a spectacular image: a ring of blue neon and sunlight from the invisible cupola above illuminate a simple yet fascinating pattern of golden wood, which bears striking resemblance to the rose windows of the great European cathedrals.

Inside the silo, to the right and left, are cloth covered bulletin boards: one highlights the youth program and upcoming events—nearly half of the board is covered with photos of the youth and a large sign labels the collage “ALIENS.” The other half of the board has more traditional information posted, a sign announcing a ladies night out event, clear plastic holders and posters detail the church community’s beliefs and programs. The second board highlights the missions supported by the community—a world map with push pins and strings connect to information about individual missionary families supported by the church, letters from the families are posted near the information, and a poster with more photographs highlights a local missions event sponsored by the community.

Straight through a doorway opens into a small vestibule; large double windows let lots of natural light into the space. A long table sits on the left with more free information about the church community; on the right a smaller table holds free Bibles for any in need. The natural granite tile continues through in a standard straight pattern.<sup>104</sup> Two foot wainscoting and a chair rail with a natural finish sit below white walls. A third doorway leads into the post of the cruciform.

The cruciform is basically comprised of two parts: narthex (also called the foyer), and sanctuary. The sanctuary can be broken down further into the nave, side aisles,

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<sup>104</sup> Bedrosians: Floor Tile Patterns-Group 1, 13 March 2006  
<<http://www.bedrosians.com/flrpatt2.htm>>

chancel, apse, and balcony. A small room, the deacon's closet—directly above the vestibule, nestled beside the silo, lighted by two gabled dormer windows—is accessible from the balcony. The Barn Church has an additional section at the top of the post that contains the pastoral studies with a small chapel on the floor above; this could be argued as a part of the transept as it is positioned at the cross point; however it extends beyond the transept area as the top of the post aligning it further with that section of the building.

It is here, in the cruciform, that the post and beam construction is most evident. Antique white walls above naturally finished wainscoting continued from the vestibule further highlight the beauty of the wooden frame of the building by contrast. Just through the doorway on the left is a guest register holding a guestbook on top and information packets on a shelf below. On the eastern wall a staircase with wrought iron railing ascends to a landing and splits leading up to the balcony. A central window in the back wall at the landing and doors beneath the two staircases on the eastern wall allow light into the room on the lower level. In addition, on the balcony level above are seven more windows: three above the staircases and the central one below, two square ones on either end, and above these a ribbon window, and finally a square one at the peak. Two arts and crafts style semi-cylinder light fixtures flank the central window on the base level; the grey metal pattern emblazoned on the fixtures could be interpreted as a cross, but in actual fact, more directly reflects the craftsman style of the painted glass window. Two signs, on the cross beam just above, direct individuals to the “conference room” up the left stairway and “Sunday school” up the right staircase. A long table, beneath the left staircase, holds recommended books and publications for purchase, and a second beneath the right holds information about local missions opportunities, home groups, and CDs of

Sunday's messages. On the perpendicular wall a doorway leads into a great room where a sitting area and massive stone fireplace are visible.

On the wall opposite the stairway are three sets of natural wooden double doors that open outward dividing the narthex from the sanctuary;<sup>105</sup> they are framed with ribbon windows of the craftsman style, a single row above each and double paneled row on either side, excluding the central door. The granite tile of the narthex is exchanged for hardwood that matches the balcony stairway. The design of the church section of the building, especially the cruciform post, is symmetrical. Two rows of cushioned wooden pews form the central aisle of the nave filling most of the space, darker stained wood and green upholstery are repeated in the chairs that line the side aisles of the nave. Racks on the backs of the pews and bottoms of the chairs hold Bibles and hymnals. Paned glass windows and doors line the outer and inner walls behind the chairs. Six rows of post and beam arches form the side aisles and support a balcony above. Small black box speakers, hang unobtrusively from the ends of some of the arches. The same semi-cylindrical lights line the walls at equal intervals between the windows. Open doorways, on either side, just before the chancel, provide access to the cruciform beam spaces beyond the sanctuary.

The light fixtures are repeated again on the balcony level. Rows of chairs match the rows directly below in the side aisles. A clerestory of paned glass, gothic arched windows on the outer wall lines up directly with the windows and doors below. Wrought

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<sup>105</sup> In a Catholic church the sanctuary refers to the area of the church where the altar is located, where only the priests are allowed. In the nonconformist church the emphasis is on the theology that the heart of the believer is the sanctuary, and therefore there is no division between the people and the "priest." Where the people are, there the sanctuary is. Also, in many nonconformist churches, an altar is only present for the communion service, which happens monthly or less—whereas this ritual is the focal point of the catholic mass. Rather an empty cross replaces the elaborate altarpieces of the cathedral and reminds the congregation of the sacrifice made on their behalf once and for all.

iron fencing lines the balcony edge. The larger balcony space supported by the wall dividing the narthex and sanctuary holds a large stationary sound booth and a few more rows of chairs. Altogether, the sanctuary holds a congregation of up to 350 people. The ceiling rafters are close enough to touch in the balcony. Massive golden beams support a cathedral ceiling above the nave. The eastern and central cupolas flood the sanctuary with light from the sky above and draw the eye and mind upward to the heavens, while four dormer windows let in even more natural light. Six massive custom designed wrought iron chandeliers in the form of wheat sheaves illuminate as needed. A large black box speaker hangs above the chancel.

The chancel design reflects many elements of the nonconformist church, while still maintaining some of the more traditional elements of the cruciform model. There are three levels to the dais forming the chancel. The first holds the lectern from the Oberkotter barn, a solid unfinished remnant of a beam framed and topped with a two-inch thick square top to hold sermon notes or a Bible. A small wooden wedding cross is tacked to its front and a thin black microphone to its top. Behind, against the edge of the second level are four monitors. The edge of the second level is curved, semi-circular, in line with the apse at its apex it is flush with the third level. The second level holds instruments, black metal music and guitar stands, stools and microphones. The south side holds a black and silver drum kit and a bass guitar amp. The north holds a keyboard with a black halogen lamp beside it. The edge of the dais in front of the keyboard and drums is a hand crafted wrought iron fence and rail, similar to the one on the stairs in the narthex and edging the balcony. A projection screen is hidden behind one of the beams of the chancel on which an LCD projector mounted from the edge of the balcony projects

song lyrics. Another fence and gate spans the width of the sanctuary, dividing the first and second levels from the third. Decorative scrollwork adorns the top portion of the fence, the same trinity of scroll work, three stylized C's in a circle, is repeated in the gate of the fence at its center. The gate is often left standing open. The third level is actually the cover of a large baptismal tank; doors in the apse wall on either side of the tank give rear access to the space via a few stairs. A large empty cross dominates the otherwise unadorned apse wall of the sanctuary. This space is most often where the Catholic altar would be located.

Beyond the apse at the top of the cruciform post are two rooms originally designated to be the church library and a men's lounge with a short corridor to the front entrance in between. The rooms, now labeled "Pastor Teacher" and "Associate Pastor," both contain large desk units and are lined with very full, naturally finished, bookcases. Partially exposed beams continue the theme and design of the building into these brown-carpeted rooms. Upstairs, above the studies, accessed from the balcony or via the transept stairwells, the chapel more closely reflects the design of the sanctuary. The western cupola shines light into the smaller room onto a second freestanding wooden cross, which sits aloft on a high platform formed by the ceiling of the upper cruciform beam corridor. The western wall almost mirrors the upper pattern of windows in the eastern wall, minus the larger window in the center because of a stoop roof outside. The rafters continued in the chapel from the sanctuary draw the mind and eye heavenward as well. A single prayer desk<sup>106</sup> and several chairs of the same type as those in the sanctuary provide places to sit

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<sup>106</sup>"Prayer Desks, Stands, Fonts." *Trinity*, Temple, TX: Trinity Furniture Manufacturing, 15 Mar. 2006 <<http://www.pews.com/prayerdesks.phtml>>

or kneel. Sunday school posters hung on the wall distract somewhat from the holy atmosphere of the room.

The cruciform beam corridor runs through the beam perpendicular to the nave on a straight line, though it curves along the backside of the apse at the cross point between the sanctuary and the rooms at the top of the post. From the front of the building, the cruciform beam section appears to be aligned, with both arms extending equidistant and perpendicular to the post. However, the arms of the transept are not actually built in a straight line across the post; oddly, the north transept is actually set back a few feet more than the right from the top of the post. The transept houses two areas, one in each arm. The south arm of the cruciform houses the school: the copy room, bathrooms, kitchenette, library/study, secretary's office, stairwell up to Sunday school rooms, and storage for instructional supplies. Down the corridor past the chapel, the north arm houses the hospitality center: a gallery, the ladies loft workroom, two full bathrooms, elevator, stairwell, warming kitchen, cry room for nursing mothers,<sup>107</sup> storage room for tables and freezers, and janitorial closet. The hospitality stairwell continues down to the bowels of the building, which contain mechanical, elevator, oil/furnace, and electrical rooms on the south side, and three spare utility rooms on the north side that extend beneath the fellowship hall.

Upon exiting the sanctuary through the chancel doors the floors return to the standard straight patterned granite tiling. In all of the hall areas on the ground floor this is the pattern used. The red, green, and natural wood of the exterior are carried through

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<sup>107</sup> This room was originally labeled "crying babies" on the blueprints; the traditional term for such a room is "cry room," however, the signage in the building labels the room: "crying room."

the various rooms of the cruciform in the way of countertops, carpet, wall color, and furniture. The white walls of the cruciform post continue with the same wainscoting in the cross point area. The walls of the transept arms are green tinted. The offices and studies on the first floor of the transept are carpeted: dark green checkerboard pattern in the main office and library, and carpet of the same pattern, but brown, in the pastoral studies. Variegated green wall-to-wall carpet covers the floors in the balcony and all of the second floor rooms also.

The granite tile of the hallways extends into the warming kitchen, where a large work island dominates the space. Custom crafted cabinetry holds dishes and supplies for food preparation and communion. A stainless steel industrial dishwasher, white twin stoves with stainless industrial hood, and white refrigerator are available for use as needed. Green countertops complement the Cherry cabinetry, picking up the same tones of the pews in the sanctuary, and additional windows shed natural light on the area. Two swinging doors with brick-red trimmed round windows and a matching countered pass-through window open into a great room, which marries the house to the cruciform via two shared walls.

It is not uncommon for a contemporary church building to be built with a warming kitchen and fellowship hall, and many older church buildings have added these types of facilities to their buildings for the purpose of hospitality—in their basements or as an addition depending upon space constraints. At the barn church a coffee bar is located in the northwest corner of the room; a large round blue neon faced clock sits centered on the wall above the bar sink—a small echo of the blue neon ring in the silo. The outer wall on the north side is set with six windows between two paned glass doors



that open out onto a small side lawn. Rolling counter units rest against the wall under the windows. Round tables and chairs are set up in the space near the kitchen and coffee bar for dining or visiting. Round chandelier style light fixtures hang from the ceiling.

The massive granite fireplace, visible from the narthex, dominates the room at its east end. A large oriental rug covers a portion of the random patterned granite tiling on the floor. A deep red, close to burgundy, cut velvet sofa and matching wing back chairs; a small green velvet Victorian loveseat; small tables; and a contemporary floral patterned couch and love seat frame a sitting area in front of the fireplace area. To the right a doorway leads into the house extension where nurseries, coat racks and restrooms are located. On the southern wall, between the doorway to the narthex and the coffee bar, a most interesting feature presents itself: two paned glass windows centered between two doors provide a view of the sanctuary on the other side. These paned glass windows are functional just like all of the other windows of their kind in the exterior walls of the building. Aside from Venetian blinds to protect books from sun damage in the pastoral studies, library, and church office, this is the only room where window treatments are present. Red drapes with a pattern of yellow peaches and green leaves are topped with hard valances in a fine barn red check above.

The nurseries and bathrooms in the house extension hold some interest for the viewer. The walls are not white. The ladies room is quite large, a new material is introduced: polished grey marble with flecks of red, dark pink, light pink and white tile the floor. An L shaped counter top, with sinks and tilted mirrors above on the short side and a huge lengthwise mirror above on the long side, is dark pink, almost red in color. A basket of dried flowers, and dishes of decorative soaps, sewing supplies, tissues, and

antistatic spray are set on the counter. The walls are a lighter pink as are the toilette stalls on the other side of the mirrored wall. An oversized full-length mirror is mounted on the wall opposite the horizontal mirror alongside a paper towel dispenser and trashcan.

A door connects the ladies room to the infant nursery; the main entrance to the nurseries is between the two restrooms. The nursery has pale yellow walls and two windows and a door on one wall. Counter space, a sink, microwave for bottles, and changing table are on the opposite wall. Little cage-like bunk beds characteristic of so many infant nurseries, rocking chairs, and a few toys are also present. Two doors open from the infant nursery into the toddler nursery. One, a split door so that the top half can be opened, is in direct line with the main point of entry. It allows workers to talk to the people working in the toddler nursery, or allows mothers to hand babies to the workers without the chance for the crawlers to escape. The second opens into the toddler nursery behind a green check-in counter so that children or workers can go between the two nurseries safely.

The Toddler nursery is mint green with four windows and a paned glass door. Cork tiles and a carpet cover the granite floor to cushion the falls of little ones learning to walk. Baskets of toys, wing back chairs, a rocker, and a small bathroom are elements of the room. A second sink and counter unit are readily accessibly for washing small toys, pacifiers or hands as needed. Both nurseries have doors to a fenced play area on the side lawn, and many windows.

Out the main nursery entrance, also a split door, and around the corner is the door to the gent's room, less than half the size of the ladies room. The floors are of the same granite tile as the hallways and the walls are white. The bathroom stalls, however, are a

bright emerald green with faux marble finish. The gents do get a floor to ceiling full-length mirror like the ladies, but the room is considerably less adorned. Across from the restrooms and nursery entrance are coat racks and a bench. At the east end of the extension is a door that leads to a stairwell and the rear entrance of the building.

The bowels of the building beneath the kitchen and great room lead beyond the cruciform beam into the basement activity room of the house extension of the building. The activity room is the meeting place of the Aliens, the youth of CCC. The Aliens room is the most diverse room in the building. Eight by eight carpet tiles of multiple colors and patterns cover the floor. The south and west walls of the room are blocks of two shades of red, as is the central portion of the north wall. The East wall is completely beige or gold in color, a pictogram of a "Mars Attack" flying saucer with the silhouette of a figure standing in its door is painted in black on the wall. A cast shadow of the figure in the outline of the door is painted in black on the wall. A cast shadow of the figure in the outline of the door is below the saucer. The word A L I E N S is arched above the pictogram and the phrase, "We'll take you to our leader," is arched beneath. Squares of the same beige reoccur on the north wall on either side of the red section. Shelves holding literature and curriculum materials related to the youth ministry are by the door, along with alienware and mugs for sale and a moneybox. The Alien's Café and a wall of mirrors are in the southwest corner. The northwest corner holds framed wacky photos of the group and a wall of spontaneous strange sayings by the aliens. A platform with various musical instruments, a lectern, and white board sit in the northeast corner. A hodgepodge of furniture litters the room: foosball table, numerous couches, beanbag chairs, ping-pong table, vintage Sega arcade game, and coffee tables. The metal ceiling, steel beams and pipes are painted white, and round white Chinese lanterns hang from the

ceiling and strands of light filled plastic tubing are wound around several of the larger pipes. Coffee sacks hang from the ceiling in front of some of the red sections of the walls. All the way up the stairs brings the individual to the loft of the house extension.

The loft room is labeled “conference room” on the fire escape plans. The room touts a lower ceiling compared with the rest of the rooms in the building. Recessed lighting, and ribbon windows set at floor level lend an air of close quiet to this room. When one enters it there is the sense of being in an upper room, the same feeling evoked when entering a large attic or a hayloft in a barn. The room contains a second drum set, a piano, long tables and chairs, and storage closets.

In Summary, the barn church successfully integrates the architecture of the church and the architecture of the house to the New England post and beam architecture of the barn. This marriage of styles is typical of the postmodern era during which the building was designed and constructed. Prak said that the purpose of architecture is to embody meaning and bring order out of chaos for society, so that community can occur.<sup>108</sup> The use of a particular set of materials, colors, and design elements throughout the building act as a unifying factor for such an unusual place; creating a peaceful atmosphere with a distinct aura of authenticity.

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<sup>108</sup> Niels Luning Prak, *The Language of Architecture* (Netherlands: Mouton, 1968).

CHAPTER IV  
APPLICATION OF SONJA K. FOSS'S RHETORICAL SCHEMA FOR THE  
EVALUATION OF VISUAL IMAGERY TO  
THE BARN CHURCH-HOUSE

Symbols cannot be produced intentionally. They are born and grow and die. But one can tell how they are conceived and born: Out of a personal passion of individuals who in total honesty and seriousness penetrate in to the demands of the material with which they work, who have a vision of the form which is adequate to their aim, and who know that in the depth of every material, every form and every aim something ultimate is hidden which becomes manifest in the style of the building. ...Out of this depth symbols can and will be born which, by their very character, say no to present conformity and which point to an environment in which the individual can find symbols of his encounter with ultimate reality.<sup>109</sup>

Thus far I have provided a brief historical account and a thorough description of the Barn Church-house as preparation for the analysis of the rhetorical functions evident in the architecture of the Barn Church house, to which the next chapter will be devoted. Identification of the most prominent elements of the building will be summarized. After

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<sup>109</sup> Paul Tillich, *On Art and Architecture* (New York: Crossroad Publishers, 1987), 203.

which, I will turn my attention to the functions communicated by the architectural elements of the building—divided by three architectural forms conveyed by the building: church, house, and barn.

### Elements of Architectural Rhetoric

The elements that are of central importance are the context, form, craftsmanship, form, color, components, and media of the building. The exterior form of the building is that of a large red barn. The interior form has some barn elements, but is primarily of the church-house, a cruciform structure with a house like extension married to the cruciform by the fellowship hall. It is also potentially significant to note that the form of building was built in the Arts and Crafts or craftsman style. Its integrated form suggests identification of the community of faith as a Christian community

Context: Rural postmodern New England, Independent Non-conformist Christian Church movement, Reformation, natural-real-genuine versus synthetic, neither Spartan-minimalist nor gaudy-extravagant-elaborate-Popish, Puritan tradition, artistic-craftsman style.

Form: it is a rural New England barn-like, church-like, house-like building.

Craftsmanship: the building is custom crafted. Mostly natural, some manmade, high quality materials; attention to detail, design, and decoration; hand crafted versus machine crafted; careful construction characterize the craftsmanship of the building—in other words a great deal of care went into the construction of the building. Typical features of the arts and crafts or craftsman style of architecture present in the Barn Church-house: informal, asymmetrical, use of natural materials like wood, tile, and stone,

low-pitched, gabled roof, roof rafters usually exposed, and decorative (false) beams or braces commonly added under gables.<sup>110</sup>

Post and Beam: the framework is exposed at the front stoop, in the porte-cochere, and in the entry areas just outside of the silo entrance. The post and beam frame of the cruciform post is also exposed in both the sanctuary area of the building and in the pastoral studies—characteristic of the craftsman style.

Color: the exterior red and green colors of the building are carried throughout the interior of the building in various shades. The natural golden wood tones of the silo and post and beam frame are also carried throughout the interior of the building in the cruciform post, trim around the windows, doors, staircase to the balcony, sanctuary floor, and bookshelves in the library and studies. The black of the wrought iron is seen both interiorly and exteriorly. The interior walls of both arms of the transept are painted a very pale green, the fellowship hall and sanctuary areas are a yellow hued white, and the back wall of the apse and the hallway behind was primed, but not painted as well as the loft room. In addition to the shades of red and green, shades of gold or yellow, into oranges, browns, green, grey and the black of the wrought iron carried throughout with an occasional touch of blue in neon or part of a plaid valance. No purple was designed into the building. The majority of the colors are warmer, and nature oriented—roof, men's room stalls, carpet, metal rails, stair edge, metals are green, grey and black. The granite is its natural grey color.

Wood: pine is used to frame the building, trim the interior, and as shelving material. Custom crafted cherry cabinets in the kitchen, the same hue as the wood of the

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<sup>110</sup> For a list of characteristics of the Arts and Crafts or Craftsman style architecture see: <http://ah.phpwebhosting.com/a/archsty/a&c/a&cfeat.html>

pews and pew chairs in the sanctuary, and oak cabinets in the restrooms and nurseries are examples of the use of wood in the building, as well as the hardwood floors in the sanctuary.

Windows and Doors: windows in the roof and exterior walls of the building are also found in the interior walls of the front entrance hall looking into the pastoral studies, in the interior side aisle wall of the Nave, and in one of the spare rooms in the basement. Very few windows in the church are draped or shaded, and no stained glass is present. Window treatments are minimal. Most of the windows in the building are without window treatments allowing the most natural light possible into the building. The library and pastoral studies do have shades and valances to protect the books that line the wall-to-wall bookcases in each room. The kitchen has shades in its windows and the fellowship hall windows in the integration wall and exterior wall are draped. Its numerous windows provide most of the light in the church. Paned glass doors are located in both the exterior and interior of the building letting in more light. A small number of fire doors differ from the paned glass doors mentioned earlier. And split doors are used in the nurseries. Door-less doorways abound inside the building connected by passageways.

Roof: the seamless steel roof is the same green as the railings and front stair panels in the back stairwells. The design of the roof is complex, but not so complex that it loses its elegance.

Wrought Iron: exterior detailing in the form of a hand crafted weathervane and lightening rods, and interior décor in the form of hand crafted banisters, railings, apse gate and sanctuary's eight custom crafted chandeliers are of wrought iron craftsmanship. All are black custom designed elements of the cruciform post section of the building.



Stone: is primarily used as foundational materials. The foundation of the building is entirely concrete, beneath the building and the floor of the stoops. Crushed stone for drainage edges the circumference of the building. The three stairwells, located in the cruciform beam and house extension, are steel and concrete construction.<sup>111</sup> The public areas on the main floor are tiled with granite<sup>112</sup> except the sanctuary, one ladies room—it is tiled in rose marble, and the offices in the cruciform beam. The fellowship hall fireplace is also granite. Marble tile is in the ladies room.

Carpet: the pastoral studies, church office and library of the main floor are carpeted with brown and green check weave carpet respectively: in the pastoral studies the carpet is brown, in the church office and library: originally intended to be the pastoral offices the carpet is green. Variegated green carpet runs wall to wall in the upper story of the building, in the classrooms, chapel and hospitality area, through the balcony in the sanctuary and into the conference loft in one continuous floor.

Fireplace: prominently positioned in the fellowship hall on the wall opposite the warming kitchen is flanked by granite benches that are sometimes used to hold wood. The chimneypiece was set in a design that resembles the form of a dove; the large triangular shaped stones protrude wing-like beyond the vertical boundaries of the chimney on either side.<sup>113</sup> The Granite hearth is large enough and high enough off the ground to act as a long bench when not in use.

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<sup>111</sup> Rick Fillian stated: Reg Jacquith and I argued a long time over that, whether or not we should make those stairwells wood or steel and concrete. It nearly ended our friendship it got so bad, but then we realized it was ridiculous to end a friendship over something like that and we settled it.

<sup>112</sup>New Hampshire is known as the granite state.

<sup>113</sup> Karen Caple stated that the stonework above the fireplace had been designed with the form of an angel above. But when I inspected it, it seemed to me the proportions of the

Lighting: electric light fixtures are used outside in a variety of forms: outside spots, motion detectors, and lantern style lamps often used in barn construction. Inside hanging bowl chandeliers in the gallery and fellowship hall, sanctuary wall sconces, basement hall lights, recessed lighting, spots, fluorescents in the concrete and steel stairwells, blue neon in the silo and on the coffee bar clock, and wrought iron chandeliers in the sanctuary harvest oriented form.

Seating: the pews and pew chairs in the sanctuary—contribute to the concept of an open community, equality, and family, as do the wingback chairs in the library, and rockers in the nurseries and cry room. Sofas and wingbacks around the fireplace, in the ladies workroom, the loft and in the activity room are all of the more authentic home-like style rather than the institutional plastic, or metal. Office chairs of high quality are tools for those who spend much of their day sitting in them. The chairs in the dining area are metal and plastic, for the sake of utility, easy storage and rearrangement. All contribute to the home function discussed later in the chapter.

### Functions of Architectural Rhetoric

Taken in their historical context, the elements of the Barn Church building highlighted above suggest several functions of an utilitarian and symbolic nature, which relate to the ends of architecture: to provide shelter, preserve memory, restore order, and transmit meaning.<sup>114</sup> The building is an integration of three forms: barn, church, and

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stones and the lack of arms or halo, etc. give it a stronger bird like appearance—the dove is the bird most often associated with the Holy Spirit in the Christian faith. See the appendix for the image.

<sup>114</sup> These ends are derived from the ideas of faith narrative, historicity and metaphor as discussed by Ronald C. Arnett, “Interpersonal Praxis: The Interplay of Religious

house; and as such an integration of functions characterize it. The individual elements, which act as grounds for the functions argued by the building, provide support for multiple functions simultaneously. Here, is where Sonja Foss's<sup>115</sup> rhetorical schema for evaluating visual imagery comes into play. Utilizing Foss's schema, I will identify the functions communicated by the Barn Church through an interpretation of the physical data of the image, i.e., the elements presented above; assess the support provided for the functions in the Barn Church; and argue the legitimacy of the functions by their implications and consequences.

### A Church

First, the building is a church. Not church in the sense of "the body of all Christians," but in its use to denote the building in which a body of Christian believers meets for worship, instruction, fellowship, and evangelism. There is little but the sign by the roadside on the exterior of the building to indicate that it is a church. However, once inside, this function becomes more obvious. As described in chapter two, the design of

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Narrative, Historicity, and Metaphor," *Journal of Communication and Religion* 21 (1998): 141-144; monumentality, permanence, drama, and novelty as discussed by Kenneth J. Conant, "The Expression of Religion in Architecture," in *The Arts and Religion*, ed. Albert Edward Bailey (New York: MacMillan Company, 1944), 72; operational, environmental, and expressive/symbolic functions as discussed by Nathan Knobler, *The Visual Dialogue* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), 382-387.; and parallel: functional, iconographic: manifest symbols, and latent-unconscious symbolism as discussed by Niels Luning Prak, *The Language of Architecture: A Contribution to Architectural Theory* (Paris: Mouton & Co, 1968), 41.

<sup>115</sup> Sonja Foss, "A Rhetorical Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery," *Communication Studies*, 45, (Fall-Winter, 1994): 213-219. Valerie Peterson has written an article in response to Foss claiming that the elements of an image should first be analyzed before functions are identified. She asserts that Foss does not propose this. However, if read carefully, Foss's schema does exactly this. See Valerie V. Peterson, "An Alternative to Foss's Schema," *Southern Communication Journal*, 67, (Fall 2001): 19-32.

the building fits into a traditional form of Gothic inspired church architecture, an atrium of sorts: the silo with its rose-window-like ceiling, vestibule, narthex, nave and chancel, apse, and balcony are easily identified; gothic arched windows and an open ceiling supported by a skeleton of arches that form three aisles, liken it to the cross section of a Gothic cathedral.

That a Protestant or Non-conformist Church meets here is implied by several elements: the empty cross, displayed prominently on the apse wall; also the lack of an altar, but a baptismal tank in its place. The lack of physical division between priest and congregation is indicative of the Non-conformist doctrine that all members of the church are priests, the altar is their hearts and thus wherever they gather is the sanctuary. The Word—the Bible—is central in the Protestant church;<sup>116</sup> made prominent by the lectern on the dais at the front, along with instruments to accompany congregational singing, further emphasis on word. Pews and pew chairs, Bibles and hymnals for all, arches, aisles, cathedral ceiling and cruciform shape, all declare that this is a space where the gathering of the Protestant saints occurs.

In relation is the sense that the building functions as a metaphorical skin or clothing for the body of believers who meet in the building. One's skin and clothing comprise the public image one chooses to present to the rest of the world to be judged by, for "man looks on the outward appearance."<sup>117</sup> The public image of Christ Community Church, a New England Barn, is unlike any other functioning church building in the area. By its appearance it cannot be identified with any particular denomination. Rather, it can be identified with the building of its origin: the Oberkotter barn in Cornish, New

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<sup>116</sup> Tillich, 195.

<sup>117</sup> I Sam. 16.7

Hampshire, thus making a strong argument for its identity as denominationally independent. The congregation can be identified with the harvest of Christ; with the Protestant church; with Non-Conformist church movements of the reformation, many of which originally met for services in barns.<sup>118</sup> They can be identified with Christ through the barn form of the building, having their congregation “born” in a barn just as Jesus Christ was born in a barn of sorts.

One of the things the congregation was collectively bothered about at Trinity was a shifting of emphasis toward an inoffensive appearance, and the resulting compromise on the physical expression of their whole identity: removal of the cross from the chancel, habitual removal of the lectern, the pews replaced with chairs, installing offering drop boxes and doing away with the passing of the offering plates—symbolic fundamentals of the Protestant faith downplayed to avoid offending visitors.<sup>119</sup> Visitors came to Trinity expecting a particular doctrine as they had experienced with a congregation of the same denomination and were surprised and uncomfortable when they found that the reality was not as they expected.

When building their new facility, the Barn Church wanted to be certain that this was not the case with them—visitors could see them for who they are, unapologetically,

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<sup>118</sup> For more information about the history and development of Nonconformist church architecture see: Jack Boyer, *The Evolution of Church Building*, (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977); Peter T Mallery, *New England: Churches and Meetinghouses 1680- 1830*, (London: Vendome Press, 1985); Luning Prak, *The Language of Architecture*, (Paris: Mouton, 1968); Paul Thiry, Richard M. Bennett, and Henry L. Kamphoefner, *Churches and Temples*, (New York: Reinhold Publishing Company, 1953); and James F. White, *Protestant Worship and Church Architecture*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964);

<sup>119</sup> Concerned Members of Trinity Evangelical Free Church to the Elder Board of Trinity Evangelical Free Church, 6 March 1999, printed copy with notes, from the personal files of Melony Burch.

and quickly assess if the congregation is one that they might be interested in joining. As a result, authenticity characterizes the Barn Church. The rhetoric of transparency, use of natural materials, hand crafted and carefully constructed, implies a sense of reality, honesty, and genuineness. This church, Christ Community Church, is the real thing—what you see is what you get. This congregation does not hide their identity.

The rhetoric of transparency is a characteristic of public architecture that was deliberately designed into the Barn Church.<sup>120</sup> The rhetoric of transparency uses unstained glass in walls to communicate a sense of openness, honesty, and a lack of division between the world and the entity housed in a building. This concept also invites examination, a “come and look because we have nothing to hide” message. The use of multiple clear glass windows—166 windows and 16 doors in the exterior walls of the building, and 15 more windows in the interior walls (not counting the windows of the interior doors) is direct support for the presence of this concept in the Barn Church’s architecture, especially where the significant lack of blinds or curtains is observed. Also, anyone inside the building can look out and see the world in which they exist: the Church is in the world, but not of it. In addition, the opposite is also true as well; anyone on the outside can look into the building and observe what it really is about.<sup>121</sup>

In the architecture of the Catholic church, stained glass windows contribute to the mysticism of the Mass. Natural light is diffused through the glass, filling the space with a

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<sup>120</sup> Interview, Bob Oberkotter, “We did that because of the concept of transparency, I’ve always been fascinated by that and so we did that.” For more about the rhetoric of transparency see Prak, 180; Eric Jarosinski, “Architectural Symbolism and the Rhetoric of Transparency: A Berlin Ghost Story,” *Journal of Urban History* 29 (November 2002): 62-77.

<sup>121</sup> This concept of transparency seems to function similarly to the church portal art examined by Charles F. Altman, “The medieval Marquee: Church Portal Sculpture as Publicity,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 14 (1980): 37-46.

riot of beauty and dancing color. This mysticism is not present with clear glass panes. According to theologian Paul Tillich, the clear glass is representative of rational thought, rather than Divine indicative of the light passed through stained glass.<sup>122</sup> This rational thought is further a distinction of the Protestant church of the Reformation and of many Non-conformist groups characterized by the Protestant church's focus on the preaching and teaching of God's Word rather than the mystical symbolic act of the Mass. It is the kind of light that illuminates and exposes rather than covers or decorates, as does the stained glass.

There is a liberty implied in the illumination and exposure of this type of light. Unlocked doors or lack of doors in great number throughout the building further supports this liberty. The openness of space, referred to by Tillich as sacred emptiness, created by the numerous doors and windows, and cathedral ceilings actually serves to impress a sense of intimacy between God and congregation, and the individuals to the congregation. Accessibility, to nearly all areas of the building by all individuals is clear. The design of corridors, stairwells, and balconies grant quick and easy access from all areas to all areas. There is no sense of "you can't get there from here," because there is always a way and sometimes two or three. The presence of wrought iron gates leading to the apse further contributes to the sense of liberal access—characteristic of the Protestant church.

The extensive use of glass, wood, granite and marble, and metals all taken from the earth in raw form and carefully crafted to fit the functions of the building, emphasize the natural aspect of the Barn Church's construction; they are natural, not synthetic

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<sup>122</sup> Tillich, 193.

materials. The clear glass allows the utilization of natural light to illuminate the space. The extensive use of wood in the building's construction and decoration: the post and beam frame, held together with wooden pegs, not nails; the genuine wooden silo, as opposed to a metal one; the hardwood floor in the sanctuary; custom cabinetry and bookshelves, all give it the hand made, more natural quality.

The building exudes a sense of permanence, which also contributes to the function of authenticity. The form of the building fits in naturally with its surroundings. Anchored in place by the wooden silo it looks as though this barn-church has always been there. The use of stone and metal in its construction further supports this argument. Both, natural elements taken from the earth, are enduring; they can withstand fire of great temperatures and are not easily bent or broken. Used as foundational materials, floor and roof, fencing and lighting, these elements will stand the test of time and decay. CCC is real and here to stay. The house built upon the rock will stand firm in the midst of a storm.

The sense of permanence leads to another aspect of the building's authenticity: the building as an anchor, or foothold. Vitruvius argues that the end of architecture is the representation of order. This order is the anchor that keeps individuals from drifting away from fellowship. It provides humans a finite place in which to lay anchor, from where they can then reach for and understand the infinite.<sup>123</sup> Building, gives mankind a sense of power, the ability to preserve and order life.<sup>124</sup> When individuals began questioning the identity shift at Trinity and were asked to leave the church, the fellowship was broken and order was lost and people began to look for an anchor. Some of the people there

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<sup>123</sup> Tillich, 192.

<sup>124</sup> Lethaby; Frith.



chose to throw their anchor down deeper where they were. Others decided to weigh anchor and look for a stronger hold, for these it was with the shipmates that they had known the longest that they decided to throw in.

### A House

Second, the building is also a house. Tillich observes: “Architecture has a very special character which other [arts] do not have. It has first of all a practical purpose, namely to build a house.”<sup>125</sup> Similarly, Marvin Halverson writes: “Fundamentally, ... a church building is designed not as a place where a person comes for a religious experience, although that may happen, but to house a community that is gathered together to do something.”<sup>126</sup> Architecture is designed primarily to provide a place to house something, a physical thing or it may be a conceptual thing, and in doing creates a space where community can occur without fear, this is its utilitarian function. In the case of church architecture, temples, basilicas, cathedrals, chapels, churches, or meetinghouses are designed to house the Church and provide a place for the work of the Church to be done.

The house form of the building also functions symbolically—as home and shelter. When Christ Community Church first made plans to build a facility, one of their goals was to make a home for the Church family.<sup>127</sup> The home represents a place of safety, shelter, warmth, comfort, community, correction, learning, freedom, fellowship, food, growth, work, and play. This function is suggested first by the presence of the fireplace.

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<sup>125</sup> Tillich, 192.

<sup>126</sup> Marvin Halverson, of the National Council of Churches, quoted in Paul Tillich, *On Art and Architecture* (New York: Crossroads, 1987), 195.

<sup>127</sup> Karen Caple said: “We wanted to build a home.”

Vitruvius tells us that fire was the inspiration for human beings meeting and living together, and the motivation for the gathering of minds was in sharing the benefits of fire.<sup>128</sup> The fireplace, once physically central, has become symbolically central to the home—the hearth is the symbolic heart of the home. The hearth has long been central to architecture. The first buildings constructed by humans were homes; the hearth was central to the home—a shelter for the fire, around which community was created. The hearth was the place where the source of life was kept; it kept man from death by freezing or food poisoning. Because of its origins, the hearth has come to represent protection and the heart of the home, prosperity, and hospitality. The size and prominence of the massive fireplace located in the fellowship hall of the Barn Church demands to be noticed as a primary feature. Arguably, the hearth is symbolic of the home for this community.

The hand crafted Oriental rug and sitting area surrounding the fireplace further supports this function. Color choice in the decoration of the building suggests warmth and life; the colors range from warm brown through burgundy to red through orange, gold, yellow, and into vibrant greens. Window treatments shelter the occupants from prying eyes, giving the place a sense of privacy and protection. The presence of light, electric, natural, and via fire illuminate the interior of the building and connote the sense that individuals can be who they really are in safety. Houseplants are common to the home; the presence of green growing things with seasonal blossoms supports the place as one of growing and learning. There are spaces for play: basketball court, nurseries,

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<sup>128</sup> Vitruvius II.1.1-2, trans Morgan, M. H. *the ten Books on Architecture*, New York: Dover. Quoted in Stephen Frith “A Primitive Exchange: On Rhetoric and Architectural Symbol,” *Architectural Research Quarterly* 8 (2004): 40.

activity-room and fellowship hall. There are spaces for feeding: kitchen, dining area, and nurseries. The doors inside the building are open; many doorways are without doors and all areas are accessible from any point in the building.

The Barn Church is a place for the Church community to live and also was designed as an emergency shelter, both in the literal and symbolic sense. Literally, the building meets the code requirements to act as a shelter in case of a large storm or other emergency event. In the symbolic sense, the Barn Church as house acts as a shelter for those in time of figurative storms of life. It is a safe place to throw down anchor and wait out the hard times or to ride the waves on out with the assistance of other experienced sailors. This function is supported by the opportunities for fellowship and community provided in the spaces of the library, pastoral offices set up for counseling, and fellowship hall.

### A Barn

Third, the building is a barn. Today, barns are used for storing agricultural wealth; they are used to store hay, to thresh wheat,<sup>129</sup> and house livestock, and silos hold the grain that has been threshed just as they were in early times. This barn is different from the average barn however; it is a red, New England barn built to withstand the Northern winter—long, dark, cold, and dry. It does not house livestock or hay; it houses a harvest of a different sort.<sup>130</sup> This barn is a storehouse of meaning, of harvest, and of history. The metaphor of the barn or storehouse is mentioned throughout the Bible in reference to

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<sup>129</sup> The act of separating the grain from the chaff.

<sup>130</sup> The postmodern context in which the building was built supports the barn form: it gives the appearance of being a barn, while it functions only as a barn in terms of symbolic or metaphoric meaning.

the Christian Church in terms of stewardship of wealth and knowledge, storage, and the importance of sharing with others.

The Barn Church represents the biblical harvest metaphor; the form of the building lends itself to be read with its meanings attached to this metaphor. The overall form of the building is unmistakably barn-like. Even though the building has no front door, the faux silo acts as the main entry and exit point for the worship area. It is a hollow, empty silo—because the harvest is not yet over and neither is the threshing. The Church is the harvest, the grain that will one day fill the silo of heaven with its bounty. The blue neon light high in the silo, reminds the viewer of heaven. The color blue has association with the sky, and appears seldom in nature and seldom also in the Barn Church: the silo ring is referenced elsewhere in the building: a second neon circle on a clock above the coffee bar—possibly a reference to the imminent end of time and a heavenly future. The bulletin boards posted in the silo further support this function; they report and identify evangelistic activities, and indicate evangelistic missions financially supported by the Barn Church congregation.

The harvest metaphor is extended in the light fixtures, which hang in the sanctuary: crafted of wrought iron they resemble sheaves of bundled wheat. Bundled wheat is indicative of what has already been harvested, but as yet unthreshed. There are several Old Testament references to threshing as God's means of purging or purifying the peoples of the world, in particular the people who belong to Him. There are also references to the use of the Word of God, the Holy Bible, to purify the people. On Sunday mornings people gather in this storehouse, the Barn Church, ready to be threshed by the Word of God presented to the audience in the space of the sanctuary. The sheaves

of wheat are a light source to those in attendance, some of whom may not yet have heard the Word of God.

Architecture aims at the eternal.<sup>131</sup> The blue neon circle of the silo and clock may express this in relation to the two concepts of time, Kairos and Chronos. *Chronos* is marked time, the kind we measure by clocks and calendars and chronicles of human history; *kairos* is the time beyond marked time, of infinite nature, eternal, as continually experienced by God. Occasionally, we as humans have kairos moments; moments where we experience something outside of chronos, those moments when the world recedes and time seems to stop. Artists often experience these moments in the act of creation, the process of conception, growth and birth of something new. Parents may experience it in the process of having children, scholars in the expression of coherent thought. It is in the manifestations of faith that what is unseen develops and becomes a real experience. In True love: moments of sacrifice; in inevitable tragedy: pain or death that comes suddenly and often, however ridiculous, unexpectedly. These are fleeting moments that cannot be held onto, but some places bring those moments back to the present. *Kairos* is “an unrepeatabe moment when events of great significance come to be gathered in the life of an individual or people.”<sup>132</sup>

In a discussion of American sacred space Belden Lane explains how a place becomes sacred.<sup>133</sup> He uses Aristotle and Plato’s definitions of place: *topos*-a neutral, measurable, quantifiable location; and *chora*-“an energizing force, suggestive to the

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<sup>131</sup> Christopher Wren quoted in William Richard Lethaby, *Form in Civilization: Collected Papers on Art and Labor*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1922), 83.

<sup>132</sup> Belden C. Lane, “Giving Voice to Place: Three Models for Understanding American Sacred Space,” *Religion and American Culture* 11 (2001): 54-55.

<sup>133</sup> Lane, 54.

imagination, drawing intimate connections to everything else in our lives,” as they relate to the Greek concepts of time, *chronos* and *kairos*. He says, “To experience oneself simultaneously in a situation of *chora* and a moment of *kairos* is truly to encounter wonder.”<sup>134</sup> That first service held in the Oberkotter barn one Sunday in May was such a transformation: the ordinary became sacred and that sacredness is memorialized in the Barn Church-house. Church at the Oberkotter barn was an experience of *kairos* and *chora* in *topos*; this congregational monumental experience led to the design and construction of the Barn Church.

Closely related to *kairos* is the concept of historicality. Historicality is the sense that history is present. Historicality is particularly characteristic of monuments and memorials. The monumental or memorial capacity of architecture can be understood as its ability to allow a community to experience the presence of history in a particular place. “Monumentality springs from the eternal need of people to create symbols for their activities and for their fate or destiny, for their religious beliefs and for their social convictions. Every period has the impulse to create symbols in the form of monuments, which according to the Latin meaning are “things that remind,” things to be transmitted to later generations.”<sup>135</sup> Monuments are characteristic of community. Without a community there is no need for a monument; without the assumption of a future there is no need for a monument. Monuments guide us; they commemorate significant events for future generations. They can commemorate great triumphs, like the Triumphal Arch, the Gateway to the West, the Lincoln Memorial, the Eiffel Tower, or the London Eye—

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<sup>134</sup> Lane, 55.

<sup>135</sup> Sigfried Giedion, *Architecture, You, and Me: The Diary of a Development*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 28.

monuments to man's achievements. Or they can commemorate great tragedy, like the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, Holocaust memorials world wide, the D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA, or Israel's Wailing Wall. The Barn Church commemorates the reformation of a church congregation.

The functional metaphor of Christian rebirth is also present in the Barn Church-house. The symbols of Jesus Christ's birth: the barn, baptism: the baptistry in the sanctuary, His death and resurrection: the bare cross above the baptismal tank, and Pentecost, the stonework dove above the fireplace in the fellowship hall, are all-present in the architecture of the building. The memorial function can be understood in light of the church community's history. The Barn Church was constructed in the form of a barn in part to echo this common heritage.

One aim of church architecture is to bring the story of the World, the Church, and Jesus Christ into the present. In this faith narrative, the dying World and its chronos surrounds the church-house, but the Church is not "of it." The Church is set apart, made holy, by God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. This sacrifice redeemed the World, allowing it to be reborn, symbolized by water baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; in other words, the believer is reborn into the familial fellowship of holiness and becomes an heir to a place in kairos. This new life resulting from regeneration is marked by the life giving presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer, often symbolized by water, a dove, or a flame.

The symbolic functions of architecture are mutable and can be described in several terms dependant on the historical period and cultural context in which the building was designed and constructed. As time passes and cultures grow and morph, so

do the symbols [or metaphors], icons, and monuments of that culture change.<sup>136</sup> The Barn Church tells the story, through symbols that hold meaning for today. The cross, the baptismal and the hearth are three primary human symbols, which are a part of the core metanarrative of this world. The cross is a common symbol of death even outside the Christian church: the Egyptian ankh, the German rune of death is the upside down broken cross, the skull and crossbones, and the x as eyes on a cartoon character signify death are all examples of the symbol used outside of a Christian church context. Baptism involves the element of water, which connotes cleansing, bathing, and birth. The hearth protects a fire from the elements, preserving it from death and thereby preserving man from death; fire connotes life and purification. The hearth is the heart of the home, and the hearth of the Barn Church is symbolic of the home of the Holy Spirit, the form of a dove having been worked into the stone above the fireplace.

#### Integration of Forms

The function of marriage, or oneness characterizes the Barn Church. The wall of windows between the fellowship and sanctuary areas, gives the impression that the two areas, while distinct, are equal in value, that worship and fellowship are one. They are a plexus, interconnected, and necessary. The church would not be the church without one or the other. This idea is characteristic of the post-modern architectural period during which the building was designed and constructed. Modern architecture attempted to divorce itself from any references to architecture of the past in an attempt to create an

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<sup>136</sup> Maria Kanengieter-Wildeson, "Architectural Metaphor as Subversion: The Portland Building," in Sonja Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*, 3d ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2004), 325[-328].



independent identity so that by its ambiguity it could serve all parts of society, but its resulting sterility of meaning did not long satisfy the multicultural community.

It is the character of post modernism to reacquire the historical elements of a collective identity of a global culture, culling the most significant and meaningful elements of design and marrying them to create new form, a mosaic, from pieces of the old in the never ending goal. The integration of Barn and House and Church becomes a monument to the rebirth of a church congregation.

It was the desire of the church body to lay off the old and become a new creation, to unapologetically communicate their new identity as an authentic community of faith to the people of Connecticut Valley; to shine their light before mankind that mankind might see their good works and glorify God. Niels Prak argues that the aim of architecture is to create the integrated society.<sup>137</sup> Architecture is the language of society. The elements of barn, church, and house are integrated to reflect the reformed identity of a church congregation and to communicate their faith as authentically as possible through symbol in connection with history, an integration of faith narrative, historicity, and metaphor.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analyzed the Barn Church using Sonja Foss's rhetorical schema for the evaluation of visual imagery. Foss's schema has three components: (1) interpret the physical data, or elements of the image and identify the implied functions communicated; (2) assess the support provided for the functions; and (3) argue the legitimacy of the functions by their implications and consequences. I identified as the

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<sup>137</sup> Niels Prak. *The Language of Architecture. A Contribution to Architectural Theory* (Netherlands: Mouton, 1968).

major presented elements context, craftsmanship, form, post and beam construction, color, wood, windows and doors, roof, wrought iron, stone, lighting, carpet, window treatments, doorways, seating, and fireplace. From an interpretation of these elements I identified several functions which I assessed in terms of the barn, house, and church forms which fell into two categories: utilitarian and symbolic. For the barn form the utilitarian function is a storehouse, whose symbolic functions are metaphors of harvest and rebirth, and monuments of history and rebirth. For the house form the utilitarian function is a house, whose symbolic functions are home and shelter. For the church form the utilitarian function is meetinghouse, whose symbolic functions are public image and authenticity characterized by: transparency, nature, freedom, reality, and permanence. Once the viewer recognizes these groupings, the identification of the function of integration of forms and functions becomes apparent. Through the building of their church-house, CCC crafted an identity characterized by authenticity, monumentality, and metaphor, which met the need of the historical moment and managed the briefest encounter with the eternal divine.

CHAPTER V  
INTEGRATION OF FORM AND FUNCTION IN  
CONREGATIONAL REFORMATION

The purpose of this study was to understand how the rhetoric of church architecture communicates congregational reformation. Chapter one offered justification for the study and a review of literature devoted to the rhetoric of architecture, including memorial and church architecture as well as an outline of the methodology to be used to acquire this understanding.

In chapter two a narrative context was established for the rhetoric of the Barn Church architecture. The faith narrative of the congregation is characteristic of non-conformist church groups in the Puritan tradition, which rejects Church and Episcopal authority, a liturgy focused on the Mass and Church established sacraments. It elevates the Word of God, the Holy Bible, and equalizes those symbols amplified by the text: making disciples, the empty cross, baptism, communion, offerings—both financial and actual, i.e., service, music, dramatic, etc., and fellowship. It is uncompromising in its communication of its identification with Jesus Christ. It recognizes the common priesthood of all believers, recognizing the authority of all Christians to make disciples, counsel, teach, hear confessions, baptize, and serve in the church. This identity was not in keeping with the doctrines and projected image of Trinity Evangelical Free Church, from whom the congregation split in 1996.

The congregation regrouped in a barn space in Cornish, New Hampshire that they used as a church meeting space where they began the process of reformation. When the weather changed and it became too cold to meet in the barn-church on the hill the congregation moved to a winterized location. There they began deliberately to craft their new identity through: individual faith conversion testimonies, deciding on a name and incorporating as Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church, and writing a constitution and collective statement of faith. They then planned and built the Plainfield Barn Church house as a monument, home, and worship center.

In chapter three, a detailed description of the building was presented, beginning with the physical location of the building, a description of the exterior of the building in two sections, rooftop and church-house, followed by a description of the building's interior in two sections, church and house.

Chapter four identified the utilitarian and symbolic functions of architectural rhetoric utilizing Sonja Foss's rhetorical schema for the evaluation of visual imagery. Identification of functions implied by the physical data of the image present in the building are: identity, community, memory, and transcendency and the physical data or elements which undergird the identification of these functions are: form, context, craftsmanship, post and beam construction, color, wood, windows and doors, roof, wrought iron, stone, carpet, hearth, lighting, and seating. After the prominent elements were assessed, I turned to an identification and assessment of the rhetorical functions, which I determined according to the three forms embodied by the architecture of the Barn Church: barn, house, and church. I found that each of these forms had a utilitarian function of *topos*: storehouse, meetinghouse, house of worship; and symbolic functions

of *chora*: metaphor—skin, harvest, home, and rebirth; authenticity—transparency, light, the natural or real, freedom, and permanence; monument, and integration. The legitimacy of these functions for church architecture is dependant upon their implications and consequences. These functions meet five aims of architectural rhetoric: crafting identity, manifesting memory, creating community, and constituting transcendency.

The Barn Church house creates and evokes meaning as it establishes and exhibits historicity, and visually communicates the gospel message utilizing architectural metaphors, all within the context of the re-formed faith narrative, or worldview, of Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church. Through the building of their church house CCC crafted a Christian identity characterized by authenticity, integration/community, monumentality, and transcendence. The building manifests memory through monumentality by referencing the place of their origins, in relation to the origins of Nonconformist church congregations of history and the humble birthplace of Jesus Christ. Further, through identification with Christ in his baptism, ministry of teaching and service, death on the cross, and resurrection, it reminds the congregation of its past and its future. The Barn Church creates community through collective memory embodied in the building and identification with the symbols of the Christian faith that the congregation includes in the architecture. Therefore, the rhetorical functions of the Barn Church house are legitimate according to Foss's schema.

These four chapters served to provide grounds for the claim that the rhetoric of church architecture functions as an integration of faith narrative, historicity, and metaphor. The faith narrative of CCC is one of the authentic, independent, rural New England artistic-craftsmen of the Nonconformist/Protestant Christian Church, in the

Puritan tradition. The historicity of the moment was in the spirit of the Reformation, bringing present the creation of a new congregation from an existing congregation. The biblical metaphors/symbols of the church present in the architecture of the barn church were created out of its faith narrative and successfully met the need of the historical moment, bridging the faith narrative and historicity and creating an instance of communication. The Barn Church rhetoric integrates faith narrative (worldview), historicity, and metaphor (symbol), which authentically and monumentally create community. This instance of church architecture thus creates community and invokes the transcendent kairos or the eternal.

### Implications

This study has various implications for aspects of visual rhetoric and rhetorical theory. At base, it offers further understanding of how communicators craft a message through visual images and suggests some visual dimensions of effective communication. The study contributes to an understanding of how visual elements communicate identity, meaning, and culture to the people who see and make sense of them.<sup>138</sup> Arguably, the study adds further understanding as to how architecture functions as rhetoric, and how church architecture in particular functions as visual communication.

This study further legitimizes Sonja Foss's rhetorical schema for the evaluation of visual imagery, and extends and clarifies some aspects of the schema's judgments through their application to church architecture. Thus far the schema has been applied to art and memorial architecture, including the First chair of Michele de Lucchi, the Quaker

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<sup>138</sup> Valerie Peterson, 27.

Tapestry, the NAMES project AIDS Memorial Quilt, the Clark County (Alabama) War Memorial, the United States Holocaust memorial Museum, and advertising images.<sup>139</sup>

Valerie Peterson, in her article, "An Alternative to Foss's Schema," finds fault with the schema. She argues that it "gives undue precedence to visual *images* [as opposed to the elements of those images], supports critical circularity, divorces function from aesthetics, and reflects modernist assumptions that may work against important critical projects."<sup>140</sup> I believe Peterson has misread Foss's Schema and applications and I find her criticism overdrawn. Arguably, Peterson's "elemental schema for evaluating visual imagery"<sup>141</sup> seems to be a very close embodiment of Foss's first "kind of judgment involved in the process of evaluating an image: ...identification of a function communicated in an image, accomplished through the critic's analysis of the image itself; this function is a product of the critic's interpretation of the physical data [i.e. the elements] of the image...the critic's responsibility is to support the function proposed by showing the steps taken from the physical data to the claim concerning the function."<sup>142</sup> Foss begins her two sample applications with narrative background of the image and

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<sup>139</sup> Foss, "A rhetorical schema," 218-221, applied the schema to the chair and quilt; Michael P. Graves, "The Quaker Tapestry: An Artistic Attempt to stitch Together a Diverse Religious Community," *The Journal of Communication and Religion* 24 (March 2001): 1-42; Alison I. English, "The Clark County (Alabama) War Memorial: Kairos and Chronos United in the Sacred Commemoration and Contemplation of Five Wars," *The Journal of American Culture* 27 (December 2004): 384-405; Julie D. Fisher, *Prescription Drug Advertisements as Fantasies: A Cultural Critique Using a Visualization Model* (M. A. thesis, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1999), abstract, MAI, 37: 05; Billie J. Jones, *The Rhetoricity of Museum Design: An Analysis of the United States Holocaust Memorial museum as a Rhetorical Text* (Ph. D. diss., Bowling Green State University, 1998), abstract, DAI, 59, 12A.

<sup>140</sup> Valerie Peterson, "An Alternative to Foss's Schema," *Southern Communication Journal* 67 (Fall 2001): 21.

<sup>141</sup> Peterson, 26.

<sup>142</sup> Foss, 216.

description of the elements of the image, followed by identification of the image's function, assessment of elemental support for the function, and evaluation of the function's legitimacy. So, Foss's schema is not image-centric; this initial examination of elements also negates Peterson's claim of the problem of circularity. In addition, Foss is clear that the critic's chosen function represents only one possibility of interpretation and there are many others.<sup>143</sup>

As to Peterson's other assertions, I offer these reflections in Foss's defense. Foss attempts to insinuate the visual image into the realm of rhetoric, which has until recently resided almost exclusively in the realm of aesthetics. Her claim on the visual image does not exclude aesthetics, but rather reduces its established rule. The assertion that Foss's schema "severs rhetorical function too neatly from aesthetics" is weak at best. There is no clear divorce. Foss includes the element of personal taste as influential to the critic's interpretation of the image, which implies aesthetic inclusion.<sup>144</sup> It is clear from Foss's work in visual rhetoric that she believes meaning is in the receiver of the message, not the message itself, so though the sender of the message may intend to send a meaning, that intention is null as soon as the message is sent. Only the meaning provided in the mind of the viewer is featured by Foss. The assertion that Foss's schema reflects modernist assumptions is dubious. Foss is clear that the purposes of the artist for what the image means are irrelevant to understanding it as rhetoric. She pays little attention to the audience, save the critic's view of the object; and, as stated above, she believes both elements and whole image are important to the critic's judgment of meaning. These

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<sup>143</sup> Foss, 216.

<sup>144</sup> Foss, 218.



statements are the antithesis of modernist assumptions.<sup>145</sup> Peterson presents a clearer explanation of Foss's first kind of judgment, but fails to provide an evaluative road in her own "alternative schema" and does a questionable job of making a case for it as an alternative in the first place.

Another implication for visual rhetoric is the application of Ronald C. Arnett's religious interpersonal praxis to a visual instance of religious communication. This study contributes further understanding of the praxis for religious communication and expands it to include visual communication. Arnett argues that it is the interplay of narrative background, historical moment and metaphor which create religious interpersonal praxis in communication. In the religious narrative context, when appropriate metaphors are chosen to communicate a meaning or truth to those on the outside, the need of a particular moment can be met and communion, or Communication, can happen. If inappropriate metaphors are used, the communication will be rejected. My study offers examples of this kind of depth communication. The Barn Church is an integration and enactment of its faith narrative and appropriate metaphors [or symbols], all of which met the needs of the moment and can, for now, communicate truly and authentically for the congregation. Because of its nature as architecture, the Barn Church house will continue to stand as a monument to the rebirth of a church congregation. It is through the integration of faith narrative, historicity, and metaphor that an authentic and monumental congregational reformation is communicated in church architecture.

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<sup>145</sup>Peterson, 21, and Foss, 216-219.

### Limitations of the Study

This study and its findings are limited in various ways. The first limitation concerns the data used in the analyses. I analyzed one church building. In addition, the church is of a particular type: postmodern New England non-conformist church-house. A study of several churches of similar type, or of various styles and historical periods, might have yielded a better sense of whether this instance of architectural rhetoric holds true for differing styles of church architecture.

The second limitation of this study is that my analyses reflect only my perspectives and interpretations. Following the lead of Foss's schema, I did not survey other viewers for their perspectives on the identification of functions communicated in the image, perspectives on how well the identified functions are communicated and the supportive elements of the functions in the building, nor on the implications and consequences of the identified functions. That sort of study would have required the tools of social science, not rhetorical studies. My description, interpretation, and evaluation of the rhetorical functions of church architecture were also limited by the fact that I am white, female, middle class, non-conformist, Yankee, Christian, and a New England farm girl; my interpretations are somewhat likely to reflect these biases. My gender and cultural upbringing may have encouraged me to focus on and emphasize some presented and suggested elements over others and influenced the choice of functions and categories I derived from the suggested elements. I do believe, however, that the integration of faith narrative, historicity, and metaphor would be recognizable by many viewers, regardless of the specific conclusions reached in my analysis of the buildings.

Another important aspect and limitation of this study is my membership in the academic discipline of rhetoric. Another viewer untrained in architecture, but with allegiance to other academic fields such as anthropology, psychology, or theology, might provide additional frames from which to interpret communicative ideas.

### Suggestions for Further Research

This study suggests several lines of inquiry for further study. The realm of architecture is not new to the field of rhetoric, having been addressed by Plato and Aristotle and many rhetoricians after; however, the language of society through architecture has been given too little attention in the field rhetoric. Rhetorical scholars may benefit the field and contribute to the area of political discourse with further examination of the architectural rhetoric of public buildings.

Church architecture in particular offers a unique type of communication in its relation to the monument and memory. Monumental communication is a rich storehouse of cultural meaning for rhetorical scholars that has already been dipped into, but an examination of church buildings as memorials has not yet been examined extensively.

In addition, the forms and functions of the Barn Church suggest other relevant means of critical examination that could shed further light on the visual rhetoric of architecture. Formal criticism may offer a contribution to understanding. After all, form and function are primary aspects of architecture. I have focused this study on function: a closer examination of form might yield significant understanding that could further

enlighten the subject.<sup>146</sup> An examination of the artifact using Walter Fisher's Narrative Paradigm,<sup>147</sup> techniques of metaphoric criticism,<sup>148</sup> Kenneth Burke's Pentad,<sup>149</sup> Frederick Beuchner's theory of Gospel Truth,<sup>150</sup> or an application of Barry Brummett's rhetorical dimensions of popular culture,<sup>151</sup> to name a few possibilities, could provide deeper understandings of the rhetorical functions of church architecture and enrich our understanding of complex architectural sites.

The character of the building is such that examining the text from an aesthetic, theological, or purely architectural standpoint might be valuable to those fields of scholarship. Paul Tillich's *Art and Architecture* could well serve as a starting point for such an examination.

My intention in this study was two-fold: first, I sought to discover how architectural rhetoric contributes to the reformation of church congregations, which may give insight into church movements as the Church attempts to establish community according the will of God, in the image of Jesus Christ. Second, I hoped to further

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<sup>146</sup> Malcolm O. Sillars, and Bruce E. Gronbeck, *Communication Criticism: Rhetoric, Social Codes, Cultural Studies* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2001, offer a detailed explanation of formal criticism.

<sup>147</sup> Walter Fisher, "Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument," *Communication Monographs* 51 (March 1984): 1-22; for more information on Narrative Criticism see: Sonja Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Long Gove, IL: Waveland Press, 2004); Dann Pierce, *Rhetorical Criticism and Theory in Practice* (Boston: McGraw, 2003); Malcolm O. Sillars, and Bruce E. Gronbeck, *Communication Criticism: Rhetoric, Social Codes, Cultural Studies* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2001.

<sup>148</sup> For information on metaphoric criticism see: Sonja Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Long Gove, IL: Waveland Press, 2004); or Dann Pierce, *Rhetorical Criticism and Theory in Practice* (Boston: McGraw, 2003).

<sup>149</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1945)

<sup>150</sup> Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1977).

<sup>151</sup> Barry Brummett, *Rhetorical Dimension of Popular culture* (Tuscaloosa Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1991).

dialogue about the ways in which rhetoric functions in nondiscursive forms. The amount of further research needed in the study of visual images and architectural rhetoric is extensive, but I believe I have contributed a unique piece to the conversation in this area. My application of the tools of rhetorical theory and criticism to architecture has provided new perspectives both for architecture and rhetorical studies.

## APPENDIX A

To the Elder Board of Trinity Evangelical Free Church:

It is with deep regret that we write this letter. We begin by expressing our most sincere love for both the leadership and the body here at Trinity. That is what makes this such a difficult task. Nonetheless, it is one we feel compelled to do, out of obedience to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and to His Word. It is with prayerful consideration that we bring these concerns forward.

We, the undersigned, are submitting this letter, detailing many concerns we have about our church and the path it is taking. We want you to know that we have not entered this lightly, but with trepidation and only after much prayer. We are all grieving for our church - for those who have gone and for those who remain. We do not believe this is a healthy body, and we have a right and an obligation to bring our concerns to our leaders. The Elder Board is to oversee the church body and to address their concerns, and we submit this to you hoping that you will, as our servant/leaders, consider what we have written in a spirit of prayer.

### Concern #1 – Inappropriate Discipline

The church is a family. Even within a worldly family, brothers and sisters should be free to disagree with each other, and in a healthy family even the children are able to place their grievances before their parents without fear of anger or retribution. Yet it has become evident that this is not the case within our church family. There is a pattern of people being told, subsequent to objecting to a doctrine or practice, that perhaps they would be happier worshipping elsewhere. In some cases they have been given the names of other churches as a further push to leave. This is not an isolated or even occasional event: it is frequent, and has caused tremendous pain to a great many believers. In addition, it has created an environment in which people still attending Trinity are afraid to express their disagreement on even the smallest of issues because of the reaction of anger or ridicule, or perhaps even a late-night phone call suggesting that another church would better serve their needs. This fear is present in those of us bringing this petition, and there are many whose fear of consequence (or memory of past consequence) has kept them from participating in what we are doing here. This is wrong. It should not be. An appalling number of people have left our church, and a large portion have done so carrying anger and intense hurt with them. This is a stain on the reputation of our church, and a shame to us.

### Concern #2 – Baptism Vote

Before the recent vote was taken on the issue of baptism as it relates to membership, there was a lot of talk about how this vote would reveal the will of God. And we should all be prepared to accept the result. Yet we are aware that there is an intention to bring the issue up again within the next year or two. When Trinity chose

the Evangelical Free denomination, it was with the explicit agreement that it was free to retain the baptism requirement. This was crucial to the church body, and the change to the Evangelical Free would never have been made had that aspect not been agreed to. Now there is a big push to conform to the Evangelical Free position on baptism, something that has been rejected by the body three times, once when changing denominations and twice by vote. A church is not a leadership council, it is a body of believers, and it is upsetting that there is a constant attempt by the leadership to change what the body has decided.

#### Concern #3 – Breach of Confidence

There have been incidents of things that were shared in confidence with individuals in leadership being told to others. It is not our place to address the details of these breaches, as we believe those whose trust was violated need to follow the Biblical pattern, first confronting the person who has offended them before, if necessary, moving on to the elder board. However, the fact that this has occurred is of concern to us, as it is another evidence that things are out of order.

#### Concern #4 – Unashamed Presentation of Christianity

We believe that our church has been gradually watering down our witness in an effort to avoid offending non-believers. There is no more offering plate, no more scripture reading, little discussion of the consequences of being unsaved, and no direct invitation to receive salvation. Many of these things have been justified by the leadership by saying that non-believers were made more comfortable by the changes. We suggest that the purpose of the church is not to make non-believers comfortable. God is not merely our friend; He is also our judge and Savior. We fear that Trinity is on the road to becoming a “seeker-friendly” church, which may be very non-threatening to the unsaved, but rarely brings change in their lives, and leaves the saved out in the cold. Seeker-friendly churches are very comfortable and enjoyable and are usually very large, but they are, in the end, ineffective in their witness.

#### Concern #5 – Standards of Leadership

When an individual takes office in the church, he signs a paper stating, among other things, that he accepts the Standards of Leadership. However, a large number of those selected for office are in stated opposition to the requirement of baptism for membership, which is a doctrine of this church, yet they signed the paper anyway. If leaders feel free to do this, what is to prevent them from disagreeing with any part of the constitution and teaching or counseling the same?

#### Concern #6-Business Meeting of 2/9/99

There was much confusion surrounding the vote which took place. Two things were clear, however; there was no discussion of individual concerns, and there was a lack

of adherence to Roberts' Rules. A question may not be called without a "second" and then a majority vote.

We feel that The Nominating Committee should post the nominations for officers prior to the business meeting so the body has the opportunity to prayerfully consider these individuals in light of their prospective responsibilities.

It would seem to make sense that we would follow the same protocol for voting in officers as we do prospective members. The candidates would step out for discussion and vote so that concerns could be shared comfortably.

We would also like to be allowed to vote by secret ballot so that it would not be necessary to reject an entire slate when a member has come to the determination that he cannot support the election of one or more candidates. If a slate was offered with boxes beside each candidate we believe this would not prolong the voting procedure unduly.

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This is not a complaint against any individual. We love our church, and we love and pray for her leaders. This love has meant that we cannot sit placidly by when we believe wrong is occurring, and so we must present to you, the board of Elders, this list of our concerns. We pray that you will consider and address them, answering to us all as a group as we are unified in our convictions. We would ask that this be accomplished by a meeting, to be held after you have had sufficient time to consider, investigate and pray about these issues.

Please consider this a formal request for a meeting between the undersigned parties and the elder Board. Please have the Chair of the Elder Board contact Rich Heim at (xxx)xxx-xxxx with the time and date of the meeting.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this matter.

Respectfully in Christ,

(30 signatures follow)



## APPENDIX B

### **I. Who CVCCC Is**

Welcome to Christ Community Church. We would like to introduce you to “Who We Are.” Christ Community Church is a non-denominational church that desires to reflect the truth, character and glory of God in all we do and teach. We feel the best way to help you understand what we stand for is to explain the reasons behind choosing the name Christ Community Church.

#### **Why “Christ”**

The most obvious reason is because He alone is the source of our salvation.

John 14:6 – Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.”

Acts 4:12 – And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.

Without the redemption that is in Christ Jesus there is no church. He alone is our Savior and Lord. He alone was worthy to pay the penalty for our sins, and thus satisfy the righteous wrath of God that rests upon all those who do not believe. He alone has made the way possible for us to be brought near to God and be united together with all those who place their faith and trust in Him alone for their salvation.

We also chose to place Christ at the head of our name because we know that Christ is the head of the church. As the Creator of all things and the head of the church we believe that Christ should have first place in everything.

Colossians 1:16-18 – For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. The Lordship of Jesus Christ over our church is also reflected in our dependence on His revealed will for the church – the Bible. The Bible—the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments—is the inspired, inerrant, self-revelation of God Himself, and our only source of truth. Therefore, it is our sole standard of faith and practice, as well as church life.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

### **Why “Community”**

We chose the word community because we are simply a local community of Christians whose loyalty is to Christ alone. Believing that the scriptural model of church government is independence and local autonomy, we are free from denominational demands and requirements. This allows us to recognize and utilize the gifts God has given the individual members of this local church without concern or unnecessary input from outside agencies. The elders and the Pastor-Teacher are free to serve the needs of the body and shepherd the flock of God in a way consistent with the Scripture alone and the particular character and needs of those among us. Cultural trends and ministry fads do not guide our leaders. We are free to rely on the Bible alone as our standard and model for ministry, and focus our attention on the needs of the flock God has called us to serve. 1 Peter 5:2 – Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God.

We also chose the word community because we believe that we are called to reflect the character of Christ in our community as well. Thus we are called to serve the spiritual needs of the community in which we live in ways consistent with the calling and commission of Jesus Himself. We are called to reflect the love of Christ with compassion and preach the gospel of Christ without compromise or apology.

1 Peter 3:15 – But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.

Galatians 6:10 – So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

### **Why “Church”**

There are many that use the name “church” without recognizing the real significance of the term. The universal church of God—the company of all true believers for all time—has always gathered in local congregations. The individuals in these congregations are, together with all true believers, called to imitate the character and virtues of Jesus Christ. The Greek word translated church means an “assembly” or “congregation” and comes from two root words meaning, “to call out.” The term reminds us that God has graciously called out His children to be a light to the world, to be saints, “set apart” to live in a manner that is pleasing to God and that reflects the work that He has done in our hearts. Matthew 5:16 – Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Ephesians 5:1 – Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.

Everything we are and what we profess to believe must be consistent with our desire to imitate the person of Jesus Christ and the pattern for righteous living that He modeled in His life and outlined for us in the Scripture. Jesus Christ is Lord of all and we believe that all those who have truly put their trust in Christ and have received the gift of salvation

will reflect a practical submission to His commands. Membership at Christ Community Church is given to those who have made a public profession of faith in Christ, and who reflect this practical submission to His Lordship. This is explained further in our "Membership" brochure.

1 John 2:6 – The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

2 Corinthians 5:17 – Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

We believe strongly in an active membership which calls upon all true followers of Jesus Christ to assemble and join together in love, to worship in Spirit and in truth, using our spiritual gifts and resources for the common good of the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:7 – But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

As stewards of the ministry of reconciliation we also understand we are called out for the purpose of being ambassadors to reach those who are still lost and in need of God's salvation. The fact that the lost will suffer the torments of eternal punishment motivates us to do this with earnestness and conviction.

2 Corinthians 5:20 – Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

1 Peter 2:9 – But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

### **Christ Community Church**

We would consider it a privilege to be able to answer any specific questions you might have concerning our church. Please take the time to fill out the enclosed visitor registration card and drop it in the offering plate so that we can acknowledge your presence with us today and get to know you a little better.

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<http://www.cvccc.org/WhoWeAre.html>

## **II. CVCCC Statement of Faith**

### **Section 1**

The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and the Divine and final authority for Christian faith and life.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17; cf. I Thessalonians 2:13; II Peter 1:19-21).

### **Section 2**

In one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all (II Corinthians 13:14; cf. Matthew 28:19; John 14:26; John 15:26; I Peter 1:2).

### **Section 3**

That Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary. He died on the cross a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now our High priest and Advocate.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...In Him was life, and the life was the light of men...And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1, 4, 14; cf. Luke 1:35; John 2:1; I Corinthians 15:3-4; Acts 4:10-12; Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 4:14-16).

### **Section 4**

That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:13-14; cf. John 15:26; John 16:8).

### **Section 5**

That man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (Romans 5:12; cf. Romans 5:17-21; Hebrews 9:14-22; John 1:12; John 3:3; Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 1:31; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Ephesians 2:1-9).

### **Section 6**

That the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His subsequent resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, repent of their sin, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God.

How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14; cf. Hebrews 9:15-22; Romans 5:17-21; Acts 4:10-12; I Corinthians 15:3; Ephesians 2:4-9).

### **Section 7**

The true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which He is the Head.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13; cf. I Corinthians 5:6; John 3:5).

### **Section 8**

The Lord Jesus Christ gave his Church two ordinances. These two are Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In obedience to the command of Christ every Christian is to be immersed in water as a public testimony of his personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and as a sign of his identification with the visible Body of Christ.

So then, those who had received his word were baptized...And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:41a, 42; cf. Acts 8:36-38; I Corinthians 11:23-28, Matthew 28:18-20).

### **Section 9**

In the personal, premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.

This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven (Acts 1:11b; cf. II Peter 3:10-13; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19:16; Revelation 21:1-7, Revelation 20:4).

### **Section 10**

In the bodily resurrection of the dead, the believer to the everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-15; Revelation 21:26-27).

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<http://www.cvccc.org/StatementofFaith.htm>

### **III. CVCCC Constitution**

#### ***Preface***

This document is intended to serve a legal, a practical and a spiritual function. Legally, it enables Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church, to comply with federal and state regulations regarding the establishment and use of corporate by-laws. Practically, it is an attempt to define, regulate and provide guidance for the business affairs of the corporation. Spiritually, it is provided to explain our understanding of how the church should be governed and guided according to Scripture, God's Holy Word, the 66 books of the Old and New Testament. Spiritually then, insofar as its present form accurately reflects the truth of Scripture in these matters, it also provides protection from straying toward unbiblical standards or unbiblical forms of church government.

The intention of the framers of this constitution was to have its guidelines and contents in complete conformity with the standard of God's Word. The intention of any revision of this document should always be to ensure that it is only changed in such a way that it more clearly brings itself into line with the standard of Scripture. God's Word is the final authority for all matters of life, doctrine and practice. We recognize that all men are fallible, and that therefore, all man-made documents are potentially fallible. Where it is determined that the contents of this constitution are either unclear or not consistent with biblical truth, the Bible should be held as the final authority and arbiter of what is right. In other words, this man-made document is not to be held sacred in any way, or held as a higher authority than God's Word itself.

#### ***Article I – Name***

The name of this Corporation is Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church. It is a New Hampshire nonprofit religious Corporation with its principal offices in Plainfield, New Hampshire.

#### ***Article II – Purpose***

This Corporation is organized exclusively for religious purposes (including charitable purposes common to church ministry, as defined by Scripture) and is dedicated to worship and service by believers to the glory of God. Its mission is summarized as follows:

We exist to worship Jesus Christ, edify believers, and evangelize unbelievers, as instructed by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 22:37-39; 28:18-20).

## ***Article III – Corporate Membership***

### ***Section 1 – Members of the Corporation***

In this section, “members of the corporation” refers to the legally designated responsible parties according to the laws of the state of New Hampshire. Members of this Corporation shall consist of the elders of Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church. Thus, any action, which, under New Hampshire law, would otherwise require approval by a majority of all church members, shall only require approval of the elders. All rights and responsibilities, which would otherwise vest in the church members, shall vest in the elders. This legal distinction is consistent with the biblical model of a plurality of elders leading and governing the church (Titus 1:5; 1 Timothy 5:17; Acts 20:17; Philippians 1:1).

### ***Section 2 – Members of the Church***

Nothing contained in Section 1 of this Article shall be construed to limit the right of the Corporation to refer to persons associated with the corporation as “church members” even though such persons are not members of the corporation.

The members of this Corporation may confer by amendment of this Constitution some or all of the rights of a member as set forth in the New Hampshire Nonprofit Corporation Law, upon any person or persons.

## ***Article IV – Church Membership***

### ***Section 1 – Church Membership***

In the New Testament a distinction is made between those who joined themselves to the church, and those who remained apart from it (Acts 5:13; 1 Corinthians 5:12, 13). Some kind of formal church membership in the early church can, therefore, be inferred from a number of passages in the New Testament. There are statements in Scripture that imply that the early church leaders at least generally accounted for those who were numbered among them (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7).

Maintaining a formal membership accomplishes at least three purposes. First, it is one means the leadership uses to guard the flock from error. We will know at the very least that individuals who have joined with us in the ministry of this local church understand, believe, and have professed loyalty to the gospel. Second, it provides the new member a forum to declare publicly their intention to join in ministry and mutual accountability with the body. Third, it provides the leadership a forum to publicly affirm their conviction that the new member has professed salvation, and is personally devoted to Jesus Christ.



Church membership in Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church shall be open to all persons who confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and who have been baptized by immersion. These persons, who have applied for church membership and have been duly accepted, shall constitute a body, united for purposes set forth in Article II of this Constitution (see Acts 2:36-41).

***Section 2 – Responsibilities of Church Members***

Church members shall promote the philosophy and ministry of Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church (Romans 15:5-6), participate regularly in the corporate worship of this church (Acts 2:42), support this ministry prayerfully and financially (2 Corinthians 9:5-8), exercise their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of all the church body (Ephesians 4:15-16) and willingly submit to the biblical oversight of the elders (I Thessalonians 5:12; I Timothy 5:17; Heb. 13:17).

***Section 3 – Applications for Church Membership***

Requests for church membership shall be made to a pastor, elder, deacon or member of the church staff. Upon making such a request, the person shall be given an application for church membership.

A pastor, or elder shall then meet with the applicant. In the presence of an elder, the applicant shall testify of personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and shall subscribe to the church's Statement of Faith, ("What We Believe") and Constitution. They must also attend a membership class and/or read and understand the material presented in said class.

***Section 4 – Admission of Applicants***

Applicants admitted to church membership must have been in attendance and under the pastoral care of the elders of Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church for a six-month period. Applicants admitted to church membership shall, if possible, present themselves at a worship service designated by the pastor-teacher and elders. At this service, applicants shall publicly affirm their church membership commitment and be publicly acknowledged as church members.

***Section 5 – Denial of Church Membership***

If, upon review of an application for church membership or after meeting with a prospective church member, the elders determine the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior or there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, church membership shall be denied. The decision made by the elders shall be final, and there shall be no appeal to any court regarding the decision.

***Section 6 – Voting***

Church membership shall not vest in any church member any proprietary rights in the Corporation, but shall only entitle the church member to vote at meetings of the church members on those matters submitted to the church membership by the elders. Voting

privileges are restricted to church members who are at least (16) years of age. The elders should take care and caution to proceed consistently with the provisions of Article VI, Section 5 of this constitution, taking the opinions of the congregation into account. However, no result of any vote of the membership of the church shall obligate the elders to decide a matter according to the result of said vote.

### ***Section 7 – Reproof and Restoration***

The purpose of reproof and restoring a person who errs is to bring about a return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1), to maintain purity in the local church (I Corinthians 5:6) and to deter sin (I Timothy 5:20).

Persons who err in doctrine or conduct shall be subject to dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18. Before dismissal, however, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. It shall be the duty of any person in the church who has knowledge of the erring person's heresy or misconduct to warn and to correct the erring person in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration.
2. If the erring person does not heed this warning, the warning person shall again go to the erring person, accompanied by one or two witnesses, to warn and correct the erring person, seeking repentance and restoration.
3. If the erring person still refuses to heed this warning, it shall be brought to the attention of the elders. The elders, upon careful and prayerful consideration, shall inform the church. If the erring person is an elder himself, he would be disqualified from serving in that capacity at this point, which is consistent with I Timothy 3:1-7, 5:20, Titus 1:5-9, and Article VI, sections 2 and 8.
4. If the erring person refuses to heed the warning of the elders and the church, the erring person shall be publicly dismissed from the church.

It is understood this process will continue to conclusion whether the erring person leaves the church or seeks to withdraw from church membership. If after dismissal the person heeds the warning, repents, demonstrates repentance and requests reinstatement, he or she shall be publicly restored to the church membership.

### ***Section 8 – Removal from Church Membership***

A church member who shall be absent, without plausible reason or excuse, from the services of this church for a period of one (1) year shall be removed from church membership at the discretion of the elders.

## ***Article V – Church Membership Meetings***

### ***Section 1 – Regular Meetings***

A regular annual meeting of the church members shall be held at the meeting place of the church in June of each year. At the regular annual meeting, church members shall hear and/or receive written reports of the affairs of the Corporation and transact any business the elders determine shall be brought before the meeting. Presentation of those who shall serve as elders, deacons and deaconesses for the ensuing year shall be made at the meeting.

### ***Section 2 – Special Meetings***

Special meetings of the church membership may be called at any time by the pastor-teacher, by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, or by the elders.

### ***Section 3 – Notice of Meetings***

Notice of the regular annual meeting of the church membership shall be given from the pulpit and shall be published in the church bulletin for two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. Such notice shall be given at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.

Notice of special meetings shall be given from the pulpit at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting and shall also be published in the church bulletin on the Sunday immediately preceding the meeting.

### ***Section 4 – Quorum***

At all meetings of the church membership, whether regular or special, the church members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

## ***Article VI – Elders***

### ***Section 1 – Number of Elders***

The authorized number of elders shall be not less than three (3) nor more than twenty (20).

### ***Section 2 – Qualifications***

Each elder must be a church member and possess the qualifications described in Scripture.

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of an overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the

church of God?); and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. (I Timothy 3:1-7 – NASB)

Namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. (Titus 1:6-9 – NASB)

### ***Section 3 – Nomination, Selection, Affirmation and Service***

A. In keeping with the example of the early church in Acts, chapter 6, those chosen to serve the church in a leadership capacity should be identified and affirmed by the congregation and the current leadership. In the early church those men were identified only as circumstances arose that made it necessary to fill an existing need. When the need arises to replace or add men to the existing elder board, recommendations to fill the office of elder shall be requested from all church members. A Nominating Council consisting of not less than five (5) church members shall be appointed by the elders, who will also designate a chairman of the council. This council shall review all nominations and determine each nominee's qualifications. Nominees should be men who are qualified biblically (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), who have proven gifts for teaching and shepherding, and who have a desire to serve in this capacity. Members of the Nominating Council may be nominees, but no council member shall nominate himself.

B. A proposed slate of nominees prepared by the Nominating Council shall be submitted to the pastor and other staff members designated by the elders for their review and comment. Upon receiving their comments, the Nominating Council shall submit the slate of nominees (which may be revised) to the elders, along with any relevant comments. The elders shall then approve, disapprove, add to, or subtract from the list of nominees.

C. Annually the Secretary shall publish the list of any possible nominees, together with the names of those presently serving as a pastor or elder, all of whom shall have been previously approved by the elders. This list must be published at least four weeks prior to the annual meeting of the church members. During this four-week period, any church member having a concern about the character, the giftedness, or the calling of a particular nominee, present pastor, or board member shall first speak privately with that individual concerning his sin (in keeping with Matthew 18:15), or their lack of gifts or calling; if the concern is not resolved, the member shall speak with the nominee in the presence of one or two witnesses, elders if possible and appropriate (consistent with Matthew 18:16); if still unresolved, the matter shall then be brought before all the elders and the elders will

resolve the matter (consistent with the provisions of Article IV, section 7, if it is a pattern of sin, or prayerfully applying biblical wisdom if it is a matter of discerning his gifts or calling).

D. At the annual meeting of the church members, those men whom the elders have unanimously agreed to appoint to serve as elders and pastors, shall be presented to the church membership. At that time the church members present will publicly affirm, through a verbal affirmation, their approval of those men.

E. A newly appointed elder will come forward, either at this meeting, or at another designated meeting of the church, in order to be publicly commissioned through the "laying on of hands" by the present elders (Acts 6:6; Titus 1:5; I Timothy 5:22). He shall assume office immediately and faithfully serve the people for the duration of his ministry. That duration will be until he no longer desires the office (I Timothy 3:1), until he becomes biblically unqualified to serve (see section 2 above), or until he becomes physically or mentally unable to fulfill his duties and responsibilities as an elder (see also Article VI, section 8).

#### ***Section 4 – Biblical Responsibilities***

Elders, pastors, and overseers are to concern themselves primarily with the spiritual well being of the flock. They are especially responsible for:

- A. Shepherding the flock (I Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3:5).
- B. Teaching and exhorting the flock (I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9; Ephesians 4:11-13).
- C. Managing God's Church and ruling well (I Timothy 3:5, 5:17).
- D. Being examples to the flock (I Peter 5:3).
- E. Standing up for truth, refuting those who oppose truth and confronting those who teach contrary to truth (Titus 1:9, 11).
- F. Visiting those in need (James 1:27).
- G. Protecting the flock of God (Acts 20:29-31).
- H. Leading the flock to walk in a worthy manner (Ephesians 4:1-3).

#### ***Section 5 – Church Membership Involvement***

In the execution of their responsibilities and in keeping with their role as shepherds of the flock, the elders shall diligently seek the counsel of the church membership through personal interaction, open forums, councils and other ministry teams on all matters under their consideration.

#### ***Section 6 – Administrative Responsibilities***

The elders of the church constitute the legislative body of the church. They pass all resolutions binding upon the Corporation in accordance with Article VI, Section 5. Neither they nor the church membership shall have any equity in the real property of the Corporation. Said property of the Corporation is dedicated to religious and charitable

purposes as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation.

Subject to limitations of the Articles of Incorporation, this Constitution and pertinent restrictions of the Corporation code of the State of New Hampshire and all the activities and affairs of the Corporation shall be exercised by or under the direction of the elders, including the following administrative responsibilities.

- A. To appoint and remove all the officers, agents, pastors, staff and employees of the Corporation, to prescribe such duties for them consistent with law, the Articles of Incorporation or with this Constitution and to fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
- B. To authorize disbursements from the funds and properties of the Corporation as are required to fulfill the purpose of this Corporation as set out in the Articles of Incorporation; to conduct, manage and control the activities and affairs of the Corporation; and to make such rules and regulations consistent with law, the Articles of Incorporation and this Constitution.
- C. To adopt and use a corporate seal and to alter the form of the seal if and when necessary.
- D. To establish policies and practices for the church consistent with the purposes of this Corporation.
- E. To assist in the administration of the ordinances of Baptism and Communion.
- F. To borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose of the Corporation and to cause to be executed and delivered, in the corporate name, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgages, pledges, hypothecations or other evidences of debt and securities.
- G. To carry on business and apply such profit that results from the business activity in which it may legally engage.

#### ***Section 7 – Vacancies***

An elder may resign immediately following written notice to the Chairman or the Secretary unless the notice specifies a later resignation date. If the resignation is to take effect at some future time, a successor may be selected before that time following the process described in Article VI, Section 3.

A vacancy or vacancies shall exist in case of the death, resignation or removal of an elder or if a need exists and the specified limit is not exceeded.

No reduction of the maximum number of elders, given in Article VI, section 1, shall have the effect of removing any elder from office.

#### ***Section 8 – Removal of Elders***

Any elder will be removed from office if he becomes physically incapacitated or biblically unqualified (I Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9).

***Section 9 – Time and Place of Meetings***

Any meeting (whether regular, special or adjourned) of the elders may be held at any place.

Regular meetings of the elders shall be held without call or notice on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, unless otherwise modified by the elders. Meetings shall be open to church members except where a need for confidentiality may require them to be closed.

***Section 10 – Special Meetings***

A special meeting of the elders can be called at any time by any elder or group of elders. Notice of special meetings shall be given to each elder at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the time of meeting. Where all elders agree on time and location, a special meeting may be called immediately, waiving the 24-hour notice.

***Section 11 – Quorum***

Except as otherwise provided, a majority of the elders currently authorized to serve shall constitute a quorum.

Whenever the matter to be considered concerns calling or dismissing a pastor or buying or selling real estate, a quorum shall consist of not less than two-thirds of the elders currently authorized to serve.

Except as the Articles of Incorporation, this Constitution and the New Hampshire Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law may provide, the unanimous act or decision of the elders present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the elders as a whole.

***Section 12 – Participation Without Attendance***

Elders may participate in a meeting through the use of conference calls or similar communication equipment, as long as all members participating in the meeting can hear one another.

***Section 13 – Adjournment***

The elders, whether or not a quorum is present, may adjourn an elders' meeting to another time and place. Notice of the time and place of holding a reconvened meeting shall be given prior to the time of the reconvened meeting to the elders who were not present at the time of the adjournment.

***Section 14 – Action Without Meeting***

Any required or permitted action may be taken without a meeting if all the elders shall individually consent in writing to a duly prepared resolution. This consent shall have the same effect as a unanimous vote of the elders and shall be documented by the signed resolution.

***Section 15 – Conduct of Meetings***

Meetings shall be conducted according to scriptural principles as set forth in Philippians 2:2-8. After prayerful consideration, decisions shall be reached by unanimous vote in a spirit of unity and humility, with each elder regarding the others before himself.

***Section 16 – Rights of Inspection***

Every elder shall have the right to inspect all books, records and documents as well as the physical properties of the Corporation for a purpose reasonably related to his responsibilities as an elder.

***Section 17 – Compensation***

Elders shall not receive compensation for their services as elders. However, elders may serve in another capacity and receive compensation. Indemnification is not considered compensation.

Any persons receiving compensation directly or indirectly from this Corporation shall not participate in any action to determine the nature or amount of the compensation.

***Article VII – Officers of the Corporation***

***Section 1 – Officers***

The officers of the Corporation shall be a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer. These officers shall be members of the Corporation. Other officers, who shall not be officers of the Corporation, may be appointed in accordance with the provisions of Section 7 of this article.

***Section 2 – Selection***

The officers of the Corporation, except officers appointed in accordance with the provisions of Section 7 of this Article, shall be chosen annually as needed by the elders at the first meeting of the elders following the annual meeting of the church members. Each officer shall hold his office until he resigns, is removed, becomes otherwise disqualified to serve or until his successor is qualified and appointed by the elders.

***Section 3 – The Chairman***

The Chairman, subject to the direction of the elders, shall have general supervision and oversight of the activities and officers of the Corporation and shall act in all legal matters pertaining to the Corporation. He shall have such powers and duties as may be prescribed by the elders or by the Constitution.

***Section 4 – Vice Chairman***

In the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall perform all the



duties of the Chairman. He shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions placed upon the Chairman. The Vice-Chairman shall also have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the elders or by the Constitution.

***Section 5 – Secretary***

The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, at the principal office of the Corporation, a book of minutes of all meetings of the membership and meetings of the elders and its ministry teams. These minutes shall include the time and place of holding, whether regular or special (if special, how authorized and the notice given), the names of those present at the meetings and the proceedings, as well as a record of any actions taken without a meeting. The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept at the principal office of the Corporation the original and a copy of the Corporation's Article of Incorporation and Constitution, as amended.

The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept at the principal office of the Corporation, a current list of all church members with their addresses and phone numbers.

The Secretary shall give, or cause to be given, notice of all meetings of the church membership, elders and councils or committees as required by the Constitution, shall keep the seal of the Corporation in safe custody and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the elders or by the Constitution.

***Section 6 – Treasurer***

The Treasurer shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the Corporation.

The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all moneys and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the Corporation with such depositories as may be designated by the elders. He shall disburse or arrange for the disbursement of the funds of the Corporation as may be directed by the elders, shall render to the elders, whenever they request it, an account of all transactions and of the financial condition of the Corporation and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the elders. He shall present financial reports at each regular meeting of the elders and at the annual meeting of the church members.

The Treasurer shall not be a member of the Pastoral Staff nor shall he be financially remunerated by the Corporation for his services.

***Section 7 – Inability to Act***

In the absence or inability of any officer of the Corporation to fulfill the responsibilities of their office, the elders may delegate the corporate or administrative responsibilities of the officer to any other church member whom the elders may select.

### ***Section 8 – Resignation and Removal***

An officer may resign at any time without prejudice to the rights of the Corporation under any contract to which the officer is a party, by giving written notice to the elders, to the Chairman or to the Secretary of the Corporation. The resignation shall take effect on the date the notice is received or at a specified later time. The acceptance of the resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

An officer may be removed by the remainder of the elders at any regular or special meeting of the elders.

### ***Section 9 – Vacancies***

A vacancy in an office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or any other cause shall be filled in the manner prescribed in the Constitution. The vacancies shall be filled as they occur and not on an annual basis.

## ***Article VIII – Deacons and Deaconesses***

### ***Section 1 – Deacons***

Deacons shall be church members who possess the qualifications described in Scripture:

Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach... Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. For those who have served well as deacons, obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. (I Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13 – NASB)

The elders shall assign responsibilities for service to the deacons as the needs of the congregation require, enabling the elders to focus their attention on the spiritual affairs of the church. This is intended to follow a pattern established in Acts 6:1-4. There are three primary responsibilities.

*Managing the Finances.* The deacons will prepare a preliminary annual budget for review by the elders before it is submitted to the congregation one month prior to the annual meeting of the church. In addition, they will monitor revenue and expenditures during the course of the year.

*Maintaining the Physical Plant.* This includes maintenance of the grounds, maintenance of the equipment and the facility, repairs and improvements for the facility, and regular upkeep of the facility.

*Assisting the Elders.* Particularly in areas that have financial or facility related issues, the elders may rely on the deacons for input and policy-making decisions.

***Section 2 – Deaconesses***

A. Deaconesses shall be church members who possess the qualifications described in Scripture:

Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. (I Timothy 3:11 – NASB)

B. They shall prepare the communion elements, assist at baptismal services, aid in the general spiritual care of the church in ways consistent with their biblically defined role (1 Timothy 2:9-12; Titus 2:3-5), aid in the care of the sick and needy and perform other duties as determined by the elders.

***Section 3 – Nomination, Selection, Affirmation and Service***

The nomination, selection and tenure of office of deacons and deaconesses shall be the same as for elders, as set forth in Article VI, Section 3, of this Constitution.

***Section 4 – Vacancies***

The elders shall determine the number of deacons and deaconesses to be appointed. If during the period between annual meetings a vacancy occurs among the deacons or deaconesses, the elders may fill the vacancy for the unexpired term.

***Article IX – Councils and Ministry Teams***

***Section 1 – Purpose***

To assure effective participation in all decisions by the church members, the elders may appoint various councils and ministry teams, which shall perform tasks specifically designated by the elders. These councils and ministry teams shall have general responsibility to:

- A. Provide a wider base of counsel to the elders concerning specific church ministries by reflecting the needs and desires of the members of the church.
- B. Bring recommendations to the elders thereby serving as the principal source of operation-level direction of specific church ministries.

***Section 2 – Formation and Limitations***

Councils and Ministry teams shall exist for the period of time specified by the elders. A council or ministry team shall be composed of at least two church members, one being an elder, and have powers and duties as the elders delegate to it, with the following exceptions:

- A. The approval of any action for which the New Hampshire Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law also requires church membership approval (must be approved by the elders as a whole).
- B. The filling of vacancies in any office.
- C. The amendment, repeal or adoption of a new Constitution.
- D. The amendment or repeal of any resolution of the elders.
- E. The appointment of other councils or ministry teams composed of the elders or the membership.

### ***Section 3 – Meetings***

Unless the elders or the council or ministry teams shall otherwise provide, the regular and special meetings and other actions of a council or ministry team shall be governed by the provision of the Article applicable to meetings and actions of the elders. Minutes shall be kept of each meeting of each council or ministry team and maintained by the Secretary of the Corporation (Article VII, Section 5).

## ***Article X – The Pastor-Teacher***

### ***Section 1 – Selection and Tenure***

The pastor-teacher shall be selected by the elders in accordance with Article VI, Section 5. He shall be responsible to the elders and shall remain in office for an indefinite period of time.

### ***Section 2 – Duties***

The pastor-teacher shall be responsible for all public and regular services of the church and for the general oversight and spiritual welfare of the church.

### ***Section 3 – Resignation or Dismissal***

The elders reserve the right to dismiss the pastor-teacher upon giving him one month's written notice. In doing so, the provisions of Article VI, Section 5, shall be exercised to the extent practical.

The pastor-teacher must give one month's notice if he intends to resign. The time limit of a pastor-teacher's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if both the pastor-teacher and the elders, by mutual agreement, provide otherwise. Dismissal may be immediate and without the pastor-teacher's consent in the case of biblical disqualifications (I Timothy 5:17-22 – see Article VI, Section 8).

## ***Article XI – Ordination, Licensing and Commissioning***

### ***Section 1 – Ordination***

Ordination refers to the unanimous recognition by the elders of a man's call to the ministry, preparation as a shepherd and qualifications to serve. Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the office.

### ***Section 2 – Licensing***

Licensing is issued by the elders and is given in recognition of a man's call to the ministry. Its aim is to allow a man to perform the ecclesiastical duties and functions of the church.

### ***Section 3 – Commissioning***

Commissioning is issued by the elders and is given in recognition of a person's call to the ministry. Its aim is to allow a person to perform the ecclesiastical duties and functions of the church within the sphere of his or her ministry.

## ***Article XII – Receipt, Investment and Disbursement of Funds***

### ***Section 1 – Receipts***

The Corporation shall receive all moneys or other properties transferred to it for the purposes for which the Corporation was formed. However, nothing contained herein shall require the elders to accept or receive any money or property of any kind, which the elders deem will not be prudent.

### ***Section 2 – Investments and Disbursements***

The Corporation shall hold, manage and disburse any funds or properties received by it from any source in a manner that is consistent with the purposes of this Corporation.

## ***Article XIII – Corporate Records and Reports***

The Corporation shall maintain accounts, books and records of its business and properties. All books, records and accounts shall be kept at its principal office.

## ***Article XIV – Dissolution***

Upon dissolution of this Corporation, the elders shall cause the assets to be distributed to another Corporation with purposes similar to those identified in Article II of this Constitution.

## ***Article XV – Other Provisions***

### ***Section 1 – Endorsement of Documents and Contracts***

The elders, except as the Constitution otherwise provides, may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized by the elders, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Corporation by any contract or agreement, to pledge its credit or to render it liable for any purpose or to any amount.

Subject to the provisions of applicable law, any note, mortgage, evidence of indebtedness, contract, conveyance or other instrument in writing and any assignment or endorsement executed or entered into between this Corporation and any other person, when signed jointly by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman and the Secretary and the Treasurer of this Corporation, shall be valid and binding on this Corporation in the absence of actual knowledge on the part of the other person that the signing officers had no authority to execute the same.

### ***Section 2 – Instruments in Writing***

All checks, drafts, demands for money, notes and written contracts of the Corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents, as the elders may designate.

### ***Section 3 – Representation of Shares of Other Corporations***

The Chairman or any other officer or officers authorized by the elders are each authorized to vote, represent and exercise on behalf of the Corporation all rights incident to any and all shares of any other corporation or corporations standing in the name of the Corporation. The authority herein granted may be exercised either by the designated officer in person or by another person authorized to do so in proxy or power of attorney duly executed by the designated officer.

### ***Section 4 – Construction and Definitions***

Unless the context otherwise requires, the general provisions, rules of construction and definitions contained in the New Hampshire Nonprofit Corporation Law and in the New Hampshire Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law shall govern the construction of this Constitution.

### ***Section 5 – Amendments***

This Constitution may be amended or the elders may make a new Constitution at any time. Prior to the adoption of such changes, the elders shall notify the church members of the nature and purpose of the proposed changes and provide a period of at least 15 days for receiving comments from the members. Changes made to the Constitution shall be communicated to the church members at the annual meeting or at a special meeting.

***Section 6 – Record of Amendments***

Whenever an amendment or new Constitution is adopted, it shall be copied in the book of minutes with the original Constitution, in the appropriate place. If any portion of this Constitution is repealed, the fact or repeal with the date of the meeting at which the repeal was enacted shall be stated in the book of minutes.

<http://www.cvccc.org/StatementofFaith.htm>

## **IV. Main Teaching of the Bible**

### **It seems like everyone would know.**

The Bible has long been the most popular book in the world. It teaches a message that is unique. It teaches a message that both offends and comforts many. Somehow, the main teaching of the Bible is unknown to so many even though the Bible is in more homes than any other book!

### **In the beginning it was so good.**

The Bible starts out saying, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). God created you and me and everything else. God is not dependent on His creation. On the contrary, His creation is dependent on Him. All men are dependent on Him. Also, since God is the Creator, He is the Master of heaven and earth. God is all-powerful, and He is the Ruler over all. He created man with the intention of having a personal relationship with Him (Acts 17:27). He is a loving personal God.

### **We want it OUR way!**

Because God is the Creator, He sets the standard. His standard is very high. God says to man, "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). God created men without sin – man was morally perfect. God and man enjoyed fellowship together in harmony. Genesis 3 tells us how Adam, the first created man, rebelled against God. He chose to do things his own way. He sinned against God. Since that time all men are born sinners. The Bible says, "all have sinned and come short of the glory [perfection] of God." You have fallen short of His standard. I have too.

### **What have we gotten ourselves into?**

Sinching against God is no small matter! Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages [paycheck] of sin is death [spiritual death], but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Because we have all sinned, the wages (or, paycheck) that we earn is death. This death is more than just a physical death. It is a spiritual death. It is the opposite of 'eternal life' mentioned in the last part of that verse. This means that we deserve to spend eternity in Hell separated from God. We deserve this because we have fallen short of His standard – His law. James 2:10 says, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." We all know this to be true. We wouldn't tell the police officer that we didn't break the law because we only broke one speed limit. Certainly we have all broken God's law. The requirements of the law must be satisfied. The "wages of our sin is death."

### **What can be done?**

It is important to understand that we can never do good deeds to be saved. Eternal life is a 'free gift' (Romans 6:23). A gift is never deserved. It can never be earned. We owe a great debt, and none of us is able to pay it because we are spiritually poor. Even if we could pay the debt for our past sin, we still wouldn't have what it takes to stop sinning.



We are helpless. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked." Isaiah 53:6 says, "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way." We all naturally go 'our own way.' We need to be freed from our sin-debt and freed from our bondage to sin!

### **Only one Man can do it.**

Because God is perfect, He must punish the sinner with the sentence of death, but because He is loving and merciful, He finds a way for a sinner to have eternal life and to be in a perfect relationship with Him. God shows His love and mercy in saving sinners - without compromising His holy standard. He does this by sending His own Son, Jesus (God Himself), to die instead of the sinner. God treats Christ as the sinner (He is put to death), and God treats the sinner as Christ (perfectly sinless). This is the great exchange! Romans 5:8 says, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Christ died instead of us ('for us'). Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus becomes the substitute for the sinner. Only Jesus Christ is able to save us. He is the only worthy substitute. He is sinless because He is God. He is qualified to be our substitute because He is man. He died on the cross in place of sinners, and He rose from the dead having victory over death and sin!

### **So, what now?**

God does not want you to die without Him (2 Peter 3:9). He offers you eternal life! To be saved you must... (1) Admit that you are a sinner with a selfish heart. (2) Admit that you deserve eternal death in hell apart from God. (3) Ask for God's forgiveness. First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. When you 'confess' your sins to God you are agreeing with God that your sinful words, thoughts, and actions fall short of His perfect standard and are therefore deserving of death. God graciously forgives you of your sin if you ask Him. He can forgive you of your sin and still be perfect because His perfect (holy) standards are met when Jesus Christ takes the punishment for your sin. (4) Accept that Jesus Christ took your place and suffered the punishment on the cross, which you deserve. (5) Submit to Jesus Christ as your Master. Romans 10:9-10 says, "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord [Master], and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." You must accept that Jesus is your Master - the ultimate authority in every area of your life. You must be willing to give up everything to obey Him. (6) Ask God to save you. Romans 10:13 says, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

If you have never committed your life to Christ and asked Him to save you, God is pleading with you right now to do so!

<http://www.cvccc.org/TheMainTeachingoftheBible.html>

## V. CVCCC's Definition of a Christian

One recent survey indicates that there are approximately 2 billion Christians in the world today. Yet, despite these supposed large numbers, society seems to be spiraling downward into a moral and ethical morass. This should lead us all to ask the question, "What is a Christian?" The Bible contains God's definition and description of a Christian. What exactly does it say? How does God define the term Christian? Would He agree that there are really 2 billion Christians in the world? Or are many of those 2 billion going to be surprised and gravely disappointed on judgment day as Jesus said (see Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23).

### **Who is God?**

"Who is God," is the first thing that you must understand in order to be a Christian. The Bible is the revelation of God to mankind. It is the purpose of the Bible to reveal God to us. Knowing the God Whom it reveals is its own definition of a Christian. "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Every major religion of the world has a different conception of Who God is and what He is like. Although it is popular today to speak of God in terms that make any personal conception of God equally valid, there is only one God. As we read in John 17:3, an accurate knowledge of who God is determines our eternal destiny.

The Bible says that because of the wonder of His created world every man knows in his heart of hearts that there is a God. "That which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:19-20). Those that deny this are not only called fools (Psalm 14:1) but are suppressing the truth that they know to be true in their conscience (see Romans 1:18).

To be a Christian you must first understand and confess the fact that **God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe**. Everything was created for His pleasure, not for ours. We are just creatures. He is God. "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:36). He is the origin of everything, He is the power behind everything, and His glory is the ultimate purpose for everything. But this God who is powerful enough to create the world out of nothing and hold the entire thing together—from a solar system to the smallest atom—is also a personal God. In fact, mankind was created for the express purpose of relating to God, their Creator.

It is also true that **God is Holy**. This is the aspect of God that separates Himself from mankind. The Bible calls Him, "the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and

Lord of lords; who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light” (1 Timothy 6:15-16).

What does it mean to be holy? The word can mean set apart, pure, sanctified, consecrated, perfect, complete, righteous, sinless. All of these ideas are included in this word holy. Holiness is the preeminent characteristic of the nature of God that separates Him from mankind. “Who is able to stand before the Lord, this holy God” (1 Samuel 6:20)?

Because of His holiness God hates sin. “The wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” (Psalm 1:5). “The boastful shall not stand before Thine eyes; Thou dost hate all who do iniquity” (Psalm 5:5). Because God is perfectly holy and perfectly just He must punish sin. “The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, And the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished” (Nahum 1:3).

While God’s holiness is what separates Him from us, what is it that keeps us at such a distance from Him? That is the next question.

### **What is Sin?**

God created us in His own image and likeness. Because of this fact, mankind was created with the wonderful ability of being able to know and communicate directly with God and to have a personal relationship with Him without the stain of sin. Unfortunately, this image and the abilities and privileges that came with it were destroyed when sin entered into the human race through the rebellion of Adam and Eve. Their sinless nature immediately became sinful, and that nature has been passed down to every person since.

Because of this sin nature our sinful thoughts, desires, attitudes and actions come out of us naturally, often without our even trying. Man is born with this natural inclination toward sin, selfishness and rebellion toward God. “As it is written, ‘There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one’” (Romans 3:10-12). “There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:18).

What is sin? Sin is anything that is done, in our thoughts, attitudes or actions that is contrary to the righteous character of God. Everyone does that. No one is sinless. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

This sin makes the sinner worthy of death and God’s punishment. “For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). “The soul who sins will die” (Ezekiel 18:4). “When lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death” (James 1:15).

Our condition in sin is profound. We cannot avoid it. As a result of it we are all guilty. Unfortunately, God's holy character makes Him unapproachable on our own. And even worse, it demands that He punish sin. Mankind apart from God is really in a helpless state. "Having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). Fortunately for us, God didn't leave us to ourselves. He sent Jesus.

### **Who is Jesus?**

**He is God.** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

**He became a man.** "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14a; cf. Philippians 2:6-7).

**He is Lord of all.** "God...[has] bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

**He is utterly pure and sinless.** "In Him there is no sin" (1 John 3:5).

Why is all this important? The importance of these facts has everything to do with what He has done for us.

### **What has He done?**

We are helpless sinners. And because God is holy and righteous and just, He cannot justly allow our sin to go unpunished. However, because our sin was against an eternal and infinite God, it is also an eternal and infinite offense. Because it is an eternal and infinite offense it must be punished eternally and infinitely.

That means that we have to pay an infinite punishment ourselves by spending eternity in hell, or we have to find some other eternal and infinite payment for our sin.

- Because Jesus Christ was God, He is eternal and infinite.
- Because Jesus Christ was man, He can pay the penalty for man's sin.
- Because Jesus Christ was sinless, He doesn't have to pay a penalty for His own sin.
- Because He doesn't have to pay His own penalty God has made it possible for Him to pay ours.

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). "And He Himself bore our sins in His

body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). "And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin" (1 John 3:5).

No one else has, or ever will, meet the requirement of being a perfect man that has no debt of sin to pay. No one else has, or ever will, meet the requirement of being eternal and infinite so that they could pay an eternal and infinite debt. Jesus was the one innocent man who could pay the penalty for all guilty men because He is both God and man. "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). And to prove that God was satisfied with His payment for sin, He rose from the dead, proving that the penalty of eternal death had been conquered forever.

Guilty people in our legal system often get off free. Our legal system is not always just. In God's legal system no one can get off free. God is always completely just, which means sins must always be punished. In the death of Christ, as a substitute for us, God satisfies both His holiness and His justice (see Romans 3:23-26). How can this payment for our sin be applied to our account? That is the next question.

#### **What does God require of us?**

He requires first of all that we believe all that has been laid out here already.

- We are sinners in the sight of God.
- God is holy and must punish sin in order to be just.
- We could not pay the infinite penalty that we owe for our own sin.
- Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, paid that penalty for us.
- He rose again, proving He was God, and that God the Father was satisfied with His payment for our sin.

Many well meaning people will tell you that all you must do to be a Christian is acknowledge that those facts are true. I would challenge you to answer this question? Which of those facts does the devil not believe? The answer should be obvious. He believes them all! And yet it is certainly true that the devil is not a Christian.

Here is what the devil will not do though. The devil will not ever turn from his sin and turn to serve the living and true God. That kind of repentance is what the apostles called on all men to do. "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent. Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). And that total turning from the old way of life to a life of service to God is what characterized the early Christians. "You turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God" (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

Being a Christian not only means believing the facts about Jesus Christ's death for sinners. Being a Christian also means being a loyal, dedicated and consecrated follower of that Christ who died for your sins. He cannot be Jesus Christ your sacrifice, unless you know Him and own Him as He truly is—Jesus Christ the Lord of Lords (see again John 17:3; Romans 10:9, 13).

What God requires of all of us is to not only believe those truths about Jesus but also to entrust to Him our entire life—body, soul and strength. Confessing Jesus as Lord does not just mean believe who He was or what He did or even why He did it. The devil believes all that, yet certainly could not be called a Christian. To confess Jesus as Lord means that nothing is held as more important than your commitment to Him. Jesus said, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26-27). "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul" (Mark 8:35-37)?

What is a Christian? A Christian is not just someone who believes the facts, unless the devil is a Christian too. A Christian is someone who believes the facts and recognizes that if those facts are true then his entire life, his entire existence, his every breath needs to be dedicated and set apart to the glory and honor of God. Certainly He is worthy of that loyalty and commitment given the price that He has paid on your behalf.

It boils down to whether or not God is the God of your life, or whether you live like YOU are the God of your life.

Now that we understand what a Christian is, it is little wonder that those who have turned to God can be spoken of in such dramatic terms as these. "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). What does God require of us? A belief in all that God has done on our behalf and a wholehearted commitment to love, serve and obey Him. That could be adequately termed "repentant faith." That is what God requires of us.

"As though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20). "For he says, 'at the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.' Behold, now is 'the acceptable time.' Behold, now is 'the day of salvation'" (2 Corinthians 6:2). All of your sins can be washed away; you can be made right with God; you can have the hope of eternal life; you can have the desires of your heart changed through the new birth and regeneration of the life of God. And it is all granted to us freely as a gift from God if we come to Him in repentant faith.

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked

forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6-7).

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<http://www.cvccc.org/WhatisaChristian.html>

# Charter of Organization

"...and the Lord added to their number..." Acts 2:47

We, the chartering members, proclaim the formal organization of Connecticut Valley Christ Community Church in Plainfield, New Hampshire this Twenty First day of May in the year of Our Lord Two Thousand.

*Steen Moxley* *lyn Cape* *Karen Cape*  
*Raymond J. J. J. J.* *Gary Brothers* *Paul Dubel*  
*Robert Maynard* *Ally Horn* *Marie L Roberts*  
*Stewart Judy* *Ralph Brothers* *Carol Jazwitts*  
*Meg Ann* *Jan Brothers* *John O'Neill*  
*Joseph L. G.* *Scott M. Waller* *Ray L. Weidman*  
*Melony J. Burch* *Endre Obichinski* *Wendy S. Brothers*  
*Stephen Burch* *Kim Fillion* *Robert F. Burch JR*  
*Michael W. W.* *Rick Jell* *Dayna J. Wood*  
*Dawn M. Cook* *Dan Capel* *Ganice S. Johnson*  
*Kathie Buisan* *Robert Paul Chapman* *Thomas C. Johnson*  
*Bob Bartlett* *Matthew M. M.* *Matthew M. M.*  
*Jerry Baiditt* *Anthony Wood* *Sandra J. Matley*  
*Heidi McCabe* *Rachel A. Dani*  
*Attested to by signature of each person placed hereon.*  
*Melony J. Burch* *Tom J. Wood*  
*Mary Anne Roberts* *George J. J.*

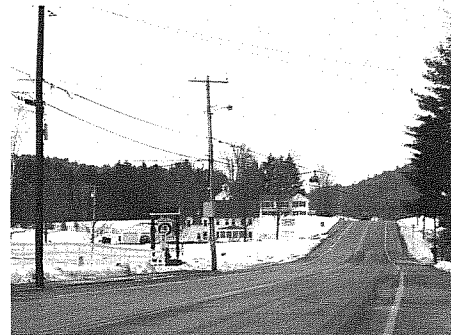
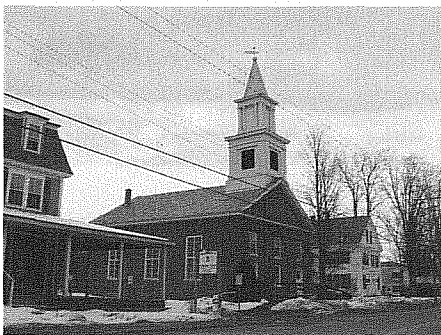
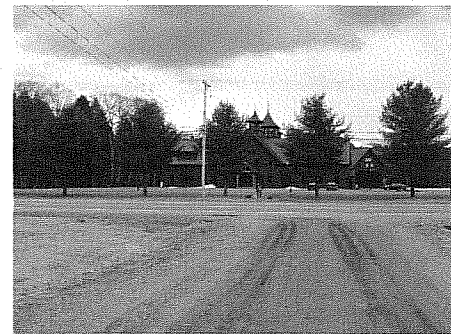


APPENDIX D

THE OBERKOTTER BARN

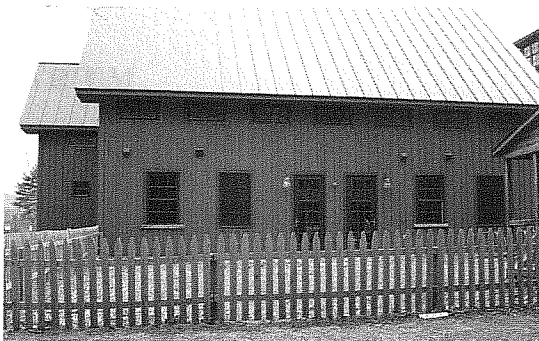
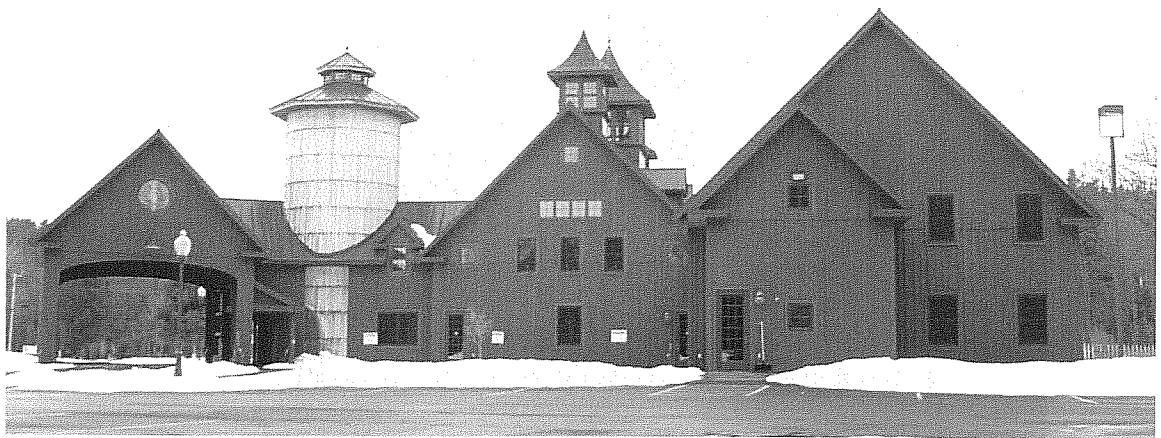


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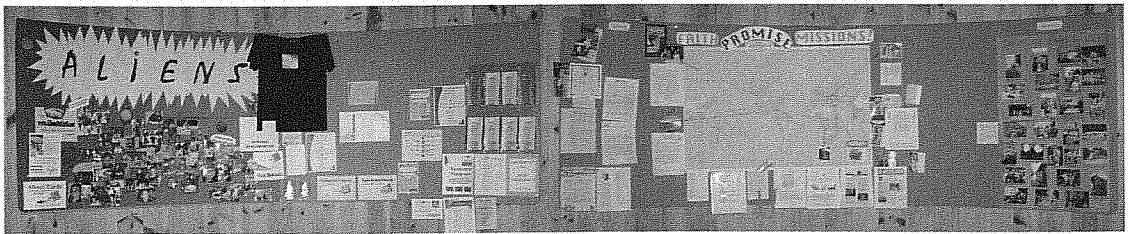
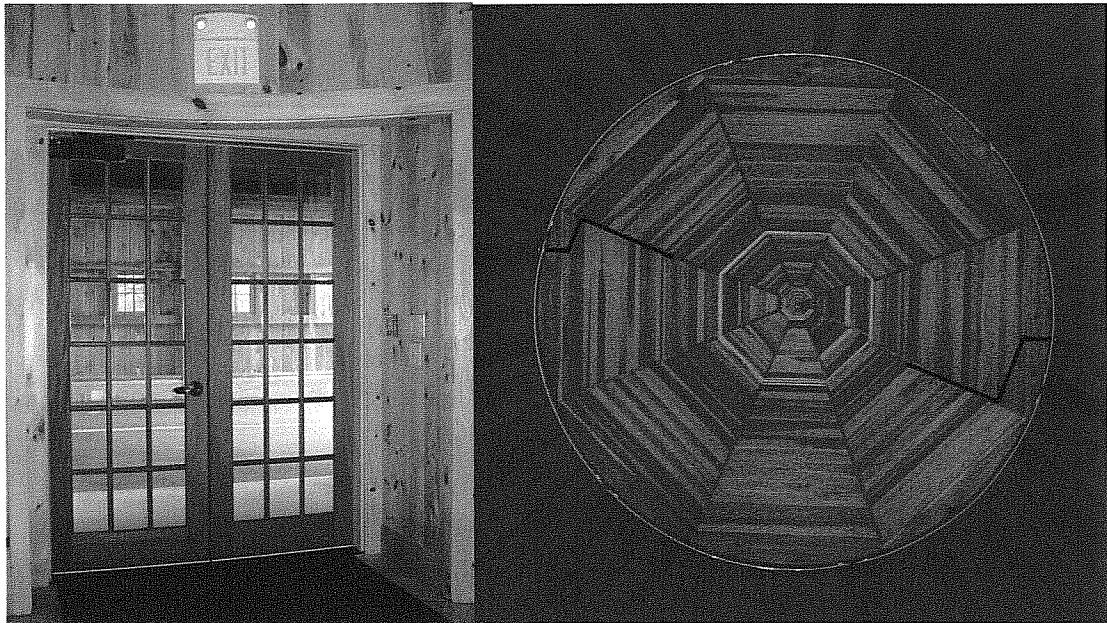
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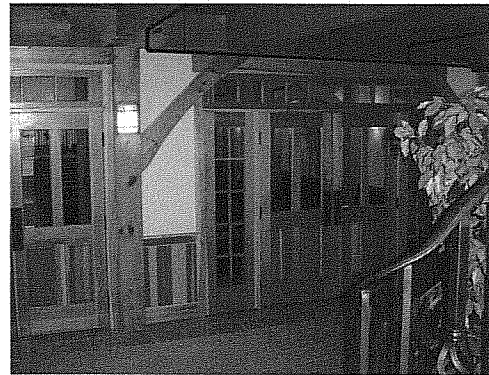
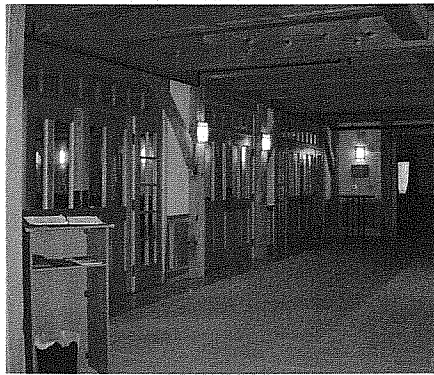
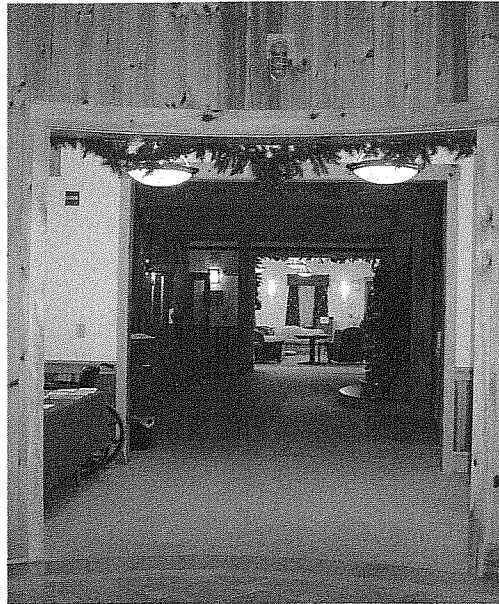




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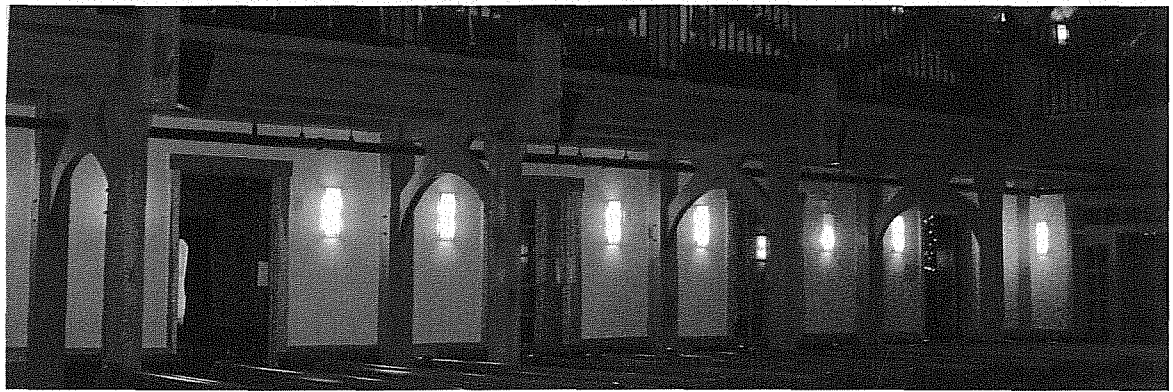
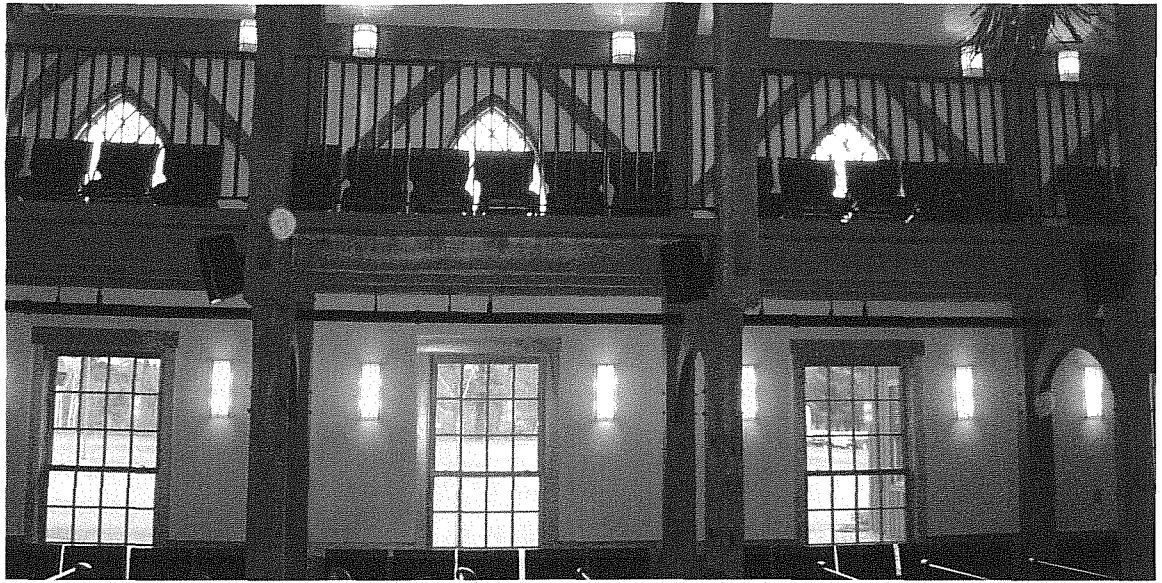


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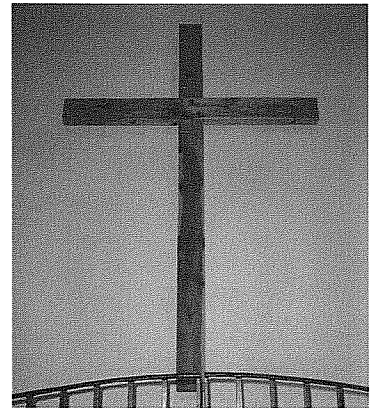
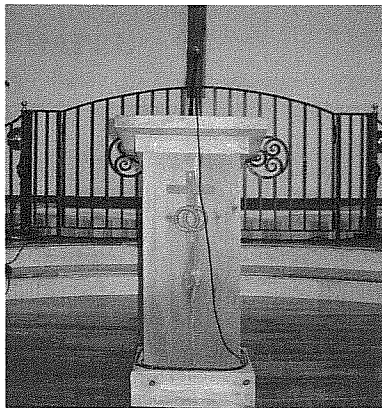
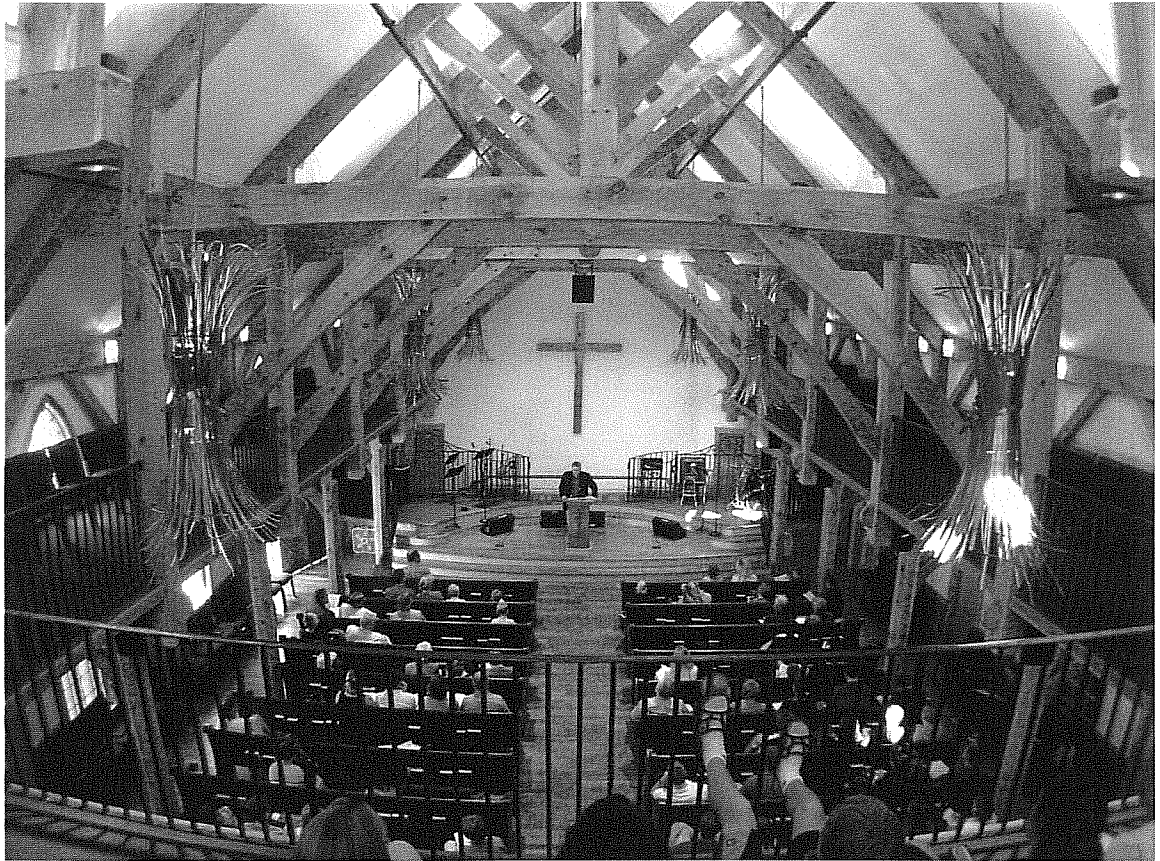


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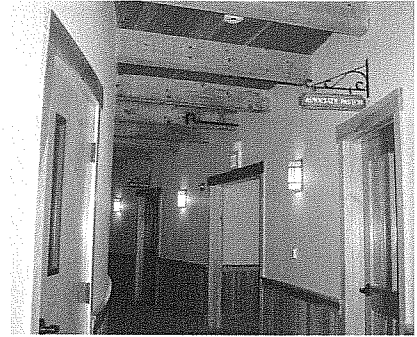




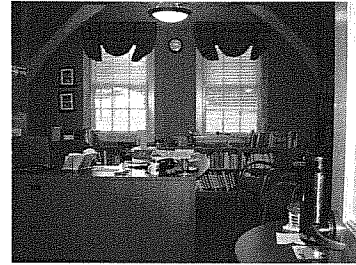
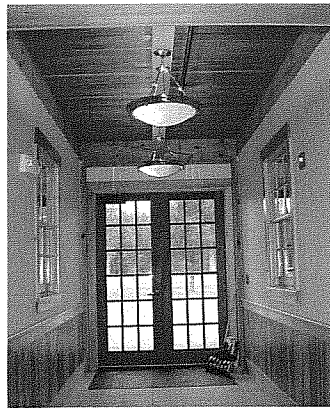
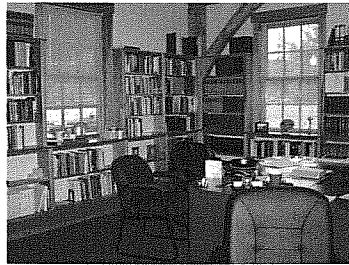




## BEYOND THE APSE



## PASTORAL STUDIES



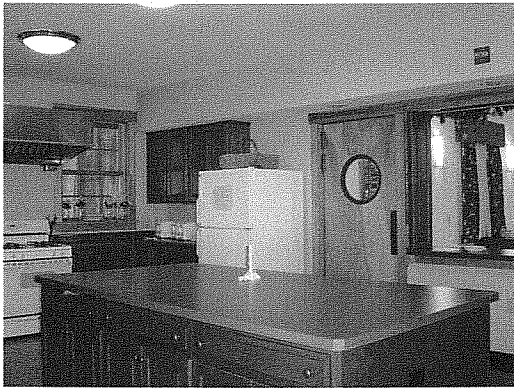
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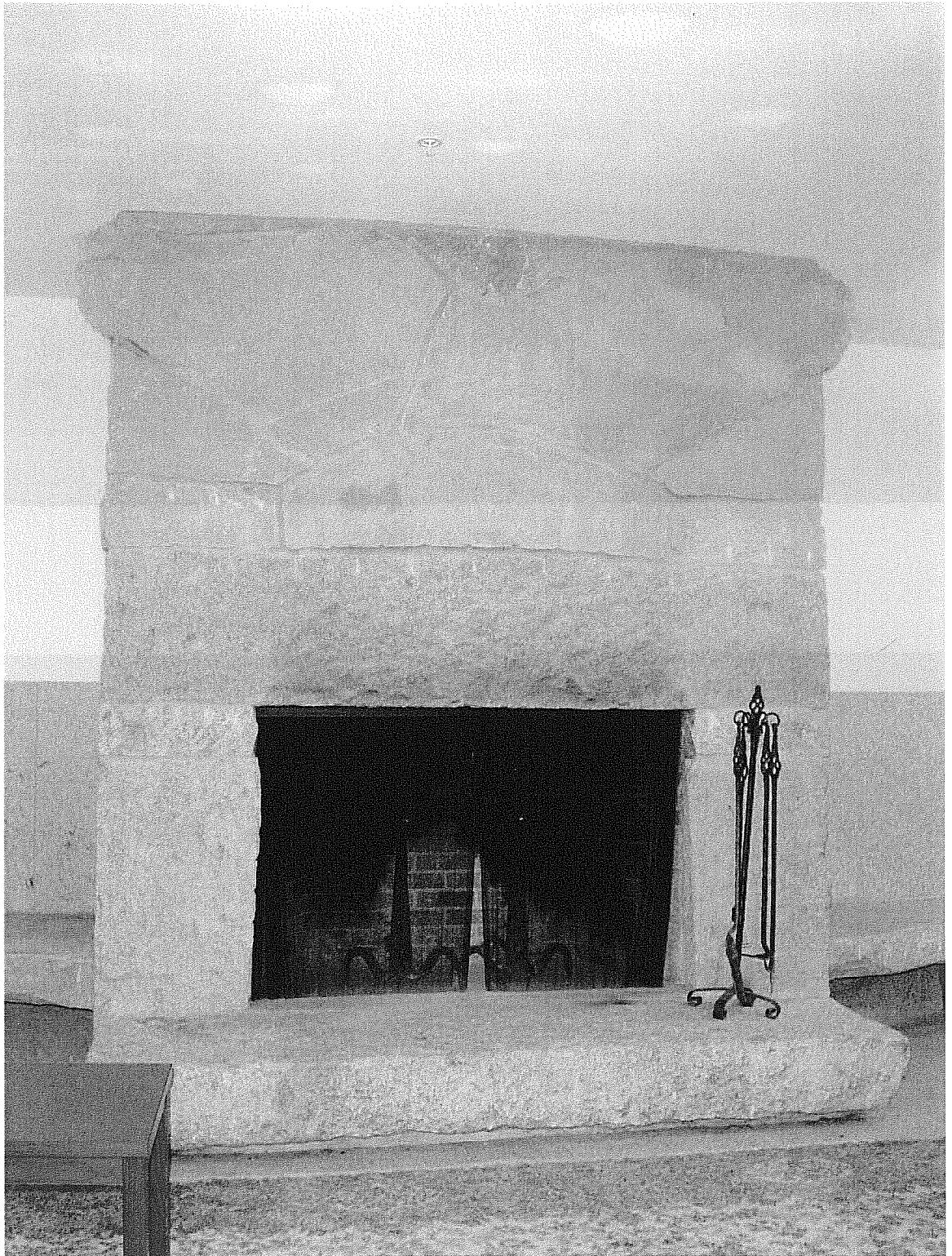


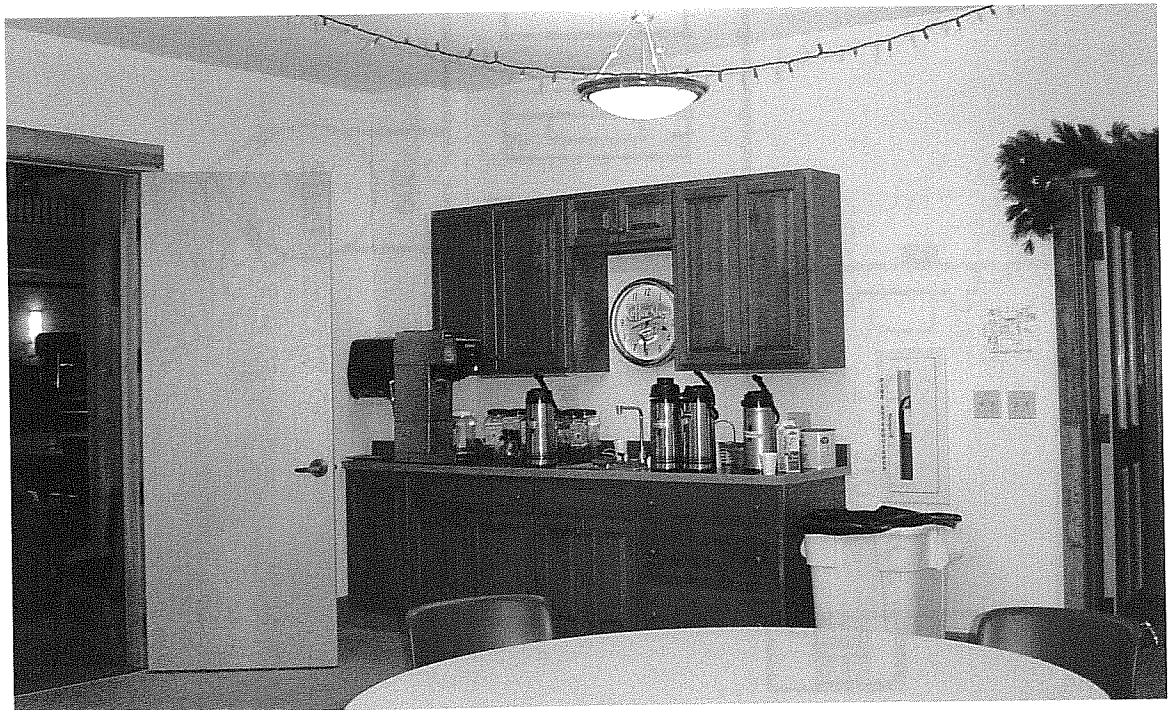




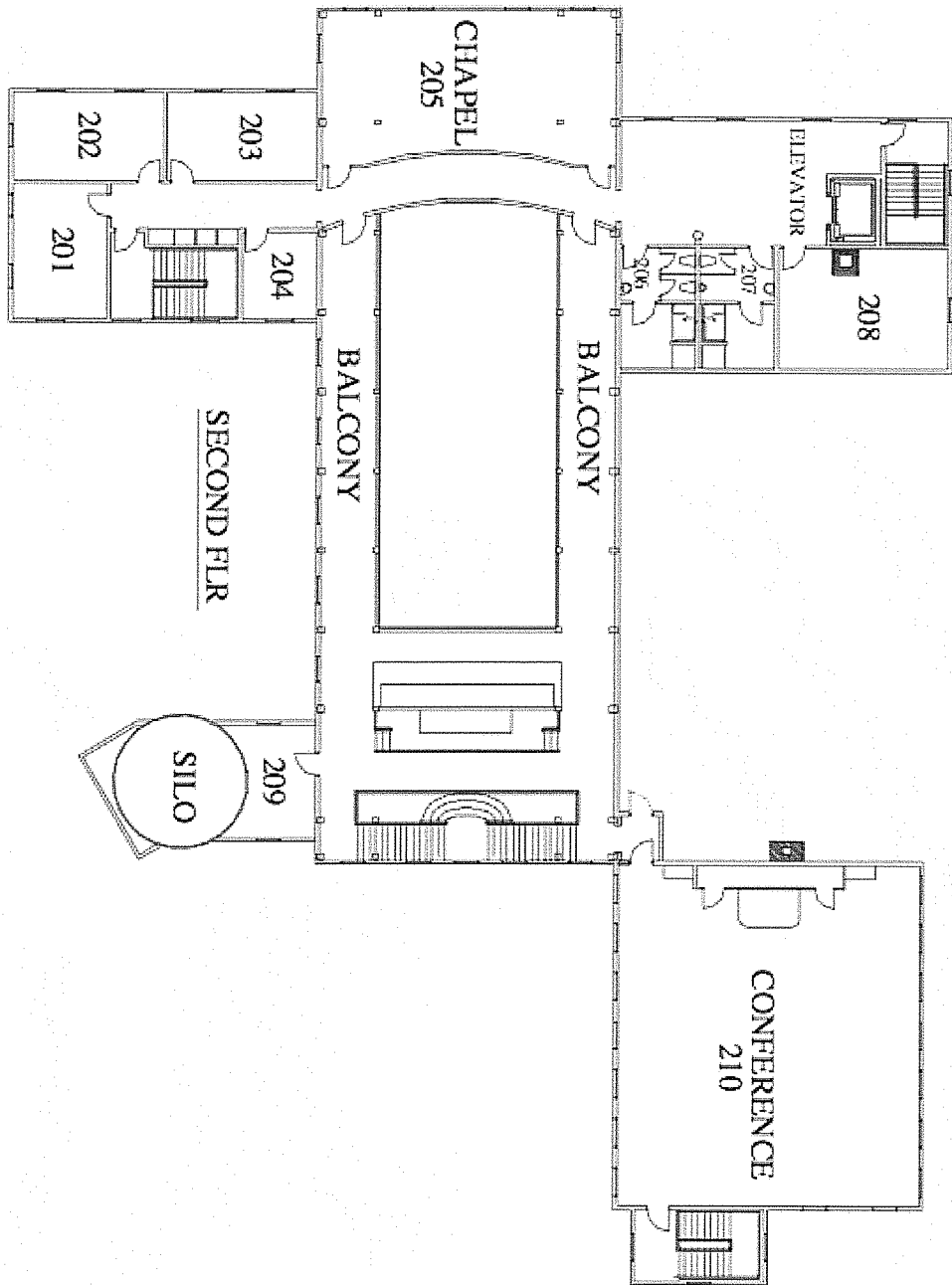
## GREAT ROOM—KITCHEN AND FELLOWSHIP HALL



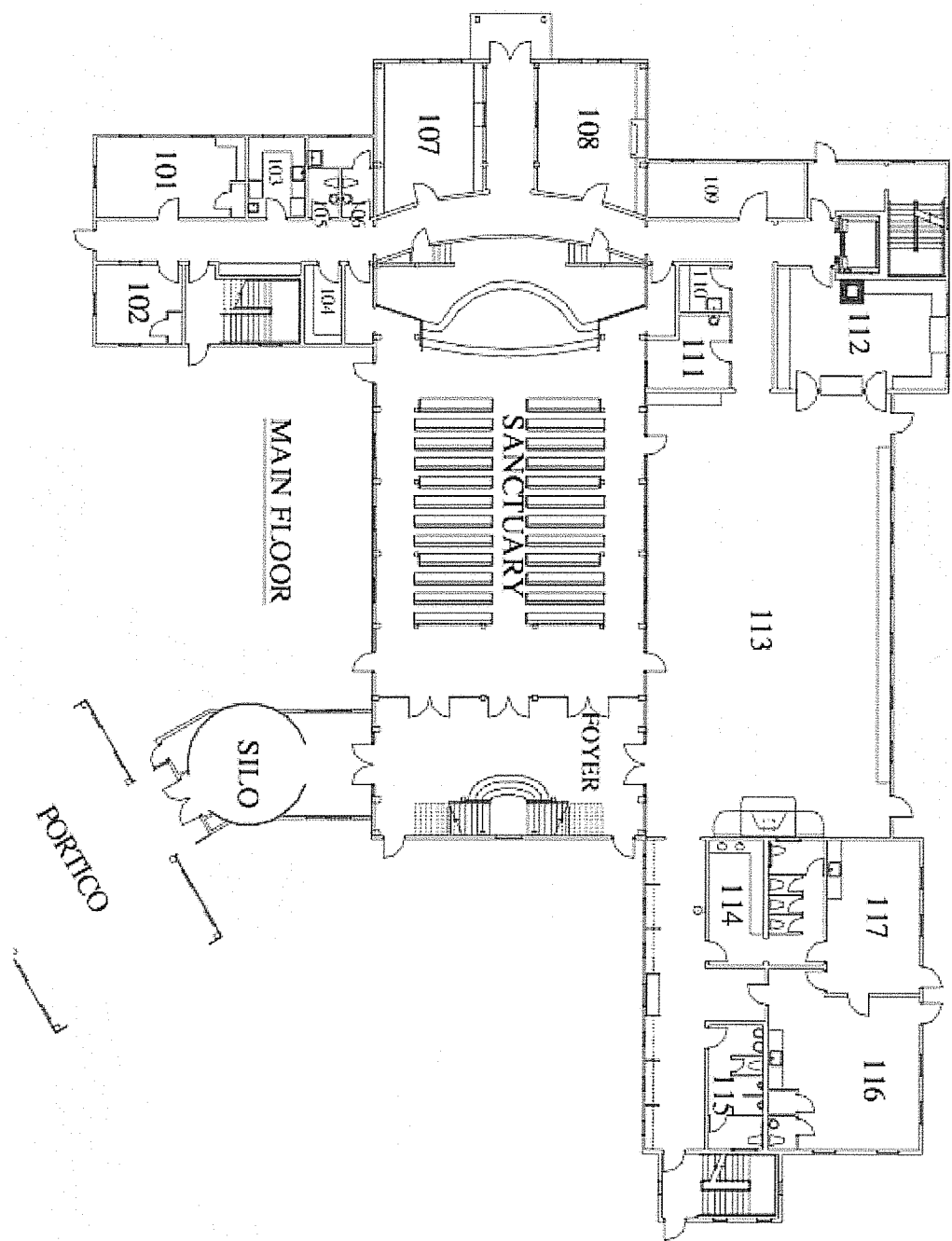


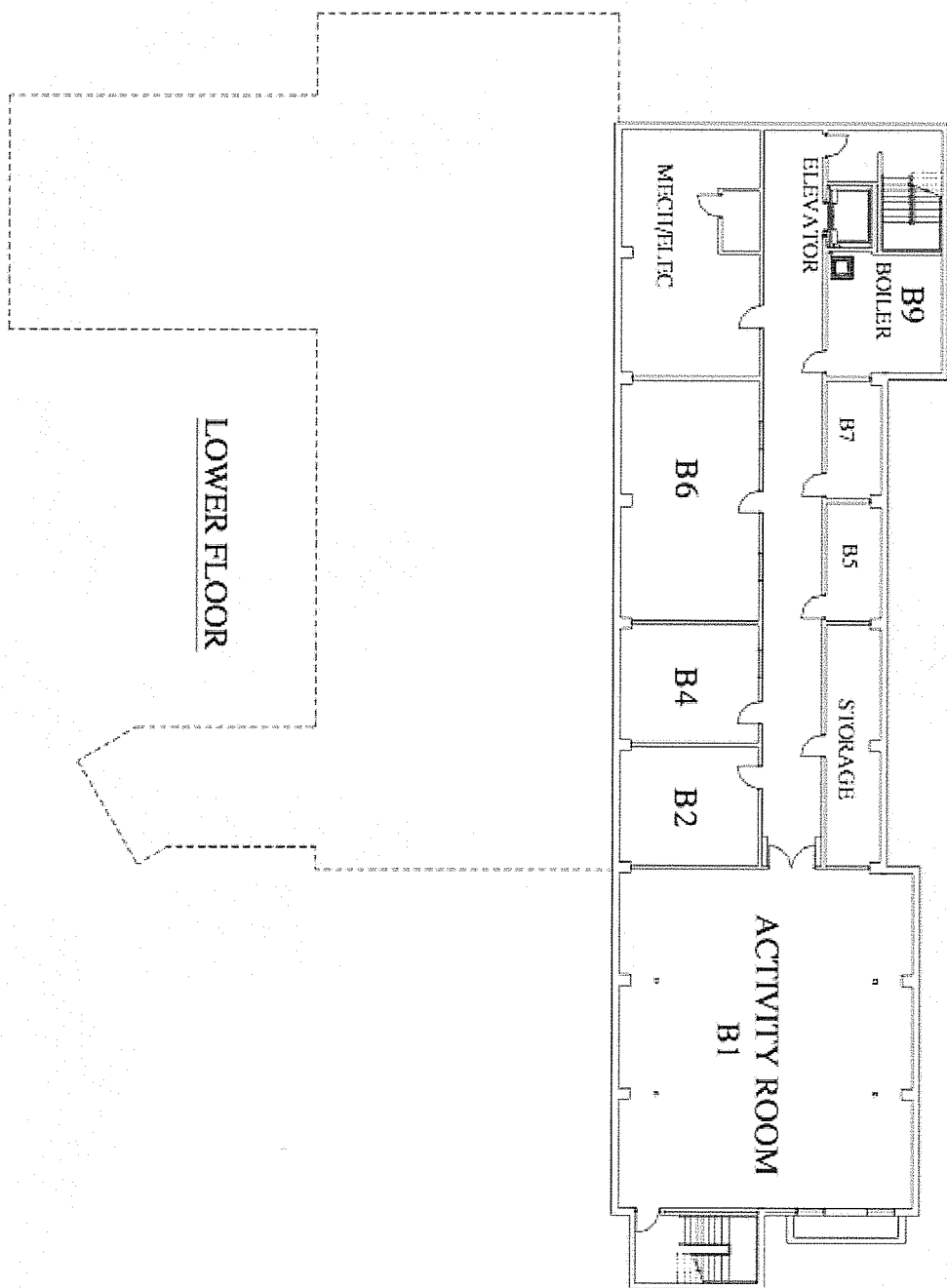


APPENDIX E









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