

A New Headquarters Building for America in New York

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Throughout all our campaigns in America, Reverend Moon never established one central point, a headquarters. Now that time has come. On May 5, the signing for the new headquarters building at 4 West 43rd St. took place. In his first sermon in the new building two weeks later, President Neil Salonen said, "In these last two weeks when brothers and sisters from different countries of the world, from different Families -- from New York, Barrytown, and Washington came together and worked with one purpose and determination, I could feel Father's joy growing that He could make one place where Reverend Moon could come to give his authority to launching the campaign all throughout New York, all throughout America, and all throughout the world."

Half a block away is prestigious Fifth Avenue, one block's distance is the New York Public Library. Several blocks down 43rd St. is Grand Central Station. But the eight-story building we purchased from the Columbia University Club will become a grand central station of its own.

"They just don't build anything like this anymore. There isn't a stronger building in Manhattan," says Bobby Gonzalez, who spent 30 years at 4 West

43rd St. as executive manager of the Columbia University Club.



Spacious lobby required 100 man-days to paint

And just one look at the newly purchased headquarters is convincing proof that the building excels not only in strength but also in beauty, versatility and appropriateness to our purposes. The building dates back to the 1870's, when it was a French hotel. At the center was a courtyard with gardens and fountains. The building forms a C-shape around the center, once interrupted in the rear by a gap originally used by carriages for access to 42nd St. The courtyard was made into a two-story high ballroom by the Columbia University Club after it acquired the building in 1901. The ballroom, used by the club as its main dining room, can hold about 200 people. The room's dominating characteristics are its large brass chandeliers and parquet floor of large squares of light and dark wood.

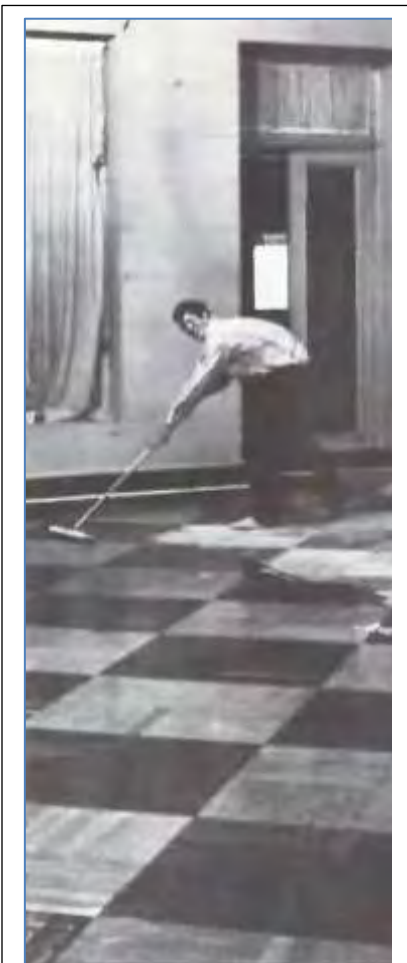
The possibilities for public purposes seem endless. The ballroom can host lectures, movies, dinners, receptions, cultural programs, etc. The second floor rooms overlooking the ballroom can be showcases to the public, our members, and their families of the progress of our movement. Uses could include displays

of our activities, a continuously-running slide show, meetings, conferences, teaching, discussions, and a room dedicated to our international missionaries.



Publications Department's Ron Pine removes old paint from lobby walls

For all the uses that we could imagine for the Unification Church, how many more will be possible for our affiliates: International Cultural Foundation, Freedom Leadership Foundation, CARP, etc.? At last we have a facility that can house our many scattered branches and activities, including our large campaigns in New York. Truly, America is honored to be chosen to have the first such headquarters building, one where Reverend Moon himself can work and entertain.



Dennis Taylor refinishing ballroom floor

The fourth, fifth, and sixth floors are lined with small rooms, used by the club for temporary and permanent residents. On the seventh and eighth floors the club provided a variety of services for its members: a barber shop, exercise room, masseur, lounge, and locker area. Four squash courts, and a small valet shop are one flight up. From the roof one can see an excellent view of the Empire State Building.

Because the building had been vacated several years ago, first work groups arriving at the building encountered dim hallways and rooms filled with dirt and signs of disrepair.

"Junk" cleaning required not only hard physical labor but also some ingenuity. How to remove layers of rust, hardened grease, mud or other forms of dirt measurable in inches? Where to put the old rugs, mattresses, trash, furniture, etc.? First a hammer and chisel, then oven cleaner and a razor blade worked best on cleaning hardened grease out of ovens (there are four kitchens in the basement, on the first, second and third floors). Naval Jelly, we discovered after using boxes of scouring pads, lifts off rust. And Lysol Bathroom Cleaner, about three dozen cans of it, did the nearly impossible job of cleaning the 50 or so bathrooms' tiles and fixtures.

As for the junk, we soon filled up two thirty-foot dumpsters and started on a third. Usable beds, chairs, chests, lamps, etc. were stored in the second floor front room, floor to ceiling. The ballroom floor, uniformly dark, was freed from dirt by three successive sandings to reveal its original nature, a bold and beautiful design.

Even more important than the physical restoration was the unity that was being created in us -- unity with the building as God's temple in

America, and unity with each other as brothers and sisters restoring that temple.

In speaking to us one evening, Dr. Salonen said, "We must make this building the symbol of our unity. This is where we can meet God. This is where we can turn the tide. We must make it so that everyone is happier here than anywhere else, that anyone can fulfill his mission here more easily. We all must feel: 'This building is my building!' "