

## Unification Church Purchases Mormon Chapel in Washington, D.C.

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The Unification Church has purchased the former Washington, D.C. Mormon Chapel, the first traditional church structure which we have acquired. The building is centrally located on 16th Street and Columbia Road, one of the city's major intersections midway between downtown and the suburbs. It was completed in 1933, after three years of construction. Its ground was broken by Senator Smoot, the first Mormon U.S. Senator, who was originally denied his seat due to his religion.

Externally the church has many beautiful features. It is built of 16,404 blocks of marble quarried from Mount Nebo, which contain fossils of prehistoric shells. Its steeple, reported to be the highest in Washington, rises 180 feet above the street. Above the main entrance is a gold mosaic of Jesus giving the Sermon on the Mount. Inscribed in the marble exterior are various religious quotations, including: "The glory of God is intelligence," and "Righteousness will flow down from the hills." The architects of the building were Young and Hansen; Young was the grandson of Brigham Young. The building is classified as an architectural landmark.

The sanctuary seats about 300 people and is equipped with solid walnut pews and pulpit. Its stained glass windows depict scenes from American and Mormon history. One set of windows forms maps of North and South America and Europe. Others show the trek of the Mormons to Utah, Joseph Smith receiving the Book of Mormon, Pilgrims crossing the ocean to America and Indian temples in South America. Other windows represent state flowers. The sanctuary also houses an Austin organ having 3,000 pipes. It is reported to have a tone of superior quality.

An auditorium is adjacent to the sanctuary and can be combined with the sanctuary for large events. It can seat about 500 people and has a fully-equipped stage. The building also includes a basketball court, a kitchen and dining area, offices, an apartment, and a large narthex.

The chapel has been vacant for several years since its congregation moved to the suburbs. The Mormons sold it to the Columbia Road Broadcasting Company, which sold it to the Unification Church. The Washington Church is considering a wide variety of programs for the church after its official opening, planned for November.

Two days before the announcement of the building's purchase, Reverend Moon sanctified the building. He prayed prayers of sanctification both near the top of the steeple and at the pulpit in the sanctuary.

The purchase was announced at a press conference in the church auditorium on September 17. The event received extensive coverage in the Washington area, including a long report on a TV station which included footage from the Washington Monument rally.

Sixteenth street has been dubbed Washington's "Religious Row," because it is the site of more churches than any other street in the city. The neighbors of the church include a Masonic Temple, a large Baptist Church, and a Unitarian church which was the site of the December 1972 pioneer training program, in which Reverend Moon chose the ten national owe teams.