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PASTOR GIL GILCHRIST - Richmond Foursquare Church

INTERVIEWED:

March 26, 1975

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Approx. 1940 Started from a Sunday School group meeting in Richmond by an individual family - Mr. & Mrs. Bergman. They, and other families went out picking blueberries to sell them to raise funds to purchase the site with a small structure on it at 914 Granville Avenue. Early records show around 12 people meeting for church and Sunday School. This structure was later remodelled and incorporated into the present sanctuary.

Growth

Sunday School expanding, and so around 1960 under Pastor Russ Fox plans were drawn up to expand this first structure. This was done by the brother-in-law of Pastor Fox, a graduate Architect, Norm Jones. Mr. Jones was attending Kingsway Foursquare Church, Vancouver, the mother church, and he was asked to come out and look at the possibility of expansion.

Sizes

Original structure 22'6" across by 34'2" - used as present sanctuary. Materials came from a contractor downtown who had a fence around a construction site. This fence was free if picked up. So 30 volunteers arranged this, but the Architect had to design the church around the sizes of this available wood, so the walls are the sizes of the sheets.

Kingsway Foursquare Church sent volunteers who helped assemble the wood into frames and it was put up in one day - Saturday. The following Saturday the exterior was finished but it took the congregation a year of week-end work to complete the interior.

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Design - Old structure had crawl-space, extension on concrete pad.

Downstairs - Sanctuary (in original structure)
- Hall 15' x 25' - fellowship meetings & dinners
- Kitchen & rest rooms
- Nursery
- Furnace room - 2 gas furnaces.

Upstairs - Hallway with offices & Sunday School rooms on either side.

Two rooms have recently been made into one room for an Interest Centre for Sunday School teachers.

Ministers

Approx. 1940 - Pastor Bergman
Approx. 1942 - Mrs. McClenahan
1950 - Pastor Geo. Belobaba (now in Washington)
1954 - Pastor Russ Fox (now in Courtenay)
1968 - Pastor Roy Livingstone (now in Saskatchewan)
1971 - Pastor Gil Gilchrist

Groups Meeting

- Sunday School continuing
- Architect Norm Jones worked on with Youth Program for many years. Group now being re-structured to meet Friday evenings.
- U.F.W. (United Foursquare Women) - very active missionary support, fund-raising. Now have Ladies Fellowship and Prayer Meetings Wednesdays 10:00 p.m.

Role of Women

International Church of the Foursquare Gospel was founded by a woman, Amy Semple McPherson, an American evangelical, in Los Angeles - story related of her ministry. Many women have been ordained with same requirements as for men.

Youth Group

Strong outreach to youth of religious base. No Brownies, Guides, etc.

Background of congregation

Originally, members came from outer areas but now quite a local congregation. Presently of Anglo-saxon background, no

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Background of congregation...cont'nd

Oriental or East Indian, but quite a few of Dutch background coming in.

Upkeep

Tithing and offerings.

Facilities for Pastor

Small house at east of church too small for minister, Pastor Fox, so they purchased a home. Presently is occupied by caretaker and son. Present ministers, since 1968, have rented home from private party.

Alliances

1923 - Incorporation of International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. 800 churches across North America in 10 districts. This church is in the Western Canada District with Supervisor Pastor Gardner of Kingsway Foursquare Church. Many missionaries across the world.

Much freedom given to local Fellowship. Property belongs to whole organization - protective aspect. The organization at times will support needy missionary groups - in B. C. and Saskatchewan, and will give help to individual churches if needed but not generally, as upkeep is really the responsibility of each congregation.

Size of Congregation now

Approximately 50 in number now. Sunday School at same time as adult services.

Tenets of Faith

Foursquare Church - means SOLID. Four basic tenets of Faith:

- Jesus Christ is the Saviour
- Jesus Christ is the Healer
- Jesus Christ is the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit
- Jesus Christ is the Soon-coming King

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Tenets of Faith ...cont'nd

Each of these is described in the Bible. Other tenets of Faith are evangelic in nature. "Dedication" of infants leading to baptism at age of awareness.

Special Events

Note burning ceremony of original loan of \$17,000 to put up extended building (date unknown). Attended by General Supervisor, Dr. Courtenay, of International Church.

Each year, Christmas and Easter services special celebration.

Plans for Future

Aiming for greater outreach into Richmond community to High School, hospitals, to the streets. These aims take precedence over building expansions.

M. NOBLE