

MR. GERALD HUTCHINSON

(West Richmond Gospel Hall)

MR. GERRIT BERGSMA

INTERVIEWED:

April 3, 1975

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Origin of Congregation

Goes back to 1954, when an Irish missionary, Mr. Wright, was waiting to go back to Japan. He requested some members of the South Mainstreet Gospel Church to show him around Steveston where he had heard there were many Japanese. After working there for a few months, they rented the Orange Hall on Steveston Highway, and had a Saturday morning children's family Bible Hour - April 3, 1954 had six children who came out. A few Japanese children came, but it eventually became a general Sunday School.

1955

Sunday School grown so that they decided to purchase own building. Purchased lot at 828 Gilbert Road. About 10 in number of Sunday School teachers undertook this purchase.

Two lots purchased - 66' wide. One had an old house on it. Other had a small structure which was pulled down, and a building about 25' x 50'. Lot purchased for \$1,250.00.

Building - Wood structure, of stucco outside.

- Heating - oil furnace
- Lighting- incandescent
- Seating - folding chairs

Times of Meetings

2:30 p.m. Sunday School meeting

7:30 p.m. Gospel Hour

These original times were because most of group coming from Vancouver.

Wednesday 8:00 p.m. - Prayer & Bible readings.

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Ministers

No ordained clergy - priesthood of all believers. Have had evangelists, one of them Mr. Wilkie, coming out at times to take various types of meetings.

Small house was kept for a residence for two bachelor members, and also as Sunday School rooms on a Sunday.

First Service

July 5, 1959 officially commenced as a church group to Break Bread at a morning communion.

Role of Women

According to Scriptures, women take no part in services or administration, but are active in singing and Sunday School work - men take the services.

The Bible is the complete text and they have a Believers hymn book of about 500 Christian hymns and songs. No catechism.

Special Events

Tent campaign on Williams Road & No. 2 Road.

Two Public Baptisms in 1960, 1961 at Lynas Lane area of the Fraser River before facilities available in own church.

Mr. Hutchinson is an Elder of the group & Treasurer.

Mr. Bergsma is an Evangelist who has been commended by the Assembly on a full-time basis.

1963

Due to the need for expansion, the Assembly decided to relocate. Active membership of about 50 active adults, plus a large

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Sunday School. Started work in May 1963. Purchased three lots at 565 Francis Road - had to put a bridge in first \$7,500. for three lots.

Design

Mr. Bergsma drew up floor plan, then submitted to an architect for official acceptance.

Building

Constructed by voluntary labour - some sub-trades paid for. Women came out to help and provide food. Mr. Bill Bingham was a Contractor and he gave much advice. Total price ended up at \$40,000. Old building on Gilbert sold to Salvation Army for \$14,500. approximately.

Present Building

Interior - Is L-shaped building, 34 feet wide by 80 feet. Has about 14 Sunday School rooms on long arm, with kitchen, wash-rooms, furnaces in the short arm.

Exterior - Stucco and siding, shake roof.

Foundation- On sand base with concrete slab with heating and electrical wiring in that.

Heating - Two natural gas furnaces for two wings.

Lighting - Incandescent lights.

Seating - Benches made by group - can be moved.

Removal of Effects

- Table for communion services removed but have no sacred objects so none to be removed.

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Upkeep - Free-will offering by members only during communion service. Takes care of Evangelists and all work.

Structure - No headquarters, each assembly is indigenous to area it serves, but they support missionaries wherever they are needed.

Groups Meeting Now

Sunday through the week - meetings outlined.

Description of annual meetings given.

Youth Involvement

Well involved - teaching in Sunday School, taking small children on hikes, Bible classes. Have started outreach to Ladner.

- Seafair area - Sunday School
- Seacote area - Sunday School

Alliances

Oregon, Washington & Alberta Sunday Schools are contacted and 60 - 70 visitors meet for conferences annually. There is a funding agency - in Vancouver, the Gospel Perpetuation Foundation - without authority over any assembly but can supply funds.

Special Events

Big change recently with intake of many university students, and youth members in early twenties.

Gospel Movement

Fundamental from the New Testament. Resurgence in the 1820's using the Scriptures as the foundation. Revival around the world.

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Tenets of Faith

- Belief in Trinity.
- Redemption through Jesus Christ the Saviour.
- Priesthood of all believers.
- Ordinance of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper celebrated on the 1st day of the week.

(See also attached pamphlet).

Plans for the Future

Rather than build new building, will probably split and send out members to open a new assembly.

New church would again be on its own with a fellowship relationship alone with the old group.

- Description given by Mr. Hutchinson of economic setting-up by a new group, also financial situation of group moving to Francis Road.