

MR. & MRS. PIERSMA - (Christian Reformed Church of Richmond)

INTERVIEWED:

January 23, 1975

T.36.2

The church stemmed from its early "roots" the First Christian Reformed Church of Vancouver, on Victoria Drive, and the Bethel Church on 49th Avenue, corner of St. George. The latter was founded by a group from the Vancouver First because of the rapidly increasing numbers of Dutch speaking immigrants. After some years, people from Richmond were going over to the Bethel Church and, as their numbers were rapidly increasing, they got permission to hold their own services.

They first held services at Bethel, in the morning, and in the afternoon they gathered in Richmond at the United Church on the corner of Cambie and River Road -- having guest speaker or speakers from their own group Sunday afternoons. They subsequently asked permission to be organized as a Church.

Permission was granted by the *"Classis". This meant they could start a church building, engage a minister if otherwise able to do so; also that on certain Sundays they would receive appointments of various ministers through their Classis, and could get assistance from church funds for building a church and parsonage. Without permission of "Classis" such a group would be proceeding on "its own".

The official date of organization of the Christian Reformed Church of Richmond was October 23, 1957. Started holding services at 123 Cambie Road, the old Community Building. The officers at that time were Mr. Louenen, Chairman, himself as

.../2

.../2

Clerk, and J. Busink. The building was old and inconvenient; for example, one afternoon when he was reading the sermon, one of the other elders came to him and said he had "got the ceiling on fire!". The ashes fell on his paper and prevented him from continuing. Also they could not use the building during the week and had to hold board meetings, etc. in different places. So they decided to look for a place to build their own building -- which was accomplished at 818 No. 2 Road (dedication of first building there, September 25, 1959).

Here they operated a daily elementary school through the week, and Sunday it was used for church work. The question arose as to whether it was going to be a school which the church could use, or a church the school could use. The first was decided upon.

Again, because of increasing numbers, it was found necessary to get more room, so they built another building, on the property at 928 No. 2 Road (property purchased November 2, 1964) -- entirely with volunteer labour. It stands there today for all to see what has been done.

Remarks by Mrs. Piersma

A Dutch Ladies Aid Society was started in the Fall of 1957, continuing until about 1973, when an English-speaking Ladies Aid came into existence and the former declined.

A bible discussion group was started in the fall of 1974 at Reverend Jonker's place, which met bi-weekly and was greatly enjoyed.

*Classis - A general description (perhaps not very accurate) is that it is a regional association of local congregations, regulatory in some functions, but providing a means for local churches to co-operate on a broader basis for special causes or projects, such as aid to local churches, the Harbor Ministry, etc.

.... /3

.../3

A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH

October 23, 1957 -

Organization of the Richmond Christian Reformed Church.

May 9, 1958 -

Reverend William L. Vander Beek received as first pastor.

September 25, 1959 -

Dedication of first building on 818 No. 2 Rd.

June 9, 1963 -

Rev. William L. Vander Beek leaves for Transcona, Winnipeg.

September 19, 1963 -

Rev. Alvin H. Venema becomes our second pastor.

November 2, 1964 -

Church property purchased at 928 No. 2 Road.

October 18, 1965 -

Congregation decides to sell first building to the Richmond Christian School Association and to build a new church.

April 11, 1966 -

Beginning of church building project.

1963 - Reverend J. Zantingh became pastor.

1974 (February) - Reverend P.M. Jonker became pastor.