

PASTOR ERVIN STRAUSS - Rose of Sharon Baptist Church

INTERVIEWED:

February 25, 1975

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First came to Richmond June 1962 - then moved with family in August 1962 on invitation of Baptist Conference to start a church in this area. Many people driving into Vancouver then wanted own church. October 6, 1962 - met in Lion's Club House (pulled down for Minoru Blvd.), then met in Legion Hall (Westminster Highway) till June 1963 when building almost ready for moving into.

Land purchased off Granville before even Pastor Strauss came. Ebenezer, Bethany and Emmanuel churches in Vancouver met to set up a Building Committee.

Lot: 2-1/3 acres - \$6,700.00

Construction Company

Mr. Henze - became charter member.

Architects

Wilfred Buttjes & Robert Rapske (of Vancouver).

Financing - 3-fold basis:

- Offerings
- Loan from Bank of Commerce
- Denomination Headquarters

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Price - around \$40,000 for labour and material (see financial statement)

First Building

Exterior - One story, on a crawl space foundation. Wood construction over it. About 5,000 sq. ft. (Tape correction includes area of new addition). Stucco on wood frame construction.

Interior - Centre hall is Fellowship Hall seating approximately 200 people. Has classrooms either side with kitchen and washrooms. Congregation moved in before completely finished - tiling, panelling.

Choice of name

Decided before moving in. Area not built up so no subdivision. Richmond Baptist already used. Comes from Song of Solomon in Old Testament. Voted on by whole congregation.

Organizational Meeting - March 3, 1963.

Used original structure until 1968. Very obvious building too small for Sunday School and outreach program into community. Sunday School attendance around 100 - 140 .

Building Committee - Recommended an expansion.

Architects - Same as original

Construction - Mr. Reg. Rice hired by congregation - Congregation applied for building permit in own name.

Financing - Same as for original structure.

Groups in Church

- Sunday services
- Sunday school & junior church service
- Youth services, Sunday evenings
- Boys & Girls ministry - Tuesdays
- Junior church - Bus ministry come in for children's worship.

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Youth Outreach

- Church reaches families Youth Group - has activity night every Friday.

Women in Church

Involved in:

- providing - Missionary Society
- Fellowship
- Meetings
- Handicrafts and hospital supplies
- Visiting ill and shut-ins
- Working with Girls
- Sunday School
- Deaconesses - assisting Deacons in ministering to women.

Choir

About twenty voices:

- Junior
- Mixed
- Male choir - very active

Background of Congregation

Conference began in U.S. under Western Union Federation of Baptists for German immigrants. Has grown to include many ethnic groups. Rose of Sharon ministered mainly to Germans at beginning. Now East Indian and Oriental as well as Anglo-saxon. Local drawn congregation.

Inter-church Fellowship - Of other Baptist churches. But no accountability to others - quite autonomous.

Affiliated with North American Baptist - H.Q. Forest Park, Illinois - delegates sent to Conferences but they have no authority over church.

Upkeep

From offerings, free-will offerings, encourage tithing.

No church owned manse, Pastor Strauss received housing allowance - bought his own house, using allowance.

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Special Events

Has celebrated 10th Anniversary. Brought in guest speaker from Willmington, Delaware. Had special dinner for community, dinner for leaders of community. Yearly events - conferences; seminars. Have barbecue built in at back and hold summer time dinners for youth and congregation.

Memorials

Gifts given to church:

- One by Fairdry family
- One family donated carpet for building - Mayer family
- No plaques identifying them
- One family (not named) gave electric organ.

Plans for Future

Have bought 2 buses to increase Bus ministry and for outings.

Hope to increase congregation.

Have bought more land next to church to build Senior Citizen's complex for older members. Land now $4\frac{1}{3}$ acres. Plans for building manse also on this land. Hoping to add sanctuary to present building.

Tenure of Minister

On mutual agreement of congregational relationship.

M. NOBLE