

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XVII

February 3, 2008

No.5

Quail Springs Reaching Out

Jerry Fite

When the decision of the elders was announced to the church, part of the congregation applauded, while some left the gathering with tears. The elders had announced that they would add a mechanical instrumental service to their future plans. Last week the web site for the Quail Springs Church of Christ in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma advertised the first service as “*instrumental*” and the second service as “*a cappella*” It may have been a difficult 2007 as changes were being envisioned. But apparently the change has occurred despite the tearful leaving of some.

In a recent video, Mark Henderson, the “senior minister,” answers questions of an interviewer on how the church of Christ has viewed this issue. He says we have historically “interpreted the silence” of the Scriptures as “intentional” and “restrictive”, therefore leading us to think that mechanical instruments are adding to the word and therefore sinful.

Brother Henderson is not describing my views or those of whom I know who oppose the use of mechanical instruments of

music in worship unto God. We do not interpret the “silence” but honor the “revealed” word God has spoken. We understand we are *not to add to or take away* from God’s Word—the expression of His mind. (*Revelation 22:18-19*). We respect his authority, by “singing”- do what He has commanded (*Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16-17*). We respect the Lord’s authority and will not be presumptuous and interpret his silence as permissive (*cf. Heb. 7:12-14*) This is the Scriptural view, not a mere historical view.

But this shows where this church through its leaders has been led. . Brother Henderson describes those whose concern for the change is how it will affect their relationship with their family. They are okay with the change, but do not want the pain of family members condemning where they worship. What teaching has prepared them to think it is okay? Or, is it that many untaught members are clamoring for the change to be like other popular churches? One of the reasons brother Henderson gives for going to the “instrumental service” is to “keep” those who are leaving because of the practice of not having the mechanical instrument.

In a sermon, “Tearing Down Walls and Removing Barriers,” designed to prepare the people for the changes, Mark Henderson makes the point that members should be willing to “embrace discomfort” for the “sake of the mission”. The “mission” to brother Henderson and the elders is to “reach” out instead of following the easier path of “keeping” members happy.

Does “reaching out” mean we must add unauthorized practices? Can we not “reach out” to the world and show through teaching and example how we are to “reach up” to Him honoring Him in worship which we know is in spirit and truth (John 4:24)?

The course for Quail Springs has been set. She will have, and will not have mechanical instruments in worship. You are free to attend the one that pleases you, not the one honoring what God has authorized. Oh, we want to keep everyone. If you do not like our additional instrumental service, do not fret. We have an “a cappella” service for you. Forget the fact that you are part of a church that has compromised truth for numbers. Don’t cry, we are reaching out!