

## Comic knows he's on a divine mission

Richardson: He relies on God for inspiration to clean up comedy

Monday, October 9, 2006

By EMILY POWELL / The Dallas Morning News

He can play the guitar, the banjo and a handsaw with a violin bow. He's got a master's degree in divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a bachelor's degree in Biblical studies. And he'll perform at the Addison Improv on Tuesday night.



Richardson performer and Bible teacher Al Fike will perform Tuesday night for Christian Comedy Night at the Addison Improv.

Al Fike is the star of Christian Comedy Night, a clean comedy show at the Improv.

"Through laughter, we break down barriers," he said.

Mr. Fike has been breaking down barriers at the Improv for about three years. The Richardson resident started doing stand-up comedy during the 1970s while at William Carey University in Mississippi.

The 50-year-old minister and comedian has since been on a mission to clean up stand-up comedy.

Not that he's above physical comedy. In fact, the end of each show usually includes a song or two played by making "toot" noises with his hands.

Jason Earls, another clean comic, began working with Mr. Fike at the Improv a year ago. He said the audience especially loves that part of the show.

"He's Mr. Funny Man," Mr. Earls said.

In addition to performing with his palms, Mr. Fike plays a handsaw with a violin bow – a skill he learned while on a student mission in Africa.

While the unusual instrument is a crowd favorite, Mr. Fike said he also likes to think of it as a metaphor for his relationship with God.

"The saw's handle is made for the hand," he said. "God's the same way.

"We're made for him – he has a purpose in our life."

In addition to his local show, Mr. Fike travels internationally to perform, give motivational speeches and promote his book, *31 Days in Proverbs: The Ultimate Self-Help Book*.

Just released as an audio book in August, it has everything anyone could want to know, Mr. Fike said.

"Everything you could want to do with daily living – it's all in the book of Proverbs," he said. "It gets God's word in your mind."

He also spreads that message in a weekly adult Bible fellowship class he teaches at The Heights Baptist Church in Richardson.

"I've been there for nine years, and we have a great time," he said.

Soon Mr. Fike and Mr. Earls will join Susan Burchett, Linda Stogner and "Ms. Vickie" (last name Ransom) for a Clean Collar Comedy Show at Pantego Bible Church in Fort Worth.

Mr. Fike said he likes to turn each of these shows into an outreach event.

"We entertain the crowd and give them something to be blessed with," he said. "It's all a gift from God."

E-mail [epowell@dallasnews.com](mailto:epowell@dallasnews.com)