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Fike takes Christian comedy seriously

By Ken Camp

Managing Editor

Al Fike takes Christian comedy seriously. That's why he decided to move it from church fellowship halls to established urban "improv" comedy clubs.

"There are not many church gymnasiums that are really set up for low-light environment where comedians can perform and people can enjoy a meal,"

Fike said.

Fike has performed as a Christian comedian for 28 years, mostly at church-related events.



"It's great that I get paid now for what I used to get beat for doing when I was a kid," he quipped.

Last summer, he called one of the owners of the Addison Improv in north Dallas. Fike told him it was about time an established Christian comedian was allowed to be a headline act at a secular comedy club.

The owner surprised him by saying he already was considering a family-friendly "clean comedy" night at his club.

Fike told him not everybody agrees on the definition of clean comedy, so he should advertise it as Christian comedy instead.

About 200 people attended the first Christian comedy night at the Addison club last June. "The next time, they must have oversold, because we had 270," Fike said, noting the club comfortably holds about 250.

While attendance dropped when school started, Christian comedy night has continued to expand. Starting Feb. 10, Fike will bring Christian comedy night to Houston, and he hopes in the future to start a similar event in Fort Worth and Little Rock, Ark.

Each performance features acts by Fike and three or four other Christian comedians. All performers are required to sign forms stipulating what is acceptable in their routines.

He thinks the comedy nights are meeting real needs.

"A lot of people are tired of raunchy humor, and they want to go to a place where they can enjoy a comedy show without being afraid of getting offended and having to get up and leave," he said.

While the events are geared primarily toward a Christian audience, they also offer opportunities for low-key

evangelistic outreach, Fike added.

"We have a lot of walk-ins in Addison from the hotel next door," he said. "Now that gives us the opportunity to tell about why we do it. We don't preach, but at the end of the show I just say, 'Here's what Christian comedy is all about. It's the joy we find through faith in Jesus Christ.'"