

## CHURCHES IN NO MAN'S LAND

The above title is from an article written by Erik Tryggestad in the February, 2009 *Christian Chronicle*. According to Mike Washburn, **executive minister** (I do not recall an executive apostle, MLW) of Richland Hills church of Christ, the 2009 edition of *Churches of Christ in the United States* committed an egregious error in deleting this congregation from the directory. The explanation the *Chronicle* gives is that “the Texas church was one of 21 congregations omitted from the latest edition of the directory for using instrumental music in at least one Sunday morning service.” Carl Royster, the volume’s compiler, said, “The one unifying constant that defines whether or not such a congregation is included in this document is the practice of a cappella worship services.” If I interpret correctly, as long as any congregation claims to be a church of Christ and sings a cappella, they can abandon all other Bible doctrine and remain in the directory. There are **hundreds** of so-called churches of Christ that need to be excluded from the directory because they “*went out from us*” (1 John 2:19) long ago!

The article further explains, “In the past, compilers have excluded congregations as they broke ties with Churches of Christ. In 2003 the Oak Hills Church of Christ in San Antonio, then with about 3,500 members, added instrumental worship services and dropped ‘of Christ’ from its name. The church was excluded from the next directory, published in 2006.” But according to the *Chronicle*, Mike Washburn opines that “Richland Hill’s elders have not broken ties with Churches of Christ, nor did they ask to be excluded from the 2009 directory.” The offended “executive minister” also states, “From a church standpoint, we’re saddened and disappointed ...we **strongly feel** like we are a part of Churches of Christ and

continue a **strong love for** – and commitment to – excellent a cappella worship” (emph, MLW).

May I point out that “executive Mike’s **feelings**” do not make the Richland Hill’s group a church of Christ! Mike would do well to heed Proverbs 14:25: “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; But the end thereof are the ways of death.*” His **true** convictions are revealed in this quote: “However, **we** are a **part** of a **huge movement in our fellowship** who **do not believe** a cappella worship is the **sole way** of defining who Churches of Christ are” (emph, MLW). Faithful brethren have never argued that a cappella worship is the **sole** (only) way of defining the church of Christ. I realize that the compilers of the church directory used “a cappella worship” as the “one unifying constant” to determine a congregation’s place in the book when in reality there are other doctrinal matters that **must** also be considered. The bottom line for this article is that “executive Mike” believes members of the church **can** worship without a cappella worship!

“Executive Mike” does express a concern “that church members will see Richland Hill’s exclusion as a sign that the church has broken ties with its fellowship. That’s not the case, he said, noting his congregation’s involvement with a cappella churches, ministries and schools associated with Churches of Christ.” He states: “We have great love for the people in our heritage. We want to be a part of this fellowship.” “Executive Mike” may profess love for the people in our heritage (whatever that means), but he surely doesn’t love the Lord and His Word! He has **no** fellowship with God and thus has **no** fellowship with faithful brethren!

Let me offer positive proof of my assertion about Richland Hill’s members being out of fellowship with the

Lord. The article states: “In 2007 Richland Hills **added** an instrumental worship service on **Saturday** nights. A few months ago the church **added** instruments to one of its two **Sunday** morning services” (emph, MLW). Men have **never** had God’s approval to add or subtract from His Word (Deut. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19). Christians are commanded to **sing** (Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12; James 5:13), but there is no command to **play an instrument**. Neither have faithful brethren forgotten about the addition of an instrumental worship service on Saturday night! We have Bible authority for Christians to worship on Sunday and an example of them doing so (Acts 20:7).

“Executive Mike” wants to worship at Dan and Bethel and **whenever** he pleases (cf. 1 Kings 12:28-33). Jeroboam learned that God labeled this type of progress as sinful. For the last six months Richland Hills has averaged between 4100 and 4200 for its combined Saturday and Sunday services. Richland Hills and **all other** apostate congregations will one day learn that just being “a part of a huge movement” will not get one to Heaven! Such congregations are no longer the Lord’s church, and faithful brethren should not pretend that they are!

**Marvin L. Weir from Bonham St. Beacon**

*“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”*  
**Ephesians 5:19**

*“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”*

**1 Corinthians 14:15**

## **ILL**

**Sunday:** Ralph Franklin; Millie Robertson (PM); Leah Thrasher; Tom Tucker.

**Wednesday:** Clara Scott; Tom Tucker.

Ralph Franklin was injured in a fall and was treated at Olathe Medical Center. Tom Tucker was admitted to Providence Hospital on Wednesday, had back surgery on Thursday and was released on Friday. He is recovering at home. Millie Robertson is scheduled for further tests. Clara Scott is recovering from knee surgery at home.

**Those battling cancer:** Ledgia Campbell, Betty James and Cleo Stone. Please remember these in your prayers.

## **HOME BOUND**

Kathleen Camp is in Room 101 at the Royal Terrace Nursing Home in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Barbara James' aunt, Evelyn Marquardt is at the Sweet Life of Rosehill in Shawnee. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

## **OUT OF TOWN**

The Brown's visited relatives in Council Grove, KS last weekend. The Schleif's visited relatives in Hutchinson, KS last weekend. Trent and Leah Thrasher visited relatives in Owensville, MO last weekend. Chris Edwards was away on business last week. John and Barbara James are in Arizona vacationing.

## **POT LUCK DINNER**

Our monthly Pot Luck Dinner will be held this Sunday, March 1 following our AM worship. Plan to come and enjoy the good food and company!

## **MEN'S MEETING**

Our monthly Men's Business Meeting will be held next Sunday, March 8 following our AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Sunday AM, 38; Sunday PM, 27; Wednesday PM, 34.

# **Those To Serve**

**March 1, 2009**

**BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Nelson**

### **MORNING WORSHIP**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Trent Thrasher**  
**SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson**  
**OPENING PRAYER ..... John Dodson**  
**PRESIDE..... Chris Edwards**  
**ASSIST..... Steve Brown**  
**ASSIST..... Steven Schleif**  
**CLOSING PRAYER..... Jared Nelson**

### **EVENING WORSHIP**

**OPENING PRAYER ..... Jeff Nemechek**  
**CLOSING PRAYER..... John Cody Carter**  
**LORD'S SUPPER..... Chris Edwards**

### **WEDNESDAY 4th**

**SONG LEADER..... Jeff Nemechek**  
**INVITATION ..... Joel Nelson**

## **WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

### **Sunday**

Bible Study ..... 9:30 AM  
Morning Worship ..... 10:30 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### **Wednesday**

Ladies Bible Study ..... 10:00 AM  
Bible Study ..... 7:00 PM

**Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher**

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