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Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas to officially open Conway campus

BY CAROL ROLF STAFF WRITER

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RIVER VALLEY and OZARK AREA — Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas is reaching out to those in Conway who seek to know God.

A multi-ethnic, economically diverse church established in Little Rock in 2001 by Mark DeYmaz and his wife, Linda, Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas meets in Conway at Cornerstone Bible Church, 1905 Dave Ward Drive.

The "official" opening service at the Conway campus is set for 10 a.m. Sunday, although the congregation has been meeting for several weeks now.

"All are welcome," DeYmaz said.

A youth pastor in predominately white churches for about 18 years, the last eight being in Little Rock, DeYmaz began to look around at the makeup of the churches he served and wondered why the congregations were segregated.

"We believe that the kingdom of God is not segregated - why should the church be?" he asked himself and others.

And with that, he began a journey of learning and prayer that led to the establishment of Mosaic Church.

"In Little Rock, people from 30 different nations attend our church," he said. "We have four pastors - one white, one black, one Asian and one Hispanic. We have multilingual services, and we use headset translators. We have different music each week as well. We are a multi-ethnic church."

DeYmaz said not only is the church integrated along ethnic lines, but also along socio-economic and educational lines.

"We have a homeless man sitting next to a doctor or lawyer, and all in between," he said. "Our motto is, 'Walk, work and worship God together as one.'"

The pastor said Mosaic Church seeks "purposefully" to integrate the worship facility not because it may be politically correct but rather because it is "Biblically mandated."

"Look at the Jews as the whites and the Gentiles as the blacks back in Biblical time," he said. "They worked together, worshiped together in their local churches, all following the one prince of peace."

"What we're doing here is nothing new. It's just a reformation of the church of the first century, who worshiped together until the end of the first century."

DeYmaz said the church is not coming to Conway "to compete" with other churches.

"We want to be cooperative with all," he said. "Larry Pillow and the members at Cornerstone have graciously

welcomed us, and we are so thankful for that.

"We are not here to try to get people to change churches. We want to reach out to those who are without Christ or without a church."

DeYmaz said since 2001, there has been a "real solid core of people from Conway who have attended our church in Little Rock.

"Lloyd and Lela Hodges are one of our elder teams, and Thelma Moton is co-director of our women's ministry," he said.

He said about a year ago, because of the gas crisis and the economic crisis, "I wondered if that was the time for us to come to Conway. That took us to prayer and I approached the group who come from Maumelle and Conway and asked them what they thought about us opening a campus in Conway."

DeYmaz and the group met monthly for a year "to seek the Lord to see if we should do this," he said.

"Then in May, it became real evident that this was something the Lord wanted, and he led us to where we are today."

Cornerstone has its Sunday worship service at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary, and Mosaic has its services at 10 a.m. in the fellowship hall.

"On Sunday, Sept. 20, we held a joint service," DeYmaz said with a smile. "From all reports, everyone loved it. We shared the music, too. Then after the service, we shared a meal. I think this might become a monthly thing."

Asked if Mosaic Church planned to build a building in Conway some day, DeYmaz said, "We do it a little differently than most churches. We don't buy land or build buildings.

We find existing buildings and revitalize them. That's a real strong metaphor for resurrection.

"We want to take those old buildings, bring them back to life and maximize their use. It's good for the community."

Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas holds worship services in an old Walmart facility in Little Rock and is getting ready to move to an old K-Mart building.

DeYmaz said he believes that "by 2020, if a church does not diversify, it will be irrelevant and people will quit coming to it."

"In an increasingly diverse and cynical society, people will no longer find credible the message of God's love for all people when it's preached from segregate pulpits and pews," he said.

He said the move toward diversity in churches is in the "pioneer" stage with much more to be done in the future.

For more information on Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas, visit the Web site www.mosaicchurch.net.

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