

Free Methodist Historical Society

Newsletter

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OUR GLOBE TROTTING FOUNDERS

BY MINDI GRIESER CROMWELL

Last summer the Marston Memorial Historical Center and Light and Life Communications sponsored a contest to promote Free Methodist history and General Conference 2019. The #FlatBT Contest asked contestants to create a drawing of B. T. Roberts that could “travel” from Free Methodist spots around the globe to General Conference, using the concept from the famous children’s book series about Flat Stanley, a flattened boy who can be folded up and mailed around the world to see new places.

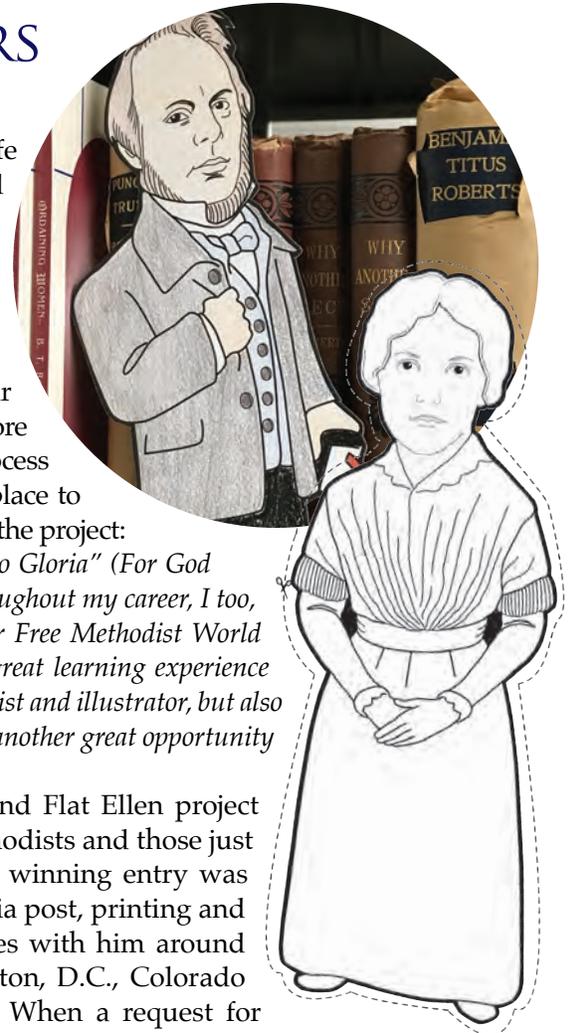
The goal of the contest was to creatively engage all Free Methodists in our history, especially children who may not know about our founders. With more than 20 entries from people aged 4 to 60 across 13 states, even the submission process engaged children! The panel awarded third place to Alexis Chanes, second place to Kasey Uhter, and grand prize to Frank Ballew, who said of his experience with the project:

The great composer Handel often wrote “Soli Deo Gloria” (For God Alone) at the beginning of his compositions. Throughout my career, I too, have taken this stance. To that end, my work for Free Methodist World Ministries Center (1986-1998) was not only a great learning experience that furthered my education as a designer, portraitist and illustrator, but also a good way to give back to God. This contest was another great opportunity to share my skills with the denomination.

We certainly appreciate how the Flat BT and Flat Ellen project has helped us connect with long-time Free Methodists and those just discovering the denomination today. Once the winning entry was announced, folks started sharing the social media post, printing and coloring their own #FlatBTs and taking pictures with him around the world. So far #FlatBT has visited Washington, D.C., Colorado Springs, Asbury University, Brazil and Spain! When a request for #FlatEllen was submitted, the panel asked Ballew to create a flat version of B. T.’s partner in life and ministry. #FlatEllen was released in January and has already started her journey around the globe. We can’t wait to see these two visit more local churches and follow folks to General Conference 2019 and beyond.

You can help us promote #FlatBT and #FlatEllen. Please share them with your children’s ministries, youth groups, kids, grandkids, nieces, nephews, and friends. Make your own and post your adventures on social media using the following hashtags: #FlatBT, #FlatEllen, #MarstonHistorical, #LightandLifeMagazine, #FMCGC19.

Follow B. T. and Ellen’s travels on Facebook (/MarstonMemorialHistoricalCenter), Twitter (@marston_hist) and Instagram (@marston_historical). Download Flat BT and Ellen at fmcusa.org/lightandlifemag/flatbt.



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The Mission of the Free Methodist Historical Society is to preserve Free Methodist heritage and transmit it faithfully to each generation in order to assist the Free Methodist Church in fulfilling its mission.

Writing the Book

on Chapel at Central Christian College of Kansas

BY JACOB KAUFMAN

There I was, 17 years old, visiting Central Christian College of Kansas (CCCK) on a Friday morning in 1998 -- a high school senior on a preview weekend. I found myself, honestly, quite insecure, as any preview student might be, sitting in Geer Auditorium. After songs led by a worship band and displayed by an overhead projector, a vibrant, some would say Pentecostal, student preacher preached a tent revival-like sermon that would have made Charles Finney proud. Students came forward to pray for forgiveness. Humbly, I went up as well to confess my sins. That was my first encounter with CCCK's chapel program. Little did I know I would be spending the next 20 years, working with this program one way or another.

I attended CCCK the following year and soon was recruited play bass and guitar during chapel services. My sophomore year, I was given the opportunity to serve as the student worship leader. These two experiences, along with serving in a traveling ministry team, began a journey for me that would shape my passion to teach and mentor worship leaders and musicians as a career.

In 2004, Academic Dean Dr. Jerry Alexander hired me to be the director of the contemporary Christian music program. It was at that time I started working with the college's worship bands and traveling

ministry teams. By God's grace, and with the help of my colleagues, these teams have traveled around the country leading thousands of students and have led the students of CCCK worship for the last 14 years. In 2008 while attending Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, MN, I took a history of Christianity course which required a final paper on a "local history." While most in my class turned to minutes, bulletins and other church documents from their local congregation, I started exploring the history of chapel at CCCK. I dove deep into the college archives, spending most of my time in college yearbooks. I reached

out to those who were blessed with long life, asking about what their chapel experience was like. I hold those interviews close to my heart, since many of the subjects are no longer with us. I also enjoyed having conversations with current faculty members who spent their first years here on campus. Interestingly, one of the interviews back in 2008 included our new president, Dr. Lennard Favara.

Fast forward to 2016-17 school year. When reviewing the spiritual state of campus, a committee of faculty, staff, and students applied for a Vital Worship Grant through the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (CICW), with funds provided by the Lilly Endowment Inc. We were ecstatic when we received an email that we had received the grant. This grant provided us funding to grow in unity as students, faculty and

staff when it came to the spiritual development of the campus, specifically chapel. As we wrote:

We hoped to nurture an environment that facilitated ecclesiastical, ecumenical, and inter-generational unity during intentional corporate worship and daily life of the college, in order to promote a unified connectedness of worship practices, spiritual formation, and Christian discipleship for all ages. To complete the task we committed to the following objectives: intentional all-campus worship services, collaborative conversations on corporate worship, faculty and staff worship lectures for new learning of unity and worship as they apply to mind, heart, soul, and body, and integrative techniques of chapel themes in daily activities of students, faculty, and staff at Central Christian College of Kansas.

At the completion of the grant and after analyzing the chapel program, I felt like it was time to resurrect my paper from Bethel Seminary. The first step was working with student Caleb Koerperich to go through all the yearbooks and digitize pictures and narrative related to chapel. I then reshaped the paper in light of our grant with four intentional areas of discovery: sacred space, liturgy, leadership and the worshiping community. The new document became a book published in the spring of 2018: *The Historical Development of Chapel at Central Christian College of Kansas*. It has been shared with alumni, students and faculty; other institutions who are interested in chapel; and people researching college institutions and worship.

I am proud of the history of chapel here at CCCK. This project reminded me of the years of dedication faculty and staff have given to ensure the campus embraces the mission of the college when intentionally meeting in chapel. While many colleges

with denominational affiliation have pushed aside the tradition of chapel, Central Christian College of Kansas has embraced the importance of communal worship. Generations have come and gone, technology has advanced, styles of worship have changed, but CCCK holds to its mission to see God shape the mind, heart, body and soul. Chapel is one way we see God's transformational work in our students' lives.

So here we are in the 2018-19 school year. We have come a long way since the first record of chapel in 1914. Because of the gracious hospitality of the McPherson Free Methodist Church, we now worship in their sacred space. I ask that you continue to pray and support your denominational colleges as they submit to the Lord's leading when it comes to the spiritual formation of students. Many of the leaders in our local churches will be coming from these small colleges. There are many challenges for any private institution, but I believe those challenges are magnified for colleges committed to keeping Christ the center of their vision. In Hebrews 10:24-25 we read, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

As for Central Christian College of Kansas, we will continue meeting together. If you are in the McPherson, Kansas area, you are always welcome to come and worship with us!

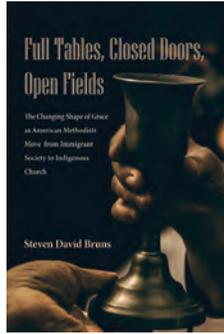
PHOTOS: (Left) Wednesday chapel service lead by CCCK students. (Right) Tom Seaman, the former music department chair who recruited me to play bass, leading the student body during chapel in the 1990s. Inset: An alter call during chapel in the early 2000s, much like the one I experienced during my preview weekend. © Central Christian College of Kansas; all rights reserved. Used by permission.



BOOK REVIEW

Steven David Bruns, author. *Full Tables, Closed Doors, Open Fields: The Changing Shape of Grace as American Methodists Move from Immigrant Society to Indigenous Church*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-5326-1476-7.

The Rev. Dr. Steve Bruns has done all of us a favor. In his comprehensive book *Full Tables, Closed Doors, Open Fields* he has written not just a history of Eucharistic understanding within American Methodism but also a call to reclaim the soteriological and ecclesiological import of the Lord's Supper. And though Methodist scholars and historians will find much to value in this well-researched work (with 3 appendices of tables and nearly 120 bibliographical references), the church-at-large will also benefit from the readability and clarity with which Dr. Bruns presents his case. Following a brief but helpful survey of both English and American Colonial Eucharistic theology, Dr. Bruns turns his attention to reviewing Wesley's Eucharistic theology before and after his Aldersgate experience. The Eucharistic practices and perceptions in the American colonies/states are then discussed. This historical appraisal builds to an apex mid-way through the text with special focus on the often forgotten Flauvanna Conference of 1779. It was there, Dr. Bruns points out, that American Methodists debated the role of the clergy and the Church in administration of this sacrament. Whereas



Wesley saw the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as having soteriological importance in the life of the believer as a clear means of grace, with the expansion of the faith American Methodists began to see the sacrament of Holy Communion primarily in an ecclesiological manner. Only a true Church can administer the sacrament, after all, so it was of tremendous ecclesiological import for the growing Methodist Church and its ministers to have the authority to provide access to such grace through the bread and the cup. How this was lived out and how this was practiced, however, continued to evolve. Consider the diversity of ritual and frequency of celebration that still exists when it comes to the celebration of this sacrament. Some churches receive Communion quarterly, others monthly, and still others weekly. In seeing the Lord's Supper as the means of grace par excellence, Wesley advocated reception of the sacrament as frequently as possible. Dr. Bruns' work causes the reader to reflect upon the meaning of the sacrament in one's own prayer and practice. Is it, like for Wesley, primarily a soteriological event that draws one closer to God through the Church? Or is it, as seen in the Flauvanna Conference, primarily an ecclesiological function that marks a Church as a true Church? Whatever conclusion one makes, Dr. Bruns has provided a wonderful resource to further our sacramental reflection and deepen our sacramental devotion.

— Supt. Bruce N. G. Cromwell, *Great Plains Conference*

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