

Interview with Tresa Mote, Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church

Interviewer: Haley Claxton (**HC**), University of Kansas, Dept. of Religious Studies Intern

Interviewee: Tresa Mote (**TM**), Band Director of Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church

Location: Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church, 33565 Metcalf Rd, Louisburg, Kansas 66053

Date: June 15, 2015

Time: 4:50 pm

Length: 00:07:36

Transcriber: Haley Claxton

Abstract: Oral history interview with Tresa Mote conducted by Haley Claxton at Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church in Louisburg, Kansas, on June 15, 2015. This interview features Tresa Mote, band director of Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church. This interview discusses what drew Ms. Mote to become a part of Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church and her role within the congregation as band director. Additionally, Ms. Mote describes the style of church as non-judgmental and strongly community oriented. This interview was conducted for the Religion in Kansas Project as part of a summer fieldwork internship funded by the Friends of the Department of Religious Studies.

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HC: This is Haley Claxton here with Tresa Mote here at Rutland Outpost—

CG: (Pastor Carl Garrett) Rut- lay-der.¹

HC: Thank you. Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church. Tell me a little about where you were born and raised.

¹ Pastor Carl Garrett, Senior Pastor of Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church, was present for the interview.

TM: I was born in Kentucky, but was raised in Joplin, Missouri, so I come from southwest Missouri.

HC: And did you grow up going to church?

TM: Yes. I'm a preacher's kid [laughter].

HC: What kind of church did you go to?

TM: We—Dad was a preacher in the Church of God, which is headquartered in Anderson, Indiana.

HC: Is that a particular denomination of church?

TM: It is a particular denomination and that's why I stated Anderson, Indiana.

HC: So, what made you change from that sort of church to Cowboy Church?

TM: Didn't really change from the Church of God to Cowboy Church. The Church of God has a philosophy that all who come to know the Lord are members of the body of Christ, and so that's always been my philosophy, no matter what denomination you're in. You're always a member if you are saved. And so comin' to Cowboy Church was no—big thing for me to come over because I believe that anyone who has already come to Christ is already a member of the body. So... comin' to the Cowboy Church—it took a while to get me here because I didn't come from that background. I'm not a cowboy or a cowgirl or a farmer's daughter or anything like that. My folks grew up that way, and so I understand where they came from, but I didn't grow up that way. So comin' here to this church was not really a big stretch for me because my parents were so close to it, and I understand a lot of things they taught me from the way I grew up, but—Pastor Carl had asked me three times to come and help with the music and I kept tellin' him "I'm sorry

but, I'm just not into Cowboy music," [laughter] and, the last time he asked me I said, "Alright, I'll give you six months." And it's been such a treat, I've been here six years. So I guess it was okay [laughter].

HC: So, would you say you stayed because you enjoyed the music, or is it the community?

TM: I have stayed because of the community. The music is a big part of it, obviously, and being in charge of—being able to rearrange songs and, ya know, being able to bring life to old hymns has been a treat for me. And being able to write stuff that we can all... and arrange for the band has been awesome for me to do, because that's what I enjoy doing. But, the reason I stay, or the reason I'm really here, is because of the community. The—*whole* aspect of this being the body of Christ. This is truly the body of Christ. This congregation.

HC: So how would you define Cowboy Church? What does that mean to you?

TM: Well, that can mean a lot of different things. Cowboy Church is a place of safety. It's a place of worship. It's a place where God has shown his presence. For me, it's a—community of believers who just want to see others come to Christ. That's for me the biggest thing on it, or how I see this. It's been the easiest—Cowboy Church has been the easiest to do because the people are so open and willing to just be fed, because they've been so hungry, coming from the other places where they obviously weren't getting fed or like Carl² said, where they got hurt or something like that. Then they can come into this room and just feel like—a big breath. A big sigh of relief. Nobody's gonna judge me here. Nobody's gonna say anything about me or, ya know, bad. I can just come and be myself. I've seen that happen so many times. So that's really what Cowboy Church is for me.

HC: You lead the band now. What has been the biggest struggle in doing that, if there is any? Or what's the most difficult thing, if it's at all difficult ever?

² Referring to Senior Pastor Carl Garrett of Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church, who was interviewed directly prior to Ms. Mote's interview.

TM: How many things we have to do! [laughter] We've had so many things. Probably, and I've told the band this, probably we could play every weekend somewhere. I physically can't do it. They can't do it. That's probably been the biggest struggle for me, is picking and choosing which ones, because honestly I can't think of much I would say that is a negative. Because everybody just comes—ya know, I've been in bands before. I grew up in rock bands and in high school bands and I've done the whole—you name it, I've probably done it. And these people that come here every Tuesday never get mad or upset that they didn't get to get a solo or that they didn't get to sing a particular part. It's all—it's just not that way. And, so, I'm sorry I didn't answer your question, I went the opposite way, but I, ya know, I really don't have a lot of—there's just not a lot of negativity here at all. I wouldn't know what it was.

HC: How do you think that the Cowboy Church will be growing in the future? Or what do you think, kind of, the path looks like from here?

TM: Wow, I had never really thought about that ya know. Cuz' I'm in the moment, so [laughter]—I don't really know how to—I don't know for me—I don't know how to answer that. I know for me I would want to stay here and in this place and continue what we're doing.

HC: What would, I guess, your hope be for the future of Cowboy Church in general?

TM: That I could—my hope for Cowboy Church, for the future, would be that it just continues to grow and, like he [Pastor Carl Garrett] said, just having little pockets of, ya know, places where people can come together. Just—that's all I can say. So that it could grow so that other people could experience, what we have.

HC: So what would your favorite song be, do you think?

TM: Heavens. Probably—probably “Amazing Grace.”

HC: And why is that one your favorite?

TM: Probably because it gives the story of how to be a Christian. That grace is there, and through everything, it's always there. And always has been. It gives the answer. So, yeah.

HC: I think that's all the questions I have. Thank you, Tresa.

[00:07:36]

[End of Recording]