

**A SHORT HISTORY OF THE OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE – PART TWO, by Raymond E. Balcomb and Robert W. Burtner© (used by permission).**

(Part One: What started out as a foreign mission to the Indians in the Oregon Territory, soon became a ministry to the increasing number of white American settlers coming by wagon train over the Oregon trail.)

In 1849 William Roberts formally organized the Oregon and California Mission Conference that included the present states of Oregon, Idaho, Washington, California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, and part of Montana! Though this vast territory included many Methodist ‘preaching places’ most of the churches were in the Willamette Valley – Salem Circuit, Oregon City, Portland, Yamhill Circuit, Marys River Circuit and Astoria and Clatsop, a few in northern California, and one in Santa Fe. The gold rush to California soon changed everything as more preaching places arose in California than in all the rest of the Conference combined. It also caused a huge migration of men out of the Willamette Valley.

In 1852 the Oregon and California Mission Conference was divided; the northern part became The Oregon Conference. At its first session in 1853 there were twenty-one traveling preachers who along with Superintendent William Roberts and Bishop Edward Ames organized the conference.

Gold was discovered in the Boise Basin in 1860, swelling the population to nearly 15,000 persons, most of whom rushed from one “strike” to another. These soldiers of fortune seemed like a “different breed” from the pioneer farmers of the Willamette Valley; they were much harder to evangelize, as ministers sent by the Oregon Conference soon realized. C. S. Kingsley, a retired Methodist preacher living in Idaho City, comments on this in a letter he wrote to a friend: “It is a hard soil to cultivate. People forget God up here, except to profane his name. You can hardly appreciate our difficulties, if you have never been in a mining camp.”

Idaho City was one of the richest gold camps and rife with corruption and lawless behavior (“sheriffs were bandits, bankers were thieves, and drifters, gamblers, whores, pimps, and other social leaches pretty well ran the city”). In 1863 a miner who had been converted to Methodism in the gold fields of California arrived in Idaho City before any Methodist circuit riders. Within a week of his arrival, he canvassed the town and discovered four Methodists. He organized them into a Class. Three months later C. S. Kingsley organized a Society and within a year a building was built.

In 1864, the General Conference designated the Boundaries of the Oregon Annual Conference to include only the State of Oregon and the Washington Territory. Idaho was not included, though in 1865 William Roberts, then Presiding Elder of the Willamette District, was appointed by the Missionary Society as the superintendent of Methodist work in Idaho with the expectation that a new Conference would soon be organized.

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# MethodistDimensions

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FEEDING MIND, BODY, SOUL

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## Getting Out of Your Cave

Rev. David Madden

If we want to rediscover God, it is important to emotionally downshift. We need to remove some of the noise and clutter from our lives. God is hard to hear when we’re so inundated with the very things that drive us to the depths of despair. We can become so busy moving that we don’t have time for God. Stop and listen for the voice of God, and he will lead you out of your “cave”, or the “hole” you have dug yourself into. The voice of God will come to you in the most ordinary of places, while working, or in church, or when you are reading your Bible. God will show you the way out of your current predicament. But it probably won’t be in the way you would expect.

I have found that the most popular way God gets me out of my “cave” is to put someone in my life that needs help.

When we forget our own worries and get interested in helping others with their needs, we will snap out of our despair. During a lecture on mental health someone once asked Dr. Carl Menninger, a national renowned psychiatrist: “What would you advise a person to do if that person felt a nervous breakdown coming on?” Most people thought he would say, “Go see a psychiatrist immediately,” but he didn’t. Much to everyone’s astonishment, Dr. Menninger replied, “Lock up your house, go across the railroad tracks, find somebody in need, and help that person.” To overcome discouragement, “Don’t focus on yourself, get involved in the lives of other people.”

When you are discouraged, beaten down by life, frustrated, down in the dumps, or depressed; stop, rest, listen for the stillness of God’s voice, and then get busy helping someone besides yourself. Then, you will have rediscovered God.



## SPEAKING FROM THE HEART – MAY 2018

What a privilege it has been for me to drive around this beautiful district and receive blessings and grace from many. It’s only been two years, and it has gone by fast. Thank you for the glimpse into the life of United Methodists in the beautiful mountains and high desert of Southern Idaho and Northeast Oregon.

Although I’m looking forward to retirement, I will miss some of what I do. I will be back on the edge of things instead in the middle of it. I imagine I will sometimes miss that...maybe. I will miss working with colleagues as a team. I will miss visiting all the churches and being amazed by all that you do. I was never comfortable with having colleagues’ future in my hands. I know that all my decisions have not been the best decision, so I also ask for your forgiveness for what I haven’t done, or didn’t do well, or shouldn’t have done at all.

As I leave active ministry as a pastor and D.S., I am clear that ministry is about loving each other, and while that can happen anywhere, it definitely needs to happen in our local churches. We need to love each other and our neighbors and God. As simple as this sounds, it is the hardest task before us, as human beings, as Christians, as United Methodists. It is our life’s work, personally and collectively. So, as I leave the fabulous Sage District, I challenge you to love each other with the heart of Christ, a heart of peace. Because as someone said, if a line is drawn or a wall is built dividing us from one another, you can be sure that Christ is on the other side loving those who are separated and excluded. Peace, Rev. Gwen Drake

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**RUMC  
FOUNDATION  
AND THE  
RUPERT  
UNITED  
METHODIST  
MEN AWARDED  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
SUNDAY, MAY  
20, 2018**

Brothers, Mason & Carson Skaggs were awarded \$3,000 scholarships (each) from Rupert UMC Foundation and \$500 scholarships (each) from Rupert United Methodist Men.

Mason & Carson are the sons of Jared and Michelle Skaggs.

Mason graduated this May from Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho with a Bachelor of Science degree in Management and Applied Sciences in Information Technology. He graduated from Burley High School in 2014 with Honors, Tech Prepped and College Recommended distinctions on his Diploma for enrolling in Advanced Placement and Dual Credit Courses. In high school he was part of the Jazz Band, playing guitar and various percussion instruments. He and his brother, Carson have their own band, playing various types of music for events and gatherings. Mason is an Eagle Scout. For his Eagle Scout Project he was in charge of fifteen people who successfully restored the dilapidated Burley United Methodist Church's Cassia County Fair Booth. He has taken part in various service projects around the area. He has maintained a 3.5 GPA in college. Mason will be enrolled this fall at Idaho State University working on a master's degree in Business Administration.

Carson is currently a sophomore at Idaho State University, hoping to graduate with a dual major in Business Management and Marketing in the Spring of 2020. While at ISU he has been a member of the Idaho State Bengal Marching Band, and plans to continue with that activity this fall.

While at Burley High School he participated in all of the school's bands and was a leader in marching and jazz. He has had various work experiences in the area honing his abilities and leadership qualities. He currently works on ISU campus as a lecture captioner at the Information Technology Resource Center. He is a hard working teen being able to manage work, school and a little bit of fun on the side.

This summer he is excited to have been chosen to participate in an internship at Dot Foods in Burley.

Congratulations Mason and Carson. Your Rupert UMC family is very proud of you both.



My sincere thanks to our church family, and to the choir for the tribute and the gifts given to me on Thursday night and on Sunday. The forty-three years spent as your Director of Music have been fulfilling for me musically and spiritually. My mission has been to serve God by enhancing the worship service with music that will be uplifting to the worshippers, while providing a fun and satisfying musical experience for the musicians. Our Choir has responded with enthusiasm and love. "To God be the glory, great things He has done!". Together, dear friends, we have given glory to God. Stan Bruns



We are pleased to welcome Harold May who became the newest member of RUMC, on Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. Harold attended this church from the 6<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grades. His junior and senior years were spent at the Rupert Nazarene Church. After college Harold became a nurse, and eventually moved to Colorado where he married. Harold's wife passed away in Dec. of 2015, He moved back to Rupert, where his sister, Helen Beeler lives. Harold started to attend church here, and before too long he was singing in the choir. We welcome you Harold, into the Rupert United Methodist family.

(continued from back page) It was not until 1873, however, that the Oregon Annual Conference was divided along the crest of the Cascades, creating two conferences, one of which included eastern Oregon, eastern Washington Territory, and Idaho Territory. Then in 1884 a Conference was formed that included only eastern Oregon and Idaho Territory. Two of the new conference's most famous pioneer preachers were "Brother Van" Orsdell from Montana, and Thomas Liff from Utah.

The United Brethren Church had a number of members who migrated to Oregon. In 1849 a German American farmer, George Bethers, who lived on a land claim near Corvallis, wrote a letter to a United Brethren periodical asking for a preacher to be sent to Oregon. It took four years to raise enough money to send Rev. Thomas Jefferson Connor who established the first Class at the Union School house in Benton County in 1854. In 1867, Rev. Connor organized Philomath College with a starting enrollment of 100 students. (part 3, next month)



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Rolling River Rampage invites children on a white water rafting adventure to experience the ride of a lifetime with God! Along the river, children discover that life with God is an adventure full of wonder and surprise, and that they can trust God to be with them through anything. (call 208-436-3354 for more info)

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With joyful anticipation, I invite you to the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference, June 13-16, 2018. Sage District will host, and will meet at the Riverside Hotel and Boise First United Methodist Church (*The Cathedral of the Rockies*). Opening worship and the Episcopal Address are scheduled for 7:00 pm, Wednesday, June 13. The conference will conclude the afternoon of Sat., June 16.

The theme for 2018 will build on last year's: *Do this and you will live*, based on Luke 10:25-28, where the young lawyer asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. We'll ask ourselves and God, *Do what? or, What does love look like?* We'll celebrate surprising, life-changing adventures in ministry across the Conference. Most of all, we will experience the fresh presence of God's Holy Spirit in the gathered community in worship, table conversations, and tending the connectional relationships that make us stronger together than we could ever be separately.

I can't wait to be with you in Idaho, singing praises, sharing faith stories, and peering into an uncertain future, searching for a path that God is preparing for us to walk. Thank you for your faithfulness. God is doing a new thing. Can you see it?

~Bishop Elaine JW Stanovsky

Note from office: Bishop Stanovsky's full letter is posted on the announcement board. More information about the conference will be on a table in the Fellowship Hall each Sunday. Please talk with Rev. Madden, if you are interested in attending any part of Conference, or have questions about registering, sessions, etc.