

WISDOM AT THE END OF LIFE

BY CONRAD HERTZLER

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Sermons in Rosedale Network of Churches

Continuing a multi-year theme of hearing how God is at work in our churches, the 2025 Feature Beacon articles focus on preaching within Rosedale Network of Churches. Each article features a recent sermon by a Rosedale Network pastor. May we all be encouraged by the faithful teaching of God's Word.

You've just been given the news—your days on this earth are numbered, and soon you will be seeing Jesus face-to-face. You sit down with pen in hand to leave a final note to your loved ones. What would you say? This is the situation in which Paul finds himself. A prisoner in Rome, he probably suspects that he doesn't have long to live, and in Colossians 4, we read his final words to believers whom he has never met! In these words, we discover some of his deepest longings for his spiritual children.

If we don't seek God for wisdom to respond in the right way toward those who are not "like us," how will we ever overcome our fear and suspicion and be able to engage with people from different backgrounds and cultures?

Paul's first words in verse 2 are to "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2 ESV). Pray steadfastly with watchfulness and with thanksgiving. In other words, let your life be centered around prayer, which does not waver! This echoes the heart of Jesus who once told a parable to teach His disciples "that they ought always to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1). While you are praying steadfastly, be watchful because you have an adversary who understands too well that the steady prayers of believers will wreak havoc to his plans! And remember to be thankful. How often are my prayers whiny "gimme" prayers, instead of choosing to thank and praise God for who He is and what He has done?

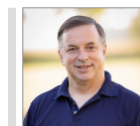
Also on Paul's heart is the desire for the Colossians to "walk in wisdom toward outsiders" (Col. 4:5a). My goodness, is this

needed today? In these days of partisan rhetoric, fear, and suspicion, even the church can be unsure of how to respond to "outsiders." Whether Paul is talking about unbelievers or about those who are from outside our normal social circles, the challenge is the same. We are in desperate need of wisdom to know how to walk with these folks! Why? Because at stake is the very commission of Jesus to make disciples of all nations. If we don't seek God for wisdom to respond in the right way toward those who are not "like us," how will we ever overcome our fear and suspicion and be able to engage with people from different backgrounds and cultures? Included with this instruction to walk in wisdom are Paul's words, "making the best use of the time" (Col. 4:5b). Do I use my time in a way that is *me-focused* or *others-focused*?

And finally, Paul tells his loved ones, "Let your speech be gracious, always seasoned with salt" (Col. 4:6a). This is such a needed reminder as we engage, not only with the world around us, but as we speak to each other in church! Just as salt brings life and flavor to food, so should our words bring life and flavor to every conversation we are in. We can probably think of people who always seem to have the right thing to say. They seem to speak directly from the heart of God, and we come away feeling encouraged, strengthened, and like we have been brought closer to Jesus, the Giver of life. I am challenged as I

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Photo credit: Heidi Hertzler



Conrad and his wife, Heidi, live near Kalona, Iowa. They have three children, Alissa, Justin, and Kayla, and a German Shepherd named Leisel. Conrad pastors Fairview Mennonite Church.



Anabaptism and the Assemblies of God

BY PHIL WEBER

Anabaptism and Other Denominations

On this 500th anniversary of the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement, Rosedale Bible College's Beacon articles look at a wide variety of denominations within the household of faith. We hope to foster a humble, rooted, appreciation for how the gospel has come to us and to consider how Jesus might be calling us forward.

In the 1990s when I was helping to direct outreach in Alabama prisons, I sometimes thought I was surrounded by crazies! And I had my reasons. But even more often, I was reminded of God's amazing love and grace as it was expressed through the faithful compassion of volunteers from across the spectrum of Christian traditions. Some of those reliable ministry volunteers were from the Assemblies of God.

The Assemblies of God (AG) was formed in 1914 by 300 people gathered in Hot Springs, Arkansas. They came from a variety of independent networks and churches, deciding to form a new association "to promote unity and doctrinal stability, establish legal standing, coordinate mission enterprise, and establish a ministerial training school." As part of the Pentecostal movement arising from the Azusa Street revival and the teachings on Holy Spirit baptism by Charles Parham, the new association sought to exhibit the kind of "vibrant, faith-filled" life it perceived in the New Testament. It looked for inspiration and instruction not only in the Bible but also in the revival tradition exemplified by the First and Second Great Awakenings in the previous two centuries.

On their website, the Assemblies characterize their position in the Christian world as Protestant, Trinitarian, Evangelical, and, most definitively, Pentecostal. As a coalition of Pentecostal churches, the AG famously requires its licensed or ordained ministers to speak in tongues as "the initial physical evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit." Baptism in the Holy Spirit is understood to be "distinguishable from and subsequent to" new birth and not an end in itself, but an experience that introduces a lifetime of sanctification through the Spirit's power.

There is no similar requirement of Holy Spirit baptism or tongues-speaking for membership in an AG church. In fact, while the 2009 General Council passed a resolution reaffirming the doctrine of speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit, a 2003 report from the AG Office of Statistics indicated that less than half of AG adherents testified to having received Holy Spirit baptism as

it is defined by church agencies. This report, combined with a growing minority of pastors who question the necessity of tongues as evidence of Holy Spirit baptism, has raised the lament that this distinctive doctrine—a belief that once was unifying—has become a point of contention in some portions of the church.

My association with AG ministers and prison volunteers was most intense during a period of relatively strong growth. In the late 1980s, the coalition sometimes ranked as the fastest-growing American denomination. In our small Alabama town, the congregation at First Assembly expanded in 1989 into its third location, building along the main thoroughfare one of the largest and most modern sanctuaries in town. The pastor was faithful in prison visitation, and his church for a time seemed like the most active and broadly attractive congregation in town. Their growth was part of the national growth that has swelled their U.S. numbers to nearly three million. Worldwide, 86 million adherents make the Assemblies the world's largest Pentecostal denomination.

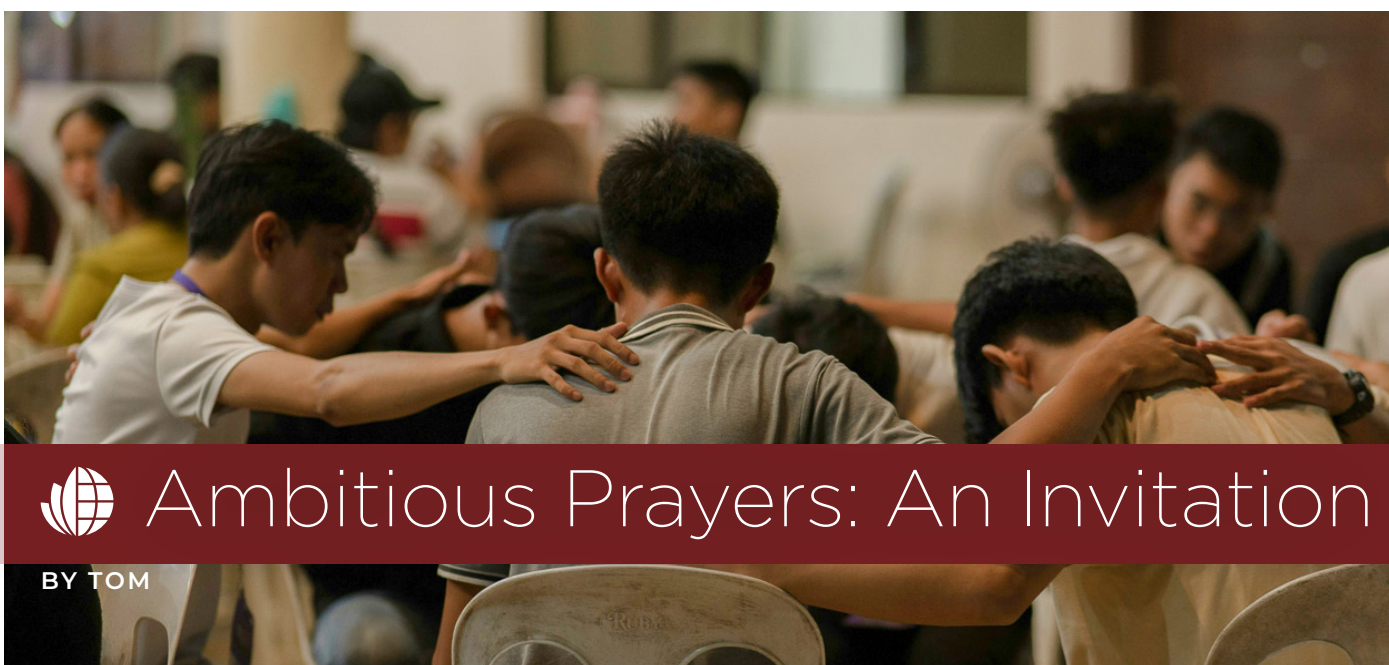
Despite the slowing of growth since the 1980s, from 2-3% per year to less than 1% per year in the last decade, the AG seems poised for growth at a time when most Protestant denominations are in marked decline. Perhaps one reason is its relative youth and its rapidly growing ethnic diversity. In 2023, some 45% of its adherents were ethnic minorities, and more than half were younger than 35.

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Photo credit: [pexels.com/Luis Quintero](https://www.pexels.com/photo/young-man-smiling-1000000000/)



Phil serves as professor at Rosedale Bible College and archivist for Rosedale Network of Churches. He and his wife, Twila, have three children and six grandchildren. They divide their family time between Central Ohio and Kansas.



Ambitious Prayers: An Invitation

BY TOM

In a hot and bustling market in a South Asian border city, Santanu spends his day making and repairing leather shoes. He is remarkably cheerful, earning the nickname “happy, smiling man” from his neighbors. His background, however, is far from happy. Santanu’s mother died when he was very young, leading to a difficult and sad school experience and an entanglement with a gang of boys who eventually went to prison for murder.

In the midst of this turmoil, Santanu met Tanmoy—a young man who came from a similar background, but who had a very unfamiliar message about peace, hope, and Jesus. At first, Santanu observed Tanmoy and his friends from the outside. When he noticed how the group prayed for each other and their problems, he started attending their Bible studies.

Today, Santanu is one of a core team of eight people who work with Tanmoy and his wife, sharing with their own people group and praying that God will lead others to experience the same hope and joy that he’s found.

Rosedale International (RI)’s involvement with this group is new and developing, but it has some old roots. In the late 1990s, an RI worker named Dan was living in South Asia and working with a group of low-caste Hindus who had come to faith in Jesus. Tanmoy came to visit relatives in the town where Dan was working, and the two men met and spent some time together. When he went back to his home city, Tanmoy sought out Christian training and eventually decided to follow Jesus! He reconnected with the group that Dan was mentoring several times over the years, but over time, they lost touch. Dan moved to Thailand and eventually returned to the United States.

Almost twenty years later, the COVID-19 pandemic led Tanmoy and Dan to reconnect. Because visits to Asia were not feasible at the time, Dan had begun a weekly online Bible study with RI’s partner team in the south. Tanmoy heard about this and reached out to Dan, asking if he would do the same for

his group. Dan was intrigued by Tanmoy’s report of Hindu-background believers who were hungry for Bible study, and so the second phase of RI’s connection to Tanmoy began.

They are praying ambitious prayers for God to expand their work...

During the time that Dan and the RI team had lost contact with Tanmoy, he had been busy, and God had blessed his efforts in amazing ways. He had gotten married to a Muslim-background woman (an event that nearly cost them their lives...but that’s another story), had three children, received training through YWAM, and begun working full time to share about Jesus with his people group. He and his wife started Sunday school classes for the children and youth, and this led to the formation of the team they have today.

Today, the team meets regularly for worship, prayer, strategy, and outreach. They have continued the Sunday school program that was so influential in many of their lives. They meet twice a week with Dan for online Bible studies. They are praying ambitious prayers for God to expand their work and allow more of their people to hear the good news in a way that makes sense to them. Dan reports that they currently have “more opportunities than they have time and resources to meet.”

As RI’s partnership with this group deepens, the main benefit

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Photo credit: unsplash.com/Ziph



Tom serves as Asia Regional Director, overseeing the work of RI’s team in Thailand and sister teams of local workers in Asia alongside his wife, Candice. Tom is also a Bible teacher and chaplain in a local international school.

Wisdom at the End of Life *cont'd from page 1*

read Paul's words. Would people describe my words like this? Would they say I speak graciously and know how to flavor my words just right? Salt also has healing and purifying properties. How many relationships in the church could be healed if we understood better how to salt our words in just the right way?

Do you hear the Holy Spirit's message flowing through Paul's pen to these young believers? Does your heart connect with God's heart expressed here? With the help of the Spirit, I want my life to be defined by prayer. I want to walk in wisdom towards those who enter my world, and I want my speech to be gracious and life-giving. May it be so. 🙏

Anabaptism and... *cont'd from page 2*

As these numbers demonstrate, there is much to like about the Assemblies. They are Restorationists who want to be just as much God's people in the 21st century as the New Testament church was in the first century. Their worship style is often energetic as well as devout. They are strongly missional. Historically, they have demonstrated many of the same ethical sensitivities as Anabaptist groups—including non-participation in war—and for many of the same reasons. Their early publications made many appeals for separation from the surrounding culture because God's people are "strangers and pilgrims" whose "citizenship is in heaven."

I also like that the AG is not bashful about its doctrinal distinctives, though it is some of those very distinctives that make me wary. Even though I affirm that the Holy Spirit still gives the gifts described in the New Testament, the teaching of a baptism in the Spirit that is separate from salvation lacks biblical warrant in my view, and I've noticed that the claim of such a baptism offers no special protection against moral failure or even apostasy.

For these reasons and others, this article is too short to detail; I find that I am more inclined to enjoy working with AG believers than to leave Anabaptism to join them. 🙏

Ambition Prayers... *cont'd from page 3*

that Tanmoy sees is support through prayer. "Satan never leaves us in peace," he says. The team faces strong spiritual resistance and social pressure as they speak openly about Jesus, and prayer makes all the difference.

Tanmoy, Santanu, and the rest of the team are asking for dedicated intercessors to form a group that will pray specifically and regularly for them and their work. If you are interested in learning more about partnering with the team through prayer, please contact info@rosedaleinternational.org. The Communications Team will connect you with Tom, Asia Director, and Tanmoy's team in South Asia. 🙏

multiply **2025**

LIVING *ROMANS 12*

July 25-27, 2025 | Montgomery, IN

What is Multiply Conference?

Rosedale Network's annual Multiply Conference provides a wonderful opportunity for people of all ages, scattered across the U.S., to come together to celebrate our life together as a body of churches and to recommit ourselves to the mission God has given us to *mature and multiply churches locally and globally*.

The theme of Multiply 2025 is Living Romans 12. Together, we will immerse ourselves in a passage of Scripture that calls us to live transformed lives marked by humility, love, and service. Throughout the weekend, we will worship God together and hear expository preaching as four Rosedale Network pastors preach through Romans 12. Breakout sessions will take a deeper dive into key principles of living transformed lives as outlined in the passage, including nonconformity, renewing your mind, exercising your spiritual gifts, and overcoming evil with good.

Mark your calendars now and plan to join us July 25-27 in Montgomery, Indiana! **Registration opens May 1.**

For more information and to register, visit our website at www.rosedalenetwork.org





SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY AFTERNOON

DOORS OPEN 3:00 pm

SUPPER 5:00 pm

FRIDAY EVENING 6:30–8:00 pm

Worship – Morgan Coblentz and RBC Alumni Team

Offering for Rosedale Bible College – Jeremy Miller

Recitation of Romans 12 – Craig Beachy

Romans 12:1-2 – Preston Yoder

Anabaptism 500 Story

Reception 8:00 pm – Hosted by RBC, RI, & RNO

SATURDAY MORNING 9:30–10:45 am

Worship – Morgan Coblentz and RBC Alumni Team

Introduction and Prayer for New Congregations
– Moderator Preston Yoder

Anabaptism 500 Story

Romans 12:3-8 – Merlin Miller

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Breakout Sessions 11:00 am–4:00 pm

- **Book Discussion: The Anxious Generation**
– Conrad & Heidi Hertzler
- **Enduring Persecution** – Yemiru Tilahun
- **Foster Care and Adoption** – Dan & Gwen Horning
- **The Gift of Encouragement** – Mel Eash
- **The Gift of Generosity** – Curtiss & Robin Kanagy
- **The Gift of Leadership** – Dale Keffer
- **The Gift of Mercy** – Kevin Swartzentuber
- **The Gift of Prophecy** – Conrad Showalter
- **The Gift of Serving** – Chris Raber
- **The Gift of Teaching** – Tim Yoder
- **Ministering to Those with Addictions** – Scott Miller
- **Nonconformity in a Polarized World** – Rob Presthus
- **Practical Tools for Renewing Your Mind**
– Dion & Naty Peachey
- **Rescuing Victims of Human Trafficking** – Chris Russell
- **Rosedale International Field Workers** – RI

SATURDAY EVENING 6:30–8:00 pm

Welcome – Moderator-Elect Ivan Yoder

Hymn Sing – Dave Swartz

Offering for Rosedale Network of Churches

Anabaptism 500 Story

Romans 12:9-16 – Eddy Hostetler

Reception 8:00 pm

Hosted by local Rosedale Network congregations

SUNDAY MORNING 9:30–11:30 am

Worship – Morgan Coblentz and RBC Alumni Team

Mission Feature & Offering for Rosedale International
– Rosedale International

Children's Choir

Recitation of Romans 12 – Craig Beachy

Romans 12:17-21 – Brandon Funk

Anabaptism 500 Story

Moderator Transition & Closing – Preston Yoder and Ivan Yoder

YOUTH SESSIONS

Saturday 9:15 am

Topic: *Transforming Grace*

Panel Discussion (Romans 12:3-8)

RI Promo – Discover REACH

Lunch 12 pm – RBC Pizza Party and Promo

Breakout Sessions – Barr-Reeve Middle/High School

(Youth and young adults are encouraged to attend the adult breakout sessions.)

YOUTH SOCIALS

Friday Night 8:30–10:00 pm

Barr-Reeve Middle/High School

Saturday Night 8:00–11:00 pm

First Mennonite Church – 106 E 3rd St, Cannelburg, IN 47519

NURSERY-PRE-K

Available Friday & Saturday evenings 6:30–8:00 pm

CHILDREN'S CLASSES

 Infant – 8th grade

Theme: *Faith Quest: The Treasure of the Truth*

Saturday 9:00 am–noon & 1:00–5:00 pm

Sunday 9:30–11:30 am (Nursery–5th grade only)

Registration & Check-In Location:

Barr-Reeve Middle/High School new gym entrance

Note: *Classes are determined by grade completed*

Children's info and registration found at
www.rosedalenetwork.org.

Complimentary Multiply 2025 t-shirts available
for all registered children ages K-8th
and a special gift for preschoolers.