



PREPARED FOR BATTLE

MATT SCHRAG

A ROSEDALE NETWORK PUBLICATION
VOL. 56 | NO. 02

If I walked up to you one day wearing a baseball cap, comfy t-shirt, jeans, and a pair of half-worn-out sandals, would you say I was combat-ready? Of course not! If I were to head to the front lines of any military operation, I would be laughed at and would be likened to the proverbial sitting duck! Dressed like this, I am not physically ready to engage the enemy.

Yet, many times we, as Christians, are walking around like this. Tired, ill-equipped, and unprepared. How then do we prepare?

The first step to being prepared for spiritual battle is to recognize that the body of Christ is, indeed, in a battle. Ephesians 6:12 tells us, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (ESV). Paul doesn't mince any words. He clearly lays out that we are *constantly* battling a spiritual war.

Christ came to bring peace to a world filled with chaos.

Next, we need to know who we are fighting against. It isn't a battle we fight with each other. It isn't a battle that is against others we go to church with. It isn't even against others who go to a different church. It is against the devil and the darkness that he brings with ever-increasing intensity.

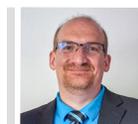
Don't lose hope! Paul continues on in Ephesians 6 about how we can prepare for (and *win!*) the battle we are facing! How do we need to "put on" according to Ephesians 6:13-17 in order to accomplish this?

- **Belt of Truth.** Society is searching and longing for truth. As believers, we have it! God's Word *is truth!* Preparing for battle requires us to know God's Word and have it in our hearts.
- **Breastplate of Righteousness.** Where does our righteousness come from? The prophet Isaiah says that our own personal righteousness is like filthy rags in Isaiah 64:6. We need His righteousness protecting us.

- **Sandals of the Gospel of Peace.** During the Christmas season, we celebrate the coming of the Prince of Peace. Christ came to bring peace to a world filled with chaos. When we fight, we need to remind ourselves that we need to bring His perfect peace to the world around us. Not on our own strength, but through His strength.
- **Shield of Faith.** Shields were used to help protect warriors against flaming darts that were meant to cause great harm and destruction. These darts were designed to cause mass casualties. Shields were used to help extinguish these darts and make them ineffective. Paul is reminding us in Ephesians 6:16 that having a solid faith in God helps protect me and the people around me from Satan's fiery darts, meant to cause fear and doubt in my Christian life.
- **Helmet of Salvation.** What does the enemy try to put in our minds? Anything that gets our focus on something other than the Lord. When we receive the gift of salvation, God helps us guard our minds. He will give us the tools we need to keep our minds focused on Him and His plan for our lives.
- **Sword of the Spirit.** Being prepared is not just an offensive strategy. It is also defensive. Having the sword of the Spirit, which is God's Word, allows us to actively engage our enemy by using Scripture to combat the temptations Satan throws at us. Jesus offers us a perfect example of this in Matthew 4:1-11, when Satan sought to destroy Jesus' earthly ministry by causing Jesus to sin by giving in to temptation.

So, church, prepare for the inevitable spiritual battle that we are in! Let's daily put on each piece of the armor God has provided for us and engage the enemy! Together, we can fight against the powers of darkness and carry God's light into the world around us! 🕊️

Photo credit: AI-generated



Matt and his family live in Middleburg, Pennsylvania, where he serves as senior pastor at Boyer Mennonite Church. He and his wife, Tamara, have three children, ages 16, 13, and 12.



How Did We Get Here?

BY MERLIN MILLER

At the July 2025 Minister's Business Meeting at Berea Mennonite Church, Rosedale International (RI) announced an upcoming transition in the president's position. Joe Showalter's five-year term of service ends in August of 2026, and he will round out his fifth term of service. This means RI has benefited from the steady, consistent leadership of the same president for almost 25 years! What was announced and approved of by the ministerial body at that meeting was for Matt Showalter, current academic dean of Rosedale Bible College (RBC), to succeed Joe as president. This transition represents a major change for RI, and Matt's move represents a major move within the Rosedale Network of Churches world. You may be asking yourself, "How did we get here"? As a former RI board chair and one who was involved in the process from start to finish, hopefully I can shed some light on the answer to that question.

We began talking about this transition as a board almost as soon as Joe's final term began in 2021. Our initial aim was not focused on any candidates, but rather to lay the necessary groundwork as an organization for this transition—things like sharpening our vision, mission, and values. Understanding who we are was important to eventually be able to understand who we were looking for. We engaged John Stahl-Wert from the Center for Serving Leaders (now World Serving Leaders) to help guide us through some of this process. In the end, we realized that we were not looking for someone who would come with a new and fresh vision for RI, but rather someone who would be able to serve the existing vision, mission, and values that we still felt strongly that the Lord had called us to. To be clear, there is room for operational changes within that vision, but the overall goal is for the vision to remain the same.

As the time for the transition came closer, we began to talk more intentionally about the "who" as well. We initially wanted to start with Joe himself to find potential candidates, then move in an ever-widening circle (as needed) from RI's executive team, the board itself, key people within RI, Rosedale Network, and RBC circles, and finally a broader context if necessary. Over the course of several months, a small group of potential candidates began to emerge—candidates whose names had been mentioned by several people, and who I had already had enough initial contact with to know that they would potentially consider accepting such a position.

When Matt's name came up, there were two challenges that immediately presented themselves: first, that he is Joe's nephew, which negatively affects how this transition appears, and second,

that he is already a key figure within another Rosedale Network institution that we love and care for. As to the latter, we reached out to Jeremy Miller, president of RBC, before even contacting Matt to get his blessing on making contact. If he had told us no, we would not have taken another step down that road. We are so grateful for the leadership of RBC for their graciousness and commitment to the Lord's will over their own preferences.

...it was unanimous that Matt is the man whom God has selected to be the next president of Rosedale International.

As to the former, it should be clearly stated that Matt's name was not brought up by Joe, but suggested by others. In every conversation and interview that involved Matt, Joe recused himself from the discussion, and in the end, we had to decide whether we would be led by what we sensed God wanted or what we thought would give the best optics. Speaking personally, when we went into the initial interviews with our small pool of candidates, Matt was at the bottom of my list, almost completely because of the family ties and how that could be perceived. However, at the end of those initial interviews, every board member who had participated felt the same: it was unanimous that Matt is the man whom God has selected to be the next president of Rosedale International.

We are so grateful for the Lord's leadership, for good working relationships within the Rosedale Network institutions, and for a network of churches that trust their leaders. Please pray for RI, RBC, and Rosedale Network as these transitions take place! 🙏

Photo credit: [GeoJango Maps on Unsplash](#)



Merlin is married to Heidi and is the father of seven children. He serves as Rosedale Network moderator-elect as well as senior pastor at Riverview Christian Fellowship in White Pigeon, Michigan.



Revive Us, Lord: Part 2

BY ANTHONY CONTE

I believe it's very important to study past revivals and special moves of God, and I hope these articles will whet your appetite for more. Through these historical accounts, we can learn to understand more about the heart of God and His desire for the Church.

God used the Waldensians, Francis of Assisi, the Moravians, Wesley, Finney, Evan Roberts, and the Brownsville revival, to name some I've studied, but the story of the United Prayer Revival of 1857-1859 especially gripped me.

Charles Finney's ministry in New England for the preceding 30-some years laid the groundwork for this renewal. But when the revival fires started burning, it was the prayers of laymen, not the preaching of ministers, that fueled it.

Jeremiah C. Lamphier started a weekly prayer meeting at Old North Church in Boston on September 23rd, 1857. The meeting of seven men grew to 14 the next week and almost 40 by October 7th. Those who attended were so blessed by the evidence of God's presence and decided to meet daily for prayer. Within a month, over 100 people were meeting at the church for prayer, including unbelievers who were falling under conviction and surrendering their lives to Christ.

As Old North Church overflowed with hungry intercessors, prayer meetings sprang up at churches around the city to accommodate the spirit of prayer. Within months, similar prayer meetings were birthed across the country.

Are we hungry for a move of God?

From January to April of 1858 alone, it is estimated that over 100,000 people received Christ through the prayer revival. Over the entirety of the revival, more than 10,000 cities and towns hosted noon prayer meetings, and nearly two million people were converted in the United States (out of a population of 30 million). That's 6.5% of the total population converted in two years. At the height of the revival for six to eight weeks, roughly 50,000 people were born again weekly.

Testimonies abounded as God answered the cries of His people, oftentimes almost immediately. Wesley Duwel reports, "All people wanted was a place to pray. Sinners would come and ask for prayer. Someone would individually pray for them, and in minutes, the newly saved person was rejoicing in Christ. Prayers would be asked by name for unconverted friends and loved ones from all over the country. In a day or two, testimonies would be given of how the prayers had already been

answered. In some towns, nearly the entire population became saved."

God's holy presence rested so heavily upon the land that there were numerous reports of those on ships approaching the East Coast suddenly coming under conviction and turning to Christ, even without knowing anything of the revival. On one small ship, both the captain and every crew member were converted within the last 150 miles of the voyage as holy conviction enveloped them.

Word of the revival spread to the British Isles, where revival fires began to burn as well. 1859 became known as the Irish Year of Grace as nearly 10 % of the population of Northern Ireland was converted. Between 1858 and 1859, over one million people gave their lives to Christ in Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales. The revival gave way to a renewed interest in missions with reports of renewal in India, Indonesia, South Africa, and the West Indies.

My heart is very stirred by stories like these. But the question remains, what about our day? Are we hungry for a move of God? What if the Lord wants to pour out His Spirit afresh upon us as He's done so often throughout history? Do we desire it? Would we welcome it? Would we be ready to receive it?

John Piper states, "Do you have a hunger for God? If we don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because we have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because we have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Our soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great."

cont'd on page 5

Photo credit: jcomp-freepik.com



Anthony lives in Plain City, Ohio, where he serves as youth pastor at Shiloh Mennonite Church. He is passionate about seeing young people grow more fully into Christ's image and the church flourish in all it was created to be.



Like a Child: A REACH Update

BY ROSEDALE INTERNATIONAL

The 2025-26 REACH teams are nearing two months on the field. Since arriving in their outreach locations, they've shared about building relationships, outreach work, and meeting God in a new context. The following excerpts were collected and edited from their latest blog posts; in some cases, names and locations have been changed or omitted for security.

Madeline, Team Mediterranean: A recent experience that has left an impact on me was a simple walk home one afternoon. Walking is a common method of transportation in this country, so we passed a lot of people as we went on our way. Many of the people we met on the road were women, so I greeted each one in the local language as we passed by. Some just kept on walking without much of a reaction, but others were so happy! It was amazing to see the way their faces changed when I greeted them in their language instead of just walking by.

In every context, on every continent, He has stayed by my side.

As I reflected on this, I realized the importance of meeting people where they're at. Not trying to change who they are, what they've been through, or where they come from, but just accepting where they are right now and sitting there with them—even in a way that's as simple as a five-second greeting. This made me so thankful for the times that our Father has come to meet me where I was, too. In the midst of my sorrows, my sin, and my joy, He has always been there. In every context, on every continent, He has stayed by my side.

Bryleigh, Team Zambia: The week was filled with some new, exciting outreach opportunities and fun time with the kids. All of us on the team have been able to start leading activities on the base, such as worship and Bible studies, and we've really been enjoying it.

We also got the opportunity to visit a school near Love's Door. We sang some songs, played a game, and shared encouragement from the Word with the students. This time was a highlight for all of us, and we are very excited that we get to do this every Friday for the next two months.

The kids just have so much joy and excitement when they see us, and God has been showing Himself to me through them. I've been realizing that I should be as excited and enthusiastic in my faith and

my relationship with the Lord as they are with me. His arms are wide open, and He truly just wants me to run into them like a child.

Maddy, Team Himalayas: On Monday, we began our three-day trip to one of the last villages in this mountain range. We took a 17-hour bus ride, an eight-hour jeep ride, and a four-hour walk to get here. This village is a very rural place, so there have been a lot of changes in our routine to be able to adapt to the culture well.

The community is extremely welcoming and kind. The day after we arrived, they already had us very busy! For the first two days, we spoke at the church, and each gave some words of encouragement. We had all prepared our messages individually, but when we compared notes with each other, we realized we'd prepared very similar things. It seemed like the Father had an important message to share with this community.

We talked about how to trust and praise the Father even through difficult times. We know that He is good and that He loves us. Through hard times, He is there with us and grieves with us. Brian specifically spoke about being thankful and giving glory to the Father.

As I sat there listening, I realized I had a lot to be thankful for. These beautiful mountains, this community, my team, my friends and family, but most importantly, how much the Son loves me and has never left my side.

Kiah, Team Zambia: Please continue to pray for our teams as some of us acclimate to a new culture for the first time and deal with the challenges of being far away from anything and pretty much anyone familiar. Thank you for your continued support and prayers. It brings me much comfort to know that God has so clearly led all of us here and surrounded us with an organization and churches that have sent us in the power of the Holy Spirit. The "senders" are as important as the "goers!" 🙏

Photo credit: Rosedale International



RI is the mission arm of Rosedale Network of Churches, working to take Jesus to the ends of the earth by fully engaging Rosedale Network churches in maturing and multiplying disciples, especially among the least reached.

Revive Us, Lord: Part 2 *cont'd from page 3*

I believe it is time to get hungry. Those who are hungry in the Kingdom will eat. If we ask our Father for bread, He will not give us a stone. May the cry of our hearts be, "Lord, do it again—do it in our day. What you did in Acts, what you've done in the history of revival, do it again, that many would come to Jesus."

In 1 Corinthians 2:4, Paul states, "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power" (NIV). And a few chapters later, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power" (4:20). I believe we need a fresh demonstration of the Spirit's power in our midst.

As long as revival is optional, its likelihood remains improbable. Let's get hungry and pray and ask our Father to do "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us."

"Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? 7 Show us your unfailing love, Lord, and grant us your salvation (Ps. 85:6-7)." 🙏



This month, we remember the remarkable Ohio blizzards of 1977 and 1978. Although conditions statewide during the winter storm in 1978 made it the "Storm of the Century," conditions a year earlier left a greater impact on the 256 students attending Rosedale Bible Institute. The evening of January 28 (Friday) brought wind gusts up to 70 mph and incredible, hard-packed drifts that made roads impassable and required earth-moving equipment to open. See photos and additional explanation in this edition of [From the Archives](#).