

Bucket List

1. See the Northern Lights
2. Travel to Italy
3. Learn to Surf
4. Hike Machu Picchu
5. Swim with Dolphins
6. Write a Book

OR

7. I want to know Jesus
8. I want His righteousness
9. I want to attain the heavenly prize
10. I want you to know Jesus

BEACON

MAY 2026

TRANSFORMED BUCKET LISTS

BY CALVIN EASH

A ROSEDALE NETWORK PUBLICATION
VOL. 56 | NO. 05

The “seed” for this article came from a message I preached in 2023, but more on that later. How many of us have a bucket list—things we wish to accomplish before departing this life? Collections? Projects? Adventure? Athletic goals? For where I live in Kentucky, perhaps my bucket list includes visiting all 120 counties, driving from Mary to Calvin, canoeing the middle fork of the Kentucky River from Buckhorn to Beattyville, and following the 76 Bicycle route from east to west across the state.

Some may have a religious bucket list, perhaps to attain a paid position as pastor, youth leader, or worship leader, preferably in a prestigious church, earn a seminary degree, and staunchly uphold and defend the traditions of the church fathers.

Have I really met Jesus?

The Apostle Paul had a religious bucket list (Php. 3; Gal. 1:13-14) to be the best Jew ever. More specifically, to be the greatest Pharisee. He knew his heritage and ancestry. He was so zealous at being the best that nobody could find fault with him in any of the dozens of laws that had been given on Mt. Sinai, and he persecuted those who believed in Jesus as the Messiah. Paul’s bucket list could be representative of many Mennonites, zealous of the traditions of our fathers, knowing our ancestry, rejecting those who don’t have the right surname, shunning those who don’t believe as we do, and, although not going so far as to consent to their death, speaking critically of them.

Then he met Jesus, and he—and his bucket list—were completely transformed. A summary of his transformed list might look like this:

- I want to know Jesus.
- I want His righteousness (not my own).
- I want to attain the heavenly prize.
- I want you to know Jesus.

As I mentioned previously, the “seed” for this article came from a previous message, and for the past three years, a question has been growing in my heart:

Have I really met Jesus?

Has my bucket list—my passions, dreams, aspirations, and religious values—been as radically transformed as those of the Apostle Paul? Is knowing Christ Jesus far superior to Olympic gold, flying an airplane, restoring an antique, a Wagner cast iron cookware collection, or maintaining proper Mennonite decorum? Is knowing our Savior more excellent than acquiring a pastorate in a prestigious church? Am I truly hungering and thirsting for His righteousness? Can we picture Jesus telling us, “Except your righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees (church fathers) ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven”?

One might also note that this new bucket list cost Paul his reputation, position, and income to follow wherever Christ led him. And myself? Do I say Jesus is first and everything else comes second, or, as Paul stated, “count them but dung?” (Some versions try to tone it down to make it sound more sanitary, but tracing the etymology of the word translated “dung,” it appears to actually mean dung, specifically, dog droppings). What now drives and motivates me? Knowing Jesus?

Jesus told several parables in which an individual found an exquisite treasure and sold everything in order to obtain that one treasure. He also said, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also... No man can serve two masters” (Matt. 6:21, 24a KJV) and “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33).

May our encounter with Jesus dramatically transform our bucket lists, passions, goals, and dreams. May He be that one priceless treasure. 🙏

Photo credit: AI-generated



Calvin serves as a bi-vocational pastor at Bowlings Creek Mennonite Church in Buckhorn, Kentucky. He and his wife, Mary, have three daughters and nine grandchildren.



What Happened to Voluntary Service?

BY AARON MILLER

In the 1960s, President Lyndon B. Johnson decided to send troops to Vietnam, and as an unintended consequence, fledgling Mennonite churches in Central America were greatly affected.

Let me explain. From 1964-1973, the Selective Service System drafted 1.7 million men for service in the United States military in the Vietnam War. This presented quite a challenge for Rosedale Network of Churches (previously Conservative Mennonite Conference) as it held to the historic Anabaptist-Mennonite peace position.

Thankfully, the United States government allowed alternative service for young men who belonged to historic peace churches. Because of this, young RNOC men who were conscientious objectors to war signed up for Voluntary Service (VS) through Rosedale International (previously Rosedale Mennonite Missions) or other approved humanitarian mission and service agencies. Costa Rica and Nicaragua became primary destinations for RNOC volunteers collaborating with long-term RI workers in the region.

Young RNOC women also volunteered to serve, and a vigorous short-term missions movement took off! From 1962-1984, approximately 200 young men and women served in Central America, usually giving one to three years of their lives to dig wells, build roads and latrines, run clinics, suture machete cuts, teach Sunday school, pastor young churches, perform weddings and funerals, and much more.

Central America was not the only place where RNOC youths volunteered during the 70s and 80s. In addition, RNOC had VS units in Mississippi, Kentucky, Arkansas, Ohio, Alabama, and Germany. In 1980, for example, 110 people served in these locations as missionaries or as part of the VS movement. Needless to say, there was serious interest in VS during this era.

These incredible service numbers give me pause and prompt me to ask—*what happened to the Voluntary Service movement?* Thankfully, Rosedale International has seen numerous young people serving in the REACH program, but where is the volume of yesteryear?

As dean of students at Rosedale Bible College, I have a front-row seat to our network's youth, and I can assure you that our churches are raising young people who love Jesus and are passionate about the work of the Kingdom. Yet very few are going into Voluntary Service.

I could give a myriad of reasons about how one can be missional and Kingdom-minded in the business world, but I still think the church loses something when our young people aren't setting aside months, or even years, for a specific season of sacrificial service.

How did we get to this point, and what is the solution? I believe there are three aspects that are vital if we are to see a resurgence of young people dedicating time to intentional service: **church, family, and allegiance.**

Church

At an April 17-19, 2026, reunion for Central American VSers, one man, now in his 80s, marveled at the incredible gift the church gave him and hundreds of other young people: the opportunity to serve overseas without having to raise any money. The church covered its costs. By doing so, the church sent the message, "If you're willing to go...go! We'll cover the costs."

The reality is that mission programs then and now will always cost money. How many young people would be more interested in serving in short or long-term missions if they knew their churches were committed to paying the majority or totality of their expenses? To do this, the local church would need to make funding the mission and service work of its members a higher priority.

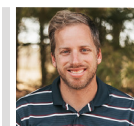
Family

Unfortunately, an obstacle I see for our young people is convincing their parents that a decision not based on future earnings is a good decision. A temptation for parents is to fear for their children's safety; to fear they will fall behind their peers' careers. There are fears of the distance from home and the inevitable difficulties and dangers.

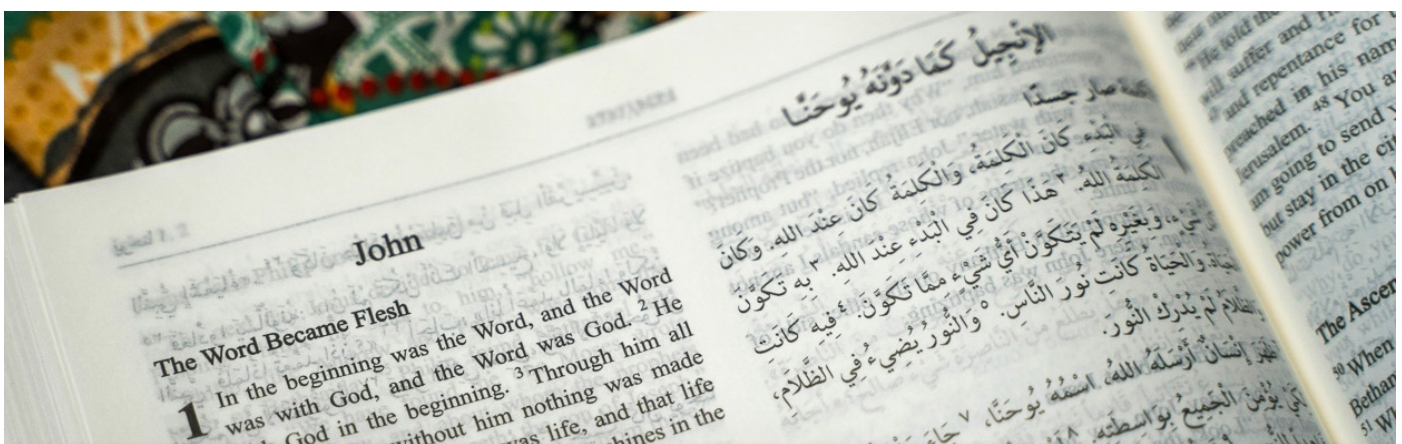
These might be valid fears, but can we afford to deprive our children, the Kingdom, and the world of the blessings of service for the King because of our fears?

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Photo credit: *Rosedale International*



Aaron serves as dean of students at Rosedale Bible College. He and his wife, Katarina, are the parents of two young sons and live at the four-way stop in Rosedale, Ohio. They attend Shiloh Mennonite Church.



My Friend, Marwan

BY RALEIGH

Names and locations have been changed or omitted for security.

Nine years ago, my son Robbie—who is autistic and has Down syndrome—made a friend for me. We were at a restaurant in the old part of our city when Robbie suddenly jumped up from his seat and headed across the room. He had noticed a young man wearing an enticing necklace around his neck, and he was going for it! When I realized what Robbie’s intentions were, I hurried across the room to apologize and help pry his hands from the necklace. Sitting next to my son’s attack victim (as it were) was my future friend.

Marwan noticed that I spoke in halting Arabic and struck up a conversation with me in English, saying that he would enjoy meeting again in the future. Some time later, Robbie and I met Marwan at a café and got to hear his story. He was a lover of God and a dedicated Muslim who, as a young man with a disability that limited his movement, had even memorized the entire Quran. As we spoke, Marwan quickly discovered that I was also a lover of God, but one who walked in the way of Jesus instead of the way of Mohammed. The two of us also shared a love of the arts—he an actor, me a musician and songwriter.

In the years since, Marwan and I have stayed in touch, and when my family moved to another town and set up a ministry guesthouse, we invited him to come and stay with us. Through our conversations each time he came to visit, I could see movement in his journey of belief. He began to wonder aloud why I loved God so much, saying that my love of God and of the Bible reminded him of his father, who was a passionate believer in God and lover of the Quran. He became increasingly curious about what was in my holy book. When he expressed that he wanted to read it in Arabic as he’d read the Quran, I found an Arabic Bible and gave it to him as a gift.

Several weeks later, Marwan wrote to me, saying, “Before I read the [New Testament], I knew some things, and I heard some things about the Bible, but this is the first time I read these things in detail.... There are stories and events in the book that have been mentioned in the Quran as well.” The next time he visited my family, he shared with me his deepest

questions about and critiques of Islam—many of them based on his deep knowledge of the Quran and the ways that many Muslim leaders have twisted the words in it or have taught illiterate believers things that simply are not in the Quran. In return, I shared with him significant moments in my own spiritual journey, including the Spirit’s powerful infilling in answer to my own times of questioning.

The next time he visited, Marwan shared a secret with me: “You are the first person I’ve ever told; I am no longer a Muslim. I believe in God, but I think that Islam is a man-made religion. I can’t say this to my family or friends yet, because they wouldn’t understand.”

I was (and continue to be) so impressed by Marwan’s desire for truth, and I pray that he will continue seeking until he meets Truth in the person of Jesus, who loves him. Recently, I was able to facilitate a meeting between Marwan and a young man who is a follower of Jesus in the city where they both live. It was beautiful to watch and listen as this young man shared the good news with Marwan and responded thoughtfully to his questions over a four-hour conversation. In the coming months, it is a strong possibility that Marwan will begin to meet with other local seekers in his city, a group that studies the Word together to understand what following Jesus means. Please pray for him as he continues this journey! 🙏

Photo credit: [Photo by Sara Calado on Unsplash](https://www.unsplash.com/photos/sara-calado)



Raleigh serves in the Mediterranean alongside his wife, Opal, and their four children. They enjoy sharing their faith in Jesus through conversations with friends and neighbors, teaching English, running a guesthouse, and providing leadership to RI’s workers in their country.

What Happened to Voluntary Service? *cont'd from page 2*

As I listened to Central American VSers at this recent reunion, I heard time and time again, "My life was completely changed by my time of service." How sad it would have been if 60 years ago their parents had forbidden them to go because it would have been too far away and not practical for their future careers.

Allegiance

To quote Bob Dylan, "Ya gotta serve somebody!" RNOC's Central American VS program was directly impacted by the youth of the conference, stating they would not serve in the military but were willing to serve the kingdom of God in a developing country.

There is no draft today, but how many in the church have been drafted into the American way of life? Get a job, invest, make money, and have a comfortable life. There is no need to intentionally set aside a time of life to serve, without pay.

The original Voluntary Service program of RNOC wasn't actually voluntary. It was a response to the military draft. What would it mean today to intentionally choose service as an alternative way of understanding life? If our allegiance is to comfort and financial stability, why would our young people choose an alternative allegiance to the Kingdom?

Interestingly, every person I heard speak at the recent Central American VS reunion mentioned how their time deeply impacted their lives for the better. Not even one mentioned it negatively affecting their financial plans and net worth. If our churches can help our youth, and their parents see this truth, I can't help but think we will see more young people choosing mission and service, both short and long-term. 🇺🇸



The Rosedale Network of Churches archives include a growing number of digitized recordings of presentations at Annual Conference and Pastors Conference. The earlier recordings were originally analog: first using reel-to-reel tapes and later using tapes in cassettes. While digitizing these older recordings, I noticed what seemed to be more frequent (and longer) prayers than I recalled from recent years. So I took a closer look at a few prayers from the 1971 conference and compared them to a few prayers from the 2025 gathering. The result is this month's [From the Archives](#).

multiply 2026

NO FEAR

Be Strong in the Lord

July 31 - August 2 | Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA

Join us for Multiply 2026!

Rosedale Network's annual Multiply Conference provides a wonderful opportunity for people of all ages 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*. This year's event will be unique in that it will be held on a college campus. In order to meet our financial obligations to the college, we are transitioning from a suggested donation model to a set fee for registration. We don't want anyone to miss the conference because of the cost, so please contact us if you want to come but are unable to cover the cost of registration.

No Fear: Be Strong in the Lord

The theme of Multiply 2026 is *No Fear: Be Strong in the Lord*. As tensions in our world mount, we will gather to shift our focus from what we can see, touch, and hear to the spiritual realities that truly govern our lives. Sermons and breakout sessions from Ephesians 6:10-20 will help move us from a posture of fear to boldness and divine strength as we explore what it means to "put on the full armor of God." Mark your calendars now and plan to join us **July 31-August 2** in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania!

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





SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY AFTERNOON

DOORS OPEN 3:00 pm Ellis Hall

SUPPER 5:00 pm Ellis Hall

FRIDAY EVENING

PLENARY SESSION 1 6:30–8:00 pm Halbritter Center

Welcome – Ivan Yoder, Rosedale Network Moderator, and David Kochsmeier, Steel City Mennonite church, Senior Pastor

Worship – Morgan Coblentz and the Multiply Worship Team

Children’s Feature – Jim Miller & Laban Miller

Offering – Rosedale Bible College

Sermon: Ephesians 6:10-11 – Adam Peachey

SATURDAY MORNING

PLENARY SESSION 2 9:00 –10:00 am Halbritter Center

Welcome – Merlin Miller, Moderator-elect

Worship – Morgan Coblentz and Multiply Worship Team

Sermon: Ephesians 6:12-13 – Yemiru Mintesenot

Saturday Morning Sessions

- The Battles Men Face – Kyle Rodgers
- The Battles Women Face – Lydia Mohler

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

PLENARY SESSION 3 Halbritter Center

Welcome – Ivan Yoder, Rosedale network Moderator

Introduction/Prayer for New Congregations – Ivan Yoder

Sermon: Ephesians 6:14-17 – Greg Widrick

BREAKOUT SESSIONS 2:30 – 3:30 pm; 4:00 – 5:00 pm
Brumbaugh Academic Center

- *Belt of Truth* – Matt Mullen
- *Breastplate of Righteousness* – Phil Stutzman
- *Feet Fitted with the Gospel of Peace* – Keegan Wright
- *Shield of Faith* – Ron Embleton
- *Helmet of Salvation* – Daniel Byler
- *Sword of the Spirit* – Steve Lapp
- *Not Against Flesh and Blood* – Abraham Ndungu
- *Deliverance Ministry* – Ben Snyder
- *Rescuing Victims of Human Trafficking* – Rocky Tash & Tom Cochran
- *Rosedale International Field Workers* – RI

SATURDAY EVENING

PLENARY SESSION 4 6:30–8:00 pm Halbritter Center

Welcome – Moderator – Ivan Yoder

Hymn Sing – Dave Swartz

Offering – Rosedale Network of Churches

Rosedale International Transition

Sermon: Ephesians 6:18-20 – Matt Showalter

Reception 8:00 pm

Honoring Joe & Janice Showalter, hosted by Rosedale International

SUNDAY MORNING

PLENARY SESSION 5 9:30–11:30 am

Welcome – Merlin Miller, Moderator-elect

Worship – Morgan Coblentz and the Multiply Worship Team

Offering – Rosedale International

Children’s Choir

Moderator’s Address – Ivan Yoder

YOUTH SESSIONS – Kennedy Sports Center

No Fear: Be Strong in the Lord

Saturday 9:30 am

Lunch 12:15 pm

Afternoon Session 1:40 pm

Closing 3:30 pm

YOUTH SOCIALS

Friday Night 8:30–10:00 pm

Music, Bonfire, and Hangout – Outside on the green space by the Halbritter Center for the Performing Arts building

Saturday Night 8:00–11:00 pm

Volleyball Tournament – Kennedy Sports & Recreation Center

See website for a detailed schedule

NURSERY–PRE-K Liebig Center for Science

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

CHILDREN’S CLASSES Infant – 8th grade Liebig Center

Theme: *No Fear: Be Strong in the Lord*

Saturday 9:00 –11:30 am & 1:00–5:00 pm

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

Registration & Check-In Location:

Lobby of Liebig Center for Science

Note: Classes are determined by grade completed

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