

COMMUNITY KITCHEN:
ALL ARE WELCOME

BEACON

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YOU GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO EAT

BY BRIAN BEACHY

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There are many times in life when I find myself facing a circumstance that looks overwhelming or out of control. Times when I come before Jesus and say, "Here it is, I can't do this."

Maybe you are in a season of life where you are completely overwhelmed with all that you have going on. There is the season of raising a young family, demands at work, ministry, caretaking for aging parents, and the list goes on. I believe that when we are at the place where we feel we have nothing to offer and nothing left to give, this is the place where God wants to use us the most. You may say, *Hold on! Are you meaning I should live in a state of burnout so that God can use me?* Of course not! Let's look at how Jesus taught His disciples to handle ministry at a time when they were weary and emotionally drained.

Recently, I shared a message titled "You Give Them Something to Eat" out of Mark 6:30-44. In this passage, Jesus feeds 5,000 men, plus all the women and children. Contextually, this miracle comes directly on the heels of a season of exhaustion for Jesus' disciples.

They had just returned from their short-term mission trip, where they had been sent out in pairs. They saw the beautiful side of ministry where healing and restoration happened before their eyes, while also facing the sting of rejection as people scorned their message and the "Christ" whom they represented.

Who is Jesus asking you to feed or minister to in this stage of your life?

To add to their already depleted state, their return was greeted with the news of John the Baptist's execution. The disciples were physically tired and emotionally drained. Jesus saw this and had compassion on them.

He said to them in Mark 6:31, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat" (ESV). This sounds wonderful. Time to rest. Time to grieve the death of John the Baptist.

Instead, the people guessed where they were going and arrived there ahead of them. Human logic would likely say this is where we need to

draw a boundary and turn them away until we can take time to have proper self-care. What did Jesus do?

Jesus saw them and had compassion because they were like "sheep without a shepherd." In the parallel account in Luke 9:11, it says Jesus "welcomed" them.

As the day grew late, the disciples came to Jesus and requested that he send the people away to get food and go home. They were beyond exhausted. What did Jesus say? "You give them something to eat." This was an impossible task that Jesus was asking the disciples to complete.

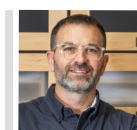
In the account in John 6, it states that Jesus asked Philip to test him. His initial response was to count the cost and concluded that it was impossible to feed this many people. Is this not our typical response? We immediately look at the "cost" of something God wants us to do. From our human perspective, it looks impossible.

Do you think Jesus needed the five loaves and two fish to feed the people? Of course not. He wanted the disciples to bring what they had to offer.

Maybe he wants us to bring what we have to offer so we can see how woefully inadequate we are without His provision. Who is Jesus asking you to feed or minister to in this stage of your life? Is Jesus saying to you, "You give them something to eat?"

Jesus knew there was no way possible for the disciples in their own strength to feed this huge crowd of people, yet he told them to give them something to eat. I think this is exactly where Jesus wanted them to be, and where He wants us to be: completely dependent on Him. 🙏

Photo credit: AI-generated



Brian serves as a bi-vocational associate pastor at Trinity Christian Fellowship in Millersburg, Ohio. He and his wife, Julie, have four adult children, one granddaughter, and a grandson on the way.



Better Together

BY BRIAN HERSHBERGER

As a result of the ministry of Rosedale Network Overseer and Immigrant Church Growth Consultant Yemiru Mintesenot, a growing number of Ethiopian immigrant churches are seeking affiliation with Rosedale Network of Churches. Add to that our Spanish-speaking churches in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, New York, Ohio, and California, a Nepali church in Ohio, and a predominantly Kenyan church plant in Texas, and you'll find that over 10% of Rosedale Network's congregations are "other culture."

We can do more with others than we can alone.

In a recent meeting with several leaders from Rosedale Network's agencies, and then again at the most recent Executive Board meeting, we discussed our growing connection with immigrant churches and the need for a clear vision for what we are doing and why we are doing it. There are many good reasons why we should embrace churches from other cultures and welcome them into the Rosedale Network family:

- We care about the stranger and the foreigner. It gives us an opportunity to exemplify the love of Christ for all people. Immigrant congregations often feel isolated. By welcoming them into Rosedale Network, we can provide a sense of belonging and affirmation that they are part of a larger spiritual family.
- We can learn much about being on mission and living fully surrendered to God from our immigrant brothers and sisters.
- We can do more with others than we can alone. We can learn and benefit from the creativity, resilience, and spiritual giftedness of those from other cultures.
- We can offer theological stability, structure, and accountability for church leaders who are finding their way in a new culture.
- It fits our mission of *maturing and multiply churches locally and globally*, and our vision of being a global family of Anabaptists.
- It complements Rosedale International's work of going to unreached people groups by investing missional energy into immigrant churches who are reaching people groups that are coming to the U.S.
- It gives us an opportunity to exemplify in at least a small way the body of Christ from every nation, tribe, and tongue.

If I were to sum up the reasons why we should embrace churches from other cultures and welcome them into the Rosedale Network family, it would simply be that **we are better together**. It's a biblical concept:

"Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their labor:
If either of them falls down,
one can help the other up.
But pity anyone who falls
and has no one to help them up.
Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?
Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Ecc. 4:9-12 NIV).

If it is true that "better together" applies to congregations and not just individuals (and I believe it is), what can we do to foster a sense of togetherness with immigrant churches who are joining us? One Rosedale Network pastor suggested we implement a sister church plan where each church coming into Rosedale Network (immigrant or not) would be paired with an existing church in a sister church relationship. Perhaps we could call it the **Better Together** initiative.

We don't have plans to implement a formal or required sister church program, but we would be very interested to know if your church would like to be included on a list of churches who could potentially be matched with an incoming church for the purpose of mutual encouragement and support. This could simply mean praying regularly for each other, or it could also include things like keeping each other informed about special events in the life of the church, and maybe even visiting each other occasionally. Let me know at brian@rosedalenetwork.org if you're interested in exploring what it might look like for your church to be a sister church to one of our incoming churches. 🙏

Photo credit: Darren Peachey, Rosedale Network of Churches, Conference Pastor



Brian serves as executive director of Rosedale Network of Churches. He and his wife, Sharla, live in Marysville, Ohio, and are involved in community outreach and worship ministry at Lighthouse Fellowship.



Put Your Phones in the Phone Basket!

by Esther

There is something humbling about standing in the center of a room full of young people all on their phones. Attempts to make an announcement at a reasonable volume go largely unnoticed, and by the time everyone finally looks up, half of them have already missed what you said. So, when my husband, Mark, and I made the announcement loud and clear at our youth retreat, “This afternoon during free time, we want all of you to put your phones in the phone basket!” collective groans filled the room.

Maybe I added a little too much enthusiasm for their liking, or maybe most of them really did not like the idea of their phones sitting in a little brown basket for hours. I wouldn’t go as far as to say that the youth group was always glued to their personal screens. In fact, some of them were excited to give up their phones. As expected, the grumbles lasted only a moment, and as soon as the basket was full, so was the room with chatter.

Throughout the afternoon of the “no phone policy,” we observed that board games had emerged, a wrestling match or two had to be broken up, and more laughter and chaos resounded through the house and yard. It’s ironic that having a device with immediate access to entertainment, communication, and information never produces the joy of genuine connection that comes from being present together.

Over the past four years, I have had the great privilege of relating to high school and college students every single day. I have never encountered a young person in my spheres of influence without a phone, and rarely find anyone without some form of social media. Because this is the first generation to grow up “chronically online,” they are experiencing uncharted territory, and everyone else gets to watch.

We have all heard the alarming statistics about anxiety, depression, and how young people are more “connected” than ever, but somehow report feeling lonelier than ever. It can be tempting to think that it’s a *them* problem and assume that if only they were like *our* generation, then they would have no problem at all. After all, other generations grew up with calloused hands, chapter books, and neighborhood hide-and-seek.

The disappointing reality of effective marketing is that young people want real relationships and authentic community, but have been given screens as a substitute. I have a great deal of sympathy for today’s youth because I know that, as a whole, they truly desire something real for their social and spiritual lives. This search for something

long-lasting has resulted in a movement of young people joining institutions that offer more authority, not because those institutions are suddenly more trustworthy, but because young people are hungry to have structure and something that offers boundaries.

Our churches and communities have an opportunity to fill this need for young people. Today’s youth are thoughtful, charismatic, authentic, and quite wonderful. They did not choose to be the test generation for TikTok and algorithms, just like baby boomers didn’t ask to be young when smoking was understudied and highly marketed. It is a special opportunity we all have to create spaces for teens and young adults to be free from the social and cultural burdens that have been placed on them and in front of them.

This is what I love about youth ministry and my role at Rosedale Bible College. The place and the structure are provided, and the students bring a desire for growth and connection. I have seen firsthand that when a phone basket is provided, or a mandatory discipleship group is on the schedule, students may groan at first, but they always thrive and impress me with their creativity and their desire for more depth.

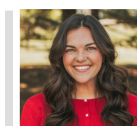
What I have observed over the past few years is that our youth in the 21st century are the same as every other generation of young people—they have dreams, they are trying their best with what they have been given, and they have a longing that can only be satisfied by Christ and life in the Kingdom.

If this is true, then our job is to create and offer them those spaces to discover who God is and what His plans for their lives are. It isn’t always as difficult or as serious as we think.

Make them participate in strange, “uncool” games at youth group, expect them to show up for an early morning Bible study, and give them the chance to surprise you because they will. Maybe our role in the lives of the young people we love is simply to provide a metaphorical, and sometimes physical, phone basket. 📱

...young people want real relationships and authentic community, but have been given screens as a substitute.

Photo credit: [Rumeysa Demir on Pexels](#)



Esther is wrapping up nearly four years of work as an admissions counselor at RBC. Later this summer, she and her husband, Mark, plan to move to Lexington, Kentucky, to serve at Oasis Community Church.



Provision: A REACH Reflection

BY MADELINE

Names and locations have been changed or omitted for security.

If I have learned anything during my time in the Mediterranean, it's that life will constantly change—that circumstances and local culture can end up clashing with my plans or expectations. Some weeks feel like they require daily shifts in my understanding of things I thought I'd already learned. Living in a place that I can't completely grasp means that I must constantly re-evaluate, which is humbling to say the least.

Thankfully, our Father is gracious and wants to provide.

This sort of evaluation can be really tiring. I don't have the luxury of just mindlessly operating here like I can at home, where language and culture are second nature. The words of Annie Sherwood Hawks' hymn "I Need Thee Every Hour" have become increasingly real for me in the Mediterranean; every hour, I truly do need Him to provide me with the patience, grace, and energy to get through the day. Thankfully, our Father is gracious and wants to provide.

Our team experienced this provision as we were returning from our vacation this year. Our route home included taking a train from the southern part of our country up to a town that neighbors the one our team lives in. Though I'd lived in this same location during my previous year of REACH, I'd never made it to this neighboring town; however, after being here in the Mediterranean for so long, I figured I that I would have no problem getting us home. I'd used taxis so much that I felt like a total professional. How different could the town next door really be? I'm sure you can guess that it was not as easy as I'd assumed.

I knew that the train would make two different stops in the town, and I planned for our team to disembark when we reached the second stop. From there, we'd hail a taxi, ride to the town's taxi station, make a transfer, and climb into a final taxi for the trip back home. Unfortunately, my plans immediately began to fall apart.

First, you should know that the trains here in the Mediterranean will sometimes overbook. So, when three women boarded our train at the first station, their tickets were for the seats my team and I were occupying. The women realized what had happened and were gracious, but warned me that we really should have gotten off at the first stop—many more taxis were waiting there for passengers than would be at the second station.

When we arrived, I realized that these women were right. It took us a while to flag down a taxi, but eventually, we were able to squeeze into a car, and I directed the driver to take us to the taxi station. He proceeded to ask me *which* taxi station we wanted to go to, and I had to tell him that I had no idea. I'd forgotten that this town is much larger than ours and has multiple stations. Thankfully, he was very patient with me and, despite our language barrier, was able to understand which town we wanted to travel to.

Once he'd dropped us off at the taxi station, my team and I learned that our troubles weren't over. No regular taxi traveled between this town and ours, which meant that we would either be stuck waiting for an entire taxi to fill up with people also going our direction, or we would have to pay for the whole vehicle ourselves. I was honestly impressed by how incorrect my assumptions were about how this final leg of our trip would go!

Fortunately, we have a good, good Father. He provided local people to guide me through that entire experience and gifted me with extra patience and grace for myself as I used the small amount of language that I've acquired to fumble my way through explanations. The best part about all of this, though? He provides new beginnings as well. When I woke up at home the next day, I didn't have to believe that everything in this country is confusing; there are parts of this culture that I truly do understand. It was possible for me to start the day with a clean slate and with the confidence that I could trust God to see me through.

2 Corinthians 4:8 comes to mind often in this place. It says, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair" (ESV). What a blessing it is to have a Father who can make that true! When hard things come our way—things we can't understand at all—His faithfulness and love will help us stay standing and deliver us safely to our destination. 🙏

Photo credit: [Mathias Reding on Pexels](#)



Madeline has served on two REACH Mediterranean teams, most recently as team leader. This fall, she will return to the Mediterranean as an RI worker intern.



From the Archives

BY PHIL WEBER

Eras and generations have their idiosyncrasies in habits and language. I enjoy asking each rising class at RBC what the current best term is for doing what Paul suggests in Romans, that is, to "boast in God." We have passed through "awesome," "sick," and others to get to "fire" and "lit" most recently. In a time when many women were known by their husband's first name with "Mrs." preceding, our featured person this month remained unmarried and was called by her own name: [Verna Gingerich](#). 