

THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF ROSEDALE BIBLE COLLEGE

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MIRROR 70 YEARS

Glimpses of God's faithfulness:
Hearing from alumni in the past seven decades

Once upon a mustard seed...

“Do we have to put it off any longer? Can’t we start a Bible school this year?” Middle-aged minister Shem Peachey rose to his feet and pled with the CMC ministers as they deliberated and suggested forming “a study committee.” The year was 1950.

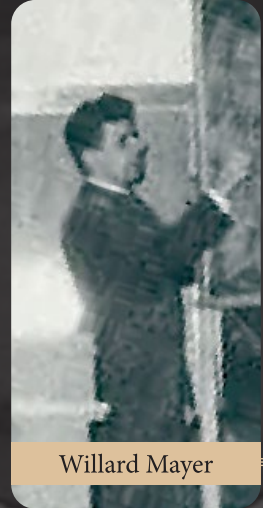
Shem had longed to attend Bible school in his youth, but it hadn’t been an option. For the past 50 years there’d been a ground-swell of spiritual renewal and interest in Bible study in the broader Mennonite church. Thousands enrolled in congregational winter Bible schools. Now it was time for CMC to do something.



David Beachy



Shem Peachey



Willard Mayer

“I shall always remember January 1, 1952, as a day of excitement, anticipation, and apprehension as 136 students, without prior registration, converged upon the facilities of the Pleasant View meetinghouse near Berlin, Ohio,” says Willard Mayer, one of the first five faculty members of the six-week Conservative Amish Mennonite Bible School (CAMBS/Berlin Bible School/Rosedale Bible College). In addition to the “out-of-towners” who needed housing, 40 evening students pushed the first-year enrollment to 176.

Wending through the registration line, students from distant places like Iowa, Michigan, Indiana and Delaware chose from 21 different classes. They quickly paid their dues to the business manager, \$15 for day students and \$48 for boarding students. But things stalled at the lodging table as hosts worked frantically – well into the night – to find lodging and coordinate transportation for the 136 students plus faculty and staff.

After volunteering to host the fledgling CAMBS in 1951, the Pleasant View congregation had enlarged their meetinghouse to create more classroom space. They hung curtains in the sanctuary and balcony to accommodate larger classes – obscuring vision but not sound! Additional cupboards, shelves, and a large black restaurant-style stove were moved into the basement along with eight long tables.

Willard says, “The host congregation graciously accepted us even as we slept in their beds...and disrupted their public gatherings.”

Young pastors like Raymond Byler (1914-1993) from Pigeon, Michigan, and David Beachy (1916-2022) from Alden, New York, had dreamed of this day. They’d both enthusiastically promoted the new school, polled Conference leaders, recruited faculty members, arranged for the venue, designed the class schedule, and Shem Peachey, who never got to attend Bible school himself, was one of those first teachers, his son, Mark, the first principal, and his wife Salome, the first matron.

**And now, 70 years later, the large
tree has branches that spread
throughout the world ...**

1950

David I. Miller ('53) of Grantsville, Maryland, and **Erma Bender ('53)** of Springs, Pa., were two of the 189 young people who showed up (without preregistration!) at Pleasant View Mennonite Church to attend CAMBS in 1953.

They remember how crowded the church was! The sanctuary doubled as an assembly hall and classroom. Students and faculty lodged in private homes. The instructors were ordained ministers from various states. None had college degrees except Willard Mayer, a recent graduate of Eastern Mennonite School (now University). Most teacher/preachers had grown up in farm families where even graduation from high school was not expected.

The young Bible school offered an impressive 29 classes. David and Erma remember memorizing 66 Bible verses for Personal Evangelism and making two required visits. They sampled Christian Fundamentals and Church History. David got reprimanded for spending too much time with Erma in the library.

There were revival and spiritual life meetings, literary societies, and vocal ensembles. Gospel teams travelled to churches and mission outposts like Turner's Creek, Bowling Creek, and Gays Creek, Kentucky or Flint and Mt. Morris, Michigan. Panels discussed how modern developments like electricity, tape recorders, and radios were affecting young people.



David & Erma Miller

After marriage, continued church involvement, and additional schooling, David and Erma moved their young family to Flint, Michigan, in 1963, at the invitation of the Conference mission board (now Rosedale International (RI).) Then in 1972 the Millers moved to Rosedale, Ohio, where David first joined the faculty of RBC then went on to serve in administration with RI and CMC.

David and Erma say, "The Berlin Bible School experience infiltrated our beings, clarified our beliefs, strengthened our faith, and oriented us to serving God however and wherever he might call. This year we celebrated 68 years of marriage. We have seven children, 19 grandchildren, and 27 great-grandchildren. We encouraged each of our children to attend RBC. We highly recommend RBC – knowing how important biblical studies are for a good foundation for life."

Sally (Miller) Hershberger ('63) says the Bible classes and connections with other classmates profoundly shaped the direction of her life. While on a gospel team to Austin, Indiana, Sally grew especially close to five friends, and they've kept a circle letter and regular reunions going for 60 years. She says, "We share deeply and personally. These friendships have been a source of spiritual strength."

After Bible school Sally married John Hershberger. They served briefly in northern Minnesota then moved to Kalona, Iowa, where they pastored at the Fairview Mennonite Church for 30 years. Sally says that both Berlin Bible School and the RBC summer terms their family attended helped equip them for ministry.

Now retired from pastoring, John and Sally enjoy serving tour groups that visit the Kalona area. John drives the tour buses and lectures on the history of the region. Sally serves in-home meals.

John and Sally have four children, 18 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. Sally says, "Our four children have all attended RBC. We are deeply grateful for the choices they have made to serve the Lord in business and church work. Three of our four children met their spouses at RBC, making it an even more special

1960



Ruth Yoder, Ann Stutzman (front row), Sally Hershberger, Anna Marie Mullet, Alma Miller, and Ruth Miller (back row) pictured in a 2021 reunion in Sugarcreek, Ohio

1970



Susan and Bill display a quilt she designed in memory of their grandson Kaleb who died two years ago.

Bill ('73-'75) and Susan (Miller '74) Hochstedler chose to live and raise their family in communities where the majority of people are non-churched. For 40 years that's been Sioux Lookout, Ontario. Here they're well known through Bill's Plumblin business and tourist camp – West Point Cove Camp.

Bill, a pilot, has served on the Airport Commission, with the Gideons, and on the board of Living Hope Native Ministries. Currently he's an active member of Rotary.

During the years Susan homeschooled their four children, their family baking and craft projects helped them interface with the broader community. Susan has also been a member of the Hospital Auxiliary, the Chamber of Commerce, volunteered at the Salvation Army Thrift Store, and sung in the community choir's Christmas and Easter Cantatas.

Even as they rubbed shoulders with many in secular settings, Susan says they "required" all four of their children to attend RBC for at least one year. (All stayed to graduate!) Now she's excited to see that their two oldest grandchildren are enrolled for the fall semester at RBC in 2022.

Bill says his time at RBC gave him the solid base he's needed to function well in the secular world. Susan found the Bible eye-opening and life-changing. She still recalls concepts from those days.

She says, "My Rosedale experience helped me see that I was part of 'something bigger', but also to know that I, as 'something smaller', mattered immensely to God! I'm glad that RBC is continuing to provide strong, biblical foundations for each succeeding generation. It's not easy to maintain the balance between being culturally relevant and biblically accurate!"

1980

When **Angela (Detweiler) Schlabach's ('84)** friends headed to other Bible schools she chose RBC so she could earn credits toward a college degree. She thoroughly enjoyed classes – especially Hebrews with Fran Overholt.

"We had to memorize Hebrews 11," Ang recalls. "And parts have remained embedded in my heart to this day. I'm thankful for the challenges RBC afforded me. I was dealing with a lot of fear, but I was pushed beyond my comfort zone and encouraged to take on roles I would otherwise have avoided. God has taken those small seeds and continued to grow them in me. Today when I'm asked to teach a class, lead a Bible study, or speak to women, by the grace of God I actually enjoy doing it!"

When Ang came to RBC she was dating Dave Schlabach, the man she married in 1988. They had two daughters, one adopted from Ukraine. Dave built his own masonry business which grew into a profitable poured wall company. Ang says, "He loved spending time with the girls and me, and we enjoyed many adventures together. Sadly, five years ago Dave began having serious health issues and died unexpectedly."

Since then Ang says there has been lots of chaos, but she finds comfort in Lam. 3:22-23: *Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed; for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!*

Currently Ang lives in Uniontown, Ohio, and is helping to raise her one-year-old grandson. She also serves as family coordinator for Pure Gift of God, an organization in Berlin that gives grants to families who adopt.

Ang says, "I hope RBC continues to challenge youth to follow Jesus. Life often doesn't turn out how we dreamed it would. But God gives us 'an anchor for the soul'. As the world changes, I pray RBC continues to lead its students to cast their anchors into a God who remains forever unchanging!"



Ang & Dave Schlabach

1990

Lynette (Hochstedler) Schrader ('91,'92,'96) came to Rosedale in 1991 and never left. She met her husband **Tim ('92)** at RBC, and they live nearby on a lovely five-acre plot of land with their four daughters. Tim is an engineering manager for Vertiv, working on new product development.

After RBC Lynette earned a degree in English Ed. and currently teaches high school English at Shekinah Christian School in Plain City, Ohio.

“Literature is full of life lessons,” Lynette says, “and I love being able to discuss these lessons with students through a Christian lens. I also love teaching kids to be wise and discerning thinkers. We walk through how to research, how to discern if a source is a reputable one or not, and then how to craft a reasoned and sound argument. This is now more important than ever.”

“My time at RBC helped ground me in my faith in ways that I can’t even begin to measure. It exposed me to the grand themes of the Bible and to great authors and theological ideas that were brand new. It forced me to think critically and helped me to see the preeminence and validity of Christianity. It also gave me lifelong friendships with like-minded people.”

Lynette is also delighted to see RBC impacting the lives of her daughters. Her oldest is headed into her 15th year of Choral Camp this summer. One daughter graduated from RBC and another is headed there in 2022.

“RBC, you have been called into an incredibly sacred mission,” Lynette says. “You are a vital sanctuary for young people to grow deep and wise in their faith. You are providing students with a foundation of truth, grace, and vision. Go forward into the future with absolute confidence that what you are doing is of immeasurable value. Be bold in seeking God’s provision and guidance for the future. His hand is on you and with you.”



Tim & Lynette Schrader
and their four daughters



David & Deborah Landis

When **David R. Landis ('99)** and his wife Deborah came to RBC from Telford, Pa., in 1998 their lives took a radical turn. They’d grown restless in running their Landis Graphics business, and wanted to dedicate time to deeper study of God’s word. At RBC God steered them into prison ministry through We Care in Atmore, Alabama. They sold their home and business and gave themselves to prison ministry for the next 20 years. Dave served as president of We Care for 13 of those years. Since stepping down in 2014, Dave now serves as an overseer for the Gulf Coast area of Good News Fellowship.

As Dave contrasts a business he ran before entering “full-time ministry” with We Care to his current bi-vocational role running Landis Design Co. alongside his overseer work, he says, “I see how I’ve moved from merely building a business to an understanding of how we’re building the Kingdom through our business. I like saying we work to build the Kingdom throughout our lives. The lines between business and mission have blurred so much that in many ways they are really one and the same.”

Dave says, “RBC has certainly earned a position of influence over the last 70 years. As important as on-campus learning is, I’d look for every opportunity to expand that influence outside of the property lines of RBC.”

2000

After **Starla (Moser) Swartz** ('02-'05,'09), Grove City, Ohio, finished music and worship studies at RBC, she worked in a variety of jobs before taking up dental hygiene studies and work until 2018 when she became a fulltime “domestic engineer” with three young children.

Starla says, “Now my focus is on raising children who are aware of Christ and what he has done. Parenting is probably the hardest role I have taken on yet!” She’s also been involved in music and children’s ministries at her church. Starla is married to **Mike Swartz** ('89,'91-93,'95) who works at Prudential Insurance as director of infrastructure architecture.

Starla had grown up in a small, rural community and says, “My time at Rosedale helped me understand and develop my own beliefs. I’ve now left that ‘bubble,’ but feel that I have a good foundation for each new experience. If all students gain the same footing I did the world wouldn’t seem quite so intimidating. I hope RBC continues teaching the Bible seriously and watching as God shapes the lives of students.”



Starla & Mike Swartz and their children

2010



Meklit Tilahun (left) and her sister Tsega who is currently a student at RBC

Meklit Tilahun ('18,'19) came to RBC from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2018, a bit reluctantly at first because it was a small unknown place and far from home. Although she’d been raised in a Christian home and wanted to be a medical missionary she says, “My exposure, education and interactions at Rosedale clarified that call. RBC became my ‘Mount Horeb’ – where God spoke to Elijah in a ‘still, small voice.’ I was able to connect with God on a deeper level.

“RBC is a safe environment for young Christians to explore and learn about different controversial topics. I felt safe asking questions and seeking for answers because I knew my surroundings were filled with believers who cared about the word of God and how it is interpreted. The amazing relationships I built are unforgettable and hold a special place in my heart. I experienced Christ-like love from the professors, staff and students.”

After RBC Meklit graduated from college and is currently working in cancer research at Exact Sciences in Madison, Wisconsin, as she applies for medical school. She’s also involved in teaching classes for children and youth in her local church and hosts a Bible study for young adults in her apartment.

“The consistency of RBC for 70 years never ceases to surprise me. Thank you for welcoming one African girl to your campus and transforming her life forever. I know there are so many more young people God wants to reach through you! I am grateful that RBC shaped me to be the best clinical scientist I can be as salt and light in the world.”

Conner ('20,'21) and Andrea (Lyndaker) Johnson ('18-'20) are students at Ohio State University in Sustainable Agriculture and Human Development while awaiting the birth of their first child in June.

As they prepare for future service overseas Conner and Andrea are enjoying connecting with fellow students and neighbors in their diverse neighborhood which includes a recent Afghan refugee family. Andrea also works in a Christian daycare for low-income families.

“Attending RBC helped us understand the value of intentional community,” Andrea says. “We are learning how to build a community of people that love and support one another in a deeper way than what the world outside the church usually experiences. While believers vary in background and belief, we are most effective when we focus on loving one another and working towards the common goal of spreading the gospel.

“Attending RBC helped us learn the Bible and establish firm beliefs. It also gave us the humility to recognize that we are not always correct, and that being people of peace means listening with grace while interacting with others, even when we disagree. RBC also helped prepare us for mainstream academic world – engaging with tough ideas and conversations, as well as tackling papers and studying for tests.

“We love RBC’s focus on building Kingdom community and kinship. Living in the RBC ‘bubble’ through the worst COVID year helped us develop deep friendships in the midst of turmoil. Off campus now, we find that community, belonging, and stability are really lacking in most people’s lives. We hope RBC will continue being a stepping stone for students who live in Kingdom community to learn how to share that ‘good news’ with others.”



Conner & Andrea Johnson

MIRROR

Our Mission: We exist to prepare Kingdom workers through collegiate biblical education in the context of authentic community, experiential learning opportunities and skill development, Spirit-led prayer, worship and devotional Bible reading.

Alumni Updates: Please go to rosedale.edu/alumni-resources » “Update your Contact Information”. High-res photos are always welcome. We’d love to be in touch!

Please address all correspondence to:

Rosedale Bible College
Jewel Showalter, Editor
2270 Rosedale Road
Irwin, Ohio 43029-9504

[740.857.1311](tel:740.857.1311)
Fax: 877.857.1312
Email: info@rosedale.edu

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Thanks!

MISSION DRIFT

J. Howard Pew*, a wealthy Christian businessmen (1882-1971) ran the Sun Oil Company for 35 years amassing a sizeable fortune. During his lifetime, the Pew family established a group of foundations which have become the well-known Pew Charitable Trusts.

In the early years, Pew was explicit in his desire that these foundations were to distribute his resources only to organizations that were faithful to the gospel. However, after his death the organization lost its focus and now, only 73 years since the first trust was founded, its \$6 billion fortune helps to support groups like Planned Parenthood and various Ivy League universities unsympathetic to the gospel.

My hunch is that J. Howard Pew would be distraught with the current focus of his trusts. 70+ years can change many things.

You'll not be surprised to hear that in my conversations with others about RBC, the question of mission drift sometimes arises. "Is RBC following the well-worn path of many colleges begun by churches but no longer explicitly tied to Christ and his church?"

This year RBC turned 70. No church, individual, or institution is immune from the potential of spiritual drift. Like various colleges, many churches have lost their spiritual way. Frustratingly, it's likely that each of us has had seasons of spiritual wandering. What is needed is fidelity to Jesus and a commitment to center

our work around his calling.

For 70 years, by God's grace, RBC has maintained a commitment to preparing men and women for service in God's Kingdom by understanding his Word to us. In fact, over the last several years we have worked to become even more intentional in the way we carry out that mission.

RBC is certainly different from what it was 70 years ago. We are accredited. We carry out campus life very differently. We offer a wider variety of courses. And we even had a donation of jewelry that we sold for benefit at a choral concert!

Over decades of changes what remains is the unchanging call to train young men and women to be faithful to Jesus and his Kingdom through careful study of his Word. These most important things have not changed, and I pray they never will.

On this quest to stay faithful to the mission God has entrusted to us, we recognize that we are not invincible. We value partnership and accountability with you. Our aim is to serve God's people, and we can't do that without walking with his global Body. May God grant us all the perseverance to stay true to Jesus in every decade of our lives.

President
JEREMY MILLER



*Cited in *Mission Drift* by Peter Greer