

THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF ROSEDALE BIBLE COLLEGE

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MIRROR



MANUAL LABOR: A HOLY ENDEAVOR
Introducing Rose Dale Trades



MANUAL LABOR: A HOLY ENDEAVOR

by Dion Gingerich ('04,'06)

I have a hobby that some may feel is a bit different.

I love woodworking with old hand tools. One reason I love making things in a more traditional way is the feeling I get when I complete a project.

I just finished making a traditional English joiner's mallet from the wood of a maple tree cut down two years ago on the Rosedale Bible College campus. It's hard to describe the feeling of accomplishment I get when I finish projects like this!

Part of that accomplishment is the extra skills it takes to do the project in this way. The woodworker must learn to sharpen tools, chop mortises with chisels, and use tools to cut off perfect shavings that shape the project.

When done correctly, even little projects like this are worth accomplishing because they create quality things that will outlive my own life. Additionally, I would argue that the making of a lowly carpenter's mallet is something that is theologically important. Such work may even be at the core of what it means to be human in God's creation.

Let me explain. RBC is poised to launch a new trades program this fall, and we want to take time to think carefully about work. What is work and what purpose does it serve? The answers to these questions have huge implications for how we understand God and His intentions for creation and what it means to be human.

Now some might think this is going a bit far. We've often heard that "our work does not define us" and therefore can't be so connected to something as important as our very humanness. But for Christians, understanding God's intentions can help us to better live into His purposes for us.

What then is the purpose for work? Is it something that we do only to gain other things like money, goods, and services? If work is only for the purpose of gaining other things, then it becomes hard to evaluate whether certain forms of work are good or bad. If it's just for the gain of other things, then work which generates the most money is the best work.

I would argue against such a shallow, utilitarian view of work because Scripture has much more to say.

In the very first chapter of the Bible, God gave humanity a mandate to subdue and rule over creation and to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28).

This did not mean that humans should rule and exploit the earth for what they could get out of it. Rather, the mandate was for humans to rule the earth as God would rule, to bring the earth to its fullest potential. Human work is to be a reflection of God and His creative actions of bringing order out of chaos, just as He did in Genesis 1:1.

Work, as ordained by God, is the very intention for which we were created. Work is a part of what makes us human. As we work, we fulfill the mandate God gave us to rule the earth as His representative image-bearers.

Thus, we can't say that work is only a result of the fall. Sure, Genesis 3 states that work will also come with "painful toil." But in the beginning, work was part of God's good intentions and mandate. Only after the fall did work often become painful and destructive. This pain comes because of our own broken, distorted choices that diverge from God's original intentions.

Work, even after the fall, is still good because it is a part of God's original mandate and intention. Viewing our work as good is incredibly important. It speaks of our humanity – the purposes God has for us as His priestly rulers over creation. These works which God has commanded us to do are not just actions for the present. They are actions which tie us to the beginning of the world as well as point us forward to the future.

Revelation 21:24-26 speaks of a future when the heavens and the earth are united as one, and the kings of the earth carry their glory into the heavenly city. What is this glory of the kings and nations?

I believe that the mandate given to the nations is the work of building up and caring for the creation in a way that points toward its fullest potential. Part of the "glory and honor of the nations" (v. 26) is what humanity has done to build up and further creation.

A few years ago when I was in seminary, I used my summers to work at making extra money. One summer, a friend hired me to build a screened-in gazebo for his family so they could enjoy the outdoors in the buggy Canadian summers. One morning in the middle of this project, I was visiting with my dear friend, a New Testament scholar. Drawing our conversation to a close, I told him I had to go to work on this gazebo.

He looked at me and said, "Work well, my friend. One day that gazebo will be ushered into the heavenly city."

What a glorious declaration of the goodness of work! He was declaring the truth of this passage in Revelation. All the artistic marvels of humanity – functionality, efficiency, creativeness, ingenuity, beauty – are the "glory and honor of the nations" which will one day be ushered into that heavenly city.

If all the functional, creative, and beautiful works of God's image bearers will be ushered into that heavenly city, how we understand and think of work changes.

Work is a core part of what makes us human. Our humanness is tied to our building, furthering, and enabling creation to be what it was designed by God to become.

In the New Testament Paul refers to "the work of the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). This work is not just "spiritual" work done by pastors and missionaries. Rather, "the work of the Lord" includes all the work we were created to accomplish. It is work that will continue on into the renewal of creation. In the new creation we will continue the creation mandate unimpeded by the brokenness of this present age. Our task as priestly caretakers of creation means that our work should further God's intended ends and be a part of building up creation.

This framing also means that there is work that God does not intend for us to do. Work that dehumanizes people or actively destroys creation has a shallow focus on outcomes. This exploitative work does not fulfill God's intentions for our care of creation.

Even the small job of making a mallet can be important work in line with God's purposes for humanity. But there is also much work that does not fulfill God's best desires for humanity and in fact actively works against these divine purposes.

The creative endeavors of our work – as preachers or seamstresses – are both a part of our created purpose as image-bearers. Both the teacher and the tradesman help fulfill the purposes for which God has created us. Both tangible and intangible work calls us forward in hope. It is the future of a renewed heaven and earth where the work of God is accomplished through His people in righteousness – without hindrance or exploitation.

Our mandate at RBC is to train workers in God's Kingdom. We're excited to see how Rosedale Trades will both balance and augment this divine calling.



Dion Gingerich currently serves as dean of students at RBC but is planning to transition to a full-time teaching role. He and his wife Krista ('03,'04) have four children and live in Rosedale.

Introducing ROSEDALE TRADES

by Titus Beitzel ('84)

"Hey, Gramps! Don't forget, in two days you and Nana are going to take us to get ice cream to celebrate your birthday."

My wife Beth had picked up our grandkids after school. We were all sitting around our kitchen island, chatting, and teasing each other. Beth had told them of my upcoming birthday, and that we'd be heading to Country Roads for ice cream. They wanted to make sure I didn't forget!

I'd like to think that the grandkids were excited to celebrate my birthday because they appreciate the wisdom that I share with them by being this old, but I'm pretty sure they just like ice-cream!

This birthday will be number 59. Only one year away from the big 6-0.

When I was around 40 years old, our family was listening to a *Focus on the Family* radio program. Someone read from Psalms 90, "Seventy years are given to us! Some even 80."

Our son Jeremy, who was around 13 at the time, piped up, "Dad, you're 40, so you're half-dead!"

Now that I'm way past "half-dead," I have more experiences to reflect back on and more appreciation for possible future adventures. What would I tell a younger Titus? Obviously I can't go back, but I can share my experiences with young people who want to prepare for work in the Kingdom. I can share about the faithfulness of God and encourage others to place their trust fully in Him.

Titus Beitzel lives in Grantsville, MD, with his wife Beth. In addition to helping design and implement Rosedale Trades this year, Titus and Beth enjoy hiking and spending time with their four sons and their families.



How the Rosedale Trades adventure began

The phone rang, and it was Jeremy Miller, president of RBC. I was a member of RBC's Board of Trustees and remembered how Jeremy had lead us in brainstorming sessions about how the college can better meet the needs of our supporting churches.

During one of these meetings, I mentioned being at RBC back in 1985, long before I was "half-dead!" At the time I had no intention of attending college because high school had taught me that I wasn't good at "book learning." Out of that brainstorming the idea for beginning a parallel "trades track" at RBC emerged.

As Jeremy floated this idea with people from different communities the idea gained traction. Now he was calling to ask me to consider becoming the director of Rosedale Trades.

As Beth and I discerned if this was something I should take on, it became clear that I should make myself available for this new challenge.

I'm not a classroom teacher or professional with degrees behind my name, but I am willing to teach others what I've learned over the past 34 years while working in the trades.

I started my career as an electrician's helper and retired 34 years later as the company's Chief Operating Officer. Throughout my career, I've carried various titles including Master Electrician, Master Plumber, Master HVAC, Project Manager, Manager of Operations, Pastor, and Mentor. But I've also come to realize that titles quickly fade, and the only title that matters is Child of God. As a Child of God, I'm willing to add Director of Rosedale Trades to the list of titles that define what I do for this next season.

The Vision of Rosedale Trades

In Ephesians 2:8-9, we learn that we are saved by grace through faith and don't earn salvation by our good works. But verse 10 states, "*We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*" This verse helps us see God's love and purpose for our lives during the 75 or 80 years He gives us.

First, we are His "handiwork." I love creating things and then watching others enjoy my handiwork. We are all unique. I believe God smiles and says about each of us at birth, "Here you go world. Enjoy this masterpiece!"

But this verse gives us a greater purpose for life than just being enjoyed by others. We are created "*to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*" What greater calling is there? God designed "good works" for us before we were born.

I am excited to help students recognize that they are masterpieces created by God, and that He has good works with their names on, waiting for them to do. I am also excited to help them develop the necessary skills to do these good works in a way that honors God.

Where will Rosedale Trades be located?

It's also been encouraging to see how God was "preparing a place" for Rosedale Trades even before this idea surfaced. Choice Books had a distribution location adjoining the RBC property. When they decided to consolidate their operations at another location, the facility became available to the college at a reasonable price.

When we committed to begin Rosedale Trades and toured the former Choice Books property, I told Jeremy that we could have looked from Rosedale to Grantsville, MD (my home region) and not found a facility better suited for the start of a trades program!

There are offices, storage, and conference areas which will work well for classroom and lecture areas. There is a large climate-controlled garage area that will be perfect for lab and hands-on teaching. There is a large storage barn which will allow for at least two locations for building full-length *tiny houses* or other real-world learning projects.

The building will need only minimal modifications – such as moving a few main doors, adding a few windows, additional lighting in the shop areas, and removing some van loading docks in the garage area.

Partnership with



**Mennonite
Disaster
Service**

Another way that we have seen God work in unexpected ways is that MDS approached RBC about becoming an active partner in Rosedale Trades. MDS is pleased to introduce young people to their service opportunities, get help in staffing their project sites, and see young people trained for life-long service. MDS is offering scholarships to students who attend Rosedale Trades and participate in the six-week winter term service opportunities at one of their project sites. This gives students an opportunity to gain real-life experience in the trades while doing the "good works" they were created to do.

Curriculum plans

Rosedale Trades will emphasize hands-on learning along with a small percentage of time dedicated to theory and book study. We will be drawing from organizations such as National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) which offers printed resources geared specifically for the trades.

Our current plan is to build at least one *tiny house* every year and then auction it off at year's end. The proceeds from the sale will help offset program costs. Building a *tiny house* will allow students to practice many of the construction trades such as carpentry, electrical, plumbing, and HVAC.

Student Life & Schedule

All students who participate in Rosedale Trades will be part of normal RBC campus life. They will attend general Bible classes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and trades courses on Tuesday and Thursday. In the fall semesters of years one and two, they will focus on general carpentry and plumbing respectively. Spring semesters of years one and two will focus on general electrical studies and HVAC. During the six-week winter terms, students will participate in service opportunities with MDS. In addition to the deeper dive into specific trades each semester, students will have the opportunity to work hands-on with all the trades while building the *tiny houses*.

I pray that Rosedale Trades will be a place where students will come and develop solid foundations for their journey through life. I pray that when they are way past "half-dead" they can testify of God's grace and provision while they were doing the works He "*prepared in advance for them to do.*"

a **TRADESMAN** in **KINGDOM** **WORK**

by Randy Sunderland ('96)

At an early age, I experienced what I believed to be a call into ministry. I was 10 years old at the time and translated that to mean that I *should become a pastor*.

During my teen years, and even as I began attending RBC, I felt confident that God was leading me into the pastorate. As my time at RBC wound down, I was still very passionate about Kingdom work, but felt that God was cooling off my idea of *becoming a pastor*. Sensing this caused tremendous conflict for me.

One of the many benefits of RBC is the opportunity to seek counsel from godly professors. When I talked with one, he simply advised me to follow God's leading. That sounded great until I realized that I had to *wait on God's leading and timing*. Instead of the clear-cut answers I desired, I found myself putting one foot in front of the other, daily making choices that I hoped and prayed were promptings of the Holy Spirit rather than *my will* pulling in straying directions.

This time of waiting and then walking one step at a time took me into landscaping, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, installing outside wood boilers, self-storage, minor excavation, and now residential construction.

I kept taking each step questioning God... "Really, this doesn't sound like Kingdom work to me? Did I not hear you right? When is it going to be time to switch to *real* ministry?"

Somewhere in this journey, I began to realize that I had the same number of hours in a day to interact with others as a pastor does. I was listening to people, hearing what they were saying, caring for them, praying with them, living life with them. And it wasn't just customers, but other tradesmen, employees, employers, salesmen, and so on.

It took me way too long to realize that God had put me in just the right circumstances at just the right time to *minister* to the needs of those around me – and He used my plumbing and electrical work as an opportunity for me to interact with those I normally wouldn't have rubbed shoulders with.

The years that I spent – waiting with anticipation of the fulfillment of *the real call into ministry* – were just

Randy Sunderland and his wife, Juli, live in Huntingdon, PA. They have two adult children: Rachel, married to Tristan, and Josh. Randy serves as administrative pastor at Allensville Mennonite Church in addition to his other business involvements.



as much Kingdom work as what I am now doing as a bi-vocational pastor at Allensville Mennonite Church.

Ministry – *Kingdom work* – isn't just lived out in pastoral roles.

It is lived out by each of us, walking faithfully – not perfectly, but faithfully, wherever God leads us. It is loving on people that God lines up to cross our paths, using the gifts and passions that He gave us, not for our glory, but for His. Even our mistakes can be redeemed by God's grace.

Some of the most meaningful conversations I've had started with me saying, "I'm sorry." I probably haven't used those two words enough.

What a blessing it is for all of us to discover our gifts and passions and to use them as we interact with, truly listen, and speak life into others' lives. I've been blessed to have others do this for me and pray that I will be found faithful in doing the same for others.

I am very excited to see how RBC is expanding its ministry training. Intermingling Biblical studies with the trades will be life-changing for those who have a passion and calling into the construction industry.

Through God's blessings in various businesses, my wife Juli and I feel we have been called to support people in ministry in ways that others may not be able to. Beyond financial support, we've enjoyed assisting with electrical work in Costa Rica, concrete work at an orphanage in Romania, and installing a septic system at Springs of Life Camp in Spain. Juli's nurses' training has also come in handy.

May each of us make the most of the circumstances that God places us in to minister to those around us. As we listen and follow God's leading, we will end up serving the Kingdom exactly where He wants us, and in all kinds of ways beyond our imagination.

ALUMNI NEWS & RBC UPDATES



RBC graduates 28 students, breaks ground for new dorm, and prepares for largest-ever fall enrollment

“We’re very grateful to launch this new group of Kingdom workers as well as break ground for a much needed new dorm,” said Jeremy Miller, president. He explained that when they kicked off the capital campaign to raise \$6 million for a new residence hall three years ago, they had no idea of how urgent the housing needs would become.

Projected enrollment for the fall semester is running over 110 students, taxing current facilities that have comfortably housed 70-80 students the last several years, and creating the need to make a waitlist for both men and women who are still applying.

“While we have had more students on campus for various short terms, our projected fall enrollment is the largest that RBC has ever had to begin an academic year,” Miller said.

In light of the urgent need for student housing, the RBC board made the decision to break ground for the new dorm in spite of the fact that \$500,000 is still needed to complete the project debt free.

“We are continuing to pray that God will provide the needed funds,” Miller said.

When the new dorm is completed in the fall of 2025, campus capacity will increase by over 40%. Men will move into the current women’s dorm and women will occupy the new dorm. The current men’s dorm is slated for demolition.

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"I AM NOT GOING TO COLLEGE!"

President
JEREMY MILLER

When I arrived at RBC in the summer of 2018, we were excited to recruit, sharing RBC's vision with young people around the country.

Those early conversations with high school students were interesting because there was a clear sense of ambivalence about college education even when there was a desire to study the scriptures. This was particularly true for young men.

In more recent years, we have seen another shift in the perspective of young men in particular. In 2018, discussion about college would cause a shrug of the shoulders. In 2023, it often provoked a hostile rejection. This is in line with recent cultural trends in which 60% of college grads are now women.

I'm sympathetic to young men who are rejecting the collegiate path. Much of the current college landscape is expensive and filled with ideological landmines. At its best, a secular education was supposed to help young people prepare for a more effective life by learning to think critically, to communicate well, and to gain a larger understanding of the world.

While RBC is designed to help students think critically and communicate well, its purpose and foundation is different from that of a secular

institution. RBC's mission rests on our King Jesus and His Word to us. It is our conviction that a deeper understanding of the King and His Word enables men and women to live more effectively in His Kingdom. As the truths of the Kingdom of God are understood and lived, life becomes deeper and more colorful, and we are able to walk with the King in joy and confidence. We want these kinds of Kingdom workers.

We didn't start Rosedale Trades because the world needs more trades training, though it might. We are launching Rosedale Trades because God has opened the door to help young people understand the Kingdom of God through trades training. While learning to build houses, our trades students will also study the Bible and be disciplined in our campus community.

It's ok to lose interest in certain kinds of studies, but Kingdom studies are essential. When we know the King and His Word, we are able to think critically and speak redemptively into the important issues of our day be it apologetics, human sexuality, or the purpose of the church. RBC exists to help people do just that.

