

RUF REPORT

News of Reformed University Fellowship in the Northeast and Midwest

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RUF in Mexico!

RUF is working on some large universities. The University of Maryland has 26,000 undergraduates, the University of Minnesota has 29,000, and Penn State has 38,000. But these are nothing to the 120,000 students at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in Mexico City. Five years ago Peter Dishman arrived in Mexico City to begin an experiment in campus ministry. It was a collaboration between the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico, Mission to the World (MTW), and RUF. His job was to establish an RUF in Mexico that could be a model for the Mexican church to use all over the country.

Last month I spent a week with Peter in Mexico City. I have known Peter since he joined RUF, and am glad to be his Area Coordinator and to return to Mexico to visit him. I arrived on Monday and got oriented to the UNAM and Peter's neighborhood. Tuesday I strolled through the shopping district and bought a few books, even though I speak no Spanish and the merchants speak no English. That afternoon we had the large group meeting where Peter is speaking on the book of Acts. I was impressed – with the students, with Peter's message, and with Zurielly, his co-worker. Peter and Zurielly met at Covenant Seminary and have been working together at the UNAM. She is the primary welcomer and is a big part of the success of RUF. She provided a terrific snack and most of us hung around for a couple of hours afterward.



Peter Dishman preaching at the UNAM large group

On Wednesday and Thursday RUF hosts an English conversation club. Students show up and we discuss a topic to help them improve their English. Many of the students at the large group meeting first met RUF here. On Wednesday I conversed with some of the 20 students who came. Thirty students came out on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Antonieta had received an email about the Bible study she leads in the sciences faculty (department). Here is an edited translated copy. (Note: RUF in Spanish comes out as CUR.)

Dear Christians,

I lament to inform you that the true CUR (Committee of the Revolutionary Unit) has decided that you are not welcome in the sciences faculty. The reason? Well, if you look at the main entrance...you will see in red and black letters a welcome message that says clearly FREE AND REBELLIOUS TERRITORY such that there is no place in our faculty for oppression, misogyny, obscurity, mysticism, and ignorance such as [that which comes from] religion and in particular from the homophobic and genocidal Judeo-Christian religions.

Do you really believe that a community of brother scientists of Galileo and Kepler would look well upon a mountain of zombies descending from that ignorant man named Luther...? Do you believe that the students of Darwin would get along lovingly with the religious people who negate the scientific FACT of evolution...? Do you believe that a mountain of free and diverse men would accept retrogrades that come to tell us that homosexuality offends their god...?

As a result and in according to the agreement we have made in the anarchic-communist plenary session of the CUR we agree on the following:

1. ALL FLYERS THAT INVITE PEOPLE TO BIBLE STUDIES WILL BE IMMEDIATELY REMOVED....

Peter and I were discussing how to respond to this when we had to go to the English club. It had a threatening tone to it, and Peter was wondering how to interpret that. We were not aware that Antonieta was already replying:

Esteemed Students:

As an ex-atheist with a double bachelor's degree from the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters I understand and respect your point of view, but I do not

think that you are extending the same understanding and respect to us. If we are so civilized, pluralist and free thinkers as we profess to be, we should be open to dialogue. I propose that we meet personally to discuss in an adult manner our respective points of view...

Your series of rhetorical questions...seems to imply that nobody would be interested in attending our studies, but the reality is that we have the pleasure of having various members of your faculty in our group....If there really is "no place" in your faculty for "oppression," why oppress us by taking down our flyers? And, what is more, why take away from your fellow students the freedom to choose? Let us allow them to decide if they wish to come to our studies.

I am proud to say that the Bible study continues! The communists have continued their saber-rattling, but the RUF students are not intimidated.



Ministry Team. Zurielly is on the far left,
Peter is in the rear

Wednesday night Peter and I flew to Monterrey to meet the MTW church-planting team there. They have decided that the next step in reaching Monterrey is to establish RUF ministries on the two major campuses there. Peter and I were given a tour of the campuses and I must say, they are ideally suited to an RUF ministry. At the end of the day we met with a veteran Mexican campus worker who said that the UNAM is the hardest campus in Mexico. If we can succeed there, we can succeed anywhere.



Students at the University of Nuevo Leon in Monterrey

On Friday we flew back to Mexico City in time for me to teach some students in the afternoon. Then in the evening I taught the leaders some basic principles of leadership. They were very appreciative and quite pleased that I am planning to return in the spring.

So God is at work through RUF in Mexico! Pray for God's continued blessing on Peter and Zurielly at UNAM. Pray also for God to provide two men to go to Monterrey. *See more pictures of my trip to Mexico at dgreenruf.org/.*



Students in the cafeteria at the
Monterrey Institute of Technology (MIT)

Everywhere Else

I am in the midst of my fall campus visits and RUF is prospering everywhere. This is the first year for Jeremy at Harvard and Brian at Purdue. Both are exceeding my expectations. This is Chris Garriott's fourth year at University of Maryland, and that ministry is hitting on all cylinders. Joey Pensak is in his fifth year at UConn. A Korean ministry merged with RUF last year, and the two groups have blended nicely. The second year ministers are all doing fine. They are facing difficulties they did not anticipate, however. It will take them a few years to adjust fully to their campuses, which is normal.

dgreenruf.org

I have a new website! Jim Femister set it up for me. The old one was oriented toward Lehigh and was outdated. This one is easier to maintain and is focused on my ministry with staff. It describes my work and has a list of all the men I supervise with links to their own RUF sites. It also has a lot more pictures than I can include in this letter. It has a calendar of my travel plans. And each week I post a brief report of my activities. *Go to dgreenruf.org.*

If you would like to stay in touch with my RUF ministry more frequently, you can receive my weekly prayer update. Send me an email (dgreen@ruf.org) and I will put you on the list.

Thanks and Funds

Finances have been a tense issue for RUF this past year. The good news is that income is up substantially. But expenses have also been higher. At the beginning of the year we were running a deficit in the general account (the account which pays my salary and expenses). There were sufficient reserves to carry us, so there was no short-term problem, but it was not a happy situation. Thankfully, the general fund has become healthier as the year has progressed.

The take-home lesson here is that my ministry with RUF ministers on campuses in the Northeast and Midwest needs your support. Thank you so much for your gifts and prayers, and keep them coming!

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Focus on Chris Garriott



As summer wanes, the end of baseball season draws near. The Baltimore Orioles are in last place in their division, but Chris Garriott has hope for future seasons. He sees his team as having great potential with many “young, promising pitchers.” Now in his fourth year as RUF campus minister at the University of

Maryland (UM), Chris thinks of his students in much the same way.

Over the years, Chris has watched students grow in leadership and unity. Along the way, Chris has learned to delegate many responsibilities to them. He’s formed a ministry team to address specific needs. He’s encouraged Bible Study leaders to think strategically about newcomers and hopes to expand the number of student-led studies in the dorms. He’s come alongside students to create a welcoming environment for those coming from a non-Christian context (not an easy task when less than 2% of the student body is affiliated with any Christian group on campus).

Before joining RUF staff, Chris spent much of his life in youth ministry. As part of his own youth group experience, Chris recalls studying God’s Word, memorizing Scripture, and even learning to lead Bible Studies as early as seventh grade. Following in his four older siblings’ footsteps, Chris began to work with Young Life in high school and continued with that ministry throughout college and seminary. After completing his M.Div degree at Covenant Seminary in St. Louis, Chris stayed in the area

to teach Bible and coach basketball at a Christian high school before moving on to become the youth pastor at Heritage PCA in Oklahoma City. A few years into his time at Heritage, Chris attended RUF non-staff training and began to incorporate the RUF philosophy of ministry into his work at the church. When Chris decided to transition out of his youth pastor position years later, RUF seemed an obvious next step.

Just as RUF impacted Chris’ approach to youth ministry, so has Chris’ experience with youth ministry affected his campus ministry. In both contexts, Chris has seen social interaction as a fundamental part of spreading the Gospel. As a youth pastor, Chris hosted a free lunch for seniors allowed to leave the public high school near his home. Chris has applied a similar model at UM; each week RUF offers a free pizza lunch on campus as a means of outreach.

In addition to his own background in ministry and strong student leadership, Chris has also been blessed with the support of Wallace PCA of College Park, MD, which has partnered with RUF at UM to connect with the campus. In June, the church made the move to a building just off-campus in an effort to better reach students; their welcome BBQ brought in a record 75+ students! That first week, Chris preached to over 50 students at the largest-ever UM RUF large group meeting. A big change from the 14 contacts Chris started with three years ago!

Chris has also been fortunate to have a female intern, Kathryn Drumwright, now in her second year. As a single campus minister, Chris would have a hard time relating to the women on his own, but Kathryn has had a huge impact with the women on campus. On a different note, not having a family allows Chris to spend more time serving on campus. However, it also makes it more challenging for him to have a life outside of RUF. “It’s easy to find my identity in RUF instead of Christ,” he admits. In what little spare time he has, Chris has taken up a few projects around the house and also began training for the Philly Marathon. Also, after 14 years away from his native Maryland, Chris’ work at UM has given him a chance to reconnect with family and friends from home.

In terms of the near future for RUF, Chris looks forward to bringing on another intern. Patrick Watkins will join Chris and Kathryn as soon as he is fully funded. Also, Chris hopes to secure a good large group meeting location for the spring semester. For most of the fall, RUF has been relegated to the outskirts of campus in a less-than-desirable space. Chris snagged a few weeks of the semester in a prime location at the center of campus and is now working with the university to gain access to that room for the whole second half of the year. Pray that the Lord might look upon this venture with favor and continue to bear much fruit through Chris and the overall ministry of RUF at UM.

To learn more about Chris Garriott and the ongoing RUF

ministry at the University of Maryland, please visit the website: www.um.ruf.org.

The Homefront

Christopher has graduated, but now he has to find a job. He spent a good summer in China with a program that takes Americans there to teach Chinese children. After that was over he traveled for about a month. Now he is back home, working as shift manager at Arby's while he waits to take his final foreign service exam. We do not mind – both Ruth and I have a list of projects for him.

Peter is in his last year at Covenant Seminary, so he also is thinking about his next move. He has to coordinate it with Megan, who will finish either next summer or next year. Stephen is back at Lehigh, studying business or international relations, but majoring in friendship. He is starting to put his sociability to use in the RUF group there. Daniel is still in Maryland working for the Navy. He will be going to Georgia for most of October for special training prior to an assignment in Afghanistan.

Benjamin is in eighth grade this year and still home-schooling. He and Ruth have joined a new homeschool co-op, where Ruth is teaching a biweekly English class – LitWits. She is still doing her online AP English class. I am back teaching the adult Sunday School class this year, but Ruth decided to continue with the third and fourth graders.

Personal Reflections

“So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”
Luke 17:10



Encouragement is a big part of ministry. Paul frequently reminds us to encourage one another, and I am sure you know the power of encouragement in your own life. Certainly RUF campus ministers need encouragement as they face numerous obstacles and setbacks, and I try my best to encourage them.

So Jesus surprises us with this apparently *unencouraging* command that we admit to being “unworthy servants.” What sort of motivation is that? If such is the case, maybe

we should not wear ourselves out so much serving God!

There are two lessons to be gained from this passage. First, if discouragement is one hazard of ministry, conceit is its companion. If you are not discouraged because your ministry is suffering, you are likely proud that your ministry is going so well. Ministers are just as likely to bask in hero worship as anyone else. To such people Jesus says, it was never your ability or wisdom that caused this success. Although you may look impressive in the eyes of men, your ministry ability is unimpressive to God.

But what about those of us who do not have great ministry success? Here we must remember to take Jesus' comment in context. In Luke 10 Jesus said, “Rejoice that your names are written in heaven,” and in chapter 12 He said, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” The amazing truth is that Jesus calls us to be His servants, knowing that we will be unworthy. He gives us the kingdom, even though our own efforts are insufficient to keep it.

Jesus lets us serve Him, even though it would be easier to do His work without us. It is like a father or mother working with a child. Every mother knows it is far easier to fix dinner without her children's help. But they love to help because they love their mother, and she lets them help because she loves them. Jesus lets us serve Him because He loves us – not because we are so great. And when our inadequacies are on full display, Jesus loves us no less. At our best we are unworthy, and at our worst we are unworthy – but Jesus' love never changes. And this is powerfully encouraging!

David Green



Altar at the cathedral in the Zocalo (main plaza)
in Mexico City

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