



Northeast Report

News of Reformed University Fellowship in the Northeast

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Preaching the Gospel

When people think of RUF, they usually think of the Large Group Meeting. RUF ministers to students in a wide variety of settings – Bible studies, social events, conferences, mission trips, 1-1 meetings with the campus minister, etc. All of our events have a powerful impact on students, and the cumulative effect is enormous. Still, it is the Large Group Meeting that first comes to mind when we think of campus ministry.

If I had to pick just one way to represent RUF, I suppose it would be the Large Group Meeting. Here's why. All of our events feature fulfilling relationships, fun activities, leadership by an ordained campus minister, a spiritual climate. Our Bible studies, Large Group Meetings and 1-1 meetings also include scripture and prayer. But only in the Large Group Meetings is there an opportunity for the campus minister to preach the gospel week after week. And although everything we do is important and contributes to the growth of students – nothing changes people like preaching the gospel.

I began the RUF ministry at Lehigh University in 1998. It took us a few years before we had enough students to have a Large Group Meeting. But for 15 years, there has never been a week when Lehigh was in session where the gospel was not proclaimed on campus. Isn't that exciting?

Following are reports from around the Northeast of how God is using RUF ministers to preach the gospel on college campuses.

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Penn State Large Group Meeting

After a Large Group Meeting where Alex spoke on identity and idols, a girl I'd met with for coffee the previous day came up to me and said, "So many things in that message had implications from our conversation yester-

day. It's like God is trying to tell me something." I had been thinking the same thing. With a huge smile I said, "God knows what He's doing." He does! God uses many means to show us Himself, and to open our eyes and ears to His truth. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." This is just one tangible example of His working through Large Group to grow my faith and hers. Please pray that God would continue to open eyes and ears this semester through our Large Group Meetings. *Callie Norris, Campus Intern at Penn State University*

Our first Large Group Meeting was this past Wednesday. (Sept. 4) We started a new series on the Minor Prophets. When I introduced the series I said, "I bet there isn't another college ministry in New York City that is doing a series on the Minor Prophets, so come out weekly." There were some chuckles. We did our first message on Daniel 2 and how Daniel had both a Hebrew name and a Babylonian name meaning he was a man of two cultures. But he neither assimilated to the Babylonian culture, nor separated like those in Jeremiah 28. Instead he lived out his life faithfully. He was bi-cultural. In a similar vein college students need to live their lives at college, by neither assimilating nor separating. *Michael Keller, Campus Minister in New York City*



Brown/RISD Large Group Meeting

We had over 50 students show up for our first Friday night, almost half of them new students checking us out. Our student president, Stephanie, shared her testimony with the group, how she came from a Christian family and home church to school, whereupon she was no longer surrounded by Christian influences. At first the isola-

tion was difficult, but she connected with RUF, and through RUF, found Christian friends. They helped her grasp scripture and the gospel not only as the faith of her family, but also as her very own. *Eddie Park, Campus Minister at Brown University*

This year Harvard RUF is studying the Gospel of Mark in their “Meeting Jesus (Again)” series. Meeting in the heart of the most influential university in the country, we spend our time week-to-week praising God, discussing the gospel of Jesus Christ, and calling on the Spirit to shape and transform hearts and lives here. *Jeremy Mullen, Campus Minister at Harvard University*

New people. New room. New series. As the semester begins, nearly everything about Large Group at Pitt seems new (except for me). A few weeks we have had more new students than old, familiar ones. We have a great new room, but we’re still making ourselves at home there. And we are embarking on a new series in Romans, which presents a daunting challenge: how to communicate the rich old truths of this letter to new people in a new place? Fortunately, these truths, though ancient, are still new and fresh, and ever renewing. In fact, we have titled our study “All Things New.” For the good news of the gospel is that God has done all these things, and done them Himself, in order to make all things new. *Derek Bates, Campus Minister at University of Pittsburgh*



Lehigh Large Group Meeting

I appreciate your prayers for my health. This semester is one that I’m limping into as I try to recover from a severe acid reflux diagnosis which has affected my lungs and asthma, as well as being diagnosed with a gluten intolerance. After having others preach for me the second half of the spring semester, I have been anxious about preaching and if I will have the energy both to study and give my sermon. I was encouraged by this note from a former grad student after last week’s Large Group Meeting:

Pastor Garriott:

I wanted to say thank you for your sermon tonight.

Though I’ve grown to appreciate the regularity with which you deliver a scripture-based, yet practically-applicable message, I appreciated your deconstruction of an uncommonly studied passage from Acts in a new way.

I know I was not the only one talking about it—I had at least another conversation about the concepts you presented.

*Chris Garriott, Campus Minister at University of Maryland*

## Your Connection with RUF

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The apostle Paul said, “For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? ” *Romans 10:13-15*

This issue of the *RUF Northeast Report* has been about preaching the gospel on campus. This is what campus ministers do. But as Paul said, how are they to preach unless they are sent? Praise God for you, who by your prayers and donations send us to college students! Thanks for sharing this ministry with us.

You can make donations to our ministry here: <https://www.ruf.org/donate/> or scan this QR code →



You really need to make a habit of visiting our RUF Northeast website! Each week a campus minister posts some new development among our RUF ministries. Go to <http://rufnortheast.org/> or scan this code →



If you would rather receive these newsletters by email, contact us at [Northeast@ruf.org](mailto:Northeast@ruf.org).

And if you would like to receive weekly prayer requests by email, also contact us at [Northeast@ruf.org](mailto:Northeast@ruf.org).

## Focus on Rick Gray

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About thirty years ago a young Rick Gray served as president of his fraternity at the University of Delaware. By his own admission, this undergrad had an ego problem and matters of God were far from his mind. Today that frat house has been replaced by a residence for international students and in an incredible example of God’s timing and providence, Rick now meets on that same plot of land, leading Bible studies and ministering to students from all across the globe.





During his senior year of college, Rick, like many undergrads, began reflecting on what is truly important in life. Resolving that if God did exist He would have the best answer to this question, Rick wandered into Campus Crusade for Christ. Here he was pursued and mentored by a Haitian man, Philippe, working on their staff. One year out of college the Spirit moved in Rick's life and he committed himself to Christ. After some time serving in his local church, and with encouragement from leaders in his congregation, Rick decided to enroll in seminary. His move to Covenant Seminary in St. Louis was his first outside the state of Delaware – Rick had been born, raised, and educated in the greater Newark area.

While Rick initially wanted to work in campus ministry, and even learned of RUF from peers at Covenant, his heart for international ministry grew while living alongside seminary students from across the world. Seeing the great need to educate and train pastors and church planters in their own countries and cultures, Rick went to work with Mission to the World after graduation.

As part of a cooperative agreement with World Harvest Mission, Rick moved to East Africa where he met a beautiful Bible translator from Columbia, Maryland. Rick and Wendy grew up only one hour apart from each other, but fell in love in a rural Ugandan village over 8,000 miles from home. They married and started their family, sharing a love for international ministry. After learning that their third son required specialized health care, the Grays permanently relocated to the U.S. and God provided a position for Rick with RUF at his alma mater. The family was grateful to return home while still continuing their ministry to international students.

Rick reports that RUF looks very different from RUF on other campuses. Open to a community of more than 3,500 students from 100+ countries, RUF functions in three distinct ministries. The first, and largest, is "Welcoming the Nations in the Love of Christ." This takes shape every Wednesday night as 25-35 students attend English Conversation Class, getting the opportunity to

practice English with native speakers, usually volunteers from a local church. Accurate or not, many students perceive American culture to be predominantly Christian and are very curious about American beliefs and practices. This eagerness to understand the culture opens the doors for volunteers to share their faith freely and to love these passionate students.

The second branch of the ministry comes in the form of an investigative Bible study. Rick meets weekly with 10-20 students to study the scriptures in English, allowing students another space to practice their language skills while also being able to ask questions about Christianity and American religious practices. A select few of these students, most who came to the U.S. as believers, then meet in a smaller setting with Rick for discipleship, which comprises the third branch of RUF's ministry at Delaware.

For fun, students love site-seeing trips to the beach, Annapolis, and the occasional outlet mall, but most enjoy time spent in American homes. Many students have left family behind to pursue their education in America, so it is vitally important for the Grays and families from the church to open their homes and include these students in their families. Rick loves seeing that more local churches are catching the vision for this ministry and are opening their homes to students as well. Major holidays have become a special moment for ministry, allowing students the highly sought-after home-stay with an American family and the space for Christians in the area to share the gospel by explaining the foundations of our Savior's birth, death and resurrection with these curious students.

Rick hopes that students see what it is to be loved and cared for with the grace, hospitality and love of Christ. He is grateful that God has enabled his family to minister across cultural boundaries from a place as remote as Uganda and as near to home as his old fraternity house.

– by Dana Skerry

## Fall Reflections

"For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 Corinthians 1:22-24



It's almost too hard to believe. Words – just words – are the power that changes the world. All the apostles did was talk about Jesus, but those words changed minds, converted hearts, established the church, and con-

quered an empire. Very few paid Paul and his companions any attention. As an apostle, Paul performed signs – but not many compared to his sermons. As a highly educated man, Paul disputed with the best of his age – but not in the academies of Greece. Jews and Greeks alike dismissed Paul as a windbag – but in the end those mere words transformed the world.

Nothing has changed, really. Today people still are impressed by power and intelligence – and few consider sermons to be much use. We hang on every word of President Obama and eagerly check to see who won the German elections. We flex our military muscles and worry about whether Iran is getting an atomic bomb. Power! That's what we need!

Or to solve our economic problems we need a better Chairman of the Federal Reserve and smarter doctors to find a cure for cancer. We are amazed at the genius that engineers a smart phone and builds a 45 inch OLED television screen. Education! Intelligence! That's what this world needs.

Meanwhile, tucked away in a smallish room in a corner of the campus, a minister is preaching to several dozen, or maybe 100 students. A charming scene. We're glad those students are being cared for by a nice man, and appreciate the encouraging message he brings. Who would guess that this minister holds more power than President Obama, and more learning than the whole internet. It's not him, of course, but the message he delivers. Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Do you believe this?

*David Aear*



Giant Jenga outreach at University of Maryland

