



Northeast Report

News of Reformed University Fellowship in the Northeast

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Reaching Students for Christ

As we enter the holiday season, we are reminded that Christmas is about evangelism. Jesus took on flesh and lived among us because we were enslaved to sin and needed a savior. The angel told Joseph that “you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” Thirty years later Jesus said that His purpose was “to seek and to save the lost.”

Followers of Jesus share His passion for the lost, and evangelism is central to RUF’s ministry. We serve on diverse campuses, so evangelism looks different at the University of Maryland than at the University of Vermont. Each campus minister identifies evangelistic approaches that are effective at his campus. Following are some stories of RUF at work reaching students for Christ.

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This Fall is the second time we have done an evangelistic Bible study, called the Investigating Christianity Study. This is where Christians in our group can bring their friends to explore the Bible and the gospel through a study of the Gospel of Mark. Currently, it is co-led by a senior in our group and one of our interns. We have about a dozen people come out to the study, asking great questions: “Who is Jesus?” and “Why did he have to die?” Please pray for these students as they discover who Jesus is. *Eddie Park, Campus Minister at Brown University/Rhode Island School of Design*



Brown/RISD students at the New England Fall Conference

The first time I met Fritz was the very first night of school. He was homesick, lonely, and regretting his deci-

sion to come to UVM. “Why did I ever come here?” he said wiping a tear from his eye. We sat on a park bench in the middle of campus in the dark of night. He cried. I listened. And we prayed. I wish I could say things got immediately better for Fritz, but they didn’t. Fritz tried out for the soccer team but didn’t make the cut. His problems with his roommates were so bad that he had to switch rooms. His girlfriend broke up with him. As his list of woes grew longer and longer, Fritz became more and more convinced that God wasn’t for him but against him. “Is following God even worth it?” he wondered.

I know that this semester was a hard one for Fritz—that in a lot of ways, it felt like a desert. In a desert, you must travel light; you cannot carry a lot; you need to let some things go. Water is also hard to find; it is not ready at the surface; a plant, for example, must shoot its roots down deep if it is to survive. Yes, this semester was like a desert for Fritz. Yes, he’s had to let some things go. And yes, Fritz has had to dig deeper and work harder to find good, spiritual drink. But he’s doing that. His roots are growing deeper here at UVM (yes, at UVM!) and in the process he is becoming stronger and more unshakeable.

When I look at Fritz, I am beginning to see, more and more, a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, that does not fear when the heat comes, and whose leaves remain green in a time of drought, never ceasing to bear good fruit. This has been a joy and privilege to witness and is, without a doubt, the highlight of my fall semester. *John Meinen, Campus Minister at University of Vermont*



Harvard RUF Women

There are a number of things we have been doing this

year to equip students at Pitt to share the faith with their friends and acquaintances. First, we seek to make everything we do in RUF comprehensible to those outside of the Christian tradition. We explain things, we acknowledge doubts, we preach the gospel as clearly as we can, in order that others might hear and understand what Christianity is about.

Second, our student leaders this semester have been studying and discussing how more to faithfully share their faith with others. We are learning from others, from one another, and praying for those who do not know Jesus.

Third, a few of us attended the MTW/RUF Global Missions Conference Nov 7-9th. Though only a few of our students are interested in foreign missions, we were all encouraged as we were reminded that God is at work on the mission of reaching people here. We were challenged to consider how we are often the greatest barrier to mission, with our selfish preoccupations and judgmental attitudes often blinding us to real opportunities. Pray for us! *Derek Bates, Campus Minister at University of Pittsburgh*



Derek Bates & Pitt students at the Global Mission Conference

There's a big difference between knowing who God is and believing in who God is. And for the major part of my life I was struggling with this concept. Growing up, my family and I for the most part did not attend church. My granddad provided my siblings and me with our first exposure to church. It was only after he passed away in 2007 that my parents started making a concerted effort to have our family attend church on a consistent basis. Despite the repeated exposures to God's word every Sunday morning, I still had a hard time accepting it as truth. I was curious, with many questions that I needed answers to before I could completely give myself over.

As a junior in high school I was blessed with the opportunity to study abroad for a year in Florence, Italy. The host

family that I lived with for the duration of this year identified themselves as atheist. While in retrospect I know I was not a Christian at the time, I still placed myself within this category because it was all that I had known. And so my host family and I would have discussions about our respective beliefs. They asked me questions like how I could believe in a benevolent God when things like genocide, political corruption, and natural disasters all existed within our world. And I didn't have an answer for them. My spiritual foundation was so unstable, that I returned from Italy primarily agnostic. I so badly wanted to believe in God, but I couldn't shake from my mind all of the seemingly valid points that had been brought up by my host family over the past year.

I started my freshman year at Lehigh University about a year later, and like most college freshmen, I had no idea what to expect. I became really good friends with one girl in my hall early in the semester. One night before dinner, she asked me if I would want to come to a worship service with her that night. I wasn't really seeking to become a part of a Christian group at the time, so not really knowing why, I agreed to tag along. This would become my first exposure to RUF.

That night after the worship service I was introduced to the pastor of RUF, Scott Mitchell. I began to meet with him once a week to discuss the many questions I had about Christianity. He would patiently walk me through each of them, ultimately having my understanding of the gospel sharpen just a little more at the end of each meeting. Through our many discussions, I understood just how broken I was, and how desperately I needed a savior.

A year later I find myself standing before you now. The ceaseless flow of questions that I once had still remains. But the difference between who I was then compared to who I am now resides in the newfound confidence with which I can proclaim that God loved us so much that he sent his son Jesus Christ to die for us, and as it is written in Romans 8:38, nothing can ever separate us from that love. *Student at Lehigh University*



Mid-Atlantic Fall Conference

## RUF Needs You!

Aren't these stories exciting? You can almost feel the movement of the Holy Spirit as He works through cam-

pus ministers to bring students to faith in Jesus. And we are grateful to you for your partnership in the gospel, because your prayers and donations have sent RUF ministers onto these campuses. Thanks!

Only two more weeks til Christmas! And only three more weeks til the end of the year. RUF needs your help! Health insurance costs have increased substantially, and some of our campus ministers have not had enough contributions to cover their budgets. Generous donations before the end of 2013 can close the gap and help us end the year in the black. If you are able, please make a donation this month.

Donations can be made by sending a check in the enclosed envelope. You also can donate here: <https://www.ruf.org/donate/> or scan this QR code →



Type the name of a campus or a minister into the search box.

Are you regularly checking our RUF Northeast website! It's full of encouraging articles. 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).

## Christmas Reflections

All praise to Thee, Eternal Lord,  
Clothed in a garb of flesh and blood;  
Choosing a manger for Thy throne,  
While worlds on worlds are Thine alone.

Once did the skies before Thee bow;  
A Virgin's arms contain Thee now;  
Angels, who did in Thee rejoice,  
Now listen for Thine infant voice.

A little child, Thou art our guest,  
That weary ones in Thee may rest –  
Forlorn and lowly is Thy birth,  
That we may rise to heaven from earth.

Thou comest in the darksome night,  
To make us children of the light,  
To make us in the realms divine,  
Like Thine own angels, round Thee shine.

– Latin, sixth century



Christmas captures our attention more than any other holiday. We have better food, prettier decorations, richer music than other holidays – and of course presents! But the source that sets Christmas apart – even from other Christian holidays – is the cosmic reversal.

Easter, Pentecost, Ascension – these festivals celebrate God's mighty acts to save us and draw us near to Him – and are vital to our faith and experience. But the heart of Christmas is a baby. We never tire of marveling at the wonder of God become man, the eternal divine becoming flesh and blood. And not only did God become man, but He became the most helpless and insignificant of men – a baby. And still more, He was a poor baby.

Then as God's mission unfolded, we see that His purpose was to make men godlike, to make the weak strong, to give power to the powerless, and riches to the poor. The salvation Jesus brings is not merely a narrow escape from hell. He doesn't just pay the penalty for our sins and then let us go. After forgiving us our sins, Jesus promises to stay by our side forever, to conquer sin in our flesh, to give us rest from guilt and shame, and ultimately to bring us into an eternal home.

As C. S. Lewis might have said, the Christmas story is so richly, deeply wonderful, we never would have thought of it on our own. Only God, in His eternal love, could have conceived such a plan of salvation. Only God could have given us Christmas!

I hope this Christmas you swoon with delight over Christmas dinner, bask in the warmth of family and friends, rejoice in the richness of holiday music – because all this joy is the overflow of God's love for you, and it is a sign that much better is still to come. Merry Christmas!

