

RUF REPORT

News of Reformed University Fellowship in the Northeast and Plains

Volume 1, Number 3

March, 2009

What Do You Do?

Everywhere I go people keep asking me, often with a note of concern, "How is your new job?" "How do you like all the travel?" "How is Ruth handling your absence?" The answers to these questions are "Great," "I like travel," and "Ruth is phenomenally competent!"

I love what I am doing, and I think God has given me the gifts, experiences, and motivation to be an Area Coordinator. There are several components to my work. The biggest component is ministry to campus ministers. Through visits, email, and phone calls, I seek to encourage, assist, and instruct RUF campus ministers. I remind them that God has called them into this ministry and placed them on campus – even if results seem slow in coming. I point out the wonderful things God is doing through them. I reinforce the training they receive in July and December and look for ways to improve their ministry. We review principles of ministry and discuss how they apply in a particular setting. When problems arise, I help find solutions.

The second part of my work is assisting the committees that oversee each RUF group. RUF ministers are called and placed on campus by local presbyteries (group of churches). Each presbytery appoints a committee to select a minister, decide on a budget, and supervise the work on campus. Often I am called to answer questions and provide advice to these committees.

The third part of an Area Coordinator's job is to participate in discussions with the other coordinators about national issues. Under the leadership of Rod Mays, our national coordinator, we evaluate staff candidates, place interns, work on problems in our areas, and discuss policy issues.

This all might seem more concrete if I share my travel schedule for the first half of this semester.

1/12-14	Evaluate staff candidates (Charlotte, NC)
1/15	Eastern Pennsylvania Presbytery meeting
1/16-17	New England Presbytery (CT)
1/19-20	Coordinators (Atlanta)
1/21	Visit Rob (Millersville)
1/28-31	Visit Alex (Penn State) and Derek (Pitt)
2/2	Eastern Pennsylvania committee

2/3-6	Visit Steve (Nebraska) and Ross (Missouri)
2/9-10	Coordinators (Charlotte, NC)
2/11	Visit Kevin (Yale)
2/13-15	New England winter conference (Cape Cod)
2/16-19	Visit Chad (Minnesota) and Josh (Iowa)
2/20-21	Lehigh training conference (Lancaster)
2/24-28	Visit Eddie (Brown, RI), Bradley (Harvard), Jeremy (new staff), and two pastors (Boston)
3/3-6	Visit Steven (Johns Hopkins), Chris (Maryland), a committee chairman, a committee
3/9-10	Permanent (national) Committee (Atlanta)
3/11-12	Coordinators: place interns (Atlanta)



Reverend Rick Downs teaching at the New England winter conference

Focus on Joey Pensak

Campus Minister Joey Pensak is now in his fifth year of RUF at the University of Connecticut, having started the ministry at the campus in 2004. Joey and his wife, Katie, are both originally from Memphis, TN. They met doing undergraduate work at Mississippi State University, where they were first involved with RUF as students. Joey's seminary work was completed at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, MA, and he is also the co-founder of a new non-profit ministry, Bifrost Arts, committed to enriching the music of the church. Joey and Katie have two beautiful girls, four-year-old Nadine and one-year-old Lucie.

This year in ministry has brought some new and exciting challenges to RUF at UConn. For the last four years RUF



has worked very closely with the Asian Christian Fellowship at UConn, a ministry which is associated to the Korean Presbyterian Church, and therefore very similar to

RUF in theology. At the beginning of the fall semester, the leadership of ACF decided it was best to dissolve their independent ministry and join RUF. This almost doubled the student body at RUF!

The Asian students were excited to have the regular preaching and presence of a pastor, having been without pastoral leadership for over a year. God is really working in RUF through the merge, as well, giving the leadership and students a bigger vision of God's kingdom as they learn to reach out to a different culture.

Furthering the students' education in gaining a bigger vision of God's kingdom this year was a mercy ministry trip to New York City. During spring break, 20 RUF students were able to work with five different ministries in the boroughs of the city serving the poor and underprivileged. It was also a great opportunity for the students to begin shaping their vision of how they will be able to use their gifts in the future to serve their local churches.

Looking forward, there are two specific ways you can be praying for Joey and RUF at UConn. First, that the leadership and students would be able to make progress in really understanding the Asian culture, to truly help the students from ACF feel like they are part of the family at RUF. Also, the leadership would like prayer for a time of rest and refreshment this summer after a very busy year of travel and unique challenges.

— by Bonnie Mitchell



Ultimate frisbee at the New England winter conference

Thanks and Funds

Good news! In spite of the troubled economy only one of my supporters has lost his job and had to cease his RUF support. Praise God for His great grace and abundant provision! And thank you for your generous support.

Bad news! Support for RUF's general fund has suffered. Some of the churches that support us have had to cut back their donations. Individuals who give out of their investments have less to give. In the midst of these troubles RUF is financially sound, but we have had to cut back a little. I am not able to visit campus ministers as much, and we are watching all our expenses closely.

If you have not been giving to RUF, now is a good time to start! Your gifts will enable us to maintain and expand our ministry to students on over 100 campuses all over the U.S. You may use the enclosed envelope to mail a donation. If you wish to make automatic monthly donations from your checking account, contact Bonnie Standridge at 678-825-1070 (bstandridge@ruf.org)

Personal Reflections

"What should I be doing to develop leaders?" "How can I get my students more involved in evangelism?" "What will help my students care more for each other?" These are a sample of the questions I have been getting recently from the ministers. RUF ministers are energetic, motivated, compassionate, and zealous for God's glory. They long to see God's kingdom grow. Their hearts break for the lost and hurting on their campuses. In the face of overwhelming needs, how can a minister build a group of students that will represent Christ to their campus?

The book of Hebrews begins this way:

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...

Later we read that Jesus' words are...

...living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Heb. 4:12)

This passage encourages us that as we share the gospel and teach the scripture, Jesus is speaking to students and completely changing their lives! We do not need special techniques, or the latest technology, or sparkling personality, or intellectual brilliance. Jesus will change students — *is* changing students — through His word. As ordinary ministers open the scripture, Jesus speaks to students, changes them, and builds His Kingdom.