

RUF REPORT

News of Reformed University Fellowship in the Northeast and Midwest

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RUF Service

RUF exists to serve the church. We take the ministry of the church into the university, a community which is out of reach for many churches, and difficult for most churches to penetrate. We also train students to plug back into the church, and equip them with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to serve there. Our vision is that when RUF students graduate, they be trained and ready to join the church in reaching the poor and the lost, in our cities, overseas, and in our backyards. One way we do this is by taking students on mission trips to Mexico, New Orleans, rural communities, and anywhere we can pitch in and help people who need Jesus.

Lehigh RUF started the new year with a trip to Greece. Several students raised the funds to spend almost two weeks in Athens and Volos working with Greek pastors. Activities ranged from cleaning up the city to conversing with Greek students.



Lehigh Greece team taking a break

Last month students from the new RUF group at the University of Minnesota spent their spring break serving on an Indian reservation. Although this is only the third year for this group, service is already part of their character.

Prayer Notices

Do you want to be more involved in the RUF ministry in the Northeast and Mid-west? One important way for you to participate in our ministry is by praying for us. Each week I send an email with a brief list of prayer needs. If you would like to receive this weekly email prayer reminder, sign up by contacting me at dgreen@ruf.org.

Weekly Report

If this quarterly newsletter fails to slake your thirst for RUF Northeast and Mid-west news, you should read my weekly report. I post it on my website, usually on Monday. Go to <http://dgreenruf.org> and click on "Weekly Report" on the menu at the left.

My website also has other material that may interest you. If you click on "Campuses," you can see a list of the schools I visit. Click on the school name to go to the website for the RUF group there.



University of Minnesota spring break mission team



People of the Indian reservation

Training Students

If students are to serve in the church, they must be trained. The Mid-Atlantic staff hold a training conference each semester to train students in Bible study, leading Bible studies, basic Christian doctrine and life, Bible survey, evangelism, and how to train another student. Steven Badorf, at Johns Hopkins University, has taken on the role of leading these conferences.



Mid-Atlantic winter training conference

Thanks and Funds

God continues to bless RUF with solid financial support, and the good friends who stand behind us. The ministry you read about in this newsletter comes from your donations and prayers. Thank you so much for your care for us and your generosity toward this ministry. Please use the enclosed card and continue to pray for God's powerful blessing on college and university campuses.

Focus on Jason Harris



During his freshman year at Princeton University, Jason Harris got involved with a new campus ministry started by upperclassmen who wanted to see the Gospel communicat-

ed to their non-Christian friends. By his junior year of college, Jason took the reins of this campus fellowship, an experience which he describes as both "beautiful and extremely difficult." As a student himself, Jason saw he was in over his head trying to minister to peers with significant struggles. His lack of training, experience, and maturity at the time revealed to him the importance of staff-led campus ministry, and it was then that he discovered his future calling as a campus minister.

After college Jason spent two years working in New York City, where he learned about Redeemer Presbyterian Church. As Jason returned to Princeton for a seminary

education, he maintained his connections with Redeemer and first learned about RUF from Redeemer staff. Already convinced he should pursue campus ministry, Jason's love for the church and its ministries made his decision to do so through the PCA-affiliated RUF an easy one.

RUF at Northwestern was also a natural fit for Jason and Ashley, his wife and fellow Princeton alum. As Jason's seminary graduation neared, he and Ashley were hoping to move to Ashley's native Chicago. Coincidentally, the local presbytery had wanted to start an RUF ministry at Northwestern, and so Jason and Ashley were obvious candidates for launching Northwestern's RUF in 2005.

The transition from the Northeast to the Midwest went smoothly given that Princeton and Northwestern attract a similar highly-motivated student body from all over the country and world. Jason was well-accustomed to extremely driven, career-oriented students who are generally hostile to the gospel, and has found a niche ministering in this type of environment. Currently the only RUF campus minister to have graduated from Princeton Seminary, Jason has much experience dealing with mixed theology in the classroom. He can identify with what Northwestern students receive in their religion classes and suggest resources to help these students sort through their questions.

Likewise, Jason particularly enjoys having Christians in RUF regularly introduce him to their non-Christian friends so he can engage in open dialogue and learn about their views and values in order to get a feel for the greater campus climate. Though Jason has students leading all of the campus Bible Studies, he is especially excited to lead fraternity discussion groups on religion in general and Christianity specifically.

By God's grace and through Jason's efforts and the commitment of students in the ministry, RUF at Northwestern has earned a reputation as a safe place for investigation. Non-Christians are welcome to explore Christianity, and in the six years Jason has served as campus minister, he has seen a number of these students move from cynicism and doubt to greater openness, and sometimes to the point of embracing the gospel for the first time.

One challenge Jason faces in his ministry is the reality that Northwestern is a campus full of students who are frantically busy, overcommitted, and seemingly have no time for relationships. To a significant degree, they would not have gotten accepted to such a high-caliber institution if they had not been focused on developing their gifts or involved in as many extra-curricular activities as possible. Naturally such a system fosters a loneliness and isolation within the campus community. A large part of Jason's ministry has been helping students to make connections with each other. Over time he has seen much relational growth on their part as students have learned to make sacrifices of time and academics in order to better serve their friends.

As another way to serve such over-involved students, Jason has committed to holding RUF's Tuesday night large group at the late-hour of 9 P.M. when the campus is finally slowing down. Originally the timing was not too taxing on his schedule, but now with a one-year-old (Olivia) and three-year-old (Luke) at home, these late nights are much more of a sacrifice for Jason. However, Jason has also seen how RUF has greatly benefitted his family. He and Ashley love to invite students into their home and have seen their son Luke conduct himself in a more mature way as a result of spending time with so many college students. In fact, before RUF students come to visit, Luke will ask, "Are we having friends over?" In his three-year-old mind, the students are just as much companions as his toddler peers.

Jason hopes his RUF students will learn to see everything as a gift to be received, enjoyed, and delighted in with gratitude. It seems he also has learned to see his ministry through RUF as such a gift.

For more information on Jason Harris and RUF at Northwestern, take a look at their website:
www.rufnorthwestern.org.

— by Kristen Boe

The Homefront

This time I asked the family what I should say about them. Life is pretty quiet for Daniel. The most exciting thing Daniel has done is paint his basement taupe.

Peter says he is busy in his Ph.D. studies at Wheaton College. He will defend his thesis proposal next week. The next newsletter should include news about Peter and Megan's baby!

Christopher is in the Republic of the Congo with the Foreign Service. He writes, "It's now been a little over one week here in Brazzaville, and life is – crazy. Or work is crazy, and life is quiet. I supervise about 30 people in six sections, and each section is rife with problems."

Stephen began the new year in Greece, with the Lehigh RUF mission team. They divided their time between Volos and Athens, doing street ministry and conversing with students. He is locked in a three-way contest with his housemates for the presidency of Lehigh RUF for next year. Check back next time for the results.

Benjamin has a message for you: "Minecraft is awesome! Buy Minecraft!" Somehow he is plowing away at his schoolwork in between sessions with this new computer game.

Ruth, as usual, spends much of her time preparing for teaching her literature students. However, she seems to be eagerly preparing for the literary education of our first grandchild, collecting favorite out of print baby books.

Personal Reflections



I just finished teaching Romans for two quarters in Sunday School. What a book! It is always overwhelming, and there is always so much new to learn.

Early in the class someone pointed out that Paul's goal was that the Romans become obedient. I impulsively reacted against this thought. Everyone knows

that Romans is about faith, and that Paul spends many chapters proving that salvation is by faith, not by works. But there it is in Romans 1:5, "...we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations..." But this is a special kind of obedience. Not obedience to earn salvation, but the obedience that springs from and accompanies faith.

James famously says that "faith without works is dead," and he is sometimes quoted in opposition to Paul, with Paul's antagonism to works. But Paul sees a true and living faith as producing obedience – good works – in the lives of genuine believers. Paul closes his letter on the same note, "For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience – by word and deed..."

We could say this is the mission of RUF, to bring about the obedience of faith among college students. We teach that they can be guilt-free by believing in Jesus, and that with their new identity in Christ and loyalty to him, a new life of obedience naturally follows.