



NORTHEAST REPORT

NEWS OF REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP IN THE NORTHEAST

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Amazing Growth!

Last month RUF Northeast launched another year of ministry, but this time there was an important difference. Instead of 10 campuses, we are covering 14. This is such a big increase, we never could have done it ourselves. In the words of the psalmist, “This is the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.” In this issue of the RUF Northeast Report we introduce our four new campus ministers and our new national coordinator.

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### Nathan Dicks, Boston University



Nathan Dicks is returning to the mission field. In 2011, the Atlanta native left Bosnia where he worked with Campus Crusade to attend Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. This year, he says he will once again be “a voice for the gospel in an unchurched area.”

This “unchurched area” is Boston, Massachusetts, where he attended seminary. There

he fell in love with the city’s history, culture, and people. There, he fell in love with Sarah Lints, whom he married this July.

Nathan entered seminary with the desire to be an RUF minister wherever he was needed, including the West Coast. He found his calling 15 minutes across town at Boston University (BU).

BU is the biggest university in a city of colleges and universities. Although it’s not an Ivy League school, like its neighbors MIT and Harvard, Boston University consistently ranks among the nation’s top colleges. In this academically rigorous environment, students have little time to devote to extracurricular activities. Nathan expects that many students will struggle to prioritize their faith.

When he begins full-time student ministry next year, Nathan must find creative ways to meet students on a campus with no central meeting ground. BU’s campus is frag-

mented and spread across several train stops. The students view themselves as much part of the city as part of BU.

This school year, Nathan is leading a student-focused Bible study at his host church CityLife (PCA), but his primary focus is laying a solid foundation for his ministry. Nathan seeks to form strong relationships with alumni, donors, and campus administrators. He also hopes to be recognized as a BU chaplain after his ordination.

– by Rebecca Trudeau

### Solomon Kim, MIT



A local church initiated the new RUF at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Many of MIT’s graduate students already attended services at Christ Our King Church (PCA), which is a short walk from campus. The church wanted to extend its ministry to the school’s undergraduate population and offered to host an RUF ministry.

This summer, Solomon Kim, his wife, Jane, and their two children, Caleb (2011), and Katie (2013) moved to Boston to start RUF. Solomon believes that MIT students will respond well to RUF’s approach. He explains that RUF cares for the whole student by engaging the students’ questions, vocation, and daily life.

MIT is a challenging and prestigious university, but it is not cut-throat. Solomon calls it the “anti-Harvard.” The school emphasizes cooperation over leadership. Every part of an MIT student’s life fosters a communal attitude. Freshmen and seniors live in the same dorm, and class-

mates complete their homework co-operatively. The school abstains from bestowing Latin honors on graduates.

The university's focus on teamwork does not allay the students' stress. "Many experience an inferiority complex for the first time," Solomon says. "I understand that."

Solomon completed his engineering degree at Cornell University. He recalls his drive for success, his fear of failing loved ones, and his general confusion about life – emotions experienced by many MIT students. Solomon says, "I want to minister to them with the gospel that frees."

The typical Christian MIT undergraduate spends less than three hours a week in church or para-church activities. "I'd like to maximize my time with them," Solomon says, "to give them the gospel and for me to be their pastor."

– by Rebecca Trudeau



University of Maryland RUF Hike

### Eric Lipscomb, Columbia University



New York City now hosts two RUF fellowships. Last year, a handful of students from Columbia University participated in RUF City Campus, an RUF ministry that reaches students from schools throughout New York City. This fall, Eric Lipscomb and

his wife, Brittany, are forming a separate group specifically for students at Columbia.

"There is a great need for RUF; it's a hard place to be a Christian," Eric says. The ministry will be supported by Redeemer Presbyterian Church (PCA) and Emmanuel Presbyterian Church (PCA), which is directly across Broadway from the campus.

Columbia University is one of the nation's flagship universities. The private Ivy League school educated nine Su-

preme Court Justices, 43 Nobel Prize Laureates, and three U.S. Presidents, including Barack Obama. Many of Columbia's students are pursuing equally grand goals. At other schools, students can be said to work hard, play hard. At Columbia, the students "work hard, work hard," Eric says. The typical Columbia student focuses almost exclusively on building an impressive resume.

Similarly, Eric recalls pretending to "have his life together." He attended an all-boys preparatory school before enrolling at the University of Virginia. Eric says, "I know what it is like to have the whole world telling you to define yourself by your resume. For me, it was really freeing to be taught that my whole life is defined by Jesus. I want to share with (the students at Columbia University) that freedom and rest which they won't find anywhere else in their lives."

This year, Eric is learning about Columbia and becoming part of its community. Eric is leading a Bible study on campus while seeking to be recognized as a Religious Life Advisor, Columbia's equivalent of chaplain. He also hopes RUF will be recognized as an official student club this year. If so, RUF can recruit freshmen during orientation next year.

"We are prayerful that the Lord will be working on campus in a great way," he says.

– by Rebecca Trudeau

### Daryl Wattley, Delaware State University



Last year, Delaware State University (DSU) had only one evangelical Christian ministry on campus. This school year, the 4,000 plus students will have two.

"Despite the amazing young people at DSU and the Scriptural mandate to reach all peoples, historically black campuses [HBCs], like DSU, are often under-represented by national evangelical ministries for a variety of rea-

sons," explains Daryl Wattley, DSU's new RUF minister.

RUF's long-term approach to campus ministry ensures that DSU students will be consistently taught the gospel and encouraged in their faith. "Having a committed ministry on campus and a local church will be the difference maker when you talk about long-term Kingdom impact," Daryl says.

Daryl studied at Georgia Southern University as an under-



graduate. He later became the first African-American to receive an Master's of Divinity from Atlanta Campus of Reformed Theological Seminary.

Although he did not attend a HBC, Daryl grew up in Atlanta, Georgia near some of the nation's largest and most prestigious HBCs, including Moorehouse College, Martin Luther King Jr's alma mater. Many of Daryl's family and friends attended these institutions. "As a result, I have a real heart to reach these outstanding young people and future leaders," he says.

The RUF at DSU is based out of Grace Presbyterian Church in Dover, Delaware. Daryl believes it's important for Presbyterians to cross the cultural divide.

"RUF needs to reach out to the wonderful and talented students at HBCUS, like DSU, if you want to bring cultural harmony to God's Kingdom, introduce new people to the truth of Scripture, and reach the next generation of college students in the name of Christ."

– by Rebecca Trudeau



University of Vermont backyard dinner at the Meinens

## RUF's New Look

We're the same great ministry, but we've got a fresh new look. We hope you like it! This newsletter features our new logo, but perhaps even better – we have a new and improved website. Go to [www.ruf.org](http://www.ruf.org) to check it out.

## Your Connection with RUF

It costs a huge amount of money to support 14 ministers and their families in some of the most expensive areas of our country. We think it's worth it. The overwhelming need and the unbelievable opportunity make it worth doing. It also takes massive prayer for these ministries to be effective.

Thank you for your support of RUF through your prayers and donations. Our four new campus ministers are spending much of their time this year raising the rest of their support. Pray for their support to come in, and please give if you can.

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



Remember to visit our RUF Northeast web site! 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 Tom Cannon



Tom Cannon is serving as the next Reformed University Ministries coordinator since Rod Mays' retirement this year. "I want to maintain the legacy of my predecessor," Tom says.

Tom encountered RUF in 1981 as a sophomore at the University of South Carolina. That year, several members of Campus Crusade for Christ persistently witnessed to Tom, convincing him of the Scriptures' truth. After his conversion, he visited many Christians groups on campus, but did not feel at home in any. Then Lee Ferguson started RUF at USC.

The fellowship's straightforward approach to Christianity appealed to him. As a new believer, Tom wanted to know what a normal Christian life was. RUF taught him to pray, study the Bible, and serve in the church. He was intrigued by their discussion on worldview, a rare topic among Christians in the early 80s.

The RUF Tom now leads is much like the RUF he attended as a student. RUF has maintained its Reformed message and its consistent, but not overbearing, approach to its ministers. The organization prays for its ministers, trains them, and oversees their work. It doesn't dictate how every campus fellowship should function, and the ministers are given freedom to adapt to their campus' culture. Because of this flexibility, Tom says, "we are able to reach students for Christ with people who are remarkably different."

One of Tom's goals as RUM coordinator is to support these remarkably different ministers. "I want to make our ministers a priority," Tom says. "They are the ones we should be serving. They are the ones serving, praying, correcting – if necessary – and making friends."

Tom hopes to establish ministers at more campuses in the coming years. RUF is expanding beyond the PCA's stronghold in the American south and southwest. Tom expects that the organization may need creative strategies to maintain its connection with the church while reaching campuses with few local PCA churches.

Tom also expects that RUF will encounter more cultural clashes on campus. "I don't want to be reactionary," he says. But given the culture's attitude toward Christianity and Christian morality, "It's hard for the Christian worldview to find a place on campus. We need to be prepared for that."

### A Life of Ministry

Tom Cannon received his call to ministry while in college. As an RUF student leader, he discovered that he was gifted in teaching and shepherding. Ferguson and other RUF students encouraged him to pursue ministry. "RUF has a full-orbed approach to everything," Tom recalls. "I had the resolve and the abilities, so we decided to test the call."

Tom interned with RUF at USC with Ferguson for two years. "The desire was still there, and the gifts were evident," he says. Tom graduated from Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi in 1988. He married his wife, Dawn, while in seminary.

Tom desired to minister to college students, but the year he graduated, RUF was not expanding to another campus. Instead, Tom accepted a call to develop a church plant in Melbourne, Australia, and to minister to students at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT). His three children were born in Australia.

Tom returned to the US in 1997 to minister to the students of New York University. While there he served as the Northeastern Area Coordinator. In 2001 he left one university known for its excellence in the arts for another. He moved to Georgia to lead the RUF at Savannah College of Art and Design. In 2008, he accepted a position as pastor of Red Mountain Church in Birmingham AL, which he has left to serve as RUM coordinator.

– by Rebecca Trudeau

## Autumn Reflections



"Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever." *Psalm 118:1*

Part of my job is to visit seminaries to encourage men to consider ministry with RUF when they graduate. I also help presbyteries establish new ministries, and that includes selecting a good minister for the campus.

This year we have the thrill of beginning four new RUFs in the Northeast, and we are also laying the foundation for up to five more.

As exciting as all this growth is, it is also very humbling. Honestly, I wonder how it has happened. I remember Mark Lowrey, the founder of RUF, saying it is unbelievable that a small denomination like the PCA could fund and support a campus ministry on 140 campuses. The numbers don't add up!

Of course the secret is God's power and presence in RUF and on college campuses. Somehow God is making these things happen, and we rejoice in his work. God's math is different than ours, and in His Kingdom, the numbers are adding up.

I quoted a verse from Psalm 118 at the beginning of this newsletter: "This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." Jesus quotes this verse, and it is recorded in Matthew's and Mark's gospels. In context, it clearly refers to Jesus' approaching rejection and crucifixion at the hands of the Jewish leaders. What appeared to be a hateful and tragic end, God made into a wonderful and glorious beginning. The LORD's doing in Jesus' death and resurrection is the reason that RUF is able to bring eternal life to students.

That psalm begins and ends with this verse: "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever." Indeed. Let us give thanks. God is at work, His Kingdom is growing, it is marvelous in our eyes, for his steadfast love endures forever.

*David Green*

