

# RUF REPORT

*News of Reformed University Fellowship in the Northeast and Midwest*

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## RUF Activities

The part of being an Area Coordinator I enjoy most is visiting the campuses – seeing campus ministers and their wives, meeting with students, and seeing first-hand the great things God is doing through RUF. It seems that this semester has been particularly pleasant. Maybe it is because I know my way around and am not so focused on how to get there, where to stay, and bothersome logistics. Maybe it is because the fruit of the past four years is becoming more evident. This month I want to share with you a few snapshots of what God is doing in my area.



University of Minnesota Ministry Team

### University of Minnesota

We began the semester with what we call a “Vision Retreat” for our student Ministry Team. We had almost 20 student leaders at the retreat. We spent time praying for the semester, praying for students, discussing what we wanted to do for the semester, and studying Matthew 18.

Each semester I focus on an aspect of ministry to equip the students in. Last semester, I taught the Ministry Team how to share the gospel with their unbelieving friends. This semester, I am equipping the students on how to minister to other Christians.

We are studying 1 Peter in our six small groups. This semester we have five students who are helping to lead the Bible studies. – *Chad Brewer, campus minister*

### University of Maryland

We have had new visitors at our meetings almost every week now! We have been blessed to see students come in our midst on their own or through a connection with one

of our RUFers. Tonight, I will be preaching for the third time since the internship started on the Book of Jonah. – *Elvis Le, intern*



Penn State spring break mission trip to Los Angeles

### Johns Hopkins University

I continue to meet with several non-Christians who are open to searching out the claims of Christ Jesus. Please pray for these young men and women. Pray that their hearts would be softened and that they would ultimately trust Jesus Christ with their lives. Furthermore RUF Hopkins is continually making new contacts through our “RUF Fishing Pools” (our regular outreach events) like our “Breakfast on the Breezeway” and “1st Saturday of the Month Pancake Breakfast.” Pray for students to be open to us. – *Steven Badorf, campus minister*



Millersville RUF girls

## Thanks and Funds

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All campus, staff, and intern accounts in my area ended the year 2011 in the black! This is good news, because some of our ministers struggled all year to raise enough money to cover their expenses. A lot of hard work has paid off, but especially God's grace was at work – moving you and many others to support our ministry. Thanks for your partnership with us!

Please continue to support us and to remember our financial needs in your prayers. I have no doubt that God will supply our needs, but we do need to pray. One immediate concern is the rising price of oil. All the travel I do is going to cost more this year.

## Focus on Ross Dixon

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If you were to step foot on the campus of Mizzou, you might encounter a college student wearing a t-shirt with the image of a kindergartner in a denim leisure

suit blazoned across the front and the RUF logo printed on the back. The kindergartner is none other than RUF campus minister Ross Dixon from decades past, and today he is no less conspicuous gracing Mizzou's campus in the flesh. Especially when donning his infamous Madras pants, Ross stands out among the college crowd. He admits surprise that Mizzou students are willing to give him the time of day, and yet Ross' weekly schedule is filled with one-on-one meetings and small group Bible studies with Christian and non-Christian students alike.

Ross is also making connections with students through playing basketball once a week at the campus rec center. At least one student, Larry, has started coming to RUF large group after meeting Ross through a game of basketball. Serving with RUF Mizzou since 2003, Ross has regularly seen the fruit of time invested with students at large group meetings, in small groups, across the lunch table, and on the basketball court. Such growth takes time. Ross tells his immediate-gratification-oriented students that to see the benefit of RUF, they need to stick around longer than two weeks.

Ross recalls the first time he met Josh for lunch. Josh, currently in his senior year, was a freshman at the time and confessed that despite growing up in the church, he had never read the Bible or seen it used during Sunday worship. In the past few years, in large part through the ministry of RUF, Josh has been learning and growing in

his knowledge of Scripture, and he now leads a small group study. Ross notes how often the other students in Josh's study express their appreciation for his leadership.

Marcus, now a grad student at Northwestern, was a very intelligent but socially awkward freshman at the start of his Mizzou career. By the end of his undergraduate experience, Marcus was inviting others to what Ross refers to as "epic pancake parties" in his apartment. Ross describes the average Mizzou student as friendly and genuine, but he makes a point of encouraging all students to grow in learning the process of initiating and following up with others. For example, Ross finds he must challenge well-meaning students who think they have done outreach by merely creating a Facebook event. Students are showing growth in the process. Visitors to RUF almost all report how welcomed they felt by the students in the room.

Some of Ross' favorite RUF experiences include community-building activities such as RUF Mizzou's annual Float Trip, where students boat down the Missouri River, and the RUF Summer Conference, where RUF students from across the country gather for a week of teaching and fellowship. Ross loves the strong bond that develops among the students throughout the week and during the 30 hours spent driving there and back. Ross also encourages opportunities for student service both on and off-campus. A group of RUF students is currently spending spring break in Joplin, MO, where they will help with the rebuilding effort in response to the devastation caused by the mile-wide tornado that ravished the area in May 2011.

In addition to getting students involved in RUF while in college, Ross spends a lot of energy preparing students for post-graduation life in the local church. He stresses the importance of pursuing community and service within the context of the church and informs his students that this may be harder than in their experience with RUF, as opportunities for community come practically ready-made in the university setting. Often Ross is able to connect with alumni through weddings and social meetings, giving him the chance to see these lessons manifested in their lives.

As for his own family, Ross and Jenny love raising their almost nine-year-old daughter, Avery, in the context of RUF. As a family they enjoy just being together, and they like to invite students into their lives. Ross and Jenny especially appreciate the exposure Avery gets to so many great college students as they spend time in the Dixon home.

On the subject of family, many of the 60-70 students who are a part of the RUF Mizzou ministry refer to the group as their family. Just as Ross' Madras pants are a patchwork of different plaids pieced together, so RUF Mizzou reflects a hodge-podge of students with different personalities and interests learning what it means truly to be in relationship with one another. While Madras might be a

matter of personal taste, it's hard to deny the beauty in college students coming together through the bond of Christ's love and to celebrate how God is using Ross Dixon through RUF at Mizzou.

For more information on Ross and the RUF ministry at Mizzou, please check out their website: [www.mizzouruf.org](http://www.mizzouruf.org).

– by Kristen Boe

## The Homefront

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Daniel and Ginny are living in her house. They are working on moving Daniel's stuff out of his and getting it ready to rent.

Peter says, "I'm almost done with course work." (Then he will focus on writing his dissertation.) "I'm presenting two papers at different conferences this month and preaching twice in April and twice in May." Megan's father had surgery in January, which has led to serious complications. She and Elijah are with him in Seattle, where Elijah is a big hit with the nurses in the hospital.

Christopher sent this email early one Sunday last month: "You might see some news about explosions in Brazzaville. The cause is unknown. I am unhurt and was far from the site. It seems to have been an accident." Pat Hansell concluded Christopher must have been cooking again. FoxNews got around to reporting on Tuesday that it was an accident at an arms depot. Oh, Christopher says he won the local chili cookoff.

Stephen is looking for a job to pay some of his bills. Benjamin's big news is that he got a job at Rita's Italian Water Ice! He tried last year, but did not get it. His primary academic labor at the moment is writing a paper on the Parthenon.

We are happy that Ruth is getting to travel with me some. We went to the New England winter retreat in Newport, RI, in February, and we will be going to Boston to assess a possible campus minister later this month.

## Personal Reflections

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*Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods, for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt... Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God." But Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins." Joshua 24:16-19*



I have been teaching the book of Joshua in Sunday School this year. This passage has always startled me. It is the end of the story. Joshua led the people of Israel through five years of hard warfare. They defeated all the Canaanite armies in the Promised Land. Now they are settled and prospering and Joshua is an old man. Before he dies, he will give one last charge to his people.

Joshua reminds the people how God had led them to Egypt and back, and how He had kept all his promises. Now, will they keep their promise to God? Will they remain faithful to Him, even when Joshua dies? Here at the climax of his sermon, Joshua puts the question to the nation – and the answer is "yes."

You would expect Joshua to breathe a sigh of relief. This is the answer we hope for. We long for the next generation to follow in our footsteps. But instead of rejoicing in this declaration of faith, Joshua rebukes the people. "You are not able to serve the LORD," he says.

This passage shows that Joshua understood God and man better than most of us. He knew that we cannot serve God just because we want to. Sin runs too deep. Sin is more than immoral acts – it is the corruption of our hearts, minds, and wills. Today we may choose to serve God, but tomorrow we may change our minds. Sin is always at work in us to lead us astray.

Joshua did not have a complete answer to this problem, and sure enough, the Israelites fell into idolatry soon after he died. Jesus, the new and final Joshua, came to do more than deliver us from our enemies. He also changes our hearts so that we *are* able to serve the Lord. But even *we* are still dependent on a daily basis for Jesus to work obedience in us. We cannot serve the Lord on our own. We need Jesus to help us.

Remember to check out my weekly report at <http://dgreenruf.org>. And email me if you wish to get weekly prayer requests.