



Northeast Report

News of Reformed University Fellowship in the Northeast

Volume 5, Number 3

March, 2013

Engaging with the Bible

RUF ministers are all seminary trained, ordained pastors who preach and teach with great skill and passion. Our men are the primary means God uses to advance the ministry of RUF with college students. But preaching and teaching are not enough. Without consistent interaction, students' heads can become filled with biblical knowledge and theological concepts, but have little understanding of what they mean or how to defend them. One of my great concerns is that students not leave RUF with religious prejudices – opinions without the knowledge to back them up.

The way to transform opinions into convictions is by interaction. Students have to discuss the scripture. This is why discussion-oriented Bible studies are essential to RUF's ministry. We want to graduate students with biblical convictions – not religious prejudices. Here are some reports of how we are doing this in the Northeast.

New England

Imagine sitting in a bustling Harvard dining hall, filled with brilliant, high-achieving and often stressed-out students while considering these words: "no one can serve two masters," "do not be anxious about your life," and "everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock." At Harvard, our Bible studies are called Dinner Discussions – we use dinner time to talk about scripture and pray together. This semester our students have been discussing the Sermon on the Mount, and we hope that there's some felt irony in discussing this deeply subversive



Bible study at Brown University

sermon right in the heart of Harvard's busyness. *Jeremy Mullen, 4th year, Harvard University*

I am just beginning the process of rebuilding our small group ministry here at UConn. After one Bible study I led on Galatians earlier this semester, a student told me that she had never been part of a study where so many people contributed to the discussion. My hope is to eventually equip this student and others to be able to lead similar discussions, not "teaching," but facilitating discussion in a way that draws the wonder and beauty of the gospel out of the Biblical text for all involved. *Lucas Dourado, 2nd year, University of Connecticut*

Mid-Atlantic

I had explained the gospel to a student involved in my Dravo dorm Bible study over lunch one day. He got angry at me and as he walked away he insulted me. But to my surprise – and, as an answer to prayer – he showed up at Bible study two days later! *Scott Mitchell, 5th year, Lehigh University*



Bible study at University of Maryland

We are very excited about a transition at RUF Penn State in the small group ministry. For the past five years, Alex has led the freshmen small groups by himself. This spring, due to the growing amount of freshmen, it did not make much sense to do two huge groups with 30 freshmen, so two upperclassmen joined in to lead two of the freshmen guys groups. The ministry is taking this a step further in the fall with Alex transitioning completely out of role. The plan next fall is to have eight juniors

lead all the freshmen small groups, with the goal of getting 40-50 freshmen involved with our small group ministry. *Alex Watlington, 5th year, Penn State University*



Bible study at Millersville University

For a few years now I have trained students to read the Bible well, and then to lead Bible study discussion groups for their fellow students. The training typically comes in the form of two very intense weekends of study and practice. Though these weekend seminars adequately educate them on what needs to be done, and in what manner, they do not supply enough of an opportunity to hone their skills in preparing and leading Bible studies.

So a year ago I created a small group apprentice position, and this past fall, our two apprentices completed it....having done little to nothing. Now, it wasn't their fault. Indeed, it was mine, because the internship had no expectations or obligations. This spring, at the prompting of a new small group apprentice, we sat down and put expectations on paper. I'm proud to say that through this collaborative effort, we have created a fine small group apprenticeship. Our two interns this semester are regularly attending a small group, periodically preparing study questions for review by me, carefully studying how others lead a discussion, and will be leading a small group in the month ahead.

This is all part of a process by which we are equipping students to serve one another, as God uses them to build up our group, and His church. *Derek Bates, 5th year, University of Pittsburgh*

Your Connection with RUF

It's been a tough five years economically, but God's goodness to RUF has been evident in the steady donations to this ministry. Even as our nation has struggled financially, income to RUF has kept pace with expenses. Last year continued the trend, as we ended 2012 in solid financial shape. Praise God! And thanks for your help!

Nevertheless, our expenses do keep rising – so your continued support is necessary to keep us ministering to students. You can make donations to our ministry here: <https://www.ruf.org/donate/> or scan this QR



code.

A few times each week we post news of RUF in the Northeast on our website. Go to <http://rufnortheast.org/> or scan this QR code. Check in each week to see the latest about what is happening with RUF in the Northeast.



If you would rather receive these newsletters by email, contact us at Northeast@ruf.org.

And if you would like to receive weekly prayer requests by email, also contact us at Northeast@ruf.org.

Focus on Scott Mitchell



In 2008, on the heels of completing an M.Div. degree at Westminster Theological Seminary (Dallas), RUF campus minister Scott Mitchell came to Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA to take over a ministry David Green had pioneered and led for the past decade. Given his experience working as an engineer and serving in campus ministry through Campus Crusade, Scott seemed a natural fit to minister on campus made up of many engineering majors. Scott especially proved himself a good candidate for RUF Lehigh when, during the RUF assessment, David Green told a math joke and no prospective campus ministers laughed – except Scott. At that moment, David knew Scott was an obvious choice for his successor.

Having lived in Texas his whole life before Lehigh, Scott finds the cultural contrast of the Northeast invigorating and is energized by serving in an atmosphere where most people do not identify as Christians. Scott sees the lack of Christian presence on campus at Lehigh as well as in the surrounding Lehigh Valley, which is among the nation's ten least evangelical areas, in a positive light: it is easier to know where people stand and very few people have to shed the excess baggage of nominal Christianity. As a result, RUF at Lehigh is comprised of very few students who have grown up in Christian homes and a number who have converted to Christianity through their experience with RUF or are currently openly antagonistic to the Gospel message yet willing to continue investigating the claims of Christianity.

Scott describes this fifth year of ministry as his favorite thus far, and notes how RUF Lehigh has taken on more of his personality over time. Scott has found his niche in preaching through narratives, which seems to appeal to

post-modern students. Also, Scott has a particular affinity for leading small group Bible studies and, in addition to the Bible studies in the dorms, he has taken to leading a number of less traditional groups over lunch: basketball players, fraternity brothers, and Korean students. Unlike most RUFs, the total of Lehigh students in small groups throughout the week always exceeds the number of students who attend weekly large group meetings.

As a whole, Lehigh students have a reputation for being less social than many other college students, which can present a challenge for building relationships. Also, Lehigh students tend to be success-driven and come from a position of privilege, and Scott likes watching RUF students grow in embracing brokenness and giving up some of their notions of success – for example, learning to value more than getting the perfect grade. At the same time, while Scott wants students to be involved in RUF, he doesn't want them to do so at the expense of other things. When meeting with a gifted student musician who was invited to serve as a guest conductor for the orchestra, Scott discouraged the student from giving up his pursuit of music to attend RUF meetings and lead a Bible study. In this case, Scott counseled the student to use the tremendous musical gift God had given him and seek other expressions of his faith.

In addition to watching students develop, Scott is encouraged by the fruit he sees in the lives of alumni. Scott has been thrilled to see a number of alumni become very active in their local churches. One such alumnus, Dan Olson, called Scott shortly after his graduation in 2010 and move to Houston, TX, to seek advice on how to start small groups at church, which he eventually did employing RUF principles.

While some consider RUF a stepping stone to other ministry, Scott credits David Green for giving him a vision for long-term involvement with RUF Lehigh. In addition to developing RUF at Lehigh, Scott wants to see RUF expand in the Northeast and loves speaking to others about the RUF philosophy of ministry. As Scott sees it, if the church is going to plant more RUFs throughout the region, where students don't tend to flock to RUF or any campus ministry, it needs people who are committed to RUF for the long haul.

Scott is married to Bonnie, whom he met through a small group in Dallas while both were attending different seminaries. Native Texans Scott and Bonnie love to experience the snow of Northeastern winters while also giving RUF students and neighbors alike a taste of home in the form of real BBQ during summers. Scott, Bonnie, and their children, Lucy (3½) and Eli (1½), like having stu-

dents in their home all year round to give them a picture of normal family life and how faith works out in the context of family.

For more information on Scott Mitchell or RUF at Lehigh, check out their website: www.lehighruf.org

– by Kristen Boe

Easter Reflections

This joyful Eastertide,
away with sin and sorrow!
My Love, the Crucified,
hath sprung to life this morrow.

– George R. Woodward; (1848-1934)



“Mary.” With that one word Jesus changed everything.

Easter is many things. Even if we pass quickly by the commercial trappings of this spring holiday, it is a multi-faceted celebration. The resurrection of Jesus is proof that His claim to divinity was valid; it is the assurance that His sacrifice for our sin was acceptable to God; it is the ushering in of a new era for God's people.

But Jesus did not burst from the tomb and immediately issue a press release, or begin signing the manifesto of the new world order. The first thing He did was to speak to Mary. And He called her by name!

At Easter Jesus comes to us as the Good Shepherd who calls His sheep by name. He comes as the Older Brother who rejoices when His lost brother is found. Jesus comes as the Bridegroom to His adulterous bride, and He loves her. Mary understood this, and her world was shattered when her Love was crucified. But when she heard that Voice, everything was changed.

We preach, we witness, we pray for college students, family, and friends – that they also might hear that Voice calling their name. This Eastertide, may you hear Jesus call you afresh, and rejoice!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Green".

