

RUF REPORT

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Summer Conference!

Ruth, Benjamin, and I spent most of May at the beach on the Gulf coast. It's tough job, but somebody has to do it!

I will not deny that we had a wonderful time, but the purpose was to participate in RUF's summer conference. Two thousand students came over a three week period for teaching, seminars, worship, fellowship, and fun. They came from as far away as Corpus Christi, Texas; St. Paul, Minnesota; and Boston, Massachusetts. It was a profitable time for everyone, and truly life-changing for some. Two students from another country where the church is not accepted were astonished to see that many Christians in one place! It is a powerful vision they will carry back home with them.

It is impossible to convey the experience of 2,000 students, but I will share a few of their own thoughts:

I thought John Stone [the evening speaker] did a fantastic job of reminding us of the Gospel. I appreciated that he didn't sugar-coat the Christian life. I loved what he had to say about suffering, the cost of ministry, and the importance of solid Christian friendships.



I LOVED the Rest seminar! Josh Vahle was very relatable and broke this down very well with great examples.

It's very rare to get a speaker who is really funny, but

also has really meaningful things to say, and says them in an engaging way. I will be reading over my notes from his messages....

I had a wonderful time, I learned a lot, and I can't wait to come back next year.



Steve Allen's seminar on Prayer

Seminars are offered on a wide variety of theological and practical topics. I led a seminar on evangelism, and other ministers addressed Bible study, worldviews, prayer, sex and marriage, the church, etc.

But my primary goal at summer conference is to interact with the staff. During the semester I go to them – in May they come to me! It is a great ministry opportunity!

To see more summer conference pictures, go to www.dgreenruf.org and click pictures on the menu.



Jeremy Mullen teaching about Buddhism in his seminar on other religions

Thanks and Funds

All campus, staff, and intern accounts in my area ended the year 2011 in the black. And we had a wonderful, fruitful spring semester of ministry, capped by the largest summer conference ever. Now as we face the summer, some of our campus accounts are dipping into the red. A top priority for our campus ministers this summer is raising the support needed to cover expenses for the rest of the year.

Thank you for your prayers and donations to the ministry of RUF! Please continue to support us and to remember our financial needs in your prayers. Pray also for campus ministers as they work this summer to raise new support.

Focus on Derek Bates



In April 2008, just one day after the birth of the Bates' first child, Derek received a call from the Pittsburgh Presbytery asking him if he would accept the task of pioneering an RUF ministry at the University of Pittsburgh. When Derek and Luda's plans to start a similar campus ministry in Moscow had fallen through, the couple decided to pursue

domestic ministry through RUF. Though Derek and Ukrainian-born Luda had a heart for international mission, they also felt passionate about campus ministry in general and were attracted to the RUF model. Earlier in 2008, Rod Mays had informed Derek of the RUF Pitt possibility, and soon after receiving that information, the Bates took a trip to Pittsburgh to check things out. Derek describes their first campus visit as dreary and empty as they were there during a rainy-snowy college break. Despite Pitt's lackluster first impression, the couple liked the local church so much they quickly accepted the Pittsburgh Presbytery's proposal.

With newborn Caleb in tow, Derek and Luda made the trek from their home in St. Louis, Missouri to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Derek describes that first year of RUF ministry as a whirlwind of finding a house and adjusting to a new place to live, acclimating to parenthood, fund-raising and introducing RUF to northwestern PA churches unfamiliar with this campus ministry, and trying to get RUF registered as a campus group. While waiting for Pitt to grant RUF campus group status, Derek gathered ten students in his home for weekly meetings.

Since that first year, the group has grown significantly in size as well as maturity. The group now reflects more of the diversity of the campus as a whole. They have made tremendous strides in welcoming outsiders and establishing RUF as a safe place for students to discuss their brokenness and struggles.

A few years ago, a fellow campus minister called Derek to say he had a niece living in Pittsburgh for a graduate program. Derek took the initiative to meet with Sandy* who confessed she was not living as a consistent Christian. She expressed a desire finally to get involved with the local church as well as RUF. Derek encouraged Sandy to establish relationships with the younger undergraduate students in RUF. Sandy joined a couple of undergrads and together they began to change the culture in the group. Her honesty in admitting her own struggles helped to create openness among other RUF students.



Derek interacting with a student at his summer conference seminar on Faith and Science

Derek is also excited about last year's freshman class. While freshman outreach is important for any RUF ministry, Derek stresses the particular poignancy for Pitt. As an urban campus, Pitt has less of a traditional campus feel: dormitories are locked down and impossible for outsiders to enter uninvited and there is very little common space where students gather. In addition there are no all-campus events most students would attend, and weather keeps students cooped up inside for long stretches of the academic year. Simply put, Pitt is not the kind of school where you just run into people and get to know them. Freshman outreach is one of the only shots RUF gets to reach campus newcomers, and so Derek and his RUF students approach it very seriously.

RUF's partnership with City Reformed PCA has also served as a great way to reach the campus. Within walking distance from Pitt, the church attracts a number of students, some of whom have become members of the congregation. The church invites Derek to preach at key points in the academic year and recognizes it needs the ministry of RUF fully to engage students.

Though Pittsburgh is not overseas, Derek and Luda’s love for international mission has found expression in their lives today. In addition to raising four-year-old Caleb and his two-year-old sister, Abiel, to be bilingual, their cross-cultural love has also translated to their urban context. The Bates family enjoys the diversity of Pittsburgh and greatly appreciates living near its vibrant downtown.

Though RUF can now meet on campus as a registered campus group, the Bates still enjoy regularly hosting students for meals as well as leadership team meetings. Caleb and Abiel love being surrounded by students (fellow “kids” in their eyes), and the students love being around the Bates family. Some students even asked Derek, “If I stop coming to RUF, can I still hang out with your family?” At this time, Derek and Luda await the birth of their third child who will follow the other two in having RUF shape some of their earliest memories.

For more information on Derek Bates or RUF at Pitt, check out their website: www.pitt.ruf.org

* name has been changed

– by Kristen Boe

The Homefront

Daniel and Ginny enjoyed a trip to Aruba this spring to participate in a friend’s wedding. They have done a lot of work on Daniel’s house and are finally almost ready to start renting it.

Peter says, “Megan and I have been doing some projects around the apartment to get Eli’s new ‘bedroom’ [a closet] ready. We also planted a garden. I am working on my dissertation. Next week we will go to Danville.” (To visit Megan’s aunt and uncle.)

From Christopher, on vacation in Egypt: “Just got back from a dawn balloon ride that flew over ancient temples, modern cities and the Nile. We landed in a farmer’s field. And of course the riots [in Cairo this week] didn’t start until I had already left. What sort of amateur do you take me for? Last night saw the sound and light show at massive Karnak temple. Tonight I fly to Addis Ababa via Cairo airport, to do some hiking and see if Great Uncle George and I can’t get ourselves into trouble.”

Stephen is currently working for Keystone Human Services where he cares for an autistic man. He is enjoying finally being a productive member of society, but always is looking for exciting and challenging new ways to make a splash in the job market. In the few odd hours that he is not working or sleeping, he is engaging in hobbies and

projects like constructing new homes for his pet rats.

Benjamin is enjoying working at Rita’s Italian Water Ice. He does not mind the break from school too much either. To get a jump on next year’s reading requirement, he is working on *The Lord of the Rings*. Coming up are two weeks at camp.

I am typing this on our 32nd anniversary. It is amazing to think we have been married that long, but time flies when you’re having fun! And Ruth gets more amazing each year. This summer we are looking forward to traveling together to General Assembly and two RUF events in July. It is so much more fun when she is along with me!



David and Benjamin jet skiing in the Gulf

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