

LeHIGHlights

News of Reformed University Fellowship at Lehigh University

Volume 1, Number 3

December, 2001

RUF in the Dorms

RUF at Lehigh continued expanding its ministry this fall by entering the dormitories. The semester began with an unimpressive number of new contacts, but before the first week was over more than 50 new students signed up to learn more about RUF! There was enough interest among freshmen that we were able to start dorm Bible studies in two out of three freshmen dorm areas. It is exciting to take the ministry of God's Word right into the living quarters of Lehigh students! We reached students who didn't make it to our large group meeting, and provided additional teaching for those who did. The discussion format enabled them to sharpen their thinking about the scripture, and the studies in Philippians connected with issues they face every day.

We had four grad student contacts and I was wondering if we should begin a grad student Bible study. It took a couple of weeks to launch the freshmen Bible studies, and then I began talking to grads. I learned that there already was a grad student Bible study – but soon the leader had to pull back and focus on his research, so I was asked to take over. This has been a rewarding new ministry – one I hope continues to grow.

The Good News of Life

Who is Jesus? This is the topic we addressed in our large group meeting each Tuesday night as we studied the gospel of John. Each week we took a different name or title for Jesus: the Word, the Lamb of God, the Vine, etc., and examined its meaning and application. Of course the fundamental message is that Jesus is God in the flesh, come to earth to save us. I was fascinated to see in how many ways Jesus revealed His deity, and to see Him constantly declaring that life is found only in Him. Jesus was in the beginning, giving us physical life, and He is present now to give us spiritual life. Without Him we are not just lost, we are dead! Jesus' gospel is the message that you can escape death and live forever!

Two Dead Come to Life

Students often remarked how much they appreciated the studies in John, but you never really know all that happens in their hearts and minds. Two students, however, made clear professions of faith this semester. One

came to see me about a question troubling him, and before the night was over, he prayed confessing his sin and committing himself to Christ. Another student had been exposed to the witness of several RUF students for several years. This fall at a Christian concert he gave his life to Christ, and has been reading the Bible diligently ever since.

But this is only the tip of the iceberg. Many students are actively witnessing to their friends and roommates. I have had the opportunity to share the gospel repeatedly with a guy who is really nice and really lost. He grew up Presbyterian, but his mother also practiced spirit worship. He likes Jesus and Buddha, but leans more toward Hinduism. All over campus Jesus is using RUF to confront students with the gospel.

Multiplying the Laborers

Perhaps the biggest factor in the rapid growth of RUF's influence at Lehigh has been the development of strong student leaders. Each year we build on past strengths, and this year the leaders are pulling more of the weight of the ministry. Furthermore, several new members have shown such remarkable commitment to our group that we invited them to join the Ministry Team. Four freshmen and one senior accepted, doubling our total leadership! We are very excited about this. The potential impact of 10 committed students on a campus like Lehigh is enormous!

Miscellaneous

These are some of the highlights of the RUF ministry at Lehigh this fall. There are too many interesting and significant developments to mention them all. Our second large group meeting was scheduled for September 11. Instead of our regular meeting we held a prayer service outside the University Center to deal with the attacks in New York and the Pentagon. It was a shocking and moving time for all of us, even though most students were not directly affected by the terrorist attacks. Our weekly social activities continue to provide a healthy alternative on Friday nights, and several who attended have since become involved in our Bible studies. A great answer to prayer is an assistant for me in the office. John Bright, a senior at Lehigh, comes three mornings each week and is extremely helpful.

Financial Report

God continues to bless RUF financially, and we are profoundly grateful for hundreds of supporters. You are the human foundation of this ministry. Without you we could not be here. So thanks for your support.

Our support base has increased significantly this year, but we are still \$10,000 short of our budget. If you can begin regularly supporting us or increase your support, that will reduce my fund-raising requirements and free up more time to spend with students. At least, if you are able, please consider a year-end gift. Thanks!

Homefront

We are doing well. Daniel is a junior at Johns Hopkins, and is starting to look for a better summer job than he has had in the past. Peter is enjoying life as a high school senior. He fractured his collarbone in a soccer game, but was back on the field again in a few weeks. Christopher is working diligently on his first research paper -- on mahogany. Stephen is plowing through sixth grade at home and Benjamin is starting some schooling, too. Ruth is teaching history and literature again at the Masters Academy of the Fine Arts in addition to home-schooling the younger three.

The big change has been the arrival of Ruth's parents. After living in Hawaii for 17 years they returned to Bethlehem and bought the house next to us. It has been a big project to get moved and settled, but we are very glad they are here. Ruth's dad is teaching Latin to Christopher, and her mom helps her with a lot of household work.

Christmas Reflections

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...
Hebrews 1:1-3

For many Americans, our first impulse after the shock of watching the World Trade Center collapse was to cry out, "Why? Why, God, did you let this happen?" That night and for several weeks after, in cities and towns, churches and schools, Americans gathered for prayer. And this is how it should be. But although we are

quick to ask God why, we are much slower to listen for the answer. I do not remember any call for pastors to proclaim God's Word regarding those attacks. Why? Is it that Americans, by and large, do not know that God speaks to us, or is it that they do not want to hear what He has to say?

Hebrews tells us that God has always spoken to His people. Earlier He sent prophets – messengers. But when the old ages were over, He sent His Son to speak to us. This is a lot better. God's Son does not merely transmit a message from afar – He speaks as God Himself. When Jesus came, we saw the glory and image of God exactly – and when He spoke, we heard the voice of God directly. Whether it is a terrorist attack, a fatal illness, a broken family, or professional failure – whatever disaster befalls us, God speaks to you. His voice is recorded in scripture and articulated by His pastors and evangelists.

At Christmas we celebrate God's coming to earth as a man. And if this historical fact is true, we can be sure that God still speaks to us through Him. God does not answer all our questions, but He speaks to comfort, instruct, and save. And just as surely as God's Son came to earth 2,000 years ago, so we have confidence that He cleansed us from sin and rules from heaven today. May this be your joy and hope this Christmas season.