



NORTHEAST REPORT

NEWS OF REFORMED UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIP IN THE NORTHEAST

Volume 11, Number 4

June, 2019

Much More Than a Student Org



RUF is much more than just a student organization looking to make change on campus. RUF is the backbone on which we students rely to make sure we are impacting the spiritual healing on campus. As I came into RUF my freshman year, I wasn't a student who was fully invested in the word of God. I thought I had good friends, but it turned out to be they weren't the friends I needed. By walking into RUF my freshman year, I could just tell my healing process was taking place.

Pastor Daryl and RUF has such an impact on me that I stuck to the program and made sure I was immersing myself in the community. The kind of family that surrounded me, the love I felt was unmatched. Immediately I knew this was going to be a life-changing organization. The foundations of this program were built on love and truth, but most importantly – the word of God. The different trips and events I attended through RUF shaped my life not only emotionally, but spiritually as well. I was walking around with much more confidence both in myself and in the word.

I was no longer afraid to pray in public, whether it was at the cafeteria or anywhere. I was excited and jubilated to be able to play gospel music out loud and not feel as if I weren't cool. RUF shaped me into a man with principles and I am forever grateful.

*Marlon Offei, class of 2019
Delaware State University
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Reaching the Fulness of the Campus

This fall a new campus ministry will begin at one of the most prestigious historically black universities, Howard University in Washington, D.C. RUF has been increasingly sensitive to reaching students of different cultures and ethnicities. In doing so, the ministry is not responding to culture pressure, but fulfilling its calling to preach the gospel to all students on campus.

Most RUF groups appeal primarily to the dominant culture on campus. Reverend Russ Whitfield hopes to help change that. In 2017 Russ was hired as the RUF Director of Cross-cultural Advancement. As such he provides consulting and teaching for RUF leadership and ministers. "I want RUF to reach the fullness of the campus," Russ says. Commitment to bringing the gospel to all students should not be a specialty of a few ministers. Instead, he says, "It should be essential to being a disciple and follower of Jesus. It is the main deal."

The desire to reach the fullness of the campus has bred a related vision of planting RUF ministries on historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). These academic institutions were created before the Civil



Russ Whitfield

Rights Act of 1964 to serve the African-American population. Today, they remain a stronghold of African-American culture and a welcoming place for people of color to study and explore their identity.

An RUF planted at an HBCU needs a church willing to welcome a diverse student body. Ideally that church would be multi-ethnic, a body of believers already sensitive to the needs of different cultures. Russ pastors Grace Mosaic, a multi-ethnic church that will support RUF at Howard University.

Howard University: Reaching the Nation

When the Potomac Presbytery was considering where to start an RUF ministry, they quickly prioritized Howard University. Although the campus was not the largest university in the Washington D.C area, the presbytery recognized that it was critical to RUF's mission. The school is a bastion of black intellectual culture. Howard University consistently produces more African-American doctorate graduates than any other academic institution.



Howard University Founders Library

RUF ministries often have a local focus, explains Reverend Chris Sicks, chairman of the Potomac Presbytery's RUF committee. They frequently attract students from local churches seeking discipleship and training. This is a vital ministry of RUF. After graduation, many of these students will likely join the church as Bible study leaders, deacons, elders, and ministers. Alternatively, RUF International has a global vision, sharing the gospel with students who will eventually return to their home country.

The ministry at Howard differs from both of these. Because most of the students at Howard come from outside the D.C. region, they are likely to leave the region after graduation. Additionally, the student body is primarily African-American, a demographic underrepresented in the PCA. These students are unlikely to have encountered Reformed teaching. Chris says, "By bringing Cyril to Howard, the hope is that we impact the denomination on a national scale."



Cyril and Janelle Chavis with Aria and Elise

Reverend Cyril Chavis, Jr., the RUF minister at Howard, is well suited to this calling. Cyril has family ties to the university, his father having completed his medical internship and residency at Howard. Cyril grew up in the mid-Atlantic region. While at the University of Virginia, Cyril became involved in a campus ministry called OneWay, a chapter of InterVarsity's Black Campus Ministries. Later, Cyril attended Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi. There he discovered RUF at Jackson State University, the first HBCU to host an RUF. Cyril got involved with RUF in Jackson where he served for six years - first as an intern, then as part of the interim staff, and finally one and a half years as the campus minister.

"It's important to point out," Chris says, "that Cyril's greatest qualification is not that he is black, but that he is deeply intelligent, mature spiritually, and well-versed in the history of the church in America." To minister at an HBCU, "one must love and celebrate black culture," Cyril says. This includes loving the food, music, and literature of African-Americans, but it also requires the minister to recognize their core concerns. "The African-American cultural narrative has much sorrow as well as joy," Cyril says. "African-Americans are constantly wrestling with issues common to all those who live in this fallen world, but particularly issues of deep suffering; issues of identity and dignity; and issues related to freedom and power over their own bodies, resources, and communities," says Cyril.

HBCUs were founded to give education to recently freed enslaved Africans. "HBCUs have a beautiful origin," Cyril says, "Many of these schools were started by churches and Christians because their faith compelled them to care for the well-being of those who were brutally oppressed." Although Howard has several thriving campus ministries, Cyril believes RUF's distinctive theological foundation and a commitment to discipleship will make it a unique offering among the campus's other ministries. He looks forward to working with the other Christians on campus and being able to work for the good of the university as a whole. Cyril says, "We have the honor of being on campus."

Jackson State University: Practicing RUF's Fixed Theology and Flexible Methodology

Cyril may be starting RUF's newest HBCU ministry, but he was trained at the first HBCU to host an RUF – Jackson State University. Reverend Elbert McGowan founded Jackson State RUF in 2007. Both Elbert and his wife, Karen, received their undergraduate degrees at HBCUs. “When we both came to know the Lord, we felt a burden for the gospel truth and a burden for people who looked like us and talked like us,” Elbert explains. As they grew in their faith, Elbert and Karen frequently met believers who were influenced by RUF. They were excited to hear about the ministry, but they noticed that they had not met any black people who had been a part of RUF. When they joined Redeemer Church, a multi-ethnic church in Jackson, Mississippi, Elbert and the church leadership knew they wanted to start an RUF at a local HBCU.



Elbert and Karen McGowan with Karis and Tripp

Elbert recalls thinking, “Man! Now we have a church that our students can come to and [where we can] see children from an HBCU be a part of God’s vision to reconcile all people to himself.” Many students attend HBCUs to be immersed in black culture, and RUF at Jackson State reflects this. The preaching style differs from that found on predominantly white campuses, but the theology remains the same. The students pray, confess, sins, and study the Bible, just as they do elsewhere. They praise God, but their musical selection reflects their African-American heritage. Group activities are different – at JSU they play kickball not ultimate frisbee – but students still benefit

from RUF’s distinctive focus on discipleship and training. Elbert says that “RUF has a strong theology and a flexible methodology.”

In 2015 Elbert became the pastor at Redeemer Church. When Elbert stepped down as RUF minister, Cyril led RUF. Now the incoming campus minister, Anthony Forrest, leads the ministry at Jackson State with current staff David Jackson and Latasha Allston

Delaware State University: Pursuing God’s Vision in the Northeast

The story of RUF at Delaware State began years before RUF minister Daryl Wattlely was brought on campus. In the 1990s Reverend Jonathan Seda had what he calls his “Damascus road experience.” The pastor of Grace PCA, a mostly white church plant in Dover, Delaware, was reflecting on God’s decision to include Gentiles into spiritual Israel. Suddenly he realized that the physical church should also include all people groups. The divisions we see in our local churches do not honor the unity we find in Christ. “God has a vision that people from every nation, tribe, people, and language worship him,” Jonathan says. “We should be pursuing that vision.”

Jonathan presented his vision of a multi-ethnic church to his elders, and after a decade of discussion and prayer the church hired a black pastor, Reverend Kenny Foster. Both Kenny and Jonathan share leadership and preaching responsibilities. This shared ministry has been vital to creating a church that not only welcomes African-Americans – but also individuals from other cultures. A significant Korean population attends the church, and a Korean pastor helps translate the sermons. Their worship services incorporate a range of styles. As Kenny thinks about his diverse congregation, he reflects, “This is what heaven is going to look like.” Both Kenny and Jonathan hope to see more multi-ethnic churches in the PCA, but to do so the PCA needs more African-American ministers. Jonathan believes that “RUF is the tool for drawing African-Americans to the Reformed faith and channeling them to seminary.” Kenny and Jonathan decided that they wanted to launch an RUF ministry at Delaware State University, an HBCU two minutes from their church. After Kenny began a Bible study on campus, he and Jonathan sought a minister who could connect with the students at Delaware State University. That man was Daryl Wattlely.

At the time, Daryl was about to become the first African-American to graduate from Reformed Theological Seminary in Atlanta. As an undergraduate at Georgia Southern University he joined RUF, and after graduation decided to pursue the ministry. Daryl’s heart was drawn to college students, especially African-American college students. Daryl’s ministry at Delaware State University is not limited to African-Americans because DSU has a significant population of Latinos and white Americans. The university also hosts many exchange students and profes-

sors from Korea, China, and Africa. Many students at HBCUs, including Delaware State, face greater challenges than the average college student. Much of Daryl's work involves giving practical help.



Daryl, Laria, and Leia Wattley

For example, a large percentage of DSU students experience financial difficulties, and many of them are first-generation college students. A portion of Daryl's time and money is spent helping students with practical issues. These students may be working to provide for themselves and their families or may need help with transportation. Not infrequently students at Delaware State University may not be able to buy meals. Every RUF meeting on campus involves food; some of it is provided by Grace PCA. Although these students are intelligent and dedicated, DSU has a lower graduation rate than many colleges. Some students may find themselves unable to afford their education, or financial concerns distract them from their studies. This affects leadership development in RUF since a potential RUF leader may not be able to complete a four-year degree. Given the challenges the students face, a successful RUF at an HBCU may appear different than a successful RUF at a wealthy, predominately white campus. But it is one step closer to experiencing the fullness of the church and obeying the command to bring the gospel to all people.

Although ministering at an HBCU brings all of the challenges of ministering to college students, there is a unique privilege, beauty, and joy. Daryl is passionate about his

work. "Historically black colleges and universities are ... one of the most effective ways to reach African-Americans for the gospel," Daryl says. "If you want to influence the next generation of African-Americans, you need to go to an HBCU."

– by Rebecca Trudeau

Stay Connected to RUF!

Had you ever heard about HBCUs before? Most of us in the PCA have not, so it is more challenging to develop the support networks to fund these ministries.



Perhaps God is moving you to help! You can make donations to RUF here: <https://www.givetoruf.org> or scan this QR code. ← Type the school or campus minister you wish to support in the box.

We don't have space to tell everything happening in RUF – like the Summer Conferences last month. But you can find up-to-date news on our website! Go to <http://rufnortheast.org/> or scan this code →



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.

Summer Reflections



"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." *Matt. 28:19*

The Greek text indicates that Jesus was not so much interested in geographically defined states as peoples – ethnic groups. In my 34 years of college ministry I had been on many sorts of campuses, but never an HBCU until Jonathan and Kenny asked RUF to serve Delaware State. It has been a great pleasure to help Daryl reach a type of campus I had never encountered before, and I am excited to help Cyril get started at Howard University. May Jesus be exalted and the gospel proclaimed at these important universities!

David Green





NORTHEAST

Prayer Requests, June 2019

1. Pray for our new ministry at Howard University:
Cyril and Janelle as they move from Jackson to D.C.
Funding!
Gathering students, beginning Bible studies
on campus.
2. Pray for God to enable RUF learn effectively how to
reach and equip students in many HBCUs.
3. Pray for more ministers like Daryl and Cyril.
4. Pray for all ministers as they pray, plan, and prepare for
a new academic year beginning in August.