

RUF JACKSON STATE

From Jackson State's Campus to RTS Jackson Classroom!



DA Carson writes, *"Losing the Gospel does not happen at once, its more like a four-fold process: the Gospel is accepted, the Gospel is assumed, the Gospel is confused, and then the Gospel is lost."* The picture on the left was taken at the main entrance of JSU's campus. The picture on the right was taken in a Biblical Studies classroom on the campus of Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS). Early that Saturday morning, forty of our students traveled six miles to attend a special lecture taught by Dr. Miles Van Pelt. During this three hour lecture he dealt with the Canon (How the Bible was written and arranged) and the Covenant (its Christ-centered message, framework, and continuity)! Why was the trip planned? Student after student, over the course of the semester, confessed not knowing what the Bible is about, how to approach the Scriptures, nor the relationship between the Old and New Testament! How close I was to making the grave mistake of assuming my students, in large, know the message of the Bible, merely because they participate in RUF.

After prayerful reflection, I realized that the greater Jackson area is replete with resources to aid in their spiritual development! What began as a problem resulted in a partnership between RTS and JSU RUF that will involve a three hour lecture, every semester, specifically geared toward my students! These special lectures will be taught by RTS Professors on topics that I feel our

students need the most! In the end, Gospel work will be multiplied!

My students' statements caused me to reflect deeply on my role as their campus minister. It was as if God, in his kindness, was speaking through them, to me. It was as if He were saying, "Elbert, be planting AND watering. Be laying the foundation AND building on it." Of course, you and I know that these words are in found I Corinthians 3. Paul writes, *"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth...we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. According to the grace given me, like a skilled master builder I laid the foundation, and someone else is building upon it."* In its original context, these verses highlighted the different ministries of Paul and Apollos. Paul was the church planter, going from city to city, laying the foundation of Christ. Apollos was the under-shepherd who arrived in Corinth, shortly after Paul's departure, to build up the church.

Can you imagine what might have happened had Apollos showed up, set apart by God to be a builder, with no foundation to build upon? The building (God's church) would not have survived! Can you imagine what might have happened had Paul planted the seed of the Gospel before being constrained by the Spirit to go elsewhere, without anyone to subsequently water it? Harvest time would have been disastrous because the anticipated crop would have long died due to inadequate seed hydration!

Yet, these are the exact dilemmas we face in campus ministry. Each semester, the Lord providentially sends us students from all walks of life: atheists, churchd, unchurched, de-churched, agnostic, evangelical, catholic, international, skeptics, along with students from manifold denominations. These variables weigh heavily upon my soul because I have to constantly and strategically think about planting the seed/laying the foundation AND watering/building. This daunting task involves a prayerful awareness of where my group is collectively, and individually.

Yet, what we learn from I Corinthians 3 is like balm to a weary pastor's soul. Paul teaches us that Gospel ministry involves partnerships-with God and with others. Neither Paul or Apollos could do the work alone! They viewed themselves as partners, co-laborers, God's fellow workers! They both labored in God's field, BUT God gave the growth!

God has strategically called me to JSU to pastor. But, I am not alone! He has placed numerous people and resources at my disposal. Through strategic Gospel partnerships, I will redeem the time I have with JSU students and lay the foundation of Christ, brick by brick. I will also water the seed and build on the foundation, through prayer and careful instruction, in order to apply the Gospel to every sphere of their lives! Let us continue to pray that God will continue to bring the appointed harvest!

HOW CAN YOU PARTNER WITH US IN PRAYER?

1. Our part-time RUF Interns, Phillip Holmes and Bryan Grove. Phillip is attending RTS Jackson. He is doing a phenomenal job with our Freshman Bible Study. Bryan has a real heart for our campus and city! He is finishing up his thesis and is in need of direction upon graduation.
2. Lyle Lee, a JSU RUF student who graduated in May 2011. Lyle was offered a 4-year internship with The Village Church, PCA (Huntsville, AL) this summer! He will begin seminary this January!
3. Ontario Ford, a current JSU RUF student, will be graduating in May 2012. He is applying for the RUF Internship and will more than likely be placed at Delta State University!
4. I will be preaching a sermon series this spring, dealing with some of the particular vices affecting our students and campus. Please pray for wisdom.
5. We will be introducing two, weekly, gender-specific discipleship groups! If you would like to be a part of a team of adults (including Karen and myself), please let me know.
6. Spring Break Mission Trip. This March we will be traveling to Huntsville, AL to serve alongside The Village Church and Lincoln Village Ministries!
7. Rest for our family. As the number of students in our ministry continues to rise, we find ourselves more busy than ever. Weekends, holidays, and built in breaks provide time for us to rest. Pray that we can truly do so!

HOW CAN YOU FINANCIALLY PARTNER WITH US?

It was a little over 5 years ago when Bebo Elkin asked me to pray about starting RUF on the campus of Jackson State University. We both knew that it would not be easy.

Yet, we both knew that such a work would bring the transformative power of the Gospel to our city, the students, our seminaries and churches. We were both aware that RUF is a pipeline, not only for future pastors and leaders in the church, but also for future business men and woman, fathers, mothers, and members of the local church.

As I reflect upon God's faithfulness, I can't help but pause and give Him thanks. Those dreams are becoming realities! What began with virtually no students in 2007, has resulted in a ministry of over 200 (see picture to the right)! What began with virtually no JSU students in our local churches, has resulted in 20-30 weekly (see picture above)! What began as no real partnership between any college ministry on other campuses has resulted in a deep relationship between JSU and Belhaven (see picture below). JSU RUF has also played a pivotal role in the creation of the AALI (African American Leadership Institute) at RTS Jackson. The AALI will help RTS Jackson recruit, scholarship, mentor, model and prepare men for ministry in a multi-ethnic or urban context.

Our past, present and future fruitfulness depends upon God's grace and blessing! Yet, one of the manifold ways He blesses our labors is through financial partnerships between us and others. Would you consider partnering with us in this way? Our ministry exists solely through the contributions of others (not students or our university)! Sadly, our support has been down this year. We entered the month of December with a \$1,000 surplus. This means that without a strong year-end and elevated levels of monthly giving, we will be facing a deficit in early Spring. Should you desire to partner with us, all gifts should be either sent to: **Reformed University Ministries, 1700 North Brown Road, Suite 104, Lawrenceville, GA 30043** OR submitted online at www.ruf.org/donate. Please remember to denote Elbert McGowan-Jackson State as your staff person! All giving is tax-deductible. You will promptly receive a receipt and a year end statement. Thank you for partnering with us! God bless you!



JSU RUF STUDENTS AT REDEEMER CHURCH, PCA



JSU RUF LARGE GROUP, FALL 2011



RUF JSU/BELHAVEN SKATE NIGHT

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