

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

A DIFFERENT MISSION

By Pastor Brian De Jong

One of my priorities for this summer was to visit Rev. Mike Wenzler and catch up on his ministry at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. When we made plans to get together, I told him I wanted to see the campus where he ministers.

So on Monday, June 20th I traveled south for my appointment. The experience that I had was far better than I anticipated. Having never seen UW-M, I didn't know exactly what to expect. The campus is definitely

"urban" and fairly condensed into a relatively small space. The buildings were typical for colleges and universities, and the dorms reminded me that I'm glad dorm life is a thing of the past for me.

What was most refreshing was the number of students that not only knew Mike, but joyfully greeted him. He is well-known and well-liked on the campus. The encouragement continued when we went off-campus for lunch. The waitress at the restaurant immediately recognized Mike and introduced him to her coworker as "my pastor." After she was out of earshot, Mike told me that this girl is not a Christian, but started coming to their large group meetings. She enjoyed the friendship that was extended, and she was intrigued by the teaching she was hearing from Pastor Mike.

I also observed something which made my heart glad as I watched Mike interacting with these students. He has a natural friendliness, yet a seriousness that is appropriate for a college minister. His pastoral skills are quite good, from what I was seeing.

The ministry that Mike carries out at UWM is part of Reformed University Fellowship (RUF), the campus ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America. You may know that I myself worked for RUF for 8 years, focusing on ministry to inter-

One thing I've always appreciated about RUF is their commitment to the Reformed faith. They don't shy away from Reformed theology in order to be more acceptable to other evangelicals. They

stand firm for the truths

that we hold dear. I

national students

don't think it's an exaggeration to say that Mike Wenzler is the only person at UW-M that is teaching Reformed Christianity to the students.

Another distinctive of RUF is that it is church-based, not "para-church." Mike is a PCA minister and part of the Great Lakes Presbytery of the PCA. He serves on their Candidates & Credentials Committee and does a fair amount of preaching in their churches. He also recruits students into a nearby PCA church plant, where he and his family attend.

According to RUF's philosophy of ministry, campus ministers are to be reaching and equipping. Reaching means evangelizing the non-believers on the campus with the good news of Christ. Equipping refers to the training of Christian students to be actively involved in ministry. It is a good balance for ministering to all the students that they encounter.

One of the reasons that RUF is significant is the high number of young people who go to college and lose whatever religious faith they had in childhood. I've

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Duties and Discouragements

By Richard Sibbes

"As we set

about duty.

God

strengthens

the influ-

ence that

He has in

us."

From what has been said it will not be difficult, with a little further discussion, to resolve that question which some require help in, namely, whether we ought to perform duties when our hearts are altogether averse to them. To be satisfied on this point, we must take account of certain things.

WE SHOULD PERSIST IN DUTIES

1. Our hearts of themselves are reluctant to give up their liberty, and are only with difficulty brought under the yoke of duty. The more spiritual the duty is, the more reluctance there is. Corruption gains ground, for the most part, in every neglect. It is as in rowing against the tide, one stroke neglected will not

be gained in three; and therefore it is good to keep our hearts close to duty, and not to listen to the excuses they are ready to frame.

- 2. As we set about duty, God strengthens the influence that he has in us. We find a warmness of heart and increase of strength, the Spirit going along with us and raising us up by degrees, until he leaves us as it were in heaven. God often delights to take advantage of our averseness, that he may manifest his work the more clearly, and that all the glory of the work may be his, as all the strength is his.
- 3. Obedience is most direct when there a nothing else to sweeten the action. Although the sacrifice is imperfect, yet the obedience with which it is offered is accepted.
- 4. What is won as a spoil from our corruptions will have as great a degree of comfort afterwards as it has of obstruction for the present. Feeling and freeness of spirit are often reserved until duty is discharged. Reward follows work. In and after duty we find that experience of God's presence which, without obedience, we may long wait for, and yet go without. This does not hinder the Spirit's freedom in blowing upon our souls when he pleases (John 3:8), for we speak only of such a state of soul as is becalmed and must row, as it were, against the stream. As in sailing the hand must be to the helm and the eye to the star, so here we must put forth that little strength we have to duty and look up for assistance, which the Spirit, as freely as seasonably, will afford.

Yet in these duties that require the body as well as the soul there may be a cessation till strength is restored. Whetting a tool does not hinder, but prepares. In sudden passions, also, there should be a time to compose and calm the soul, and to put the strings in tune. The prophet asked for a minstrel to bring his soul into frame (2 Kings 3:15).

OVERCOMING DISCOURAGEMENTS

Suffering brings discouragements, because of our impatience. 'Alas!', we lament, 'I shall never get through such a trial.' But if God brings us into the trial he will be with us in the trial, and at length bring us

out, more refined. We shall lose nothing but dross (Zech. 13:9). From our own strength we cannot bear the least trouble, but by the Spirit's assistance we can bear the greatest. The Spirit will add his shoulders to help us to bear our infirmities. The Lord will give his hand to heave us up (Psa. 37:24). 'Ye have heard of the patience of job,' says James (James 5:11). We have heard of his impatience too, but it pleased God mercifully to overlook that. It yields us comfort also in desolate conditions, such as contagious sicknesses and the like, in which we are more immediately under God's hand, that then Christ has a throne of mercy at our bedside and numbers our tears and our groans.

And, to come to the matter we are now about, the Sacrament', it was ordained not for angels, but for men; and not for perfect men, but for weak men; and not for Christ, who is truth itself, to bind him, but because we are ready, by reason of our guilty and unbelieving hearts, to call truth itself into question.

Therefore it was not enough for his goodness to leave us many precious promises, but he gives us confirming tokens to strengthen us. And even if we are not so prepared as we should be, yet let us pray as Hezekiah did: 'The good LORD pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary' (2 Chron. 30:18,19). Then we come comfortably to this holy sacrament, and with much fruit. This should carry us through all duties with much cheerfulness, that, if we hate our corruptions and strive against them, they shall not be

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counted ours. 'It is no more I that do it,' says Paul, 'but sin that dwelleth in me' (Rom. 7:17). For what displeases us shall never hurt us, and we shall be esteemed by God to be what we love and desire and labour to be. What we desire to be we shall be, and what we desire truly to conquer we shall conquer, for God will fulfill the desire of them that fear him (Psa. 145:19). The desire is an earnest of the thing desired. How little encouragement will carry us to the affairs of this life! And yet all the helps God offers will hardly prevail with our backward natures.

THE SOURCE OF DISCOURAGEMENTS Where, then, do these discouragements come from?

- 1. Not from the Father, for he has bound himself in covenant to pity us as a father pities his children (Psa. 103:13) and to accept as a father our weak endeavors. And what is wanting in the strength of duty, he gives us leave to take up in his gracious indulgence. In this way we shall honor that grace in which he delights as much as in more perfect performances. Possibilitas tua mensura tua (What is possible to you is what you will be measured by).
- 2. Not from Christ, for he by office will not quench the smoking flax. We see how Christ bestows the best fruits of his love on persons who are mean in condition, weak in abilities, and offensive for infirmities, nay, for grosser falls. And this he does, first, because thus it pleases him to confound the pride of the flesh, which usually measures God's love by some outward excellency; and secondly, in this way he delights to show the freedom of his grace and confirm his royal prerogative that 'he that glorieth' must 'glory in the Lord' (1 Cor. 1:31).

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, among that cloud of witnesses, we see Rahab, Gideon and Samson ranked with Abraham, the father of the faithful (Heb. 11:31,32). Our blessed Saviour, as he was the image of his Father, so in this he was of the same mind, glorifying his Father for revealing the mystery of the gospel to simple men, neglecting those that carried the chief reputation of wisdom in the world (Matt. 11:25, 26).

It is not unworthy of being recorded, what Augustine speaks of a simple man in his time, destitute almost altogether of the use of reason, who, although he was most patient of all injuries done to himself, yet from a reverence of religion he would not endure any injury done to the name of Christ, so much so that he

would cast stones at those that blasphemed, not even sparing his own governors. This shows that none have abilities so meager as to be beneath the gracious regard of Christ. Where it pleases him to make his choice and to exalt his mercy he passes by no degree of understanding, though never so simple.

3. Neither do discouragements come from the Spirit. He helps our infirmities, and by office is a comforter (Rom. 8:26; John 14:16). If he convinces of sin, and so humbles us, it is that he may make way for his office of comforting us. Discouragements, then, must come from ourselves and from Satan, who labors to fasten on us a loathing of duty.

SOME SCRUPLES REMOVED

Among other causes of discouragement, some are much vexed with scruples, even against the best duties; partly by disease of body, helped by Satan's malice in casting dust in their eyes in their way to heaven; and partly from some remainder of ignorance, which, like darkness, breeds fears- ignorance especially of this merciful disposition in Christ, the persuasion of which would easily banish false fears. They conceive of him as one on watch for all advantages against them, in which they may see how they wrong not only themselves but his goodness.

This scrupulosity, for the most part, is a sign of a godly soul, as some weeds are of a good soil. Therefore they are the more to be pitied, for it is a heavy affliction, and the ground of it in most is not so much from trouble of conscience as from a disordered imagination. The end of Christ's coming was to free us from all such groundless fears. There is still in some such ignorance of that comfortable condition we are in under the covenant of grace as to discourage them greatly. Therefore we must understand that:

- 1. Weaknesses do not break covenant with God. They do not break the covenant between husband and wife, and shall we make ourselves more pitiful than Christ who makes himself a pattern of love to all other husbands?
- 2. Weaknesses do not debar us from mercy; rather they incline God to us the more (Psa. 78:39). Mercy is a part of the church's marriage inheritance. Christ betroths her to him 'in mercy' (Hos. 2:19). The husband is bound to bear with the wife, as being the 'weaker vessel' (1 Pet. 3:7), and shall we think

"Weaknesses do not break covenant with God."

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Duties and Discouragements Continued...

"If Christ

should not

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Christ will exempt himself from his own rule, and not bear with his weak spouse?

3. If Christ should not be merciful to our weaknesses, he should not have a people to serve him. Suppose therefore we are very weak, yet so long as we are not found amongst malicious opposers and underminers of God's truth, let us not give way to despairing thoughts; we have a merciful Saviour.

But lest we flatter ourselves without good grounds, we must know that weaknesses are to be reckoned either imperfections cleaving to our best actions, or actions proceeding from immaturity in Christ, whilst we are babes, or the effects of want of strength,

where ability is small, or sudden unintended breakings out, contrary to our general bent and purpose, whilst our judgment is overcast with the cloud of a sudden temptation, after which we feel our infirmity, grieve for it and from grief, complain, and, with complaining, strive and labour to reform; finally, in laboring, we make some progress against our corruption.

ruption.

Weaknesses so considered, although a matter of humiliation and the object of our daily mortification, yet may be consistent with boldness with God, nor is a good work either extinguished by them or tainted so far as to lose all acceptance with God. But to plead for an infirmity is more than an infirmity; to allow ourselves in weak-though

nesses is more than a weakness. The justification of evil shuts our mouths, so that the soul cannot call God Father with childlike liberty, or enjoy sweet communion with him, until peace be made by shaming ourselves, and renewing our faith. Those that have ever been bruised for sin, if they fall, are soon recovered. Peter was recovered with a gracious look of Christ, David by Abigail's words. If you tell a thief or a vagrant that he is out of the way, he pays no heed, because his aim is not to walk in any particular way, except as it suits his purpose.

WHAT ARE SINS OF INFIRMITY?

To clarify this further, we must understand that:

1. Wherever sins of infirmity are in a person, the

1. Wherever sins of infirmity are in a person, there must be the life of grace begun.

There can be no weakness where there is no life.

2. There must be a sincere and general bent to the

best things.

Though a godly man may suddenly be drawn or driven aside in some particulars, yet, by reason of that interest the Spirit of Christ has in him, and because his aims are right in the main, he will either recover of himself, or yield to the counsel of others.

- 3. There must be a right judgment, allowing of the best ways, or else the heart is rotten. Then it will infuse corruption into the whole conversation, so that all men's actions become infected at the spring head. They then justify looseness and condemn God's ways as too much strictness. Their principles whereby they work are not good.
 - 4. There must be a conjugal love to Christ, so that there are no terms on which they will change their Lord and husband, and yield themselves absolutely over to be ruled by their own lusts, or the lusts of others.

A Christian's behavior towards Christ may in many things be very offensive, and cause some strangeness; yet he will own Christ, and Christ him; he will not resolve upon any way wherein he knows he must break with Christ. Where the heart is thus in these respects qualified, there we must know this, that Christ counts it his honor to pass by many infirmities, nay, in infirmities he perfects his strength. There are some almost invincible infirmities, such as forgetfulness, heaviness of spirit, sudden passions and fears which,

though natural, yet are for the most part tainted with sin. Of these, if the life of Christ be in us, we are weary, and would fain shake them off, as a sick man his fever; otherwise it is not to be esteemed weakness so much as willfulness, and the more will, the more sin. And little sins, when God shall awaken the conscience and 'set them in order' before us (Psa. 50:21) will prove great burdens, and not only bruise a reed, but shake a cedar. Yet God's children never sin with full will, because there is a contrary law in their minds by which the dominion of sin is broken and which always has some secret working against the law of sin. Nevertheless there may be so much will in a sinful action as may destroy our comfort to a remarkable degree afterwards and keep us long on the rack of a disquieted conscience, God in his fatherly dispensation suspending the sense of his love. To the extent that we give way to our will in sinning, to that extent we set our-



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Duties and Discouragements Concluded...

selves at a distance from comfort. Sin against conscience is as a thief² in the candle, which spoils our joy, and thereby weakens our strength. We must know, therefore, that willful breaches in sanctification will much hinder the sense of our justification.

What course shall such take to recover their peace? They must condemn themselves sharply, and yet cast themselves upon God's mercy in Christ, as at their first conversion. And now they must embrace Christ the more firmly, as they see more need in themselves; and let them remember the mildness of Christ here, that he will not quench the smoking flax. Often we see that, after a deep humiliation, Christ speaks more peace than before, to witness the truth of this reconciliation, because he knows Satan's enterprises in casting such down lower, because they are most abased in themselves and are ashamed to look Christ in the face, because of their ingratitude.

We see that God did not only pardon David but, after much bruising, gave him wise Solomon to succeed him in the kingdom. We see in Song of Solomon 6:4 that, after the church has been humbled for her slighting of Christ, he sweetly entertains her again, and begins to commend her beauty. We must know for our comfort that Christ was not anointed to this great work of Mediator for lesser sins only, but for the greatest, if we have but a spark of true faith to lay hold on him. Therefore, if there be any bruised reed, let him not make an exception of himself, when Christ does not make an exception of him. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden' (Matt. 11:28). Why should we not make use of so gracious a disposition? We are only poor for this reason, that we do not know our riches in Christ. In time of temptation, believe Christ rather than the devil. Believe truth from truth itself. Hearken not to a liar, an enemy and a murderer.

Sibbes, Richard, <u>The Bruised Reed</u>, Chapter 8, Duties and Discouragements

Secretary Needed

Are you a member of Grace Church and willing to serve as a temporary office secretary while Susan is on maternity leave? The volunteer would have to be flexible, since the time of the baby's arrival is still unknown. The starting date could be any time from mid-August to mid-October. The ending date would be around mid-December. Office hours are usually Thursday mornings for about 4-6 hours. Duties include producing the weekly bulletin, the monthly newsletter, and other secretarial duties. This is a paid position and training is included. If interested, please speak with one of the members of the session.



Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for volunteers to replace Ellen McNeese & Marge Halbach on the Pine Haven Auxiliary. They have been on the Auxiliary for many years so it is time to get new faces in the Auxiliary. If you are interested (especially young people) see Marge or Ellen. This volunteering is very rewarding. Thank you.



Ice Cream Social

We are planning an ice cream social on July 29th at 7:00 p.m. here at the church. We will be making home made ice cream, so if you have an ice cream maker, please feel free to bring it along!



Bridal Shower

Save the date for Alyssa Mork's shower on Thursday, August 11th at 6:30 p.m.! She is registered at Bed, Bath & Beyond, and Target. Mark your calendars and join us!



July Birthdays

Wedding Anniversaries



Comments on Finance

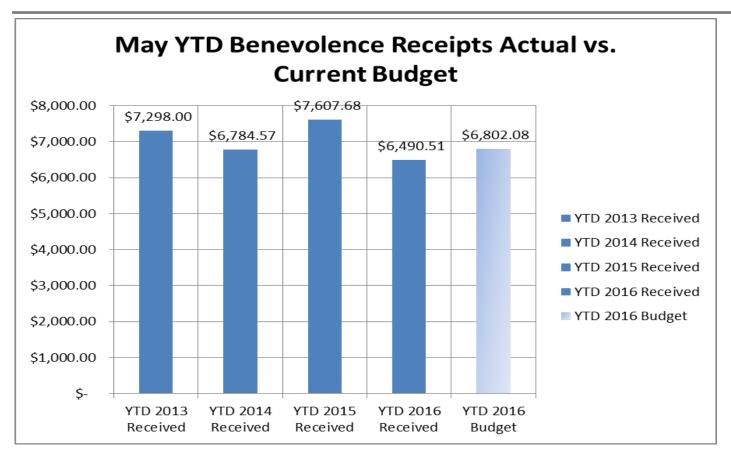
by Joel Moody

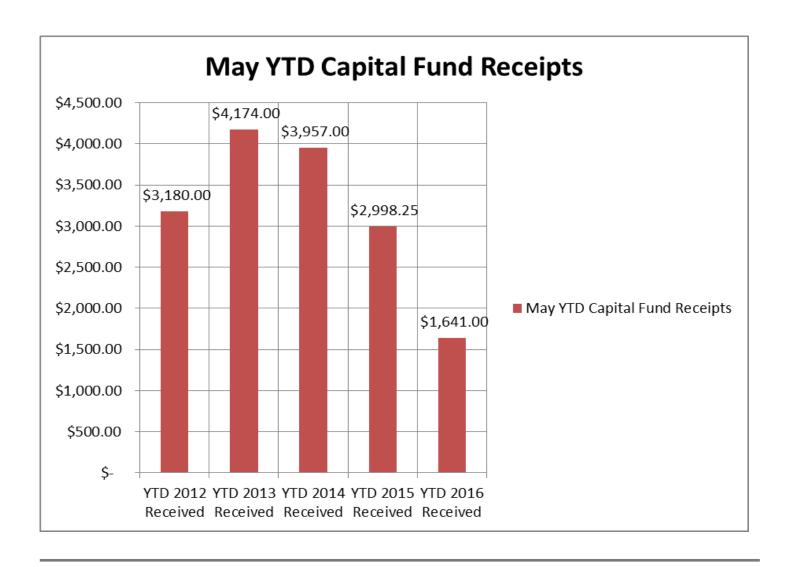
General Fund receipts for May totaled \$13,248.13 as compared to the budget of \$16,117.10, while General Fund disbursements for May totaled \$12,242.39. May year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$71,252.48 as compared to the budget of \$70,915.30 (an excess of \$337.18), while May year to date disbursements of \$67,258.30 were \$3,657.00 below budget. Through the end of May, the General Fund has increased by \$4,035.76. Year to date General Fund receipts for May were 11.9% above last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 0.9% above the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for May totaled \$1,734.01 as compared to the budget of \$1,360.42 (excess of \$373.59). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through May totaled \$6,490.51 and were below budget by \$311.57. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget. During May, \$500.00 was sent to Worldwide Outreach (WWO) for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and \$200.00 was sent to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee (CHEX). In addition, \$2,625.00 was sent towards

Hub-Spokes missionaries (\$1,100 for the Wingards serving in South Africa, \$1,000 for the Hopps serving in Haiti, and \$525 for Don Ritsman serving with Miami International Seminary (MINTS).

May Year to Date giving for the **Capital** Fund was \$1,641.00. Please refer to the Capital Fund Graph that shows the historical giving for the years indicated in the graph. You may contribute to the Capital Fund by marking your gift as "Capital Fund" and placing it in the offering plate. Please note that the Capital Fund is used to pay for current and future needs that may exist to purchase additional equipment (such as computers, the sound system, tables and chairs, etc.) or building-type items (such as a parking lot, driveway, furnace boiler, etc.). During May, a new laptop was purchased for the pastor from the capital funds. Since some capital needs are quite substantial in nature, resources to finance and pay for these projects can take years to pay for them. Even though capital needs may not be large in the current year, we should wisely allocate our giving not only to current needs, but also to these future needs as well.





TIMBER RATTLERS GAME

Calling all baseball fans! We are planning a Wisconsin Timber Rattlers game on the evening of Friday, July 8 in Appleton. We plan to tailgate beforehand in the parking lot (bring your own food). There will also be a petting zoo before the game and fireworks afterward. For a group of 20 or more, the tickets will be \$8. Please contact James Bingham by July 3 for more information or to reserve your spot.





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



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Strawberry Shortcake

- ★ 2 cups sliced strawberries
- ★ 1/4 cup sugar
- ★ 1/3 cup butter
- ★ 2 1/2 cup flour
- ★ 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- ★ 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- ★ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ★ 1 cup milk
- ★ 2 cups heavy whipping cream/ 1 Tbsp. sugar/ 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 1. Heat oven to 400°. In a large bowl, mix strawberries and 1/4 cup sugar; set aside. Place bowl & beaters for making whipping cream in freezer for 15 minutes before making the whipping cream.
- 2. In a medium bowl, cut butter into the flour, 1/3 cup sugar, baking powder & salt using a fork or pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in milk.
- 3. Drop by 12 spoonfuls onto a baking sheet and press down with the back of a spoon to 3/4 in. thickness. Sprinkle with a little sugar.
- 4. Bake 12-15 minutes or until golden brown. Cool 10 minutes.
- 5. Take the beaters & bowl out of the freezer & mix the heavy cream & 1 Tbsp. sugar in the bowl, adding vanilla when soft peaks form. Beat until stiff peaks form.
- 6. Assemble the strawberry shortcakes by slicing the cakes in half and adding spoonfuls of strawberries & whipping cream.

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"The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing."



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Spurgeon Corner

"Ephraim is a cake not turned." (Hosea 7:8)

A cake not turned is *uncooked on one side*; and so Ephraim was, in many respects, untouched by divine grace: though there was some partial obedience, there was very much rebellion left. My soul, I charge thee, see whether this be thy case. Art thou thorough in

the things of God? Has grace gone through the very centre of thy being so as to be felt in its divine operations in all thy powers, thy actions, thy words, and thy thoughts? To be sanctified, spirit, soul, and body, should be thine aim and prayer; and although sanctification may not be perfect in thee anywhere in degree, yet it must be universal in its action; there must not be the appearance of holiness in one place and reigning sin in another, else thou, too, wilt be a cake not turned.

A cake not turned is *soon burnt on the side nearest the fire*, and although no man can have too much religion, there are some who seem burnt black with bigoted zeal for that part of truth which they have received, or are charred to a cinder with a vainglorious Pharisaic ostentation of those religious performances which suit their humour. The assumed appearance of superior sanctity frequently accompanies a total absence of all vital godliness. The saint in public is a devil in private. He deals in flour by day and in soot by night. The cake which is burned on one side, is dough on the other.

If it be so with me, O Lord, turn me! Turn my unsanctified nature to the fire of thy love and let it feel the sacred glow, and let my burnt side cool a little while I learn my own weakness and want of heat when I am removed from thy heavenly flame. Let me not be found a double-minded man, but one entirely under the powerful influence of reigning grace; for well I know if I am left like a cake unturned, and am not on both sides the subject of thy grace, I must be consumed forever amid everlasting burnings.

Morning, June 23rd by C. H. Spurgeon

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heard that as much as 70% of students who enter college as Christians will leave their college years as unbelievers. Moreover, there are growing numbers of secular people in our society – they call themselves "nones." They have no religious affiliation at all, and need the gospel. We need an evangelistically oriented Reformed ministry to the university world if we are to impact this generation for Jesus Christ!

Please pray for Mike's ministry as he prepares for the fall semester and the arrival of new students. Each year at "move-in" day, RUF plans a brat fry on one of the open areas of campus. Last year he said they gave away over 150 brats to new students —

now that makes a good first impression! Pray, too, for his teaching load in the fall with small group Bible studies and their weekly large group meeting.

