

The Covid-19 situation has had a significant impact on CRF this spring. Since we've not been able to continue normal one-on-one or group meetings, I thought this might be a good time to give you a report on our fall semester as well as an update on how we're managing during this lock-down.

### **Fall 2019**

Last spring we made a decision to do a CRF reboot and attempt to get our weekly meeting back onto the UI campus. This decision was prompted by the addition of Aaron Ventura to our CRF staff. Aaron has brought youthful energy as well as administrative and preaching gifts into the CRF tool box. He has also helped connect the CRF generate an effective social media presence. This re-boot was more than just a change of location, it included a shift of focus. Up till last fall our weekly meeting has always been an informal, large group gathering, focused on Bible teaching, singing and fellowship. This past fall we adopted a more formal midweek worship service model, emphasizing bold preaching, psalm singing, community prayer, and the public reading of God's Word. Our goal was to establish a regular, God-honoring worship service more geographically accessible to UI students. We also hoped that this would be a springboard to more evangelistic activity on campus. This was not a change in the underlying DNA. The discipleship ministry which has been our strength still remains, but with additional resources and a renewed presence at the UI, we were excited to give this a shot.

### **How did we do?**

We successfully established a weekly worship service on Thursday nights in the University's Whitewater room. Our attendance average was 70 students (roughly 80% NSA students and 20% UI students/Other). We also organized a larger evangelistic event on *The Lost Virtue of Sexism* that had an attendance of over 230 people and gained widespread local media coverage, with Pastor Doug on the front page of the University of Idaho's newspaper. In some of these cases, the newspaper reports preached the gospel on our behalf by simply describing why we do what we do. Here's a quick glimpse at the numbers:

### **Weekly Meetings**

- We had 21 meetings as of March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Average Attendance: 70 people
- Highest Attendance: 100+ (September 5<sup>th</sup>)
- Lowest Attendance: 44 (December 5<sup>th</sup>)
- Total YouTube Sermon Views: 21,000+
- Total Facebook Sermon Views: 15,000+

### **The Lost Virtue of Sexism – Outreach Event (February 4<sup>th</sup>)**

- Event Attendance: 234+
- Event YouTube Views: 20,000+
- Event Facebook Views: 9,000+

### **Campus Presence**

- Palousafest – Handed out over 500 flyers. Conducted a religious survey and received over 230 responses.
- Evangelism – About 4-6 times a semester, CRF gets a table in the UI Commons to talk to students and evangelize them.
- Social Media

- This year we added Twitter and Instagram to our active social media networks and targeted our content at University of Idaho students. We also increased our Facebook reach from 426 likes (one year ago) to 712 today.
- We created *The University Podcast* which will launch this summer as a way of getting biblical and theological content to university students both here and around the country. The pilot version of this was the *CRF Daily Bible Study*, which averaged 200+ plays per episode.

### **What can we do better?**

One of our chief goals, and apparently our biggest challenge, is getting new UI students involved. While we're very pleased with the preaching presence we've established on campus, it simply has not drawn UI students in any significant numbers. So, we're trying to find a way to make our meeting more effective in reaching the rank and file UI student (of course without spilling into the foolishness and irreverence of the seeker friendly model). We realize that for our impact to grow at the UI we need our current UI students to take the initiative in inviting their classmates/friends to our activities. But they have found that inviting other students to a worship service was a bit intimidating, especially if they are unbelievers. But what about inviting them to a free dinner?

One Idea that we are seriously considering is adding a regular evangelistic dinner to the mix. This would provide our current UI students an easier way to invite classmates and others as they get to know them. We're working on the details of how to accomplish this, so please pray for us. This additional emphasis could become a hub for hospitality evangelism.

### **The Shut down...**

The Covid-19 scare has obviously had a big impact on our usual activities. Our weekly meeting, small group studies and one-on-one meetings have ground to a halt. We've done our best to transition to a virtual format. Zoom room meetings and a greater reliance on email and texting have been helpful, but it hasn't been the same. But we are plugging away and doing what we can. It looks like things will begin to ease up soon, so we should be able to launch into our usual summer activities at the usual time.

### **Summary**

We have seen God do some amazing things this year. Some highlights for us include the week that Pastor Doug preached on *The False Gospel of Rome*, and a large group of local Roman Catholics, including the parish priest, came to listen and talk with us. Another highlight was the interactions we had with The Young Democrats who protested the sexism event, and have now asked to debate us on campus, giving us another opportunity to evangelize the lost. Looking ahead to the fall, please join us in praying that God will guide our steps as we seek to reach a broader swath of UI students. Thanks very much for your support and encouragement.

In Christ,

Matt Gray  
Campus Minister

CRF Videos: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/collegiatereformedfellowship/videos>

Link to Big Event Video: <https://youtu.be/SqUVSVIDAGM>