

LUTHER RICE SEMINARY INC.

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LUTHER RICE SEMINARY AND UNIVERSITY

PIONEER

SPRING 2011 EDITION

Pastoral training empowers Christian leaders in India

On a recent trip to India, Russ Sorrow, VP of Institutional Advancement, and his wife Linda, visited with a large group of alumni from the Luther Rice Institute India. While the institute is no longer organized by LRSU, the pastoral training it started has continued. The comprehensive pastoral training is now being managed by Indian nationals Dr. Paul Devakumar, of *India for Christ*, Rev. Israel Yenerber, of *Bible Training Center India*, and Dr. Samuel Madavaraj, of *Indian Leadership*.

With the exponential growth of the Evangelical Church in India, training local leaders in critical Bible

knowledge and ministry skills has become imperative. The young congregations of Christians are literally surrounded by their Muslim and Hindu neighbors. There are over one billion people in India and even with the current evangelical growth, only 5% of the population is Christian. India is the largest democracy on the planet. The evangelistic opportunities in India are vast.

This alumni gathering was hosted by Luther Rice Seminary & University and *Indian Leadership*, at the offices of *India for Christ*, located in Bangalore.

Thank you for your strong support in empowering these Christian leaders to take the Gospel to their countrymen.



Pictured here are 23 men and 21 women, all graduates of the *Bible Training Center for Pastors* institute curriculum. There are 17 pastors, 3 evangelists, and 19 Bible teachers of women and children. By God's grace, this one group of graduates alone has planted 24 churches throughout India!

Continued from Page 4

Graduates reflect on their Luther Rice Experience

"My D.Min. degree prepared me for my studies in a Ph.D. in Archaeology & Bible History."

"I believe the administration and faculty do all they can to assist you in the educational process. They always return your phone calls even sometimes after hours."

"Awesome — Prof. Skinner, Dr. Dieringer, and the chapel worship"

"Restoring relationships through Marriage and Family Counseling."

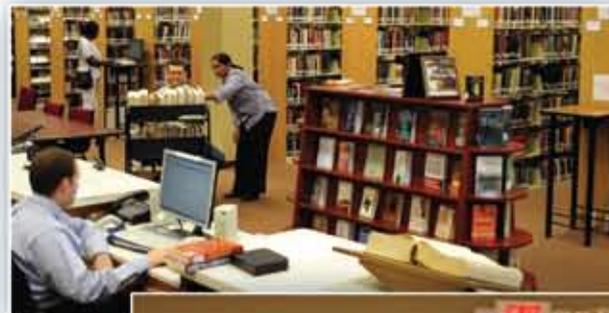
"Many professors have now become mentors."

"I became great friends with Dr. Flanagan and Dr. Long."

"My experience at Luther Rice was life changing. I thank God for the men and women that invested in my life, which has helped me become the Christian disciple that I am today."

"The study online was easier than by mail. Also, the interaction with other students online and in person in one class helped me."

"I loved graduation. It was a highlight of my life and a great time for my family."



"I really enjoyed the professors and their interest in their students. I have never met any of them personally, however I have corresponded with several."

"The best thing Luther Rice has done for me is they stick to the Bible — not liberal theology."

"Learned how to interact with others from different denominations."

(Note: These testimonies were submitted to us through the Alumni Survey, conducted in 2010.)

INSIDE THIS EDITION, YOU'LL FIND

- ❖ A Personal Word from Dr. Flanagan **PAGE 2**
- ❖ Military Families Touched by God's Love **PAGE 3**
- ❖ The nature of Change **PAGE 6**
- ❖ **And much more!**

A Personal Word



from **DR. FLANAGAN**

We are in a final countdown moving toward our 50th Anniversary celebration on May 18, 2012. For the next year, I will be writing about various remembrances of the past and hopes for the future.

Dr. Robert Witty founded Luther Rice in 1962 and served the institution for 20 years. He began a school that focused on the many pastors and Christian workers who could not attend a traditional seminary. Over a few years he introduced distance education to the theological world. Clearly, Dr. Witty was a pioneer in the field of nontraditional, theological education.

One of the early slogans of the Seminary was "making the impossible possible." Throughout the Seminary and University history, Luther Rice has provided the opportunity for those called to the Gospel ministry, to receive an affordable, accessible, and biblically-based education. Now through online education, we are providing theological education in the United States and around the world 24/7. By God's grace, Dr. Witty's pioneering efforts are now realized in a way that is far more extensive than anyone could have imagined.

This year, we have approximately 1,200 students from all 50 states and over 25 foreign countries. Over 6,000 graduates are serving around the world. The sun never

sets on our Luther Rice students and graduates.

Each President succeeding Dr. Witty has been Christ-centered, biblically-based, and student-focused. We have all built upon the foundation of the Founder, "making the impossible possible" for thousands of students and graduates.

Through the generosity of friends like you, our students can take what they have learned and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those in need around the world. Only heaven will reveal the impact of your prayers, support and gifts, which make the impossible possible for our students.

Watch for exciting new ways to support the institution coming soon as we celebrate 50 years in ministry and look ahead to what God has in store for the next 50 years.

James Flanagan
President



Graduate Ministering To Military Families in Italy

Letters like this one from current students and graduates come in to Luther Rice on a regular basis. We thought we would share this one with you. It is encouraging to know that LRSU alumni are diligently serving God not just in the United States, but all around the world.

Email from Sam Owens, 1990 graduate serving as a pastor in Aviano, Italy:

"Greetings in the name of Jesus to Dr. Flanagan and the esteemed staff and faculty of Luther Rice Seminary and University!

I am a 1990 graduate of the seminary when it was still located in Jacksonville, Florida. Adele, my wife, and I, have the fondest memories of our time there when I was a student.

For the past ten years I have served as pastor of Aviano Baptist Church in Aviano, Italy, a church that ministers primarily to active duty U.S. Air Force personnel and their families. In October 2010, I became the Vice President and President Elect of the International Baptist Convention (IBC) headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany, of which this church has been a long-standing member. Under the by-laws of the convention, I will serve as Vice President for one year and then automatically assume the presidency in October 2011.

Our convention is what I like to call "the best kept secret in Baptist life." There are currently 74 member churches, all English speaking, scattered from Latin

America throughout Europe into the Middle East and Africa. Most of our churches are truly international with people from up to 40 countries worshiping together on any given Sunday.

I would like to invite Luther Rice students and graduates to prayerfully consider serving the Lord through one of our churches or partnering with us on a short-term mission trip. You may access our convention website at www.abc-churches.org to learn

all about us and to see where we have vacant pastorates at any point in time.

Serving in an IBC church combines the best of home missions and foreign missions in one setting. There are usually a good number of Americans mixed in with the international personnel. Many of the internationals will one day return to their home countries, and we have the opportunity of sending

them back better prepared to carry out the Great Commission among their own citizens. What a joy!

May God continue to prosper Luther Rice Seminary and University and to bless its faculty and staff in all that you do."

Yours in His service,
Sam Owens, Pastor
Aviano Baptist Church

Sam represents just one of thousands of Luther Rice alumni that are serving God in a multitude of various ministry environments around the world. Right now in our current student body, there are people studying the Word of God in all 50 states and in 28 foreign countries. Luther Rice is helping advance the Great Commission Mandate 24/7/365.

Looking back at what God has done.



Looking ahead to what God will do.

A Historical Timeline of Luther Rice Seminary and University

June 14, 1962
Founded by Dr. Robert Witty, Luther Rice Seminary granted a charter by the State of Florida.

1965
Student body reaches 100 students.

1970
First Administrative building purchased located apart from the church.

1982
Library building constructed and open to students.

August, 1991
Relocation to Lithonia, Georgia, to property gifted by local church.

April, 1994
Dr. James Flanagan named as president.

September 11, 1962
First classes meet in Florida at Central Baptist Church.

1968
Dr. Robert Witty named president and first property purchased.

1976
Full-time faculty begin to serve students.

1982
Dr. Robert Witty becomes chancellor and Dr. Gene Williams appointed president.

September, 1991
Dr. James Bryant named acting president by the Board of Trustees.

(Stay tuned for more in upcoming newsletters!)

Graduates reflect on their Luther Rice Experience Here's what they're saying...

What do you appreciate about Luther Rice?



"Enjoyed the balance of thought-provoking counseling classes with Dr. Cobb and challenging theological classes, especially NT with Dr. Flanagan, where I had to synthesize what I knew."

"The fellowship of study at LRSU was always great! LRSU provided me with needed preaching skills."

"Appreciate allowing women to receive credit for preaching classes."

"The banquets that accompany the graduations were a highlight."

"The personal touch of professors. It has been very easy to have long-term friendships with men such as Dr. Flanagan and Dr. Kinnebrew. The professors truly care about Luther Rice students."



"I love LRSU, the staff, Dr. Flanagan & Dr. Long so much! There's no way to say how time & time again the people in Administration, like Gary Cook, and Professors have been Christ-like! That means everything and I pray for LRSU."

"Some of the professors were real friends to me."

"Enjoyed interacting with students online with the group discussions, and then finally meeting them during the graduation ceremony."

Continued on Page 8

"I met and made many wonderful friends while attending LRSU. I will be ever grateful for the impact of the teaching and staff of LRSU. I pray for the school and the staff often. God Bless!"

"Developing many friendships and getting excellent teaching from many fine men. Appreciated the passion of Dr. Dieringer and Dr. Cocar. I still miss "school days!"

"I truly love the evangelism and counseling courses. Both were eye openers for me."

"My entire journey with Luther Rice was a positive experience."

"The one-on-one personal relationship with staff and faculty. Also, the Mission Trip to Jamaica I took as a student."

"Dr. Mape's hermeneutics class taught me writing skills. Dr. Halsey's OT survey class taught me the importance of general knowledge outside of the Bible."



Annual World Missions Conference

March 7-10, 2011

Theme: His Commission – Our Command Acts 1:8

This year's Annual World Missions Conference speakers were:

Dr. Ron Long who serves as Consultant to the President at Luther Rice Seminary and University, assisting with vision and strategy for the institution's global influence. The heart of Luther Rice is to equip national pastors with the ability to disciple and train their churches to impact both the local community and reach out to the uttermost parts of the world. He has been affiliated with Luther Rice for over 20 years. Dr. Long served in the pastorate for 35 years until devoting all of his efforts to world missions.



Rev. Larry Pridmore who currently serves as the Pastor of Southside Baptist Church in Mansfield, Louisiana. Rev. Pridmore holds a B.A. and a M.Div. from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary and has been serving at Southside for almost five years. He has held multiple



state denominational positions including Moderator and President of the Baptist Convention of New York and has served on several committees within the Southern Baptist Convention.

Rev. Jeff Wisot's vision of full time Christian service began to become a reality when he and a few friends began doing door-to-door evangelism and a Bible study in Elkton, Maryland back in 1992. The Bible study grew, families were added and Life Community Church was planted. Since those early beginnings, the church has grown and overcome many obstacles. Today, Life Community Church sits on 22 acres in a 60,000 square foot multi-purpose worship complex.



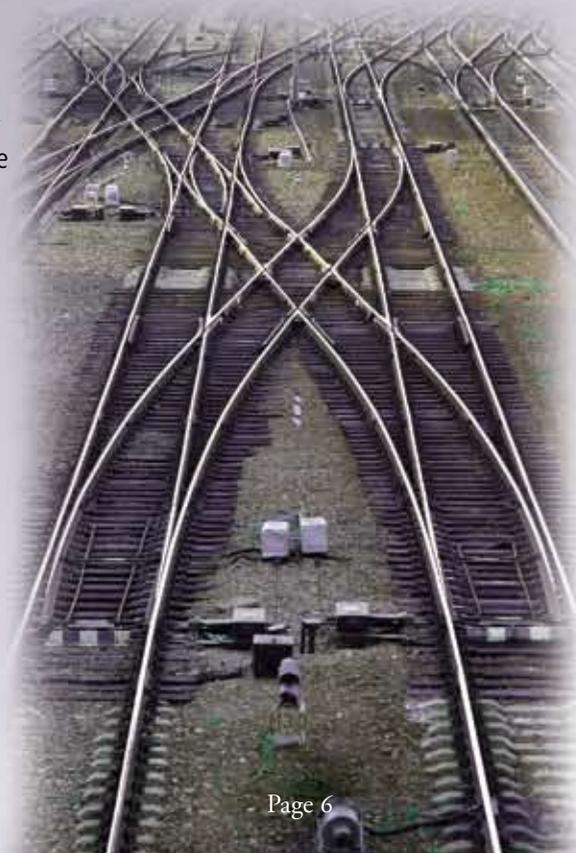
It was a time of wisdom, insight, and celebration of what God has accomplished and how He continues to transform lives here at home and around the world through the work of Luther Rice Seminary and University. Thank you for joining with us!

PREREQUISITES TO CHANGE

By Dr. Rusty Ricketson

Change is inevitable and in many cases necessary to stay abreast of growing needs and a burgeoning world economy. In a world that is constantly changing, how can those of us who hold a biblical worldview manage the organizational changes necessary to meet the growing needs of those we serve while still holding firm to the biblical values that honor God and give meaning and purpose to what we do?

In 1 Kings 3: 9-13 God gave Solomon “a wise and understanding heart.” Pairing wisdom, being able to see the world from God’s perspective, with understanding, being able to separate out the various parts of a situation, makes great tag team partners when wrestling with the multitude of challenges presented to us on a daily basis. In light of this alliance, before making any changes, consider the following prerequisites:



Understand Yourself

It does little good to try and discern the values of others when I have not taken the time to address my own



“So to give thy servant an understanding heart... to discern between good and evil.”

1 Kings 3:9

values and determine whether or not they are congruent with Scripture. This process of self-introspection can be accomplished if we are willing to be deadly honest with ourselves. Once we have experienced the discord, uneasiness, and quite possibly the pain of discovering and applying biblical core values to our personal lives, we will have some idea of the discord, uneasiness, and pain those in our churches or businesses will undergo when we ask them to go through this process. Discovering values is not for the faint-hearted.

Luther Rice Seminary and University

Empowering the leaders of tomorrow

Yes, Dr. Flanagan, I want to help train Christian leaders and be a part of what God is doing in the lives of the students here at home and around the world. Enclosed is my gift of:

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Understand the Organization

In order to create lasting change, we need to know and better understand the organization beneath the surface. Such understanding comes only as we are willing to invest the time to investigate the core values of the organization. Every organization has a culture. We need to understand the difference between the espoused values (what people say they believe) and the actually underlying assumptions (what people actually believe).ⁱ One way we can accomplish this is by conducting a Core Values Auditⁱⁱ of the people within our organizations. As an anonymous instrument, these CVAs will help reveal the discrepancies between the stated purpose of the organization and its practices and where the purpose and practice are congruent with Scripture.



Understand the Process

Lasting change takes place as a reciprocal process between leaders and followers within any organization. Change requires an understanding of the organizational culture and this understanding is gained over time by knowing the history, background, purpose, and vision of not only the organization but, more importantly, the individual people who participate in our organizations. What we say, do, recognize, and how we face challenges all serve a part of the process of embedding change within the organizational culture.

As a leader or follower within our church or business, we have the capacity to affect change. As Ambassadors of Christ, let us seek change that honors God and upholds the values proclaimed in God’s Word.ⁱⁱⁱ

i Schein, Edgar H. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

ii Malphurs, Aubrey. *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.

iii Adapted from, Ricketson, Rusty. *Follower first: Rethinking Leading in the Church*, Cumming, GA: Heartworks Publications.