

# PIONEER

ANNUAL ALUMNI EDITION • SEPTEMBER 2015

## What's So Important About *Truth?*

By Scott Henderson, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Philosophy & Apologetics

**T**he Christian faith rests on the notion that truth is real, absolute, and discoverable. To be sure, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is absolutely impossible unless truth is both real and verifiable. According to John 14, Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.” Unless we are able to defend truth, our faith is blind and empty.

**Truth is real and undeniable.** To say something is true is to say that one's words match how things really are. Some people today deny that truth exists at all. “There is no such thing as truth,” they might say. Or “Truth is just a human construct with no referent to the real world.” The problem is, those assertions are not logical. To claim “there is no truth” is either true or false. If it is true, then it is also false, since it dispenses with itself by virtue of what it asserts. It is like saying, “It is true that there is no truth.” This is surely nonsensical. The fact is, truth is undeniable and those who try to deny the reality of truth engage in contradiction.

**Truth is absolute, not relative.** It is popular today to hear that truth is relative. Exactly what it is relative to varies. Some might say it is relative to persons—“that may be true for you, but it is not so

for me.” Others may say truth is relative to the culture to which one belongs. However, when we think about it, the claim that truth is relative, whether to individuals or cultures, sounds like a non-relative truth claim. The reason is simple—truth is not relative but absolute. If something is true, it is true for everyone regardless of one's culture or beliefs. The next time you hear someone exclaim “truth is relative,” ask him if that statement is true, and if so, is it relative?

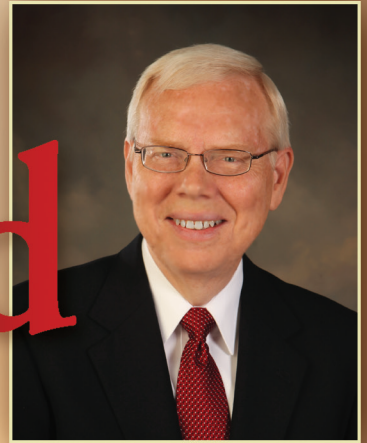
**Truth is discoverable.** The implications this has for the Christian faith are profound. Unlike some religions, Christianity is built on truth claims that can be discussed reasonably on the basis of the evidence. The Bible declares that God may be known through creation (Psalm 19; Romans 1), conscience (Romans 2), and Christ (Colossians 2:9; Acts 2:22-24). Evidence for God's existence and the resurrection of Christ are readily accessible for anyone who cares to look. Despite what some critics say, Christianity is not based on superstition, myth, or fairy tales. Rather, our truth claims are verifiable.

**What's so important about truth?** It's on our side. For this reason, we can fulfill the mandate of Jude 3, to “defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people.”

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# A Personal Word



*from*  
**DR. FLANAGAN**

**I**t's important, from time to time, to reflect on our namesake and the legacy he left behind in order to appreciate our great heritage of faith.

We remember the man Luther Rice (1783-1836) in Baptist history for the way he valued missions, church cooperation for missionary support, ministerial education, biblical authority, and biblical preaching. These, too, are the values of Luther Rice College and Seminary, as initiated by our founder Dr. Robert Witty in 1962, and over the years, we've remained true to these causes and principles.

Rice was a preacher who had a passion for the unsaved. He said, "How can we remain indifferent when immortal souls hang in the balance?" That is why our mission is to send forth ministers who are able to rightly divide the Word of Truth and who

unite with others of like faith to proclaim the gospel around the world. We achieve this by providing a ministerial education that is built upon a trust and confidence in God's inspired, inerrant Word, for it is in His Word that we find our source for biblical preaching and missions.

As I write this article, I have just evaluated assignments of Doctor of Ministry students from across the United States, South Korea, and Vietnam and from many ethnic and racial backgrounds. God has not only given us a great heritage in the past but also the opportunity and responsibility to make an impact for the cause of Christ around the world, now and in the future.

We are honored to be a part of the Luther Rice family and are committed to the causes and principles of our namesake.

*James Flanagan*  
President

For an article detailing the life of the man Luther Rice visit [www.LutherRice.edu/theman](http://www.LutherRice.edu/theman)

*Birthplace of Luther Rice • Northborough, Massachusetts*

# Fall Conference Events

Visit Luther Rice this Fall at the Christian conferences listed below:

## September

7-11 National Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Memphis, TN

23-26 American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference, Nashville, TN

## October

8-9 Catalyst, Duluth, GA

16 Luther Rice Prospect Preview Day, On Campus, Lithonia, GA

25-28 Missouri Baptist Convention, Springfield, MO

## November

2-4 North Carolina Baptist Convention, Greensboro, NC

9-10 Florida Baptist Convention, Panama City, FL

9-10 Georgia Baptist Convention, Roswell, GA

9-11 Tennessee Baptist Summit, Millington, TN

10-11 South Carolina Baptist Convention, Spartanburg, SC

16-18 Evangelical Theological Society National Conference, Atlanta, GA

19-22 National Youth Workers Convention, Louisville, KY

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# The Pastor Of Pump:

## Alumnus Uses Strength Training and Fitness to Reach Others for Christ

**D**avid Ashley is a 2013 graduate of Luther Rice and is now in the Master of Divinity program. He is the founder of Cross Strength Ministries, LLC and is a speaker, teacher, and evangelist. He is also the host of the “Pastor of Pump” faith and fitness radio talk show, heard worldwide to an audience of over 2.2 million.



a published author and writer as well as a certified family counselor, specializing in family violence, sexual abuse, and neglect.

As David Ashley says, “Your body is God’s temple. He created and designed you for a purpose—He has a plan for you and He loves you. But God can’t use you (to your full potential) if you have

David Ashley, the “Pastor of Pump,” started Cross Strength Ministries (CSM) as an opportunity to encourage men, couples, and young adults to be all that they were created and designed to be.

CSM focuses on helping people be fit for service—wherever God has called them to be—which is right where you are, in addition to where you are going. Whether someone wants to improve their marriage, family, parenting, ministry, or simply wants to be “ready and equipped”—CSM will help them reach their goals!

As a fitness professional for over 30 years turned evangelist, Ashley knows the hard work and discipline that both Christ and his 21” biceps require: full-time, all-in, never-stop-till-you-win consistency. As the apostle Paul writes, “So I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control”(1 Corinthians 9:26). Together, David and his wife Holly work to inspire and encourage others to find their “true strength at the foot of the cross” and use that strength to “run [this] race [called life] to win the prize” (1 Corinthians 9:24).

In addition to his numerous degrees and certifications for health and fitness, Ashley holds a master’s degree in apologetics from Luther Rice Seminary and is currently working towards his Master of Divinity degree.

The “Pastor of Pump” radio show is taped live every Friday at 2pm (MT) or can be heard anytime at [www.PastorofPump.com](http://www.PastorofPump.com). The podcast is available on iTunes or at the Star Worldwide Network website. Holly Ashley (“Mrs. Pump”) is

given your body over to bad eating habits and excuses for not exercising. But just as we have other issues in our lives, He can give you the strength to change your unhealthy choices too!”

Together, the Ashley’s work to inspire and encourage couples to find strength in their Lord and use that strength to win the race—in their marriage, their family, and their life. The couple has dedicated themselves to serving God in all that they do and all that they are. They believe that their marriage is their ministry and are willing to go and do as God leads.

After 30 years in the fitness industry training everyone from celebrities and professional athletes to everyday individuals, the Ashley’s are leaving their Scottsdale training studio behind and relocating to Nashville, Tennessee, where they will focus on fulltime ministry.

The Ashley’s are available to host your next Bible-based faith and fitness conference, seminar, speaking engagement, couples retreat, youth camp, school assembly, and more. To contact CSM, visit their websites at: [www.CrossStrengthMinistries.com](http://www.CrossStrengthMinistries.com) or [www.PastorofPump.com](http://www.PastorofPump.com).





## Master of Arts in Apologetics:

# Defending the **TRUTH** of Faith

**T**he purpose of the Master of Arts in Apologetics degree program (MAA) is to equip students with knowledge of issues related to the rational and biblical defense of the truth of the Christian faith.

Apologetics is an interdisciplinary field of study that engages biblical studies, philosophy, theology, science, law, and culture in the pursuit of defending the veracity of the Christian faith. Students enrolled in the program will become familiar with the essentials from these disciplines necessary for proclaiming and defending the historic doctrines of Christianity.

The MAA program faculty is committed to cutting-edge and biblically-grounded teaching that combines theoretical and practical learning through accessible, student-centered coursework. The program of study promotes excellence in scholarship and trains graduates academically and professionally to advance discourse in apologetics through research, teaching, and service.

Dr. Scott Henderson, the apologetics program coordinator, states “Luther Rice’s Master of Arts in Apologetics program is uniquely designed to address the most salient issues confronting Christians today. The MAA is a focused 36-hour degree program with courses taught by professors in their fields of specialty.”

Graduates are prepared for a variety of careers including church ministries, college ministries, and missions, as well as teaching or research appointments in academic settings. The degree also includes a thesis option, which not only allows students to carve out an area of specialty, but also provides the academic foundation for further study

at the post-graduate level.

Program learning outcomes for graduates of the Master of Arts in Apologetics include the ability to:

- interpret the Bible in light of its historical grammatical context.
- relate the Church’s theological heritage to current cultural and apologetics issues.
- articulate a rational and biblical case for the truth of Christianity.
- present a defense to major objections to Christianity.

We offer coursework either on campus or completely online, through a cutting-edge educational delivery system specifically designed for students with families and working schedules that prevent them from taking courses on campus. Students in the MAA program take courses such as “Logic, Science and Faith,” “Biblical Apologetics,” “Issues in Ethics,” “Major World Religions,” and “Modern Religious Sects.”

We work hard everyday to provide the highest quality education possible. In fact, over 96 percent of graduates report satisfaction with their academic experience and the accessibility of faculty in their courses.

Luther Rice was founded to provide convenient, affordable, and sound biblical training. If you know someone that may be interested in studying Christian apologetics, please have them contact a Luther Rice enrollment advisor at:

**admissions@LutherRice.edu**

or call **770-484-1204 ext. 5758.**

# Alumni Ministry

Send your updates to **alumni@LutherRice.edu**.

## **Dr. Ernie Perkins, '69**

Perkins recently updated his book on strategic planning for pastors and church leaders entitled "Traveling the Highway to Change without Crashing: Doing Strategic Planning for the Local Church." He is still a full time evangelist, preaching at approximately 35 revivals a year, in addition to sharing the gospel with other groups and individuals. He and his wife are in good health, and will be celebrating their 54th wedding anniversary in September.

## **Dr. Terry Douglas, '79**

Douglas has accepted a call to pastor Woodlawn Baptist Church in Marshall, Texas.

## **Gordon Herb, '79**

Herb pastored in California for many years and has served in several roles for the California Baptist Convention. He has also been a chaplain for the California State Military Reserve, a unit of the California National Guard. After twenty years in the reserves, he retired with the rank of Colonel. In recent years, Herb and his wife served with Southern Baptist disaster relief teams, his first deployment being Ground Zero for 9/11. In March, he was asked to join the staff at Immanuel Baptist Church in Wichita, Kansas, as a volunteer pastor to seniors.

## **Dr. Clifton Black, '82**

Black has published his book "The Reality of the Kingdom of Demons" with WestBow Publishing Company. Visit [westbowpress.com](http://westbowpress.com) for more information.

## **Mark Hyskell, '84, '86**

Hyskell published a new book entitled "I Want It All."

## **Dr. Leland Dittman, '86**

Dittman retired as the director of Liberty Church Planting Network and Liberty Baptist Fellowship, and now pastors Faith Baptist Church in Rustburg, Virginia.

## **Dr. Larry Teboe, '88**

After retiring from the United States Air Force, Teboe pastored a church and taught students as a college professor at several institutions in South Carolina. Last year, he began a Bible institute at Providence Baptist Church in Augusta, Georgia. The school's first students will graduate from the two-year program in December.

## **Dr. Robin Brumfield, '98**

In May, Brumfield became the pastor of Lawrence Baptist Church in Lawrence, Mississippi. He also recently authored the only biblical book on change in the marketplace entitled "Conquering The Inevitable: Coping With Change Based On Insights From Nehemiah."

## **David McWaters, '06, '11**

McWaters and his wife have been licensed foster parents in Arizona for the last four years. Two years ago, they were blessed to adopt the three children they were caring for at the time. Within the past year, they were further blessed with the opportunity to lead their two oldest daughters to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior and baptize them soon after.

# NEWS

## **Dr. Kenny Moore, '06**

Moore published a book entitled "Why Me?: Reasoning with God's Sovereignty in the Midst of Suffering," based on Genesis 37-50 and some trying events in his own life. Moore pastors Carmel Baptist Church in Pineville, Louisiana.

## **Dwight Stallings, '06, '08**

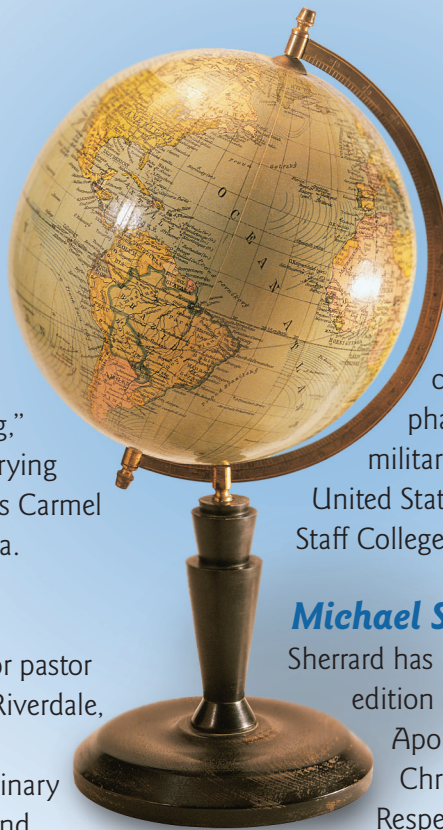
Stallings recently retired as the senior pastor of Heatherwood Baptist Church in Riverdale, Georgia, to accept a calling to teach homiletics at Peru International Seminary in Arequipa, Peru. He also teaches and preaches around Georgia monthly: at Coweta County Prison in Newnan, at Southwest Hospice in Christian City, and at Baptist Manor in Palmetto. In addition, he speaks at Luella Baptist Church in Locust Grove.

## **Matt Johns, '09**

Johns is planting a church in Duluth, Georgia, called the Transformational Church of Duluth. The church is using a local park as a meeting place so it might best meet the needs of the people. As the congregation is in the beginning stages, the church members need prayer support. Pray that the heavens will open and hearts will be turned to God rather than to their self-interests and the enemy. Johns is in his ninth year of service to two local apartment communities and needs prayer for laborers to start after-school programs. This work is done through his non-profit organization called Re-Christ Ministries.

## **LT, CHC Larry Bryant, '09**

As command chaplain for the United States Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg, Air Station Clearwater, and Sector Jacksonville (Southern AOR), Bryant ministers to over 3,500 active-duty, reserve, and auxiliary members of the Coast Guard and their families in central Florida. He



has recently received a USCG meritorious team commendation and completed phase one of the joint professional military education program at the United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College.

## **Michael Sherrard, '09, '12**

Sherrard has recently published a second edition of his book entitled, "Relational Apologetics: Defending the Christian Faith with Holiness, Respect and Truth." Relational apologetics is about your life *becoming* a defense of the Christian faith. Using stories and drawing on personal experiences, Sherrard teaches the importance of holiness, treating skeptics with respect, engaging in authentic conversations instead of shouting matches, and having well thought-out answers to skeptics' questions.

## **Dr. Craig Bailey, '10**

Bailey currently serves as an assistant professor and instructional mentor at Liberty University and was recently appointed as a subject matter expert in the Instructional Leadership department. He also serves as a bi-vocational pastor and Army National Guard chaplain.

## **Dr. Joel Dover, '10**

Last year, Dover followed the Lord's call to start Calvary Chapel Fellowship in Newnan, Georgia. The church is healthy, happy, growing, and will celebrate its first anniversary on September 6.

## **Michael Nwamoh, '10**

Nwamoh has authored a daily devotional entitled "Heavenly Banquet." The 407-page devotional is designed to encourage a sustained intimacy with the Lord for the whole year.

*Continued on page 8*

Continued from page 7

# Alumni Ministry NEWS

## **Tom Parrott, '10, '13**

Parrott is completing his doctorate at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri.

## **Doug Estes, '11, '14**

Estes is serving as the minister of education, youth, and children at East Side Baptist in Liberty, South Carolina.

## **Amy Hoogkamp, '11**

Hoogkamp is a new missionary serving in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. She will be there for the next two years with World Gospel Mission. She is working with an organization called *El Alfarero*, which means “the Potter” in Spanish. El Alfarero is dedicated to serving the needs of university students in a holistic way. They serve the student’s physical needs via a café and provide free biblical counseling, a crisis pregnancy center, library, and woman’s shelter.

## **Dr. Alonzo Thornton, '12**

Thornton released a new book on May 27 entitled, “Suffering With Dignity: The Pathway to Ultimate Shalom.”

## **Jason Cosby, '13**

Cosby and his wife currently live in Conyers, Georgia, where they have opened a coffee house in Old Town. The coffee house is an outward expression of their love for Jesus and they utilize it to build relationships and opportunities to minister to the community. Awake coffee community is a project of Awake Communities International.

## **Ismael Dora, '13**

Dora and his wife recently became missionaries with Source of Light missions. He is currently serving as a Bible teacher for the SLM institute and World Wide Bible Institute (WWBI), and is a translator for the French and Creole languages.

## **Sally Gresham, '13**

After saying she would never go to Africa, Gresham has made 19 trips to Kenya, where she co-founded a school for pastors called the Divine Providence Training Center (DPTC), and is the chairman of the board for DPTC. She accomplished all of this while earning her master’s degree from Luther Rice at age 68. Her education has better equipped her to fulfill her God-given mission of training pastors in Kenya. During the last six years, DPTC has graduated three classes of pastors, each having completed two years of study. A fourth class is now in session at the school, which is located in a small community outside of Nairobi. DPTC training concentrates not only on theology and the role of the pastor, but also on how to deal with day-to-day life challenges and self-sustainability.

## **Steven Harvel, '13**

Harvel is working as the director of the men’s ministry at First Baptist Church of Austinville in Decatur, Alabama.

## **LT. Ryan Whitfield, '13**

As Command Chaplain of Carrier Air Wing SEVEN, based out of Virginia Beach, Virginia, Whitfield provides pastoral counseling, advisement, and religious leadership and education to eight squadrons, comprising of more than 1,900 active-duty sailors. Carrier Air Wing SEVEN deploys globally, providing air assets onboard the aircraft carrier USS HARRY S. TRUMAN.



### **Jerry Burke, '14**

Burke recently accepted a call as senior pastor of Troy Baptist Church in Pontotoc, Mississippi.

### **James C. Clements, '14**

Clements was named "Pastor of the Year" for the Sixth Christian Methodist Episcopal Church on June 23 during the organization's annual conference in Columbus, Georgia. He was also ordained to Elder and accepted into Full CME Connection, as well as appointed pastor of Trinity CME Church in Toccoa, Georgia, in December 2014. He recently retired from the United States Army and will now focus on his ministry full time.

### **Steven Knox, '14**

Since graduating in 2014, Knox has been working on a Ph.D. in public service leadership at Capella University. With the education he received at Luther Rice, he was able to accelerate through his Ph.D. program to the point that he was asked to become a teaching assistant in the writing department at Capella.

### **Mark Lawing, '14**

Lawing is a pastor at New Hope Baptist Church in Old Fort, North Carolina, and started a Christian counseling service called Christ Centered Living. In February, he became the McDowell county connector for FaithHealthNC, which connects people of faith with people in need. FaithHealthNC is a collaborative effort of Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and the McDowell Hospital.

**Nathan Parker, '14**, currently in the Master of Divinity program. Parker is currently assisting a local Bible college in Arkansas with rolling out an online degree program from scratch. He is also the president and CEO of Mallard Computer, Inc.

### **Al Yokubonia, '14**

Yokubonia accepted a position as the new program director of the Phoenix Rescue Mission in Phoenix, Arizona. The mission offers a number of Christ-centered programs and services to help men, women, and children escape hunger and homelessness.

**Daniel Lowery, '15**, currently in the Master of Arts in Christian Studies program. Lowery recently accepted a position as the associate pastor at Lakeside Baptist Church in Milledgeville, Georgia. He directs the children and youth ministries at the church.

**Daniel Dickerson**, currently in the bachelor's program. This year, Dickerson accepted God's call into full-time ministry and started a new non-profit called SafetyNet Ministries. The goal of the ministry is to provide long-term transitional housing for young adults who fall through the cracks of society—those that often get overlooked by educational organizations, churches, and government, and who do not have families supporting them through the challenging young adult years.

**Mark Fraley**, currently in the Master of Arts in Apologetics program. In May 2014, Fraley accepted the position of junior high youth director at his church. He also began working with the executive pastor last fall to build a men's ministry program.

**Joey Holloway**, currently in the bachelor's program. Holloway was called to pastor Pineywood Baptist Church in Gardendale, Alabama, in June and became an ordained minister in July. This is his first pastorate.

**Send your updates to [alumni@LutherRice.edu](mailto:alumni@LutherRice.edu).**



# Recent Letters of Appreciation

From the first day of entry into the Luther Rice Seminary graduate program, I felt welcomed and embraced. It wasn't necessarily a pattern of overt efforts, but the genuine warmth demonstrated that was natural and practical.

In the graduate counseling program, I was encouraged, trained and motivated to serve with Christian character in both my personal and professional life. The counseling program of study was intense, challenging, and rich in biblical and counseling content and techniques.

The experience that had the most impact on me personally was the course taught by the president of Luther Rice, Dr. Flanagan. The genuine nurturance and care exemplified in the "Critical Issues in Ministry" course, left me not only refreshed and more informed, but also ministered to on a personal level. I was valued, embraced as a daughter, and approached as a student of the Word. The brilliance of the Doctor of Ministry program's team of professors was clearly evident and transformative as I was vigorously pushed to excel in every aspect of study and implementation.

At Luther Rice College and Seminary, I was accepted socially, guided spiritually, and handled exceptionally. The academic standards are superior, and the love and acceptance flows from pure hearts, divine wisdom, and years of experience. Luther Rice afforded me the value of a theological education, a tenacious witness for Christ, and personal examples of integrity, love, and care. For this educational opportunity, I will be forever grateful.

*Sandra L. Tyler*

Thank you to the entire faculty at Luther Rice who poured into my life during the course of my apologetics training. Teaching at a couple of universities, I am now fielding many questions regarding religion and most specifically, Christianity. This semester alone, I have been told by a voodoo practitioner, an atheist, and the disenfranchised son of a pastor, that I have been able to provide them with logical, reasonable answers to questions when no one else could.

This is all a direct reflection on my education at Luther Rice. I am amazed at how the Holy Spirit brings ideas and answers back to my mind and provides wonderful illustrations for me to share in class. Thank you again for speaking into my life (specifically my mind) and know that your efforts are reaping a harvest.

***Connie Johnson***

My name is Lucille Anderson and I graduated from Luther Rice in 2014 with my master's degree in Christian Studies.

On May 22, I became quite ill and was hospitalized for a total of 15 days while the doctors and nurses worked to save my life. Thankfully, they prevailed due to the answered prayers of so many, including my professors Dr. Wilson and Dr. Mapes, my classmates, and the office staff.

I am so grateful for how my professors worked with me so I could complete my assignments, giving me an extension on my deadlines after I was discharged from the hospital. During the graduation preparation and ceremony, the staff was so considerate of my limitation of mobility. I'm sure that it was not noticeable, but Sherri Humphrey assisted me by walking with me to my seat during the processional.

It has been such a blessing to take courses the past two years, as it afforded me the opportunity to get to know such wonderful men of God and dedicated professors like Dr. Kinnebrew, Dr. Mapes, and Dr. Wilson. Let me state my gratitude and God's blessings to Luther Rice.

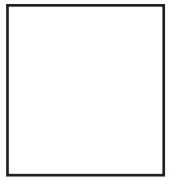
***Lucille Anderson***

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Luther Rice admits students of any race, religion, gender, age, color, national or ethnic origin, or disability, except where required by specific religious tenets held by the institution.

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