

April 2017

PIONEER

Luther Rice College & Seminary

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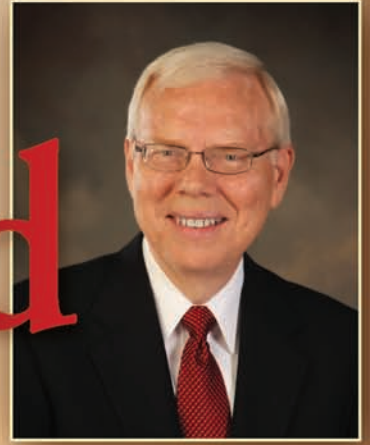
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Reaching the Lost in Vietnam

... He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.

PSALM 23

A Personal Word



from **DR. FLANAGAN**

Celebrating 25 years in Atlanta is a tremendous milestone. It's hard to believe it's been that long—people still ask how the move to Atlanta is going! Sometimes I cannot believe it has been that long myself.

The move to Atlanta was during the presidency of Dr. Gene Williams, who went home to be with the Lord in December 2016 at 89 years of age. The Lord greatly used Williams at Luther Rice during his tenure from 1982 to 1992. Under Williams' leadership, Luther Rice moved to Atlanta and was accredited by TRACS. Williams ministered around the world as an evangelist and believed in indigenous missions, supporting many foreign evangelists serving in their home countries.

Williams was my preaching and evangelism professor when I was a seminary student. At the same time I was finishing my doctorate, Williams accepted the presidency of Luther Rice Seminary. He then invited me to be a part of the faculty—now 35 years ago this year! We at Luther Rice are grateful for Williams' life and legacy.

There have been significant changes during our 25 years in Atlanta. The facilities in downtown Jacksonville were in disrepair, but the property on which they sat was valuable. So, the board of

trustees decided to move the school to Atlanta, and as some say, "the rest is history." After the land was sold, we were given the property in Lithonia, Georgia, on which the college and seminary currently reside.

As we enter our 25th year in Atlanta, another significant change will occur very soon—our city's name will change from Lithonia to Stonecrest. The voters in our region voted to incorporate and form a new city. So, when you see the name of our location change from Lithonia to Stonecrest, rest assured that we have not physically moved again.

God has richly blessed Luther Rice since the founding of the school in Jacksonville, Florida, by Dr. Robert Witty, one of the great pioneers in distance education. We continue to build upon the foundation he laid, remaining committed to the unchanging, inerrant Word of God. Many things have changed since moving to Atlanta, but we are still equipping God's servants around the world, fulfilling the vision and mission for which Luther Rice was founded.

James Flanagan
President

LUTHER RICE CELEBRATES

25 *Years* IN ATLANTA

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In 1992, Luther Rice started its first full year of operation in Lithonia (now Stonecrest), Georgia, a part of Metro Atlanta, after moving from Jacksonville, Florida. In 2017, we will celebrate this milestone anniversary with special events throughout the year. But first, let's go all the way back to 1962 and take a quick look at the founding of this historic institution.

In May of 1962, Dr. Robert Gee Witty, a pastor in Jacksonville, Florida, secured five pastors who signed the first charter application for Luther Rice Seminary. On June 14, 1962, the State of Florida granted the charter. The first classes met in facilities provided by Central Baptist Church on September 11, 1962—and there began the remarkable rise of Luther Rice Seminary.

By 1964, 94 students had registered for classes and 16 pastors served as part-time faculty. At that time, the distance education curriculum, prepared by Witty, was approved by the Board of Trustees and offered to the public. That ground-breaking, non-traditional, theological education method attracted thousands of students, both in the United States and in many foreign countries. Since 1976, a faculty of full-time professors has served the institution.

In 1968, Luther Rice Seminary purchased property from Central Baptist Church then returned the same property to the church as a gift when the administrative building at 1050 Hendricks Avenue was purchased in 1970. Later, classrooms were established in the instructional building located on Prudential Drive. The Smith Library, constructed on Home Street, was opened for use in the spring of 1982. All properties were purchased and constructed without incurring any debt.

In May of 1992, the first graduating class in Metro Atlanta crossed the stage to receive their degrees. A church building and five acres of property were donated to Luther Rice, and in late 1991, the Seminary

moved its main campus to this new location. The first new building, Williams Hall (named after the second president, Dr. Gene Williams, who oversaw the move to Atlanta) was opened in 1992. In that same year, Williams became Chancellor and Dr. James Bryant was named President. In May of 1994, Dr. James Flanagan was inaugurated as the fourth president of Luther Rice and continues to serve in that role today.

The current main academic building, Woodlawn Hall, which houses classrooms and the Smith Library, was constructed and opened in 2007. The building was made possible by a generous donation from Woodlawn Baptist Church, which was in Decatur, Georgia.

Officially chartered in 1962, the institution celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2012. Events were held throughout the year and around the country to mark the milestone occasion.

To enhance the online classroom student experience, a state-of-the-art video studio was built in 2014. The studio allows for the professional production of course video lectures by the institution's academic faculty to meet the rising demands of online education. In 2015, Luther Rice launched Project FOCUS, the school's original free theological web series designed for the Christian lay community. Currently, there are five non-credit courses available with nearly 1,000 people registered. For details about this program, visit the website projectfocus.education.

"In 2017, Luther Rice Seminary continues to operate on the cutting edge by offering a theologically-sound, biblical, flexible, and technologically-advanced education. If you are juggling life, work, ministry, and family, our institution is designed for your educational success. All campus buildings and property are debt free, allowing the institution to make strategic and timely adjustments as necessary to meet student's needs. We work hard every day to continually improve our programs," states Dr. Flanagan.

*Congratulations,
Dr. Flanagan, on
35 Years
at Luther Rice*



The year 2017 marks the 35th anniversary of Dr. Flanagan's service at Luther Rice College and Seminary. Flanagan began in 1982 after a phone call and an invitation was extended from the new president, Dr. Gene Williams. At that time, the institution was in Jacksonville, Florida, and he was the associate pastor at San Pablo Baptist Church.

Flanagan is the only staff member and president that had the opportunity to work with all three previous presidents. He began as a faculty member in 1982 and then served as vice president for academic affairs. He, along with his wife Ruth and two sons, made the move from Jacksonville to Atlanta in the early '90s. He saw the achievement of national accreditation with TRACS and more recently a second accreditation with ABHE. In 1994, Flanagan was inaugurated as the fourth president of Luther Rice.

Vanessa Nealey, who has served as his long-time executive assistant for 25 years, said "Dr. Flanagan hired me in February 1992. It has been a tremendous blessing to work for such a wonderful, godly man. The Lord has used him in many ways personally in my life and in the lives of countless others."

The staff, faculty, and students, past and present, all thank you, Dr. Flanagan, for your dedicated service to us, the institution, and to God. You are a shining example of a person fully committed to God's calling on their life and we are all better people because we have known you.

Engaging Culture With Truth and Grace

By Dr. Evan Posey, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs

Words

*Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt,
so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*

COLOSSIANS 4:6

I have a love-hate relationship with social media. I cannot imagine a more effective way to broadcast a message to the entire world in 140 characters or less. But while the “status update” has the potential for good, it is often the source of much frustration.

In a world where social media posts polarize and sensationalize, how does the Christian engage the culture in a winsome and Christ-like way? I believe the answer lies in the way we use our words.

Our Words Can Be Hostels

Hostels are known for sparse accommodations. World travelers can find a place to sleep, and if they are lucky, a hot meal “on the cheap.” However, hostels are not known for their gracious and inviting atmosphere. Likewise, the Christian who merely speaks the truth without the graciousness that Paul describes uses his words like a hostel. Do they provide what is needed? Yes. Are they inviting? Not by a long shot.

Our Words Can Be Hospices

Hospice care is typically reserved for those who are terminally ill, and

focus on making the last remaining moments of life as painless as possible. As opposed to hostels, hospice care is known for comfortable accommodations. Hospice care is not preoccupied with diagnosing illness, but providing comfort. Likewise, the Christian who fails to point out the disease of sin does nothing more than provide hospice care for the lost soul. When we are more concerned with the comfort of the lost, truth is often the first casualty.

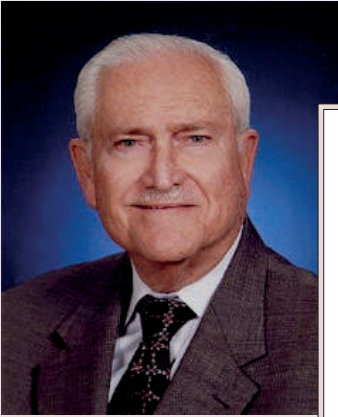
Our Words Can Be Hospitals

In contrast to hostels and hospice care, a hospital is a place where truth and treatment, diagnosis and deliverance, unite. A hospital is a place where the hard reality of one’s disease is acknowledged, and the hope of restoration is pursued. As Christians, our words should cut with the precision of the scalpel and provide a healing salve for the soul. When we find a way to speak in this manner, we have answered Paul’s call in Colossians 4:6.

Social media is the 21st century’s Areopagus. In ancient Greece, the Areopagus was a place where the Athenians “spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas (Acts 17:21). My prayer is that while we spend our time posting about the latest ideas, we also grow in our ability to engage our culture with truth and grace.



Dr. Gene Williams, Founder of Concern for the World and Past President of Luther Rice, Goes Home to Glory



Dr. Gene Williams,
President of Luther Rice College and Seminary (1982-1992),
went home to be with the Lord on Sunday, December 18, 2016.
Dr. Williams traveled the world preaching the gospel
and was a leader in Christian higher education.
The Luther Rice family is grateful for his extraordinary
life of service and ministry.

—Dr. James Flanagan, President, Luther Rice

OBITUARY

“This one thing I do!” was the lifelong motto of Dr. Gene Williams, who went to be with his Lord and Savior on the afternoon of Sunday, December 18, 2016, at the age of 89 years old. He always kept his mind and heart fixed on the one thing God called him to do—preach the Word that leads souls to Christ.

Williams was born in Corsicana, Texas, in 1927 to Henry and Lola Williams, a tradesman and homemaker. Williams described his life as very ordinary, saying “I was an ordinary little baby, born in an ordinary little town, in an ordinary little house, to ordinary parents. Who would have imagined that God had such a plan for this little baby boy?”

Living through the Great Depression, the Williams family moved often, looking for work. It was in Houston that they finally settled and where his father found work as a furniture salesman. After listening to the radio broadcast of old-time evangelist Mordecai Ham, nine-year-old little Gene accepted Christ as his Savior. Later at the age of 15, seemingly by accident, but knowing he was called, he started preaching in 1942 when the pulpit supply minister did not show up for a service. By 1944 he had started working at his first church, a Baptist church that met half time, sharing a building with the Methodists. In 1945 he was ordained into ministry, and in 1948 he began pastoring his

first church full time when he married the former Dorothy Fiew. After serving as pastor of churches in Texas, Louisiana, and Alabama, he entered vocational evangelism in 1957.

Williams conducted his first missions-focused overseas crusade in 1960 in Jamaica. In 1963, he led an 80-day “around the world” crusade traveling to Hawaii, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Korea, Guam, and Iceland. He led one crusade in India in which he preached to over 36,000 people and saw 5,000 precious souls accept Christ. His busiest years of evangelism were between 1979 and 1985 when he led 40 crusades a year in the U.S. and around the world. He led over 2,000 revival meetings in America and over 135 overseas crusades in foreign countries.

In addition to leading revival meetings, Williams founded Williams Ministries in 1959. He also served as chairman of the board of the missions ministry now named Concern for the World, and produced a gospel television show called World Concern. He taught evangelism and missions at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary with Dr. Jerry Falwell in the early 1970’s, and became president of Luther Rice Seminary in 1982, serving in that capacity until 1992.

Through the decades, Williams Ministries and Concern for the World have supported hundreds

of evangelists in America and abroad. More than 50,000 souls are saved each year through the ministry of Concern for the World and some estimate more than 2 million professions of faith have been made through Williams' ministry. He was a member of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and was elected to the "Hall of Faith" of Southern Baptist Evangelists in 2008.

In the latter part of his life, Williams dedicated his time to preaching the Word, ministering to pastors, and spending time with his family.

He received a bachelor of arts degree from Baylor University, and a master of divinity degree and a doctor of philosophy degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Throughout his life, Williams gave much of the credit for his success to his late wife Dorothy. He is survived by his three children, Sandra, Randall (Christa), and Tim (Joy), four grandchildren Reagan (Mandy), Judson (Petra), Brittney, and Ashlyn (Gabriel), and four great-grandchildren Ryleigh, Tucker, Ivalee, and Michayah.

The family asks that all donations be made to Concern for the World to help spread the gospel of Christ to the nations, or to Luther Rice College and Seminary to further ministerial training.

Concern for the World
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Student Scholarship Fund Set Up In Memory Of

Mayfred Nall

Luther Rice has been honored to receive one of the largest gifts to the institution in recent history. The gift by Dr. Roe Nall was given in memory of his late wife Mayfred and founded the Roe and Mayfred Nall Memorial Fund. The fund supports ministry training by providing scholarships to students for their studies at Luther Rice. Nall's gifts, both personal and through his foundation Reaching and Meeting Needs Worldwide Ministry, Inc., totaled \$90,000. Luther Rice is grateful for this remarkable, far-reaching gift in memory of Mayfred Nall.

Dr. Roe Nall graduated from Luther Rice with his doctor of ministry degree in May of 2000. He has been in ministry for over 45 years, initially pastoring A.M.E. Zion churches throughout Alabama, and for the last 27 years at Solid Rock A.M.E. Zion Church in Dekalb County, Georgia, where he retired in 2014. When Nall first received the pastoral appointment to this congregation, there were no actual members, just a vision for a church in the area. During his leadership



and ministry at Solid Rock, God increased the membership dramatically, lives were changed, relationships were restored, and souls were saved. Nall is quick to give God all the glory for the success of Solid Rock.

To foster his ministry, Nall has adopted the mindset of "the world is my parish." This perspective has created opportunities for him to minister and experience God's blessings as he serves others all over the world. He has traveled extensively throughout Korea, Australia, Europe, and Africa.

In 2007, Nall was the only American member to serve on a committee that planned the service of celebration marking the 300th birthday of the renowned hymn writer Charles Wesley. The ecumenical service was held in Rome, Italy, in 2007 at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. The basilica, founded by the Roman Emperor Constantine I and marking the burial place of St. Paul, is one of Rome's four ancient, papal, major basilicas. People from around the world and of various faiths gathered at the basilica to celebrate their common heritage in the hymns of the Methodist hymn writer and poet Charles Wesley.

Nall currently leads two ministries established to meet the individual needs of others. Reaching and Meeting Needs Worldwide Ministry, Inc. was founded by Nall and his wife Mayfred in 2013 to assist others as they had been helped through the years. The organization works to meet the needs of those struggling with the challenges of life in the areas of food, clothing, shelter, financial assistance, and spiritual needs. The other ministry, Teen Reach, Inc., seeks to continue the mission and legacy that Mayfred built by serving adolescents in need.

Nall holds multiple degrees including a bachelor of science, a master of business administration, a master of education, an educational specialist, a master of divinity, and a doctor of ministry.

Luther Rice is grateful for the extraordinary gift given in memory of Mayfred Nall and for the impact it will have on the lost by providing funding to students desiring ministry education.

Luther Rice Recruiting Events Schedule for 2017

To spread the word about the degree programs offered at Luther Rice, we will have a representative on site at each of these religious-based events. If you are attending any of the events below, please stop by the Luther Rice booth and visit with us.

January 23-24. Georgia Baptist Mission Board Evangelism Conference, Warner Robins, GA

January 26-28, First Baptist Church Jacksonville Pastors Conference, Jacksonville, FL

January 28, Alumni and Prospective Student Luncheon, Gorham, ME

February 3-4. Johnny Hunt's Men's Conference, Woodstock, GA

February 6, Feed My Sheep Conference, Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Sandy Springs, GA

February 23, Southside Summit, Jonesboro, GA

March 31, Luther Rice On-Campus Preview Day, Stonecrest (formerly Lithonia), GA

June 12-14, Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Phoenix, AZ

June 13, Annual Alumni & Friends Luncheon, Phoenix, AZ

June 19-23, National Baptist Convention Congress on Christian Education, St. Louis, MO

August 18-19, Georgia Baptist Mission Board Go Georgia North Conference, Marietta, GA

August 19, New Student Welcome & Orientation on Campus, Stonecrest (formerly Lithonia), GA

August 25-26, Georgia Baptist Mission Board Go Georgia South Conference, Tifton, GA

September 4-8, National Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, Cincinnati, OH

September 19-21, H.B. Charles Jr. Cutting It Straight Conference, Jacksonville, FL

September 27-30, American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference, Nashville, TN

October 23-25, Missouri Baptist Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO

November 6-7, North Carolina Baptist Annual Meeting, Greensboro, NC

November 7-8, South Carolina Baptist Annual Meeting, Columbia, SC

November 12-14, Florida Baptist Annual Meeting, Miami, FL

November 13-14, Georgia Baptist Mission Board Annual Meeting, Lawrenceville, GA

November 13-15, Tennessee Baptist Annual Meeting, Hendersonville, TN



Davey
AWARDS

New Institutional Website Design Wins Award

Luther Rice is honored to have won the 2016 Silver Award in web design from the prestigious Davey Awards for its primary website LutherRice.edu. The competition honors the best in categories such as web, video, design, advertising, mobile, and social from small agencies worldwide.

Rev. Lance and Deena Sumner

Luther Rice Graduates on Mission

I would not be the son, husband, and pastor I am today had it not been for the godly influences of the administration, staff, faculty, and fellow students of Luther Rice. I will be forever grateful to Luther Rice for disciplining me into a deeper walk with God than I could have ever imagined. I started attending Luther Rice in 2010, and God has so blessed us with having this school in our lives. Luther Rice is a ministry family—not just teachers, but family and friends. The faculty and staff are with you through the tough times and the good times.

On March 25, 2017, we will be celebrating my fourth anniversary as the senior pastor of The Connection Church in Jonesboro, Georgia. God has provided so many opportunities for us to serve the Kingdom in our local area through Luther Rice. I have also been on mission to Austria, Kosovo, and Vietnam, teaching and preaching. Our heart is to grow the Kingdom.

I've been a Student Government Association president, and my wife and I have both served Luther Rice as recruiters and continue to be advocates for the school. Currently, our church has three students attending Luther Rice and another plans to attend this fall.

We are both currently serving in our specific callings as well. I am teaching and working with students and coaches of Fayette County High School each week through Fellowship of Christian Athletes. My wife, Deena, is overseeing counselor training in order to begin a biblical counseling ministry at our church. God has blessed us beyond belief in our ministries. God brought together a great team for His glory, and Luther Rice has played a huge part in who we are and where God has us today!

Rev. Lance Sumner, Class of '13 and '14

Lance holds a master of arts in leadership and a master of divinity in ministry from Luther Rice. Deena holds a bachelor of arts in religion with a minor in biblical counseling and will graduate with her master of arts in biblical counseling this May. Luther Rice is proud of its graduates as they minister to people in their neighborhood and around the globe.

In my time at Luther Rice, I have experienced the grace and love of the body of Christ from the mentors, staff, and professors of this wonderful institution.

As I am completing my master's degree in biblical counseling, I see, more than ever, how the skills and knowledge I have been given here have greatly benefited the church I currently serve.

We are in our second year of biblical counselor training with our volunteer lay counselors. God has called and granted me and my husband the honor of teaching, training, and equipping these counselors to counsel our local body. This is no small feat and could not be accomplished without Luther Rice and the counseling program.

I feel completely honored to have learned from a group of gifted individuals who are earnest in training, teaching, and guiding as the Lord leads them to do so. Our counseling ministry and the ones who will be affected by our counsel are a product of the counseling program of Luther Rice. Thank you, Luther Rice!

Deena Sumner, Class of '14 and '17

Reaching the Lost and Training Pastors

VIETNAM



Luther Rice graduate Shaun Miles and his wife Lien are missionaries in Vietnam, where they train pastors, plant churches, and minister to the needy.

Who We Are

SALM 67 Ministries is a missional organization that serves the people of Vietnam by training and working alongside local churches, pastors, and leaders. The name SALM 67 is simply our initials because we are reaching the nation of Vietnam together. It is also a reference to the great mission-minded chapter Psalm 67.

What We Are Doing

We provide ongoing training that focuses on planting churches throughout the whole nation. We are also sending some of our graduate pastors to train other pastors and leaders in the central part of the nation. In addition, we have been blessed to offer scholarships for children (\$20 a year), food for families (\$10 food bags), and hope for many through the gospel message. In a place where living for Christ can be a challenge, we are aware of the need for His presence. Like the psalmist, we cry, "Lord be gracious to us, and bless us and cause Your face to shine upon us, so that Your ways may be known on the earth and Your salvation to the uttermost parts of the world" (Psalm 67:1-2). With Jesus and His Church, we are doing it!

Graduation Day

On Friday, January 13, 2017, we held a graduation ceremony for all the pastors and leaders who completed their work over the last 3.5 years at the in the Bible Training Centre for Pastors program (BTCP). A generous donor recognized every student's achievement by providing a Luther Rice College & Seminary shirt to all the graduates. We want to thank Luther Rice for all it has done to prepare this generation of pastors and leaders to work for God's glory across Vietnam. Thanks to all who have supported this effort financially and prayed for us and these churches over the past several years. Even still, there is much work to do.



Pastor Training

Although the regular classes of the pastor's training concluded last summer, we felt it important to offer these pastors and leaders continuing education on planting and growing churches, as well as disciple making. We started that training in late November and then at our sister church in Central Vietnam a week later. This work is continuous and has been extremely productive. We are seeing a move of God that will last way beyond our years. Thank you! Luther Rice is proud of how its graduates and current students live out their calling, meeting the needs of the hurting and lost in God's name. The Miles' can be reached through their website at www.SALM67.com.

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Providing biblical education for Christian ministers and leaders around the world.

Luther Rice is accredited by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) and the Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE).

Luther Rice is an Equal Opportunity higher education institution open to any qualified individual without regard to race, religion, sex, age, color, national or ethnic origin, or disability, except where required by specific religious tenets held by the institution.

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