

# PIONEER

JULY 2013 EDITION

## Master of Divinity: *Better than Ever!*

**T**he Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree offered by Luther Rice has always been one of our most popular. In the 2013 graduating class this past May, for example, more than 70 of 302 graduates earned M.Div. degrees.

And with recent improvements made to the program, made possible by your generosity, it's sure to be more popular and beneficial than ever before!

"We are very excited to offer a new and improved Master of Divinity degree program," says Dr. Brad Arnett, the Vice President of Academic Affairs. "The seminary faculty has been evaluating the program for the past several years, and their work has resulted in significant enhancements — including a heavier emphasis on biblical and theological studies."

Created to provide a broad base of knowledge for students preparing for lifetime vocational ministry, the 90-hour M.Div. degree program covers academic areas essential for effective Christian service in a variety of contexts. With the redesign, students can choose between two tracks of study — open electives

or biblical languages — enabling them to hone in on the skills they'll use most in the specific area of ministry they've been called to.

These changes include:

- **Students now take an additional Systematic Theology and Church History course.**
- **Course titles have been revised to better reflect the subject matter.**
- **Those in the program also have a choice between:**
  - *Completing the program with eight elective courses, for highly customized study.*
  - *Completing the program with an emphasis in biblical languages.*

The new degree program just became effective as of July 1, 2013. As with most Luther Rice degrees, the M.Div. can be completed 100% online or by attending traditional classes on the main campus in Atlanta.

Thank you again! Your generous support is making a great difference in the lives of our students and those to whom they minister.

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# A Personal Word



from **DR. FLANAGAN**

**J**ust a couple months ago, I presided over the graduation ceremony for Luther Rice's Class of 2013.

I wish you could have been there to celebrate with us. Your support of our mission — *to provide biblical education for Christian ministers and leaders around the world* — made graduation possible for so many of our new alumni.

I'm sure the testimonies shared by our graduates would have blessed you as much as they did me. Through great sickness, personal tragedies, and even a war in Afghanistan, our graduates persevered to finish their degrees. As these students walked across the stage, the faculty and staff of Luther Rice who ministered to them during these times of crisis celebrated and rejoiced too.

I praise God for each one of our 2013 graduates and their ministries — representing 36 states and seven foreign countries. These new alumni confirmed to me a truth I'm reminded of each year at graduation: the servants God has called out around the world are making a great impact for the cause of Christ.

Dr. Eddie Bumpers, who received the 2013 Alumnus of the Year Award, is a perfect example of that. He has

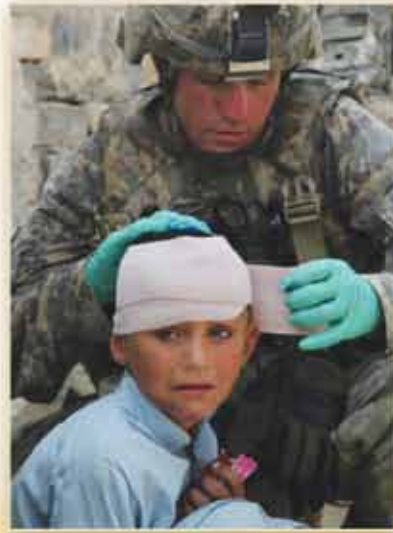
grown a great church, which God is using to reach the Springfield, MO area and beyond! More of his story will be featured in the upcoming Fall Edition of the *Pioneer*. In the meantime — *Congratulations, Eddie!*

Yes, we're thrilled to see our graduates boldly preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Still, there's much work to be done, and your prayers and support are vital as we enter our 52nd year of ministry. You don't need to look far to see morals and ethics rapidly dissolving in our world. The need is great for ministers, counselors, and leaders to stand for the Bible and apply its teachings without compromise. Through your generosity, we can provide a Christ-centered education which empowers our students to do just that.

Despite reports that seminaries and Bible colleges are in decline, drowned out by a tide of secularism and false teachings, you enable Luther Rice to stand strong and continue impacting our culture and the lives of our students. Thank you!

  
President



**Salt and Light:** Letters from Luther Rice Students and Alumni on the

# FRONT LINES

# M

any students and alumni of Luther Rice have been called to be salt and light in difficult and dangerous parts of the world, glorifying God the Father according to Christ's teachings in Matthew 5:13-16. Some have recently sent us email updates on what God is doing through their ministry, excerpts of which we pass on to you:

*I'm currently near the Syrian border assisting Syrian refugees who have fled the civil war in Syria. We are giving food, emotional care, and sharing the love of God with them. Right now, we are working with a whole family who fled just a couple of months ago and lost everything. I also just finished spending ten days in Gaza working relief.*

— Pastor Bill, current student in the Doctor of Ministry program

*I am presently serving in Afghanistan. The war goes on here, but we have a little break right now. All of my graduate studies were completed while here in the war zone in Afghanistan. God is doing great things, spreading the Gospel message here with the Afghan people despite the prohibitions on freedom of religion imposed by the Islamic government. Please send my*

*best regards to Dr. Ron Long, who sponsored me, and Dr. James Flanagan, who encouraged and supported my scholarship.*

— LTC Sanders, 2013 graduate with a Master of Arts in Christian Studies

*We just returned from our latest mission to Uganda, Africa. We conducted training for pastors and church leaders, with 60 in attendance. We also had 81 women at the women's conference. The big emphasis this year, however, was the enormous children's ministry and VBS conducted in the village. We averaged over 700 children each day, with a high of 782. There were 135 decisions for Christ among this group! God did an amazing work among the village of Kakira through these three conferences. The effect on the village was electric. The Baptist church in the village will be following up with all the people that made decisions for Christ.*

— Pastor Roy, alumnus with multiple degrees from Luther Rice including a Master of Divinity degree

Your prayer and support makes stories like these possible. God bless you for providing the salt-and-light foundation for our students and alumni to build their ministries upon. Thank you!

# 2013 Graduation

## Largest Graduating Class



On May 17, Luther Rice graduated its largest class in recent history!

We extend our sincere congratulations to the 302 graduates who received their diplomas this year. These new alumni — who hail from 36 states and seven foreign countries including Canada, Jamaica, Sweden, and France — worked hard and sacrificed greatly to earn their degrees.

The family, friends, and other supporters of these graduates — friends like you — also deserve a special thank-you. Without your support, their success would not be possible.

Commencement exercises took place at First Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia (FBA), where Dr. Charles Stanley — an alumnus of Luther Rice's Doctor of Ministry program — is Senior Pastor. Luther Rice deeply appreciates Dr. Stanley and FBA for graciously hosting the ceremony each year.

Providing a challenging and inspirational message, Dr. Bill Purvis served as this year's commencement

speaker. An alumnus and former board member of Luther Rice, Dr. Purvis recently celebrated 30 years of pastoring at Cascade Hills Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia. Dr. Purvis also has a large leadership ministry for other pastors and uses radio and television to reach the lost. We're blessed by his commitment to Luther Rice, and especially by his passion to fulfilling the cause of Christ!

One night prior, Luther Rice held its annual graduation banquet at the First Baptist Church in Snellville, Georgia. Among the 600 in attendance included graduates and their families, special invited guests, Support Partners, and the Board of Trustees. First Baptist Snellville faithfully hosts the banquet annually in honor of our graduates, and we are grateful.

Some of Luther Rice's faculty and staff also earned degrees this year. We'd like to offer our congratulations to:

# Breaks 300 Mark

## Class in Recent History



### Staff

#### **Steve Pray**

*Enrollment Advisor*

Education Specialist, (Liberty University)

#### **Steve Steinhilber, Jr.**

*Assistant to the Vice President for Student Development*

Master of Arts in Apologetics (Luther Rice University)

#### **Ken Stokes**

*Chief Information Officer*

Master of Arts in Apologetics (Luther Rice University)

#### **Yolanda Thompson**

*Records and Book Services Coordinator*

Bachelor of Arts in Religion (Luther Rice University)

### Faculty

#### **Dr. Mark Owens**

*Assistant Professor of New Testament*

Ph.D. in Divinity, with an emphasis in New Testament (University of Aberdeen in Scotland)

#### **Dr. Ann Kerlin**

*Assistant Professor of Biblical Counseling*

Ph.D. in Counseling (Liberty University)

#### **Sharon Atkins**

*Assistant Professor of Biblical Counseling*

Successfully defended her Doctor of Ministry dissertation and will graduate in May 2014 (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary)

Again, our heartfelt congratulations, on a job well done, to all of our graduates. Now that they have achieved this significant milestone, they'll spread out across the United States and the world to fulfill the Great Commission and share the love of God with a world in need.

Though we'll miss our graduates, we also look forward to a new freshman class beginning their journey in just a few months for the Fall Semester. Just as we did for this year's graduates, and all who came before, we joyfully anticipate a new year of fulfilling our God-given mission together: *Providing biblical education for Christian ministers and leaders around the world.*

**EMERGENCY**

**911**

# TRAGEDY

## Keep It In Perspective

**By Dr. Ron Cobb, Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Biblical Counseling**

**F**rom tornadoes, tsunamis, and hurricanes to violence, war, and terrorism ... it seems lately that significant tragedies, natural and man-made, are occurring daily somewhere in the world.

As life's troubles vary from person to person, it's easy to wonder why some appear to endure more than their "fair" share while others seem unscathed by momentary, "light affliction" (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Though it's okay to ask "why" when facing — or guiding others through — times of unexpected tragedy, we should take our cue from Scripture. The Bible doesn't focus on "why," instead exhorting those who suffer to keep life's tragedies in perspective.

Tragedies in life can become unbearable if one loses perspective. For the Christian: the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and the people of God are indispensable resources for maintaining a healthy perspective while in the throes of trouble.

The Word of God does not minimize or dismiss the pain of tragedy, but acknowledges the hurt and confronts it with reality and determination. In fact, Christ himself gave this warning laced with hope: "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b).

Likewise, the Spirit of God is our very real Helper who manifests God's abundant grace to His people during seasons of hard times. In John 14:26, Jesus identified the Holy Spirit as the believer's "Helper." In times of struggle, the child of God can depend on the Spirit of God to supply comfort, peace, understanding, and healing in the midst of the storms of life.

Finally, the support provided by the people of God is invaluable to those who are hurting during their times of tragedy. Never underestimate the power of a shared prayer, the strength bestowed by a loving embrace, or the motivation imparted by a wise word to those who are going through trying times. As Christians we are called to manifest the ministry of presence to those in the grip of hard times — "weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15b).

Perhaps the greatest call in the life of the believer is that of being "Jesus with skin on" to those who need help bearing the burdens of life. Many times, this means keeping tragedy in perspective, and enabling the wounded to also do so. When we look at tragedy through an eternal perspective, it can be endured and, ultimately, embraced as pain with a purpose.

# Luther Rice University and Seminary

**Empowering Christian leaders for ministry**

**Yes, Dr. Flanagan**, I want to help Luther Rice to train Christian ministers and leaders to take up the Great Commission and become salt and light to the world.

Enclosed is my gift of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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## Will an Annuity Help Me in Retirement?

**T**he economy is struggling.

The size and availability of Social Security and pension plans are more ambiguous than ever.

Investing in stocks, bonds, and other assets might offer high rates of return, but there's no guarantee that investors won't outlive their wealth.

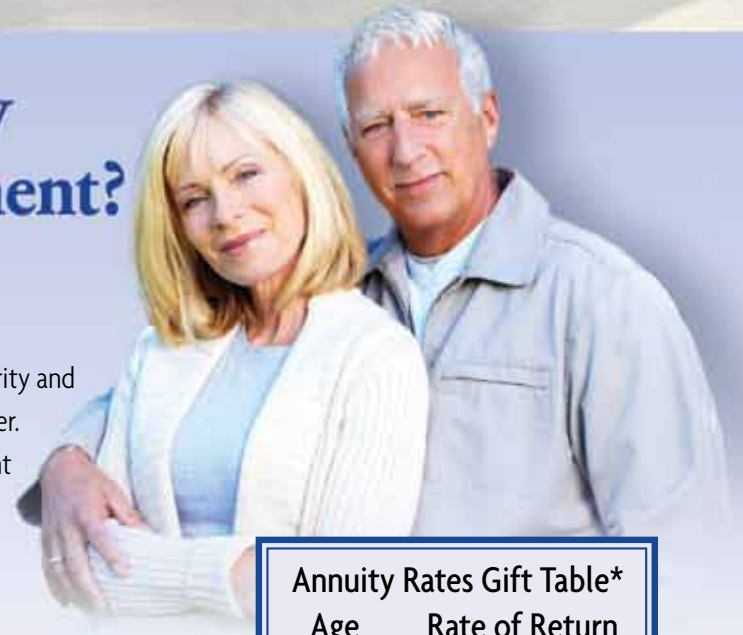
Times are uncertain, but you can have financial peace of mind by setting up an annuity.

Annuities are financial contracts that can pay a stream of income for either a set time period or over your lifetime. When you set up an annuity, you can effectively create a personal pension plan that provides the same income stream as employer-based pension plans traditionally provided.

One benefit of setting up an annuity is that they are the only financial instruments available today, other than Social Security and pensions, that can provide lifetime income regardless of how long a person lives. Through annuities, retirees are offered peace of mind and an opportunity to boost their current income.

A Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) can be a mutually beneficial way

*Continued on page 8*



### Annuity Rates Gift Table\*

Age	Rate of Return
62	4.5%
63	4.5%
64	4.6%
65	4.7%
70	5.1%
75	5.8%
80	6.8%
85	7.8%
90+	9.0%

\*Individual Rates  
Source: American Council on Gift Annuities  
www.acga-web.org  
Effective as of January 1, 2013

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The Pioneer (USPS 052-470) is published tri-annually by Luther Rice University and Seminary.

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LRU is accredited by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS).

LRU admits students of any 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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*Continued from page 7*

## Will an Annuity Help Me in Retirement?

to give a substantial gift to a charitable organization, realize a tax advantage, and provide income for retirement. In the year you make a significant financial gift to Luther Rice, you'll receive a charitable giving tax deduction, and then regular income from the interest for life. The chart is an example of the rate of return you might expect on the CGA based on your age when you establish the annuity.



We encourage you to contact Russell Sorrow, Vice President of Institutional Advancement at 1.800.442.1577, or your financial advisor, to find out more about setting up an annuity with Luther Rice.

\*Please note that this article and all statements contained herein are not intended to provide tax, accounting, or legal advice. As with all financial decisions, you should consult your professional financial advisor before making any planned financial transactions or arrangements that may have tax, accounting, or legal implications.

# PROVIDING BIBLICAL EDUCATION FOR CHRISTIAN MINISTERS AND LEADERS AROUND THE WORLD.

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