

LIVING UNIVERSITY

# ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2009-2010

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A YEAR OF INNOVATION AND CHANGE

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## A YEAR OF OPPORTUNITY FOR INNOVATION AND CHANGE

### INTRODUCTION

The Living Church of God founded Living University on February 27, 2007, in response to its growing need for university-educated personnel and to further edify its world-wide membership and their families. On August 15, 2007, Living University opened its virtual doors enrolling more than 150 students from 18 countries. Through its e-learning program the university served students in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia/Oceania and Europe. By doing so it made the entire world its campus.

In its first three years the University conferred 11 credentials (1 Bachelor of Theology degree, 1 Associate of Theology degree, 1 Diploma in Biblical Studies, and 9 Certificates in New Testament Studies). It has been a year of exceptional opportunity for growth, expansion and service to the people of God all around the globe. This annual report by the President of the University summarizes the successes and challenges of Living University's third year of operation.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In its first three years the University conferred 11 credentials (1 Bachelor of Theology degree, 1 Associate of Theology degree, 1 Diploma in Biblical Studies, and 9 Certificates in New Testament Studies). The total of Living University graduates is now nine.
2. By a statutory exemption the State of North Carolina authorizes the University to confer the Associate of Theology (A.Th.) and the Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.) degrees and limits presently course authorization to Theology.
3. DETC and SACS accreditation requires licensure by the State of North Carolina. The State requires an absolute minimum of four full-time faculty members and a full-time professional librarian for licensure.
4. The university undertook its first fund drive in 2009. It had 409 donors for the fiscal year raising \$69,672.06. In the Less than \$500 category the average total gift per person was \$85.67. The two largest donations for the year were \$6,000 (Kayne A. Burgdorf) and \$3,000 (Roderick C. Meredith).
5. For 2009, men account for 69% of the student population while women account for 31%. In other words, two men enroll for each woman.
6. The student retention rate for 2009 was 90.8% (the goal was to have a retention rate of not less than 80.0%).
7. In 2010 the University instituted a world class hosted solution for online delivery of coursework and a student management information system for the university called Populi.
8. The library now occupies space in the LCG headquarters building that was considered underutilized a year ago and modestly furnished with new book shelving and furniture.

9. The acquisition of the late Raymond McNair library and other acquisitions (primarily donated) resulted in the creation of a fairly in-depth theology reference collection.
10. The University Library moved from a manual circulation system to an automated one.

## LICENSURE AND ACCREDITATION

### LICENSURE

To operate in the State of North Carolina a college or university must either be licensed by the state or be granted a formal exemption by the state on the basis of religious education. Degree program(s) of study offered by Living University have been declared exempt from the requirements for licensure under provisions of North Carolina General Statutes Section (G.S.) 116-15(d) for exemption from licensure with respect to religious education. Exemption from licensure is not based upon any assessment of program quality under established licensing standards. The exemption authorizes the University to confer the Associate of Theology (A.Th.) and the Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.) degrees and limits presently course authorization to Theology.

### ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is a means of assuring the public that an institution meets accepted standards of quality and integrity. It developed in the United States early in the 20th century and has continued to be one of the cornerstones of North America's unparalleled achievement in higher educational quality and diversity. The University is not accredited by any agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The University Strategic Long-Range Plan calls for the University to achieve accreditation as institutional resources permit; however, the University makes no assurances or guarantees that it will be successful in achieving accreditation.

Living University identifies two recognized agencies as appropriate for its accreditation plans. These are SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) and DETC (Distance Education and Training Council).

There are basically three categories of accrediting agencies: regional, national, and specialized/programmatic.

- REGIONAL accrediting agencies, such as SACS, accredit, as the name implies, higher educational institutions of all types within a given geographic region. They feature generic standards, accommodate a wide variety of institutional missions, and usually require substantial institutional resources.
- NATIONAL accrediting agencies, such as ABHE and DETC, accredit special purpose institutions (e.g., those with specific vocational, professional, or religious/theological missions).
- SPECIALIZED/PROGRAMMATIC agencies accredit programs and/or free standing professional schools, typically departments or subunits of larger institutions.

The approach undertaken by Living University is planning and organizing in a way that it would meet the requirements of SACS and DETC. While there are similarities in the standards of SACS and DETC, and to some degree the licensure standards of the State of North Carolina, each has a unique approach. For

example, North Carolina requires an absolute minimum of four full-time faculty members and a full-time professional librarian for licensure. SACS requires the number of full-time faculty members to be adequate to support the mission of the institution. DETC requires an institution to have a sufficient number of qualified instructors/faculty to give individualized instructional service to each student. The hurdles that the University faces in this context are two:

1. The minimum number of full-time faculty required by the State of north Carolina and
2. The appropriate recognized teaching credentials necessary for teaching theology (usually an earned doctorate in theology, a master's degree in theology, or a master's degree and at least 19 graduate semester hours in theology; in each case at a regionally accredited college or university).

## INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

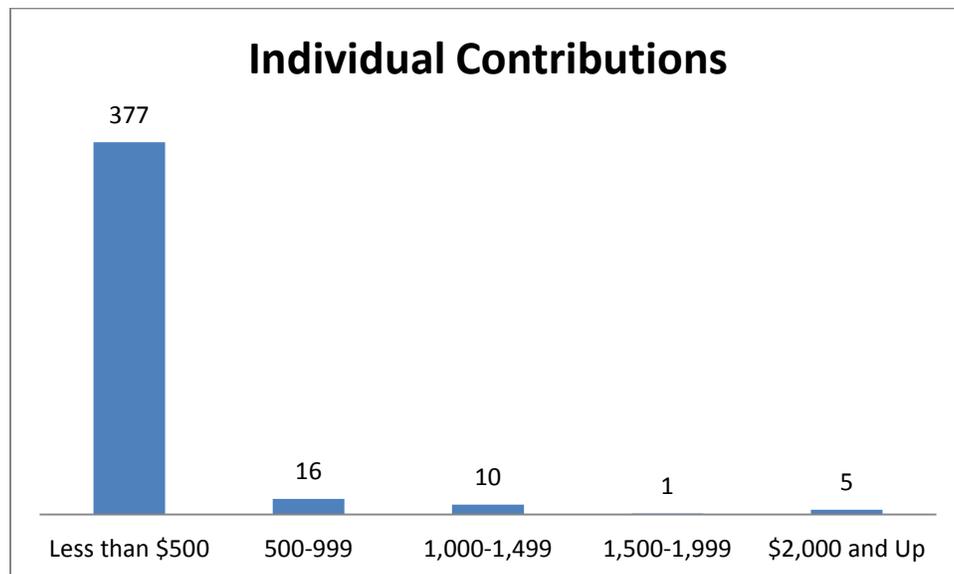
As set forth in the University Catalog all certificate, diploma, and degree programs focus on theology and the Bible. Instructional program offerings include five undergraduate certificates (Christian Leadership, Church History, New Testament Studies, Old Testament Studies and Biblical Archaeology) and one graduate certificate (Advanced Certificate in Ministry).

One student successfully completed the requirements of the Bachelor of Theology and one completed the Associate in Theology graduated in May. The total of Living University graduates is now nine.

For each course offered in 2009-2010 the University received student feedback and proceeded to make adjustments for their reoffering.

## INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

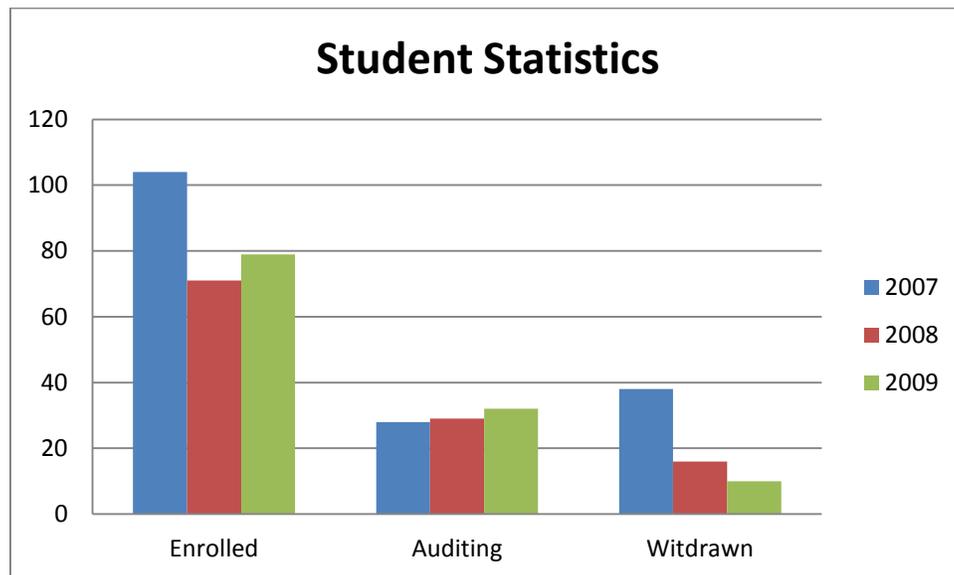
The university undertook its first fund drive in 2009. It had 409 donors for the fiscal year raising \$69,672.06. In the Less than \$500 category the average total gift per person was \$85.67.

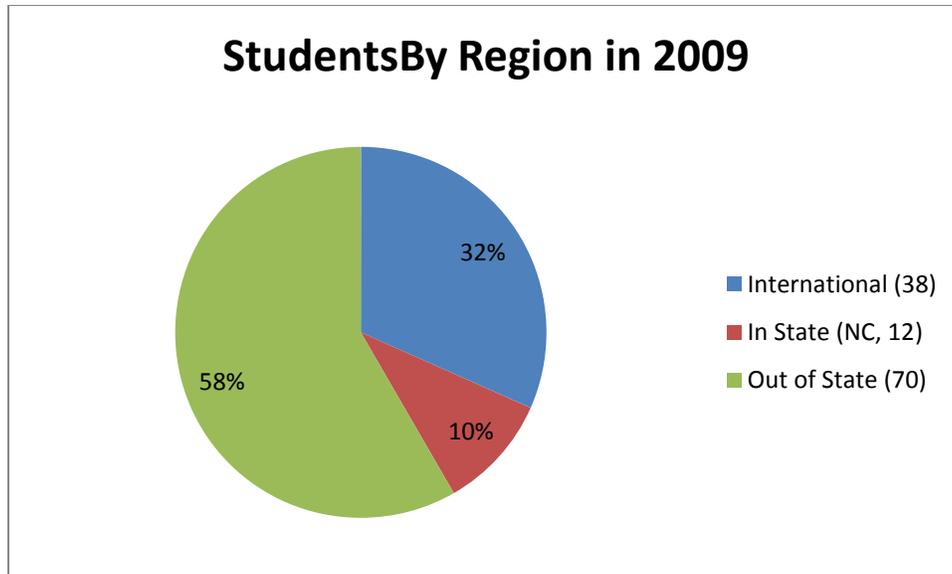


To encourage continued giving a thank you letter is sent to each donor on receipt of the a gift together with a brochure on some aspect of the university. New donors are welcomed by a handwritten card. Gifts of \$1,000 or more were acknowledged where possible with a personal telephone call or in some cases a card.

## ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

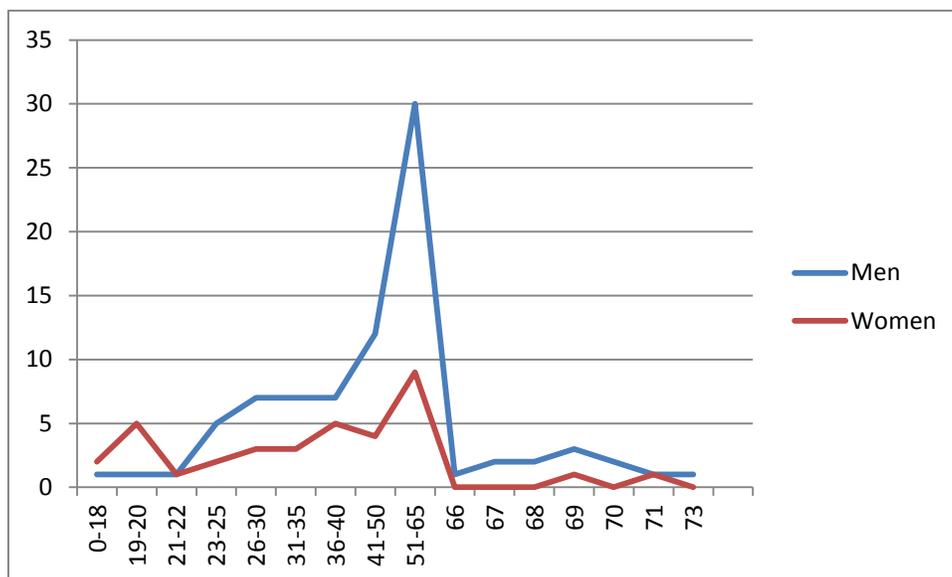
Enrollment for 2009-2010 was encouraging. In the University's first year 170 new students registered for classes with a 22.2% attrition rate. Many people did not realize that taking university courses requires a major time commitment. Some got caught up in the excitement of being a part of a new and exciting venture and soon withdrew. By the third year of operation 120 students enrolled and attrition decreased to 9.2% hence the student retention rate was 90.8% (the goal was to have a retention rate of not less than 80.0%). The implication is that students enrolling had weighed the cost carefully before undertaking enrollment. We would like to have enrolled more students but were quite pleased with the quality of those that did enroll.



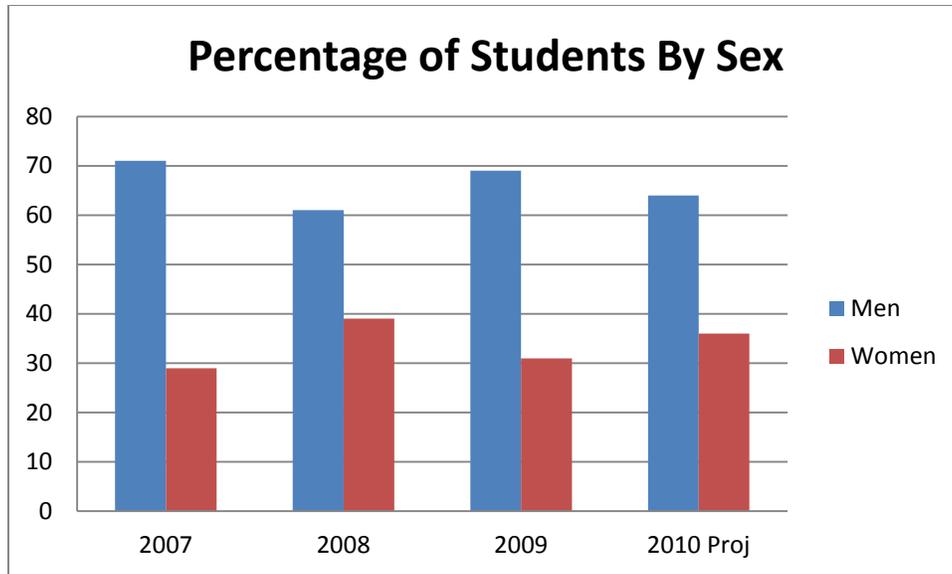


An important comparison is the men/woman comparison as LU programs are primarily related for leadership in ministry or as deacons. For 2009, men account for 69% of the student population while women account for 31%. In other words, two men enroll for each woman. Not did men outnumber women but the age of the men is precisely where we would like to see them in preparing for leadership (Age 23-65).

### Age of Fall 2009 Students by Sex



The question then is how does the men/woman comparison look for the last three fall semesters? The data below show that men consistently outnumber women at a two to one ratio.



Driving enrollments was the University's unique Open Learning Program. Students typically take one course per semester.

The Open Learning Program was for individuals who sought to enroll in one or more single courses, but did not intend to pursue a certificate, diploma or degree. Students enrolled online through the University website at [www.livinguniv.com](http://www.livinguniv.com). They were able to register as non-matriculated students in lower division courses (those numbered 100-299) and in selected upper division online courses offered by the University. Open Learning Program students are permitted to accumulate twenty-four semester hours before having to meet regular admissions requirements. A non-matriculated student can apply a maximum of twenty-four semester hours earned through the Open Learning Program to a baccalaureate degree, eighteen to an associate degree, and fifteen to a diploma or certificate. Grades earned through the Open Learning Program become part of a student's permanent academic record.

The purpose of the Open Learning Program is to make available theology and other coursework in a distance learning format to persons not seeking completion of a credential (a certificate, diploma, or degree). Enrollments are accepted on a non-credit basis or audit for those who are not interested in academic credit but who are studying for personal satisfaction.

## STUDENT RETENTION

As stated above many people did not fully consider the cost of time and effort when they enrolled. As a result the attrition was 22.2%. Steps were taken to inform students of the requirements of various courses by posting a prospectus for some courses offered in the schedule of classes together with a sample lesson. Most courses offered for the fall 2009 semester had this information made available to prospective students. Moreover, to be effective in courses students have to have specific listening, writing, reading and study skills.

As the vast majority of Living University students were mature adults some experienced difficulty in mastering the material. Nevertheless, for 2009 the University surpassed its goal of achieving a student retention rate of 80% as the actual rate was 90.8% in its courses.

## FACULTY

Core faculty members for the third year were primarily former Ambassador College/University graduates, faculty members and administrators. This continues a common understanding of the nature of the work to be done and facilitates the development of theology courses. The University had two full-time faculty members—Drs. Michael Germano and Scott Winnail.

## STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Regents Scholarship Program offered by the University is the only financial aid program available to Living University students. Living University will have to await accreditation to qualify for participation in federal and state financial aid programs. Many low income LCG families will benefit from the federal Pell Grant Program (the 2010 grant is \$5,550 projected to rise to \$5,975 by 2019).

## COMPUTING AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Living University is an online institution whether for onsite or distance learning students. Without the support of the LCG Information Technology Department the University could not function.

In 2009, ATutor served as the instructional delivery system for the University. There are some weaknesses in ATutor. It was not a perfect fit for the University, as it is an instructional delivery system not an admissions/registration/reporting system. In 2009, therefore, the University did not have a management information system in place.

In 2010 the University instituted a world class hosted solution for online delivery of coursework and a student management information system for the university called Populi. The new system became operational in June 2010. A data reconstruction of the first three years of LU operation has resulted in clean data, the ability to run accurate reports, and provided a needed student accounts module. The system was scheduled to “go live” July 1.

## LIBRARY SERVICES

The library now occupies space in the LCG headquarters building that was considered underutilized a year ago. It has been modestly furnished with new book shelving and furniture. The acquisition of the late Raymond McNair library and other acquisitions (primarily donated) resulted in the creation of a fairly in-depth theology reference collection.



The University Library moved from a manual circulation system to an automated one. The Online Public Access Catalog (often abbreviated as OPAC or simply Library Catalog) provides users with an online database of materials held by the University Library and the LCG library in Australia. Users can search this catalog to locate books, periodicals, audio/visual materials or other items

under control of the library. . Call numbers were converted from Dewey Decimal to the Library of Congress classifications.

The focus on distance education at LU necessitates the use of commercial online external databases for user access. The library provides two at this time—ProQuest Religion (a comprehensive resource for students researching religious issues and perspectives including over 150 titles with more than 130 available in full text) and Biblical Archaeology Archive (The archive contains issues of the *Biblical Archaeology Review*), *Bible Review*, *Archaeology Odyssey*, and *Ancient Israel—From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*, and various other Biblical Archeology Society publications and resources).

The literature of the Living Church of God and its antecedent fellowships (Global and Worldwide) provide a rich literary tradition for student research. The library has collected several thousand electronic resources in this regard and is in process of inventorying them in a password protected 21<sup>st</sup> century online archival system.

From time to time university faculty and staff are asked why a library is necessary when the Internet is available. This is a reasonable question. There are several issues.

1. The Internet does not provide the book resources expected of an academic library.
2. The Internet has become so commercial that the typical student cannot afford the royalties required to access online materials.
3. The Internet is so filled with propaganda, lies and trash that students get confused.
4. Undergraduate students are normally not sufficiently skilled to find needed information on the Internet for their classes.
5. Accreditation standards require that online students be provided the same level of service by the library that on campus students receive.
6. Both DETC and SACS require adequate library. NC State licensure requires the employment of a full-time librarian.
7. A professional librarian is to be made available to all students to assist them in learning how to use 21<sup>st</sup> century information retrieval systems efficiently and effectively (a necessary competency in today's world).
8. Online students are to be provided with the library materials necessary to support their courses either by the library itself (electronically or by mailing materials) or by contracting or otherwise cooperating with other academic libraries.

Those who went to college or university in the 20<sup>th</sup> century most often encountered a college library as a large book and periodical warehouse and a place to study. Some boast they never went to the library. With the invention of the personal computer and the Internet this has all changed. An academic library today functions as an information resource center.

State governments and accreditation agencies have come to recognize that as manufacturing and agriculture jobs disappear all across America, future economic success demands that students acquire the skills necessary for participation in a workforce able to compete in new knowledge-based industries. Job opportunities for unskilled labors are drying up. A 21<sup>st</sup> century library and professional staff is one key in equipping our students with necessary information technology skills.

## LEGAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The University is registering in various states so that it can take charitable contributions from residents of those states.

## BUDGET, BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL

The independent auditing firm of Cherry, Bekaert & Holland will undertake their audit for 2009-2010 and report their findings and issue audited statements after the third week of August 2010. This President's Report will be issued in its final form once that material is made available.

## INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Normally the individual assigned responsibility for Institutional Research and Planning has responsibility for serving as the licensure and accreditation liaison, for oversight of the long-range plan, and for institutional assessment matters. Presently the President fills this role.

## UNIVERSITY RELATIONS

The catalog is available in PDF format online. It is updated quarterly.

## ADMINISTRATION

There have been no new administrative changes since the last President's report. .

## FACILITIES AND MASTER PLAN

The University occupies space in the Living Church of God international headquarters building. Except for the library, as an online institution in its third year, the physical quarters needed to operate have been minimal.

Respectfully submitted,

August 1, 2010

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Michael P. Germano, Ed.D., J.D.  
President and Chief Executive Officer

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