

# JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

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## Administration

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*Dean, School of Divinity*

*Professor of Theology and Family Ministries*

**Gabriel Etzel, B.S., M.A.R., M.Div., D.Min., Ph.D.**

*Associate Dean, School of Divinity*

*Professor of Theology and Christian Leadership*

**Adam McClendon, B.A., M.Div., Ph.D.**

*Associate Dean, School of Divinity*

*Associate Professor of Biblical Spirituality and New Testament*

**Jonathan Kirk, M.A.R.**

*Director of Operations, School of Divinity*

**Nikki Wilkins**

*Sr. Administrative Assistant, School of Divinity*

## Accreditation

The Liberty Theological Seminary is accredited by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools ([www.ats.edu](http://www.ats.edu)), and is approved to offer the following degrees:

- Master of Divinity
- Master of Arts in Applied Ministry
- Master of Arts (Biblical Exposition)
- Master of Arts (Biblical Languages)
- Master of Arts (Biblical Studies)
- Master of Arts (Christian Apologetics)
- Master of Arts in Chaplaincy
- Master of Arts in Christian Leadership
- Master of Arts in Christian Ministry
- Master of Arts in Church Planting
- Master of Arts in Educational Ministries
- Master of Arts in Global Studies
- Master of Arts in Humanitarian Action and Human Rights
- Master of Arts in Sports Chaplaincy
- Master of Arts (Theological Studies)
- Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling
- Master of Arts in Religion
- Master of Religious Education
- Master of Theology
- Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership
- Doctor of Ministry
- Doctor of Philosophy (Biblical Studies)
- Doctor of Philosophy (Theological Studies)

The following degrees are not approved by the Commission on Accrediting of The Association of Theological Schools: Ph.D. in Applied Apologetics, Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Ph.D. in Christian Leadership,

and Ph.D. in Practical Theology. Liberty University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate, baccalaureate, masters, educational specialist, and doctorate degrees as well as certificates at approved degree levels.

## Program Directors

A listing of program directors can be viewed on the Program Director webpage.

## Purpose

The purpose of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity is to train champions for Christ who come alongside the local church in its quest to fulfill the Great Commission.

## History

The John W. Rawlings School of Divinity is an outgrowth of the vision of Dr. Jerry Falwell, the founding pastor of the Thomas Road Baptist Church. Dr. Falwell believed in Christian education. He believed that one of the most effective means of winning millions to Christ is by training young men and women to serve the Lord in aggressive, evangelical, soul-winning Baptist churches as pastors, staff, and members. Liberty University (then Lynchburg Baptist College) was founded in 1971 to help achieve that goal. At the heart of the college's curriculum for all students were classes in Bible. As the college grew and reached University status, the Bible Department grew into the School of Religion, providing Bible classes for students in every major and offering majors designed to prepare men and women for vocational Christian service.

Another need, however, still existed. Professional, graduate level training was needed for graduates of Liberty University and other colleges desiring graduate theological education as preparation for ministries in churches similar to Thomas Road Baptist Church. In 1973, Lynchburg Baptist Theological Seminary was created to address that need. It began with an enrollment of 41 students with Dr. Jerry Falwell serving as President and Chancellor.

In 2015, approval was granted by Liberty University's Board of Trustees to combine the School of Religion with the Seminary into the School of Divinity. The School of Divinity provides quality, well-rounded education, based on academic excellence, emanating from the belief that Christian education should be superior, not inferior, to that provided by other schools. The School of Divinity is committed to the principle that a person's most effective ministry will be in conjunction with a local church, and the vision of the School of Divinity is to equip Christians to reach the entire world through aggressive New Testament church evangelism.

## Distinctives

The John W. Rawlings School of Divinity is characterized by commitment to the core doctrines of the faith and providing significant experiences to develop practical ministry skills.

The faculty of the School of Divinity are committed to model both scholarship and practice for students. Graduates are grounded in the knowledge of God's Word, a desire to impact the world for God's kingdom, and the skills to engage the culture with the gospel.

Evangelism is a core value throughout the curriculum. Every faculty member and student is expected to manifest a compassion for the lost and a desire to see their salvation.

The School of Divinity is committed to the local church, and prepares graduates to enter into local church leadership positions. As such, experiential learning is essential to the School of Divinity's programs of study.

## The Mission of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

The John W. Rawlings School of Divinity exists to come alongside the local church in its quest to fulfill the Great Commission. In accordance with the mission of Liberty University and within the historic Baptist tradition, the School of Divinity provides undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate programs that train students for traditional, Christian ministry positions. The School of Divinity offers programs designed to equip people for lay ministry, global leadership, church leadership, and advanced scholarly research.

As a Christian community, the School of Divinity seeks to cultivate spiritual growth and faithful service to Christ and His church. As an academic community, the School of Divinity seeks to impart knowledge and necessary skills to men and women for service and leadership in Christian ministry. As a service community, the School of Divinity seeks to respond to the needs of local churches and Christian ministries as they participate in worship, global evangelism, discipleship, and scholarship.

## Core Values

The four core values of the School of Divinity can be seen in Ezra 7:9-10.

"...for the good hand of his God was on him. For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel."

When your love is rightly directed, you want to learn more about God, live for him, and lead others to do the same.

### Love

Love God  
Love People

We will live out the gospel message by loving God and loving people as a testimony to the work God has completed within us. (Mt 22:34-40)

### Learn

God's Word  
God's World

We will commit ourselves to understanding both God's special revelation and God's general revelation as a way to worship God through the talents he has given us. (Ps 19; Mt 25:14-30)

### Live

On Mission  
In Context

We will recognize our lives as part of the larger mission of God and we will faithfully engage the context within which God has placed us. (2 Cor. 5:11-21)

### Lead

To Serve  
To Transform

We will use our positions and influence to serve others and to help bring about transformation into Christ's image which is at work within us. (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 11:1)

## Programs

- Advanced Master of Divinity (M.Div.)
- Bible Exposition Executive Certificate
- Bible Exposition Graduate Certificate
- Biblical Studies Graduate Certificate
- Chaplaincy Post Graduate Certificate
- Christian Leadership Executive Certificate
- Christian Leadership Graduate Certificate
- Christian Ministry Graduate Certificate
- Church Ministry in the Digital Age Graduate Certificate
- Doctor of Education in Christian Leadership (Ed.D.)
- Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.)
- Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Apologetics (Ph.D.)
- Doctor of Philosophy in Bible Exposition (Ph.D.)
- Doctor of Philosophy in Biblical Studies (Ph.D.)
- Doctor of Philosophy in Christian Leadership (Ph.D.)
- Doctor of Philosophy in Practical Theology (Ph.D.)
- Doctor of Philosophy in Theological Studies (Ph.D.)
- Global & Intercultural Leadership Graduate Certificate
- Greek Graduate Certificate
- Hebrew Graduate Certificate
- Level I Clinical Pastoral Education Graduate Certificate
- Level II Clinical Pastoral Education Graduate Certificate
- Master of Arts in Applied Ministry (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Bible & Theology (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Biblical Exposition (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Biblical Interpretation (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Biblical Languages (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Biblical Studies (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Chaplaincy (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Christian Apologetics (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Christian Leadership (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Christian Ministry (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Church Multiplication (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Church Planting (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Educational Ministries (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Global & Intercultural Leadership (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Humanitarian Action & Human Rights (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Ministry (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling (M.A.)
- Master of Arts in Religion (M.A.R.)
- Master of Arts in Theological Studies (M.A.)
- Master of Divinity (M.Div.)
- Master of Divinity in Chaplain Ministries (M.Div.)
- Master of Divinity in Christian Ministries (M.Div.)
- Master of Divinity in Community Chaplaincy (M.Div.)
- Master of Divinity in Healthcare Chaplaincy (M.Div.)
- Master of Divinity in Military Chaplaincy (M.Div.)

- Master of Divinity in Professional Chaplaincy (M.Div.)
- Master of Religious Education (M.R.E.)
- Master of Theology (Th.M.)
- Pastoral Counseling Graduate Certificate
- Theological Studies Graduate Certificate

## Centers

### Center for Church Advancement

Center for Church Advancement (CCA) partners with students and churches to propel church leadership, planting, and revitalization. The center offer guidance and resources to equip individuals in their efforts to fulfill the Great Commission in three distinct ways:

- First, CCA is student-facing. We are discovering the next generation of church leaders through recruitment and special events. We develop those leaders through our academic programs and church partnerships. We deploy our students into different church contexts locally, regionally, and nationally.
- Second, CCA is church-facing. We work with churches to help them develop church planting residencies. We walk with churches in church revitalization efforts. We are continually developing new resources to help churches accomplish the great commission.
- Third, CCA is field-facing. We work with churches to plant churches in areas that desperately need the gospel. We are developing strategic partnerships with networks across the country. We are developing resources to plant the gospel in different people groups and contexts to see disciples multiplied and churches started and strengthened.

#### Purpose

The purpose of the Center for Church Advancement is to train champions for Christ who will champion churches and advanced the kingdom through church planting, revitalization, and resources.

### Center for Apologetics & Cultural Engagement

The culture is changing and Christians need to be prepared to defend their faith both from internal and external challenges to Christianity. To this end, the Center for Apologetics and Cultural Engagement partners with departments across Liberty University and with other organizations to equip students, faculty, and the wider Christian community. The Center resources Liberty University and Christians worldwide by hosting various events and featuring a website with articles and video clips from our Fellows, Liberty lecturers, and scholars from around the world.

The Center's *Distinguished Senior Fellows* are Liberty faculty members from various University departments who are known as outstanding scholars in their field and have years of experience engaging the culture. These Senior Fellows take part in faculty/student engagement events, are featured in videos on our website, take part in our theological fellowships, and serve as advisors to the Center.

The Center also includes an interdisciplinary *Student Fellowship Program*. Student Fellows are Liberty students of various majors who have excelled academically and have the goal of leading in cultural engagement. Student Fellows have the opportunity to learn from our Senior Fellows, serve as ambassadors for the Center, and research and write in the area of apologetics and cultural engagement.

#### Purpose

The purpose of the Center for Apologetics and Cultural Engagement is to inform and equip individuals to thoughtfully engage with contemporary cultural issues from a distinctively Christian worldview through a biblical, theological, and philosophical framework.

### Center for Chaplaincy

The culture in which chaplains serve is progressively becoming more secular and pluralistic. Chaplains are faced with ministry challenges not previously experienced. The Center for Chaplaincy prepares students to minister effectively in the changing environment by providing exceptional education, research, publications, outreach opportunities, and strategic partnerships. Educationally, the Center develops cutting-edge curriculum to best prepare students to be biblically sound spiritual leaders and soul care providers. Further, the Center designs and conducts research to advance understanding for chaplain-care and leadership. Additionally, the Center produces and encourages scholarly chaplain publications to advance effective evangelical chaplain ministry. Furthermore, the Center organizes and promotes chaplain outreach locally and globally. Finally, the Center forms strategic partnerships across Liberty University and with other like-minded Universities and organizations to synergize education and ministry efforts.

#### Purpose

The purpose of the Center for Chaplaincy is to educate and prepare chaplain students to carry the presence and message of Christ to wherever they are called to serve God.

### Center for Youth Ministries

The world's youth population ages 10-24 has grown to 1.8 billion and is at a historic high. There is some estimation that 40% of the world's population comprises all those under the age of 24. The growing trend of religious non-affiliation among young people continues to be a concern to pastors, youth pastors, parents, and churches. This demographic is one of the greatest mission fields in the world, not to mention that many countries' definition of "youth" is expanding upward to the age of 39.

The Center for Youth Ministries partners with departments across the university to assist local churches, pastors, youth pastors, and parents with resources to help understand the culture of youth in the world in which they live. The Center also seeks to help equip students who are training for youth ministry, as well as those who currently serve youth in ministry, by providing training in a co-curricular effort alongside the Department of Christian Leadership and Church Ministries.

#### Purpose

The Center for Youth Ministries exists to recruit, equip, and network those called to youth work, in both the local church and youth organizations, to carry out the Great Commission to students and their families.