



## When will you be ready for ministry?

### Advice from an LPTS student

by Andrew Black

*Andrew Black, an LPTS student in the dual Master of Divinity and Juris Doctor degree programs says that your call to ministry begins now, not after the seminary education is completed.*

It is often the case that many future and current students approach seminary as though it is just one of the many steps or perhaps even hoops for them to jump through in order to engage in future ministry. Though it is true that various denominations require seminary education for ordination into certain ministries, pursuing a joint degree in ministry and law has enabled me to recognize that ministry is not simply something to be looked forward to in the future, but rather it can also be directly encountered and experienced in the present. Quite simply, an LPTS seminary education, whether alone or combined with one of the many joint degree programs, offers students a genuine and unique opportunity to engage in ministry now.

When practiced with intentionality, the study of scripture, exploration of ancient biblical languages, discussion of theology, field education, practice of faith and community worship, social justice opportunities, and friendships with faculty and peers have afforded me the necessary vantage point to see ministry as far more than a future career, but as something truly tangible, real and very much alive in the present. While at

LPTS, I have been blessed to participate in ministries that range from designing HIV/AIDS liturgies and worship resources for the national Presbyterian Church (USA) to working with local non-profit agencies helping to organize AIDS awareness events for the city of Louisville.

Beyond the numerous opportunities to participate in local and national ministries, my education at Louisville Seminary has permitted me to obtain a FTE fellowship from The Fund for Theological Education, which funded a summer experience in South Africa. In the townships and prisons around Cape Town, I ministered to those affected by racism, poverty, and HIV/AIDS while studying what the process of truth, reconciliation, and restorative justice has to offer the United States.

Additionally, the unique combination of studying law with ministry has given me opportunities to serve the needs of others by working on issues of civil rights, poverty, domestic violence, and immigration. Through my education in the classroom and my involvement in the field, I have not only gained a deeper appreciation for the interdisciplinary potential of problem solving regarding major social issues, but I have also been equipped with the necessary skills, tools, priorities and perspectives to engage in meaningful ministries that have become a solid foundation of my seminary experience.



**Andrew Black** is a second-year student from Albuquerque, N.Mex., in the dual Master of Divinity and Juris Doctor degree program, a partnership between LPTS and the University of Louisville.



## Care within context

**Nationally recognized Marriage & Family Therapy program tailored to clients' own faith factors**

By Ron Cooper

After graduation from LPTS in 2002, Lori Morton found her dream job. She is director of counseling and family ministry at Mount Olive Baptist Church in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

"This is my home church where I grew up, and it had never had a counseling ministry," she said. "It's been a

blessing to work with people who have raised me and to provide leadership to them as well."

The MAMFT program at Louisville Seminary is one of only two seminary-based programs nationwide accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Educa-

tion (COAMFTE). It has also achieved national recognition from the American Association of Pastoral Counseling (AAPC), its other accrediting body.

Since it was established in 1993, more than 100 students have graduated from the MAMFT program, contributing more than 50,000 therapy hours to patients in the community and on campus. And with approximately 40 students studying at one time, the MAMFT is the Seminary's second largest academic program.

The program offers three distinct educational elements: theological and biblical education, marriage and family therapy training, and close and meaningful supervised client contact. The program includes 26 hours of coursework in Bible and theology, along with 42 hours of studies on contemporary systems theories of family life, current clinical approaches to marriage and family therapy, and other studies integrated within a theological-based approach to therapy and pastoral counseling. Sixteen students have chosen to complete the dual MAMFT and Master of Divinity degree, which requires 124 hours.

**Ministers turn to LPTS for pastoral-counseling training**

Morton is among a growing number of ordained ministers that have found great value in pursuing a pastoral counseling degree through Louisville Seminary. She was attracted to the program because it trains students to offer mental-health counseling in a holistic way.

“For me to help my church from an only clinical or systemic perspective leaves out a huge component of people’s lives,” Morton said. “We need

to ask the questions, Who is God to them and for them, and how does God’s love, grace, forgiveness, and mercy impact, influence, and inform who they are, the decisions they make, and how they live their lives?”

**MAMFT sharply contrasted with other counseling programs**

Louisville Seminary’s MAMFT program stands in sharp contrast to Christian counseling programs, in which the counselor may draw heavily upon Scriptures, and university-based programs established within a school of social work.

“Our focus is on understanding the Bible from a theological perspective, but also understanding different religious perspectives. So we can sit with people regardless of their faith perspective and ask them, ‘How does your faith inform you?’” said MAMFT program director James Hyde.

“We do not apologize for our Christian emphasis,” he continued. “We train our students to understand Christianity. But we also train them to understand world religions and to respect those persons who have a different world religious view than our own. In this way,

we teach our students so much more.”

Hyde attributes the ability to teach and offer pastoral counseling in multiple contexts to the Seminary’s vision and the program’s professors, who have dedicated a substantial body of work to pastoral theology, publishing many books and articles in the field. The American Association of Pastoral Counseling (AAPC) took note of that in recognizing the MAMFT degree program for its “distinguished contribution to the Association and to the field of pastoral counseling.”

With the assistance of faculty and seven clinical staff members, MAMFT students complete 500 hours of practicum as part of their studies. Supervision is an integral part of the program. As a result of dual accreditation by the AAPC and the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) of the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), graduates qualify for state licensure in marriage and family therapy, AAMFT clinical membership, and clinical certification as pastoral counselors by the AAPC.

Louisville Seminary, in partnership with other institutions, offers a number of **dual degree options**, including:

- MDIV and Juris Doctor (with the University of Louisville)
- MDIV and MAMFT
- MAMFT and MAR
- MDIV and Master of Arts in Spirituality (with Bellarmine University)
- MDIV and Master of Business Administration (with the University of Louisville)
- MDIV and Master of Science of Social Work (with the University of Louisville)
- MAMFT and Master of Arts in Spirituality (with Bellarmine University)
- MAR and Master of Arts in Spirituality (with Bellarmine University)

**Contact** the Office of Admissions at [admissions@lpts.edu](mailto:admissions@lpts.edu) or 800.264.1839 for more information.

**MDIV**  
–Master of Divinity  
**MAR**  
– Master of Arts in Religion  
**MAMFT**  
– Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy