

Alumni Spotlight: Michelle T. Sanchez (M.Div. and Th.M, '09)



Current title: Executive Minister of “Make and Deepen Disciples” at Evangelical Covenant Church

Family: Married for 18 years to Mickey Sanchez—we graduated from Gordon-Conwell together! We have two children ages 10 and 7.

Favorite professors: So hard to choose! Moonjang Lee, Tim Tennent, and Gwenfair Adams were all delightful.

Favorite class: Advance of the Church in the Nonwestern World (Tim Tennent)

Favorite memory: My mentored ministry experience with Dave and Sue Currie was wonderful! We had many joy-filled dinners together, and they are now godparents to my children.

What have you been doing since you left Gordon-Conwell?

While at Gordon-Conwell, I began an internship at Highrock Covenant Church in Arlington, MA. The internship turned into a marvelous full-time job where I served for a number of years as Pastor of Christian Formation and Mission. I have engaged in the Lausanne Movement and attended three gatherings of mission leaders in Malaysia (2006), Budapest (2007), and Cape Town (2010—the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization). I’ve continued my studies through spiritual direction training at Boston College as well as field studies on the life and times of Jesus at Jerusalem University College.

What are you doing now?

I serve as a senior executive of the Evangelical Covenant Church denomination, a growing multiethnic family of 875+ churches in North America. I am excited to be writing my first book, *Antiracist Discipleship*, to be published in early 2022 by Waterbrook Multnomah (Penguin Random House). I enjoy serving on the advisory board of the Institute for Bible Reading and am a grateful recipient of a Reflective Leadership Grant from Duke Divinity School.

How has your Gordon-Conwell education served you in your past and current work?

The rich, rigorous, and solidly biblical education that I gained at GCTS continues to yield valuable dividends year after year. For example, during my Th.M. I did an in-depth study of spiritual theology which led to the creation of some truly pioneering spiritual formation and discipleship ministries over the past decade. I marvel at how often I refer to my learnings from particular classes and experiences when preaching sermons, launching new ministries, and leading my denomination. Thanks to Gordon-Conwell, I feel exceedingly equipped to do it all.

What has been Gordon-Conwell's biggest impact/influence?

Through a variety of learning experiences at GCTS, I discovered the extent to which spiritual formation and mission are deeply intertwined. In the words of Dr. Moonjang Lee, my missions professor with whom I served as a Byington Scholar, "The best way to do mission is to be like Jesus Christ." That profound insight has guided my approach to discipleship and mission ever since.

What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are just entering the working world?

I'll never forget the African-American preacher at my GCTS graduation who said (roughly): "Be patient. You probably won't get to do what you want to do right away, or maybe even for a long while... But be patient! Remember, God's just taking the time he needs to get things set up! You've got to wait for it, you've got to be patient." Those words have sustained my heart in challenging times—of which there have been many—and they have also proven to be eminently true. Be patient. Keep doing what you know God has called you to do—especially when it is painful and unglamorous—and trust that he will take care of the rest. You've got to give God time, dear friends—He's just setting things up!

Do you have any links you'd like to share?

I write regularly for *Outreach Magazine*.

See this two-part feature story in *Outreach Magazine*: "Michelle Sanchez: the Road to Missional Discipleship" <https://outreachmagazine.com/interviews/21935-michelle-sanchez.html>. I also write regularly for *Outreach*.

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