

Alumni Spotlight: Cassandra Speck (MAET '19)



Current Title: Co-Leader of Aqueduct, the Center of Biblical Studies

Family: Garrett Speck (MABL, MAOT '19), Levi (4), Nora (2), Logan (11 weeks)

Favorite professor: Dr. Price and Dr. Johnson

Favorite class: Principles and Practices of Restorative Justice (BU through BTI)

Favorite memory: We had our first son, Levi, two weeks before our second year. I loved taking him to class and bringing him to study with us in the library or great hall. We made sure seminary was not just about learning for us as individuals, but a place for our whole family to belong.

Where are you currently serving as a missionary and what is your work there?



Kyiv, Ukraine. My husband and I lead an inductive bible study course called Aqueduct that works with young professionals, pastors and lay leaders in the churches of Ukraine and central Asia.

Left: When COVID hit, we moved our 'Historical Books' module online and were joined by 45 students from 9 nations.

Have you always been a missionary, or did you serve in other positions before becoming a missionary?

Garrett and I had been in missions (domestically) for 5 years prior to GCTS. Through our time in missions, it was very apparent that many missionaries lacked sound theological training. Therefore, when we began to think about moving overseas, we decided to first seek theological education in order to be a better bridge between missions and the Church. Our second semester at GCTS, we did a scouting trip to Kyiv and knew we had found our new home.

How has God woven together your time at Gordon-Conwell with other life events to lead you to where you are now?

For most of my life I had wanted to be a lawyer. However, I met Jesus through a young adult group my senior year of college and 6 months later I found myself in full-time ministry. I began to understand that what lead me to want to be a lawyer, my heart for

justice and desire to see the outcast and marginalized equipped, was more about them having their own voices heard instead of someone else speaking for them. When we were looking at grad schools where Garrett and I could both get more training in our individual passions and callings, GCTS was the only school we found that had programs that could serve both of us. Though my program was cancelled prior to our first year, Dr. Patrick T. Smith agreed to oversee my degree so that I could still pursue studying ethics and society. However, as a result of the cancellation, my experience at Gordon-Conwell was unique from others since I was the only person in my degree program.

What do you love about your work? What are some of the hard things about life as a missionary in your context?

I love seeing our participants understand the Bible in context for themselves. The obvious hardship of living cross-culturally is language. Though many of my peers might find this hard to believe, Russian feels more daunting than Hebrew. An additional hardship, especially as a young family, is figuring out how our whole family fits into life on the mission field. We do ministry as a family, which can be tricky with three children under the age of three and no family to help.

How has your Gordon-Conwell education served you in your past and current work? Or what has been Gordon-Conwell's biggest impact/influence?

As a student of social ethics, the greatest gifts GCTS gave me were the relationships with my fellow classmates. Some of the most impactful times occurred in class when a fellow student would vulnerably share how they had experienced racism, oppression, sexism, and other forms of injustice at the hands of fellow believers or the American culture. It really taught me to listen first and sit with people in their pain. Living cross-culturally, I am able to take what I've learned in these relationships and apply them in ministering with and to people who are suffering the same injustices.

What piece of advice would you give to alumni who are considering the mission field?

If you are considering the mission field, I would recommend considering a few questions: What is your motive for going into missions? Why do you want to go cross-cultural? Do you have the humility to follow the lead of someone from the nation you are wanting to go to? Also, it is important to remember that in missions, you are acclimating to the culture you are ministering in and not seeking to have people acclimate to you and your cultural standards. Make sure you also PRAY, PRAY, PRAY! There have been times where Garrett and I have asked each other, WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?! And the answer and affirmation to stay has always come through prayer.

We send quarterly updates, if you are interested in receiving them please email us at: specksmissions@gmail.com | For Ministry Information: www.ywamkyiv.org/Aqueduct