

Alumni Spotlight: Robert Peck (MDiv '74)



Current Title: Pastor

Family: Wife: Margot; Four adult children: Rebecca, David, Jonathan and Joel (MDiv '12)

Favorite Professor: Dr. William N. Kerr and Dr. Fred Prinzing

Favorite class: Church History

Favorite memory: The night Dr. Harold J. Ockenga surprised several of us by joining us in the cafeteria during our evening meal. No one dared to say a word. Dr. Ockenga was held in very high esteem by the whole student body.

What have you been doing since you left Gordon-Conwell and where are you serving now?

I have pastored four churches all here in New England. One in northern Maine and three in Massachusetts. Three of these churches have been in a rural setting. Two of the rural churches were tent-making ministries. Presently I am serving as the pastor in The River Valley Christian Church of Colrain, MA. The church has been in existence for nine years and is affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America

What do you love about your work? What are the particular joys and challenges of serving a rural church?

I grew up in the 1950's and 60's in a suburban town southwest of Boston, MA when the mass migration from the city had just begun. The town of Sharon, MA still had a country feel to it. There were great places for hiking in the woods, and rivers and ponds in which to canoe and fish. I feel that my love for exploring the great outdoors made me better equipped and suited for a rural ministry. God also supplied me with a wife who prefers living in a rural setting. The greatest joy of rural ministry is the intimacy that can be achieved by having a personal relationship with each member of the congregation. The challenge of rural ministry is being an outsider coming into a tightly knit, well established social circle.



How has God woven together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you to where you are now?

Entering Gordon-Conwell, my spiritual formation came from my upbringing in the Baptist faith and traditions. While at Gordon-Conwell, I made friends with students from many different theological positions. One of these students asked me to drive the bus taking his youth group to a winter retreat being hosted by his Presbyterian youth organization. I observed that they had a much better discipleship program than the one being used in our district youth group. The diversity of the students and faculty at Gordon-Conwell helped me to appreciate the work God is doing in people of different denominations and theological persuasions.

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

Dr. Kerr gave me an appreciation for Church History. Dr. Lovelace helped me to see the importance of understanding how God works through times of Awakening. Dr. Schauffle taught me how to discern current trends in the church. Practical principles of Baptist practice and polity were imparted to me by Dr. Prinzing. It was a privilege to be in Dr. William Lane's class on the Book of Hebrews and to study reformed theology with Dr. Roger Nicole. Gordon-Conwell always emphasized that each of these disciplines form the foundation on which could build on in our future study and ministry of God's word.

What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are just entering pastoral ministry?

I hate to admit that my chapel attendance on weekdays, while at Gordon-Conwell, was rather infrequent. However, there was a day I felt compelled to attend the morning service. There was a guest speaker who spoke on Colossians 4:2-6. He pointed out Paul's formula for being successful in presenting the message of the gospel: Be devoted to prayer, asking God for open doors or opportunities for sharing the gospel and, when the door opens, to help us make a clear presentation of the gospel. The speaker then identified that Paul was asking them to pray these things for him. If Paul, who had already written the book of Romans, was asking for God to open doors and help him to make his message clear, how much more then do we need to be devoted to prayer, asking God to give us opportunities to present the gospel, and communicate the mystery of the gospel clearly?