

Alumni Spotlight: Stephen Witmer (MDiv & ThM '03)



Current Title: Lead Pastor, Pepperell Christian Fellowship; Adjunct Professor of New Testament, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Family: Emma (wife); three kids – Samuel, Annie, and Henry

Favorite Professor: Gordon Hugenberger

Favorite Class: Christ in the Old Testament

Favorite Memory: Hearing Dick Lucas exposit 1 Corinthians 13 in chapel, and sweet times with friends

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

After studies at Gordon-Conwell, I completed a PhD in New Testament at the University of Cambridge, then taught New Testament at Cambridge and Gordon-Conwell before entering the pastorate. I've been the Lead Pastor of Pepperell Christian Fellowship, in Pepperell, MA (about an hour from Gordon-Conwell) for almost 14 years and have continued to teach New Testament at Gordon-Conwell during those years.

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

I love having the opportunity to preach God's Word and shepherd God's people. Pastoral work in a small-town church often entails a wide variety of responsibilities because often the church isn't large enough to support a large, specialized staff. I actually appreciate this diversity of experiences. One morning I may be working in the Greek of a biblical passage or writing an article, and that afternoon I'll be visiting someone in the hospital, planning a capital campaign, praying for the congregation, or helping a married couple who are struggling.

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

My time at Gordon-Conwell contributed significantly to my sense of calling to pastoral ministry in New England. I love this region and am overjoyed to see God at work here. Teaching at Gordon-Conwell and



mentoring students there in the years since my graduation has only added to my appreciation of the importance of the seminary.

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

Gordon-Conwell's high view of the authority of Scripture and its strong and enduring commitment to faithful study and communication of the Bible has had a major impact on me.

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

Be much among the people in your congregation, and be deep in your relationship with God. Don't get swept along, or swept away, by passing fads. Sink deep roots in the Scriptures and love your people well.

Do you have any publications or links to share?

[*A Big Gospel in Small Places: Why Ministry in Forgotten Communities Matters.*](#) InterVarsity Press, 2019.

- 2019 *World Magazine* Book of the Year Short List – Accessible Theology
- 2019 *Gospel Coalition* Book Award – Ministry
- 2019 *Send Institute's* Top Ten Church Planting Related Books of 2019
- Kevin DeYoung's Top Ten Books of 2019

[*Revelation: A 12-Week Study.*](#) Knowing the Bible series. Crossway, 2015.

[*Eternity Changes Everything: How to Live Now in the Light of Your Future.*](#) Good Book Company, 2014.

[*Jonah: The Depths of Grace.*](#) A Good Book Study Guide to Jonah. London: The Good Book Company, 2011.

[*Divine Instruction in Early Christianity.*](#) Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2d series. J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck). Tübingen, 2008.

Book chapters

'Pisidian Antioch: The Good News of Salvation,' and 'Troas: A Life-Giving Miracle,' in David Bomar, Ed. [*Journeys of the Apostle Paul*](#), Lexham Press, 2020.

'Wendell Berry and the Materiality of Creation,' in Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson, Eds. [*Doxology and Creation*](#), InterVarsity Press, 2018.

'Thankfulness: Deep, Loud, and Dangerous,' in Brandon D. Smith, Ed. [*Make, Mature, Multiply: Becoming Fully-Formed Disciples of Jesus*](#), GCD Books, 2014.