

## Alumni Spotlight: William B. Bowes (MACO & MDiv '20)



**Current title:** Mental Health Counselor, Endicott College Counseling Center

**Family:** Wife: Alejandra Fontecha (MACO & MAR '21)

**Favorite professor:** Dr. Pablo Polischuk

**Favorite class:** Group Process

**Favorite memory:** One of my favorite memories from my time at Gordon-Conwell was getting the chance to go to Israel and Jordan in January 2019 with Dr. Petter, Dr. Palmer, and a few dozen of my classmates. It was a life-changing experience, and the relationships I built with both professors and with the students were so rich!

### **What have you been doing since you left Gordon-Conwell and where are you serving now? Do you have a particular specialization?**

After I graduated, I worked for a year as a therapist for a juvenile detention facility on the west side of Boston. It was a truly enlightening yet challenging experience, as I had to learn how to connect and serve young men who were mostly underprivileged, often involved in inner-city gangs, and who came from broken families. That work led to a desire to specialize in a trauma-focused approach to mental health treatment, and while working there I enrolled in a post-graduate program at Cambridge College focusing on trauma studies, which I will complete later this year. A year after working there I got an opportunity to work as a therapist at Endicott College, which is only about 10 minutes from Gordon-Conwell and was the place where I did my practicum and internship while completing my degree. During the time when I was switching jobs, I also got married to my wife Alejandra, who is also a Gordon-Conwell alumni I first met while taking a summer course in Hebrew in 2018. Working at Endicott was something of a dream job for me, and it allows to me utilize my skills in trauma recovery with the student body there.

### **What do you love about your work?**

I really enjoy working with the college students, and with young adults in general, because of the crucial time of transition that they are in between the ages of 17 and 22. So much is happening within a person during that transitional period when it comes to the development of identity and worldview, and I see my work both as a ministry to the hurting and also as a way to serve and pour into the next generation. For me, the college years were so formative for my own life story, and the ability to have a positive influence on others during that period is really fulfilling.

### **What are the particular challenges of serving as a therapist in your context?**

Sometimes being a therapist can be lonely work, and it can be very draining. One of the challenges I have run into in my current position is that our work can often feel isolating; we are meeting individually with students each day and sometimes we do not get to spend much time with the rest of our coworkers or with other employees from different departments. For me some

of that loneliness can require the intentional prioritization of my own spiritual disciplines, self-care, and spending time with community. As we all know, after graduation many of our friends and community move away. Also, once in the workforce and into our regular rhythms, it can be difficult to sustain good community, and that has been a challenge at times.

**How has your Gordon-Conwell education served you in your past and current work? What has been Gordon-Conwell's biggest impact/influence on your counseling practice?**

I often tell friends and family how much I appreciated my time at Gordon-Conwell. I had no idea how important it would be in my own development, not only as a counselor but also as a minister and a scholar. In the last few years, I also became an ordained minister (the picture to the right shows the day when I got ordained) and began a PhD program. I doubt I would have had the desire to do either of those things without being developed as a scholar and as a minister alongside other students who cared about similar things and shared a similar vision. In terms of my counseling work, it was the intentionality and personal touch that professors like Dr. Polischuk and Dr. Mason showed me as a student, and also the way that other supporting staff like Shiri Messina believed in my future as a counselor, that helped me to develop my own confidence as someone working in this field.



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

There are so many examples! If I had not listened to the call of God to come to Gordon-Conwell, I would not have met my wife, would not have had the opportunity to meet the friends that I now have, and would never have become a part of the churches that were so vital to my spiritual health in the last several years.

**What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are beginning therapists?**

Starting out, I had no idea how long it would take to become established in the counseling field. Becoming licensed at the state level is difficult, expensive, and time-consuming. My advice would be to think long-term, stay committed, and don't give up when you begin to see how much it requires to develop a career in this field. It is worth it—don't give up! Secondly, rely on your professors' experience, and ask for help (often).

**Do you have any publications or links to share?**

I recently published an article in the academic journal *Themelios*, which I adapted from my 2018 exegesis paper for Dr. de Campos's Exegesis of Mark course: "[Revisiting 'the Time of Abiathar the High Priest': Interpretation, Methodology and Ways Forward for Understanding Mark 2:26.](#)"

My wife and I co-wrote an article on sexual health from our perspective as mental health professionals for the journal *Mutuality*, which will come out in the [September issue](#).