

Alumni Spotlight: The Stevensons Leon (MDiv '08) & Rebecca (MAR '09)



Current Positions: Leon is the Lead Pastor, and Rebecca serves in the music and discipleship ministries at Mack Ave Community Church.

Children: Shiloh, Laelle, Ezra, Elisha, & Ava

Favorite Professors: **Leon** - Rodney Cooper, Haddon Robinson, and Robert Coleman; **Rebecca** - Timothy Tennent and Carol Kaminski

Favorite Classes: **Leon** - Master Plan of Evangelism; **Rebecca** - Old Testament Survey

Favorite Memories: **Leon** - Bible study with Dr. Kaiser and Mrs. Kaiser's cinnamon rolls; **Rebecca** - Time spent gleaning wisdom from former dean of students, Lita Schlueter, who graciously mentored me and many others.

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

After leaving Gordon-Conwell fourteen years ago, we moved to Detroit, Michigan to plant Mack Avenue Community Church (MACC) with Eric (MDiv '04) & Sara Russ and Eric (MDiv '07) & Keltie (MACO '08) Nielsen.

While the Russes and Niensens have now been called to other positions, we have remained at MACC, a diverse, community-focused Church body in the heart of Detroit. MACC also has a community development corporation that is the arm for our sports, literacy, community engagement, and housing ministries. It also houses The Commons, a café-laundromat that MACC started to serve as a community space for the surrounding neighborhood.



What are the particular joys and biggest challenges of planting a church in your context?

Although there have been many difficulties in church planting, we are grateful for the community of people that God has brought to MACC. Our church family has been the greatest joy to us in our fourteen years of ministry here. We love to see people growing

in Christ-like character and excited to participate in the work God has set before them. The challenges also have to do with people. We experience great sadness when we see that people allow past hurts and pains to stunt their growth and often try to hinder those around them as well. There is great joy and pain in serving people, but there's so much you learn about God in the process.

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

Gordon-Conwell helped equip us to handle the Word of God with care and reverence. Leon loves preaching from the text and teaching others how to study Scripture. It is truly miraculous to see people come to understand who God is and then watch as the living Word of God transforms them.

Gordon-Conwell also provided us with a network of people all over the nation and the world who continue to be our closest friends and encouragers to this day. The bond we share with fellow pastors and counselors and those in various forms of ministry has at times been the only thing to keep us engaged in the ministry that God has for us. We are incredibly grateful for this community of faith.

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

We would advise young alumni who are considering church planting or life in full-time ministry to find a mentor with sound character who can encourage you to grow in godly character. Make yourself accountable to someone who loves Jesus and humbly walks with him. Also, as a leader, don't do everything yourself. Take time to invest in others, and build up other leaders who aren't concerned with titles or prestige but who love God, have good character, and lead through service.

Do you have any publications, links, or resources to share?

Learn more about [Mack Avenue Community Church](#), the [MACC Development](#) community program, [The Commons](#) café-laundromat.