

Alumni Spotlight: Colby May (MAES '14)



Current title: Founder/President

Family: Wife: Amanda, Children: Carter & Coen

Favorite professors: Dr. Patrick Smith, Dr. David Gill

Favorite classes: Congo–Self Study with Dr. David Gill, Christ in the Old Testament with Dr. Hugenberger, Exploring the Old Testament with Dr. Kaminski

Favorite memory: There are many, but one is a multicultural welcoming committee on the day we moved in. Literally the minute we walked into Bell Hall our future neighbors from China, Africa, Korea, and the US welcomed us! Not only that, but they helped us move in from start to finish right then—no one

complained (well maybe Andrew James:). You go to seminary not knowing what to really expect, and it is a little fearful. But for my family and I this set the tone and we will never forget it.

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

After Gordon-Conwell, I had opportunities to become a pastor or work in a few NGOs, but ultimately decided to start my own business/ministry. I started seminary at 35, and prior to that I was working in the energy management field for a large corporation, essentially showing schools how to save energy. My focus in seminary was missions and ethics. I actually wrote my thesis in Congo during parts of the Kivu conflict and fell in love with how God used the local church to create change.

Long story short, after seminary I joined these two passions (energy management and missions via the local church) and started an organization in 2012 called Energy for Purpose. Summarily, we perform in-depth energy studies at churches around the world with the goal of funding missions work with the redirected energy savings. Nationwide, the 400k houses of worship in the US spend nearly 10 billion USD in energy and maintenance, but only spend 1 billion USD on global missions. If we could reduce energy budgets by 30% and repurpose the savings for Kingdom work, we could double (if not triple) missional spending. This is our mission: to recapture and repurpose savings for holistic mission work done through the local church in Congo, India, Burma and beyond.

What do you love about your work?

It's not always rosy, but I LOVE my job. I love being my own boss and setting the course, although I also find it wise to listen to my wife (aka the real boss). I love the relationships we have built as a company, often with other Gordon-Conwell alumni. I love working with my brothers and sisters in Congo, India, Burma, Thailand, China, and the US and hearing how God is using them in strategic and mighty ways in their respective cultures. I also love the relationships we get to build with different churches and denominations across the globe: Presbyterian (PCUSA, ECO, PCA, etc.), SBC, Methodist (Global/United), nondenominational, Lutheran, Anglican, etc. I love seeing the fruit of how God has worked through our company.

What are the joys and challenges of serving in the business/for-profit world in general and/or in your specific context?

The challenge of owning your own business is a beautiful burden—it can be heavy. Being the owner can also mean I am the accountant, marketer, implementer, HR, IT, or all of the above. Many, many, many times, we've had to eagerly await the daily manna we needed to survive as a family and as a business. It is not fun in the waiting, but it is healthy. It stretches us and teaches us to rely on God's provision, not man's. And God has provided for us every time.

The joys are the same as the challenges. The difficulties strengthen our faith and resolve and shape us in a number of ways. They give us an understanding of what it takes to make it in the business world, and this struggle helps us relate to others doing similar work. As a result, we have had the opportunity to mentor, disciple, and walk with other entrepreneurs. If it were not for the struggles, we would not have the opportunity to walk with others in such meaningful ways. I am grateful for growth and cherish it even though it is not always fun.



How has God woven together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you to where you are now? How did you come to be doing your current work?

This is going to sound silly, but you have probably seen the movie *Taken* with Liam Neeson, (if not you should). It is very Hollywood, but it planted a seed in our heart. Why would there be a culture that has created a demand for human trafficking, specifically with children? Why is there such a perverted appetite, and why would we create such a supply to fill that demand? My initial response to trafficking was to go out and save everyone, but I knew I needed to know more. I had a desire to study this more from a biblical point of view. I did not want to attend just any seminary—I wanted to attend a seminary founded in biblical principles. I entered seminary wanting to know about biblical justice and left with a passion for missions, having learned that in order to change the hands of a perverted culture we must change the heart.

This is why we are so passionate about the local church. God has called the church to be the avenue by which He works. It is through us that He tends the soil, plants seeds, and reconciles hearts. For example, if we are engaging with an unreached people group that practices human trafficking, our first response is to plant churches (easier said than done), because it is through the church that we desire to work. We do not only want to simply see changed hands—we desire to see changed hearts.

This holistic mission, for me, came together in seminary. GCTS helped to steward and refine this theology, which has become part of the strategy for everything we do as a

company. We would not be where we are today if it were not for our time at Gordon-Conwell.

What has been Gordon-Conwell’s biggest impact/influence on the work you do now or the way you do your work?

I was at a NYC alumni event hosted by Dr. Hollinger when he asked, “What was the biggest impact Gordon Conwell had on you?” As we went around the room, many of the answers were classes, projects, professors, etc. (And by the way I agree with all the above.) I cherished the educational component of GCTS; it is why we go to seminary in the first place and has helped me refine my theology in many ways. But when it came to me, my answer was “the relationships.” For me, hands down, that was the best part of my time in South Hamilton. You may have heard it said that the Gospel moves at the speed of relationships, and in my story that is absolutely the case.

I won’t give specific names for protection, but I met E. in a missions class my last semester, and we have been partnering in India with their ministry for the past ten years. I met N. during lunch one day, and we have been partnering together in Burma for the last five years, even in the midst of a civil war. The same can be said with friends in China, Thailand and beyond.

Another example: There is a group of us that graduated together, all pastors and leaders, that come together once a year to push in together. This is one of the highlights of my year. Trying to balance ministry, business, and family can be hard and heavy at times. The ability to come together with GCTS brothers is freeing and refreshing in many ways. We share our burdens and vulnerabilities. We pray, laugh, and cry together—iron sharpens iron.

What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are considering serving in the business world?

I know many of us, myself included, plan on investing into the pastoral, ministry, or nonprofit world, but the business world is, in a sense, an untouched people group. The business world is on the front lines, not that ministry is not, but there is such a need for Christian spiritual leadership, discipleship, mentorship and beyond. It is very much lacking in the business world, and we/they need you. We need you to be intentional in guiding a misdirected culture back to the heart of Jesus.

Also, if you look at the past, present, and future of global missions (cross-cultural ministry), it is moving the way of business for a number of reasons (persecution, economy and beyond). Our teams in India, Congo, and Burma are focused on Business as Missions (BAM) because it speaks to a generation and speaks to the culture. Business provides for families. Business gives meaning and purpose to cultures (right or wrong). Business speaks the language. The point is: don’t ignore the for-profit side. God is using it in strategic and mighty ways, and in one way or the other, God is calling us to be part of His work in that sector.

Do you have any publications or links to share?

You can learn more about Energy for Purpose on [our website](#).

You can also [read this small book](#) we hand out for free to church facility managers, which shares our story (which includes Gordon-Conwell), why God’s mission is vital to our call, and why church and energy conservation are strategic to our part of *His* call.