

Alumni Spotlight: Ghandi Thompson (MAR '16, DMin '19)



Current title: Executive Director of Risk Management, Atlantis, Paradise Island, The Bahamas

Family: Husband: Garvado, Son: Israel, Daughter: I'lia

Favorite professors: Quonekuia Day and Hector Ortiz

Favorite classes: Ethics, Church and Community, and Spiritual Formation

Favorite memory: There were so many memorable moments in the classroom, but meeting Susan Currie, wife of David Currie, at my graduation was a moment I prayed for.

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

After I left Gordon-Conwell, I enrolled in Leadership Transformations Inc. and became certified in Spiritual Direction. I serve in my local church in the Christian Education and the Training, Mentorship and Discipleship Ministries. I also recently started a podcast and have been lecturing part time at a new Bible College in the Bahamas.

What do you love about your work?

I work in Paradise. I love working for a company that is a global brand. Each day I interact with amazing leaders and talented team members. There is also much creativity and beauty in my work environment. Whenever I look at the different ethnicities walking through the hotel's lobby or the many species of marine life in our aquariums, I am reminded of the awesome Creator of the universe.

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

There is never a dull moment on my job. I work with a diverse team, some of whom do not share my faith. Many profitable companies desire to create an environment that reflects equity, diversity, and inclusion. It is essential for me to remain respectful to different views while maintaining passion and commitment to my beliefs. I value the gift of choice we all have been given, but I am always prayerful and careful not to miss an opportunity to display the gospel of love and reconciliation.

Over the years, I have maintained an open-door approach to team members. Anyone can ask me anything about my faith. Sometimes they struggle with my answers, which creates curiosity and opens the door for further dialogue. I also find it important not to judge others and to guard in confidence anything shared with me. Life can be challenging, and many individuals need a safe space. I believe we are strategically

placed within organizations to be safe spaces for our co-workers, which then opens the door for us to lead them to Him, who is our safe space.

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?

In short, I was participating in a corporate fast at my church while working for my previous employer in the Insurance industry. After the fast I told my then employer I wanted to study in London. That company surprisingly supported my desire to study abroad and extended a scholarship to me. I am forever grateful. While studying in London, I felt the desire to work more directly in Risk Management. Within months of returning to the Bahamas after my studies, I got the opportunity to work in the Risk Management Department at my current workplace, which is in the Hospitality business. After serving in my role for several years, I knew it was time to invest further in my education, and while I was interested in considering a more professional degree, I couldn't shake a continuous nudge to apply to seminary. To be honest, I didn't think I would be accepted. I also couldn't see how seminary would advance my career.

During my first course at Gordon-Conwell I quickly realized I had made one of the best decisions of my life. My time in seminary was transformative. I evolved in so many ways. Studying at GCTS also helped me close the mental divide of secular and holy work. I value the opportunity God has given me to serve him beyond church walls. I feel so blessed to be a part of God's redemptive work in the hospitality industry. As a disciple of Christ, I host his presence through the Holy Spirit, and this allows me to host others with His peace, wisdom, and love. I am convinced I serve in one of the best industries in the world.

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

During my studies at Gordon-Conwell I did a class on Church and Community. In that class, we discussed how too often we create events at our churches and invite others to attend these events. However, this approach will only ever reach a certain number of people—those who chose to accept the invitation. Another approach can be to take the Kingdom to the world by creating more events in the community. This concept inspired a team from my church to create a film. Rather than hosting our usual Christmas program at church we created a movie and showed it to the local cinema. Hundreds showed up to the movie premier.

Gordon-Conwell helped me embrace my creativity. When you serve in the hospitality industry, proclamation of the gospel is not practiced with a microphone and a pulpit. In this context, the gospel is proclaimed by our workplace ethics, character, and overall daily interaction with internal and external customers. Do I always get it right? No, but each day that I am employed gives me another chance to reflect the image of Christ. We spend eight to ten hours daily with our co-workers, but at church our interactions can be limited to two per week. Studying at Gordon-Conwell helped me value the ministry opportunities available in the corporate arena.

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

I used to think to be full-time in ministry, I had to be working in a church or for a non-profit. Serving God full-time is not a location but a posture of heart, commitment to obedience and embodying the description of Salt and Light. God wastes nothing. To any young alumni considering serving in the business world, I would say: present your options to God, and if He grants you peace after praying, GO FOR IT. Serve with the utmost integrity. Many people will never walk in a church, but these same people show up for work four or five days every week. Let's meet them there!

Do you have any publications or links to share?

You can learn more about my story and work on [my website](#).