

## Alumni Spotlight: Hannah Nation (MACH '17)



**Current Title:** Managing Director, Center for House Church Theology

**Family:** Husband: Trey, Children: Verity & Clemence

**Favorite professors:** Dr. Gwenfair Adams & Dr. Xiyi Yao

**Favorite class:** This is very hard to answer. Highlights were Advance of the Church in the Non-Western World (Yao); Dynamics of Spiritual Life (Adams); or any of my directed studies on the history of women in the church with Dr. Adams.

**Favorite memory:** Defending my master's thesis two weeks before my due date with our first child and then walking at commencement with my newborn daughter watching. It was particularly poignant having written my thesis about women in church history.

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

I've served the church in China before, during, and after my time at Gordon-Conwell. After graduation, I started working full-time as the Content Director for China Partnership. My job has been to share the voices and writing of Chinese house church pastors with the global church. A few years ago, that work had grown so much that I launched the Center for House Church Theology (CHCT). As CHCT's Managing Director, I've published two books of Chinese house church writings for the North American context. Next, we are beginning to produce content from China for other contexts of persecution. Most recently, I also returned to school and am a part-time doctoral student in World Christianity at the University of Edinburgh.

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

I love helping to find and share voices in the global church that have been hard to hear from. For decades, it has been easier to find books and other published material *about* the Chinese house churches than it has been to find their actual writings in English. I love working to bring their perspectives and wisdom into our North American textual communities. I also love helping to build connections between the Chinese house churches and other marginalized and persecuted churches.

### **What are the particular challenges of non-profit work in general and/or in your specific context?**

In general, the two greatest general challenges of non-profit work are funding and work-life balance. Especially when you launch a new non-profit that you care about deeply and funding efforts are young, there is a strong temptation to believe that it all rests on your shoulders. Workaholicism is just as much a struggle in the Christian non-profit world as it is in the world of tech start-ups.

## **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?**

Before graduating from Gordon-Conwell, I worked primarily in campus ministry with Chinese students. During my time at Gordon-Conwell, I received important encouragement and confirmation that I should seek to use my writing and academic skills in ministry. Both Dr. Adams and Dr. Yao were hugely influential in helping me gain confidence in these areas and to recognize God's call in my life. While at Gordon-Conwell, I was able to experience and embrace an intellectual curiosity and creative drive that deeply impacted my work and ministry and set me on the path I'm on today.



## **How has your Gordon-Conwell education served you in your past and current work?**

One of the unique things about Gordon-Conwell is its commitment to and excitement about rigorous academic inquiry and its quiet and humble posture. Living in the New England context taught me a lot about ministering from a position of powerlessness. Whereas other seminaries might still find themselves in contexts where Christianity is culturally ascendant, as a student in New England, I was taught what it means to love a city from the cultural margins. This was a vital part of my spiritual formation and a healthy counterbalance to the desire to do excellent academic work. Part of what makes Gordon-Conwell special isn't just what happens on campus, but the opportunity to learn what it means to be the church and to be a disciple in a very secular context.

## **What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are considering working in the non-profit sector?**

Don't forget the basics of ministry, even if you are working in non-traditional ministry jobs. You are still called to be a servant of the Gospel if you are working in management, marketing, advancement, content, etc. And, you're human. God didn't make you a machine. So seek to live according to his design. Be intentional about Sabbath, prayer, and Bible study with other Christians. Dwell with the Lord and know your limits, because after all, the work belongs to him.

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

Learn more about [The Center for House Church Theology](#).

[Faith in the Wilderness: Words of Exhortation from the Chinese Church](#) (Kirkdale 2022)

[Faithful Disobedience: Writings on Church and State from a Chinese House Church](#) (IVP Academic 2022)