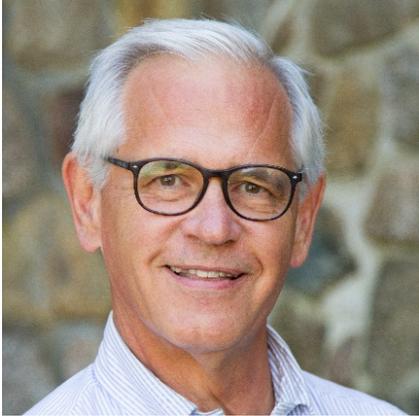


## Alumni Spotlight: Jim Pocock (MDiv '81)



**Current title:** President, Elevate New England

**Family:** Wife: Beth, Children: Nathan and his wife and children.

**Favorite professors:** Dr. Dick Peace and Dr. David Scholer

**Favorite class:** Dr. Gordon Fee's The Life of Jesus

**Favorite memory:** Playing Sinkball in the library men's room, a game we invented to break up long boring evenings.

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

I served for thirty years as Senior Pastor for three successive churches in Connecticut, California, and Massachusetts. After that I spent a couple of years doing development work for Gordon College, then I got into my current gig.

Eight years ago I co-founded a non-profit that helps at-risk urban youth graduate high school and succeed in life. Elevate New England operates in Lowell and Lawrence MA, and what started out small and part-time is now my full-time occupation. I chair the Board, raise all the funds, and help the model launch in other struggling US cities.

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

I love seeing urban young people who were once in danger of dropping out of school turn into thriving adults who now contribute to their communities. Human transformation in case after case after case—it thrills me every time. My specific role, which also jazzes me, is finding people who are interested in the elimination of generational poverty, showing them something that works, then helping them find a way to get personally involved. All people want to make a difference, and I get to show them how they can!

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

In general, the major challenge for non-profits is developing and retaining leadership that is consistent and high quality, both on the executive level and on the board level; leadership that is going to get results as well as inspire philanthropic involvement. My particular challenge right now is finding new board members with expertise in transitions we need to make and who represent the communities we serve.

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

I have lived and served in both chronically poor communities and significantly wealthy ones, and I've seen the power of the Gospel transform both. I learned about that Gospel, and the God behind it, academically and personally, at Gordon-Conwell and developed a lifelong trust in God to do things far greater than my pastoral ability could ever account for.

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

My Gordon-Conwell education opened me to the infinite breadth of the Kingdom of God, where God is right now redeeming absolutely every aspect of creation, not just saving individuals. What Scholer and Fee and others showed me in Scripture, Dick Peace, Dean Borgman and Steve Mott helped me apply practically. At Gordon-Conwell I discerned a divine calling to a ministry of renewal—of dead or stagnant churches and moribund communities. That call is still confirmed; it's what I'm still doing forty-two years later.

**What has been Gordon-Conwell's biggest impact/influence?**

I developed lifelong relationships at the seminary. I've stayed close to all the professors I've named, as well as others, every one of whom always answered on the first ring. They love to hear what I'm doing or what problem I'm facing and partner with me in offering scholarly or research-based advice.

**What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are just entering the working world?**

I would encourage pastors to remember that their people spend 99% of their time NOT in church, and most of that time is at work. It's easy to lose that perspective when your life IS the church. Visit your key people at their workplace. Ask them good questions about their life there. Listen well.

**Do you have any links you'd like to share?**

Check out [Elevate New England](#). This is the best model I've ever found for reversing generational poverty—the Kingdom of God in urban America!