

Alumni Spotlight: Ken Shigematsu (MDiv '95)



Current title: Senior Pastor at Tenth Avenue Alliance Church

Family: Wife: Sakiko, Child: Joey

Favorite professor: Haddon Robinson & Scott Gibson

Favorite class: Biblical Preaching

Favorite memory: Mary Rockefeller, who was a board member of the school, offered to fund our Student Association's vision to transform an old classroom space in the Kerr Building into a student lounge.

Would you tell us about the church you are currently serving?

I serve a large, diverse, multisite, city-center church in Vancouver, Canada.

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 ministry?

Looking back, I see that God, in His providence, led me to study at Gordon-Conwell, laying a theological and character foundation to prepare me for my current life's work. After helping church plant in California, I felt God guiding me back to Canada, where I am a citizen. While fasting and praying for five days in 1995, on the third day of the fast, the words "Tenth Avenue Alliance Church" came to mind. On the fifth day, the phrase "Senior Pastor" was impressed on my heart. I later learned that the church had cycled through 20 pastors in 20 years and had dwindled from over 1,000 people in the 1950s to just over 100 in the 1990s. Through an unforeseeable turn of events, I ended up there and have been serving here now for more than 28 years.

What do you love about the ministry work you are doing now?

I feel great joy in seeing people's lives transformed through the love and power of Jesus. For example, as a faith community, we have had the privilege of walking alongside some 400 refugees to Canada. One of them, from a Muslim country where it is dangerous to seek Christ, has been on a spiritual journey exploring Jesus. This past spring, on a Sunday afternoon under a sunny, clear sky, she dedicated her life to Jesus through baptism.



What are the particular challenges of serving in a large church in general, and in your specific context?

The challenge for a multisite church like ours is wisely balancing the encouragement of autonomy while also calling the five sites to stay aligned on a common vision.



What has been Gordon-Conwell's biggest impact/influence on your ministry or the way you engage in ministry?

The foundation of a classical seminary education rooted in Scripture, theology, ancient languages, and church history. The Puritan emphasis on a mind enlightened by the Word and a heart set on fire. I also had the privilege of developing a deep friendship with a professor who, over the years, has been a source of encouragement and gentle accountability to me.

What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are beginning in ministry?

Find a rhythm of life that keeps you close to Jesus and nourished by His love.

Do you have any publications or links to share?

Learn more about [Tenth Avenue Alliance Church](#).

My publications include the following:

- [*God in My Everything: How an Ancient Rhythm Helps Busy People Enjoy God*](#)
- [*Survival Guide for the Soul: How to Flourish Spiritually in a World That Pressures Us to Achieve*](#)
- [*Now I Become Myself: How Deep Grace Heals Our Shame and Restores Our True Self*](#)