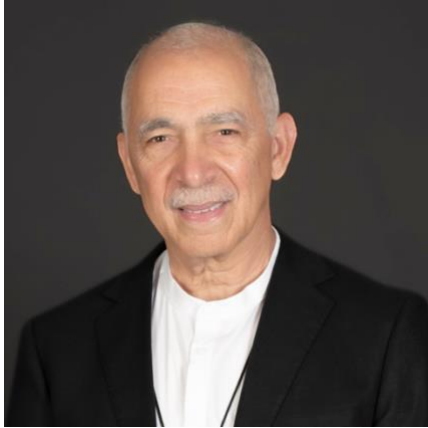


Alumni Spotlight: Marc Rivera (DMin '05)



Current title: Senior Pastor at Primitive Christian Church

Family: Wife: Enid, Children: two sons, and four grandchildren

Favorite professor: [Dr. Eldin Villafane](#), [Dr. Alvin Padilla](#), and Dr. Humberto Alfaro

Favorite class: Systems Thinking with Doug and Judy Hall

Favorite memory: On the first day of the cohort gathering, the initial Gordon-Conwell presenter stated, “50% of you will not complete this program.” That statement shook me, but it also fueled my determination to persevere and complete the DMin program in 2.5 years.

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

Primitive Christian Church is an urban, multicultural congregation located in Lower Manhattan, founded over 70 years ago. Our members come from diverse cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. Today, we are two congregations—Spanish and English—but remain one church. We also have a robust online presence, with people tuning in to our livestream from different states and other countries. Our church was deeply involved in the recovery efforts following the 9/11 World Trade Center attack, being just blocks away from ground zero and serving as eyewitnesses to the event. Additionally, we operate a 501(c)(3) organization that has provided community services for more than twenty-five years. I have served in pastoral ministry here since 1977, making this the only church I have ever pastored.

How did you come to be doing your current work in ministry?

God called me from a promising career on Wall Street to pastor Primitive Christian Church. I left a large Fortune 500 corporation in 1991 and have no regrets because God has proven to be faithful to me and my family.

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

I love being a partner in the transformative changes in the lives of people and our community.



Alumni

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

I have a personal tendency to try to be at every event and gathering. Although this is still my heart's desire, it is humanly impossible. So I've become an expert in time management: God, family, and church.

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

Gordon-Conwell helped me align my theology with the unique ministry work in New York City. It also provided a platform to share our

story, showcasing the benevolent favor of God and offering a model that others could adapt to their own contexts.

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

Ensure that both God and your family support you in pursuing this at this time. Structure your life around the program, always keeping the end goal in mind. Remember: discipline, discipline, and more discipline.