Alumni

GORDON CONWELL

Alumni Spotlight: Ben Witherington III (MDiv ’77)

Current title: Amos Professor of NT for Doctoral Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary

Family: Wife: Ann Witherington, Child: David Witherington (married with one son)

Favorite professor: Dr. Gordon Fee & Dr. Richard Lovelace

Favorite class: All the NT classes and the Bonhoeffer class

Favorite memory: Getting to hear many great preachers in chapel, such as E.V. Hill and Billy Graham

Please tell us about your area of expertise and what courses you teach.

My area of expertise is the New Testament, but I have also taught Methodist History, Doctrine and Polity, the Old Testament, and a variety of courses before I came to Asbury Theological Seminary and focused on the NT.

How did God weave together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you to where you are now?

My Gordon-Conwell experience both prepared me to be a minister—I served in six churches in NC before becoming a full-time teacher—and prepared me to do serious doctoral work on women in the NT at the University of Durham in England.

What are some things you love about your roles as a faculty member, professor, and/or researcher?

I love teaching students and seeing their eyes light up with new understanding of the Bible and its implications and applications. I also enjoy the fellowship with my colleagues in the various places I’ve taught: High Point University, Duke Divinity School, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Vanderbilt, Ashland Theological Seminary, and Asbury Theological Seminary.

What are the current challenges of teaching in higher education, being a faculty member in general, and in your context specifically?

There are many challenges, not least of which is the potential dangers of AI, with students using AI to write their papers for them, and therefore not doing their own original research and writing. There is the further problem of the pressure to offer more of our degrees online, because one cannot easily assess a

student's spiritual formation and readiness for ministry if all you know is their academic performance online. With extension campuses, of which Asbury has several ranging from Colorado to Florida and places between (Tulsa and Memphis), fulltime faculty are often stretched too thin.

How has your Gordon-Conwell education served you in your academic work?

Gordon-Conwell prepared me to do good in-depth exegesis based in the original Biblical languages, which has served me well until this very day.

Do you have any publications or links you would like to share?

I have written over 60 books and a myriad of articles ranging from my academic work, like my Biblical Theology, *The Convergence of the Canon (CUP)*, which won the Prose Prize for book of the year in Religion and Philosophy in 2020, to works for pastors including commentaries on every book of the NT, practical books like my Kingdom perspective series on Worship, Work, Rest Play, and more.

Most recently I wrote a small book for Baylor Press: *Sola Scriptura, The Final Authority for the Modern World*. I continue to write historical fiction for all sorts of people, such as *Week in the Life of Corinth,* which is used around the world in classes and churches and is in its 15th printing.