Alumni
GORDON CONWELL

Alumni Spotlight: Gary Choong (DMin ’02)

Current title: Dean of Academic Studies at Baptist Theological Seminary (Singapore).

Family: Wife: May Lim

Favorite professor: The late Dr. Haddon W. Robinson. His daughter, Vicki, asked me to write a tribute for her father, which I gladly did.

Favorite class: DMin classes with fellow pastors

Favorite memory: The collegial learning and teaching experience among my cohort mates during our modular sessions at the South Hamilton and Charlotte campuses. Over two and a half years, it was a deeply enriching part of my journey.

Another cherished memory was my six-month sabbatical in South Hamilton to complete my DMin thesis project. Dr. Freeman Barton, the chief librarian at the Goddard Library, showed me immense kindness. He picked me up and dropped me off at Logan Airport in the middle of the night, arranged a rent-free six-month stay in a beautiful mansion near Gordon College, and even set up a designated study space for me in the library. His generosity extended to regularly inviting me for meals, and friendship during that season of intense work. Though he retired to Vermont, we kept in touch until he went home to be with the Lord in 2011. Dr. Barton was a man of few words, soft-spoken yet profoundly godly, and I will always remember him with deep gratitude.

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

I teach Bible, Hermeneutics, Homiletics, Christian Spirituality, Pastoral Ministry and Leadership.

How did you come to be serving in your current position?

As a young pastor in the early 1990s, I sought to refine my preaching through Denver Seminary’s *Expositape* ministry, where I first connected with Dr. Haddon Robinson. He strongly encouraged me to enroll in the DMin preaching program at Denver Seminary, but at the time, I couldn’t commit due to my pastoral responsibilities in Singapore.

In 1992, after learning about my acquaintance with Dr. Robinson, the president of the Baptist Theological Seminary (BTS) in Singapore invited him to teach Advanced Expository Preaching to pastors and leaders in Singapore and Malaysia. At that time, Dr. Robinson was serving at Gordon-Conwell.

Our paths crossed again in 1998 when I was a student at Dallas Seminary. Once more, he encouraged me to pursue the DMin Preaching track. By 1999, I began my formal

seminary teaching at Singapore Bible College, where I served for six years—two and a half of those years as Academic Dean in the School of Theology (English). I received my DMin from Gordon-Conwell in 2002.

After completing my teaching contract in 2005, I returned to the U.S. for two years (2005–2007) to complete doctoral coursework at Biola University, focusing on Christian Higher Education Administration and Nonprofit Leadership. Upon returning to Singapore in 2007, I began part-time teaching at BTS, where I have now served for 18 years.

While teaching, I also pastored Covenant Community Baptist Church from 2007 to 2019. Then, in 2020, I was invited by the BTS president to assume my current role as Dean of Academic Studies and Senior Lecturer on a full-time basis.

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

I see myself as both a teacher and a pastor. My students come from diverse backgrounds—Southeast Asia, East Asia, South Asia, and Singapore—which makes my role deeply enriching and rewarding. Teaching is hard work, requiring thoughtful planning and preparation for every 14-week semester, but seeing students learn and grow makes it all worthwhile.

As Dean, I also have the privilege of stewarding God's gifts of leadership and administration. Working alongside the president, faculty, and administrative staff, I help guide BTS in its mission.

As a relatively young seminary (founded 35 years ago), BTS faces stiff competition from well-established institutions in Singapore's tight theological education landscape. Balancing teaching and administration is a constant challenge—one I have stumbled through many times, yet I continue pressing forward.

Another delicate balance is maintaining family life and fulfilling weekend preaching commitments. These responsibilities, though demanding, are central to my calling as a seminary educator.

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

- Funding: Securing financial support for the seminary's operations and growth. The Baptist community in Singapore is small with its 36 churches.
- Student Enrolment: Attracting local and international students in a competitive theological education market.
- Aging Faculty: Preparing the next generation of seminary educators and leaders.

- Limited Facilitie: BTS operates as a non-housing campus, which presents logistical challenges.

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

One of the greatest personal impacts has been my training in homiletics. My Gordon-Conwell education has shaped not only how I preach but also how I teach others to communicate God's Word with clarity and faithfulness.

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

You can find me at my website.