Alumni
GORDON CONWELL

Alumni Spotlight: Jonathan Moo (MAOT & MANT ’04)

Current title: Bruner-Welch Endowed Chair in Theology and Professor of New Testament and Environmental Studies at Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington

Family: Wife: Stacey

Favorite professor: Dr. Sean McDonough

Favorite class: Book of Revelation

Favorite memory: Dr. Garth’s Rosell’s joyful laugh, and every time (and it was often) he said the word “wonderful”. It epitomized for me his generous, kind-hearted approach to life and faith and to teaching the messy history of the Christian church with empathy and love.

Group morning Bible studies in the kitchen dining room of the Retreat House hosted by then-Gordon-Conwell president Dr. Walt Kaiser and his wife Marge (since deceased), while breakfast baked in the oven. I remember the conviviality, the joy of opening Scripture together, and the twinkle in his eye when Walt disagreed with my exegesis (which I recall was often). Most of all I can still smell Marge’s breakfast casseroles.

Wading in the surf off Plum Island to catch striped bass and then on the way back to campus unexpectedly running into Dr. Roy Ciampa at a barbecue restaurant, where he and his wife Marcelle invited Stacey and me to share dinner with them. Such a delightful evening and emblematic of the warm hospitality and care of Gordon-Conwell professors.

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

New Testament; early Judaism; environmental ethics; and science and faith. Most of my writing and research has focused on the book of Revelation, Jewish apocalypticism, and a biblical theology of creation and creation care. My teaching has included courses in Greek and New Testament exegesis, general introductory Bible classes, theology and ecology, environmental ethics, and a regular study program in Greece (co-taught with my wife Stacey, an art historian).

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

I came to Gordon-Conwell directly after finishing a master’s degree in wildlife biology and had no idea what I would do with a seminary education. I just had lots of questions that I felt needed answering and was drawn to study Scripture and theology more deeply. While at Gordon-Conwell, my professors modelled an approach to life and faith and rigorous study that was so beautiful and compelling that I found myself wanting to

follow in their footsteps. From Gordon-Conwell I went to the University of Cambridge for my PhD, and I ended up being offered a post-doc at the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, where I got to bring together many disparate parts of my academic background and work alongside some of the world's leading scientists and theologians. After that, I came to Whitworth University, a liberal arts college where I continue to have the freedom to pursue my diverse academic interests while rooted in a traditional Department of Theology.

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

I love nearly everything I do as a professor of New Testament and environmental studies. I spend my days studying God's word and God's world. And I get to do that in an extraordinary community of colleagues and students at Whitworth who love, support, and challenge me. In addition to lots of time writing and researching and traveling for public lectures, I teach and mentor students who are passionate about Christian faith and who major in theology, study the languages, and pursue vocations in ministry. I also teach and mentor students who have never opened the Bible or heard the gospel before. Sometimes, they're all in the same classroom. It's a challenge, but it keeps me accountable as a teacher, and it's a joy to see the work God does in their lives as we encounter Christ in the midst of our academic study together.

I also seek to emulate my Gordon-Conwell mentors in getting to know my students as whole persons, sharing life with them, inviting them into our home, and spending time exploring the local forests and mountains together. Then, every other January I co-teach a study program in Greece with my wife Stacey, and alternate Januarys I teach Ecology and the Bible at a mountain camp in the snowy Cascade Mountains, leaving screens and other distractions behind, having class around a woodstove, and skiing and snowshoeing in the mountain wilderness. It's an incredibly blessed life.

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

The greatest challenges of being a faculty member in general are the endless demands on your time and the difficulty—for me at least—of sticking to what's most important and not getting stretched too thin. But then that's a challenge for nearly every profession I know of. It just takes a particular form as a professor, because on paper we have tremendous freedom and flexibility but in reality—if you're passionate about your writing and teaching and students and wider ministry and serving your home institution—you

can find yourself working absolutely ridiculous hours (and all for rather ridiculously low pay!). Then, of course, Christian higher education is facing significant challenges, with declining enrollments, sharp political and cultural divisions, rapid technological change, and increasingly vocal opposition to the liberal arts and the enterprise of higher education in general. This creates anxiety among colleagues and administrators and leads to all sorts of bad ideas about how to adapt and change to meet the current moment (and, more rarely, it prompts some good ideas too!). Lots of professors, not unreasonably, wonder how long we've got left to do what we love.

A more particular challenge in my own context is that Whitworth University aims to be a robustly Christian institution, rooted in the evangelical and Reformed traditions while embracing an ecumenical community of faculty and staff from the breadth of the Christian church and inviting students of all faiths and none into our Christian community. Here faculty and staff don't simply check boxes and sign a faith statement; they have to write one themselves. This means that faithful Christians from a wide range of the historic traditions of the church belong here and work together to serve our common institutional mission of preparing students to "love God, follow Christ, and serve humanity." This distinctive way of being a Christian university is one of my favorite things about working here. But it means that Whitworth as a whole doesn't fit neatly into the conservative or progressive camps that our society tries to sort us all into. This makes our life together beautiful but messy, and it can be a challenge to articulate who we are to those who have become accustomed to soundbites and narrow categorizations.

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

Initially, the exceptional academic and spiritual preparation that I received at Gordon-Conwell enabled me to get into the PhD program at the University of Cambridge, to thrive there, and to keep my moorings amidst all the ups and downs of doctoral study (which for me were mostly ups, if I'm honest; I loved my years in Cambridge).

Since moving into a faculty position, I have sought from the start to emulate the example of my Gordon-Conwell professors, which includes, I think, really, every single one of them whom I had the privilege to take courses with. They modeled faithfulness, creativity, and joy in their approach to Scripture, theology, history, ministry, and the Christian life. My interest in Jewish apocalypticism and the book of Revelation has also been shaped profoundly by Sean McDonough in particular, and it has been a gift to remain in contact with him over the years, as with Dr. Roy Ciampa and other GCTS professors whose care and concern for me didn't end when I graduated.

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

Books:

- *A Commentary on Revelation*. Story of God Bible Commentary. Zondervan, 2025.

- *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World* (Co-authored with Douglas J. Moo. Zondervan, 2018)
- *As Long as the Earth Endures: the Bible* (*Creation and the Environment*. Co-edited with Robin Routledge. Apollos, 2014)
- *Let Creation Rejoice: Biblical Hope and Ecological Crisis,* (Co-authored with Robert S. White. InterVarsity, 2014)
- *Creation, Nature and Hope in 4 Ezra*, (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 237. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011)

Recent Essays:

- 'When Good Christians Destroy the Earth: The Virtue of Limits and the Limits of Virtue'. Pages 64–74 in *Ecoflourishing and Character: Multidisciplinary Christian Perspectives*. Edited by Nathan Carson and Steven Bouma Prediger. Routledge, 2024
- 'Ecology, Economics, and Our Common Home, Part 1'. *Eventide Journal for Faith and Investing*, June, 2023
- 'Ecology, Economics, and Our Common Home, Part 2'. *Eventide Journal for Faith and Investing*, June, 2023