Alumni

GORDON CONWELL

Alumni Spotlight: Alvin Padilla (MDiv ’84)

Current title: Professor of New Testament

Family Wife: Catherine H. Padilla (MATS ’83); Children: Marta (MACO ’17), Benjamin, Lucas, Jacob, and José; five grandchildren

Favorite professor: Dr. Gordon Fee, Dr. Aida Spencer

Favorite class: Jewish World of the New Testament with Dr. Aida Spencer

Favorite memory: The community and Christian fellowship with fellow seminarians living in C-Level (our dorm floor) fostered a strong bond across denominational and cultural identities that have blessed me to this day. For the first time since I was 12 years old, I had three professors (Dr. Aida Spencer, Dr. Pablo Polishuk and Dr. Bob Pazmiño) that shared my ethnocultural identity.

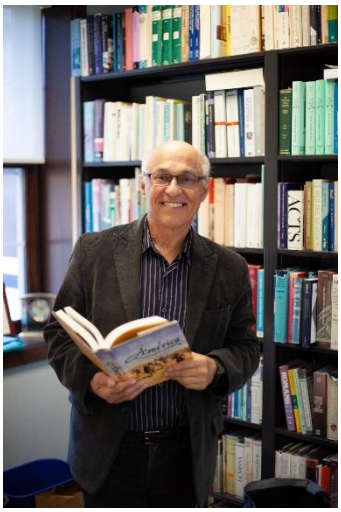
Please tell us about your area(s) of expertise and what courses you teach at Gordon-Conwell.

My PhD research focused on the New Testament and early Christian Literature (i.e. second century), and my dissertation was on 1 Clement. I have enjoyed research and teaching on the later NT documents (Hebrews, 1 Peter, and Revelation). I am thrilled that in the next academic year I will be teaching a course titled “Greek Readings in the Apostolic Fathers.” I look forward to exploring these early Christian documents with my students.

How did God weave together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you back to Gordon-Conwell as a faculty member?

Upon graduating, Cathy and I were called to help start a Bible college in upstate NY, the Spanish Eastern School of Theology, that continues to this day and soon will be an accredited college, so I was involved in theological education right out of seminary. I relied on my Gordon-Conwell mentors—Dr. Spencer, Dr. Eldin Villafañe, Dr. Pablo Polishuk, and others—for advice, guidance, and prayerful support. My Gordon-Conwell experience helped me understand my theological pedigree as reformed and pentecostal, so soon I was ordained and began pastoring a Spanish-

language Presbyterian church in Fort Washington, a neighborhood in New York City. I also served as professor of Christian Studies at Nyack College. While at Nyack, I guided many students to Gordon-Conwell, some of whom now teach at Gordon-Conwell as adjunct faculty! In 1995, then President Robert Cooley recruited me to serve as professor of NT and Dean of the Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME). And that is how I began here in 1981 and circled back in 1996.



What are some things you love about your role as a faculty member?

Interacting with students as we explore the rich content and transforming message of the New Testament. Teaching older students, most of whom are already serving the church in ordained ministry without any "formal" graduate theological education, has been the most rewarding aspect of my experience as a faculty member. Without the efforts of Gordon-Conwell, most of these students would never have had the blessed opportunity to engage in theological studies in an institution of higher education of the caliber of Gordon-Conwell. They are grateful for the doors opened to them, and I rejoice in how they have blessed me!

What's unique about teaching at Gordon-Conwell?

Most Christian churches, and theological schools, state that their beliefs and teaching arise from the biblical text, and we are no exception. However, our focus on the original authorial intent of the biblical authors seeks to ascertain as close as we can, given our distance in time and cultural contexts, the meaning of the text and then translate that message faithfully to our place and time of ministry—contextualizing the message for the women and men before us at this very moment.

How has teaching in a multidenominational setting shaped your own faith, ministry, or view of the Church as a whole?

From my days as a first-year student to the present, the multidenominational identity of Gordon-Conwell has been a formative factor in understanding that the Church is one, as affirmed at the Council of Nicaea 1700 years ago. We may differ in worship styles, theological framework, and even lifestyle issues that inform our views of the Christian life, yet I have learned to love and appreciate the love for God in Christ evident in these my sisters and brothers that make up our community of learning.

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

I have no recent publications, as my role over the last 15 years has been leaning heavily towards administration, but here are some of my major publications:

El Evangelio de Juan. Conozca su Biblia. Fortress Press, 2011.

El Evangelio de Lucas. Conozca su Biblia. Fortress Press, 2007.

Numerous articles in *The Westminster Dictionary of Theologians.* Edited by Justo L. Gonzalez. Westminster/John Knox Press, 2006.

Hispanic Christian Thought at the Dawn of the 21st Century. Apuntes in Honor of Justo L. Gonzalez. Edited by Eldin Villafañe, Roberto Goizueta and Alvin Padilla. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005. (Responsible for soliciting and editing articles, writing the introduction.)

Various articles in *Diccionario Ilustrado de Interpretes de la Fe. Veinte Siglos de Pensamiento Cristiano.* Edited by Justo L. Gonzalez. Barcelona, Spain: CLIE, 2004.

"Living in the Hyphen: Theological Literacy from an Hispanic-American Context," in *Theological Literacy for the 21st Century.* Edited by Rodney L. Petersen with Nancy M. Rourke. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.

Clemens Romanus, the Princepatus, and Episcopacy: Reassessing a First Century Date for the Letter of the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth. 1997.