Alumni

GORDON CONWELL

Alumni Spotlight: Donna Petter (MAOT & MABL ’97)

Title: Professor of Old Testament; Director of Hebrew Language Program

Family: Husband: Thomas Petter (MAOT & MAR ’97); Son: Marcus

Favorite professor: Dr. Gary Pratico

Favorite class: Theology of the Pentateuch

Favorite memory: The jaw dropping, awe inspiring devotions that my Hebrew professor gave at the beginning of each class! Also, working in the mailroom and getting to meet my fellow students when they came to the window.

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

I have written several works on the book of Ezekiel, which all started with my published doctoral dissertation. This transpired into writing study notes on Ezekiel in the *NIV Biblical Theological Study Bible*. Subsequent to this, I wrote an Ezekiel commentary for The Gospel Coalition (TGC). I am under contract with Eerdmans for a two-volume commentary on Ezekiel in the Pillar OT series. Along with Ezekiel, I have published work in Ezra. My passion project, however, pertains to a forthcoming monograph in New Studies in Biblical Theology entitled, *From the Calf to the Cross: A Biblical Theology of Exodus 34:6-7*. I regularly teach biblical Hebrew and exegesis in Exodus and the Prophets.

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

My intention was never to become a faculty member at Gordon-Conwell! I came as a student from Youth With A Mission School of Biblical Studies (YWAM SBS) to receive training as part of a sabbatical. I intended to return to the SBS when done with my studies. At Gordon-Conwell I forged a great relationship with one of my faculty mentors, Gary Pratico, who among other things encouraged me to consider doctoral work in Hebrew Bible. This changed my trajectory, and I ended up in a PhD program at the University of Toronto. I kept in touch with him throughout the years, and just as I was about to consider next steps, an unexpected OT faculty position opened

up. He encouraged me (along with my husband, also a Gordon-Conwell grad and PhD student at University of Toronto) to apply jointly for the position. The rest is history, as I have served since 2006 as a faculty member. God intricately wove together all these pieces in my life that brought me back to Gordon-Conwell.

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

I love that I am empowered to teach the Bible for a living! The fact that I get out of bed to teach Exodus or Hebrew makes my day. I treasure the students that God brings to each class. When the lights go on and students experience a revelation, it gives me a high, akin to a runner's high. I also value interaction with my colleagues. Their research and critical thinking sharpen and challenge me at the same time.

What's unique about teaching at Gordon-Conwell?

Although not a church, we have a unique opportunity in the context of the classroom to minister one to another. I love that I can start classes with prayer and/or a devotional, and that discipleship features as an important component at the school.

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

Before coming to Gordon-Conwell, I worked in a parachurch organization (YWAM) for eight years as co-director of the School of Biblical Studies, along with my husband. Due to YWAM's multi-cultural and multi-denominational context, it caused my view of the Church to expand. A narrow-mindedness was replaced with an open-minded approach which prepared me well for the setting of Gordon-Conwell. Teaching at the seminary felt like a natural extension of my prior ministry experience.

How has your own Gordon-Conwell education served you in your academic work, or impacted how you do your work?

I look at my Gordon-Conwell education as one of two critical building blocks that has impacted my writing and research. I needed a biblical-theological framework on which to hang my knowledge of the Bible. This part of my education at Gordon-Conwell shaped me in that I always try to connect the biblical-theological dots for my audience! My initial training in the languages served me supremely well when digging deeper into the languages at the doctoral level. I cannot imagine writing, teaching, or preaching without the nuances of the original language nor the biblical-theological framework I received in my own education at Gordon-Conwell.

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

Ezra-Nehemiah Video Lecture Series. Zondervan (2023).

"Ezekiel" in *The Gospel Coalition Bible Commentary* (2023).

Making Sense of Ezekiel: Interview with Dr. Donna Petter, 2024**.**

"Worship in Ezra," in Benjamin K. Forrest, Walter C. Kaiser and Vernon M. Whaley. *Biblical Worship: Theology unto the Glory of God.* Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel. 2021.

Ezra-Nehemiah (New International Version Application Commentary)*:* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020. [Thomas Petter, co-author]. *Voted in the top five Zondervan commentaries released from Logos Bible Software, 2021*.

"Ezekiel" in *A Time for Sorrow: Lamentation in the Life of the Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019.

"Ezekiel" Commentary in the *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*. D. A. Carson General Editor. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.

"Ruth" in the *Baker Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Gary Burge and Andrew Hill, eds. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2012.

The Book of Ezekiel and Mesopotamian City Laments. (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis) Bd. 246. Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011.

"High Places" in *Dictionary of Old Testament: Historical Books*. H.G.M. Williamson and B.T. Arnold, eds. Downers Grove: IVP, 2004.

"Foregrounding of the Designation ʾēšet ʾûriyyâ haḥittî in II Samuel XI-XII" *Vetus Testamentum* (54) 2004: 403-406.