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Office of University
Communications

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Will Raybon '19 Values Opportunity for In-depth Study



Will Raybon, right, serves communion to students at Cooperative Baptist Fellowship North Carolina's College Mid-Winter Retreat.

Will Raybon, a student in the School of Divinity at Gardner-Webb University, serves with the Baptist Student Fellowship at the University of North Carolina at Asheville (UNCA). As he connects with and ministers to students on the campus, he appreciates the relevance of his GWU studies.

“I am responsible for the students’ exploration of the Bible every time we meet,” Raybon ’19 affirmed. “When one of them is facing a hardship or experiencing overwhelming anxiety, I provide pastoral care. Every spring break and throughout the semester, I help plan mission trips. Above all, I feel that I am able to help them grow in their spiritual formation.”

Raybon has a criminal justice degree from Appalachian State University, but two internship experiences caused him to question his career plans. Before graduating, he had interned with a law enforcement agency. Then, he took an intern position with a church and weighed his options. “I went through a discernment process that taught me I would much rather take youth to camp than people to prison,” he reflected. “I enjoy encouraging people to read the Bible with open minds and to allow themselves to encounter the living word, not an aged dogma.”



Will Raybon, center front, poses with college students during a mission trip.

He changed his career goal to become a youth minister and immediately started looking for a divinity program. Some close friends recommended Gardner-Webb, and he checked out the school. “It was close to the mountains of Western North Carolina, which have been home to me for 21 years,” Raybon related. “My friends loved their experience there. Above all, it just felt right to me.”

He appreciates the knowledge of his professors and the opportunity for in-depth learning. “Submerging myself into the study of theology and ministry 24/7 has changed how I see

what's around me," he assessed. "Everything I see and every interaction I have draws me into a conversation with myself about its relation to the Bible, God, and the world."

If you are interested in learning more about the School of Divinity, click here, or you can apply now.