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### GWU School of Divinity Prepared Alumna for Vocational Ministry

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# GWU School of Divinity Prepared Alumna for Vocational Ministry

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Office of University  
Communications

December 4, 2017

*Rebecca Horner Shenton, a 2000 alumna, Teaches Christian Ethics at Alma Mater*

Sensing that God was writing a new chapter in her life and ministry,

Rebecca Horner Shenton, a 2000 alumna, enrolled in the School of Divinity at Gardner-Webb University.

She visited GWU once and knew it was

the place she was supposed to be. “I felt that God was calling me to prepare for ongoing vocational ministry, even though I wasn’t exactly certain what it would look like,” revealed Shenton, now an adjunct professor at GWU. “My return to teach in the School of Divinity is a strong endorsement of how much I believe in the program, its faculty, and its students.”

Doug and Rebecca H. Shenton wore traditional Afghan attire to the church where he is an associate pastor, First Baptist in Clinton, S.C.

Shenton earned her PhD in Christian ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. A resident of Clinton, S.C., she is also an adjunct for Southern Wesleyan University in Central, S.C., and teaches internationally. Her husband, Doug, is associate pastor for Discipleship and Outreach at First Baptist Church in Clinton.

She was introduced to Gardner-Webb in 1996 by Tammy Condrey, a fellow alumna from Mars Hill (N.C.) University. “Tammy had grown up in church and had been very involved in college ministry at Mars Hill,” Shenton explained. “She knew a lot about God. I was pretty new to the faith, having come to Christ at the end of my freshman year at Mars Hill. During her first semester at the GWU School of Divinity, Tammy told me, ‘I’ve learned more about God here than I did in my entire life up to now.’ That was a significant testimony.”

Shenton’s previous theological education was limited to a few classes in practical ministry and spiritual formation. “I had a naive view of the Bible when I came to Gardner-Webb. I assumed that the Bible just appeared ... rather like it had fallen gift-wrapped from heaven,” she confessed. “I learned very quickly that this assumption didn’t match the history of how the biblical texts came to be. The GWU faculty challenged me to look at the Scripture critically, but they were always gracious and generous with me as I learned to integrate new information with my faith in Christ. Gardner-Webb was a safe place to engage with scripture critically, and it challenged me to greater faith while providing me with the tools to understand scripture better.”

Some of her most memorable professors were Dr. Gerald Keown, Dr. Jack Partain and Dr. Don Cook. Keown introduced her to the Old Testament prophets and their critique of social injustice in their time. Partain's Missions and Evangelism classes opened her eyes to inequality in the world, particularly issues related to poverty. Cook instilled in her a love for the New Testament. "All three of these professors required academic excellence," Shenton assessed. "Studying for weekly Old Testament quizzes and for exams helped me to build community with my classmates."

Rebecca Shenton teaches a class at Gardner-Webb University.

Through the encouragement of her professors and the content they shared, Shenton eventually answered the question of where God was leading. "My courses in the School of Divinity, although I didn't realize it at the time, were awakening in me a passion for understanding—and eventually teaching—what it means practically to love our neighbors around the world," she observed. "That passion has led me to study and teach Christian ethics."