

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

4-28-2016

Gardner-Webb Helps Artist Find Answers to Questions about Faith

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

Gardner-Webb Helps Artist Find Answers to Questions about Faith

 webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gardner-webb-helps-artist-find-answers-to-questions-about-faith/

Office of University
Communications

April 28, 2016

Charlie Baber ('03) Serves in Ministry, Draws Comic that Explains Theology

A free application lured Charlie Baber ('03) from his home in Cartersville, Va., to come and check out Gardner-Webb University.

A visit to campus confirmed it was the right place for him. "I was pursuing a call into ministry and believed the religious studies program at Gardner-Webb would prepare me well," he reflected. "I would have double-majored in art, but it was still only a minor back in the day, so I gave the art program all the extra time I had to give."

His studies were challenging, he was blessed to serve in campus ministries, and he made lifelong friends, including meeting and marrying the love of his life, Lori Turpin. After serving seven years as youth pastor of Highland United Methodist Church in Raleigh, he is stepping into the role of associate pastor of discipleship.

"I am hoping to be part of a community of people transforming our corner of Raleigh into a place where Christ's love is found as the poor and the wealthy, the citizen and the refugee, all find refuge at the foot of the cross," Baber affirmed.

His artistic talents help him explain Methodist history and theology through a comic he created, Wesley Bros.com. "For a long time, I had the idea of putting historical church figures into today's world, and since John and Charles Wesley, founders of Methodism, were the ones I knew best, WesleyBros.com was born," Baber explained. "Over 160 comics in, the concept has expanded to include many different historical figures, and the comic is a way for me to teach the faith as well as offer editorial commentary on bad patterns I see in the church."

He also discovered that drawing comics is his way of dealing with life. "I drew monthly comics for the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch as a teenager, and then regularly for the Gardner-Webb newspaper," Baber related. "Once I began my ministry, I regret to say that my art fell to the wayside. After graduating from the Master of Divinity program at Duke University (Durham, N.C.), I got cold feet. I was not sure I wanted to commit my life, like a marriage, to the church in ordination. My spiritual director discerned that I had lost

something I was passionate about in pursuit of ordination. I realized that creating comics had been a key way I processed life for years, and that I needed to pick it back up as a spiritual discipline.”

His years at Gardner-Webb helped him solidify his faith and develop his teaching style. “My soul was formed through the combination of the religious studies and honors programs, combined with a deep involvement in Campus Ministries,” Baber reflected. “I found myself searching harder and deeper for faith answers.”

He continued, “If I learned anything at Gardner-Webb, it was to be Socratic in my own teaching. The religion and art professors never handed over the answers easily. They always made me dig and seek out solutions. This prepared me both in my career and in pursuing a master’s degree to be a person in pursuit of knowledge, to be proactive in my own education, and to instill a thirst for knowledge in the people of my congregation.”

Baber’s advice to students attending Gardner-Webb—or considering GWU—is to get involved in leadership at the school and in the community. “I stayed in Shelby (N.C.) for several years after I graduated from Gardner-Webb, because it is an incredible town with fantastic opportunities for art, ministry, and business,” Baber offered. “Don’t wait until you’ve got a master’s degree to go out and work in the real world! A strength of Gardner-Webb is that the professors know the students. Spend time getting to know your professors. Take them out to dinner. Learn about their passions and why they teach. Begin your adult network by demonstrating to these professors that you mean business and that you are serious about your future and the future of the community.”

[Click here to go to the Wesley Bros comic homepage.](#)