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Office of University
Communications

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Caroline Nethery ('14) Serving as Intern for International Justice Mission in England

A Gardner-Webb alumna is taking her passion for social justice to a whole new level after being appointed as the Student and Volunteer Relations Intern for International Justice Mission's (IJM) United Kingdom partner office in Witham, England. The global organization works to protect the poor from violence in the developing world.

In 2014, Caroline Nethery of Boiling Springs, S.C., graduated from Gardner-Webb with a bachelor's degree in psychology. One of her most important achievements during her undergraduate years was born out of her desire to make a difference in the world around her, particularly for those who are mistreated and enslaved.

"I was blessed to grow up in a family who loves me and loves the Lord. We've been fine financially," Nethery shared. "I just think if I had been born in any other situation, it could just as easily be me as anyone else who is enslaved. I had no choice in where I was born and they had no choice in where they were born. If the roles had been switched, I would want someone to fight for me. They need people to come from the outside and fight for them. That's one of the biggest motivations for me."

She and fellow students established the human trafficking awareness club, *Release*, at Gardner-Webb. She helped coordinate events for Human Trafficking Awareness week, including a concert by "American Idol" finalist Majesty Rose to benefit Justice Ministries, a nonprofit organization based in Charlotte, N.C., that works to remove people from human trafficking situations. Ultimately, it was Nethery's involvement in *Release* that led to her new role with IJM in the U.K.

"I'm really grateful for my time with *Release* at Gardner-Webb, because it was such a great way to gain experience in raising awareness about social justice issues," Nethery explained. "My professors helped equip me with resources and information when I was starting *Release* and gave me confidence to move forward with any goals I had. The faculty and staff at Gardner-Webb are so incredible and they really want students to succeed, both in and out of the classroom. My professors instilled a love of learning in me and helped me cultivate that throughout my time at Gardner-Webb."

Her professors also taught psychology from a Christian perspective, and this was one of the reasons she chose to attend Gardner-Webb. “When you’re doing something like counseling or even just understanding the way a person thinks, you’re working with both the mind and the spiritual well-being,” she observed. “I wanted to learn from professors who understood that and shared the same values as me.”

Nethery trained for her new role at the IJM headquarters in Washington, D.C., before travelling to England. She firmly believes her experiences at Gardner-Webb have offered her a firm foundation for success in her new position.

“I have a ton to learn in this area, but my involvement with *Release* taught me so much about what works and what doesn’t work when it comes to leading anti-trafficking groups,” she related. “The classes I had really helped me to be more open-minded and able to see things from different perspectives.”

Some of her most formative GWU courses were Positive Psychology, Psychology of Women, and the higher-level Bible classes. “These were the types of classes that provided room for reflection and for all of the students to come to their own viewpoint on the subjects,” she assessed. “The professors did a great job of opening up discussion, guiding us to our own perspectives, and providing new information to think through and apply to our lives.”