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Communications

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Potter Dave Byers '99 Demonstrates How God Restores Broken Vessels

On a highly traveled street in Cologne, Germany, one storefront draws attention. Through the window, people watch as Gardner-Webb University alumnus Dave Byers ('99) works at his potter's wheel.

Byers creates pottery and recycles it when necessary. "I have opportunities to share hope through the process of making clay pots, as well as what happens to them when they break or fail to meet expectations," he related. "Most people will want to just throw it away, because it is junk, but the process of recycling clay—of taking the hardened clay pot, breaking it down and making a new one—makes it easier to describe to people why I believe in a God who created me while I'm creating something."



He also draws people into his shop by writing clever sayings on a chalkboard. "Germans have an innate curiosity," Byers shared. "That curiosity led more people to come in and talk. I focus on building relationships with people and through that, I share kingdom ideas and God's word."

Byers and his family have lived in Germany for 11 years. In partnership with Greater Europe Mission, they work with a church and youth ministry. His pottery studio has flourished, and his wife has focused her talents to minister to victims of human trafficking through the International Justice Mission and the A21 Campaign.

Byers' journey to Cologne was the result of a series of opportunities, including his decision to attend Gardner-Webb and major in communication studies with a photography concentration and minor in art. "Everything I learned through the communication courses has helped me—from public speaking, designing print materials and ceramics," he reflected. "I make a living creating art, preaching, communicating and telling stories."

His professors taught him the skills he needed, but more importantly, they gave him confidence. “Professors like Ms. (Susan) Bell and Bob Carey, and others on campus seemed to be glad I was here,” Byers observed. “They made me feel welcomed and they saw a gift in me.”

He also discovered his talent and passion for making pottery at Gardner-Webb. “Once I took my first ceramics class, I knew whatever I did for the rest of my life, this would be a part of it,” Byers described.

Additionally, Byers is thankful for the friends he made at Gardner-Webb, who encouraged him to make better choices. “They were the ones who pulled me out of where I was headed in the wrong direction for my life,” he revealed. “We are still close and they are supporters of our ministry.”

For more information about Byers’ ministry, visit cafebyers.com.

If you are interested in learning more about the programs offered by the GWU Department of Visual Arts, [click here](#).