Reflections on Ghana
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I remember the moment I suddenly felt at home in Ghana. It was nothing spectacular; it was just a brief moment about two weeks after arrival. It was a thought in my head and a feeling in my heart that this was home, for now. This thought came to me as I walked along the outer edges of the courtyard that our dorm surrounded.

In the weeks and months after that moment, there were many more moments that reminded me of why I was there and why this felt like home. There were many more moments in which I experienced God’s grace, and in which I simply experienced God in Ghana.

The laughter of my Ghanaian roommate is still ringing in my ears; she had such a joyful spirit, and had such a knack for describing and explaining everything I wanted to know about Ghanaian culture. I consider my roommate one of the biggest blessings of my time there. And then there is Anita, the cleaning lady on my floor. I don’t remember how we became friends but I remember that day early on when I asked her where to find a mop, and instead she just came in and cleaned my entire room. From then on we had many conversations, many smiles as we passed in the hallway, and she even invited me over to her one-room home where she taught me how to dye batik fabric and cook jollof rice, a traditional tomato-based rice dish.

There were tough times too; there were bouts of homesickness which God got us through. We pulled together in our Calvin community but we also reached out to the community around us, remembering that this is home, for now. There were frustrating times as we sometimes went for three or four days without running water in our dorm, but God was there, reminding us that there are ways to get through life without running water, that it isn’t all that big of a deal, and now back in North America, when we turn on a tap and drinkable water comes rushing out, we remember.

We really had to make ourselves at home in Ghana; in a culture so different from your own, that’s the only way to make it work. Just do it. Go to the market and buy food you’ve never tried before, talk with your roommate and their friends who’ve never met a white person before, wave down a taxi and bargain for what you guess is a good price, and hop on a tro-tro going to the complete wrong city and just laugh at your mistake when you get there. Throughout our four months, we slowly figured out that if we were going to seize the day and make the most of every opportunity, those are exactly the things we’d have to do. And pray. We asked God to open our eyes and our hearts, to make us strong, to stretch us wide, to show us the beauty of his world, his people, and his church in Ghana, and our prayers were answered well beyond our imagination.