

# TAMALE GHANA

June 20 - July 20, 2023



The purpose of this newsletter is two-fold. First, to communicate a sliver of the emotions and thoughts that I experienced with you. Secondly, I hope that in years to come this will serve as a reminder to myself of my time in Ghana and keep alive or, God forbid it necessary, rekindle the inspiration that I felt during my time there.

Above: Students from New Life College

Too long? TL;DR on Page 16

## UNCERTAIN BEGINNINGS

Before I share about my trip, allow me to recount how I ended up going to Ghana. In February 2023, I was at a church retreat when the story of Helen Roseveare was shared. A medical missionary from England, Roseveare served 20 years with Worldwide Evangelism Crusades (WEC) in what today is known as the Democratic Republic of Congo. She faced many trials during her ministry, but most notably, she was imprisoned, brutally beaten, and raped during a civil war in 1964.

Her response was remarkable. Of course, she was upset and humiliated, but in the midst of her pain, there was a profound sense of privilege that God would choose her to be a missionary and certainty that,

despite her suffering, he dearly loved her. As my friend Hymn likes to say: "Wild."

*"The privilege He offers you is greater than the price you have to pay. **The privilege is greater than the price.**"*

- Helen Roseveare

Hearing this sent shivers down my spine. Not just because Rosenveare's story was indeed wild but because it reawakened a sense of urgency to go into missions myself. I purposely use the word *urgency* rather than *desire* because it was with a reluctant acknowledgment that I felt God telling me to go back to missions (I was with YWAM from 2016-2017).

Fast forward a few months, I was in the car with Hymn when he brought up a missions trip to Ghana that he was going on. Not knowing about my own convictions, he casually asked me to join. Now Hymn is gregarious and will invite anyone to do anything, so he probably didn't expect me to accept his invitation. Well, I'm sure to his surprise, I did.

Don't get me wrong, I didn't immediately accept. In fact, there were a few months of feet dragging before I bought the tickets and applied for a visa. I got caught up with my thesis work and applying for jobs, but eventually, and with reassurance from God through prayer and advice from trusted, wiser Christians, I bought my flights.

Another reason I wasn't sure about this trip was the lack of clarity concerning the de-



tails of who I would be working with and what I would be doing. It was the kind of a situation where a friend's friend has a cousin who knows a guy. In my case, Hymn's parents knew a pastor from Hong Kong who served as a missionary in Ghana for 30 years and had set up a college directed by someone named Christian.

With my degrees of separation from Chris-

tian a little closer to Bacon's Law than I would have liked, I looked into the college's website only to be hit by an alarming amount of 404 Page Not Found's and Content Coming Soon's. It had been vaguely proposed to me by Christian that I would teach programming in the Computer Science department, but on the website, there was absolutely no information about the department! Oh man, what was I getting myself into?

It was with the exact same sentiment that I began my time in Ghana. With still no idea of what I would actually be doing, I arrived in Tamale, a Muslim-majority city in the north, where I was picked up by Pastor Siu and Hymn. After 30 hours of travel, I was ready to go straight to bed, but as I quickly learned, Pastor Siu is not one to turn down a day of hard work. Despite being in his 70s, he is more active than I have been in years and spends 6 days a week working from 8-6pm, often doing backbreaking construction work in the hot Ghanian sun.

**What follows is a random assortment of descriptions of people and memories. They're in no particular order, but all of them struck me and were impactful in someway or another.**

Left: Hymn and I at the church retreat in February 2023

So, with tired eyes, I dropped off my bags at his home and drove off to the college. And thus my time in Ghana began.

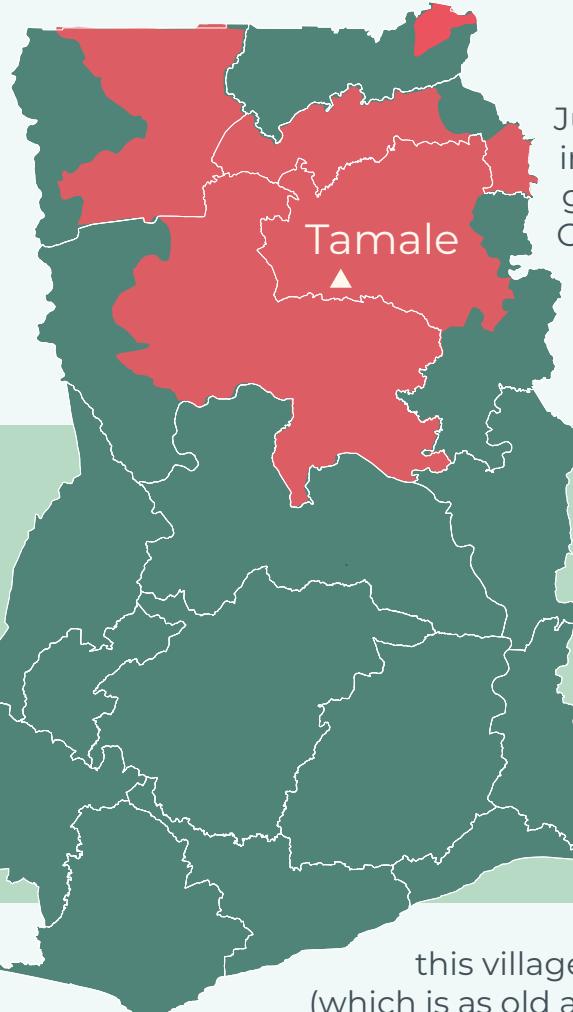
## PASTOR SIU

A man of few words, Joshua, or Pastor Siu, speaks in great depth. A product of rice Christianity in Hong Kong, Joshua became Christian early in childhood. A hard worker, he received promotion after promotion in industry, but more important to him were the opportunities his position afford-

ed him to bring coworkers and subordinates to Christ. He told me that he brought many more people to Christ through his work in Hong Kong than in Ghana, which means he must have been a prolific evangelizer in Hong Kong!

**This map shows the majority religions in Ghana by region. People say the south is for christians and the north is for muslims. In reality, you find a mix of both anywhere you go.**

Note how almost everyone believes in something



Joshua has a pastoral heart, and his patience with everyone amazed me, from the congregation he served to the occasional rude Ghanian confronting him in a Kung Fu stance. For example, at the church he serves, there was an issue with one of the leaders not fulfilling the responsibilities assigned to him and causing a lot of tension between members. Pastor Siu holds tremendous respect in this church, and his words carry weight. Plus, he is technically an outsider, giving him the liberty to speak freely. When I asked him why he wasn't visibly upset with the man despite clearly not agreeing with his actions, he smiled and explained that getting angry would not solve anything and would worsen the situation by offending the man. The man was a good Christian and genuinely wanted to help those around him. He just had been focusing on matters that were not assigned to him, making him neglect other duties. Instead, Joshua diplomatically set up a meeting with church leadership to explain the situation and advocate on behalf of those affected by the man's actions.

Just like Joshua saw good in the man, he also saw good in all situations. One time we were going to a remote village about an hour and a half from Tamale. Joshua frequently goes to



this village in his old pickup truck (which is as old as I am!), but this Sunday, we took a bus with a group of students from Hong Kong. Using the bus forced us to take a different, unfamiliar route, and along the way, we stopped several times to ask people for directions. Everyone we asked told us just to keep going the way we were going — every single person was wrong. What should have taken 1.5 hours became a 3-hour trip as we backtracked along a bumpy dirt road on a bus with no AC. By the time we arrived at the village, I wished we had never come. After worship, Joshua was called up to give a sermon.

*"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it"*

- Matthew 7:13-14

I'm not sure if he knew he was preaching that day or if he had to make up something on the spot but he was able to turn our trip

to the village into a message. He shared how often in life we get advice from people that makes us stray off the right path and how only Jesus can keep us from drifting. As Joshua shared from Matthew 7, the road to destruction is broad, and many people enter through it. We must ensure we enter through the narrow gate and can only do so by seeking advice from Christ. Joshua had used our unfortunate excursion to share our need for Jesus!

### CATERINA

They say behind every great man is a great woman. Caterina, or si mo (Cantonese for “pastor’s wife”), is no exception. With a fiery personality and a flair for the dramatic, she makes an exceptional and hilarious storyteller. On many occasions, I would sit at our dinner table and listen to her speak for hours as she told stories of her time in Ghana and her upbringing in Hong Kong. Raised in a non-believing household, it was with opposition and beatings from her family that she attended church. Once she started working, she would spend

her superiors for her diligence and excellence but also with the lowest factory workers for her courage and willingness to advocate for them. She told me that she once found out the workers at a third-party manufacturing plant had yet to be paid because one of her superiors hadn’t signed a check. She promptly marched into her director’s office and demanded he immediately sign the check to the manufacturer so the workers could receive their money. The man quickly apologized as he fumbled around, looking for the check on his desk. Due to similar occurrences, Caterina would always receive gifts from the workers of all the different manufacturers her employer did business with. She did not want to make her coworkers jealous, so she always set up a white elephant event at work to share the gifts with everyone.



JOSHUA

CHRISTIAN

CATERINA

her weekday evenings accompanying her pastor on home visits and serving the elderly. Quickwitted, sharp, and unafraid to do what is right, she became an invaluable employee who gained favor not only with

enough money to pay for the first year when she decided to go to bible college. Despite this, she went to her boss (the same one she insisted pay the other workers) and informed him of her decision. Des-

In another story, she shared how she didn't have

perate to keep her, he asked her to reconsider. She refused, saying God had called her to go, and her mind was set despite not knowing how she would pay for it. A few days later, she received all the money she needed from the director, wishing her good luck and asking her to return if she failed her first year. When he called her a year later, he was disappointed to find out that she had — of course — passed.

I learned a lot from Caterina, but one thing stood out the most. While driving around town and running errands, I shared with her about my experience working on the website with Hymn. We both had ideas that would likely turn out well, but I was having trouble giving up control, resulting in friction between us. I was fluctuating from being critical of his ideas to despondently agreeing to anything he suggested. This turned into frustration with myself as I wanted to change but didn't know how.

When I told her this, she shared with me how when she first married Joshua, she would get irritated by his snoring at night. When she told him this, he responded, "What can I do? That's who I am!" She realized that the issue wasn't that Joshua snored; instead, it was that she allowed herself to get annoyed by it. She said that the problem wasn't Joshua's but hers, and as soon as she realized it, she could not only stop feeling irritated but admire how deeply and soundly Joshua slept (Caterina, on the other hand, has only slept for around 4 hours each night her entire life.) Hymn and I don't see everything eye-to-eye, but if I let myself be bothered by things I disagree with, it's not Hymn's problem. It's mine!

Don't worry, Hymn and I have talked all of

this through and reconciled :P

### CHRISTIAN

In name, Christian is the vice principal of New Life College, but in practice, he is the commander in chief. He's an extremely hard worker with a generous heart. Most days, when I came into the office, he was already on his third cup of coffee and would likely have several more before the day

ended. Christian also worked six days a week from 7 am - 7 pm in addition to running a consulting business and, most importantly, having a family. As he always told me while he paced around his office, he had a lot of "pressure." And despite this, he always remained calm and composed as he navigated all the different personalities and problems that came to him daily.

Christian was also incredibly generous. Within a few days of working at new life college, I started to pack only half of my lunch because I could count on Christian to offer me something to try every day. Fried cassava and plantains quickly became my second lunch, thanks to him. As a side note, Ghanaians are some of the most hospitable people on earth. Rarely have I seen generosity, warmth, and kindness like theirs. As I heard many of them say, "Ghana welcomes everyone."

Christians also has a deep love for the students. As a graduate of the first cohort of New Life College, Christian knows about the literal lifechanging opportunity students have here and does everything possible to help them succeed academically, professionally and spiritually. It's this love for the students that fuel his long days. And despite his dry humor and serious demeanor, the students know that Christian has their back and respect him greatly.

### A \*TYPICAL\* WEEKDAY

<b>7:15 - 8:00</b>	Breakfast
<b>8:00 - 9:30</b>	Get Ready/Devos
<b>9:30 - 12:00</b>	Work on Website
<b>12:00 - 12:30</b>	Lunch
<b>12:30 - 15:00</b>	Prepare for class
<b>15:00 - 18:00</b>	Teach
<b>18:00 - 21:00</b>	Dinner/Chatting
<b>21:00 - 22:30</b>	Website/Prepare Class



1



2



3



4



5

1- My first day in Tamale. The price of cereal and peanut butter is around \$20, so the Sius asked me to bring some with me. We finished all of it in a month!

2- On my second or third day, we went to the remote village I spoke of earlier to build a school. We ended up getting a flat tire along the way.

3 - Sharing my testimony with the students during a morning character development session.

4 - Construction at the school site in the remote village. Hymn would return several more times, but because I taught every day, I was only able to go this one time

5 - A photo of Christian, Hymn, Pastor Siu, Caterina, and I in Accra at the end of the trip



1



2



3



4

1- A picture of the remote village. It's called Torope, by the way. You can see the traditional mud huts and thatched roofs. In these villages, finding a group of 4-5 huts with walls connecting them is common. This compound has a male land-owner with several wives, each of whom gets their own hut.

2- The church in the remote village. This was during worship, which is very lively. It often involves a train of people going to the front and dancing. At a different church we went to, it was very cool to see everyone sing in different languages.

3- A woman in Torope making a traditional Ghanaian dish, most likely Banku. It's incredible to see how hard the women work in these villages, and honestly everywhere in Ghana. A lot of the time they worked harder than the men.

4 - Hymn trying to sleep on the bus on our way back from Torope.



Teaching for-loops during our last week

## TEACHING

I enjoyed TAing at Cornell and was looking forward to teaching Python. There were some concerns, though. For one, I had yet to learn what students did or did not know. Secondly, the WiFi at the school did not work at all. Consequently, the first week of teaching was rough as we tried to understand students' abilities and learned to work around limited resources.

Overall I would describe teaching as very humbling. There was a sense of uneasiness about whether I had been able to convey material to the students effectively. This was exacerbated by a vast knowledge disparity where some students needed help to type or do basic arithmetic while others already had a firm grasp of the basics of programming. Catering to all the different levels of ability was quite stressful. As Hymn can attest, on my first day of teaching, I was sweating so much that my shirt was two shades of green!

Ultimately, we could only get through half the material I initially hoped we would. Despite this, there was peace knowing that, at the very least, this course exposed the students to Python, and at the very best, some of them had truly learned how to use the language. I was excited to see a group of high-achieving students come to me after a lecture one day and show me a script they had written that would ask users for a website and open it in a browser. While not

particularly difficult to do, I had not shown them how to do it. They had taken what I taught them and expounded upon it. What a wonderful feeling!

## THE HONG KONGERS

When I first spoke to Christian over WhatsApp, he encouraged me to share the gospel with the students openly. While I did have the opportunity to share my testimony during a morning character development session, there wasn't much time to casually chat with students as I spent my entire day at a New Life College working on the website in Christian's office or teaching in the computer lab. However, back at home, there was ample time to get to know and witness to a group of Hong Kongers who had come to visit and volunteer.

During the two weeks they were in Tamale, the Hong Kongers would come over for dinner and listen to Pastor Siu share about God, his and Caterina's time in Ghana, and various aspects of the culture. During dinner, I could chat with the Hong Kongers with Hymn and learn more about their lives and backgrounds. One night our conversations revolved around happiness, and I asked the question to all the Hong Kongers, "Are you happy?" It was very saddening to hear that all of them, except for one, said that no, they were not happy and that they felt they had no hope. They told me about how people dread going to work and how people try to show off their luxurious, com-



The Hong Konger men on their last day (girls not pictured here)

fortable lives on social media, but everyone secretly knows everyone, including themselves, is deeply unhappy.

A few nights later, we went up onto a building that was in mid-construction next to our house. Under the moonlight, with hundreds of bats flying overhead, Pastor Siu asked each Hong Konger to share about their lives. The first to share talked about how they had been arrested for protesting in Hong Kong, and now their career as a medical doctor was uncertain as the government may not allow them to practice. The next talked about how their father openly cheated on his wife and continues to do so today. What followed from all the Hong Kongers, with again the exception of one, were brutally honest stories of broken families, mothers telling their children to die, unloving fathers, an oppressive government, and hurt people.

How saddening it was to hear such heart-wrenching stories. It was with these people that Hymn and I were able to share how Christ had transformed our lives and how we have a hope greater than anything of this world in Him.

If you're one of the Hong Kongers reading this, I apologize if what I recounted doesn't fully capture the complexity of what you shared and your exact feelings. I know what I wrote was brief and reductionist. However,

please know that you are all in mine, Hymn, Joshua, and Caterina's prayers. God loves you all as you are, and He is a perfect, loving father who brings everlasting peace and joy to a world filled with things that only give temporary happiness. If any of you want to talk more about this, all four of us will be more than happy to chat. See you in HK :)

## NEW LIFE COLLEGE

As I said, when I first looked into New Life College, there was nearly no information on the institution. If you're curious, here's a link to the [old site](#) to check yourself. Christian wanted Hymn and I to create a new website with all the missing information filled in. This was much harder than I thought -- for the same reason that the old site needed to be remade; it was hard to find information! Much of what we did was press Christian and others for details concerning New Life so that we could put the content on the website. But by being forced to go through this process, we learned much about the institution and how God was using it to change lives. One of the best things at the college was the character development sessions every morning from 9:30 - 10:30. During this time, the students would be taught values, unashamedly picked from the Bible, and exhorted to practice them in their lives. How awesome is that? That would never occur at Cornell.

**"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."**

- Proverbs 1:7

We heard so many testimonies from students that these character development sessions helped them stand out from other coworkers and how beneficial they were to their lives. And what was even cooler was seeing the students recognize that these sessions were being done because the staff cared about them. Testimonials about New Life also showed how true the institution was to its name. I heard several stories about how New Life had changed students' lives and had given those who had performed poorly on standardized tests or couldn't afford prestigious universities new beginnings. Most encouraging were the stories of past students who were paying it forward by teaching at New Life or going to remote villages to bring education to those with the least access.

Here's a link to the [new site](#) where you can read more about the college.

## **WALKING IN FAITH**

It amazed me how Joshua and Caterina gave up everything in their lives to follow

Christ's calling into missions. They had stable jobs and families in Hong Kong, yet they willingly left those behind to become missionaries 35 years ago. Joshua and Caterina don't and never have had a steady income, yet they never asked for money, instead choosing to rely on God for all their needs. They shared stories with me of strangers in foreign countries walking up to them and giving them money, saying God told them to. Despite not saving any money for retirement, they shared that God provided them with a small apartment in Hong Kong to use now that they are retired missionaries (they still go to Ghana for a couple of months each year). If you know about the Hong Kong housing crisis, you will understand how miraculous that is. On my second day in Ghana, Joshua's pickup truck busted a tire, and we had to use our spare. Some might be hesitant to drive the truck until another spare was obtained, but as Joshua always said, "We go by faith!" Every morning he would pray the car would not break down and happily go on his way. The car didn't break down again.

Our culture values success, money, power, influence, prestige, and self-reliance to obtain all those and more. But if we make those our priorities in life, than we are



Left: Verses from the bible are unashamedly painted on the school. This isn't that abnormal in Ghana, but you would seldom see this in the United States.



Right: To my surprise, a group of girls from the basic school next door came to drop off my lunch. Caterina had sent them with my favorite Ghanaian dish, Waakye. So cute!

bound to live lives of emptiness. None of these satisfy and at best, they offer temporary happiness. Observing Joshua and Caterina, who long ago cast those aside and chose to rely on God entirely, was refreshing and inspiring. And in this walk of extreme faith, life seemed so simple and purposeful.

### A QUIET LIFE

For hours on end, I was able to forget I even had a phone as our “family” talked after meals at the dinner table. My four shirts and two pants were more than enough for me and starkly contrasted the culture of the USA, which pushes for more, bigger, and better. Losing electricity meant a break from work and time spent chatting with others. In this straightforward life, the days flew by, and before I knew it, my month in Ghana was coming to a close. Looking back, my biggest regret was purchasing a data plan. While necessary to work on the website, it also meant that I returned to social media and my biggest vice, Google News, albeit less frequently than in the US.

I had mixed feelings about returning to the US during my last days in Ghana. If you know me well, you know that I’m a light sleeper, and due to the heat in Ghana, I rarely slept more than 4-5 hours a night. By the end of the month, I was ready to return to my bed in the US with AC (which ironically was way too cold for me despite sleeping under three blankets). On the other hand, I knew that returning to the US would slowly wipe away the vividness of the memories and feelings I experienced in Ghana. That is part of why I’m taking the time to write all of this now, so I don’t forget entirely.

And I already feel it now that I’m back in the US. Social media, Google News (ugh), and movies are like pacifiers for me. They numb me to the people and things around me and, worse, make it extremely easy not to spend time with God. Devotionals should not just consist of me reading the Bible; knowledge of the Bible is useless without

understanding. I need to spend time with God, contemplating his word and its meaning in my life. This sounds basic, I know, but it’s very easy to read some scripture in the morning (or not at all) and then spend the rest of the day distracting yourself with videos, podcasts, music, work, and everything else.

*“That you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands as we commanded you”*

- 1 Thessalonians 4:11

This verse has often been on my heart during the past year. Paul is encouraging a lifestyle that contradicts the modern addiction to entertainment. By doing so, we make room for God in our lives and fight laziness as we mind our own affairs and work diligently to fulfill the responsibilities God has placed in our lives.

### A DESIRE TO SERVE

During my final days in Ghana, I strongly desired to continue serving. The Siu’s walk of faith and their countless stories of God’s faithfulness and provision were profoundly moving and encouraging.

Toward the end, I spent much time contemplating missions and thinking about the cost of being a missionary. Giving up a stable job, a 401k, friends and family, hobbies, and more. But if that is Jesus’ desire in my life, then the cost, no matter how great, is much less than to disobey him.

*“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?”*

-Luke 14:27-28

As these thoughts swirled, I asked the Sius how they got into missions. During these conversations, the Sius revealed they had

spent their 30 years in Ghana working for Worldwide Evangelism for Christ, previously called Worldwide Evangelism Crusades (WEC). The same WEC that Helen Rosenveare had worked for! How funny that God would lead me to work with missionaries from the same organization as the missionary who prompted this trip!

And in this revelation was a reminder. Rosenveare had also counted the cost. And though following Christ had caused her pain, humiliation, and much more suffering, she couldn't help but feel all of that overshadowed by the privilege of serving him as a missionary.

I don't have to become a missionary to serve the Lord. There is plenty of work to be done here in the US or wherever I end up living, and I want to make it a point always to serve my local community. In short, you can be missional anywhere you go. But, I pray that should God call me to be a missionary, I readily accept and count it a privilege to be chosen.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

**- The Gospel:** I, unfortunately, encountered a lot of prosperity gospel in Ghana, just like in the US. It's easy to understand why people want to be blessed financially in a country that has recently been heavily impacted by inflation. Pray that people put their hope in God and pursue treasure in heaven rather than on earth.

**- New Life College:** NLC is trying to grow and needs a larger capable and dedicated staff. Pray that God raises leaders and that they can pursue academic excellence while fostering an environment that prioritizes faithful living above all else.

**- Joshua and Caterina Siu:** Pray for God's protection over the Sius and that they have many more years serving Ghana and witnessing to those around them through their radical way of life.

**- Hong Kongers:** If you're one of the Hong Kongers reading this thinking I'm a nut, know that I share this because I've experienced God's power and His transformative work in my own life. Life used to be empty, everything futile, and absolutely nothing satisfied me for more than a moment. That's because only God can eternally satisfy. Not people, not money, not work, not drugs, alcohol, or sex, nor anything else. I pray that you keep an open heart, and when the opportunity comes to know Christ you take a step of faith.

**- Evangelical Church of Ghana:** ECG was planted by WEC and is the church that runs New Life College. Recently there has been a focus across Ghana on recruiting members from other churches rather than evangelizing to those who don't know Jesus. Pray that member-stealing ends and the church focus on sharing the good news.

**- Sincere Faith:** We encountered many sincere Christians in Ghana. However, Pastor Siu shared that many people quickly return to their traditional beliefs if things don't go as they want. Pray that the churches in Ghana raise a body that is not lukewarm in their faith and can patiently and faithfully endure the suffering that following Christ entails.

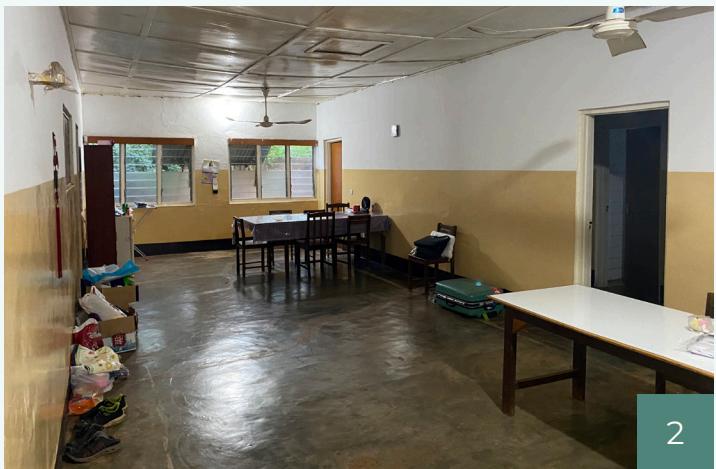
**- My Future:** In October, I move to Boston to begin work. Pray that I prioritize being involved in a church, find Christian community, and serve those around me. Also, pray that I humbly accept the call to missions should that be God's will in my life. On the tail-end of this mission trip, it's easy to say I'm ready and want to, but I also know it's easy to talk without following through.

If you have gotten this far, thanks for reading. Don't be lukewarm and stay salty, my friends. That's as much for me as for you.

Blessings,  
Daniel



1



2



3



4



5



6

1- My bedroom consisting of a bed, desk, and a string nailed to the wall to hang my clothes.

2- Our living/dining room. When the Hong Kongers came, we would combine both tables.

3- The mid-construction building next to our house Joshua was working on.

4- My desk in Christian's office. Right next to the coffee and tea :)

5- Two of the three dogs on our property. They belonged to a missionary couple who had left.

6- One of our last meals in Tamale before flying down for a few days in Accra.



1



2



3



4

1- During our last week of teaching, Christian surprised Hymn and me with a day trip to Mole National Park. By this time, Hymn and I were pretty burnt out with the website, so this day trip was a much-needed break to rest our eyes and admire God's beautiful creation. Within minutes of arriving, we encountered our first elephants!

2- It's required to hire a guide in Mole, and ours was well worth it. Over the course of two hours, we encountered a lot of other wildlife, including warthogs, baboons, antelope, different types of monkeys, and toward the end, a herd of elephant bathing in a watering hole. Pretty cool :)

3- Our excellent guide Paul, in green, and our driver, Nat. Nat was willing to drive us to Mole around 4 am and then back to Tamale around 3 pm!

4 - I was ecstatic when Joshua came home from Torope one day with a chameleon! I let it crawl on me, hoping it would turn blue, but that never happened. For reasons I now forget, villagers don't like chameleons and will kill them. So, we decided to set it free on our property where we would not harm it.



1



2



3



4

1- Hymn teaching the students Rhino, a 3D modeling software he uses for architecture. Hymn would teach MWF from 4:30 - 6 pm, and I would be his TA. MWF, I taught from 3 - 4:30, and Hymn would be my TA. On Tuesday and Thursday, I would usually teach from 3 - 6 pm or until Hymn and Joshua returned from their construction/architecture work and picked me up

2. A photo with the students on the last day of class. We had around 30 students for most of the course, but we entered finals season toward the end, so our numbers dropped to about 15. I'll look back at these students fondly. Eric was the most passionate about learning despite not owning a laptop. David always helped me locate the projector, which mysteriously was never in the lab. Mohammad was an excellent student and a gentle soul. Shadrach was such a goofball. I know you don't know who I'm talking about - this is mostly for me to remember :P

3. Photo of students helping each other complete the tic tac toe game I had them create on the last day. Seeing Mohammad ecstatically clap when I demoed the game at the beginning of class was so funny. And it made for happy moments to see the students finally succeed in building the game.

4. Hymn and I during a late-night website work session. I'm pretty happy with how things turned out in the end. We created a much better site that I hope will encourage volunteers and students alike to come to New Life College. Hopefully, people will have a better idea of what they're getting into when they go!

# TL;DR

## (Too Long; Didn't Read)

**Disclaimer:** While I wrote everything above myself, **the following was generated by ChatGPT.** I just fed it my newsletter and asked it to generate a TL;DR.

My trip to Ghana was inspired by the remarkable story of Helen Roseveare, a courageous medical missionary. Despite feelings of reluctance, I accepted an invitation from my friend, Hymn, to go on a missions trip to Ghana. Uncertain about my role and the lack of information, I arrived in Ghana with a mix of excitement and trepidation.

During my time in Ghana, I had the privilege of meeting incredible individuals who left a profound impact on my life. Pastor Siu, a man of few words but great depth, showed me what it truly means to have a pastoral heart. He demonstrated extraordinary patience and diplomatic skills in handling challenging situations within the church community. I was inspired by his unwavering faith and willingness to work hard, despite his age, to serve others.

Caterina, fondly known as "si mo," the pastor's wife, was a fiery and hilarious storyteller. Her fearless and unapologetic pursuit of what is right, even in the face of opposition, left me in awe. She exemplified courage and determination as she stood up for the rights of factory workers and fearlessly advocated for justice.

Christian, the vice principal of New Life College, was an embodiment of hard work and generosity. He worked long hours, ran a consulting business, and yet still made time to support the students and offer them a helping hand. His generosity extended to me as he always offered me something to eat during our lunch breaks.

Teaching Python to the students at New Life College was both humbling and rewarding. The diverse knowledge levels of the students presented a challenge, but seeing their progress and excitement in learning was a source of joy and fulfillment for me.

The Hong Kongers who visited Ghana had deep-rooted struggles and stories of brokenness. Hymn and I had the privilege of sharing our testimonies with them and praying for a transformation in their lives.

Witnessing the impact of the character development sessions at New Life College and hearing the students' testimonials of how it changed their lives highlighted the significance of the institution's work.

Living a simple life in Ghana, free from the distractions of technology, allowed me to connect deeply with others and God. I was moved by the Siu's walk of faith and their trust in God's provision, even in the most challenging situations. It made me reevaluate my own priorities and seek a more purposeful and devoted life.

As I returned to the US, I felt the pull of material distractions and the need to prioritize my spiritual journey. The trip strengthened my desire to serve God faithfully and reminded me that His calling may lead me to places beyond my comfort zone.

I have prayer requests for Ghana's well-being, New Life College's growth, the Hong Kongers' encounter with Christ, and my future journey in faith and service. I hope to continue serving my local community and be ready to embrace the call of missions, should it be God's will for my life.