



Music, Medicine, and Mampong

I don't know what came over me in late 2003, but I suddenly had a strong urge to have an international experience, particularly in Africa. After a few clicks of the mouse on BYU's International Study Programs web site, I discovered a medical anthropology field study program to Ghana, West Africa. Though I knew almost nothing about anthropology, and an old desire to go into medicine had long since been abandoned, I knew the Ghana field study was exactly what I wanted to do.

Soon I learned that our group would spend about three months in the town of Mampong, visiting both hospitals and traditional healers. Within that context, I decided to focus my research project on one of my loves—music. After a semester of background research, I was excited to head to Mampong and explore the role of drumming in traditional healing ceremonies.

One of the first things I noticed about the Ghanaian people was how happy, friendly, and giving they were. I remember first meeting the family of the healer in the village of Nyinampong. They were not financially well-off, but without hesitation they greeted us with smiles and invited us into their home and offered us food. Their kindness was quite a contrast to the more apathetic Western culture I had grown up in.



Our field study group (from the left: Tyler, Eric, Jake, Kevin, and me) with our guide, Albert, at Mole National Park. Three of us from this group are going into medicine. No Events