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SS112 Intercultural Communication

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Field Assignment # 2

Virginia Woolf once said, “One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.” In some instances, this may be true. However, when it comes to being on an assignment you would have to define what it means to “dine well.” If it means eating what is pleasant to your pallet, that may not always be the case. I love it best the way my professor Mae Reggy says it. “Where you lead me, I will follow. What you feed me I will swallow.” We may not always enjoy the food that is presented to us from different ethnicities when we find ourselves in different countries, continents, or even cities. Yet we must be able to take in the experience and adapt if we wish to be successful in doing work and ministry. Thankfully, this was not the narrative for me while visiting a local ethnic restaurant in my hometown.

Soon as I walked into Shiskebab Restaurant in Evans, Ga, I was greeted with the warmest smile from Azra, who would also be my waiter. At the time of my arrival I was the only guest at the restaurant joined by Azra and the chef whom was working in the back. She told me “Pick any where you’d like.” After surveying my surroundings, I saw that I could choose from multiple tables to my left or the cute decorative coach cushions on the floor to my immediate right. I wanted to really enjoy the experience, so I chose a floor seat. The ambiance of that particular area of the restaurant screamed of their Turkish ethnicity. From the printed golden drapes, to the

fabric of the cushions carefully arranged on the floor with the matching tabletops, to the soft background music of the room, I really began to feel the ethnicity in the restaurant. I almost wish I would have chosen to go in the evening or after the sun went down to heighten the intensity of the moment. Nevertheless, I tried to take in the moment and be very present.

Once Azra brought me a menu I began to skim through to see what caught my taste buds. This was my first time experiencing the Turkish restaurant, although I had heard much about it, and even seen the food truck at the local Arts in the Heart festival that is held each year in the city where ethnicities come together and share their culture with the city. This was the first time I had taken the time to experience the culture in its totality beyond buying a quick wrap on the road. I was drawn to the whole left side of the menu! I ultimately went with the 50/50 lamb meat and beef sliced. This came with a side of rice and vegetables. Upon the arrival of the meal, it was everything and more I hoped it would be. The plate itself was carefully put together as if it was designed just for me. And the portion size was beyond what I could even eat. The food was perfectly seasoned, and I feel it really added to the entire Turkish experience.

Outside of just the experience of food itself, which by the way was phenomenal, I really enjoyed the Intercultural Communications and experience. Although there was a heavy accent and a bit of a language barrier between myself and my waitress. I enjoyed her pleasant disposition and her willingness to help me learn the items on the menu and answer my questions as to the kind of foods I was eating and the way in which it was prepared. There were also televisions that displayed the process the meats go through from slicing to cooking to getting to the table. I value the authenticity and genuineness of the Azra and her sweet spirit. If she is a

representation of the Turkish culture, then I would say they are gracious people. I am grateful for experience, the exposure, and the environment.