

Living Letters

2 Corinthians 3

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Dear friends and family,
(By Michael)

This summer was filled with reading, writing, and anticipation of what will come next. Once school finished in May, I dove into preparing for a literature review for a thesis. As a professor noted, “You will find the path of a thesis is fraught with details!” My response, “Amen.”

By God’s grace, I made progress in compiling a literature review for my thesis and a lot of behind the scenes communication details that needed to take place. The beginning of September was slightly stressful for me. I had a fair amount of reading and revisions for my thesis proposal with a looming deadline. I met the deadline, and I am registered as a thesis student!

I have talked with some people for months, if not a year about working on a thesis. I am thankful for this time that I am able to finally dedicate to the work. It is a long process, and I am sorry that it seems like it goes on forever. However, I am still in the beginning stages in many ways. How long will this take? Good question. God only knows.

Currently, I am writing a thesis about translating Genesis 41 with the application of several translation theories in the process. Genesis 41 is the story of Pharaoh’s dreams and Joseph’s interpretation of them. In this process, I have been reading about several different translation theories, cognitive linguistics, African theologies, and theories about dreams in ancient Egypt and in biblical Hebrew. I’d like to share a few thoughts.

Some of my research goes into how Egyptians during the time of Joseph understood dreams and talked about them. Why? Well, would Pharaoh have recounted his dreams in Hebrew? No. The account he gives is assumed to be in ancient Egyptian. Since language and culture go hand in hand, I need to study aspects of the culture from this time to understand how an Egyptian perceived dreams. Some of this information may be reflected in the Hebrew translation we base our Bibles.

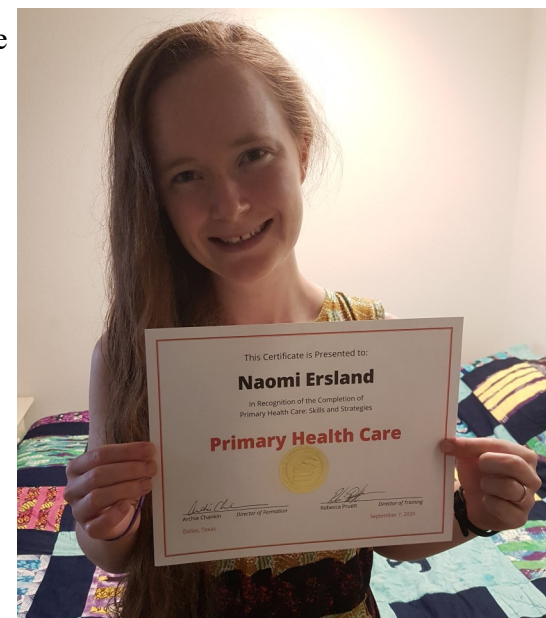
I also look at how dreams were understood in the Hebrew Bible. What was the purpose of sharing dreams? Are there structures to dream texts? Do they reveal ancient Hebrew perceptions? When Pharaoh awoke in Genesis 41:8, English Bibles usually say, “his mind was troubled” (NIV). The Hebrew text talks about Pharaoh’s *soul* being disturbed. That was how their culture perceived the effect of some dreams. In the US, we perceive dreams as part of our *mind*. Other cultures consider dreams taking place in a different part of the body.

Later, in 41:16 Joseph speaks, “God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires” (NIV). The Hebrew references God giving Pharaoh complete health “shalom.” *Shalom* is often translated as “peace” in English.



Summer was filled with reading, writing, and revising Michael’s thesis proposal.

Naomi took a village medical health care course virtually the beginning of September.





We were blessed to join Michael's family in the Grand Tetons for their annual gathering (top left).
We also hiked a nearby trail in August (top right)

Prayer Requests

- Praise God Michael's thesis proposal was accepted and pray for focus, clarity, rest, and a clear mind as he reads, researches, writes, and communicates with participants
- Pray for the Komba translation team as we prepare for consultant checking in October, that revisions go smoothly and the technology and internet work
- Pray for good health as seasons change and for the health of those in Komba land
- How may we pray for you? Please let us know so that we may be praying for you!

However, that does not completely work for English speakers in this context. How do other languages perceive the effects of dreams on the human body?

Not every culture views dreams the same. I hope to study how Komba men and women perceive dreams and talk about them. This information can be used to create a translation that sounds natural in Komba while also reflecting aspects of the Hebrew and Egyptian cultural contexts. My research looks at other features of Genesis 41, and perhaps I'll share some more in the future. For now, we can take this information and rest assured ONLY God can calm our troubled souls in this life.

In September I will take a couple weeks to do my part of checking a few Old Testament books the Komba team has reviewed, and I will make comments. We hope to meet virtually as a team to go through the notes and prepare for consultant checking. We hope to meet with a consultant in October. I haven't done virtual team checking since last summer. School has kept me busy. The Komba translators have been hard at work, and I always get to learn from them in this process. I am excited to take part in this portion of the task and to continue learning.

Thank you for faithfully praying for us and partnering in this work! It has been a full Summer and we look forward to the work we get to do together this Fall.

Confident in Christ,

Michael and Naomi Ersland

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