

# Living Letters

2 Corinthians 3

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 1  
FEBRUARY 2023

Dear friends and family,

Recently we used the truck to bring back a full load of chairs and speakers from the Komba Lutheran Church Christmas convention. On the final day of the convention, as people were dispersing and saying farewells under the shade of large trees, I walked up to a few church leaders to thank them for organizing the convention. I saw that something was on their mind as they had been walking between people trying to solve a problem. "We are wondering if it would be possible to send some chairs and the speakers back to Gbintiri in the back of your truck?"

After my affirmative reply, I quickly went to the truck. We went to work with young men bringing stacks of plastic chairs and then a speaker appeared. They were up in the bed of the truck trying to arrange things and then another speaker appeared. Some leaders were giving directions as chairs were stacked higher and speakers rearranged. Meanwhile, I was pulling out my ratchet straps as I emerged to find them tying down a speaker with a rope. A couple ratchet straps later, we had everything secured like a package. They came to me and thanked me because they didn't know how they would have gotten everything back to Gbintiri so easily while also trying to get participants home. Soon we were off on our return trip to Gbintiri with my mother, nephew, and another woman accompanying us.

Down the rocky road we bounced as we made our way from one town to another. The terrain changed and it was sandy. Then, back to hard dirt. The A/C in the truck was a relief in the upper 90 degree weather. That is a luxury not to be taken for granted here. We dropped off our passengers and bid goodbye and then after leaving Naomi and baby home, I returned to church to offload the contents.

On the ride home, I thought about how the truck has been a blessing to us and our ministry. From the interior to the exterior, from the type of vehicle it is to its age, every part is a blessing. It is a relatively new truck (2015) and so it has run well without major issues since I have owned it. I try my best to maintain it and I hope that will keep it running for years to come. The extended cab allows more people to ride in the truck and we have given rides to many people.

From chiefs to babies, colleagues, pastors, men, women, and children, they have all ridden in the truck as we go to meetings, come back from church, head to a yam festival, or return from a meeting with a bishop. The truck has carried many people. Sometimes it seems like we would like our own privacy, but we also realize that this is an extension of our ministry and we are happy to bring people along on our long trips to the regional capital or short journey back from church in the village, to take someone to the hospital or to bring us back home with our newborn.

In addition to the people in the truck, we have been able to carry many things in the large bed of the truck. It has been used to transport discs for a friend's plow from the regional capital, grain from our family village, and literacy books for distribution at an event. It has been used to carry dear deceased people from hospitals, sometimes in caskets and sometimes not.



*The truck has been used to take people and literacy books to events (above), to transfer loads (below), and to cross currents of water.*







We are thankful for a safe vehicle to drive our family and other people around in. This top right picture is from the recent Christmas convention with two speakers and a couple towers of plastic chairs.

None of these things were planned. They happened with minutes notice as people were confronted with their problems and looking for a solution: we are in a burial service but they need a way to get the casket to the cemetery, "Can he take it? Let's ask and see if it is ok." "Yes, and the pastors can ride along."

The fact that it is a truck with 4WD is also a blessing for our context. I have used the 4WD every year I have driven it and multiple times during rainy season. The roads are rough and rugged. If I took a car, the bottom of it would scrape against the boulders on the road or submerge into the mini ponds in the road needing to be crossed. The truck is high up. We feel safe and protected.

I never drove a manual vehicle or a truck before coming to Ghana. That all changed pretty quickly and I learned new skills. It has been filled with some stressful trips or journeys and some mundane traversing. It has taken me off the path and into areas I never imagined myself going.

Years ago, when I first came to Ghana, I asked people to consider contributing to my vehicle ministry fund. You were all very generous and that allowed me to purchase this truck. The years have passed, and it continues to be a blessing. The diesel, fuel filters, oil filters, air filters, and other maintenance aspects are a large portion of our general budget. We haven't been stressed though, because you have joined us by prayerfully and monetarily investing in the ministry here. Thank you! Through you, this truck has been and continues to be a blessing to not just our family, but also to other people here. We pray that it will continue to be that way.

Confident in Christ,  
Michael and Naomi Ersland

## Prayer Requests

- Praise God for safety while driving the truck this last year in poor weather, on challenging roads, and congested streets.
- Praise God that the truck has been a blessing to our family and to other people in the community.
- Pray that God will keep the vehicle running well, passengers safe, and everyone and everything on the road safe as we drive so that we don't have any accidents.
- How may we pray for you? Please let us know so that we may be praying for you!

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