



Living Letters

2 Corinthians 3

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Dear friends and family,

It has been a while since our last letter and a lot has happened. Our lives have been filled with translation work, funerals, community events, house maintenance, visitors, family needs, and travel. We have had a major repair project on our water system the last few months. We hope to share more about that in another letter when the project is complete. Until then, please be praying with us. We have felt satan at work with all the challenges we have been facing, but God has been faithful and provides so much!

For this letter I (Naomi) thought I would give an update of where we are with the translation work, then include a few questions we have received with their answers. I hope they help answer a few of your questions!

Translation update

The translation team continues to work hard at team checking and consultant checking. Since the start of 2023 they have finished team checking Jeremiah and Lamentations. They are currently working through Ezekiel. They have also finished consultant checking Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs.

Questions & Answers

How difficult is it raising a baby on the mission field?

I don't have anything to compare this experience to. I often feel like we're different from other families here. I see sleeping babies being laid down on a cloth on the ground, while my baby wakes up as soon as I try to reposition him. My baby cries when he's handed off to other people while other babies go to anyone. We had an experience where church stopped because our baby wouldn't stop crying and Michael was sent out to come help the baby and me. The church leader then came out to kindly say it was okay for us to go home. We understood these actions to be in love and to help us feel free to take care of our baby, but it was a new experience for us. When we go out, we draw a lot of attention and a lot of people we know and don't know want to hold him. Hydration, the intense sun, loud speakers at church, and health are also challenges we continue to navigate during each stage of development.

Is the food different from American food?

Yes! We eat a lot of food that is grown in country: rice, yam, plantain, fonio, millet, sorghum, avocado, bananas, mango, carrots, bell peppers, okra, black eye peas, coconut, pineapple, groundnuts, cassava, and scotch bonnet peppers. Some imported things we buy include chickpeas, lentils, and special treats like pears or apples.



Our little guy has learned a lot, and will continue to learn more as we live here and he makes friends.

While the food is different, it is delicious! This is a rice ball. Yum!





It is important to be present for events in people's lives here. We are able to learn more about local customs, relationships, rhythms and seasons, daily tasks, and other local cultural activities by living here. This can contribute to the creative depth of the translation work as Michael asks the team about what he sees and learns.

Why do you need translation teams? Can't Google translate do the work for you?

Translation is more than translating word to word. For example, Michael did an analysis of Komba proverbs to aid in translating the book of Proverbs. He looked for patterns and discussed what made something a Komba proverb. The team then incorporated what they learned into the translation so when the book of Proverbs is read, it can be better understood in this context.

Why do you need to live in Ghana? Why not work remotely with Zoom?

There are several reasons why living with the Komba people has been so valuable: relationships with people can go deeper, language and culture learning can grow deeper and be applied more readily during translation work, and we are able to engage Scripture with people more easily by being physically present.

When are you coming back to the United States?

We don't know. Currently, we have Ezekiel and Daniel left to team check and both of these books plus Lamentations to consultant check. Then, we have more editing and reviewing. The complete Bible needs to be reviewed by a typesetter before it is sent for printing. We know that we are getting close to the end of the project. We don't know what is next for our family. We anticipate an upcoming visit to the United States, but we don't know when.

Confident in Christ,
Michael and Naomi Erslan

Prayer Requests

- Praise God that everything went well for meeting with a Ghanaian consultant to check several Wisdom books in May! We were also able to work with a translation manager and computer specialist for the Bible Society of Ghana, and they were very helpful.
- Pray that we can finish the remaining books in good order.
- Pray for the Komba community as they anticipate the complete Bible. May the Spirit bring life.
- How may we pray for you? Please let us know so that we may be praying for you!

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