

# Living Letters

2 Corinthians 3

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Dear Family and Friends,

God's Word is like water in a parched land. It sustains, fills, and refreshes. It is necessary for life.

January began with a discovery on the mission grounds: our cistern had a leak. Where, how, what? Yeah, the questions were too many. In April I (Michael) could enter the cistern. The water was up to my thighs and oh so cloudy from all the sediment on the bottom of the floor from years gone by of rain entering the cistern from our roof. I couldn't tell what was causing the issue.

The rains start in April, come occasionally in May, and should take off in June with a crescendo around September. Our only source for water with our system is the rain, so I needed to wait to work until the beginning of rainy season and start harvesting rain immediately when the work finished.

In May, we emptied the cistern; it was no small task to remove the remaining couple feet of water. Then, we needed to clean out the cistern. As we were cleaning the cistern, I realized the rubber sealant on the floor from the 90's was coming off. So, we scraped off the top layer of the sealant. Then, the source of the leak was discovered! There were some substantial cracks going throughout the floor.

Life switched into a crash course of cement and fixing cracks. For you civil engineers and architects, I have an increased appreciation for your work. Due to our remote location, resources are limited. I was also cautious about how things are done because I didn't want to make a mistake that would harm our family through the drinking water.

I tried researching and asking people for help. We decided to chisel out some of the major cracks and have them filled with a waterproofing cement. Then, we put in rebar to reinforce a new topping slab for the floor. I verbally was told that the waterproofing cement was safe for potable water, but I began having doubts soon after we finished the work the beginning of June. After a couple weeks of trying to research and find answers, I found out it was not safe for potable water.

God helped provide an answer to our situation, and we were connected with a contractor who could work with a product that is safe for potable water. It took a few weeks, but some men traveled to our place in July. They ended up grinding all the walls to remove the 90s rubber sealant, and then they painted a cementitious mortar on the floor and the walls.

We were getting nervous because we were already entering July without any water stored up for dry season. I had been rationing drinking water



*It took creativity to rig a system for emptying the cistern.*

*After cracks were chiseled and filled, rebar was put down with a topping slab poured on top.*





We made a hard push in July and August to finish team checking the books of Ezekiel and Daniel (left). It is always a joy to witness baptisms. I appreciate how the pastors always provide teaching for the families before they baptize someone (right).

from what I pumped just before emptying the cistern. I collected rain water from roofs into barrels, and I also used borehole water for bathing and washing clothes. I was able to take a sample to a water research institute, and 10 days later, I was informed that the chemicals and metals we tested from the construction work were nothing to worry about.

We are thankful that our issue appears to have been fixed and our cistern is full. This experience highlights an important aspect of life that we take for granted in the US—water, and clean drinking water at that.

As the day guard and I began work in the cistern, I would ask him throughout the first week for a Bible story with water. Then, I would ask if it had a connection to baptism. It was discovered that some Old Testament stories are used by New Testament authors as a connection to baptism (e.g. the Flood story and 1 Peter 3)!

I hope that as people have access to the entire Bible, they may have opportunities to see the unity of both testaments of the Christian Bible. Both the first and the second testament are complementary and not to be excluded at the cost of the other. Baptism is brought from the first testament into the second testament. This is just one example. We are nearing completion of the Protestant Bible in Komba so that people will have both testaments. We have three books left to consultant check and then typesetting. We are making updates in the New Testament currently. Praise God for this living water!

Confident in Christ,

Michael and Naomi Ersland

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Checks written to Lutheran Bible Translators with *Ersland Ministry* on the memo line. You can also give online at LBT.org

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## Prayer Requests

- Praise God that our cistern appears to be fixed.
- Praise God that we have three books left to consultant check!
- Pray that all will go well with typesetting the Komba Bible.
- Pray for our family and guidance as parents.
- Pray for many in our area who experienced flooding in August and its lasting effects.
- How may we pray for you? Please let us know so that we may be praying for you!

