

(Narrator) Truck drivers in West Africa face death each day. They fear that they will not make it home to their families. Retirement? Insurance? They don't exist. Temptations? Hardships? They abound! The miniscule amount of money given by the owners to the truckers falls short of what is needed. These African truck drivers earn about 100 USDollars per month. They receive 240 to 400 USDollars per trip to pay for diesel, food, vehicle repair, fees, and whatever else they encounter. The drivers resort to creative financing and unapproved activities, such as transporting personal freight, to make money along the route. Their countrymen perceive their life as glamorous, but to hear them talk, the life of a trucker is a life of desperation.

(#1 truck driver) On the road, there are problems. The road is, just, not good. There are lots of pot holes. The paved roads aren't wide enough, so, we suffer from this. And the hills combined with the amount of stuff we carry, it's hard, it's really hard on us.

(#1 truck driver) The money that the owners give you for trip expenses it's, just, it's not enough. So, you go to collect money from your friends with the promise that you will bring back goods to them. Maybe you find 2, 4, 5, 10, 100 pieces, and that's their repayment. So you drive at night. Because in the day, the owner sees you and he will take the money.

(#1 truck driver) When there are repairs during the trip, you have to do the repairs yourself. The money they gave you for the trip expense, that's what you take to repair the vehicle.

(Truck driver K B) Even if your paperwork is good (with laughter), the officials will still bother you. Because of 1 or 2 USDollars, they will delay you. So sometimes you are forced to give them something, so that you can continue your way.

(#2 truck driver) The driver is always behind. For example, this is the owner's truck. Well, he'll come to repair the truck, but instead he'll tell the soldier you don't have the right to drive the truck and then he'll take the truck away. You have no one with money who can come and help you. So, you go home and suffer. If you talk about it, you won't get another truck to drive. My doctor told me to quit driving. What can I do to put food on the table? How am I going to feed my family?

(Narrator) Statistics reveal children of transient drivers and the spread of AIDS are found in concentrated numbers along the truck routes. We spoke with married Muslim drivers about their observations on the road.

(#1 truck driver) We are Muslims and once you sleep with a woman, it's necessary to wash before you pray. Along the way there's just no place for washing. We have containers for drinking water and for normal ritual washing. But there's not enough water to wash before prayers if I've been with a woman. We just don't need that.

(#2 truck driver) You'll see the drivers, they'll get a woman to take with them in their truck. Me, I have 2 wives with 11 children. I can't take another woman to get into the truck. I'm a Muslim, or even if you're a Christian.

(Sound FXs) Call to prayer from mosque in a distance over top of people in market

(Narrator) Most of the drivers are Muslim. Some take their religious practices very seriously. Muhammed recites the prayer he must say before he begins his journey.

(#2 truck driver) Yes, the prophet told us in the Qu'ran that you say at least, Bismillah Rahmani Rahim...

(Sound FXs) Arabic prayer of truck driver... starts towards end of previous comment, softly underneath then fade up at end of driver comment.

(Narrator) A large portion don't know what it really means to be Muslim.

(Interview of Ameyo\*) It's what they say. It's predetermined. Someone told them they have to be Muslim without any explanation. The father is Muslim. The mother is Muslim. You're born Muslim.

(Narrator) Ameyo\* is a rare breed in West Africa. She is a woman chauffeur who heads up a business that drives used cars from a port city to the interior countries. She grew up as a Christian among Muslims. Most of the drivers she hires are Muslim. We spoke with her about her relationship with Muslims...

(Interview of Ameyo\*) I love Muslims a lot and I want them as well, to know the truth too.... But the trouble is that they are afraid. Because, when they receive Jesus, there are threats, lots and lots of threats. Yeah, that's it. There are some who receive Jesus but they cannot go out into public to go to church. They will ask me to come to their home and teach them, and pray for them, show them how to pray, show them how to read the Bible. But they don't tell those who are around us. That's how they come. So, they do it in secret. They accept Jesus in secret.

(Sound FXs) Music starts at beginning of narration and fades to slightly heard under narration through Ann Johnston\* sound bite and fades at next narration.

(Narrator) Love of Muslims doesn't rest with just Ameyo\*. Another business woman working with a mission sending agency loves them too... especially the truck drivers.

(Interview of Ann Johnston\*) It evolved in a period in my life when I was struggling with how to blend the work that I do. Being in the office and traveling in most of the countries in West Africa. How to blend that and be used to be a part of a church planting movement. And so as I would travel, I would be on the roads and I would, through crossing the borders and through going through police stops, I would see the many many trucks that were on the road. Most everything comes into West Africa by the trucks. Islam spread in West Africa from the east to the west through the trade routes. And, today the truck routes are our trade routes. And, the truckers currently are carrying Islam to the south where there is a strong Christian base. They're also carrying AIDS with them. And, they're also leaving children along the route from the affairs that they have as they go along. I figure they could carry the Gospel just as well and that they would be able to reach and get into areas that we as missionaries would never be able to go.

(Narrator) Two-thirds of the world's population are oral communicators either by necessity or by their choice. They are called "oral learners". They learn best and their lives are most likely to be transformed

when instruction comes in oral forms. We must defer to their oral communication style if we are to be effective in communicating the Gospel. This missionary is in the thick of things - developing what will work best to communicate God's love to her people group, the truckers of West Africa.

(Sound FXs) Music starts at beginning of narration and fades to slightly heard under narration through Ann Johnston\* sound bite and fades at next narration.

(Interview of Ann Johnston\*) It began by getting that Christian base, people that I already had relationships with and exposing them to sharing the Gospel through oral stories. And so now it has grown into linking these people that are in the southern portion of West Africa, and, where there is a strong base of churches, to people further north in countries like Burkina Faso. We're in the process of a story set of twenty-one stories that gives a basic outline of the overall theme of God's Word from the creation to His return. So the way that we see this coming together past just being able to share the Gospel with them face to face ... We'll record those on cassettes. Cassettes are the main way that they have to listen to things in their trucks while they're driving. And, we hope to be able to just inundate the truckers with these cassettes so that they have something continually to go back to. But, it also gives them something that they can take back to their families and it is also something that they will reproduce a thousand times over. The long term vision is to have a base of teams throughout each truck route from each port in West Africa to the land locked countries that are their most common destinations. And to have teams that have a constant presence at these places where the trucks stop versus just having people who go once or twice a week. And, that would allow the truck drivers to have a place that they could go when they are on the road for two and three months at a time.

(Narrator) Teams along these truck routes are composed of national believers from various backgrounds, some pastors, but mostly lay people, spreading the stories of God to truck drivers. They have found this method of evangelism most rewarding and really easy to do. It is no surprise to these national workers how well this method works.

(Interview of Karim) In our culture, during my childhood, my dad or maybe my mom told me a story. I would be sitting there as he talked and talked until the story finished. That's been over 20 or 30 years ago and I still remember the story. But how many letters were read to me? Or how many journalists have read something on TV? Two (2) hours later, I have already forgotten what I heard. The truths that I follow are in story form. We do not understand why this is, but, if it's in story form, it sticks in my head. We do not understand the reason, it's strange, but it's like that! So, this is why we have chosen to tell God's truth in story form.

(Interview of Ameyo) When there is a full moon, legends are told in the village. There are a lot of things in those legends that are found in the Bible. In the past, Africans did not know how to write, instead they passed on stories from generation to generation. These stories continue even today. So, it's because of this, that when you say you have a story to tell, everyone passing by will want to hear what you have to say. That's why I say stories work in Africa.

(Narrator) Hesitation and fear barricaded these workers from approaching Muslims to talk about God. Not any longer.

(Interview of National #1) Before the training, no! I had never approached Muslims. Because, we saw that conversion or even changing their thinking is very difficult. But, with the training that we had, we now have the courage to talk to the titanmans, the truck drivers. I no longer have fear (happy laugh) to approach them. This method of telling Bible stories really helps a lot.

(Interview of National #2) For me personally, when we started learning these oral Bible stories, it was very interesting to me. It's an easy way to communicate the Gospel. It's rare for someone to refuse to listen to a story that I want to tell. And in one story, there are several lessons that emerge.

(Interview of National #3) When you go near them, they sense you are Christian. They are cautious of you. They can't listen to you. But, now, with these stories they don't ask you whether you are Christian or Muslim. You go to them like someone who is just passing by. They will want to chat with you and you tell the story. It's as simple as that! They will chat with you as if you already knew them and they really get into the heart of the story. I'm no longer afraid.(free laughter) I don't fear this anymore.

(Sound FXs) [Truck passing by with horn sounding followed by music which fades down to slightly heard under Ann Johnston\\* sound bite fading up at end of sound bite.](#)

(Interview with Ann Johnston\*) Prayer is always the priority. Pray that God would continue to raise up West Africans to embrace this. That they would continue to take ownership. That God would continue to burden other people with the validity and the importance of being able to reach this specific people group, this specific people segment. As God continues to change their hearts, I believe, that persecution is going to increase and it will be more difficult for us to gain access. And I would ask that people pray that as we flood these drivers with God's Word and their hearts are changed that, they would have other avenues to pursue God's Word when they get to their homes, along the road, when the doors close that we can't necessarily get to them, they would still have access to God's Word. But I think people need to consider coming, if there's an affinity in their heart for truck drivers, and God is placing that on their hearts, I think it would be a powerful, powerful thing for them to come out and witness it and be a part of it.

*\*Name changed*