

February 2022

MISSIONS

A photograph of a classroom in Tanzania. A teacher in a white shirt stands at the front, pointing at a chalkboard. The chalkboard has three circles containing text: 'DHAMBI = MAMHIVU', 'NDAMA YA DHAHABU' with a drawing of a cow, and 'UTII' with 'BAP' below it. Students in school uniforms are seated at wooden desks, facing the teacher. The room has a corrugated metal roof and yellow walls.

Tanzania
A Library Proclaims
the Light of the World

Colombia
Discipleship Encourages
People amid Crises

Special Areas
A NT Translation Inspires
Praise and Prayer



THINKING IT THROUGH

BY MATTHEW GLOCK

Seeing the Person Right in Front of Us

[God our Savior] desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

(1 Timothy 2:4)

Riding the Paris subway during rush hour overwhelms the senses. You feel the crush of the packed car. You can't move. You fix your gaze on a point above the other passengers' heads, waiting for the moment when you'll squeeze through the crowd and experience your deliverance.

The cramped subway reflects reality: Paris is among the most crowded cities in the world. The streets teem with the humanity that God desires "to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Our response should be obeying Jesus's command to go into this world and make disciples. As I contemplate this urban reality, God's desire, and Jesus's command, I wonder, What can I do?

One answer is similar to what the majority of Parisians do: get out of the subway and into my apartment as fast as possible. The city's noise, crowds, and endless possibilities can make people feel lost, causing them to withdraw and separate from others. Thus, the city isolates those who live in it—myself included.

We can sense the same helplessness in relation to God's desire that all people be saved. When I look out on the sea of humanity that surrounds me in my day-to-day life, I can lose heart. I think we can all identify with these feelings. We all face our limits and the indifference of those who surround us—it doesn't matter if we live in a big city like Paris or in the suburbs, in a small city, or on a farm. Yet I know that, if this is what God desires, He will accomplish it. He is the One who brings growth.

Paul declares in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of

God and not of us." Moreover, in the mass of the people who surround us, there are those whom God has prepared. So we do not lose heart.

Just as the Bible teaches us that God desires to reach all, it also teaches us that Jesus is our prime example of how to do the Father's will: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

Time and again, Jesus shows the way. During His ministry, He would stop and focus on the person who was before Him. He teaches us the value of each one. He commissions us with these words: "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." (John 20:21)

Even if the city tends to isolate people to the point that it is difficult to reach those in our apartment building, we don't lose heart. The way to reach everyone is to take care of the one right before us.

As I write this, I see in my mind's eye our neighbor, who is one of those very isolated people. She deals with many health issues. We had often greeted her only to receive little response in return. Then, one day, she came to Sylvie, my wife, and demonstrated a desire to talk. Little by little, the indifference changed into a desire to be present in the community and to know Jesus through His Word.

There are other examples, and at the heart of each one is a meeting. At some point, we must stop and see the one who is on our path. Yes, the city teems with people who hurry from one point to another, who seek refuge in their apartments far from the noise and chaos of the city—ourselves included—yet God desires that each one be saved. He calls us to open our eyes and see what He is doing, and He invites us to take part. ■

Matthew Glock serves in France.

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COVER PHOTO: Elementary school in Tanzania—Gerald Mushiha BACK COVER PHOTO: Ukraine—©AdobeStock



GOD USES A LIBRARY

Sharing the Light of the World in Ujiji, Tanzania

BY JOHN KINLAW

Each day, Islamic calls to prayer echo across Ujiji, a small town on Lake Tanganyika in Tanzania. Approximately 100,000 people live here, most of whom are Muslims. But, starting in December 2018, God has made His presence known here in His own unique way: through the Light of the World Library (or *Maktaba ya Nuru ya Ulimwengu*, as it is called in Swahili).

Since February 2018, my wife, kids, and I have served in Ujiji, which has a tremendous need for the Gospel. When we arrived, we planned to serve through evangelism, Bible teaching, and discipleship. By October of that year, we had sensed the Lord's leading in a particular direction. I hadn't set out with a Christian library in mind, but we wanted to make good Christian books available for people—including local pastors, Christians, and even Muslims—to read at no cost. So we rented a storefront in the town's main intersection and began plans to turn it into an outpost for the Gospel. After some fresh paint and new tiles and a few touch-ups, we opened the Light of the World Library in December 2018.

More than a library

With the help of Kanisa la Biblia Publishers, the Emmaus bookstore and publishing company located east of us in Dodoma, we ordered more than 100 books in Swahili from authors like William MacDonald, John Piper, and Don Fleming. In our function as a *maktaba* ("library"), people can check out books at no cost; we even have a section specifically for Muslims who want to understand the Gospel. We also distribute free Gideon copies of the New Testament in Arabic and Swahili along with various gospel tracts.

Besides being a library, the *maktaba* functions as a meeting place, office, and hub for activity. Although some people are afraid to enter because they fear persecution from their Muslim peers and family members, others stop in regularly to chat, read, or watch some of the *King of Glory* movie that is often playing

on the TV. This gospel film, which Paul Bramsen (MPH Day 27) created, explains the Bible with Muslim viewers in mind.

We have watched as some adults who don't want to be seen in the *maktaba* send their children in to get them a Bible or a tract. Either way, the Gospel is getting out into an area of great spiritual need. Rarely does anyone leave empty-handed.

An open door into the schools

Half of Tanzania's population is under age 20, so we also feel burdened to reach Ujiji's youth with the Gospel. Tanzanian government schools schedule one hour per week for a religion class, where Christian or Muslim leaders can come and teach the children. Sadly, few Christian leaders take advantage of this amazing open door. Yet the government granted permission to Gerald, my Tanzanian partner. So, each week for the past two years, he and I have taught in two elementary schools in Ujiji. And, recently, we added a third school. All of them lie within walking distance of the *maktaba*. What a joy to systematically and evangelistically teach the Bible to 60 to 80 students at each school weekly.



John's coworker Gerald teaches the Bible in an elementary school.



Because of the Bible-teaching ministry in the schools, many of the children come by the maktaba after school to watch *King of Glory*. Gerald has explained to me that we can show this gospel film with no problems, but if we were to teach the children from the Bible ourselves while they are at the library, their parents would not allow them to return. We are thankful for how the Lord is sowing His seed in Ujiji through this film.



“**PRAY THAT THESE PRECIOUS SOULS WILL TURN TO THE SAVIOR IN THE DAYS, WEEKS, AND YEARS TO COME.**”

Besides books, tracts, and copies of the *Injil* (New Testament), the maktaba offers more than 40 Emmaus correspondence courses in Swahili. These provide excellent Bible teaching at a small cost. Once a student finishes a section of eight courses, the Emmaus office in Dodoma sends a certificate, and I present a book from the maktaba as a gift.

One of the first people to start the Emmaus courses was a taxi driver, Riziki, whom I met in town one day. I gave him a tract and a Gideon Bible and invited him to the maktaba for a visit. He was a young Christian hungry for the Word. We not only became good friends, but he also became our first student to finish all of the Emmaus courses. Gerald is right behind him, nearing the finish line. These Emmaus courses are a great tool in discipleship, and we encourage any who show interest in the things of the Lord to start the first course.

A space for building friendships

Each day is unique as people stop by Maktaba ya Nuru ya Ulimwengu for different reasons. Juma, an 80-year-old Muslim man, visits daily—once in the morning and again in the afternoon. We have become part of his routine, and we hope that what he hears and reads will lead him to the Savior. Sadiki, a teacher in a Shia mosque in town, likes to stop by and debate the doctrinal differences between Islam and Christianity.

There is also Von, who runs a juice shop across the street, and Azama, who runs a beauty salon next door. Chuki operates a bus stand across the street and stops by most days along with Michael, who manages a nearby pharmacy. Unfortunately, Sada—who started having dreams of Jesus after reading the Gospel of Matthew—moved out of the area. All of these are our friends, whom we see and talk with daily. We thank the Lord for how He is using the maktaba to build relationships with so many.

A catalyst for new opportunities

Recently, a couple of young Christian men stopped by and invited me to play soccer with them one evening and give a gospel message afterward. These two men, Pagi and Saidi, play soccer with a group of youth most evenings. Originally, they had agreed with a Muslim friend to alternate messages from the Quran one evening with messages from the Bible the next, but after one week, the friend suggested they teach just the Bible after each game instead.

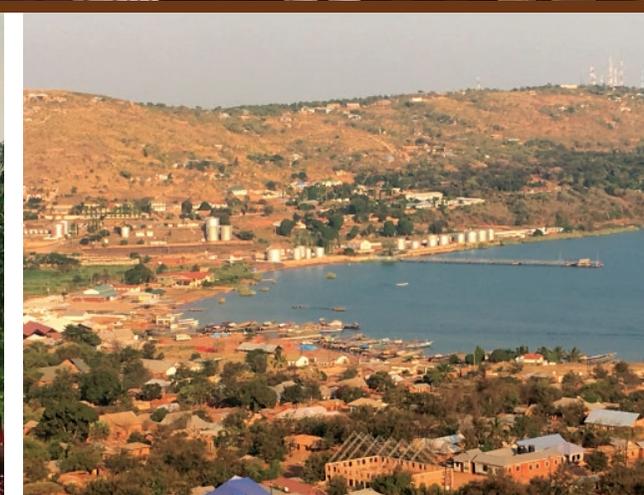
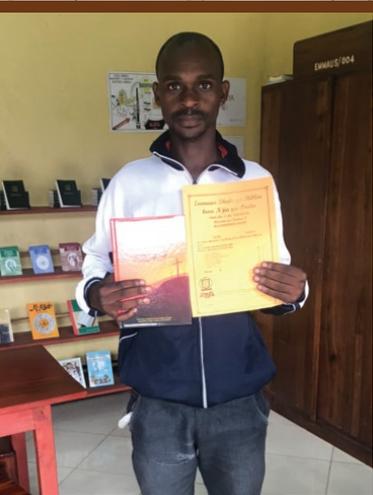
I have visited this group several times and shared my testimony and the Gospel. Recently, three of them left Islam and trusted Christ as their Savior. They have since been forced to leave their homes, forsaken by their families, and are living by the lake and fishing for their food. Nevertheless, they rejoice amid these trials their new faith has brought them.

For more than a year, we have been praying about starting a youth camp in Ujiji. Gerald is gifted in teaching and working with children and youth, and in the past, he was involved in camp work in other parts of the country. There is not a youth camp on the entire west side of the country that we are aware of. We believe that such a camp would meet a need in the lives of many young people in Ujiji and Kigoma, and we look forward to the Lord’s leading in this area in the future.

An ever-brightening light

The Lord has used the Light of the World Library in many ways over the past three years. The Gospel shines through the distribution of Gideon Bibles and tracts, showings of *The King of Glory*, participation in Emmaus courses, lending of gospel books as well as through teaching the Bible in schools and on the soccer field and daily forging relationships with acquaintances and neighbors. We thank the Lord for this storefront, and we pray He will continue to protect it.

Undoubtedly, God is at work in people’s hearts in Ujiji. Please pray that these precious souls will turn to the Savior in the days, weeks, and years to come and that He will continue to use this little outpost for His glory and purposes. ■



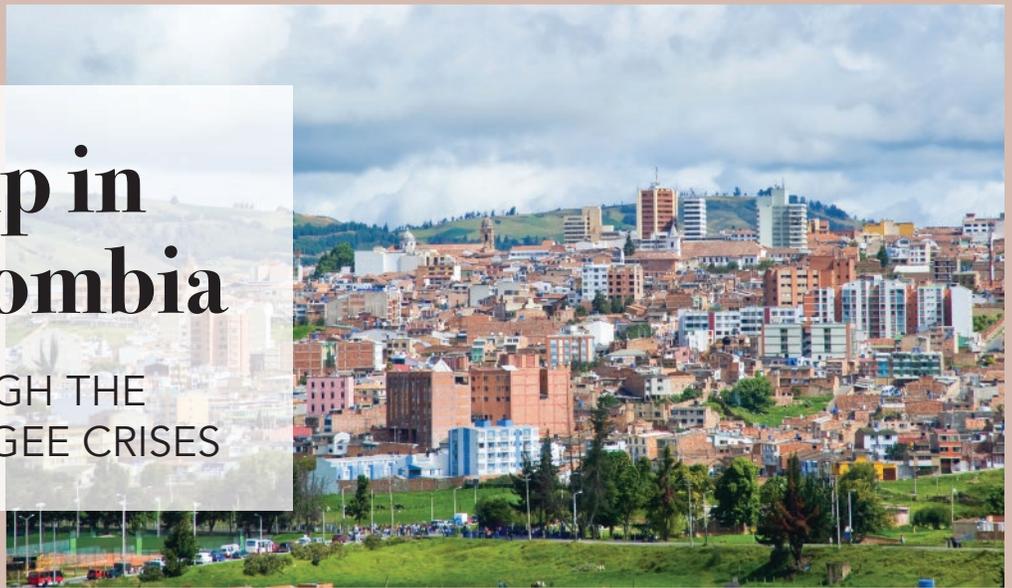
Opposite page: Children watch the *King of Glory* film in the maktaba after school. **This page: (top, L-R)** The well-stocked library is open to the public; John spends time with the children from a village church; **(middle, L-R)** Two Muslim men read and chat in the library; In preparation for the maktaba's grand opening, a sign on the door reads, "Announcement! We will open this library on Monday, and everyone is welcome!"; While visiting Ujiji, John's mother, Kittie, and sister, Elizabeth, stopped by the maktaba; **(bottom, L-R)** Riziki, a local taxi driver, shows his certificate for completing Emmaus courses; John presents a paint-board gospel message to a group of Muslim youth after playing soccer; A few miles from Ujiji lies Kigoma, which is pictured here in the background of Kibirizi Bay.



John and Jennifer Kinlaw are commended from North Ridge Bible Chapel in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Discipleship in Tunja, Colombia

GOD WORKS THROUGH THE COVID-19 AND REFUGEE CRISES



BY CAMILO & JOANNA (WERNER) AVENDAÑO

Our home in Tunja, Colombia, in the tips of the northern Andes, nestles among fields filled with the ingredients of a soothing harvest stew. This capital of the department Boyacá sits near the Andean *páramo* (a tropical, alpine tundra), a two-hour drive north of the country's capital, Bogotá. Tunja is distinguished as the closest city to an 1819 battle site—when much of South America finally gained independence from Spanish rule.

We live here because of a different battle, one that the King of Kings, our Lord Jesus Christ, won years ago. He gave His command to “go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” (Matthew 28:19) As grateful servants, we are delighted to have a small part in seeing others come to salvation in Christ.

The growing local church

The work at Comunidad Bíblica Gracia y Vida, our local gathering in Tunja, began seven years ago as an evangelistic home Bible study. For years, we were a group of about 35 believers, until the COVID-19 pandemic. For some churches, 2020 meant crisis, closures, and dispersion. But our experience was different: pulling together, finding ways to meet the needs of those struggling, persevering in prayer, and seeing some profess faith in Christ and later be baptized. When we resumed meeting in person, we had to rent a larger room, add another Sunday school class, and adjust the home meetings since no one has a living room large enough.

Two elders work diligently as shepherds. Together, with several other brothers in Christ taking on leadership roles, they share the responsibility of teaching, preaching, visiting, and much more. Since many of the believers are newly saved, there is a great need for discipleship—walking alongside those more recently born into this wonderful kingdom.

The new believers we work with are generally eager to grow in the Lord and are keenly conscious that they are part



Above: The Sunday meeting at Comunidad Bíblica Gracia y Vida is growing; Joanna and Camilo serve alongside two elders and their families: Gustavo and Mónica Cáceres (left) and Hanz and Andrea Ramirez with their children Mateo and Elisabet (right).

of a new family. They have fresh joy in praying together. They bring lists of unsaved family and friends' names to our prayer meetings, delighted to finally cast their burdens on the Lord who hears.

Being a Christian in this part of Colombia sometimes means suffering among family and friends for the stigma of leaving the traditional religion, Roman Catholicism. That stigma also causes the local people to be wary of Christianity. Additionally, many have had previous disagreeable encounters with groups who identify as Christian but do little more than pressure members to give money to enrich their leaders. Tunja has a strong presence of cults, groups who follow modern-day apostles, and other false teachings. Leaving these groups to follow Christ can be as difficult for someone as leaving the traditional religion. Due to these challenges, new believers need patience, encouragement, and solid rooting in God's Word.

New outreaches

Last year, we helped launch two outreaches, and we would appreciate prayer for each one. The first is in Villapinzón, a village an hour away. We needed a place to rent for our meeting,



but many people closed their doors to a Christian church. The Lord let us find favor with one family, who now rents us a workshop.

Unfortunately, the workshop roof leaked, and when one of the Tunja believers climbed up to take measurements, intending to fix it, he fell through to the cement floor, more than 16 feet below. However, the Lord preserved his life; he slowly recovered and is among us today, more fervent than ever in sharing the Gospel. Neighbors who inquired about the accident learned of God's protection and the church.

We pray the Lord may open hearts in this hostile little town. Each Sunday afternoon, some of



us travel there to teach the few new believers and their children.

The other outreach is in a neighborhood on the edge of Tunja called Altamira. Several new families have been coming who have not previously heard about liberty in Christ. We chose to study Galatians because, as is common in this area, many people believe that salvation is by works or perseverance. It can be a long road until their eyes are opened.



Opportunities through hospitality

As disciples of Christ ourselves, we are learning to make disciples, doing so from our apartment, which is located near to where the church meets. Much of the work is simply like Paul's method in Acts: "Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him." (28:30–31)

Almost every day, we have visitors. Some come for a few hours; others need a place to stay for a few days. Sometimes, we invite young people over for meals or to practice an instrument. Other times, people reach out to us in crisis. Our visitors might be Camilo's old university friends, children of long-time friends, neighbors, or people the elders have requested we dedicate time to.

Almost every day, our church holds a Bible study or prayer meeting, so we work around it with smaller Bibles studies in person or over the phone for people too far away to visit. Camilo and I have a general weekly routine but must be open to God's Spirit as He makes us aware of someone to whom we need to reach out. The Lord is faithful to order times of rest when needed.

Please pray that we lean on the Lord and are faithful to Him. Real spiritual work happens only by the Spirit of God, and so we resort continually to His Word as our main resource. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17) His Word never fails, and faithfully preached, it accomplishes whatever He needs it to.

Left (from top): The outreach in Villapinzón meets in a workshop; Camilo leads a Bible study in Altamira. **Above:** Little ones enjoy a Sunday school class with Joanna.

A ministry for youth

In early 2021, we and another couple were entrusted with a group of young people—informally called Muchachitos—to find a way for them to be together as well as teach them God’s Word and pray for them. So we hold a class every other Friday night with an in-depth study in Genesis. The boys and girls ask insightful questions. Whether they are opening up a Bible for



the first time or are already experts in answering Bible questions, we hope they find this to be a space to meet and know the God who revealed Himself in His Son.

We also look for ways to be involved in their lives and to get to know their families. We help some of the kids with schoolwork, we eat meals with them and their families, I (Joanna) teach life skills to one young person and piano to another two, and we offer a lending library with worthwhile kids’ books. Please pray for our muchachitos; soon, it will become evident if these seeds planted will bear fruit—if they will follow Christ.

Streams in the Venezuelan desert

Most readers have heard of the Venezuelan refugee crisis, which has meant the painful dissolution of families and incalculable economic devastation. Yet the Lord has used this upheaval to bring many who need Him into Tunja and right to our doorstep.

In 2019, a young couple with two daughters came to our church. In a matter of months, the Gospel had transformed their lives. They saw the need to be married, were baptized, and began walking with the Lord. There, the long-term work began.



The Lord intertwined their lives with ours; now, we’re neighbors, just two blocks away. We see each other most days, study the Bible together weekly, and face good and difficult days together.

In May 2021, the Lord opened our eyes to the need of their older daughter, who had never successfully transitioned into the

public school system. We offered to oversee her education from our home, and now, she comes daily to study God’s Word first and then the regular school subjects. She, too, has professed to know Him, and we pray that her life’s rudder may be set to follow Christ no matter the cost. Recently, her mom told us that, one day, they may return to Venezuela about as poor as when they came here, but they have gained Christ, and He is everything. We gained more precious companions on this pilgrim path.

Disciples who make disciples

About five years ago, a woman named Patricia saw, from a distance, Joanna sharing a Bible story with a few young kids. Months

later, when her life began to unravel, Patricia remembered this brief encounter and tried to contact Joanna. However, Joanna was in Canada. On the day she returned, Joanna and



Patricia bumped into each other in town. Patricia asked Joanna to tell her how to be a good person but not to preach the Bible.

One invitation to visit turned into two and three and more. Over the next few years, the Lord did a marvelous work in Patricia’s heart, setting her free from a life of slavery to sin and preparing her to be first in line in her large family and entire community of those who will seek to know Christ.

As Patricia began sharing the Gospel, most initially discounted her as having been brainwashed and crazy for betraying their family’s religion, but the change was undeniable. Now, by her patient, faithful service to her family, some have begun to read the Bible on their own accord.

Please pray for new believers like Patricia who need to patiently persevere. Pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ in Colombia and the next generation of those who will preach the good news of Jesus Christ until He comes. ■



Joanna (Werner) Avendaño is commended from Rideau Christian Fellowship in Perth, Ontario; she and Camilo, a Colombian national, serve the Lord together.

Left (from top): The Muchachitos study the Bible with Camilo; Joanna and Camilo have fun with their home-schooling companion and younger sister in Christ. **Above:** Joanna spends time with her friend Patricia.