

July 2023

MISSIONS



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THEIR MOST Treasured Possession

Congolese Believers Receive Bibles from Partnering Ministries

BY TERRY WILSON

When Congolese believers are asked to name their most treasured possession, most will answer without hesitation, “My Bible.” Even to this day, people in the Democratic Republic of Congo remember and revere Gertrud Harlow for her years of tireless work translating the Bible, hymnbooks, and study material into Congo Swahili. Gertrud firmly believed that the Congolese needed tools to help them study the Bible.

Her husband, Dr. R. E. Harlow, once said, “Gertrud, with God’s help, I want a commentary in simple English for every book in the Bible.” And Gertrud replied, “Good, I’ll translate each one into Congo Swahili.”¹ These commentaries launched the ministry of Everyday Publications Inc. (EPI).

Congo seems to be almost continually at war. Even today, many militia groups raid villages and destroy hospitals. Death and destruction continue regularly. People flee from their farms and homes in unimaginable suffering. The spiritual need among the Congolese believers is greater than we can imagine. It is EPI’s privilege to provide spiritual resources for these believers.

After the Lord provides what is needed to produce Bibles

and other materials through our partners, EPI arranges for the printing and shipping so that Congolese believers receive God’s Word in their own language—at no cost to them.

God’s provision

Congo’s Christian community has urgently felt the need for Bibles and Christian literature, especially in the last few years, when the spiritual leaders had run out completely. In a recent, large, collaborative project, the Lord guided the partners listed below—despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and shipping disruptions—to print and then ship seven containers of Bibles, hymnbooks, and copies of William MacDonald’s *Believer’s Bible Commentary* (BBC) from Belarus to their final African destinations.

Since then, EPI has also printed 110,000 Bible study books (one container load) to fulfill current needs. We have an agreement with the leaders in Congo: distribute Gospels of John for evangelism, provide a New Testament when someone trusts the Lord and joins a Bible study, and give a Bible and hymnbook to a believer who has come into fellowship.

ASSEMBLY PARTNERS’ ORDERS

Partners	Area Served	Bibles	Hymnals	BBC	Notes
Emmanuel Community, Northeastern Congo	Northeastern Congo (about 300 assemblies)	45,000	45,000	5,000	Additional resources shipped: 110,000 books, study guides; 274,000 BES Bible lessons for elementary schools; 25,000 New Testaments; 100,000 Gospels of John
All Nations Foundation, Netherlands	Central and northern Congo	20,000		5,000	
Global Connections, New Zealand	Lubumbashi, Congo (over 1,000 assemblies)	10,000			Distributed through training center, Lubumbashi
Ruth Willenbrecht, Germany	Katanga Province, Congo	3,000			
OPAL Trust, Scotland	Zambia	12,000			Distributed through distribution center, Chingola, Zambia

The Bible's power

The leadership of the nearly 300 assemblies in northeastern Congo, headed by a believer named Jeremie, recently organized a 28-day gospel campaign using Gospels of John. As believers preached the truth from God's Word, at least 2,092 people professed salvation and roughly 166 were restored to the Lord. Several new assemblies were established, and a new assembly district (comprising several assemblies) was formed.

The Lord's people

We are so grateful the Lord has connected to EPI people who are uniquely gifted to minister to Congolese believers. Let me share about two such individuals:

Bob Watt (*Missionary Prayer Handbook* Day 1) served the Lord for more than 25 years in Congo. He currently serves as co-chair on the EPI board. He also heads a Congolese Swahili translation team. To date, Bob and his team have completed William MacDonald's *Believer's Bible Commentary: New Testament*, revised portions of the Bible text for greater accuracy, translated new Bible studies, and developed test questions for study books.

Rex Trogdon served the Lord in Congo with CMML for more than 10 years. Today, Rex serves on the EPI board and provides a Bible teaching session during our monthly online meetings with the Congolese and Ugandan leadership. For the last year, Rex has also been producing two-minute devotional videos based on John's Gospel—"Feed My Sheep" ("Kulisha Kondoo Zangu")—in both English and Swahili. The people absolutely love it!

The video ministry has expanded its reach into 14 African countries as well as Pakistan and the Philippines. We praise the Lord that many CMML missionaries, including Terry Barham (MPH Day 2), Jeremy Bassett (MPH Day 1), John Kinlaw (MPH Day 3), and Lois Wheeler (MPH Day 2), use this resource in their ministries.

The big picture

We watch with deep concern as the current conflict in Congo has displaced nearly six million people within the country and another million who now live in neighboring countries.² The refugees have lost their homes, communities, schools, hospitals, and livestock.

However, though they leave almost everything behind as they flee, we were reminded recently that when they run, they run with their Bibles. The displaced believers living in refugee camps in other countries have become evangelists. God is using them to build His church. The Lord is working in these ways in Uganda. Fourteen Congolese assemblies now exist in that country, many within refugee camps. There are also many gatherings of God's people scattered here and there. Yes, what

the devil intends for evil God superintends for good.

Recently, the believers in some of the refugee camps in Uganda received Congo Swahili New Testaments (Agano Jipya). One believer said, "I thank you so much for receiving the Agano Jipya because I lost my Bible when I was running from the war in DRC to come to Uganda." Another shared, "To get Bibles and hymnbooks is very difficult, especially since it requires money, which is hard to find. But today God has shown grace and done a miracle to provide these books! God bless all those who have thought to provide these sweet books for us! These will lead many to eternal life!"

Your part

Please pray that the Lord will continue to bless the distribution of His Word and that many will be saved. Also, pray for the strengthening of our partnerships with assembly ministries that share our mission of getting the Gospel to the lost, especially in some of the neediest places in Africa. ■

Terry Wilson, commended worker and president of EPI

¹ Della Letkeman, *No Time to Quit: The Biography of R.E. Harlow* (Port Colborne, Ontario: Everyday Publications, 2000), 235. ² UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), "DR Congo Emergency," February 2023, [UNHCR.org/dr-congo-emergency.html](https://www.unhcr.org/dr-congo-emergency.html).

Opposite page: Some Bibles are stored in Lubumbashi (Photo by Ben Muluku). **This page: (Top)** Grateful believers receive New Testaments (Photo by Shadrack Kahiigwa). **(Left)** Bob Watt oversees Congolese Swahili translations (Photo by Glenda Watt). **(Below, clockwise from top)** Eddy Mugisa, an Emmanuel Community representative, enjoys his New Testament (Photo by Eddy Mugisa); Women in a Ugandan refugee camp hold New Testaments (Photo by Shadrack Kahiigwa); This believer balances her new Bible atop her relief food (Photo by Steve Wolcott).



The morning of February 6, 2023, was cold and snowy when a series of major earthquakes struck Turkey in and around the biblical city of Antioch (today, Antakya). Besides the catastrophic damage to the buildings, thousands upon thousands of lives were instantly lost, and even more people were left homeless. Immediately, financial contributions

Our First Mission Trip

An Albanian Assembly Builds Mini-Houses in Turkey

BY GEORGE STURM

soared, and disaster relief agencies, in turn, began sending in personnel with tents, medicine, and food. For a time, the earthquakes were one of the top news stories, and believers made many prayers on behalf of the Turkish people. Unfortunately, with the passage of time, this situation faded from public attention and was replaced with other top news stories. However, I kept thinking of what else the Lord might have me do. I mean, I could quite easily pray and send a check, but did the Lord want me to do something specific?

The answer came in Romania, where I had been invited to be one of the main speakers at a missions conference. Besides the ministry from the Word, several missionaries presented reports. One focused on a recent trip into the earthquake area of Turkey. There, the team of believers built several mini-houses for families while having a great and open door to sharing the Gospel. It was almost like a voice from heaven in that this ministry answered my prayers. Upon returning to Albania, I shared the idea with the believers, and four leading men in the local assembly volunteered for the missionary journey to Antioch.

One day in late spring, our team departed with a vehicle full of tools and the blessing of the assembly. We left in faith, not knowing exactly what to expect. After two days of travel, we arrived in Antioch. Seeing pictures online is one thing, but seeing things firsthand is quite another. Rubble and destroyed buildings were everywhere. Even the structures left standing were cracked and uninhabitable. Families were living in tents—alongside the road, in leveled-off fields, or on plots of land near their devastated homes. Everyone had a sad story to tell. Besides the loss of their worldly possessions, most had suffered the loss of a family member.

Using money distributed from CMML's disaster relief fund for Turkey, we built three mini-homes. More importantly, we brought Christ's love to three families.

Three families, many blessings

The first family is well respected in the community since the husband was a city official. A few years back, they moved into a new six-story apartment building. In February, the earthquakes destroyed it. The wife was pregnant but lost the baby when a wall fell on her. She remains in the hospital recovering from her injuries. The family owns a small plot of land nearby, so we built their mini-home there. During construction, all the neighbors came by for a look, and we communicated that we are Christians. In the end, the family was extremely grateful for this blessing. We remain in contact via WhatsApp.

The second family we helped had, likewise, lost everything. Ahmet, a welder, owns a piece of land that had been his metal junkyard. We cleared a

section, and with some good effort from our team, a mini-home came into being. We shared Scripture with Ahmet, including the story of Nicodemus. He said to us, "Jesus must be proud of you for this good work. I thought that such good people exist only in movies. I'm glad we met. You showed that good people are not only in movies. Thank you very much."

The third family is headed by a woman named Ilkay, who had lived in a one-story home with her children and mother. Like the other two families, she lost her home to the earthquakes. A tent camp for 19 people formed since extended family members were in the same plight.

In that camp, we cleared a section for Ilkay's mini-home. Following typical Middle Eastern culture, this family, despite their poverty, fed us two simple meals per day with lots of breaks for Turkish tea. Of course, these times gave us opportunities to speak of the Lord. As we finished, the family gave many thanks to us and, in the words of Ilkay, to "our Lord Jesus."

A prayer for Antioch

With great sadness, we returned to Albania. Our trip was a life-changing experience for the Albanian men and was, in fact, our first missionary journey as an assembly. They learned the truth of Acts 20:35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Oh, how great are the needs and opportunities in Antioch. May the Lord raise up more people to go into this harvest field so Acts 11:21 may once again be the description of Antioch: "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord." ■



George and Nancy Sturm are commended from Overbrook Gospel Chapel in Greenville, South Carolina.



Top: The earthquakes destroyed this building, as they did thousands of homes and structures. **Middle (from left):** The former city official appreciates his new home; Ahmet helps the team represent Albania in front of his mini-home; Ilkay's new house is ready! **Bottom (from left):** The believers' first mission trip as an assembly was life changing; The first mini-home takes shape.

Editor's Note: As the author mentioned, the needs and opportunities in Antakya are great—as are those throughout central and southern Turkey, where the earthquakes hit. Several CMML missionaries are on the ground, involved in ongoing, large-scale relief efforts. An article on this work will appear in a forthcoming issue.





God is
love.

In this the
love of God

was manifested toward us, that God
has sent His only begotten Son into the
world, that we might live through Him.

In this is
love,

not that we loved God, but that

He loved us

and sent His Son to be the propitiation
for our sins. Beloved, if God

so loved us,

we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:8–11