

MISSION: MATTERS

WHERE THE WORD
MEETS THE WORLD

August-September 2026

God seeks His valuable people
where they are at

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Despite the brokenness in our fallen world, God's Word is shining light in the darkest of places.

A life discarded— then made whole 3-6

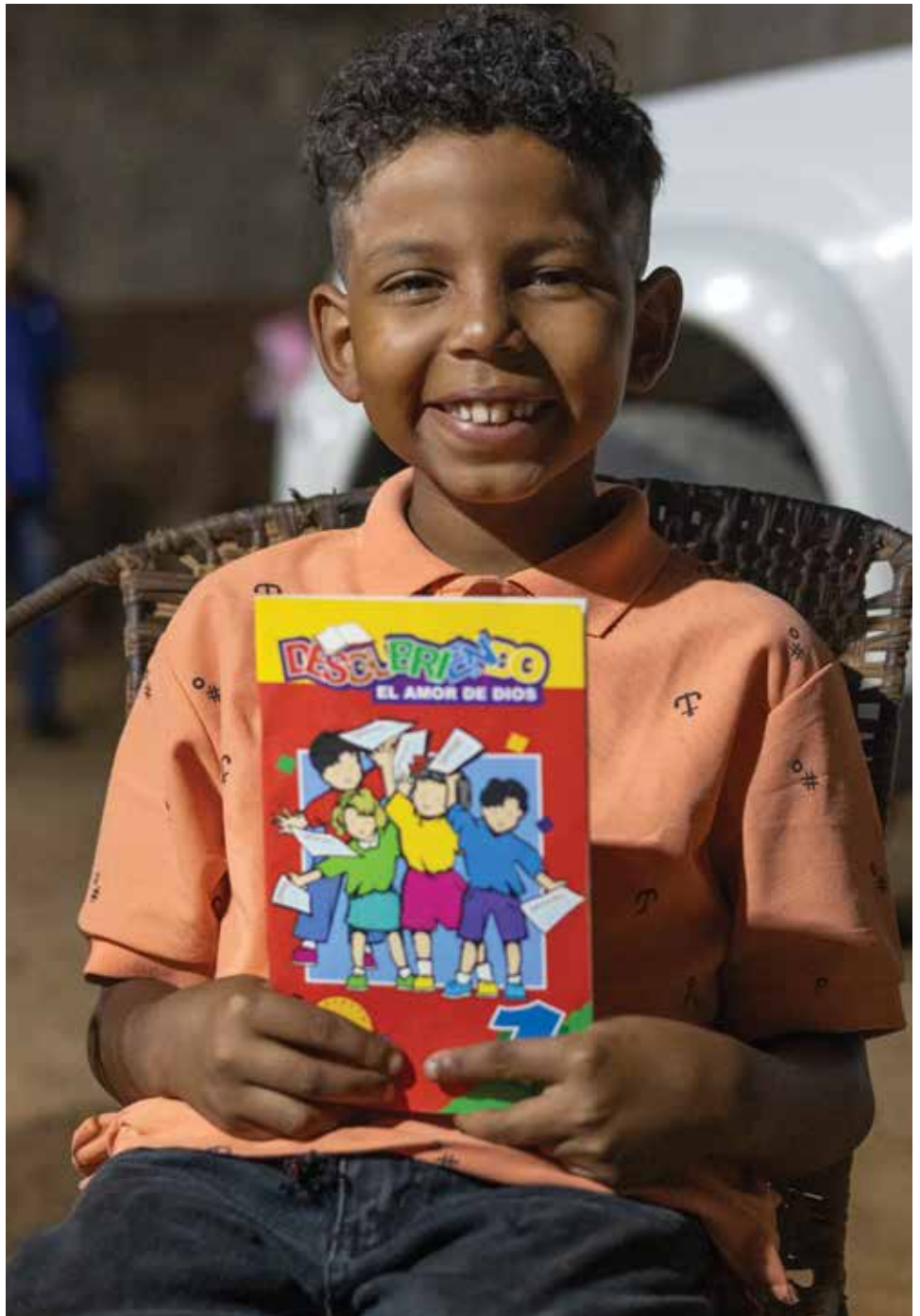
Esteban (*pictured*) was left at a dump. But Jesus showed him his true value.

Changing lives in her own backyard 7-9

Maria, by the grace of God, brought life to a place that felt like death.

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Ruth started a church in a place you wouldn't expect. Now, others are finding joy in Jesus.



Letter from the President

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on me. The LORD has chosen me to tell good news to the poor and to comfort those who are sad. Isaiah 61:1 ERV

He Goes Where No One Else Will

You're helping care for the brokenhearted amidst the world's suffering

Dear Friend,

As I look around the world, it's hard not to see the utter brokenness. Poverty. War. Famine. Yet I'm also constantly reminded that we serve a compassionate, loving Savior who meets us wherever we are in life. In the suffering, in the pain, in far-off places, and in our own backyards, He sees us. We matter to Him.

These hymn lyrics, penned in 1880, come to mind: "Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me. Come home, come home; you who are weary come home."

Scripture is full of examples of God reaching people in all walks of life. Whether it's the parable of the lost sheep or Thomas wanting to place his hands in Jesus' wounds or Hagar wandering the desert, He calls us to Himself. He knows what we need—His hope, love, and salvation.

Jesus is with us in our brokenness, our weariness, and our joy. And you'll find those stories in this edition of *Mission: Matters*.

In the following pages, you'll read about Maria Magdalena, Ruth, and Esteban. For Maria Magdalena and Ruth, God called them to take Jesus to places in Zambia and Nicaragua that others likely wouldn't go. And for Esteban in Venezuela, Jesus met this little boy in one of the most brutal situations.

As you'll read in these pages, Jesus is calling. For everyone, everywhere, no matter where they are in the world or in life. God called Maria Magdalena to *La Chureca* (the dump), and she went. She stood in front of vulnerable people in a desperate place and said, "He came with me to tell you that He wants to give you life again."

Because of your support, Maria Magdalena has the resources to keep answering that call. She's bringing hope to families who need to know that Jesus is calling them too, and that He will meet them right where they are.

Thank you for helping make this possible through your support and prayers.

In Christ,



Jos Snoep
President



Esteban Was Thrown Away

But through you, God's Word showed a wounded boy his true value

—Written by Daniel Clavijo

"...a garbage dump."

My new friend Karina, a local church leader, said those words while our van moved through Maracaibo under suffocating heat. I didn't know everything behind her words, but something in me stopped. Outside, houses, motorcycles, and dust flew by. It was right in front of me, but I almost failed to see this story.

Her words stayed there in my chest, like a stone.

A boy in a dump

The night before, we had arrived exhausted in the Blanquita de Pérez neighborhood of Venezuela for a church gathering. The meeting wasn't in a church building, but on a dirt street with little light—and without a platform, sound system, or instruments. Nothing conveyed that hidden there was a story ripe with potential for joy, of all things.

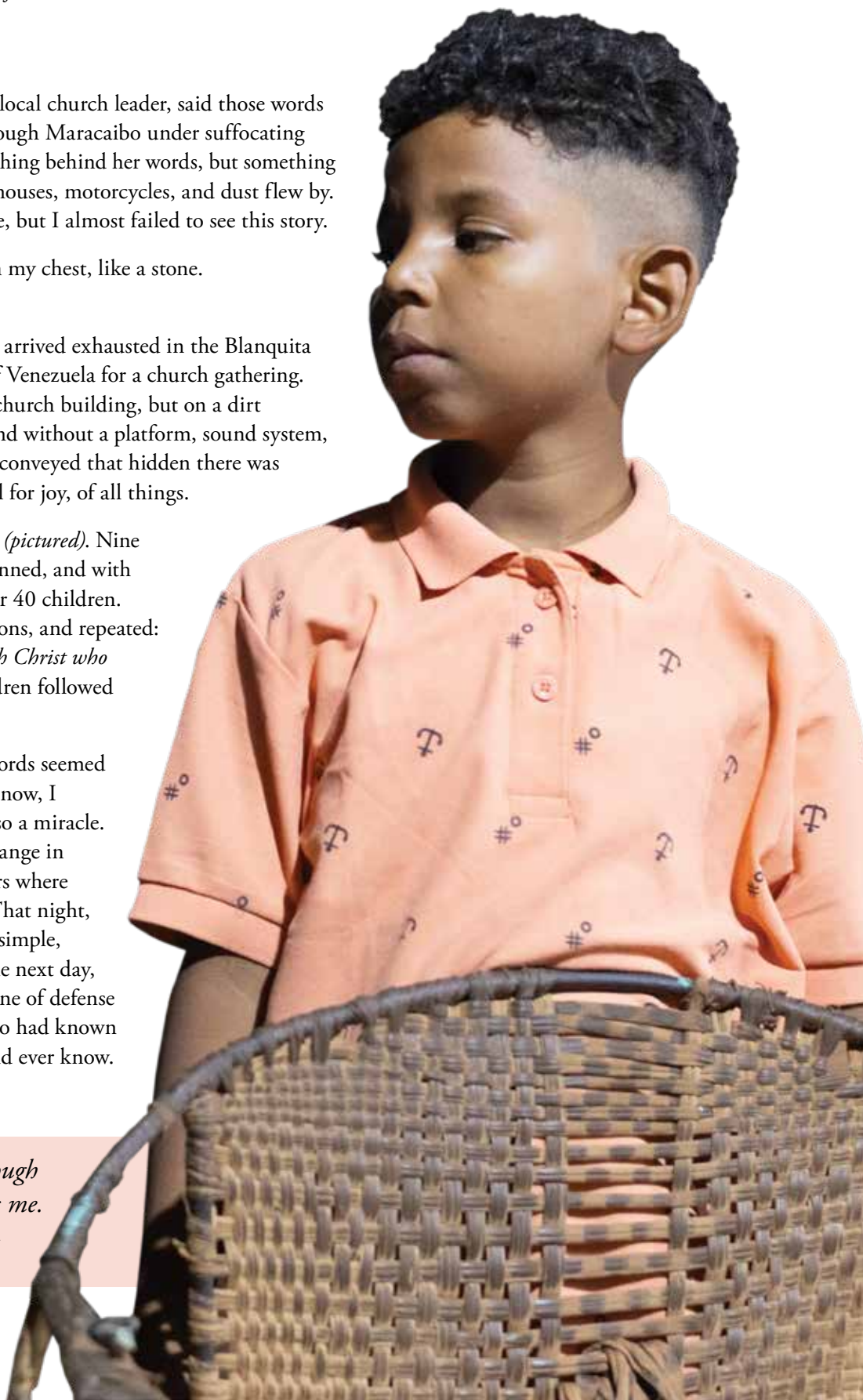
Then I saw him. Esteban (*pictured*). Nine years old, thin, brown-skinned, and with a sweet face, leading 30 or 40 children. He prayed, gave instructions, and repeated: *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* The children followed his instructions.

Even at the time, these words seemed beautiful to me. Though now, I understand that it was also a miracle. There are phrases that change in weight when one discovers where they were spoken from. That night, that verse sounded like a simple, recited memory verse. The next day, I could see that it was a line of defense in the heart of a child who had known places that no child should ever know.

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*I can do all things through
Christ who strengthens me.*

Philippians 4:13 NKJV



A boy's dream

After the service, I sat beside Esteban at a crowded plastic folding table. Together, we laughed over a meager meal of a spoonful of tuna and half a hot dog bun—most likely the only food he and his friends would receive that day. I asked him if he was afraid to lead so many children, and he told me no. Then I asked him who Jesus was to him. *“A very great God, my Father, my friend, my family too.”* I also asked him what he wanted to be. *“A pastor,”* he told me. *“It is beautiful to care for people and for my family.”*

A boy made vulnerable

Later on, Karina shared Esteban's upbringing with me.

Esteban's mother had left for Colombia, looking for other possibilities, but something happened along the way. Though the details never leave Karina's quivering lips, they are expressed by silence and the empathetic pain in her eyes. What is certain is that his mother's journey ended at the Jesús Enrique Lossada landfill, where families live among garbage, sun, hunger, and abandonment. That is where Esteban was left abandoned.

His life descended into a darkness that's difficult to write about. He was handed over to other people. Adults took advantage of his vulnerability. They dressed him like a girl, put makeup on him, and exposed him to a harmful,



confusing, and humiliating environment. I don't want to turn a child's pain into a spectacle, but neither do I want to whitewash reality until it becomes unrecognizable.

That is why my eyes filled with tears when I remembered the night before. The boy who was exposed to deep vulnerability was now standing, guiding others, fully secure in his identity as a child of God. The boy found in a garbage dump was saying God had made him valuable!

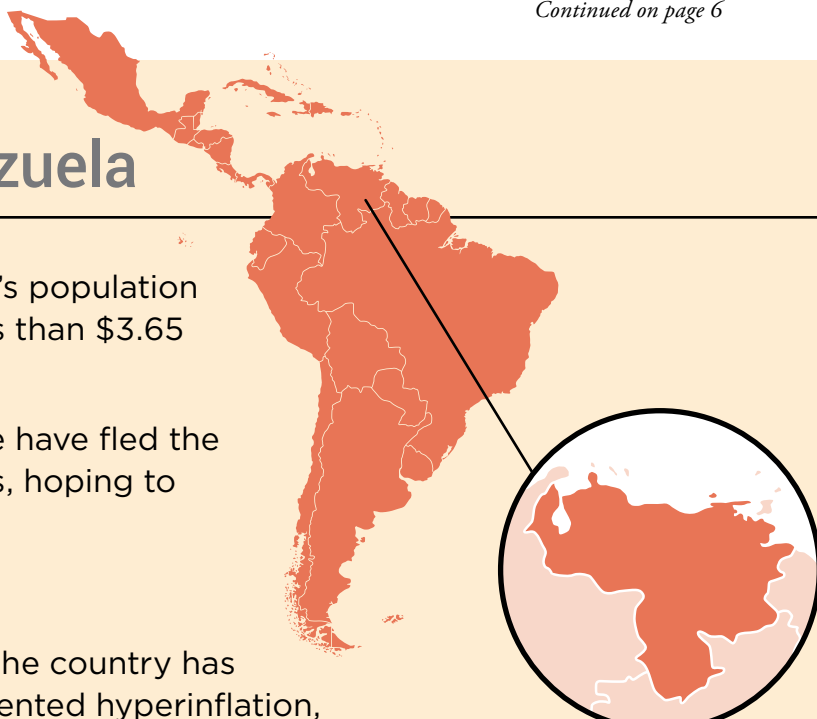
A boy made valuable

Sometime later, Doris, his grandmother and a Bible League-trained teacher, was visiting the dump. She was

looking for children to love with a passionate desire to share the Word. The very first child who ran into her arms was a child dressed like a girl. It was Esteban, her own grandson. I do not know how much can fit inside an embrace, but in this one, there was revelation, a grandmother's pain, and the mercy of God making its way through the garbage. Doris understood who he was, perhaps only by God's illumination, and took him home. Immediately, Doris began teaching him about Jesus through Bible League Bible studies, beginning with *The Gospel of John*. There, the Word began to do its work: not as an ornament, but as a seed. Taking a child

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Fast Facts: Venezuela



- Over half of the nation's population lives in poverty, on less than \$3.65 per day.
- Nearly 8 million people have fled the country in recent years, hoping to find a better life.

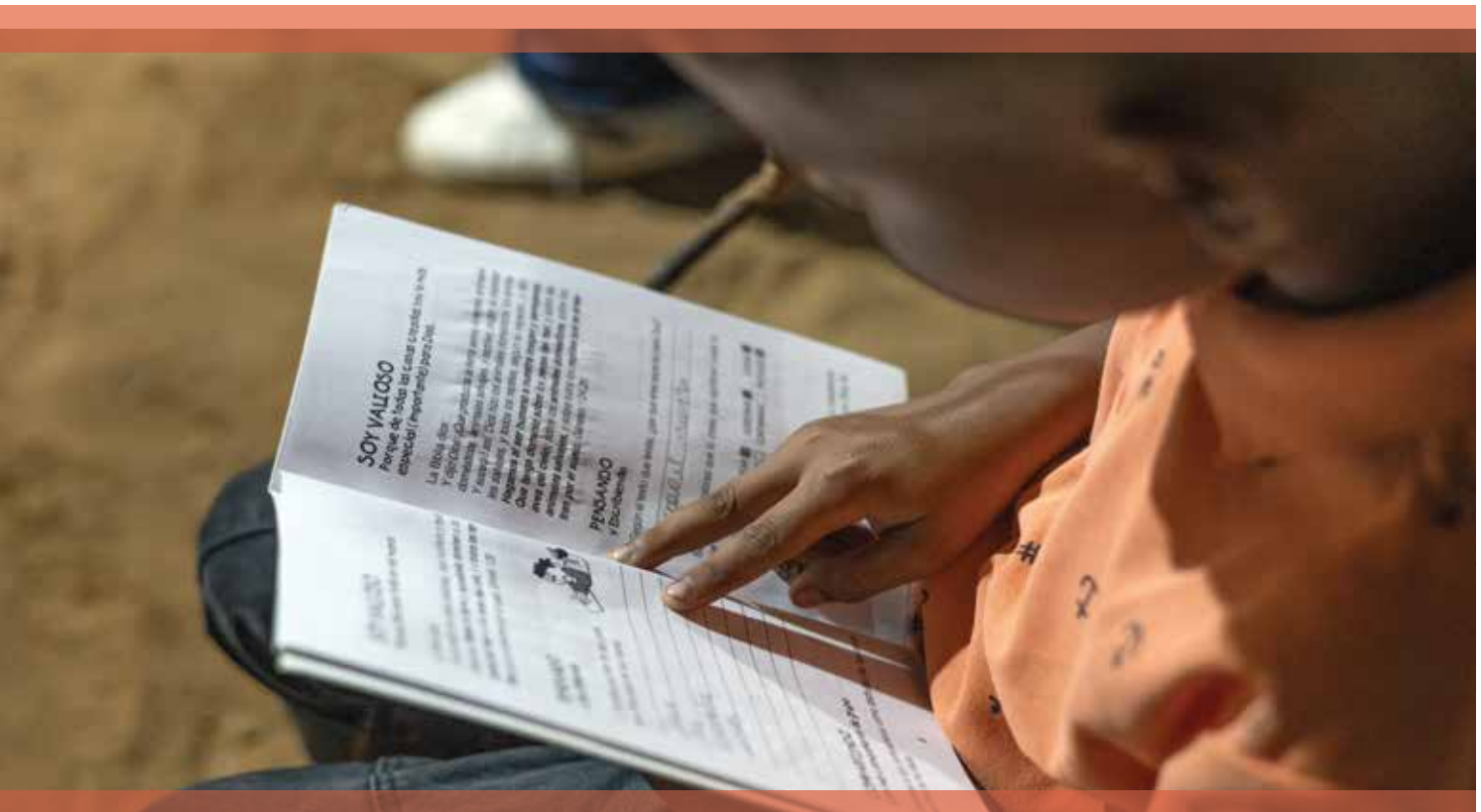


- Over the last decade, the country has experienced unprecedented hyperinflation, peaking at 130,000% in 2018. Recent reports estimate it at 387% in 2026.



- Studies have found that about 35% of Venezuelan children are malnourished.
- Last year, over 16,000 children found hope in the Word of God with Bible League's Bibles and Bible Studies.

Sources: Our World in Data, The UN Refugee Agency, Council on Foreign Relations, International Monetary Fund, and NBC News.



I asked Esteban what he wanted to be. “A pastor,” he told me. “It is beautiful to care for people and for my family.” Thank you for caring for Esteban!

out of a dark place can happen in one day; taking the darkness of that place out of him could take years.

As the van’s AC began to soothe me, I remembered standing over Esteban when I asked him what lesson he remembered from his Bible studies. He flipped the booklet open to “*I Am Valuable*.” With any child, this would be meaningful. In Esteban, it is sacred. A child found in a garbage dump needs to hear that he is not garbage. A child treated like an object needs to know that he is a valued child of God. A child in the wrong hands needs to discover that he belongs to Christ.

A boy in Christ

Not everything where Esteban lives is resolved. Poverty remains. Food is still scarce. His family still needs restoration. But something of the Kingdom is already growing when a dark street becomes a church and a

Bible booklet reaches the heart of a wounded child to teach him to say of himself: “*I am valuable*.”

I don’t know what God will do with Esteban or how many years he will need to heal. But I know what I saw: a child standing on a dark street leading others toward Jesus, a grandmother who went looking for children and found her grandson, and a table where the bread didn’t supply everything but love from the community did.

Sometimes, the Father finds His most valuable vessels where the world piles its waste. And when He finds them, He doesn’t leave them there. He lifts them up, surrounds them with community, and fills them with His Word. And one day, perhaps still wounded, He places them among other small broken vessels to say: “I am valuable. I am not afraid. Christ strengthens me.”



Story by Daniel Clavijo. Daniel serves with Bible League International as Communications Specialist based in Colombia. He captures and shares stories of faith, hope, and transformation across South America. He is passionate about telling honest, beautiful stories to bring you closer to the people and communities serving to grow the Church.

Breathing Life into the Trash

How you're transforming one of the neediest communities in Nicaragua

Children eating rotten bread. Vultures circling. Malnourished children. As Maria Magdalena watched these images, she thought: *This is probably happening in Africa.*

But what she saw on the nightly news wasn't in Africa. It was in her own backyard.

Going to the dump

The news report from Managua, Nicaragua's *La Chureca*—the city dump—changed everything. Feeling a divine call, the newly divorced single mom of two moved across town to what many

would call the worst place on earth. She immediately began telling people there that Jesus wanted to give them life.

Thirty years later, Maria Magdalena's faith has transformed the community she now calls home. What began as a small gathering on a tarp beneath a tree where people burned tires is now a building filled with a congregation of 80. Across the street, her free school welcomes more than 200 children each year. In both places, God's Word is central, is at the core, and is bringing joy to those crushed in spirit.

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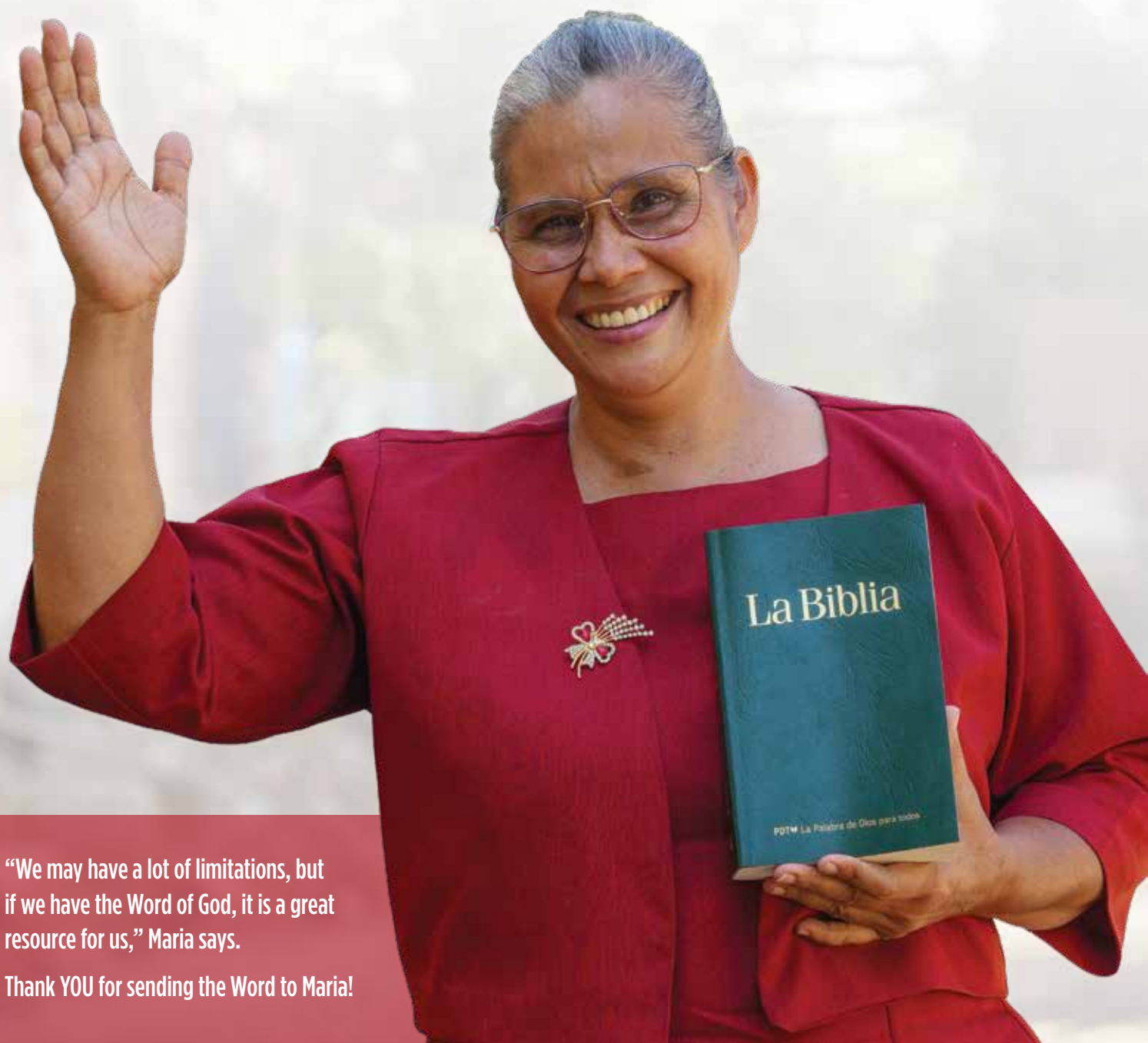
It might seem like Maria Magdalena (*pictured*) has already done it all. But she lacked one thing: Bibles and discipleship tools. Three years ago, after attending Bible League's Church Planter Training program, that changed. Using Bible League's Bible studies, people became captivated by God's Word. Now everyone in her church has a Bible, and Maria helps lead 12 Bible study groups that are discipling over 100 people.

She says, "How Bible League disciples people opened my mind. We needed material like this. The way that we are working now impacts more people than before."

An abundant life

Many kids at Maria Magdalena's school only have one meal a day. Yet Maria Magdalena knows their souls are being fed. "To have materials is to have an abundant life. We may have a lot of limitations, but if we have the Word of God, it is a great resource for us."

Today, the haze of burning trash still fills the streets. But Jesus is there, and he's bringing hope through Maria Magdalena's obedience. Just like her determination, her bright smile hasn't faded. She is still answering the call to feed hungry souls, and plans to disciple 100 more this year.



"We may have a lot of limitations, but if we have the Word of God, it is a great resource for us," Maria says.

Thank YOU for sending the Word to Maria!



“I have learned that God made me with love and purpose. That’s why I like Him, and He loves me. That’s why I feel secure. I am very special because He made me that way.”

—Sofia, a first grader at Maria Magdalena’s school in La Chureca

*I called to the LORD, and he heard me.
He heard my cries. He lifted me out of
the grave. He lifted me from that muddy
place. He picked me up, put me on solid
ground, and kept my feet from slipping.*

Psalms 40:1-2 ERV

La Chureca: A Brief History

For decades, many would have deemed this place hell on earth. This is *La Chureca* (slang for “The Dump”)—Managua’s open-air landfill on the south shore of Lake Managua.

Spanning more than 100 acres, it was once the largest open-air garbage dump in Central America. It was also home to more than 1,500 people, including children who earned income from collecting trash and recyclables.

Following the catastrophic 1972 earthquake that devastated Managua and caused deep poverty, La Chureca began receiving solid waste. For nearly 40 years, it was left unregulated. Fires, toxic waste, and trash spilling into Lake Managua led to widespread pollution.

About 13 years ago, La Chureca’s redevelopment moved residents into hundreds of government-built homes. Living in the dump is now prohibited and considered hazardous. Even so, many families still live nearby and rely on it for income.

Though much has changed, the smog and mounds of trash are a constant reminder of its heartbreaking past and present. Sadly, the community remains extremely vulnerable, facing drug addiction, low education levels, and food insecurity.



Starting a Church Under a Tree

You helped Ruth become the first evangelist her town ever had

Kapiri is a small, rural town in central Zambia embroiled in prostitution, theft, and idol worship. Seasonal torrential rains turn the sunbaked, red-clay roads into impassible muddy rivers. This community is largely forgotten by most... but not faithful Ruth.

Ruth (*pictured*) knew that as much as the people of Kapiri were lost, they still hungered for truth. As she walked the streets among her friends and neighbors, her heart ached. Kapiri didn't have a church or shepherd guiding them to Jesus. So, more than anything, Ruth desired to share the light of the Gospel with them.

God provides for His people

But how? She lacked Bible training centers, teachers, and know-how. Costing \$10 each, Bibles are too expensive—especially when so many survive on less than \$1 a day. Not in the least discouraged, she prayed earnestly—certain that God would hear her.

His answer came when her bishop, witnessing her heart and desire, encouraged her to attend Bible

As Ruth says, “Your support is helping people believe in Christ.” There’s no greater gift than that. Thank you!

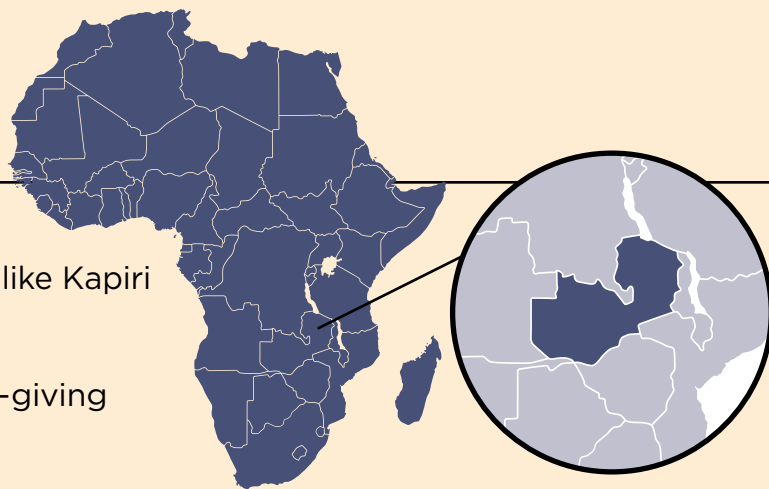
“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Matthew 9:37-38 NIV



Fast Facts: Zambia

- About 60% of Zambia's 22 million people live in rural towns and villages like Kapiri
- In the past two years...
 - 135,000 people have heard the life-giving gospel of Jesus Christ
 - 139 Churches have been planted



League's Church Planter Training program. There, Bibles and Bible studies were made freely available. Upon joining the year-long program, Ruth saw God provide everything she needed to become the first evangelist in Kapiri.

God moves greatly in Kapiri

Putting into practice what she learned, Ruth trudged through mire, mud, and grass thickets to invite a few to study *The Gospel of John*. The group grew under a

protective shade tree, then turned into a second group, then another. Soon, one Bible study had grown into three. Many who once practiced idol worship and traditional rituals are now turning to Jesus in hope and joy.

Ruth testifies, *"Some people had given up on life, but now they have hope again, and transformation can be seen and felt in the communities. Thank you to Bible League—your support is helping people believe in Christ. The Bibles and Bible studies have helped the community to interact in a humane way because they now know that Jesus commands believers to treat each other with love."*





Help Give Maria the Biblical Resources She Needs

Tears well in Maria Magdalena's eyes (*story, pages 7-9*). She can't help but get emotional when she thinks of how you're helping her to share the Gospel. "To have materials is to have an abundant life."

She believes the Bibles and leadership training you're providing her and others around the world are life-changing. She used to have nothing to give when someone asked for a Bible. Now, she does.

"This is the only way to accomplish the Great Commission—to help churches with fewer resources keep spreading the Word of God."

Your gift today will provide Bibles and train leaders like Maria Magdalena. You can help more people to have the joy of an abundant life. For more information and to donate, please visit bibleleague.org/mm or scan the QR code to the right.



Share the Bible... Every. Single. Month.

Many believers around the world have never held a Bible in their hands. You can help change that by becoming a Sower, one of Bible League's faithful monthly givers. And, right now, your first monthly gift will be DOUBLED up to \$5,000.

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