



the REAPER

VOL. 65, NO. 4 | Winter 2020

**PREPARING OUR TENT TO
ENLARGE OUR VISION**

Isaiah 54

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF SOURCE OF LIGHT INTERNATIONAL MADISON, GA

Source of Light Ministries International is an independent, faith mission that exists to bring people of every nation, language, and ethnicity into a mature relationship with Jesus Christ and into fellowship with a local church family.

SLM is a world-wide, disciple making, church planting ministry that uses the medium of Bible lessons for all ages in both printed and electronic format to achieve its goals. The International Headquarters in Madison, Georgia, its Discipleship Training Branches (DTB), and Associate Discipleship Schools (ADS), distribute lessons throughout the world.

Representatives and Missionaries of SLM are available to present the ministry to churches, missionary conferences, and other groups. Contact the **SLM PR OFFICE** for scheduling.

For information visit us at:
www.sourcelight.org
or call **800.776.1207**

the REAPER is published by Source of Light Ministries International, Inc. and is free of charge to subscribers. Write or call to be placed on the mailing list.

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Source of Light Ministries International, Inc.
1011 Mission Road, Madison, Georgia 30650

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Printed in the United States of America, October 2020

the REAPER

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Corrections & Clarifications

For the latest version of *the Reaper* go to sourcelight.org/reaper

Enlarging the Tent, Lengthening the Cords, and Strengthening the Stakes at SLM

Letter from the Editor

There is nothing significant about “numbers” in the ministry and I’ve always been hesitant in using them as some sort of gauge as to whether we have been a success. In fact, if I went off of numbers, certain seasons of my own individual missionary work would have appeared to be utter failures, had I not been convinced we were in a season of planting seeds.

Among mission agencies, some might see SLM as “the little guy,” that “little mission in Madison, Georgia.” There might be elements of that statement that are true. But given the size of our administration and overhead compared to the impact the ministry is having around the globe, our ministry “numbers” often dwarf the numbers of the “big guys.”

It is in no way a competition and we pray diligently for our partners in ministry that they would make judicious use of their time and resources in the same way God has blessed the efforts of SLM these many years.

But just because SLM has been effective these many years at its mission to “bring people of every nation, language, and ethnicity into

a mature relationship with Jesus Christ and into fellowship with a local church family,” doesn’t mean we are even close to fulfilling it and thus, the Great Commission. There is so much more yet to do.

This most recent season at SLM has given us some time to look around at how we are doing what we are doing and evaluate the operation, the oversight, and approaches to doing ministry with a vision for the future. It has become very clear that in order for us to achieve the next level of ministry, we are needing to “prepare our tents” for expansion, similar to the exhortation in Isaiah 54 verses 2–3:

Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the desolate cities to be inhabited.

God instructed Israel, that in faith, even in her barrenness, she should prepare herself, craft her life, in such a way as to be prepared for an unimaginable expansion. The tent metaphor sets the stage for a mentality that I believe to be very intentional about how He expects us

to live. God could have chosen some sort of fixed structure analogy, but instead focuses on a structure meant to be temporary, flexible, movable, and inexpensive. With so much focus placed on facilities in ministries, the disproportionate amounts invested in underutilized facilities over money used to minister to people, it’s fitting that God prepared the “barren woman” to whom He promised a rich blessing to do so from among the most modest of accommodations.



Guyana: Beginning stage of the SLM office in Guyana –Photo by Ron Barnes

When one visits SLM they are always surprised to see that it was “bigger than they imagined.” I am thankful for those who went before me who invested in ample acreage and those whose vision involved expanded facilities. Our modest facilities are not fancy, but they meet the needs of what we need to accomplish for our many Branches. But even in our facility use, we need to do more

with what we have been given. Our Branches have also been attempting to make sure they are ready for the expansion of their ministries. These are just a few examples:

Uganda just recently purchased land for an office, a residence, and facilities that can house some income generating micro-enterprises so that the ministry of SLM Uganda can expand and reduce some of its overseas dependency.

Brazil is looking to move from its donated office space to a plot of land that has been offered to them and build its own offices as God provides the resources.

Guyana has just finished the relocation of its offices after adding an office and storage facility to their church plant building.

Romania seeks to expand their ministry into a rehabilitation facility of their own that would see former inmates continue in their spiritual growth after incarceration, and also be trained for various trades.

The Lord is also challenging us to stretch the curtains and lengthen the cords. In recent months, we have completed both the World Wide Bible Institute and our Basic Courses in Online formats and we have begun uploading them in different languages to be used by each of our Branches. This will give unprecedented access to our courses for students from around the world and in many places

where the Word of God is prohibited. This will also allow those who desire a deeper study of the Word of God, particularly the many pastors, evangelists, and missionaries who have no formal training, to receive the training that they have always longed for.

The Lord has already allowed students in restricted access countries of the Middle East to be taking our courses in online format. Those who operate in underground churches have previously been prevented from attending any formal Bible training. We are also making strides in updating the courses in wording and design and in over a dozen new languages. We want to make these courses more universal in their appeal to different cultures and easy to understand and translate.

But finally, understanding the frailty of our “tent”, particularly as we anticipate expansion, we have spent a significant amount of time “strengthening our stakes.”

Our staff and administration have been feverishly preparing and studying for newer and more efficient methods to strengthen how we operate. This training, study, and research has impacted every department and every missionary at SLM. We have improved how each of us, our foreign missionaries included, are reporting various types of information for greater accountability and more streamlined administration of that information.

Our Accounting Department has “digitized” many processes that were time consuming and have reduced the amount of paperwork and “man-hours” for doing some of these tasks. We have created systems so that viewing of their accounts were made more accessible to our missionaries in real time and systems that donors and donations can be more easily tracked.

Many of the tasks that required missionaries to do on the network on the main campus at SLM has now been streamlined so that they are available wherever our missionaries have an Internet connection.

These improvements have come at some cost, yes financial, but also with significant learning curves. But we have been determined to see the vision and mission of SLM be continually carried out far beyond each of us and bigger than any of us could dream it to be. So, it has been a small sacrifice and a short inconvenience, to know that God will begin to fill the tent that we have expanded, in His time!



After years of serving as a church planting missionary, **Dr. Ronald J. Barnes Jr.** now serves as the CEO for SLM.

Follow me @RonBarnesJr

World Wide Bible Institute Now Online at wwbionline.org

by Brenda Barnes



There are approximately 10,000 Seminaries/Bible Colleges in the world today.



These institutions will only be able to produce approximately 5–7% of the needed pastors, evangelists, and missionaries.



Less than 10% of all ministers worldwide have ever had formal Bible College or Seminary training.

If there was ever a need to have an affordable Bible Institute option, not just for pastors and missionaries, but for Christians seeking to deepen their faith and knowledge, the time is now.

Bible Colleges, Institutes, and Seminaries are struggling in a day and age where cost, competition, and accreditation are driving them out of existence. Many seeking the next level of Bible training cannot afford to go away to school with jobs, ministries, and families, and many find the pace of traditional school impossible to manage. These challenges are exactly why Source of Light Ministries International has created the completely online Bible Institute.

World Wide Bible Institute, or WWBI, is a three-year Bible Institute Curriculum created to be used in a structured on-line setting.

WWBI's curriculum is one that has been carefully arranged so that it progresses from simple to more complex themes and produces a “building block effect” where each subject and year builds upon what has been learned in another. It also gives flexibility to a student's particular needs and abilities by allowing a student the opportunity of choosing one or more courses to work on at a time and the functionality of the program allows a student to work at his or her own pace.

WWBI utilizes the very latest

techniques in the field of programmed instruction. WWBI's materials are all produced using the Programmed Instruction Method or PIM. With this approach, small amounts of information are given to the student and then an immediate response is called for in which the student restates in writing the ideas just imparted.

A quiz is used following each section, which requires a second response to that same information. At the end of the "STEP", a Pre-Test is constructed so that the student again repeats the information given. Almost all STEPs have an In-Service Project

to submit and that is graded by the professor which allows the student to practically apply to life and ministry the information and truths learned throughout that STEP

Finally, a STEP-test is unlocked allowing the student to access it when ready to take the test. With this method, students come away with a firm grasp of the material they have studied. The goal of this particular method is entirely geared towards the student learning the material, having a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Word of God, and the ability to apply it to their life and ministry.

- ◆ \$50 per course
- ◆ Scholarships available for those demonstrating their need
- ◆ All 6 semesters are cheaper than one semester at other schools
- ◆ Typically transfer of credit is possible
- ◆ Articulation agreement with many Bible Colleges for guaranteed acceptance of courses

- ◆ Study at your pace
- ◆ Study without leaving home
- ◆ GAP year
- ◆ Homeschool Dual Enrollment
- ◆ Associates Degree in Christian Ministry



Brenda Barnes has served as a missionary in Hungary and the Czech Republic as a teacher and discipler as well as having homeschooled all three of her children. She serves at SLM as the Assistant Reaper Editor, Hospitality Coordinator, and the WWBI Registrar.

NEW SEASON, NEW NEEDS

by Brian Thigpen

As Source of Light poises itself to expand into online discipleship as well as continuing to grow our reach with printed lessons, how is the Finance Department to absorb the additional accounting and processing to support a growing ministry?

Consider the fact that the vast majority of missions' organizations take administrative fees to pay for finance staff. However, all our finance staff are primarily supported by individuals and churches, which allows us to avoid admin fees from donations, but makes it difficult to maintain a full staff.

These challenges are why we have spent the last year and a half researching and implementing new technologies and processes in the Finance Department. A few examples of improvements:

- 1. A New staff portal – Our local and global missionaries are now able to see their donations and current balances in real time from anywhere in the world. They can respond to financial partners quickly and know when funds are available. It also frees up our finance staff from regular requests for information from**

missionaries about their accounts.

2. Cloud-based donation entry software – Donation entry is more automated with default accounts for each donation. This reduces errors and the amount of time required to process donations.

3. Email receipting – We are also email receipt capable, giving the donor immediate confirmation and saving us time and money in the Finance Department.

Our financial team enjoys being able to get more done, in less time, with fewer errors.

With a total staff of four, and two of those being only part time, a global ministry spanning over 30 countries and thousands of donors is a challenge to maintain.

It was a steep learning curve for this 68-year-old mission agency, but we are now poised to move into the next season as Source of Light expands with our online lessons launch. New technology for a new season of opportunity with the same eternal Good News.



Believing every place is a mission field, **Brian Thigpen** served overseas, taught high school math, and now serves as CFO at SLM.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

by Kimberly Rae Thigpen

Source of Light's first lessons were hand-cranked through a mimeograph machine.



Machine used in 1952.

Over the 68 years since, millions of lessons have been mailed, hand-delivered, loaded onto transports, or shipped by barge. SLM now ships about three tons of material in a single year.

But what happens when shipping costs skyrocket, civil unrest blocks deliveries, or a global pandemic shuts down international trade? What do we do for the millions of people in closed countries, where holding a Bible lesson in their hands could result in prison or death? And how do we most effectively reach a generation more comfortable with a gadget in their hands than a book?

It's time to expand!

SLM has been working to get our evangelistic and discipleship courses into an online, globally accessible format. The advantages to this would be immense.

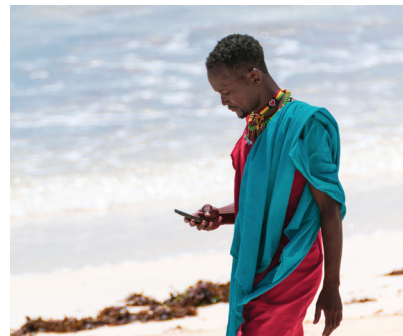
Even before the Covid shutdown, our missionaries around the world were seeing the need for courses online. Madison Discipleship School Director, Brian Thompson, says, "There are situations even in English-speaking parts of the world where it is too expensive to send lessons to those who need them. We have had people desperate to study God's Word, but lessons would get lost going the long distances to reach them in countries where we have no Branch or Associate Schools."

Right now, we have countries waiting on delivery of courses. Locations in Peru are requesting hundreds of lessons, but the Branch does not have that many in stock and could not travel to deliver what they do have.

Through online courses, Thompson says, "God is providing a way to send missionaries, via the Internet, to places we have been unable to help before."

Online courses would allow those in countries hostile to the Gospel to share the Good News phone to phone or computer to computer, with much less risk to themselves or those seeking truth. One of our Branch Directors has been beaten and left for dead while carrying

lessons. He survived, and one of his persecutors read the lessons and came to Christ. Another of his fellow workers, however, was recently murdered and the motorcycle he used for ministry stolen. For Muslims or those in Communist countries, even asking questions about Christ can be dangerous. Online lessons would allow them to seek God on their



There are currently more mobile device connections online than there are people in the world.

phones or tablets or computers. Those around them would have no idea they are not playing solitaire or doing online shopping. Imagine the possibilities!

Covid has shown us the great power of the Internet as a tool for the Gospel message. In Mexico, a Vacation Bible School was offered online rather than in person. Expecting 200–300 as in previous years, they were amazed to see logins from over 1,000 computers.

Already, the results of initial online attempts are, as one of our directors declares, "amazing." Ministry leaders are able to reach beyond their local areas, and even beyond borders.

Envision Americans studying lessons while waiting at the doctor's office, Africans reading the Gospel as they ride public transport, Asians sharing lessons in secret, device to device. Picture a great wave of new seekers learning, growing in the Lord, and then reaching others.

We recently heard about forty new pastors in one country, men who had before been graders of SLM lessons. That is the sustainable, reproducible ministry we strive for—planting seeds, reaping the harvest, and from that harvest to planting more seeds.

Online lessons are not to replace our print ministry here at Source of Light, but to expand it. More people getting the Gospel. More being discipled. That's why we are here.

Please pray with us that God will use this new tool in a mighty way. We expand our ministry to expand His Kingdom!

As Esther was told during a time of great crisis, before a time of great deliverance, who knows if we are "come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (See Esther 4:14)



Kimberly Rae Thigpen, author of 35 books, is married to SLM's CFO, Brian Thigpen, and currently homeschools their two children.

EXPANSION IN NORTH AMERICA: STRENGTHENING, BROADENING, AND ENLARGING

by Brian Thompson

Often overlooked in the rush overseas, North America has equally as needy unreached people groups according to the same standards we use for foreign statistics. Our seven Branch offices diligently share the Gospel even during a pandemic this year.

Beside the office in Madison, SLM has Branches in Canada, Kansas, New Mexico, Haiti, and Jamaica. At these locations, our Branch Directors lead the discipleship programs that reach many people all over their regions.

New Mexico

Darryl Evans heads up the office in Las Cruces, New Mexico, working with English and Spanish language students. They call their ministry, "Bible Studies by Mail" which began in 1979 in George and Mary Baker's home. After significant growth, the ministry moved to a rented office space for over 30 years. In all, it has been 40 plus years of blessing upon blessing! Now they have an

opportunity to significantly expand their ministry space and finally own their own office facility. This will give them around 1,000 more square feet to operate with. It is in a residential area, so we need your prayers as city re-zoning regulations are worked through with a planning technician. We rejoice with them as they work with almost 2,000 active students.

New Mexico– Office Building Project: Pray for the needed funds, help, and planning it is going to take for the new facility in Las Cruces.



Darryl and Joan Evans

Canada

Joe Homontowski runs the Canada Branch out of his home/office in Saskatchewan. They have a thriving ministry especially with the children in Western Canada. They keep enough inventory of English and French lessons to facilitate their work and provide lessons to Associates, across Canada. This year they were able to plant canola in a donated field so that the proceeds from the crop could benefit the ministry. As it is harvested and sold, there is a good possibility that it will provide \$25,000 for the work of the ministry. Some of the funds will be held to

buy seed for another crop for next year. This has the potential to keep the ministry self-funded for years to come!

Canada– Pray for the harvesting of the crops that will pay for the ministry after they are sold in October.



Joe and Penny Homontowski

Kansas

Leon Scott oversees our Branch in the Midwest. They serve to help many to know Christ and to follow Him in obedience. Their 4,400 active students are learning what it means to be a Christian and how to live for Him every day. This year they are working on upgrading the mission building. They will end up fixing the gutters, computers, the indoor lights, and the parking lot lighting. They need these upgrades to keep up the discipleship work they are doing.

Kansas– Office upgrade project: Between the indoor and outdoor projects, they still need \$5,500. Please pray that God will protect everyone who works to remodel and upgrade the lighting and computers at the office. Praise the Lord for His provision for the supplies.



Leon and Susan Scott

Madison

Brian Thompson supervises the home office School that has students in all 50 states and some even overseas. Over 100 salvations were reported in just the first half of the year! The staff works hard at perfecting a means to use the lessons and see an impact in lives for eternity. All the Branches in North America deal with inmates in prisons and jails, but over half of Madison's student body are incarcerated. The new opportunity that they are taking on this year is to manage the grading of lessons on-line. This has a great potential to reach many more souls for Christ. They are also involved in reworking the grading keys, revising courses, and developing additional resources for counseling.

Madison– Pray for the Lord's work in our students' hearts and to bring in many new students through the online courses.

West Jamaica

Don Schiffer started Follow the Source after several trips that made clear the need to reach the school children in the western part of Jamaica. They called the ministry

“Follow the Source” because the “Source of Light” name was already in use at the Kingston Branch. Now they are well-established with a national candidate being developed for future leadership of the Branch. The schools have given them an open door to share the Gospel and the lessons during the school year. They have thousands of children through using their teachers as distributors. They also host mission teams that go into the schools with programs and presentations.

Follow the Source– Security Project: Please pray that God would provide the needed \$2,700 to finish the security fencing around the headquarters compound and for monthly funds for their national partner who will take over leadership in the coming months.



Don and Elaine Schiffer

Haiti

Claudy Jean-Baptiste has made the most of wonderful opportunities in difficult times. He has Associates that are using the materials to evangelize all over the country. They are distributing 7,500 lesson books every month. The wonderful thing is that they have graduations

for the ones that complete all the courses in French. Every few months a new class from one of the twelve Associate Schools holds a ceremony.

The country is experiencing great economic and political upheaval and it makes travel and daily life very challenging. They have not had any power for months. They need to put in solar power to the newly built headquarters near Port-au-Prince. With solar power, they would not have to rely on the government to run the electronics in their compound. More could get done and it would be sustainable.

Haiti– Construction of a solar power array: Please pray that the Lord would provide the resources for the solar array at a cost of \$2,500.

SLM Lessons for North America: The current 2021 budget for printing for the entire region of North America is \$27,000. It is our prayer that God would provide the entire amount so that we can fully provide what we anticipate being the needs for all Branches in North America for 2021!



Brian Thompson is the North American Regional Director. He oversees the seven Branch offices in that region while overseeing the Madison Discipleship School. He came to work at SLM after spending 12 years as a church planting missionary in Maine using SLM lessons to help establish the church.

“PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD”- THE SLM OPERATIONS TEAM

by Phil Winder

John the Baptist came on the scene to prepare the way of the Lord (Mark 1:3). The primary responsibility of the Operations Team is the ongoing maintenance of the headquarters building, mission housing, and vehicles. In a sense, perhaps you could say we are preparing the way of the Lord by preparing the home office and grounds for His people’s use.

Our mission housing hosts missionaries who serve the Lord at the SLM office in Madison, as well as guests who come to visit, volunteers who come and spend their vacations serving here, retirees, interns, and our own missionaries from around the globe who come stateside for furloughs to report to and make new ministry partners. Our houses are “home away from home” for our guests and our own missionaries.

You can see the value in maintaining mission housing, but it takes a team to accomplish. Let me introduce you to our team.

- 1. Our maintenance men who work diligently every day for the Lord.**
- 2. Our volunteers who come to serve alongside of our men. They come for a day, a week, or in some cases forever.**
- 3. Our ministry partners who pray fervently for our**

team, for provision, and safety.

4. Our ministry donors who donate goods, time, talent, and finances for the team to build, repair, replace, and maintain our housing and buildings.

We also maintain a fleet of vehicles for our team’s use, which includes transporting missionaries to and from the airport, hauling mail, or taking missionaries to meetings. We always need additional vehicles for our fleet.

SLM Fleet Project: SLM needs a fuel-efficient vehicle, a truck, and a minivan or SUV to replace our aging fleet.

Would you consider a donation of funds or a vehicle you no longer need for a tax-deductible receipt or “a gift in kind” letter?

In order to succeed, we need all our team members; we need more team members and we heavily rely on our volunteers.

In order to “enlarge our vision” and “widen our tents” we need additional team members to join us. Would you consider volunteering or serving at SLM?



After years of owning and managing businesses, **Phil Winder** now serves as Director of Operations and Coordinator of Volunteer teams.

Contact Phil: pwinder@slmin.org

LOOKING TO EXPAND YOUR VISION?

CONSIDER SERVING WITH SLM IN
MADISON

Come Spend a Day, a Month, or a Year With Us



An expanding ministry will mean expanding needs and expanding opportunities in Madison. We are seeking work teams, visitors, retirees, and experienced missionaries. Every skill level is welcome- what we are seeking most is willingness.

Contact hr@slmin.org to find out how to get started.

SLM is looking for:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Receptionists | Maintenance |
| Graphic Artists | Landscaping |
| Designers | Accounting |
| Social Media Influencers | Data Entry |
| Marketing | Office Administration |
| Small Engine Repair | IT |
| Construction | Discipleship |
| Carpentry | |

GLOBAL OUTREACH FUND



Source of Light International in Madison, Georgia operates and ministers to each of its missionaries without any administrative fees charged. We rely solely on gifts and regular donations in the same way as any of our missionaries, purely by faith. In order to continue to operate this way, we are asking God, by faith, to raise up new individuals, churches, and foundations to support the work of the home office through the Global Outreach Fund.

Would you prayerfully consider partnering with SLM through the Global Outreach Fund?

STRIKING WHILE THE IRON IS HOT IN AFRICA

by Ron Barnes

Africa is seeing one of the greatest evangelical movements in the world. Source of Light Ministries has been involved in the front lines of this from the earliest days of its existence. But the momentum of the Gospel is evident in all our countries.



Nelson in front of the old school building in Liberia.

Currently, we have Branches in Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, DR Congo, and South Africa. These Branches also reach into neighboring countries with training and discipleship resources in Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Republic of Congo, Benin, and Burkina Faso. Our materials span many of the rest of the languages throughout Africa.

Our desire in the coming years is to expand into new Branches where we have laid some initial groundwork and have trained workers on the ground and so our desire is to raise about \$400 per month support for Burkina Faso and Benin in the next year, and slowly adding additional ones in the coming years. Please pray that God would provide supporters for the vision of establishing these two new Branches.

Expansion obviously comes with a price, and one of the things we are aiming to do is to have many of the costs covered by in country



Local leaders from Ivory Coast meeting with Director Barnes

self-supporting possibilities like micro-enterprises.

Ivory Coast

In Ivory Coast, "Pig Farming" has been determined to be an excellent way of doing such a project. It would help cover many of the costs of running the Branch as well as helping to meet the needs of the orphanages that SLM has. It would also be used to be

the seed for some of the orphans as they grow up learning the trade to be able to start their own farms whether they became full-time farmers, or they choose to use it as a micro-enterprise for their own ministry ambitions. This type of model opens the door for more ministry to be accomplished and less need from foreign resources. It has been the vision of Ivory Coast Director, Isaiah Bernasko, for many years, and to see this come to fruition would be an answer to his prayers and ensure the expansion of the ministry of Ivory Coast.

Ivory Coast– Pig Farming Project: Please pray for the Ivory Coast Pig Farming Project and the \$13,000 it will take to see this off the ground.

DR Congo

Expansion in Africa will also entail creating facilities that can accommodate a broader future of ministry. In DR Congo, we are looking to establish a ministry center that would house our offices and material in a location more easily accessible to schools and partners. Vedette Nlandu is the Director of the SLM Branch in Kinshasa, DR Congo, and it has been his vision to see the ministry center used very broadly to accommodate the offices as well as to serve to accommodate the visitors who often come from great distances to carry the courses back to their remote areas. He would love to have a place where they can be housed, trained, encouraged, and then send these partners back to their home areas well trained and refreshed!

Over the years of ministry in DR Congo, they haven't been able to trust the mail system and delivery methods that were in place, so many times shipments of much-needed literature never arrived. And often they would wait extended periods of time uncertain if the delivery might eventually come before they would place another request.

This has caused many of the schools to travel great distances, by boat, by motorcycle, and by car on some of the most dangerous roads imaginable.



Brian Trapp and the SLM staff in DR Congo

So, having a place where someone could come to get rest after such a trip as well as to receive better training and tools would be an excellent way to minister to our partners.

Vedette hopes that some of the land would be used to also restart some of the micro-enterprises they have attempted in the past, but with less overhead by using their own land. The vision to expand the future ministry

of Congo will really be possible when the groundwork of this project is laid.

D.R. CONGO– Ministry Center and Offices: Please pray that God would provide the necessary funds, approximately \$24,000 for the completion of the ministry center.

Liberia

Liberia has been a focus of instability on and off for nearly its entire history. SLM's early work in Liberia was all but erased as civil war destroyed all its offices and materials, sent the workers into exile, and saw any trace of its official existence burned.

But the Gospel, the discipleship, and the burden of those early missionaries allowed the smoldering flames of the ministry to be rekindled. Exiled missionaries, who studied for the ministry in Ghana while in exile, returned to Liberia to reestablish an office and attempt to pick up the pieces of ministry and put them back together.

After a few years now, they have seen ministries, churches, and individuals reconnect with SLM Liberia with great zeal for the Word of God and a great desire to grow through the use of the lessons. Nelsen Cyrus and his wife have been spearheading the effort as the DTB Director and have been doing so with extremely modest resources, but a clear and evident calling from God.

The Lord allowed them to establish a small school where the community has embraced their passion for education and their commitment to excellence. The community has seen their love and have continued to ask for them

to expand. The school has been an excellent way to attract unbelieving families into their ministry and church as well.

Several years ago, the Lord put it on their hearts that education was a way into the community that would broaden the influence of the Gospel and they have continued to see that to be true. The Lord further put on their heart the establishment of a larger school on a different property which they would own, thereby bringing the costs down which would allow for more resources for the ministry, and allow the campus to also house a pastors' training facility for pastor and ministry leader training.

Liberia: Construction of a School Building and Offices– Please pray that the Lord would provide the resources for the school and offices at a cost of \$46,831.

SLM Lessons for Africa: Paper Partners for Africa 2021

The current 2021 printing budget for the entire continent of Africa is \$82,000 US. It is our prayer that God would provide the entire amount so that we can fully provide what we anticipate being the needs for all Branches in Africa for 2021!



After years of serving as a church planting missionary, **Dr. Ronald J. Barnes Jr.** now serves as the CEO for SLM.

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STRENGTHENING THE STAKES OF OUR TECHNOLOGY

by Ronnie Barnes

For years we've run into challenges with the HR, statistical, and accounting reports we send out to our missionaries and Branches abroad. Our reports were being sent back as corrupted files, worksheets returned blank, and some struggled to even open the files. Countless hours were spent troubleshooting problems and questions over the phone. It seemed after carefully reviewing these issues, we were able to narrow down the issues to one key problem. We discovered that nearly everyone who struggled with the reports were using either outdated versions of the Microsoft products we were using or some form of knock-off versions.

Last November we decided we needed to reduce the amount of possibilities for errors. We considered buying all of our Branches the latest Office software, but the cost of getting each Branch their own membership and the fact that I would likely be the one on the phone trying to explain each step, potentially presented even more challenges.

We started looking into what our non-profit license for Google Suite had to offer. Each staff member already has their own Google Suite account with access to Google's version of everything that Microsoft has. The key differences are that nothing needs to be downloaded, everyone can use the same program, we have more control over the files, and we can easily collaborate on the same file when our Branches run into issues.

As with introducing any new program, there were some challenges getting started. However, many of the staff and administrators were already familiar with the Google Suite from having been taking weekly training courses on the subject for the past year.

Since this change, the amount of time that we spend troubleshooting has dropped significantly because more of our staff are fairly proficient with the program! Even some of the processes our home office staff were undertaking has become significantly less time consuming as they underwent their own training.

For the past two years, we have been challenging our staff to spend time weekly learning more about the programs that they regularly use, with the goal being that we can leverage all of our resources to the highest possible degree so as to be the best stewards of not only the finances given to SLM but also our time and tools.

We praise God that we have significantly reduced the IT troubleshooting throughout the organization as well as increasing the productivity of all our missionaries in their various assignments. These recent measures will help us tremendously as we broaden our ministry in the future.



Ronnie Barnes lived the majority of his life as an MK involved with church planting in Hungary and the Czech Republic. He has served for 8 years with SLM even while completing his university studies and is the HR and Media Outreach Coordinator.



Children listening to the Word of God – Photo by Tory Doughty



Evangelists go wherever the road takes them – Photo by Tory Doughty

“ . . . FOR WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING. . . ” JOHN 15:5

by Scotte Staab

Jesus taught about abiding in the vine (Himself) and that if we (the branches) would abide in Him, we would bear fruit for His glory. Expansion in the ministry can happen as we abide in Him and grow and disciple and train others. In Asia and Europe, we desire to continue to “grow” the ministry through discipleship.

We currently serve in the nations of India, Myanmar, Pakistan, Japan, Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, and Romania. I would like to highlight just a few areas of expansion in our regions.

Asia

India North East Zone – by “K.J.” Branch Director. Our goal in these days is to teach and promote “one on one” evangelism and discipleship. This model has been so effective. We have distributed Bibles and SLM Bible lessons and shared our personal

experience with God through His dear Son. As a result, we have seen 53 people come to know Christ. Our expanding ministry has branched out to DARJEELING 100 miles north of Calcutta, ALIPURDUAR 800 miles north of Calcutta, DINAJPUR (North) 600 miles north of Calcutta, MURSHIDABAD 60 miles north of Calcutta, BANKURA 80 miles west of Calcutta, BAGUA (HOWRAH) 50 miles west of Calcutta, AMTA (HOWRAH) 40 miles west of Calcutta, MOURIGRAM (HOWRAH) 40 miles west of Calcutta, BANKURA 80 miles west of Calcutta, GANGASAGAR 100 miles south of Calcutta, BISHNUPUR 100 miles south of Calcutta, and BARUIPUR 50 miles south of Calcutta. We also work in the regions of Assam, Tripura, and Manipur.

God is opening significant doors throughout northeastern India and SLM India North East Zone wants to be prepared to be able to respond with the right people and resources in the

coming weeks and months. Please pray with us as we prepare new co-laborers.

India North East Zone Projects: Evangelist Support: \$100 Monthly– With our difficult task at hand, we need help. For \$100 a month we can support an Evangelist with food, materials, and transportation.

Ministry Vehicle: \$4,000 – As a shepherd for these servants, I could use a vehicle to encourage the believers and spread the gospel throughout our entire region.

India Central Zone – by “D.W.” Branch Director. I have recently returned from a series of villages on the border with Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. These are tribal villages where, as I serve them, I must adapt to their culture. I cannot wear normal western style pants but wear the tribal clothing. I cannot even take pictures.

There are three villages where I serve. Recently, I took my laptop and showed the children Christian films and preached the Gospel in these communities. Their hearts responded to the Gospel and in two weeks we will have ten people to obey the Lord in believer’s baptism. Praise the Lord! I currently need ministry aids that will help me in this area and resources to provide for the evangelists who will follow up after the initial outreaches.

India Central Zone Projects: Data projector \$1,000– so I can show Christian films and lessons to the people, plastic mats \$100 for the people to sit on, so they do not have to sit in the mud. And lastly, we have nine village evangelists who need support of \$40 a month since their supporting church closed due to the Covid virus. We are praising the Lord for His goodness and looking forward to celebrating with the tribal village baptism.



SLM Philippine director has a vision throughout all the Philippines and Asia –Photo by Chuck Roswell

Philippines – by Dr. Abraham Vallega. Finally, on a “grass roots” level, we have an Associate School that is expanding in Gamay, Northern Samar in the Philippines. Based in the Blue Ridge Baptist Church, Pastor Dalina has celebrated his fifth year with this church. To get to this small Island of Samar, you must arrive by boat. This remote area is needy for the Gospel and the local church is committed to discipleship and evangelism using the Source of Light lessons, as evidenced by a baptism on August 2. The Lord is moving in this young church. They currently need Bible lessons. Would you consider joining “Paper Partners” and support this ministry?

Philippines – Paper Partners Project: \$14,000 – Would you pray for God to provide the necessary funds to provide this new area with evangelistic and discipleship resources?

Europe

Romania: As mentioned in the Director’s article, Cristian Oprea seeks to expand their ministry into a

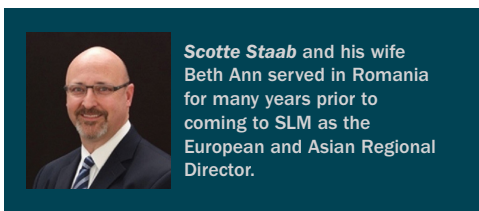


The staff of SLM Romania –Photo by Ron Barnes

rehabilitation facility of their own that would see former inmates continue in their spiritual growth after incarceration, and also be trained for various trades. This has been a vision for many years, but the project has been slow in raising funds.

Romania Rehabilitation Facility Project: \$128,263 – Will complete the next phase of this project.

Let’s take this time to make sure that our roots are grounded in the Vine, Jesus. As we serve, may the Lord expand our vision and bear fruit for His glory.



Scottie Staab and his wife Beth Ann served in Romania for many years prior to coming to SLM as the European and Asian Regional Director.

EXPANDING THE SLM VISION FOR SOUTH AMERICA

By Pablo and Dalila Correa

An unexpected pandemic has failed to stop the development of the Church of Christ. A Christian song that is sung in Latin America says, “Oh glory, oh hallelujah, in struggles and trials, the Church continues to walk . . .” The Church of Christ kept walking, even has extended its stakes. Christ commanded us to make disciples, teaching them to keep all the things that He had taught. And the things he taught are not just to be fulfilled in a certain building, chapel, cathedral, or temple. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit and we are the Church, called to complete the task.

Source of Light ministry in Latin America has been reaching thousands of people of all ages and socio-economic levels, with printed Bible lessons. The power of discipleship has been shown, in



Mexico Director Manuel Lopez Teaching by Zoom –Photo by Vicky Lopez

church planting, prison work, the use of mass media, and support for hundreds of local churches. There are thousands of testimonies from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru of how God has used each Bible course to transform lives. The materials touch thirsty souls who give their lives to the Lord to be part of the militant Church of Christ.

And it is throughout this enormous Spanish-speaking territory, the hand of the Lord continues to manifest itself in a powerful way. Today the vision, as an obvious result of the changes, is spreading in each of our Latin American Branches. Given the situation that emerged, each one has ventured into the use of technology, joining the virtual era. Using all possible networks to continue the task of discipleship is resulting in more Christians being involved in disciple-making as the Bible teaches.

We are striving to reinforce the stakes to extend out before the clamor of Cuba, Venezuela, and Honduras, to provide them the tools to reach their own people. We have an unlimited future to reach more countries of Latin America.

Each Branch in Latin America is committed to the proper use of each Bible lesson that is distributed to local churches, schools, prisons, retreat centers, camps, children, and youth. All these countries have projects that they long to see achieved, believing that nothing will be able to stop the vision that God in His mercy has granted them. This southern part of the great American continent is a land of opportunities, but with huge needs.

Argentina

Under the leadership of Jorge Ovando, the ministry is reaching hundreds of people through social means, in his country and even outside its borders, like Paraguay, requesting Source of Light courses.

Argentina: Fuente De Luz Christian school needs \$1,300 to connect gas pipes to the SLM school before in-school classes can be resumed. They also have a Camp Project and need \$25,880 for construction of dormitories.

Bolivia

Our Bolivia Branch, in the central west of South America, is led by Miguel Sanchez who has been serving God from Tarija as a church planter and the SLM Director. His ministry extends throughout the country, but he has a particular vision to go to the unreached villages. Few have this vision and even fewer could handle the trek.

Bolivia: Branch Work Funds and Director Support: Miguel serves faithfully while significantly under supported. To function fully, he needs \$300 monthly for support and \$400 for Branch ministry expenses.

Colombia

This is our newest Branch in South America even though it has been using Source of Light lessons for over 15 years. The office is in Bogotá and has been printing lessons in-country reaching prisons, rehab centers, schools, and churches. God placed in Gilberto Vanegas a vision to expand the ministry to the Guajira, an area on

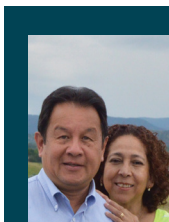


Church in Tarija, Bolivia –Photo by Miguel Sanchez

the north coast of the country, near the border with Venezuela. This will expand the ministry significantly and is a strategic area of need.

Colombia: Printing Press Replacement- It will take \$8,000 to replace the aging printing equipment that has produced tens of thousands of lessons over the years.

The current 2021 Printing Budget for Spanish Speaking South America is \$39,000. We trust God to provide the total amount to supply each Branch in the region for 2021!



Dalila Correa has ministered with her husband, Pablo, in Peru for nearly 40 years. Though now living in Colorado, they travel frequently to Peru, especially now as the ministry in Lima is in a process of reorganization.

THE SOUTH AMERICA... WHERE THEY DON'T SPEAK SPANISH

by Ron Barnes

Guyana

Dwayne Daniels grew up studying the Source of Light materials and used them in the ministries he served in as an adult. As he saw the ministry of SLM Guyana begin to struggle to meet the demands of those who were involved in using the lessons, he offered his services to help the ministry.

But when it became clear that the current leadership was unable to meet the day-to-day needs of running the office, he began to inquire of SLM leadership if he might be of help to resume its operation and respond to the great demand for the courses and training. He not only saw the current need; he saw the future potential of how God could use the SLM ministry in a much-expanded way among churches and schools. SLM's history in Guyana has been rich, so Dwayne has a desire to cultivate those earlier relationships and see a broadened ministry of SLM Guyana.

Guyana: DTB and Director Support- In order to rebuild and resource the Branch in Guyana we anticipate the greatest need to be \$800 monthly for support and office needs.

Brazil

SLM has been in Brazil for decades and has seen scores of people saved and disciplined, as well as seeing it used in local churches quite extensively. In recent years, their office too has seen a transition in leadership and a

need to have fresh life breathed into it with a new vision for the future. Samuel Milanez (Director) and Sergio Rodrigues, his Assistant Director, are two new faces of SLM in a broadening ministry. They have attempted to make the courses available to schools throughout Brazil in both printed and electronic form. They are also doing live discipleship and training with students via video conferencing as a part of a broader vision to utilize the latest methods of communication and media to spread the Gospel and make disciples among Portuguese speakers in Brazil and beyond.

Brazil: DTB and Assistant Director Support – The Branch is attempting to raise \$500 a month support so that an Assistant Director can be paid full time to serve in the Brazil office and for various office needs. Please be in prayer for God to raise up monthly partners.

SLM Lessons for South America: Paper Partners for South America 2021

The current 2021 budget for printing for Non-Spanish Speaking South America is \$9,000 US. It is our prayer that God would provide the entire amount so that we can fully provide what we anticipate to be the needs for all Branches in South America for 2021!



After years of serving as a church planting missionary, **Dr. Ronald J. Barnes Jr.** now serves as the CEO for SLM.

Follow me [@RonBarnesJr](https://twitter.com/RonBarnesJr)

PRAYER

◆ Please pray that God will provide additional financial resources for printing materials. We have many open doors for distribution, and our international Branches are eager to serve more people as resources become available.

◆ Some of our Source of Light missionaries are serving in areas that are particularly hostile to the work of Christ. Recently a pastor was returning from his area of ministry and was killed. He leaves behind his wife and two children. Please pray for his family that God will provide all their needs. Pray, as well, that his ministry will continue and that many people will come to Christ in the area where he was serving. It is a village of about 2,400 people.

◆ The orphanage run by our Branch in Togo, West Africa, cares for 18 children. One of the youths is away doing an apprenticeship in welding. Two more recently left to do apprenticeships in hair dressing and sewing. That will leave 16 living in the home. Some of the children have special health challenges that require regular medication. The orphanage provides food, housing, clothing, schooling, and for the medical needs of the young people. They are currently needing additional funding so they can adequately care for the needs of the children. Please pray that the Lord will provide the \$1,100 monthly to meet their budget needs.

◆ The Madison Discipleship School (MDS) struggles to meet the restrictions and changes that are being instituted by some of our prisons concerning materials that can be mailed to prisoners. MDS requests prayer that

they will find a way to be able to continue to serve their students currently in these situations.

◆ S.S., in Source of Light India's North Zone, is planning to have the children's Source of Light courses translated into Hindi. They are looking for just the right person to do the translation work. Please pray that God will lead them to this person.

◆ Several of our Branches need vehicles. During this time of coronavirus, the need becomes highlighted even more, because it is so difficult to maintain social distancing when traveling by public transportation. Many times, the taxis and buses in the Third World countries, where many of our staff serve, are poorly maintained and the drivers are reckless. Please pray for these servants of the Lord that God will provide reliable, secure, and comfortable transportation, and that He will protect them in the public transport they rely on until these needs are met.

◆ Pray that God will comfort the family of Ray Hill, an Associate Discipleship School Director, who went to be with the Lord. Ray had a very effective ministry working with the homeless, and his Associate Discipleship School serves many inmates. Please pray that God will direct and provide for all they need to continue the work he left behind.

◆ Our Regional Directors who faithfully minister to our National Directors see many needs each day. Pray that God will give wisdom, words of comfort and encouragement, and partners who will assist them in providing the families they serve with relief in crisis times.

PRAISE

◆ We praise the Lord for how He has been able to encourage our SLM personnel through online prayer and praise meetings during the pandemic. From different places around the world, our International Directors have kept us updated on how God is working through their ministries. In many areas the lockdowns were very tight, and these Directors who are used to traveling extensively to minister to people have felt "cabin fever" at times. But they have embraced the opportunities to use media resources that will continue to enhance their ministries in the future.

◆ Most of our Branches have been able to bring needed relief to many during the world-wide health crisis. They have provided food and hygiene supplies to numerous people, while at the same time, sharing the Good News of Christ. One Branch Director became a barber for the day and went to an elderly man's home to cut his hair. He said, "I cannot cut my own hair," as he pointed to his hair in the online meeting, "but I can help others." One missionary reported going house to house delivering vegetables. She said, "We have to social distance, but we are seeing many people come to know Christ!"

◆ Mordecai asked Esther in Esther 4:14, *Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?* We have felt like this about our South America Director, Pablo Correa, and his wife, Dalila, who oversee our Spanish-speaking ministries. They were just settling into this new role at Source of Light when the pandemic hit. It has been very devastating in their region and they have had many close ministry

associates pass away. They have been a great encouragement to their Directors by meeting with them online and over the phone ministering to them during times of great loss. We are so thankful that God had them in place "for such a time as this."

◆ We praise the Lord for his faithful provision for Source of Light ministries and missionaries during the COVID-19 crisis. We have seen several of our international Branches receive the donations needed to complete projects during these months.

◆ We praise the Lord for our "paper missionaries" that continue to serve people when we cannot meet with people face to face. In April, when the lockdowns began, Ron Barnes, Source of Light's CEO, challenged us to pray for people who had lessons laying around that they had not finished, that they would pick them up during the lockdown and resume their studies. Madison Discipleship School reports that they have seen inactive students returning their lessons. God is answering our prayers. One prisoner wrote to thank Source of Light for their continued correspondence at a time when they were locked down and could not attend the regular prison fellowships.

◆ We praise the Lord for our lesson graders all over the world who are grading or have graded lessons from their homes during the lockdowns, so that our students could continue their studies. We are also grateful for our faithful ministry directors who have shuttled lessons to and from the homes of their staff and volunteers.

THE PRINTED WORD... STILL CHANGING LIVES, CONSIDER BECOMING A PAPER PARTNER!



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Lay not up for yourselves treasure on earth ... but lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven ... for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Paraphrase Matthew 6:19-21)

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Yours for the harvest,

Dr. Ronald J. Barnes, Jr.
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