



# the REAPER

VOL. 67, NO. 3 | Fall 2022

WHEN DID WE SEE YOU HUNGRY?

MATTHEW 25

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>4 Letter from the Editor</b>	<b>26 "Not Ready to Retire."</b>
<b>7 SLM Ukraine Relief Initiative</b>	<b>27 Introducing New Faces on the SLM Board</b>
<b>10 Uno Mas, One More</b>	<b>28 Prayer</b>
<b>13 Bringing Hope to Orphans through the Word of God</b>	<b>29 Praise</b>
<b>18 Let the Little Children Come</b>	<b>31 Memorials</b>
<b>22 The Least</b>	



**On the Cover**

Jonathan Kho Ming Jun  
Matthew 25

**Corrections & Clarifications**

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# WHEN DID WE SEE YOU...

A letter from the Editor



An Orphan's Bare Feet —Photo by Tory Doughty

Returning from India recently, I was reminded of a story that forever impacted one of our missionaries. This missionary told me of taking my grandfather, Glenn Dix, former CEO of SLM for many years, and my grandmother, Joyce to a little village they had ministry in just outside their city. It was an area set aside for people who were sick, mostly with leprosy, where they could live without attracting as much attention as in the city.

Our missionary recalled the heartbreak so evident on my grandparents' faces watching these men, women, and children live in isolation, even from one another, despite having similar issues. If you have never seen leprosy before, take my word for it, it is awful, traumatizing even.

But the missionary told me how at one point on their walk, my grandmother paused, staring at an older woman

who was particularly disfigured with the disease. She walked towards this woman, somewhat startling her.

My grandmother drew closer and closer until they were sitting side by side. My grandmother then abruptly leaned in and full-body embraced this leprosy woman. The woman began to cry, as did our missionaries, and proceeded to tell her another person hadn't touched her in decades, particularly not to embrace.

To this day, the missionary still tears up remembering the kindness, compassion, and love my grandmother showed toward this leprosy woman. But for my grandmother, it was just another day of using her gift of compassion toward those who were hurting.

We all know those people, like my grandmother, who seem to gravitate

to those who are hurting and feel compelled to minister and care for them. For some people, this is their gift, but for others, it's a learned awareness, looking for people who need to be ministered to.

People living in this current season in history overwhelmingly are in need of being ministered to, loved, reassured, and given rest. Pandemic, war, persecution, politics, cancel culture, leadership failure, religious disillusionment, and just today as I write, another school shooting.

This season is an unending darkness they cannot escape. Which is why now, perhaps more than ever before in human history, Christians need to be on the lookout for those in need and help like Jesus would help.

**For I was a hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the**

**King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.**

**(Matthew 25:35-40 KJV)**

We have all heard the stories of “undercover pastors,” visiting their churches like a homeless person, and we secretly dread that we might one day be the one to overlook, dismiss or even reject “that kind of person.”

Jesus never needed to go undercover. He knew immediately the hearts of men, which is exactly why He needed to share this parable. It's far too easy for us as Christians, even those of us in ministry, to justify our busyness to overlook the everyday people God puts in our path, people who are in great need. Even if the need is material.

We can even make the excuse that our ability to help is spiritually, not materially. But, truth be told, we could probably do both. I used to tell my church-planting trainees that usually before we can take out withdrawals from people's “spiritual bank accounts,” we need to put something in them. Loving people and demonstrating it, sometimes materially, can open doors for spiritual conversations.

This edition of the *Reaper* focuses on some of the ways SLM missionaries



Orphans in Ivory Coast —Photo by Ron Barnes

and ministries are doing just that: giving food to the hungry, drink for the thirsty, taking in the stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the prisoner. For every point Jesus made, God has used SLM missionaries to respond even before it was asked, treating every occasion like Jesus would have, and perhaps like it was Jesus Himself.

From housing, feeding and clothing refugees fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, as well as the similar needs among orphans from the communities our ministries serve throughout Asia and Africa, to going to the poor and uneducated in their areas of influence, our missionaries have gone to great lengths, even to the point of exhaustion, to show love and compassion as Jesus' hands and feet. And God has provided every step of the way.

God has used many of you to provide for these needs. You, too, responded like our missionaries, generously, to allow our missionary to have the

means to materially help, with hopes of meeting their deepest need for a Savior.

It is our desire that you can get just a taste of how your involvement, paired with SLM's hands and feet, are responding the way that Jesus expected as He shared this parable:

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.



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

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# SLM UKRAINE RELIEF INITIATIVE

By Ron Barnes

A few days into the war, I sat on the floor with my grandson playing in my lap. Like many of you, I once again watched the news of the conflict in Ukraine, and perhaps like you felt somewhat helpless. My grandson, vying for my attention grabbed both my index fingers, his cue for me to help him stand. He didn't then have the strength or balance to do so on his own. Back then, he just needed a little help from his Papa.

Out of the corner of my eye on the TV, I saw a mother with her own 7-month-old son trying to navigate her way out of Ukraine alone, her husband not allowed to leave the country, staying back to defend their home. My eyes teared up again as I thought about how helpless this woman was and how as a husband, father, and now grandfather, I wished someone would come to her side. It occurred to me, that just like my grandson, they just needed a little help. It was then I determined to actively pursue a way to help, instead of waiting for a request. They needed help right then and I couldn't imagine SLM being in a better position to respond quickly.

Immediately, we reached out to some partners and put into motion some plans with the help of our European

Regional Director, Scotte Staab, Romania Director, Cristian Oprea, and ministry partners we have served alongside for many years, Mike and Marylou Rummey, with a partner mission.

Early on we discovered refugees were flooding across from Ukraine into Romania on a barge that crosses the Danube River at the Isaccea border. From there they were greeted by our partner's church members and could take a two-minute walk to the church in Isaccea.

There they received a place to stay, food, hot tea, coffee, diapers, beds, clothing, really anything that would help them continue their journey on, as well as information and transportation to other destinations.

Many were looking to continue on to family or friends elsewhere, but some had no destination in mind. For those we looked to coordinate with Cristian Oprea and Hope Baptist Church in Brasov, Romania, which has summer camp facilities that could accommodate refugees.

The Romanian churches in these areas and others sacrificed a great deal to respond to this crisis, but



The Volunteers of Tulcea. —Photos by Mike Rummy

their money would run out quickly as the crisis continued, and that's where we attempted to respond. Within two hours of the plan being in place we had commitments of \$20,000, and within 24 hours the first installment was already on its way.

Over the following weeks and months, we raised over \$100,000 and continued to provide these ministries with enough resources to fully meet the needs of these refugees.

Some of the funds we received were also passed along into a few churches inside Ukraine, helping to feed communities hard hit by the conflict.

We also helped a couple of partners in Hungary, both pastors whom I mentored and disciplined. They too received many refugees, and we were able to help them significantly as well.

There have been many challenges in these ministries. No one was really prepared for the short-term response and now the long-term effects.

Grief counseling was greatly needed. Each attempted employing varying methods of help, mostly through the internet, but those efforts have been complicated by language. Few of the refugees spoke anything but Ukrainian and Russian, and the Hungarians and Romanians spoke neither. But God intervened and they were able to get them some help.

We now face challenges for those who have no place to move on. Their homes, in some cases their entire villages or cities, were destroyed. They had no place to flee to, and now no place to return.

The church in Brasov began to work with these refugees on longer-term plans like learning the language, getting local jobs, and finding affordable housing. But even these kinds of plans take resources, and so we have tried to budget the resources entrusted to us to carry those ministries beyond the immediate needs.

At the same time, as the war continued some of those furthest from the conflict chose to return home to Ukraine. We know that those who encountered our partners at some point heard the Gospel. Some were saved, but all of them were given resources to follow up. We are thankful for this promise in Isaiah 55:11:

**So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.**

Really, this whole thing has been unpredictable. Much of the response was just that ... responding. We had no way of knowing what to do at times, but God gave direction when it was needed. But it's much easier when our missionaries are yielded to the will of God and have servants' spirits. They have been the real

heroes in this season. Day after day they used every ounce of energy treating their "strangers" as if they were Jesus Himself.

The tired, the thirsty, the hungry, the weary, each and every stranger had their needs addressed with love and care. We now pray that the greatest need they have beyond material and the perils of war will be met in the person of Jesus Christ.



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

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# UNO MAS, ONE MORE

By Danielle Dare

Extreme poverty, domestic violence, witchcraft. These are not descriptions of a lifestyle most of us care to intermingle with. Graciela, an SLM missionary serving in Argentina and Mexico, is no stranger to these challenges facing those in her community, nor does she allow what may make most people uncomfortable to stop her from sharing the love of Christ.

For years, Graciela has ministered to women and families, building trust through initiating and cultivating caring relationships that meet physical needs, while also continuously speaking the truth of the Gospel. Through door-to-door deliveries of nutritious fruits and vegetables, providing medical care, hosting community events full of fun and friendship, as well as Bible studies, prayer meetings, and literacy classes, the church in Argentina is preparing the soil for spiritual truth to take root in hearts.

Change is happening as Christ brings new life to hearts that were

once barren. There are stories of marriages being restored, hurts from the past being forgiven, evil forsaken, and even joy in the midst of grief. When asked if the people are usually responsive to the truth when it contradicts their sinful choices, Graciela told of a young woman involved in witchcraft who admitted to not liking what Graciela had to say but listened because she knew that she truly loved her.

There are times when God calls us to difficult places of obedience where it is not easy to speak the truth or to show love unconditionally. At these moments, we should recall it is our love for Christ that compels us, and it is to Him we are offering our lives. He is worthy of that gift. Recently, a partner in ministry telephoned Graciela, asking her to meet with a group of men recovering from drug addiction whom he had been discipling. Feeling unsettled after she hung up the phone, she had a flash of memory from her past working for a newspaper as a young woman in Mexico. She knew how the



Original Structure of “Uno +” Schoolroom  
—Photo by Graciela Guerrero

drug cartels would terrorize innocent people. She saw in her mind’s eye the graphic wounds of the young mother and her child who were caught in the crossfire as they entered a bank; she saw the uncovered heap of drugs and stashed money, the love of which blazed only a trail of death and destruction.

**Graciela had shown Christ’s love without fear or hesitation to so many others. Surely, He would not call her to people who had collectively caused so much pain and violence for no other reason than their love of selfish pursuits. But here she was, with an invitation to meet a group of young men who had been bound by drug addiction and were seeking the One who could set them free.**



Graciela with Students Inside Completed “Uno +” Schoolroom —Photo by Graciela Guerrero

After a conversation and prayer with her son, she made the decision to obey God’s call to love those who seemed to her unlovable. As she met with the men and listened to their stories, she began to see them with new eyes, and her heart was filled with compassion for them. The men have had very little education, a fact that, coupled with their criminal history, would make it extremely difficult for them to lead honest and sustainable vocations or assimilate into their communities. Something had to be done.

Graciela became their advocate. The men could not attend a government school, so a school would need to come to them. Together with the church member who leads the men’s group, a school room was built out of an outdoor pavilion. The concrete slab and open-air structure were transformed into a beautiful classroom complete with bookshelves, tables, and chairs. Two government-appointed teachers volunteer their time to teach the men.



Teachers, Students, and Friends Next to Partially Finished Schoolroom —Photo by Graciela Guerrero

While this is a good start, the ministry, named “Uno +Mas” (which means “one more” in English) is praying for recognition and accreditation from the government so the men can receive official certificates of a completed education, enabling them to find secure jobs. God is moving in miraculous ways through this ministry of compassion and truth. As Graciela continues to say yes to God’s call, crushing boundaries of fear, she is blessed to be included in His plan for reaching the lost. She wants others to know that God will use them as well when they are willing to surrender fear and step out in faith for the sake of His work.

**In every corner of the world, there are people hungry for the truth of the Gospel. When we dwell on the love of Christ for humanity and equip ourselves with the tools to reach the lost, we can go forth in boldness, knowing**



Graciela Sharing Her Heart with the Students —Photo by Graciela Guerrero

**it is He who does the work through us. The Word of God is powerful, even written in a simple lesson that can be distributed along with a cup of kindness to those who are willing to receive it. As Graciela so beautifully sums up her calling, “Our mission is to reach out, bringing the light of the unfathomed love of God to all who seek it, for His people to be set free, to walk in His truth, His will, and His blessings.”**



**Danielle Dare** is married to Bruce, Director of Publications at SLM. She spends her time caring for their three children and assists at the mission as she is able.

# BRINGING HOPE TO ORPHANS THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD

By Gwenda Trapp

What can bring peace to the heart of an orphan? The children at the Joseph Project, an orphanage run by Source of Light Togo, are putting their hope in the Word of God. Repeatedly, when questioned about what has brought hope to their lives, the children emphasize the teaching of God’s Word.

Sika Yawo, Source of Light Togo’s National Director, is especially sensitive to the plight of orphans and needy children. He lost his father as a teenager and had to work to get school fees to complete his high school education. When he started working with the orphans, he did not have a facility for an orphanage. From 2007 to 2009, Sika would recruit families in the village to help care for the needy children, and he would help with their support as he was able.

Sika is a native of the village of Sika-Condji, where the orphanage is located. His family donated a piece of land for the orphanage. They built buildings and began housing orphans in 2010. In the same year,

they erected a shed roof for a church. (Since then, a church has been built on the orphanage grounds.) A garden area was prepared, and the children assist in growing food items, such as corn, peanuts, and cassava. These crops help to provide for the needs of the orphanage. The village of Sika-Condji is near the Mono river which frequently floods. Sometimes the garden produces well, and other times the garden floods, and they lose their crops. Thankfully, the orphanage has been spared total flooding. In a recent time of flooding, there was a dormitory building on a small square of the orphanage property where everyone gathered until the water receded.

The orphanage offers the basics of food, clothing, shelter, and an opportunity to go to school. But the youth realize that they are receiving the most important thing—encouragement from the Scriptures that bring hope. Repeatedly, the youth point to the Word of God and the impact that it has had on them. They share that the Word of God “unites us,” has “changed my life,”



The “Joseph Project” an Orphanage Run by SLM Togo —Photo by Ekpe Sika



Children Served by the Joseph Project —Photo by Ekpe Sika



Kossi hopes to teach other children in the orphanage the skill of welding after completing his apprenticeship. —Photo by Sika Yawo

is “doing good things for me,” it “helps me live the Christian life,” has taught me to “live with other orphans in love,” has taught me “the love of God,” has given me “consolation,” has “transformed my life,” and has given “great hope in Christ.” Three of 17 children filling out questionnaires shared that they received Christ at the orphanage. They mention being fed physically, but they emphasize that it is the spiritual food that gives them inner hope, comfort, and peace.

The orphanage is staffed by pastors, deacons, and older women who serve on a volunteer basis, receiving small stipends when funds are available. The orphanage has morning devotions with the children before they go to school. Source of Light makes Bible lessons available for the children, and they have a church at the orphanage where the children can easily attend services.

One of the orphans, abandoned as a child of eight when his parents

died of HIV, is now 21 years old and is in an apprenticeship for welding. His name is Kossi. He said he was wandering around the village one day when he met Sika, and Sika invited him to attend the Bible classes. After about three years, Kossi was accepted at the orphanage. Kossi shared that he has other relatives, but stated, “they don’t care about my life.” He lives in the city now, where he is doing his apprenticeship, and attends Sika Yawo’s church. He still relies on support from the SLM Togo ministry for his apprenticeship.

Kossi has a heart for the orphanage. After finishing his apprenticeship, he wants to help anyone else at the orphanage who is interested in welding to learn the trade. He would like to see them form an association of welders in Togo. As God gives him opportunity, he would like to help the orphans have access to better food and clothing. He would also like to build a small dispensary for first aid for the orphanage. When

asked, “What is the most important thing that you learned from living at the orphanage?” Kossi responded, “I especially learned how God, through His Word, transforms hopeless people into people of great hope in Christ.”

Isaiah Bernasko, our SLM Director in the Ivory Coast, also has a heart for orphan children. He and his wife, Mansah, do not have children, but they run an orphanage where they have raised many children. Because of the way that they care for them, one might not at first realize the orphans are not their own children. As they live together, the children are being mentored in Christ. Some of “their children” are now adults and are helping in the service of the church and the Source of Light ministry, such as Jeremiah, who went to college and is now being trained to lead the ministry one day.

Martha, another one of the children, went to culinary school. After graduation, she interned at the

Airport Restaurant where she was hired to work after her internship ended. She has since married and is living in the town of Dimbokro with her spouse. They have started a church in this town that is slowly growing.

There was a child, who lived near Isaiah and Mansah, named Tina. Tina was deaf and mute. Her living situation was not good. She started attending Sunday school at Isaiah’s church. Over time, Isaiah realized that she was forming bad habits. He began to pray for Tina. He arranged for her to go to a school for deaf children and is helping to raise support for her schooling. She is now doing well in school. Isaiah also supports 27 orphans living far away from him.

Isaiah has shared that “the orphanage work is not easy, but it is important because it glorifies Christ when the children grow up knowing Him.”



**Gwenda Trapp** is the Administrative Assistant for the Regional Director of Africa. She and her family served in DR Congo for many years. To our teams in Africa, she is known affectionately as “Mama Africa.”



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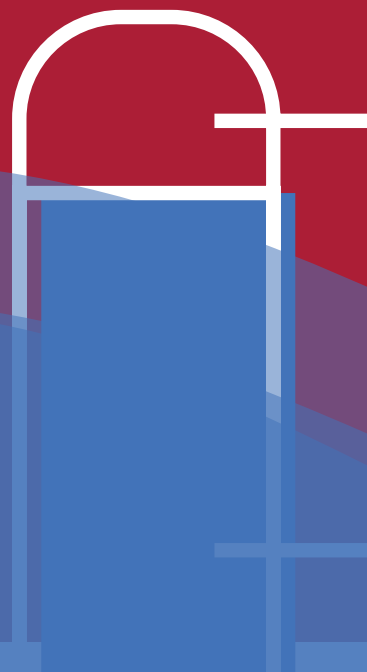
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Our King Press was made in the 1960s! Yet it is still our main source for the production of SLM courses. In recent years many upgrades and improvements have been made to the presses on the market, which require less of the operator, less specialization and knowledge, and would produce better quality, less waste, and a nicer product. This is why SLM has decided that it is time to purchase a new piece of equipment.

**Continue to pray with us that God would in 2022 provide the \$500,000 we will need to purchase this new piece of equipment so we can begin the next season of watching God use our new lessons and old.**

# LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME

By Kimberly Rae Thigpen

Simran's father is an alcoholic. Her mother abandoned her. The education for children like her, in the slums, is inferior. Our culture would describe her in words like "financially and educationally disadvantaged."

Disadvantaged. What a sterile word, nearly apathetic in its vagueness. When its dimensions expand to flesh and blood, the word is anything but.

The Train Up The Child Program (TUTC), created for children growing up in the slums of Northern India, is by definition an educational supplement program for disadvantaged children. However, as a kingdom work, it is so much more.

"Our intention for TUTC is to help the poor children in their secular studies," says Branch Director, "S. S." "Most of them cannot go for extra classes and we help them. But like the Word says, make the most of every opportunity. So, we look for ways to share the love of God."

At the TUTC gatherings, they cannot give the Gospel or literature, but, as S. S. says, "we get opportunities

in different ways. One is Children's Sunday school. In Sunday school, we share the Bible stories and gospel with the children. Now, many TUTC children attend Sunday school.

"Secondly, through "Fun Time", which is held every year during the summer holidays for a week. During the pandemic we could not do anything for years. During Fun Time we do share. This time we are doing Fruit of the Spirit."

Simran's neighbor came to India's TUTC program to see if Simran could be admitted. This neighbor, Radha, whose own children died, came to church fearful and depressed. She sourced her tragic story of loss to witchcraft, evil spirits called upon by others to destroy her family.

Our partner gave her New Life in Christ in Hindi. "I told her that she has to follow only Jesus and not any gods," S. S. shared. "Normally, I do not do this so quickly. But I saw in Radha a desire to come out of her situation and to know about Jesus. Through TUTC we are able to reach out to Radha."

And to little ones like Simran, who will have a clean, bright, happy place to come, away from the alcohol and poverty and despair, a place to learn and play and be safe. The goal is for Simran to be invited beyond TUTC to Sunday school, and there, beyond education to eternal life. She will be introduced to a God who will never leave or forsake her, a Father who wants her good. Yes, the gospel is surely good, good news.

**If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? James 2:15-16**

"Go in peace. Be ye warmed and filled."

Hollow words to a child perishing from cold and malnourishment.

Words cannot warm like a thick blanket or bowl of hot soup, like the touch of a caring hand or the presence of a friend.

In an unnamed area of Pakistan, partner "M. B." once ran a garment factory, selling clothes to the West to fund schools for thousands of children whose parents were indentured to work in the brick kilns. With no child labor laws in the country, the little ones work making

bricks, trying to pay off the debt of their parents. His work was called the School of Hope.

Hope was deterred, however, when his Muslim buyer discovered he was a Christian and stopped all business with M. The schools had to close.

M. has not yet been approved for a visa to come to our country to raise support for his ministry. Our government and his have strained relations and heightened requirements for a visa. Our Directors here have not been successful in acquiring a visa to go there either. M., who has been kidnapped, beaten and left for dead once, and has had at least one of his missionaries murdered for Christ, is isolated in many ways from the Source of Light family.

Yet, he continues on. The School of Hope ministry has transitioned to humanitarian work focused on street children. Children living on the streets are at risk for exploitation and trafficking. Some of them have parents. Most do not.

He takes blankets to the children who have no homes, no place to sleep through the dangerous night. This spring was rainy and cold, as M. put it, "a muddy and dirty affair because of these conditions. Some of the children try to hide themselves in huts or sewer pipes." He buys them shoes and clothing and when he can, gives them food. Some of them are currently missing, presumed dead.



Street Children Drinking Water, However Filthy, Where They Can Find It. —Photo by M.



Slum Children Listening at North India's TUTC Program, Notice the Room is Clean, Bright, and Cheerful. —Photos by S.S.

Having humanitarian aid listed as a focus of his work benefits M.'s position with the Muslim government. Hopefully in doing so, he will be able to continue his Christian outreach work, such as the recent event they participated in, where 1,500 people came. One hundred Bibles were given. One thousand could have been given, had they had them.

But the “humanitarian work” is much more than appeasing the government.

**What is love to one who has never been given a gift, told a gentle word, invited, reassured, embraced? What is a word with no context, no meaning? Just a word, like disadvantaged.**

Difficult and unpleasant as it is to imagine, there are children who have lived their entire existence on the streets, with no memory

of parents and no one to provide except themselves. It is painful to visualize a boy having to beg or steal to sustain himself and a younger sibling, a little girl soaked in the rain searching for shelter, children waking in the morning to find a friend died from hypothermia during the night.

Their culture has little reference of kindness without expectation, for such values come from Christ, and where Christ has not been shown, His grace has not been lived. Were they told that they were loved and valued by God, offered eternal life by Jesus, what meaning could these words have?

However, add to those words a cup of clean, cool water. Add the beauty of a genuine smile and gentle word to one accustomed to being ignored, waved away, beaten even. A blanket. A handful of rice. Positive time and attention to ones who fear both from the adults in their world.

These gifts of kindness, without deception or demand of repayment, are powerful beyond words. Missionaries use them as tools to pave the way for that illusive, sometimes incomprehensible word called love. They define it, make it real, show that it is possible.

This is the power of ministries of kindness. They are our faith in action, and our Savior's love on display. These are not merely programs for the disadvantaged. They are Jesus living today. Loving today.

Above it all, watching, surely Jesus smiles, for “What you did to the least of these, you did to me.”

**How can you help the TUTC program in India?**

TUTC currently has 60 children. Their goal is 100.

A teacher for the program could be supported for \$125 per month.

Gifts for teacher support, school supplies, or food can be designated “TUTC India.”

**How can you help M's ministry to street kids?**

The street children desperately need clean drinking water. M wants to put in a water filtration system or dig a well. You can give to this need by designating your gift “School of Hope– Water Filtration System,” or give to the general needs of blankets, food, shoes, etc. by designating “School of Hope.”



**Kimberly Rae Thigpen** is the author of several books highlighting the plight of India's street children, including *Capturing Jasmina* and *Stolen Woman*.

# THE LEAST

By Ron Barnes

Meditating over the Word in my favorite vacation spot early one morning, I began to think through how this modest home in south Florida became more than a place for vacation; it was a place of refuge. Memories of spending time as a family recovering from one of the hardest times we experienced in ministry at this home have kept this place a special place we go to recover, rest, reflect, and refresh. Not just for me, but also for my family.

We come here to fish, swim, play, relax, eat ... and laugh. Laughing is really a key stress reliever for our family and during that season it was really hard.

But as I meditated here in this place of refuge, sun rising over the lagoon, the passage that is the theme for this Reaper rang in my mind and I went back to study it more deeply. It was that word “least” that had me curious. “Least,” in Matthew 25 is, interestingly enough, the superlative of the word “micro,” the smallest of the small.

Sometimes as we read this passage, we are tempted to think primarily

of the “down and outer,” the poor, the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, particularly since that is who Jesus seemed to address, but those are outside features. Have you considered that Jesus may have also been speaking metaphorically? That He may have also meant poor, hungry, and thirsty on the inside, hidden from others’ view? It’s easy to see when someone is hungry or thirsty on the outside but seeing someone who is hungry and thirsty on the inside takes a lot more attention, and the need may not be visible at all.

Those of us in ministry who try to put on a brave face for those we serve, can be hard to read when we are hurting. Week after week during that hard time, when I met with the congregation that I ministered to, I saw that when I hurt, they hurt, and they didn’t even know why they were hurting. They didn’t know that the national pastor, my “partner,” an influential man in the denomination, was out to discredit me in the congregation and the denomination. I was confident that, in the end, it would be his sins revealed that would explain his actions and clear my



The Castle Hluboka Which Overlooks the Church Plant —Photo by Ron Barnes

name, but it didn’t make it any easier in the meantime. So, I worked very hard not to wear my emotions on my sleeve, to try to put my love for them above my own personal hurt, and shepherd them like they deserved.

My family was weary from this experience. This man was like a grandfather to them, and to be betrayed was hard on each of them. We postponed our furlough, which we really needed, because to leave in the midst of this crisis would have sent the wrong message, like giving up when it gets hard. The nationals wouldn’t have understood it was a scheduled event for a missionary.

Leaving would have also meant my “partner” sabotaging everything we had built in the congregation; he had already started using his position to bully members. Staying, I could continue to shepherd them, particularly as they became wounded too, but at the same time being wounded as well.

Part of me wanted to just defend myself, clearing my name and revealing his ulterior motives. But it didn’t seem the Lord would let me, like when the truth came out, it would eventually make things abundantly clear, with my testimony intact. So, we patiently waited.

Around this time, a team from New Jersey came, friends of my partner, but who I made all the arrangements for. We spent a good amount of time with them. They were a breath of fresh air, but I still wanted to be careful not to let them see the hurt of our family and do or say anything that would dampen the experience of their mission trip.

We continued to enjoy getting to know each other and they became quite close to my family. They ministered to us more deeply than they will ever know, because it was at one of our darkest moments. They had no idea, I’m sure, that we were the “least of the least” at that moment in time, maybe even appearing to be least likely to have a need. They invited us



Barnes Family Sightseing in Southern Czech  
—Photo by Ron Barnes



The Sunset View from Marco Island  
—Photo by Ronnie Barnes

into their lives, inadvertently under their wings, their care. They invited us to visit them in the states and one invited us to stay in his vacation home in Florida, for as long as we needed to.

Those kind gestures, those loving words, those offers for taking us in, ministered to us not because they saw we were hurting, but because they took seriously this mindset of ministering unto others like each were Jesus Himself.

Jesus didn't only speak of loving and ministering to those who are outwardly lacking, but to all, each and every person we encounter on life's path. Because, let's face it, all of us are lacking. All of us need someone sometime, and more often than we would like to admit. And we may never know when we come across that one person, that one totally-together, on-top-of-everything businessman, teacher, bus driver, or even missionary, who really needs

to be ministered to like one would minister to Jesus. On the outside they may look like the greatest, while on the inside feeling like the least, smallest of the small.

Have you considered how you can minister to those who serve you? It doesn't have to be something extravagant like a vacation house to get away, but something that shows them you love them and understand that they shoulder and carry things they can't always share. Give something to feed, clothe, and refresh them ... like they were Jesus.



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

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

# LOOKING FOR A CHANGE?

## CONSIDER SERVING WITH SLM IN MADISON

COME SPEND A DAY, A MONTH, OR A YEAR WITH US



An expanding ministry means 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](mailto:HR@SLMIN.ORG) TO FIND OUT HOW TO GET STARTED.

### SLM IS LOOKING FOR:

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

## “NOT READY TO RETIRE.”

Born in the spring of 1931, Sylvia Pollard grew up as one of 12 children on a farm in Kentucky. She attended a one-room schoolhouse, milked cows, fed farm animals, and at 16, heard the Gospel and received Christ.

The news was not well received at home. Forbidden by her father to attend Sunday school, Sylvia continued her education into teaching until age 21, when she was free to follow God’s call on her life. “The Lord had been so good to me, to send missionaries to me,” said Sylvia, “I felt the Lord’s calling to me to be a missionary.”

Her teaching experience and further education served her well through 35 years in Kenya, where at age 38, she married single missionary Herb Pollard. Over the following eight years, they had three daughters, her last at age 46.

Like many at SLM, Sylvia and Herb found their way here after retirement age. The work in Africa was left with trained nationals and thrives today. Once at SLM, Herb worked in the print shop and Sylvia graded lessons. “I found my niche,” she says.

After Herb’s graduation to Heaven in 2015, Sylvia remained at SLM. Her students now are mostly prisoners and missionary kids. Sylvia, our



*In Her Garden with Some of SLM’s Youngest  
—Photo by Bruce Dare*

eldest missionary, grades the lessons of SLM’s youngest on-site students, a testament to the continued cycle of God’s grace here.

Sylvia still walks to and from the mission and maintains her garden. She lives alone, and misses her husband, but has no desire to leave SLM. “I know this is where I belong,” she says. “Why would I sit in a rocking chair and dry up?”

Even at 91, Sylvia says with assurance, “I’m not ready to retire.”

Her example of steadfastness and commitment to God’s work are both worthy of the honor we give her here today.

## INTRODUCING NEW FACES ON THE SLM BOARD

**Doug Truax** graduated from Liberty University with a Bachelor of Science degree in International Business. At age 23, he and his wife moved to Ivory Coast, West Africa, to work with Baptist International Mission Inc. During their 10 years in Africa, they worked themselves out of a job by training Africans in the Word of God and the ministry. Source of Light Bible lessons were an essential part of the training of the national pastors. In 1993, they returned to the US, leaving two churches in the hands of capable, well-trained national pastors, who today are some of the most influential pastors in the country, one of whom is the SLM National Director, Isaiah Bernasko.

Doug returned to the US but continued to be heavily involved in supporting the ongoing work of Ivory Coast. After 23 years, Doug retired from BMW manufacturing. Currently, he keeps busy renovating houses and maintaining his wife’s three salons in beautiful Pickens County, South Carolina, and has recently returned from traveling to the Ivory Coast with the President of SLM. He is eager to see the ministry of SLM Africa promoted in this part of the world.

**Jim Thompson** has been married to Pam for 48 years. They have four children and 17 grandchildren. Jim was with Indiana Bible Church



*From left to right: Jim Thompson, Doug Truax*

Missions from 1987–1995 and planted a church in Dale, Indiana. From there, he pastored the Portage Bible Church in Portage, Indiana, and is now the Senior Pastor of Wilton Bible Baptist Church in Wilton, Alabama.

He presently serves on several mission boards, both domestic and foreign, and is a graduate of Southeastern Bible College and has his M.A. and D. Min. from Patriot Bible University. He is the author of a commentary on Ezekiel, called “Ezekiel: The Watchman.”

Jim loves Source of Light and has supported the ministry and its directors for many years. He himself has made many mission trips overseas teaching in seminaries and Bible colleges and looks forward to being available to the needs of our SLM Branches.

## PRAYER

- ◆ The problem with shipping containers worldwide is impacting Source of Light in that we cannot get stock to some of our overseas SLM Branches. Please pray that God will resolve this situation quickly so that our SLM Branches will be able to get the lesson materials that they need.
- ◆ The Branch in Kansas needs a water well on their property. Please pray that God will provide the additional \$6,000 that is needed for this project.
- ◆ In India, our Branch Director H. has seen an increase in persecution. Three pastors who use the Bible lessons in their ministries were beaten up. Church members are being harassed when trying to enter churches, and youth who have Christian names are slowly being released from their jobs. This is making it difficult for many of the poorer classes of believers to feed their families. H.'s ministry travels with a portable tabernacle that has been an effective tool in presenting the Gospel. But because of opposition to setting up the tabernacle outdoors, they are building a smaller sized tabernacle that can fit inside churches. This will increase the amount of people they can reach with the project as well. Please pray for the believers in India who face persecution for their faith.
- ◆ Many of our international Branches need individuals and churches to partner with them through prayer and monthly donations. National missionaries are vitally important to the ministry of Source of Light. Ministering in their own language and within their own culture offers them many advantages to sharing the Gospel with their own people. What a National Branch needs to function within their own country is often much less than what a foreign missionary going to the same country would need. Please pray that God will send new partners who will pray with them and help support their ministries. Even small partnerships of \$25 or \$50 a month can make a huge difference for them. Please pray for God's provision for them.
- ◆ Please pray for an ongoing postal crisis in South Africa. This Branch has always used the postal system to send and receive lessons. Recently, however, the post office refused to receive any mail, and it has brought the work to a standstill. Please pray that God will improve postal operations there.
- ◆ Many of our National Directors are getting older. Some are beginning to experience health problems. Please pray that our Directors will find individuals whom they can train to carry on the ministry of Source of Light in their countries when they are no longer able to do the work of the ministry.
- ◆ Bill Shade, one of Source of Light's former Directors, and Hugh Jarrell, who faithfully volunteered for Source of Light for over seven years, are both dealing with cancer. Please pray that God will renew their strength from the treatments they have already received and give the doctors wisdom for future treatment.
- ◆ Madison Discipleship School, at Headquarters in Madison, Georgia, needs a Spanish Coordinator. Our previous Coordinator retired, and we are trusting God to send someone to fill her position. Please pray with us!

## PRAISE

- ◆ Joe Homotowski, our SLM Branch Director in Canada, shared recently how God is providing for his ministry. They had been unable to do fundraisers for about two years due to COVID. But recently they were able to do one that was a big success. They also had someone donate a boat and a motor to the ministry. They have made \$1,250 so far from the sale of the boat.
- ◆ A pastor in Uganda who has used the Bible lessons since 2017 is grateful for the teaching he has received. He says he has kept all the lessons and uses them in his sermon preparation. He is also introducing the courses to his congregation.
- ◆ We praise the Lord for people like Pastor Paul, who traveled 24 hours by bus and 7 hours by motorcycle to get information from our Branch in Colombia about the Bible lessons. He left the meeting with an overview of the material for children and adults and with lessons for his family to do.
- ◆ Over 196 people collaborated in 40 locations in Argentina to do special Easter programs. The Word of God was presented to 1,948 children and their families. Through the effort, 800 people received Christ! The group feels like they will see much more fruit from this endeavor.
- ◆ Source of Light praises the Lord that we have recently been able to open a new Branch in Spain. Jorge Vecchiarelli is the National Director of that Branch.
- ◆ Source of Light's Branch in the Philippines, PhilSOL, celebrated their 42nd Anniversary on May 19, 2022. We praise the Lord for His faithfulness to them.
- ◆ Vedette Nlandu, the National Director in the D.R. Congo, reports an increased interest among teenagers to do the Bible courses. They are also seeing an increased number of decisions being made for Christ.
- ◆ One of our national missionaries in India reported that they had been regularly visiting and treating a lady with a skin disease. The skin disease healed. God later used this lady to open the door for a Gospel Center in a new tribal village. This Branch also reported that they had 300 children regularly attend Vacation Bible School for 10 days.
- ◆ We praise the Lord for how He faithfully sends staff for the Headquarters in Madison, Georgia. Last year, He brought the Bruce Dare Family to us. Bruce is the new Director of Publications. He arrived in time for Hugh Jarrell to train him before "passing the baton."
- ◆ There must be a lot of rejoicing going in Heaven on a regular basis. In March, one Branch in the Northeast Zone of India reported that 57 new villages were reached with the Gospel, 345 Bible studies were conducted, five leadership trainings were held, and 18 people came to know Christ. In the same Branch in April, 19 people accepted Christ, and four new fellowship groups were started. In May, 40 new villages were reached with the Gospel, and 18 people accepted Christ. Then in Uganda, for May, we read that 1,417 people were saved. This is just from two Branches of Source of Light International. Just think of all the other ministries around the world!

# 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?**

## IN MEMORIAL

### *GIFTS IN HONOR OF...*

**Jim and Susan Williams** by  
John and Sally Hensley

### *GIFTS IN MEMORY OF...*

**Don and Rose Nabinger** by  
Barbara Rabenstein

**Herman and Lula Klaasen** by  
Ken and Charlotte Wehmuller

**Alice Kirk** by  
Robert and Patricia Brickel

**Debbie Pugh** by  
Jim and Elaine McAllister

**Raymond Gilbert** by  
Roger and Carolyn Bruce

**Albert Lee Watkins** by  
Ray and Linda Walker  
John and Wyonne Goodwin  
Mark Bengé



**Source of light**  
INTERNATIONAL

*Dear Friend,*

*Let's remember His words...*

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)

*...for in heaven we will be glad we did.*

*Yours for the harvest,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald J. Barnes, Jr.".

Dr. Ronald J. Barnes, Jr.  
President & CEO

**Give Online at:**

**[sourcelight.org/donate](http://sourcelight.org/donate)**

**By Phone:**

**706.342.0397**

Each gift will be used as preferred with the understanding that when any need is met, the remaining gifts will be used where most needed. Gifts are acknowledged and receipted with an official receipt for income tax purposes.

***We are grateful to you for being a part of the ministry of Source of Light through your prayers and financial support.***





**Source of light**  
INTERNATIONAL

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