



the **REAPER**

VOL. 69, NO. 3 | Fall 2024



**WE PRAYED.  
GOD ANSWERED.  
WE GIVE THANKS.**

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**COLOSSIANS 4:2**

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.

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**the REAPER**

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We Give Thanks.  
Colossians 4:2

**Corrections & Clarifications**

For the latest version of **the Reaper** go to [sourcelight.org/reaper](http://sourcelight.org/reaper)

# WE PRAYED. GOD ANSWERED. WE GIVE THANKS.

By Ron Barnes

I know I am blessed with the ministry God has given me. On a regular basis I get to go to the frontlines and see firsthand the ministries Source of Light is involved in, and I am blessed to occasionally participate in the frontline work.

Already this year, I participated in several opportunities for training and challenging our missionaries on some of the new resources SLM has produced. Excitedly, our missionaries went back to their places of ministry and quickly set up plans for translating, editing, and publishing the new materials and sent in their project requests so that people here in the States will know the financial need as well as how to pray. Already many of these needs have been met.

One of my greatest joys is to let our missionaries know that God has once again provided for our needs. In fact, it seems recently I have had the privilege to do it quite often as God has provided—through many of you—for the needs of these projects and many more.

As I prayed over this edition of *The Reaper*, I sensed God wanted us to devote it to those answers to prayer and share some of the stories of what your prayers provided.

The second half of James 5:16 tells us that The effectual fervent prayer of “a righteous man availeth much.” Certainly, the context deals with the healing that results from confession, but it in no way minimizes the truth about all fervent prayers “availing much.”

One of our core values at SLM is and always has been prayer. We pray in faith; we pray expecting to hear answers from God; and we pray constantly. Colossians 4:2 is our basis for this: “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”

Apparently, you too have been committed to this with us, because we have seen many answers to prayer. Most of us don’t follow up as well with answers to prayers as well as we do to present the needs. This *Reaper* is dedicated to doing just



(Left) Daniel in Ghana, Giving a Ministry Update after His Recovery — Photo by Ron Barnes



(Right) Sika in Togo with His Surgeon after a Finger Infection — Photo by Lucie Yawo

that, to sharing the actual answers to prayer that we have seen, particularly in relation to projects and the need for financial resources.

But there have also been many answers to prayer besides financial ones, and I’d like to highlight just a few.

### **We have seen God heal:**

The yellow fever of Daniel in Ghana, the infection of Sika’s finger in Togo, the ulcers in James in Uganda, the dangerous eclampsia of the Vanegas’ daughter in Colombia, and the recent sickness of Sanjeeb in India.



James Speaking at a Retreat after Being Healed from His Ulcers — Photo by Ron Barnes

### **We have seen progress in the medical situations of:**

Brian Thompson, Brian Trapp, Melody Zink, Shirley Rice, Jim Tilson, and Philip Fraiser (from the home office along with many others). Internationally, God has helped Hemanth in India, Adil in Portugal, Alice and Samuel in Brazil, Joe in Canada, Lediz in Bolivia, and Isaiah in the Ivory Coast.

### **We have seen God open new doors in:**

Peru among the deaf, Brazil among new churches, Spain with new missionaries, the Philippines in government offices, Portugal among prisoners, and new Associate Discipleship Schools around the globe. Also, South Africa using online lessons due to the shutdown of the postal service and the use of online lessons in countries we don’t currently serve in.

### **We rejoice to see ministry cross borders into:**

Uruguay, Ecuador, Venezuela, Burkina Faso, Benin, Malawi, Somalia, Italy,

Ireland, Iran, Vietnam, Nepal, Cuba, Nicaragua, Panama, Belize, Jordan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Malaysia.

**We give thanks for protection from:**

Persecution in India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Indonesia, flooding in Mozambique, gangs in Haiti, unreasonable taxes in Kenya and Jamaica for shipments, and the cartel in Mexico.

**New leadership is being prepared in:**

Chile, Japan, the Philippines, India, and the Ivory Coast.

These are all requests you have been asked to pray for, and God has seen fit to answer above and beyond our wildest imagination. So, thank you for praying on our behalf. Thank you for asking others to join in. And thank you for partnering with us in the Gospel.

It is our desire that this edition of *The Reaper* honors God and honors those of you who prayed . . . and gave! God bless you! 🌿



Adil and His Wife, Erica, after His Recovery from Gall Bladder Surgery —Photo by Ron Barnes



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

# TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS WITH A THEOLOGY OF THANKS

By Bruce Dare

**The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.**

**(Psalm 24:1)**

We might consider this verse more in reference to things God has directly made, but it is just as true with things men have thought they made. Such is the difficulty squaring technology with theology. How should we view the things we use to do things for the Lord? We thank Him, for they are His, just the same. Especially in this epoch of time when apparent technological advances seem to be happening at blistering speed, we often feel unprepared to use new tools and means rightly. Just like the builders at Babel (See Genesis 11:1-9), we have goals and aspirations, and we expect the newest and fastest equipment will get us where we need to go. We might have good plans to “go into such a city, and continue there a year” and do something profitable but often quickly learn that our collection of nifty tricks “appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth” and we are sometimes corrected that our “rejoicing in our boastings . . . is evil.” Truly, instead we “ought to say, ‘If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that’” (James 4:13-16).

Even with the best of intentions, the gifts we are given at Source of Light or in any area of life always run the risk of fulfilling

the opposite of their best purpose. Are we looking to achieve personal success? Whether it be money or ministry. Are we building our own kingdom? Of followers or maybe just stories. The tools could be used for the wrong task. And the most frightening part is, we might not even know it (See Jeremiah 17:9). It is with this warning firmly in mind that we take space in this *Reaper* to announce to the world our intended purpose for such gifts: the glory of God and the good of the Gospel.

Probably the two most significant areas of change over the last several decades are with travel and technology. Though a reliable vehicle and a laptop computer might be as common as napkins in the USA, they are simply not in other parts of the world. Both are merely tools and as we might quickly take for granted, are needed for our Branches to do ministry most effectively. Here are some excerpts of what recent gifts have meant for SLM staff:



K. & S. Using New Car to Distribute New Testaments and SLM Lessons —Photo by K.J.



B.P. with Motorbike for New Source of Light Ministry — Photo by B.P.

The Discipleship Training Branch in Orissa, India recently had an addition to leadership and a hope toward expansion of the ministry. They were praying for a motorbike, a common and efficient means of transportation there, to reach more places. God answered their prayer in January of 2023. B.P. shares, “Now it is helping me to visit different mission fields.” In turn, he “had no computer for office work and our teaching ministry.” But this past April at the SLM regional conference, they received a laptop. “Now it is a great help.”

Similar needs had been met elsewhere in India, particularly for K. & S. based out of Kolkata. Public transport is often an option, but in many places none is available or taking literature not allowed. God provided a car in September of 2022.

They share, “This is helping us in a greater way to reach out to many people and make disciples ... Our fields are scattered in many far places, so this car is helping to connect to the people and places.”

Another factor we rarely face in the United States? The danger of persecution. Having a ministry vehicle not only allows for smoother but also safer work.

Also, “God provided some bicycles to the Gospel outreach teams ... They are able to carry the literature to the villages and slums.”

With no other options in these places, the bicycles are especially essential. K. also details, “God has provided us a laptop computer which is helping me to teach in the discipleship conference and leadership trainings.”

“Praise God for this wonderful gift ... Thank you for your prayer and support.”



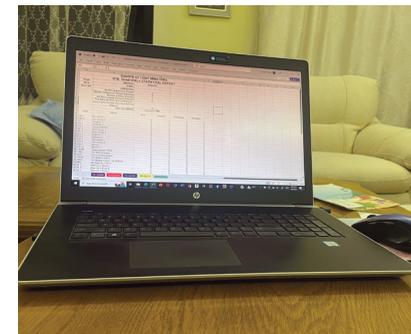
Bicycle Used for Gospel Outreach Teams to Villages and Slums — Photo by K.J.

Traveling westward to SLM Romania, Cristian Oprea notes they have “been blessed in the last couple of years with means for the ministry.” In January of 2022, donations received “made it possible to buy a decent car” which had multiple uses, especially to “carry a large volume of goods and booklets.” It has already been used for development, and they “plan to enlarge the ministry more by means of this.” Back in 2019, they received a laptop for ministry and essential communication with SLM headquarters, even such as recorded here! “We praise the Lord.”

Heading south to Brazil we often heard the report from our National Director there, Samuel Milanez, who repeatedly struggled to successfully complete ministry trips due to chronic car breakdowns. Following provision of a more dependable vehicle, he reports, “With this car, I have arrived faster, and I have arrived easier at the churches where I have presented Source of Light. The GPS has put me on streets where I thank God I no longer have the old car, which was a blessing, but it would not be able to face those streets.”



Car (above) and Laptop (right) Used to Develop Ministry in Romania — Photo by Cristian Oprea



Of course, the needs are not only overseas. Even for staff serving at Headquarters in Madison, a vehicle problem can be tenuous, though sometimes answered by God’s doubling blessing. As Brian Thompson testifies, “Since we have been in Madison working for SLM, we have been given two different vehicles, both by the same family ... In all we have been missionaries for over 25 years and He has always met our needs.”

Not only does Source of Light seek to “provide the tools to finish the task,” we are glad when we have the tools we feel we could use to do so. God has, again and again, blessed us. Sometimes it’s only what we need and little more. Sometimes it’s newer or better. We carry on either way, giving thanks and using means, Lord-willing, for His righteous purposes. 🌿



**Bruce Dare** serves as the Director of Publications at Source of Light. He and his family are grateful God opened this place of ministry full-time in 2021.

# HELP ON THE HOMEFRONT

Source of Light is blessed to have partners who are concerned and burdened to partner with missionaries and projects around the globe. But sometimes the needs right here at our home office get neglected. We tend to get as much use as we can out of our resources, but occasionally the lifespan of this equipment has run its course. Two such current projects we have are below:

**Vehicles:** Our fleet of vehicles has reached its limit, and so we are looking for two things: \$20,000 for a specific type of van that would suit our needs and either funds or a donation of a small, midsize car or SUV.

**VOIP Phone System:** Our phone system lacks significant elements that have become standard in the current work environment and thus we are looking to upgrade to a more functional system employing greater reliability and usefulness. The system to replace our current one is estimated to cost \$10,000.



# BUT I DON'T HAVE A BIBLE

By Kimberly Thigpen

Can you imagine giving a small lesson to a child about Jesus and telling them they can read more about Jesus in the Bible, but then the child tells you they don't have a Bible?

The few verses included in a SLM lesson might be the only ones a schoolchild—or even a village pastor—has.

When one of our new fields mentioned that they would really like a set of chronological Bible stories for their dynamic work with children, I got so excited. I had written the text for a series of such material decades ago that was never fully used. We dug it out, did a major edit, added some content, and it was ready to be turned into brand new material for Source of Light.



Sample Lessons of New SLM Bible Story Series  
— Photo by Kimberly Thigpen

The new CHILDREN'S BIBLE STORY SERIES is a 104-lesson study of some of the Bible's most important stories. These lessons are different than SLM's standard material. Rather than booklets with tests that get returned by a mentor, the Bible story set will be individual fold-over sheets that can be used as handouts in Sunday school or the classroom each week.

Each lesson has the Bible story, a few short questions, two memory verses, an application section, and one core truth to remember.

Source of Light wanted to offer this material for free online so our fields—or anyone—could download and print them. The material would be offered for free. The creation of it, however, would not be.

We sent the word out to friends and prayer supporters. Two fellow laborers shared it in their newsletters as well.

The response brought us great delight. Gifts came in from supporters,

friends we haven't heard from in decades, retired missionaries, homeschool moms, even strangers. I was deeply humbled when one of the largest gifts came from one of SLM's national missionary partners, who I know has gone hungry in the past for the sake of the Gospel.

None of the over four thousand dollars given came from a church or organization. Every dollar came from individuals—from as little as \$10 sent through the mail—each one surely a sweet-smelling sacrifice, acceptable and well-pleasing to God. (See Philippians 4:17-20).

Right now, more money has come in than was needed, so we will even be able to help with some translation or printing costs. God has provided a great team of editors also, all online volunteers. We love seeing God's people come together to do something great for Him!

People are already asking for this material. Lord willing, the full set will be available online when the new SLM KIDS website comes out.

We can't wait to see what God does! 🌿



**Kimberly Thigpen** is a homeschool mom, teacher, and author. She serves as SLM's Literature Coordinator.



— Photos by Kimberly Thigpen

A group of homeschool students did a missionary drama for their fellowship's very first play, and over the two performances raised an amazing \$5,000 for an SLM ministry in Asia!

# CLOTHED WITH MERCY AND KINDNESS

By Danielle Dare

**PUT ON THEREFORE, AS THE ELECT OF GOD, HOLY AND BELOVED... MERCIES, KINDNESS...**

**(COLOSSIANS 3:12)**

India, a land overflowing with people who have yet to hear the Gospel message, many of whom are burdened with physical and economic hardships that compound their spiritual blindness. For Christ followers, the directive to show compassion to the poor is clear, whether it be to see them and give generously of our possessions as we are reminded in the book of Proverbs or the admonishment in the letter from James to provide for physical needs and not only verbalize empty blessings. Within this context a partnership was established between generous friends of Source of Light and the faithful ministry of S. and A. in northern India. As S. shares, "Our main intention is to help women who are below the poverty line, to teach them a skill which will later help them to earn their own living."

S. and A. are filled with gratitude for how God has provided for this ministry through burdening the hearts of donors to give toward the purchase of 12 sewing machines. Through these gifts, 31 women have learned how to use the machines to sew women's and children's dresses, with plans for leaders to teach in a new



Women Learning Special Skills to Support Themselves out of Poverty — Photo by S.S.

place in the coming weeks. Not only are the sewing machines used for outreach, but they have been a special blessing to ladies in the church as well, some of whom have recently started a new crafting and sewing business making paper and cloth bags. No doubt the skills learned by these women will be passed on to others, creating a ripple effect of hope, just like the tangible gifts of God's people, coupled with intentional relationship building in communities in India work together to create a catalyst for the Gospel to go forth. To God be all the glory as each of us open our eyes to see the needs around us and give generously as He wills, vessels of mercy and kindness, drawing attention to the Giver of Life. 🌿



**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.

# 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?**

## WE PRAYED FOR ZAMBIA

By Ron Barnes

It wasn't that long ago we asked prayer for an opportunity to open a new country in Africa: Zambia. We felt we had good partners in place, but we needed the right leader and resources to build an office. It didn't take long for God to answer those prayers by providing an extremely gifted and energetic partner named Kelvin Chisiza.

Kelvin hit the ground running and began quickly to make plans for a building that would serve as a print shop and office. Our team in the States began to pray and to share the need, and in nearly the time it took to receive quotes for both the construction and the machine for printing, we had commitments to cover the cost for both. By the time this *Reaper* gets distributed, we anticipate construction on the office will be complete and the process of securing a machine and printing training will have begun. We also expect that soon hundreds of pastors and pastors-in-training will have access to the SLM resources that we have already begun introducing and training on there.

A quick timeline like this can only be explained by a team of prayer warriors committed equally as we are to see new Source of Light Branches established around the world. God answered... when we prayed for Zambia. 🌿



Print Shop Building in Zambia  
—Photo by Kelvin Chisiza



Inside of Print Shop in Zambia  
—Photo by Kelvin Chisiza

# BEFORE YOU KNEW WHAT TO PRAY PRINTING IN UGANDA

By Ron Barnes

Deep inside, James Byakika had privately been wondering if God would have him print the SLM lessons from within Uganda. In Africa, our experience had been that the English lessons can be printed in the US and shipped significantly cheaper than printing in-country. Printing in-country also requires a lot of help and the equipment to do so, which generally has been the biggest cost.

So, when James contacted the SLM administration about the feasibility of purchasing a Risograph machine and printing in Uganda, we agreed to commit this to prayer, and he committed to due diligence as to costs and help needed to print.



James Byakika with the New Risograph  
— Photo by James Byakika



James in the US Gaining the Vision for Printing  
— Photo by Ronnie Barnes

After a number of meetings, it seemed we had enough information gathered to determine that it might be financially feasible enough to justify the purchase of the Riso and the supplies to print in Uganda. So, when James then began the process of presenting a project proposal, I happily reminded him that in his publication account, a large gift was given that would cover the cost of the machine and some of the printing for 2024.

Before we even knew to pray for a machine, God provided the funds. This meant James could proceed immediately, and within days of our conversation, he was printing his first lessons. Thank you for those of you who pray, sometimes for what you know and for wisdom for what you don't. And thank you to those of you who give as God puts it on your heart, even when you don't know the specifics. 🌿

# GIVING THANKS ALL THE WAY TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

## TOGO

By Ron Barnes

It had been a hard year for Sika and Lucie in Togo. The characteristic jovial smile, antics, and laughter Sika usually exhibits had been replaced with a long bout of discouragement, pain, and sadness. A small discomfort in his finger soon became a severe infection in his hand, which caused Sika to lose a portion of a finger and nearly resulted in Sika losing his life. His life was spared thanks to the American missionaries at the ABWE hospital in Togo.

Lucie already had been suffering with her own health issues when the market where she was working caught fire, which resulted in her having severe respiratory issues. It is taking a long time for them to heal, and Sika recalled to me that



Van Packed and Ready to Go — Photo by Sika Yawo



Yawo Family with New Van — Photo by Sika Yawo

he told the Lord He can take him if He wants, but he'd rather stay. There's a lot more work for the Lord he has yet to do.

Thankfully, the Lord spared his life, but in the middle of this season came a source of great joy. God provided a long-awaited resource Sika and the SLM Togo team needed to carry out their ministry more effectively: a 10-passenger, 4-wheel-drive van that will get him "to the ends of the earth."

It was a real source of encouragement not only because it was during a time of physical pain but also because it was the answer to many years of prayer.

Sika and Lucie still continue to heal and are optimistic about complete healing. If God answered the prayer for a vehicle that can take them to the ends of the earth, then He surely will keep them healthy enough to drive it there. 🌿



# 2023 AT A GLANCE

Source of Light Ministries International 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.

## 61520

Represents the number of students making decisions for Christ and beginning a discipling relationship with SLM.

## 1929

Represents the number of new villages and regions our missionaries entered to help achieve our goal of reaching every nation.

## 272

Represents how many new house groups started by SLM missionaries and full time volunteers.

## 256

Represents the number of new Bible Study groups established by SLM missionaries using the SLM resources.

## 49

Represents the number of new church plants established by SLM missionaries.

### What We Do

Discipleship  
Develop and Distribute Bible Resources  
Church Planting  
Evangelism  
Edify Believers

### How We Do It

40 Branches  
179 Missionaries  
773 Full Time Volunteers  
120+ Languages  
2+ Million Lessons sent by 6378 Associate Schools

Contact us at

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# THE SURPRISING KINDNESS OF GOD

By Danielle Dare

**And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.**

(MATTHEW 19:29)

The call of the missionary can be a difficult one. Often it requires forsaking all that is familiar and leaving loved ones behind for the sake of spreading the Gospel. The reward promised is an eternal one, a laying down of one's life in exchange for treasures in Heaven. Thankfully, we also serve a faithful Father who delights in giving unexpected blessings to His children. He is compassionate to us in our humanity and kind to us in our grief.

When Jorge and Olga Vecchiarelli followed God's call to leave their home in Argentina and bring the Gospel to Spain, they knew they would miss significant moments with their loved ones back home. One such situation was when Olga's mother, who had been in poor health, passed from this life into eternity. The Vecchiarelli's financial situation at the time did not allow for the airfare



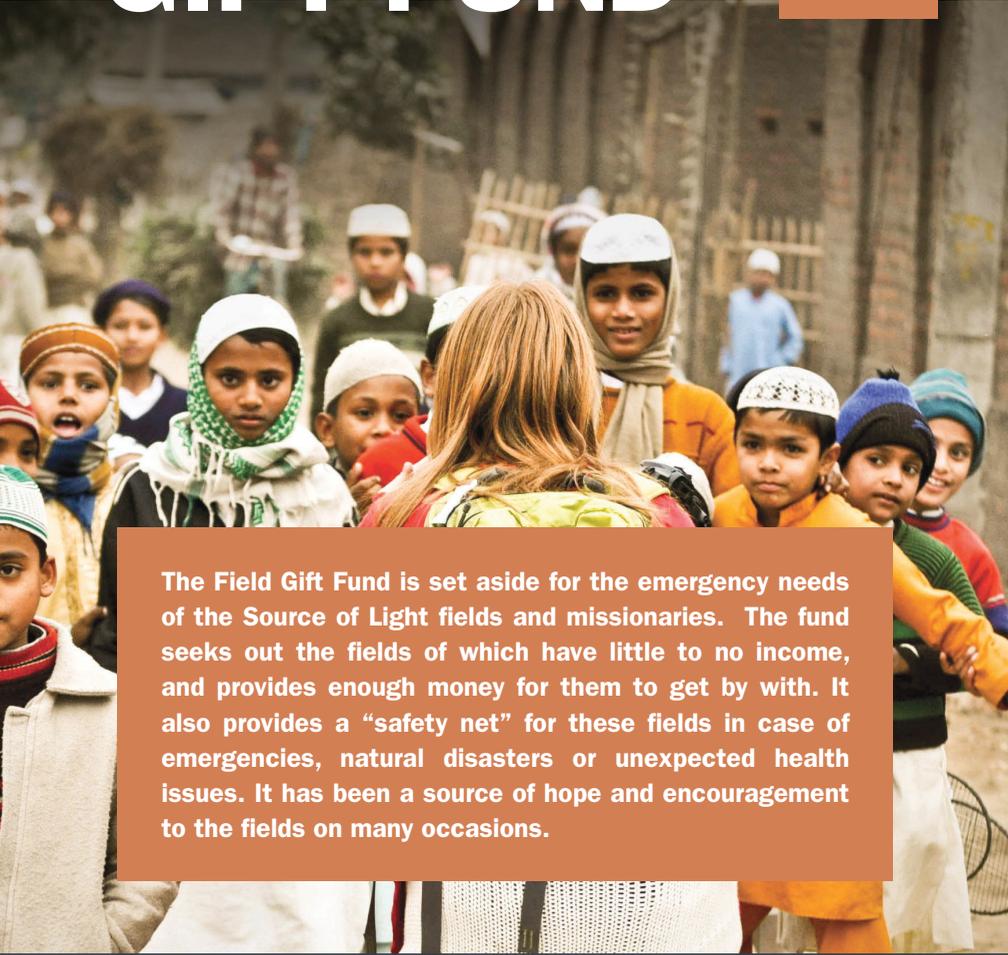
Jorge and Olga Standing Under the Newly Placed Flag of Spain at SLM HQ — Photo by Brian Thigpen

needed for Olga to return home. Having worked with Source of Light for merely weeks, they requested prayer that they would feel the Lord's comfort in their grief and separation from family. And then, as they say it, "God surprised us!" Source of Light was able to cover the cost of Olga's plane ticket so she could attend her mother's funeral. God provided for their need through leading His people to give toward Source of Light's Field Gift Fund, an expense account set aside for emergency situations and unexpected difficulty such as the Vecchiarelli's faced. Filled with gratitude, they share, "It is in the most difficult moments that we see the powerful hand of God at work! We are grateful for each of you." 🌿



Beautiful Day in Palautordera, Barcelona - Spain — Photo by Paulina Vecchiarelli

# FIELD GIFT FUND



The Field Gift Fund is set aside for the emergency needs of the Source of Light fields and missionaries. The fund seeks out the fields of which have little to no income, and provides enough money for them to get by with. It also provides a “safety net” for these fields in case of emergencies, natural disasters or unexpected health issues. It has been a source of hope and encouragement to the fields on many occasions.

Would you prayerfully consider partnering with SLM through this Field Outreach Fund Campaign? There are many ways to help.

To partner with us today, go to  
[sourcelight.org/donate](https://sourcelight.org/donate)

## BLESSING IN COSTA RICA AND BEYOND

By Miguel Diaz

### New Printers

God is wonderful, and He provides what is necessary for His work. Our task is to believe in Him and obey Him. God is the owner of everything, and He magnifies His work amidst the times. This truth has been very real for us in the last two years, where the Fuente de Luz Ministry has been blessed in Costa Rica and beyond its borders. Our “island ministry” now has its own printer to print Fuente de Luz courses. Since 2023, thanks to this printer, children, young people, and adults can learn about God and His Word on this island. And not only this “island ministry” has had this benefit but also our neighboring country, Panama, because they also received a printer to supply themselves with the courses. In this way, more people can study the Bible in an organized and consistent manner and become true disciples of Christ.



Judit Fernández of Fuente de Luz (Source of Light) at “Island Ministry” with New Printer  
— Photo by Miguel Diaz



Bibles Being Donated at Source of Light, Costa Rica  
— Photo by Miguel Diaz

### Donated Bibles

You can imagine a child studying the Fuente de Luz courses but feeling sad because he knows everyone else has a Bible except him. He pleads with his parents to buy him a Bible, but this child is the third of six siblings, and it's not so easy for this family to afford one. This year, the Fuente de Luz ministry has been able to be a blessing to this child and many others who don't have their own Bibles, thanks to a donation of Bibles we received this year.

Thank you very much to each one for your prayers, for your offerings. The work of God continues to move forward, and you are part of this blessing. 🌿



**Miguel Diaz** serves as the Director for SLM Costa Rica, which was officially introduced as a DTB in 2022. He and his wife, Viviana, left careers in engineering and journalism to serve full-time in ministry.

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



Weighing an average of **1,500** pounds, an **\$1,200** pallet of paper yields **36,000** to **40,000** Bible lessons. A **\$75** box of digital quality paper can produce about **1,250** Bible lessons. Source of Light material is used in Christian and secular schools, church planting, Bible studies, and even prisons around the world. Translations include languages such as French, Spanish, Tagalog, Hindi, and Japanese among several others available in Madison and abroad.

One of SLM's goals is to enable our international missionaries to produce the lessons on their own soil. However, many cannot because of the high cost of paper. Your generous gift will reach people in the US and overseas.

Consider a donation with the ultimate return on investment...  
...an investment which yields eternal results!

Become a Paper Partner today, go to  
[sourcelight.org/donate](http://sourcelight.org/donate)



# FULL COLOR MATCHING

By Phil Winder & Phillip Fraiser

## Main Building

While remodeling the SLM headquarters building, we had to purchase an elevator before we designed the building. This was needed so that we knew how big of an elevator shaft to build. We started praying on Thursday and on Tuesday we received a check in the mail for \$45,000, which was just a little more than the amount needed to purchase the elevator. As I tell this story while giving tours of SLM, someone so wisely mentioned that the check was in the mail before the prayer ever went up.

A second miracle or added bonus came with the answer to our prayer request. We had to choose the colors of the elevator before we ever purchased our tile flooring. When we purchased the tile for the building much later from a Christian procurement ministry, the color matched the elevator perfectly.



**Phil Winder** serves as the Director of Operations and Volunteers at Source of Light.

For several years, the Print Shop staff had been thinking, dreaming, and—most importantly—praying about a new printing press. Our goal has always been to reach every generation with the most excellent product we can print. As we considered the appearance of our two-color work, we knew we must upgrade the printing to full color to appeal to a generation saturated with color.

Enter the RYOBI 925 Printing Press! Capable of printing five colors inline and equipped with most features found on late models, this machine is sure to meet our needs for the future. And the wonderful thing is, Source of Light owns this press! How can this be? It is because SLM is blessed with many faithful donors who have a heart for reaching the world via the printed page. This is how God has chosen to meet all of our needs “according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

Thank you, dear friends in Christ, for making this dream a reality. 🌿

## Print Shop

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).



**Phillip Fraiser** has served as a pressman at Source of Light for over 30 years.

# GOD'S VALENTINE TO ME

By Gwenda Trapp

While serving as a missionary in the Democratic Republic of Congo, I developed a goiter in my thyroid. The doctor did a biopsy and told me that because of “abnormal cells,” they recommended thyroid removal. I was hesitant to go this route. My husband, Brian, had returned to Africa before me, and I was in the States with our two children. We were monitoring our debt closely and had just taken some measures to resolve debt. I was especially concerned when the insurance company started calling me with concerns about covering the surgery. I really wanted this resolved before the surgery, because I did not want to take the chance of the cost not being covered and once again face a problem with debt. I told them that it had to be clarified and resolved before the surgery. I did not want to proceed if there was any doubt that the insurance would pay.

On the day of my pre-op appointment, once again a red flag was raised. I told the girl that I could not agree to have the surgery if there was any question about the insurance paying. She left the desk and called the insurance company again. When she returned to the desk, she said, “It has been resolved. You need to write a check for this amount, and the account will be paid in full.” I did so, had the surgery, and just days later, I was on a plane to Africa.

After returning to Africa, my power of attorney in the US began sending me emails. She said that she was getting huge bills from the hospital. I said, “That can't be. They told me everything was paid in full.” After phone calls to the States, I discovered that, in the end, the insurance hadn't paid. I remember lying on the couch in the living room of our home and sobbing when I received the news. As I lay there, God assured my heart that nothing was too difficult for Him.

I appealed the claim with the insurance company and appealed to the hospital, but to no avail. Even after the hospital gave us a self-pay discount, we would owe over \$20,000. I had done everything I could to avoid this situation, and here I was—stuck!



Brian and Gwenda Trapp (in 2023) While Serving at SLM HQ — Photo by Autumn Scoggins



Gwenda Trapp with Her Husband, Brian, and Their Daughters while Missionaries in the D.R. Congo — Photo by Gwenda Trapp

I began paying. Throughout the years, I continued to appeal to the hospital and write letters. The surgery occurred in 2008. After years of service in Africa, we returned to the US and were invited by Source of Light to serve at Headquarters. In 2022, 14 years after the surgery, Brian and I had a little extra money in our ministry account that we could use for doctor bills. I began to wonder if I could get the hospital to do a settlement with me. I would offer them a lump sum, much smaller than the bill, if they would settle for that amount.

I called the hospital. The girl on the line told me that in my case a settlement wasn't possible. I almost gave up at that point. But again, I felt prompted to write to someone. I went online and wrote to the CEO of the hospital. I explained my situation, as I had done many times in the past. One evening, a short time after having sent the email, I was at home and received a phone call. The CEO of the hospital was on the line. She said, “Mrs.

Trapp, I think you have been dealing with this long enough. You will receive a call from our billing department in a few days so that we can resolve this issue.” As she promised, the billing department called and confirmed that my settlement had been accepted. She took my payment, and my account was cleared. God had worked, just as He assured me He would. And you will never guess the last name of the CEO! Her last name was Valentine! God had sent me a special valentine, and he had used Ms. Valentine! I heard through the grapevine that Ms. Valentine recently retired from that hospital. Just at the right time, God had her in the position to get me the help I needed.

**God is good.** 🌿



**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.”

# RAMPING IT UP

By Melody Zink & Dave Newell



I received a huge blessing in a ramp installed at my home in January 2022. Funds were provided for the materials to build it, and the men of the Operations Department here at Source of Light plus some volunteers from a local church did the building. The ramp was ready for use the evening I came home from the hospital after having hip replacement surgery that morning. Before leaving the hospital, the staff made sure I was able to navigate steps. However, the ramp has been a special blessing many times since those initial weeks when I've had a multiple number of items to get into the house. Yes, it is quicker to climb the steps but easier to walk the ramp.

was required just to learn how to walk again on a flat surface. Our house had at least five steps to get inside, which Anna Gay could not do. We committed this problem to God, asking for wisdom in how to deal with this challenge. Folks at a local church, Centennial Baptist, heard of our dilemma and offered to help. Funds had previously been collected to build a ramp for a need in the church which never materialized, so they offered to use those funds to build a ramp for us. A crew from the church came with materials and within a few days constructed a wooden ramp. And they did not charge us a penny! What a blessing from the Lord! Just a few days after the ramp was built, I brought Anna Gay home from the hospital and helped her shuffle her walker up that beautiful ramp. God's timing and provision was perfect! 🍂

**Melody Zink** has been involved in Christian Camp and office administrative work since mid-1985. She began at SLM in March 2011 and is currently the Administrative Assistant to Dr. Ronald Barnes. Melody also helps in the accounting department working with the field finances.



On October 7, 2022, my wife, Anna Gay, fell and fractured several pelvic bones that required a three-week stay in the hospital. Physical therapy

**Dave & Ann Gay Newell** began missionary service with Trans Word Radio in 1966 and moved to serve with SLM in 1987. Later seconded to Neighborhood Gospel Missions, they retired in 2016 but are still semi-active in both ministries.



# TREASURE FROM HEAVEN: PLANNED GIVING

By Brian Thigpen

The COVID-19 pandemic was around the corner. Source of Light's general operating fund has its ups and downs like most missions, and we were experiencing a down. Consistent monthly partners give us stability, but we also rely on special large gifts to continue our global ministry.

Source of Light was tight financially, and an economic upheaval was looming. We were praying for God's provision.

He sent it.

A large gift came in from a lady who had many decades of experience knowing and caring about the ministry of SLM International. She had given before, but never any amount to this extent. She had lived frugally throughout her life and was now giving her savings so that the work of SLM could continue and millions around the world could be evangelized and disciplined.

Did she know the difficulties the mission was in? No. Outside the administration, only God knew. The provision, as always, ultimately came from Him.

It would be right to contact this dear sister in Christ and express deep gratitude for this gift, so needed, so timely.

However, this time no call was made, and she did not receive a card.

Were we unthankful? Certainly not. Forgetful? No.

Then why? Why did we not make every effort to find and make sure she knew how much her gift had mattered?

Her gift was made from Heaven.

Not literally sent from Heaven, but yet also in a very real sense, for she had made provision in her will that, after her death, a significant portion of her investments would be given to Source of Light. She, now in a place where money was no longer needed, made sure what remained behind would continue to serve.

In Hebrews 11:4, it says of Abel, "he, being dead, yet speaketh." This woman, by planning ahead, made sure that she would continue to give beyond her years on this earth. She, being dead, yet giveth, and giveth, and will continue to give.

Her gift has helped in ways only God knows, for the results are His and future possibilities both endless and eternal. While the pandemic strained and restricted missionaries around the world, we had the funds to press forward and even expand our discipleship ministry, from national missionaries' emergency needs, to Home Office expenses, to new fields just getting started.

The legacy we here at headquarters and overseas hope to leave behind is often souls saved or tangible materials that will serve as paper missionaries for years to come. Those whose legacy is financial provide for those things to happen.

Have you ever thought of storing up treasure in Heaven while you're actually in Heaven? Imagine being welcomed with those beautiful words, "Well done," but then hearing the Lord say that His reward ceremony has to wait until the end of time because people like you are still earning rewards!

With SLM not receiving any administration fees, all gifts go 100% to the projects to which they are designated. That leaves the Home Office receiving nothing beyond what is given to the Global Outreach Fund or undesignated. This woman has helped provide for us to continue on, from small things like staplers or paper clips or new shelving to large needs like press repairs or replacement parts or travel to needy fields.

While still on this earth, we cannot express our thanks to her and others.

Such for them comes from One much greater and worthy of all we give. Yet we long to share while we can, and therefore, to all who have already designated funds in their wills or are considering other planned gifts, we say it now.

**Thank you.** 🌿



**Brian Thigpen** served in Asia and Africa before moving to Madison to join Source of Light as Chief Financial Officer.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAVE AN ETERNAL FINANCIAL LEGACY?



**For more information on how you can include Source of Light in your forever giving, contact [bthigpen@slmin.org](mailto:bthigpen@slmin.org).**

**THERE ARE MANY WAYS YOU CAN PLAN GIVING THAT WILL REDUCE YOUR TAX BURDEN OR THAT OF YOUR OTHER BENEFICIARIES WHILE INVESTING IN ETERNITY.**

**SOME COMMON METHODS OF GIVING:**

**Will or trust • IRA giving • Securities • Real estate • Life insurance**

## PRAYER

- ◆ Pray for our new Branches in Europe as they are in the early stages of ministry with Source of Light. Some have missionaries in the support-raising stage, and others need additional ministry support. Please pray that God provides and encourages them as they walk their faith journey.
- ◆ Source of Light International missionaries and Home Office staff are getting to the typical retirement age. Please pray that God will bring new people to be trained for ministry at Headquarters and that He provides the supporters they will need to serve.
- ◆ Please pray that God will guide our International Branch Directors in choosing who will take over their ministries and provide the training that is needed for new Directors to carry on the ministry without interruption when the present Directors leave. Currently, our SLM New Mexico Branch is praying that God will send them a bilingual couple (English and Spanish) who they can train to take over the work as they have retired.
- ◆ Our overseas staff face the challenges of poor health care and national disasters. One of our Branch Directors reported severe flooding in their area. Pray also for the tropical diseases and regional illnesses (malaria and dengue fever, to name a few) that present regular challenges for our international staff. In Brazil, they have faced the challenge of having an inadequate supply of water.
- ◆ Please pray for Virginia Johnson and Ruby Chambers as they adapt to and learn the responsibilities of their new positions in the Accounting Department.
- ◆ Please pray for wisdom for our SLM Uganda Branch as they learn the new Risograph machine and how to effectively produce quality literature to meet the large quantity of lessons that are utilized in Uganda. As with any new endeavor, there is a learning curve.
- ◆ We have several SLM National Directors who are scheduled to visit the United States this fall to promote their ministries. They are praying that God will speak to people's hearts about partnering with them in prayer and financial support. Please pray that God will open doors in churches and people's homes where they can share their ministries and that they will experience gracious hospitality while in the US. May they return to their individual areas of service refreshed and encouraged. (If you would like to have one of these National Directors share with your congregation or small group, please contact Ron Barnes at [rbarnes@slmin.org](mailto:rbarnes@slmin.org)).
- ◆ Our SLM Publications Department is currently preparing for printing in full color. Please pray for our staff that God will give wisdom in their first attempts and patience in the transition. The Publications Department also needs additional staff in binding and in shipping.
- ◆ Please pray for Takuji Yamazaki, our SLM Branch Director in Japan. He came to the United States for deputation but had to return home early due to the report that his cancer has returned. He has started treatment again and is feeling better. Please pray for strength for him in the treatments and for his healing.
- ◆ Continue to pray for our Branch in Haiti where violence continues.

## PRAISE

- ◆ The SLM Branch in Uganda is now printing their lessons locally on their own Risograph printer.
- ◆ Source of Light Headquarters in Madison praises the Lord for new staff in our Accounting Department. Eula Keener faithfully served there for many years, but due to poor health, she had to relocate to be closer to her children. God has recently sent Virginia Johnson and Ruby Chambers as new volunteers for the Accounting Department. We appreciate their willingness to serve!
- ◆ Please pray for our new Branch in Zambia as they are learning all the procedures for reporting. Also, they are going through the process of getting SLM Zambia registered as a not-for-profit organization in Zambia, and they are constructing a building that will be used for a print shop. Pray for all these processes. Pray that they will quickly get the building built and that they will be successful in setting up and running a Risograph printer there soon.
- ◆ The SLM Publications Department in Madison is rejoicing that literature has been sent to and has successfully arrived this year in Mozambique, Brazil, Bolivia, New Mexico, Canada, Jamaica, Argentina, Singapore, and Peru. Certain projects were done or inventory replenished just in time. They praise the Lord that the operation of the recently installed Ryobi press and Horizon StitchLiner has been more consistent. Also, a large gift was received for a new tabber. The old equipment stopped functioning in a recent mailing which called for local church volunteers and staff from other departments to report to the Print Shop to do manual tabbing. It is also a help that the USPS is requiring fewer tabs for the large Reaper mailing.
- ◆ SLM Togo is praising the Lord for a new vehicle provided for them through a sister mission organization. It enables them to reach remote areas where they are eager to evangelize and disciple new believers.
- ◆ We praise the Lord for the provision for several of our Branches to enjoy having regional conferences this year. These conferences are a great time of encouragement as they interact with peers, get spiritual and physical refreshment, and participate in training.
- ◆ Enrique, the Peru Discipleship Training Branch Director, shared the following testimony: A student from Ecuador who does her lessons online shared that her neighbors were interested in knowing more about God. She and her husband had been prepared through the Source of Light lessons to lead them to Christ. Now this couple has the joy of seeing these new believers learning more through the lessons. They are thankful that God used them to bless this young couple.
- ◆ Fanie Buys, our SLM South Africa Discipleship Training Branch Director, is praising the Lord that despite the problems that they are experiencing with the postal system, they are still able to serve students through the online platform of Source of Light Ministries International.
- ◆ Our SLM Branch in Kenya prints their own lessons. Their equipment is aging but worked perfectly to print the 45,500 books needed to sustain them in the month of May.
- ◆ Source of Light once again expresses gratitude for the many volunteer groups who come to Headquarters to serve.

## IN MEMORIAL

### GIFTS IN MEMORY OF...

**Alice Kirk** by  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Brickel

**Clyde Longan** by  
Phillip Jack, Jr.

**Helen Hardin Knight** by  
Janet Hardin  
Rebecca McBride  
Sylvia Pollard  
Katherine Kerekes  
Brenda Graham  
William Dover  
Colonial Hills Baptist Church  
Vann Calvert  
Mr. and Mrs. John Cranmer  
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Beaver  
Nancy Smith  
Glenn Eldridge

**Jim McAllister and Debbie Pugh** by  
Elaine McAllister

**Ron Boyer** by  
Connie Mertz

**Sandy Hunter** by  
Mr. and Mrs. John Cranmer



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,*

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

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[sourcelight.org/donate](https://sourcelight.org/donate)

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**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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