



the REAPER

VOL. 69, NO. 4 | Winter 2024



***LET YOUR LIGHT
SO SHINE***

MATTHEW 5:16A

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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Corrections & Clarifications

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

LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE

By Ron Barnes
A letter from the Editor



Christmas Service
Featuring the
Barnes Kids
— Photo by Ronnie
Barnes



Every year around this time, our church plants would begin planning for the holiday season. The Christian community was small, and our Czech churches tended to be small as well, but we celebrated big! In December, we celebrated a weekly advent service, a Christmas Eve service, a Christmas Day service, a New Year's Eve service and a New Year's Day service. Yes, December was busy!

Our church people loved celebrating the Lord's birth, they loved being together in fellowship, worship, and the Word, but they also saw this as the big opportunity in the year to get their friends, neighbors, and loved ones to attend church, even if it was just out of obligation to their relationship and in the Christmas tradition. But each year they hoped this year, this one open door, might be the time these loved ones would hear the Good News and come to Christ.

We planned the events meticulously, had our best preachers and musicians on the docket, and planned special activities. With such an open door, we wanted to do the very best we could to show people Christ.

For my family, we had a handful of friends who had heard the Gospel many times, and though we were like a part of their family, they never responded to nor showed interest in spiritual things. But every year they would come to our Christmas services because our children would often have a special play or music, and they came like they were there to support family.

I wish I could say many of these people came to Christ, but sadly only a few over the many years made decisions. But we took every effort to make sure we were faithful in our responsibility to present and share the Gospel, and Christmas was an excellent occasion to explain it clearly.

It's interesting that there is almost no culture in the world that doesn't celebrate Christmas, yet a good portion of the world's population has never even heard its namesake, Christ Jesus. Can there be a more fitting time to introduce Christ to an unbelieving world than the Christmas season and the opportunity it affords us to explain and proclaim Him?

The Christmas season for some of us is a wonderful time to celebrate

the Lord's birth together with the people we love. We have parties, decorate our homes, buy gifts, attend festive gatherings, and so many more things that bring us so much joy in the season. Around my house, Christmas begins in the summer as my wife looks forward to the season so much.

But for much of the world, not only does Christmas not bring joy or happiness, it actually brings sadness and depression. For many, it accentuates their loneliness, their sadness, and their emptiness. This is exactly why ministries spend so much time on Christmas activities. What a shame it would be to waste such an excellent opportunity to share the Good News when the very season is an open door to make Christ known.

Around the world, our Source of Light missionaries are preparing diligently for opportunities to make the Christ of Christmas known. They will minister in their churches, orphanages, senior citizen homes, homes of shut-ins, prisons, and the list goes on and on. They try to constantly expand their ministries and go where people need to hear—and also see in the lives of our missionaries—the light of the Gospel of Jesus.

**“Let your light so
shine before men,
that they may see
your good works, and
glorify your Father
which is in heaven.”
Matthew 5:16**

For my family, one of the greatest joys in ministry came around the Christmas season when we invited people into our home. Our home was filled with lost, wounded, and broken people who wanted to spend Christmas with us because there was “something different” about being with us than spending the season with their other friends or family. There was joy, happiness, warmth, love, and “light instead of darkness” at our home. We loved to just love on them; we saw how they absorbed our love and basked in the light we shined. It wasn't unusual that we would find someone fast asleep on one of our couches, because they found comfort in being in our home.



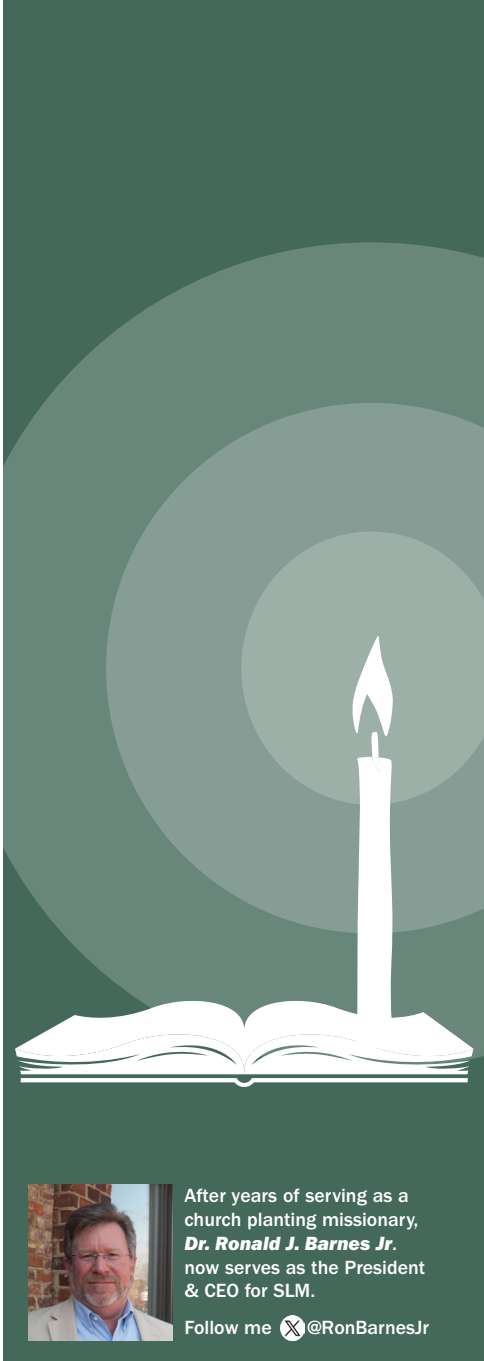
Christmas Eve Carols — Photo by Ronnie Barnes

Matthew 5:16 reminds us to radiate Christ to a lost and dying world, and perhaps there is not a better, more appropriate, nor opportune time to do it than this Christmas season. My challenge to you and to me is this: let's not let this moment, this opportunity, pass us by. Seek out the opportunities in your life to "let your light shine"!

This *Reaper* is filled with stories of Source of Light missionaries and ministries that open the door for the Gospel and reach out to the very ends of the earth. Imagine this Christmas that many will finally understand the Christ of Christmas. We hope you will enjoy the Winter Edition of the *Reaper*, but we also sincerely hope you will join us in shining His light this Christmas season.



Christmas Eve Meal with Church Friends
— Photo by Ronnie Barnes



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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Elaine Schiffer
with Some of the
Girls and Their
Christmas Gifts
— Photo by Paula
Schiffer

DREAMING OF AN ISLAND CHRISTMAS

By Bruce Dare

I'm dreaming of an island Christmas, because that's probably the only way I would think to imagine one! For me, growing up in South Jersey, we rarely would see a white Christmas or even hope for one as it typically seemed to be drizzling rain that day. For my kids now in Georgia, the best chance they have is a heavily frosted Christmas, which is pretty disappointing if it's not in reference to a cake. It's intriguing how our variable emotions and expectations can seemingly control the quality of our lives. It's curious how much value we place on Christmas traditions, in how things are "supposed to be" for a certain time of year. Would you be willing to sacrifice yours for the sake of another's?

As much as "Christmas in Jamaica" sounds like a goofy idea for a company or church holiday gathering, it has become a blessed ministry reality for Don & Elaine Schiffer. They sold their farm in Pennsylvania—and all the white snow that might go with it—to move on mission to the island of Jamaica

and the Branch of SLM in the western region called "Follow the Source." The difference of geography might be best summarized by how they did outdoor games last year at their annual Christmas event for kids. The weather is not the only December difference, however, especially and sadly as it pertains to the engagement of local churches. "It's almost like they close churches down," Elaine shares. "These kids have gone to church all their lives, but it seems like they don't even know what Christmas is all about." So, what is one of the most anticipated events of their ministry calendar? "Even when I was so sick last year, we still had to have it. The kids say it wouldn't be Christmas without the party."

The activities there are about what you might think, and each child receives a small gift at the end. But as Elaine would assure you, the focus is not just to have a nicety. "We talk about how Jesus is God's gift to us." They are sure to have a devotional, trying to address either the ignorance or the



Enjoying the Christmas Party at
Follow the Source, Jamaica
—Photo by Paula Schiffer

confusion that surrounds the real meaning of Christmas. The event is for students of the Bible club they hold every week, but the kids invite anyone all around the neighborhood. And praise God, they often see attendance increase going into January. This is one of the goals, to cultivate the regular study of God's Word, not only as a worthwhile activity of life but much more as the regular pattern and vital sustenance of a follower of Christ.

I did not ask about this, but I wonder how Don & Elaine feel about Christmas celebrations. I'm sure they miss certain things about their US home, especially people close to them, if not other small but valuable trinkets of the season. But you can hear the smile for Elaine when she talks about those kids in Jamaica and the concern when she speaks of pointing them to Christ. They have chosen to redeem the time. And it helps that their daughter has made it her practice to come every year to help. As Elaine mentions, their normal volunteer groups "want to be home for the holidays." Though it is difficult for Paula to get away from year-end responsibilities at the Christian college where she works, she loves the kids and gives of herself each year in Jamaica.

Regional Director for North America, Brian Thompson, and some of his family were able to help several years ago with this event, and with the separate Christmas program that is hosted at the mission in St. Elizabeth. God has blessed Follow the Source with a nice facility, including a warehouse converted into an outreach center. As Brian shares, it is here that "they draw a crowd of around 200 people" where "neighbors, family, and friends all come to hear the music and see the program. Time is taken to share the Gospel and present the work of Follow the Source in the area. New children join the Bible clubs and new adults join the weekly Bible study that is held at the Schiffer's home." This is perhaps another typical event but has the SLM-standard focus of ongoing discipleship. Also notable is that both these events are in addition to the primary focus in this SLM Branch, which is the almost 3,000 lessons they distribute each year in local schools. What excites them the most? When students want to continue additional lessons over the summer. That's where the ministry is most clearly showing genuine spiritual fruit.

Source of Light uses "things" to share the Gospel. Paul put such things into perspective for us in 2 Corinthians 4:7a, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." What are the "vessels"? Specifically, they are we human beings involved in ministry, but perhaps the application could be stretched to include any of the cultural "trappings" that we come up with. All those trappings are truly earthly and

fleeting and are only as useful as they help us carry the Gospel, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (v. 7b). But what is "this treasure"? What are we carrying? "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (v. 5). We are only obedient messengers, and the focus of our message is Jesus. Why do we do this? "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (v. 6). We have seen the Light, so we must share the Light! From a human perspective, there may not be anything greater than seeing a child's face light up about Christmas. But what would be a greater hope and dream this Christmas? An island where another child receives the greatest gift of Jesus Christ. 🌿



Some of the Young People at Christmas in Western Jamaica —Photo by Paula Schiffer



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.



FIELD LITERATURE NEEDS

The Source of Light World in Need

For over 70 years, Source of Light has been blessed with generous partners who support our missionaries and our projects. Usually, our countries have contacts who are regular supporters of their ministries, but a handful of our countries have virtually no mailing list and no contacts. At this Christmas giving season, we would like to focus on a few of those countries who have literature funds that have seen little to no contributions provided recently but have been helped by our emergency funds to provide their ministries with literature.

We ask for you to prayerfully consider these SLM Branches in need:

ARGENTINA
\$2,960

COSTA RICA
\$7,414

PERU
\$2,200

GUYANA
\$4,167

PORTUGAL
\$2,166

SPAIN
\$1,900

MOZAMBIQUE
\$4,000

ZAMBIA
\$5,000



LET YOUR LITTLE LIGHT SHINE

By Danielle Dare

Frost-covered windows, twinkling lights, warmth from the fireplace. Family time or hustle and bustle, tightly packed schedules, financial strain, and memories better left forgotten. All over the world, the Christmas season evokes varied emotional responses and perspectives that are as different as the cultural landscapes themselves. For the one who celebrates the birth of Christ during this season, the focus should be different. Worship of the Savior must transcend even the most treasured tradition and melt the coldest tendency toward materialistic idolatry while propelling us to make Him known among our neighbors. The Christmas season is a time ripe with opportunities to share the Gospel. People are looking for hope, distraction, a glimmer of light in the darkness of their reality, and most will indulge the delight, innocent anticipation, and wonder of their children. Christ-followers everywhere have a reason to step into the vulnerability and expectation of the people around them and show them the truth of redemption that has the power to change them beyond the season.

Such is the case in Northeast India where “K” ministers along with his family and local church. In his words, “people are fond of festivals,” setting aside many holidays to worship false gods and goddesses. From December first to January, the Christmas season is celebrated just like other pagan festivals. In similar fashion to other areas of the world, special foods are prepared, music fills the air as bands perform in parades, lights are strung along the streets and homes, and churches are ornately decorated. The outreach team matches the atmosphere of celebration, gathering beautiful decorations and traditional holiday cakes from volunteers, passing them out to the children of the community, befriending their families, and inviting them to hear the message of Good News. The region’s month-long celebration allows “K” and his group of volunteers to travel to several different neighborhoods.

While the communities are holding their own festive events, the volunteers are hosting open-air children’s clubs, youth meetings, and fellowship groups that last

one or two hours. The children's clubs are structured and interactive, involving the kids in singing and giving thanks, listening to the Bible, memorizing verses, and answering questions. They also enjoy games, watch a short skit, and have time to talk with each other over a treat. None of the meetings are limited to "the four walls of the church." The crowds gather, sitting on the ground or standing nearby with the colorful streamers and balloons creating an air of excitement. Those attending will hear the Gospel and receive one of the thousands of Source of Light booklets, "Who is Jesus Christ," that have been printed in preparation for the outreach, along with copies of the "Gospel of John." This endeavor is not the typical tract distribution we might think of in American churches. Everything from the planning to the relationship-building prior to the event is strategic, using culturally appropriate methods to prepare the way for the invitation to participate.

India is not known to be friendly toward Christianity and "K" tells us that "opposition is everywhere," running the risk of the outdoor meetings being targeted by troublemakers. While they do face some opposition from unbelievers, the prayers of the team of believers and the joyful participation of the children hold back those who would desire to disrupt the meetings. Most are happy to participate, and last year the team interacted with 7,718 individuals. Each of those numbers

is a life that needs the Light to shine in their hearts!

As Jesus promises us, the church will be built and the Gospel prevail. "K" shares, "the children are our moving force," and these little lives are what often makes the difference. Through the children of one corner in India, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is entering whole families and pushing back the darkness. Like a little candle burning brightly in a winter window, God's Word in the hands of children will shine brighter than all the glitter and brass of the season. Please pray and partner with "K" and "S," especially in the upcoming Christmas season as they ask and answer the question of their neighbors: "Who is Jesus Christ?" Take a moment yourself to consider how you can take unique opportunities to shine brightly in your own corner of the world, speaking the Good News and shattering the darkness.

"No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light." Luke 11:33



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.



Large Group of Children with Colorful Decorations in Barulpur

Ladies Teaching the Children at Bishnupur and Joka



Stars, Balloons, and Booklets at Christmas in Kolkata



Children Holding Up the Literature They Received
—All Photos by K

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?

SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT

By Kimberly Thigpen

Known by the nickname “little red dot” due to only being a tiny red dot on the world map, Singapore is small, but significant. Despite its size as one of the 20 smallest countries in the world, with fewer than six million inhabitants, it has four official languages, is a surprising blend of religions and cultures, and is touted as the “world’s only fully functioning city-state.”ⁱ

Rather than adhering to the cultures around it, Singapore stands out for several reasons:

- ◆ It is considered the least corrupt city in Asia.
- ◆ Long hair for men has been banned since the 1970’s hippie movement.ⁱⁱ
- ◆ It is one of the most prosperous countries in the world.ⁱⁱⁱ
- ◆ Singaporeans, walking at the rate of 3.82 miles per hour, average to be the fastest pedestrians in the world.
- ◆ It is illegal to chew gum in Singapore without a doctor’s prescription.
- ◆ It houses the world’s only night zoo.^{iv}
- ◆ Its port is one of the busiest in the world, handling over 600 million tons of cargo each year.^v

Singapore’s “little red dot” has sentimental value to Source of Light. President Ron Barnes likened SLM to Singapore, in that we too are just a small red dot on the landscape of global mission work. Many pallets of materials are shipped each year from our tiny location at Headquarters, not millions of tons, but enough “paper missionaries” that millions are reached with the Good News of the Gospel. We too are small but significant.

As with Headquarters, the little dot of Singapore also houses missionaries who reach across the ocean to spread the Gospel to others. Florence Lim oversees nearly 50 Associate Discipleship Schools inside Singapore, and for the past 10 years, SLM Singapore has done outreach work across the ocean in its neighboring Philippine Islands.



Singapore Circled in Orange. Roughly the Size of Atlanta. Philippine Islands in Green

— Photo in Public Domain

These evangelistic outreaches to this predominantly Catholic country include a sports ministry for teens, and last Christmas a multi-ministry cantata.

How did this partnering outreach come to be? Florence shares:

It all started with just an exchanging of messages between Pastor Aries and Ma'am Lilibeth and I that we hold a combined Christmas cantata.

The cantata was a very wonderful experience for us. The choir members were able to showcase their God-given talent and enjoyed it. Although the process of preparation was hard, the fruit of the patience of the music director and the choir members was a God-glorifying one.

In the middle of the program, Pastor Aries preached also about the purpose of Christ coming. Visitors were led to accept Christ as their personal Savior. To God be the glory!

After the music and Gospel presentation, gifts were given, and a feast was provided for all who attended.

How did Pastor Aries and Ma'am Lilibeth come to believe in Jesus?

For Pastor Aries, it started when he was 17 years old. He was about to enter college at that time. He had to find a boarding house, so he asked his cousin to accompany him, but during this time the cousin was in the church. His cousin suggested he come to the church with him, then go and search for a boarding house, to which he agreed. Though the

Gospel had been shared to Pastor before, during this time they shared it with him again. Praise the Lord, Pastor understood better this time and accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

Lilibeth was saved during her college time. She was invited to attend a Bible Study, and there the pastor who was leading the Bible Study emphasized the terrible punishment of sin and not being saved. That night, she accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Lord and Savior.

What about you?

At the age of 12 years old, right after my mother passed on, a classmate tried comforting me by introducing me to a school program by Youth for Christ. I was then invited to his church, introduced to a female youth leader, and the Gospel was shared with me. There and then I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. Being the only daughter left in the house, even at this tender age, I had to shoulder a lot of responsibilities in the family. To attend church each Sunday created a lot of challenges to me, but God is good, and He enabled me mightily.



Choir Singing in and Audience Listening to Christmas Program — Photo by Florence Lim



Choir in Philippines Serving the Church and Celebrating Christmas — Photo by Florence Lim

How did they become part of Source of Light?

Discipleship is very important in their ministry. The church used many discipleship lessons from many different authors, and they were all good. Then during the pandemic, Pastor visited another pastor in another province, and he introduced SLM Singapore. From there, they got in touch with me, viewed some SLM Bible lessons and had some discussions. Since then, by God's amazing grace, they have been in partnership in God's ministry for the past four years. Besides Bible Study lessons, we also partner in various outreach projects.

Where was the cantata held and who was invited?

At their church in the Philippines. Invitations were given generally and also through house visitation. Guests were relatives, friends, and anyone they could reach out to in their community. People from all walks of life came, mainly pre-believers.

Do you think people are more willing to learn about Jesus at Christmastime?

Needless to say, of course!

Do you know if anyone believed in Jesus at the event?

Yes. At the combined cantata, after Pastor preached the Word of God, many accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.

Any person or ministry that feels small compared to others can learn a few lessons from Singapore's little red dot. Be unique, don't conform to the world around you, get moving, and take the Good News you have and spread it out! 🌿



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

Endnotes:

- i. <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2015/07/16/the-singapore-exception>
<https://worldstrides.com/blog/2017/08/11-interesting-facts-singapore>
<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/10/06/in-singapore-religious-diversity-and-tolerance-gohand-in-hand/>
- ii. <https://www.holidify.com/pages/facts-about-singapore-2099.html>
- iii. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/duncanmadden/2024/07/25/henley-cities-report-the-worlds-wealthiest-cities-in-2024/>
- iv. <https://www.singaporevisa.ae/blog/interesting-facts-about-singapore/>
- v. <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/doing-business-guide/singapore/trade-relationships>



SPONSOR A STUDENT

One important aspect of the Source of Light mission is to provide a means of discipleship without any cost to the end user. But that doesn't mean it doesn't cost anyone anything! You can join the dozens of students who have followed the "pass it on" principle and covered the costs for the next person to study the Bible.

\$25

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Source of Light lesson

Would you prayerfully consider how many students
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FOR WHOM WILL YOU PRAY?

To give, contact us at accounting@slmin.org or go to
www.sourcelight.org/donate.

CHRISTMAS NEVER CELEBRATED THE SAME

By Ron Barnes

In a previous *Reaper*, I have told the following story but left out certain parts to save space for the article. But as we were preparing for this *Reaper*, I decided to fill in some additional details that I thought you might enjoy.

I have many friends who love to prepare early for the Christmas season with a special use of their time, long before Christmas, by filling boxes to send to Operation Christmas Child (OCC), in hopes that their effort will result in "making Christmas" for some little boy or girl, and in doing so open the door for missionaries to share the Gospel at the Christmas season.

Many of our SLM missionaries are involved in not only distribution but they also lead the distribution efforts as the OCC representative for their country. I've been honored

and overjoyed to be a part of many of these distributions, but perhaps no more so than in a small village in Togo.

During my first trip to Togo, our director, Sika Yawo, planned every free moment of my time. Hours on the road gave me ample time to get to know the translators and evangelists in our SUV. I'm always drawn into their stories and amazed by their faith through adversity and persecution. Each shared their harrowing stories about the persecution and danger they often faced, but one village seemed to keep coming up, which in a previous *Reaper* I'd called "Fio."

On numerous occasions, these evangelists had visited Fio, and within a short amount of time, they were driven out with threats on their life. Undeterred, they



OCC Shoeboxes Being Handed Out — Photo by Ron Barnes



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strategized how to earn the trust of the community and a way around the evil witch doctor and those under his influence. Witchcraft was a way of life for this village, and the town elders and leaders were under its persuasion.

A direct approach to evangelism was proving to be difficult, and they decided to attempt to earn some trust in the community by starting a school with a church planter who was also a teacher. He had done a significant amount of legwork, and these evangelists were convinced the time had finally come to reattempt preaching an evangelistic message. I was drawn in to their excitement and told them I would be praying and would eagerly await their report.

I was informed our last event of the day was to be an open-air message they would like me to bring ... if people were still at the venue. We were behind schedule, way behind almost two hours, but with bad roads from recent rains the delay was unavoidable.



OCC Shoeboxes Kept the Crowd — Photo by Ron Barnes

I closed my eyes and began to pray and prepare my mind as we began to approach the village. As the driver announced we were arriving, I looked to the right side and saw in the distance a small building with some tarps extended out across the front and a couple hundred people sitting under them. Our team was excited; the crowd hadn't left! As we drew closer, I recognized tables filled with small green and red shoeboxes. It was those iconic OCC shoeboxes, and the people stayed all that time because they were eager to see the children of the village receive gifts, likely the only Christmas gifts these children from this poor community would receive.

As we passed the sign identifying the village limits, though I could see their excitement build, I had a brief moment of panic. The sign read "Welcome to Fio." Suddenly all the stories of the last three days about being driven out of Fio with the threats of death if they returned flooded my mind. But it was quickly wiped away when I saw

the enthusiasm and bravery of our evangelists, and I told the Lord "if they can do it, I can do it"!

Immediately I was whisked to the front and told ... "Start!" I preached for an hour, with the witch doctor and village elders so close behind me I could feel their hot breath on my back. But I preached on until the invitation which I turned over to Sika to close in a way that he saw fit, and he gave an opportunity for people to receive Christ. More than 30 adults indicated that they had made decisions for Christ, and Sika introduced one of the evangelists and then welcomed all who attended to return the following Sunday to the same location for the launching of the Bethania Baptist Church. That church continues to this day and has grown with many more from that village as well as neighboring villages.

Bethania Baptist Church is established today because, long in advance, hundreds of boxes were lovingly packed with gifts which also included the SLM Bible lessons. People like yourself wanted to share the truth of Christmas with those who may have never heard and those boxes drew antagonized people to an event and motivated them to stay! Christmas will never be celebrated the same in Fio because someone halfway around the world packed a shoebox with the Light of the Gospel. 🌿



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

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.

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DONUTS, CUSTARD, AND THE GOSPEL

By Gilberto Vanegas



Our family loves Christmas; it's an amazing time of year. We wish we could put up the Christmas tree as early as October! The joy and Christmas spirit can be felt everywhere. In our country of Colombia, it is a time that means joy, family, gifts, and fun. Being a 70% Catholic country, the famous "Novenas Navideñas," the Christmas Novenas, are celebrated for nine days from the 16th to the 24th of December. Therefore, traditionally, Christmas officially begins on December 16th.

Each day, families, friends, neighbors or colleagues gather. Everywhere novenas are celebrated. Next to a "pesebre navideño" (a representation of Jesus' birthplace), Catholic novenas (prayers) are read, "villancicos" (Christmas songs) are sung, and "buñuelos y natilla" (donuts and custard) are shared. Depending on the group, it's a time of playing, sharing, and eating. For others, it is a time for dancing and consuming liquor and other activities.

As believers, we take advantage of these opportunities to share the Gospel in different ways. Some believers ask their families or groups for a "novena day" and share the true meaning of Jesus' incarnation. They do not read the Catholic novena, but instead read the Bible with the story of Jesus' birth and explain the Gospel.

As a church, we look for many opportunities to share the Gospel in the novenas. We go to the rehabilitation centers with which we work with the Source of Light courses, present an evangelistic play, sing Christmas hymns, and share with them "buñuelos y natilla" (donuts and custard). It is nice to see the whole church helping, rehearsing, preparing, and praying for every opportunity.

It was at a Christmas presentation that Jhon Londono gave his life to Christ and left behind 35 years of drugs and destruction on the streets. He was disciplined through the courses, came

to the local church where he met the woman who is now his wife, and now proclaims the Gospel wherever he goes. Other people like him have come to know Christ through these opportunities that the Lord has given us. Glory to God, we have been able to see it!

Some years we have celebrated a “Christian Novena” in a hospital, and we have shared with the patients and hospital staff, bringing donuts and custard and evangelistic literature! On occasions, we have shared in prison, where we have students from Fuente de Luz (Source of Light), and it has been wonderful to celebrate with the prisoners and bring them the good news of salvation and freedom in the midst of confinement.

Since December 24th is the big Christmas day, families get together to celebrate, eat, and distribute gifts. This is the tradition in our country. As a church, we hold a Christmas service one or two days before. The youth and children present a play to talk about Jesus, the women gather to decorate and bring food, and the children receive gifts that everyone has brought. This has been a great opportunity to invite family, friends, and families from the community we work with, to share the Gospel with them.

This year will be no exception. We will have a great Christmas service, hoping to have many non-believers hear the Gospel of salvation; we will also organize as a church and Fuente de Luz school to have many Christmas novenas in homes and invite family, friends, and neighbors. Our goal is to be able to use in the novenas the course, “Light from the Gospel of

John,” to explain the incarnation of Jesus and the Gospel of salvation.

As every year in the rehabilitation centers and some prisons in the country, we will celebrate Christmas amidst donuts and custard, showing them the Gospel of salvation with theater, songs, and gifts. May the Lord be proclaimed!

To the indigenous communities, we will send the “Light from the Gospel of John” course, printed material to guide them to celebrate Christmas, and donated gifts for the children. The indigenous people did not celebrate Christmas in the past, but with the influence of the West they have started to do so, and we want to use this as an opportunity to bring them the Good News.

We pray that the Lord will allow us to work so that each person who will be given the Gospel through the “Light from the Gospel of John” course can be disciplined with the Word of God. We have the challenge of making a closer follow-up, getting believers to commit themselves to those they will invite.

Truly! Christmas is a very meaningful time to celebrate the joy of salvation, to proclaim the Gospel, and to worship our beautiful God with our hearts. 🌿



Gilberto Vanegas has served as Colombia's Regional Director since 2019 along with his wife, Sandra and daughter, Laura.

CHRISTMAS DAY IN TOGO

By Sika Yawo

At SLM Togo, we eagerly await Christmas. Why? Because the pagans accept our invitations to share this beautiful day together, to talk about the birth of Jesus Christ. It's no longer us coming to them, but them coming to us, which is truly wonderful. They seem to understand that this is a day of joy for Christians, and they can come experience it firsthand.

Every year we organize a celebration and prepare food to serve them after preaching the Gospel, in which we mention the history of the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It has always been a day that has borne fruit for us. More lost souls come than on any other day. Last Christmas, God allowed 30 or so pagans to give their lives to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Among them were two idol priests' families who are now being persecuted. Glory be to the Lord for how often He has helped us fully on that special day for the salvation of lost souls. Thank you for praying for these families. Praise the Lord!

Christmas has also been an ineffable joy for our orphans, more so than on other ordinary days, and

they also invite their classmates, most of whom also come to the Lord after the celebration. Each year, they eat together with their friends and then surprise them with gifts. Fun activities and games are also organized.

The two events alone at Christmas give more opportunities to bring people to Christ than most other days of the year combined. Christmas for SLM Togo will always be the time “to shine our light.” 🌿



Orphan's Playing at Our Christmas Outreach
— Photo by Sika Yawo



Sika Yawo serves as the National Director of SLM Togo. He and his wife, Lucie, have been working diligently there to lead lost people to Christ since 1998.

LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO SERVE?



The SLM Global Outreach Department serves our Source of Light missionaries around the world providing administration, administrative support, counseling, and training. We are seeking experienced missionaries who have served on the field previously and have strong administrative skills in organization and leadership as well as teachers and trainers.



WE ARE SEEKING:

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

who are strong in office administration

REGIONAL DIRECTORS

with cross-cultural experience to administrate and shepherd national missionaries

REGIONAL PR REPRESENTATIVES

to share the SLM vision and needs in each region around the US

TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

who can both teach and organize teachers to deepen the level of education and training for our missionaries and their partners

NEEDS AT SLM HEADQUARTERS, EITHER VOLUNTEER OR CAREER

SLM MADISON DISCIPLESHIP SCHOOL (THE LOCAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL):

Spanish Coordinator, Prison Coordinator, Office Workers

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT:

Maintenance, Receptionist, Landscaping, Mechanic, Construction

PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT:

Shipping Specialist, Orders Clerk, Pressman Apprentice, Graphic Designer

FINANCE DEPARTMENT:

Office Staff, Accountant

BRAILLE DEPARTMENT:

New Director and/or Assistant

**CONTACT SLM@SLMIN.ORG
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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

PRAYER

- ◆ The construction of the Print Shop at our newest Source of Light Branch in Zambia is complete. Please pray with us that God will provide all the funding needed for the printing equipment. Pray also that our staff in Zambia will receive the training needed to be able to print good quality materials soon after the printing equipment is installed.
- ◆ Our Ghana Branch is trying to find a good and affordable printing business in their country that can print the materials needed for West Africa. This will enable us to ship materials within the continent rather than having to ship them from the United States. Please pray that we will find a reliable, affordable printer that can provide the quality needed, and that the partnership will be a blessing to both the printer and Source of Light.
- ◆ Our Branch in South Africa is striving to move their ministry more to the online platform. The mail service has been struggling for some time, and it is difficult to maintain the student base with a mail system that is not functioning properly. Please pray for our Director there as he advertises and seeks to get new students online.
- ◆ Please pray for our Discipleship Training Branches around the world that have Directors who are aging. Please pray that God will reveal to these Directors who they should begin training for leadership so that they will be ready when the time comes for the Branch to transition to new leadership.
- ◆ Source of Light has several national missionaries who are trying to get their documentation to come to the United States to share their ministries and raise additional support. Please pray that they will get their documents and will be able to set up meetings and that those meetings will be fruitful for reaching their financial goals.
- ◆ Our Print Shop is making great strides in learning to operate the newly acquired press and other equipment. Please pray as they continue to perfect the process of printing in four colors. They are hoping to be able to print the *Reaper* on this new press soon. We have had to outsource the printing for some time now, so it will be a great blessing to be able to print the *Reaper* in-house again. Please continue to pray for additional staff in the Print Shop. Additional help is needed in shipping and/or the bindery areas. We also need an apprentice for operating the press.
- ◆ Please pray for all the Christmas celebrations that will be taking place all over the world in our Source of Light ministries. This is a great opportunity for ministry, and many special programs will be held. Please pray that God will provide all the funding needed for these extra expenses.
- ◆ Several of our Branches have been affected by challenges brought by flooding. One of our Jamaica Branches had about \$50,000 in damage from hurricane Beryl. Please pray that God will restore the losses and provide for repair for damages incurred. (\$30,000 still needed)
- ◆ Please pray that God will provide a home for the Steinles as they join the missionary team in Spain and that they will have adequate support for ministry. 🌿

PRAISE

◆ A new flag was recently added in the Source of Light Headquarters' chapel for our newest Discipleship Training Branch in Zambia. This Branch is in the process of setting up a print shop where they will print their own materials. They already have four Associate Discipleship Schools.

◆ It has been amazing to see how God has developed our South American Region. God has really used Director Pablo Correa and his wife, Dalila, who have recently retired. How we praise God for the eagerness for ministry that we see among our South America Directors! Pray for the Correas' replacement.

◆ We praise the Lord that the Risograph press is set up and materials are being printed in Uganda. This is a big blessing because Uganda uses a vast amount of literature. In the first two quarters of this year, over 228,000 lesson books were distributed. We also praise the Lord for the additional staff that has been added in Uganda who will help meet the growing needs of the ministry.

◆ The Print Shop at Headquarters needed a new tabber (to mail this *Reaper!*), and God has provided. We praise the Lord for this piece of equipment that saves many hours of manual labor.

◆ We praise the Lord that our Director in Togo has recovered significantly from an infection that caused the loss of part of one of his fingers. We also praise the Lord that his ministry is seeing converts in a village that has been historically hostile to the message of the Gospel. Another village, where they now have a growing church, was previously hostile as well. It is a joy to see God bringing change to these places.

◆ We are grateful for the Lord's supply for our "Paper Partners" project. Recently, we had a \$1,600 donation from a local church. Their children raised the money during their Vacation Bible School for paper.

◆ Source of Light Spain is excited about missionaries Daniela and Emanuel Steinle, from Argentina, who will be joining their ministry team. Daniela and Emanuel are stepping out in faith that God will provide their home and support needs.

◆ One of our newer Source of Light Branches is Source of Light Portugal. In their fall newsletter they reported that they now have four Associate Discipleship Schools, and they are expecting to have three more schools by the end of this year.

◆ Source of Light Philippines recently celebrated their 44th Anniversary. The celebration was a success; those who attended left inspired and revived.

◆ Source of Light in Myanmar reports that 10 students of the SLM courses became believers in Christ and followed the Lord in baptism.

◆ Our Source of Light Branch in Peru is rejoicing in how God is opening new doors for a Spanish braille ministry. They shared with excitement that they have "new tools to reach blind people in Peru and show them the way to heaven."

◆ A school which was to host a rally in Kenya backed out at the last minute. Our SLM Branch there struggled to find another venue. However, with the new venue, eight additional schools were able to attend. 🌿

IN MEMORIAL

GIFTS IN HONOR OF...

Hubert Allred by
Jack Smith

Ray Walker by
Henry and Lois Lazenby

Byron and Sheila Shupp by
Gary Silverman

GIFTS IN MEMORY OF...

Eula Keener by
Claire Smith
Marvin Ingalsbe
Larry Blum
John Prada
Ada Whitener
Mary Jane Myers
David Keener
Raymond Walker
Siloam Springs Bible Church

Jack Merriam by
David Giles

Jacquelyn Kampe by
Barbara Smith

Kenneth Walker by
Raymond Walker



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

Give Online at:
sourcelight.org/donate

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706.342.0397

Each gift will be used as preferenced 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.***



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