



# the REAPER

VOL. 70, NO. 4 | Winter 2025

An aerial, black and white photograph of Budapest, Hungary. The Chain Bridge is prominent in the foreground, crossing the Danube River. In the background, the city skyline is visible, including the large dome of St. Stephen's Basilica. The scene is captured from a high angle, showing the bridge's structure and the surrounding urban landscape.

**COME OVER ...  
HELP US**

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**ACTS 16:9**

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF SOURCE OF LIGHT INTERNATIONAL MADISON, GA

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

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

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

For information visit us at:  
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#### the REAPER

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go to [sourcelight.org/reaper](http://sourcelight.org/reaper)

# COME OVER ... HELP US

By Ron Barnes  
A letter from the Editor

This coming January, my wife and I will have served in missions for 30 years. Brenda told me after we were married, that though I was pastoring a church plant at the time, she was sure, and she was prepared for, the good chance that we would serve as missionaries.

Though by that time both of us had been on missions trips, it hadn't occurred to me that God was putting together several things to unmistakably lead us down that path. It started with Dr. Bill Commons, an adjunct professor at Baptist Bible Seminary and missionary with the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE), inviting my wife and I out to dinner after one of my classes. Somewhere along the way he



*The Barnes Family Missionaries in the Early Days  
— Photo by Ron Barnes*

had learned I was ready to “graduate” the church plant to a church and leave a man I had been training to lead it.

He asked us if we thought it was time to pursue missions. Intrigued, we decided to go to ABWE's home office and meet with directors of each region around the world. We fell in love with each of the countries and could have seen ourselves in so many. This was before the internet, so going back home, we were overwhelmed and under-informed about the needs around the world. We had many exciting phone calls from missionaries on the field, expressing the needs of their country, but still had little direction.

We decided to make another trip to the headquarters, this time narrowing our focus from the “whole world” to a few countries. We sat again in office after office, mesmerized to hear what was going on and how we might fit in, when field director Dr. Michael Loftis, the only director I hadn't met before, popped his head in and asked if we could swing by his office for 30 minutes before we left.

Dr. Loftis didn't work out of the US office, but rather in an office in Budapest, Hungary. He just “happened” to be in the US office and noticed that our application was being circulated for certain approvals. A quick glance (we learned later), and he was convinced that we were the type of missionaries his region needed. But instead of a full-court recruiting press, he asked us if we would be open to making a trip to Eastern Europe to participate in a church planting training course that they were hosting ... and he would cover our flights.

That didn't take much convincing, and less than a month later, we were in Budapest. Budapest was to be the hub for trips to Slovakia, Ukraine, and Romania, where we could also see what God was doing there. Budapest was where we flew in and out of to visit the other countries, but something about Hungary kept our interest. Hungary was not at all where Dr. Loftis was thinking to recruit us to, but there were some things that kept drawing us back there in our thoughts.

A seminary professor challenged me to think along the lines of “team” and where “a puzzle piece like ours belonged.” All the countries had intrigued us, but the puzzle in Budapest kept seeming like a “Barnes-shaped piece.”

On the final few days of the trip, we finished our time at the church planters' and pastors' “Tool Sharpening Forum.” Even though I enjoyed the teaching times I was involved in, I particularly enjoyed informal times like meals and coffee breaks. It was there that I felt I was scratching where these church planters itched, answering the specific questions they had.

One particular man, Romulus, seemed to catch me fairly frequently, and my colleagues feared he might push me away with his directness and challenging the teaching. He was direct, and a little pushy and opinionated, but instead of pushing me away, it drew me in. He had so many questions, and the training really challenged his thinking. But it was during that last coffee meeting the last day before I would head to the airport, that Romulus said something which had a great impact on me. It wasn't deep, but it was palpable.



*Pastors Conference in 2002 — Photo by Gyori Mate*

You see, by this time, Eastern Europe had been open for missionary activities, but the majority of the activity was by what he called the “weekend warriors,” people who came for the trip to help or teach, but not live.

He said to me, “Ron, I am tired from the weekend warriors. What we need, what I need, are missionaries who will stay and work alongside us. You haven’t been afraid to challenge my thinking, to give me more tools. But would you ever consider *coming* over here, living here, to work with me in the trenches? That’s the help that we need now more than anything else.”

Romulus had no idea that his question was at least part of the purpose of why we were even there. To see where we could go, live, and serve.

While Hungary wasn’t even on the radar for where Dr. Loftis was introducing us to potentially serve, we saw a team that needed our pieces, we saw a team that we fell in love with instantly, we saw a ministry where our gifts could be used to the fullest, and we had what could not have been a more definite call “to come over, and help.”

I told myself, “Brenda and I need time to process this, to think and pray without the emotion and the jetlag.” So, while we discussed things all along the way, I silently felt I wouldn’t really talk things over with Brenda for at least a few weeks after the trip. And then let her objectively give her thoughts. I was pondering this as the plane taxied down the Budapest



Barnes Family to Hungary, the Early Years  
— Photo by Ron Barnes

Ferihegy International Airport runaway, wondering if this was the last time we would visit Hungary, when Brenda grabbed my hand and looked into my eyes and said, “Ron, Hungary is where God wants us.”

Yes, God has taken us a lot of other places, but each time, God led us by a simple invitation of “come, help us.” This *Reaper* is committed to that theme, where many stories of invitations to come help have been extended, and accepted! Yet more remain. So, as you read this edition of *The Reaper*, consider this our invitation to each of you, however you are equipped, to consider how you can, “Come Over, Help Us!” 🌸



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

# NEW FIELDS, NEW MINISTRIES, AND THOSE GOD CAN USE

By Ron Barnes

I’m often told, “How have I never heard about Source of Light? Source of Light is the best-kept secret in missions.” I never really know how to respond, but I often think it’s not like we are hiding; we are just going about the work and hope that that work speaks for itself.

Source of Light continues to expand its influence around the world, and we are praying that more people will investigate how they could join us, maybe with skills and gifts they never considered being useful for the ministry, like “selling” the ministry. Before you get too nervous about that statement, we all know people who are just gifted at talking to people. Who better to represent the needs of the global ministries at Source of Light than someone who isn’t shy or timid in front of people and has the special ability to motivate them to do something? What if that person would allow God to use them to “get the secret out” about Source of Light?

How about someone with a background in construction who could work with our fields as a consultant to make wise choices in the facilities our US partners are sending the resources to help build? Having the right people in place could help our fields avoid costly mistakes and secure the long-term investment in the facilities.

Has it occurred to you that the small business you started and have successfully led has given you experience and wisdom that could be used to help missionaries around the world? You could help fields prepare successful business plans that would allow them to be subsidized by a small business or even fully supported through it from within their country. Just yesterday, I learned of one of



AutoRickshaw as Ministry — Photo by Ron Barnes

our Branches in India that has seen a Muslim man (who they refer to as “Neighbors”) come to Christ, who now has a zeal to reach other Neighbors with the Gospel. He wants to stay in the workplace and use a business, like owning his own autorickshaw (a three-wheeled taxi) as a way to reach Neighbors and be self-supported.

He needs more than the \$3,500 that we hope to raise in the near future; he needs someone who can help

him develop a business plan to think through the steps every business needs to survive.

A growing need due to the cost of shipping our materials overseas is setting up micro-print shops around the world that not only can produce the SLM lessons locally but also be used as a microenterprise. Going from receiving lessons in boxes to printing them is a world of difference, but not to someone who has run a small print shop or is familiar with small office machines. Imagine if someone could go from the world of managing a Kinko to helping Branches produce Gospel materials for discipleship. Could this be you?

Could Source of Light use people with legal training, medical training, teaching experience, chaplaincy in prisons and jails, writing, editing, layout, etc., here in the USA and around the world? Could God use experienced missionaries moving towards retirement, but not ready to retire, to use their experience to help manage current fields and explore opening new ones? The simple answer ... yes! Would you consider answering the call to “come help us”? Contact [slm@slmin.org](mailto:slm@slmin.org) or call 706-342-0397 to ask me how! 🌿



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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## 10-DAY MISSION TRIP TO SLM GUYANA - JULY 2026 -

FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

This summer, Source of Light will be taking a team to Guyana to be involved in a Vacation Bible School, teacher training, and church planting ministries.

The cost will be \$3,000 for all expenses, including airfare from Madison, Georgia, where orientation will take place prior to the trip.

**For more information, contact Ben Doomy at**  
**[bdoomy@slmin.org](mailto:bdoomy@slmin.org) or call 706-342-0397**

# EMPTY SEATS OR MEANT FOR MORE

By Kimberly Thigpen

Once upon a time, a “low-class” parlor maid went to a mission organization and shared her belief that God had called her to China. The experts refused her service. She was not qualified for missionary work.

The maid did not give up. She saved her meager wages until she had enough for a train ticket. She rode through war zones, was nearly killed many times, and ... long amazing story worth reading ... years later Gladys Aylward was such a hero, she'd saved over 100 orphans in a perilous journey over mountains during WWII and had a movie made about her.

Gladys, the woman who was deemed unqualified by man, once said this:

“I wasn’t God’s first choice for what I’ve done for China; I don’t know who it was. It must have been a man, a well-educated man. I don’t know what happened. Perhaps he died. Perhaps he wasn’t willing, and God looked down and saw Gladys Aylward, and God said, ‘Well, she’s willing.’”

We could use a few Gladys Aylwards around here!

If you were to come visit, and I took you to the Home Office to show you around, I can’t think of any Department that doesn’t have slots waiting for someone willing. You might ask about literature, since I’m the Literature Coordinator. If you were a close friend, I would open up and admit to you that,



Marvin and Betty Ingalsbe with SLM for Over 50 Years and Counting! — Photo by SLM Archives

since my arrival eight years ago, I’ve wanted to see so many changes with the SLM materials.

On my tour you’d be shown the new children’s courses, beautiful and nearly ready to print, and be impressed but also be shocked at how long it has taken to complete the full set of 64 lessons.

Why?

We need some Gladys Aylwards. Not literally, of course, but people who are willing. Gladys’ qualifications were a commitment to her call, a tenacious spirit, and a desire to learn. She wanted God to use her in China and did not stop until she was there and able to serve.



Reaper Cover from 1980 — Photo by SLM Archives

We're easier to get to than China, and you don't have to learn a complex language, change your culture, or even give up American food!

Allow me to walk you through the journey of a lesson, start to finish.

First is the need. Those we have in abundance.

To meet the need, a decision is officially made and then content written by people with Biblical knowledge and writing skill.

The text is edited by an entire committee and often people in our fields overseas as well.

Once the content is ready, we need a **formatter**, someone who can use a specific printing software called "InDesign" to put the text into a format that will fit SLM's overall standard structure. (If you're thinking, well, the old courses would need to be put into that too, and maybe first, I agree, so there's even more work to do!)

Then an **illustrator** is needed. Our children's courses have beautiful illustrations, but they were done by someone who was here temporarily. Next time we do this, we need someone new.

When we have the formatting and illustrations, next is the **designer**. Again, the children's courses look great, but they were designed by a college student who worked remotely.

We'd love to have someone working here full time.

Once the course looks like it's print-ready, then the **prepress** person goes to work, putting pages into the press arrangement, adding important things like bleed and color correction, and doing a host of other complex details that are far above my knowledge and skill set. Michael Ventrello, who has done prepress for many years, moved to pastor a church in another state. He still serves



Jim Tilson Giving the Thigpen Kids Tour in 2017 Before They Joined SLM — Photo by Kimberly Thigpen

remotely but would love to train and pass this position on to another. Prior experience is not required, just a detail-oriented personality and willingness to learn under him.

After that, the lesson goes to the Print Shop, which has its own slots that need filling, and then, finally, we see a printed "paper missionary" ready to travel the world!

But then, what about translation?

We have Ukrainian, Bengali, Hindi, Spanish, and Portuguese translations that could be used in ministry today if we had the personnel to transfer the text into our design templates.

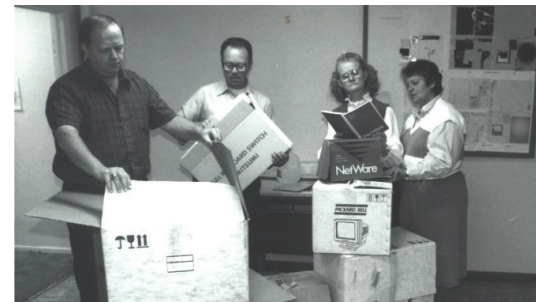
We constantly have needs for updating or new and fresh concepts for PR materials that look professional and cohesive.

I have a few potential courses written that have been sitting for years waiting for people to turn it from a manuscript into printable lessons.

Don't forget **recruiters** for all these jobs, and **marketers** for the courses we do have. And even additional **administrative leaders** and **assistants** and **Regional Directors** would help free up others who cover multiple roles in the mission.

I'd love to sit at a table talking to an entire Curriculum Committee about all the new projects in the works. Imagine how much more we could accomplish with more filled seats. That exciting meeting is waiting for a Gladys Aylward.

Actually, it's not. Gladys is in Heaven, finished with her assignment.



A Previous Transition to Computers — Photo by SLM Archives

But we are not.

So many of you pray and give, and we couldn't function without your essential partnership in this work. I wonder if I might add a question to pray over as you talk with the Lord today: are you meant to do more? Can you use your work experience or personality or interests to fill in gaps here, whether on site or from a distance, whether for a small visit or a lifetime of ministry?

Perhaps you are in a season of life change and aren't sure what God wants for you now. I invite you to come visit! Come and see what God is doing. There is so much more that could be done if those who are willing would come and I'd love to give you that tour! 🌺

*"God does not choose people because of their ability, but because of their availability."*

- Brother Andrew



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



Exterior of Bible Studies by Mail Office — Photo by Darryl Evans

Print is not dead, and mail is not broken. Yes, significant changes and shifts have occurred with both. Just think about your local newspaper, if it still exists, for the former. And I'm sure you've added a couple days to your expectations to get letters via the latter. But if there's been a "buzz" in the print industry over the last few years, it's that presswork has simply changed, not that it's going away. And the whole "direct mail" end of the business tells us there really is something still to getting something in your mailbox, even if it's a handful of junk mail.

At Source of Light, we are about a more sacred kind of business: that of sharing God's Word and seeing souls saved. We hope and pray for just as much impact - even if it's changing - with the power of the written word and mailboxes. Few examples of the immensity and potential of this kind of ministry are better than the SLM office in the southwestern portion of the USA. Semi-retired Director, Darryl, will tell you:

"Bible Studies by Mail - that's what the New Mexico Discipleship Training Branch is for Source of

Light Ministries International! The ministry began to sow God's Word in 1979 through the mailing of Bible lessons that were printed by Source of Light Ministries. Now 46 years later, the ministry continues to serve, as its name suggests, Bible studies by mail! God's sown Word is reaping a harvest for His Kingdom! Please meet some of the Kingdom harvest God is producing!

"Inmate César Castillo was mailed his first Spanish Bible lessons on January 3, 2024. In a couple of weeks, we had his study Test Pages back. He shared that he had received Jesus as his Savior on January 12, 2024. He is now studying the sixth correspondence course. He recently shared what he learned in his *Practical Christian Living* Bible lessons: 'First, I learned that God is the Owner of all things. Second, I learned that when we give to God, He gives to us. To give an offering to God is sowing into His Kingdom. It's wise to give money that's used to win souls. Third, I learned what God's goal for us is. It's to conform to the image of His Son, Jesucristo. Finally, I learned that I must see God in all my circumstances and that everything that's happened to me is His will.'

"Inmate Vladimir Arevalo was mailed his first Spanish study on January 17, 2024. He has studied diligently and shared God's Word intently among cellmates. He recently wrote this thank-you letter: 'Dear brothers and sisters, first of all, I want to thank God for the opportunity He has allowed me to educate myself and learn

more about His Word. Thank you for providing me with Bible studies all these months, for the formation of my life and spiritual character, all for His honor and glory. Each lesson, from 1 to 24, in the *Practical Christian Living* course, edified me and deepened my faith. I can declare with great confidence in the Lord that the Christian life is based on the true formation of the new believer in Christ, the Lord, the Rock of our salvation. I have decided to follow Christ, and I will not turn back.'

"Bryan Galvez is a cellmate with Vladimir Arevalo. He recently wrote: 'Hola, how are you? I hope everything is fine. The reason I'm writing to you is because a friend here in jail gave me your information and told me that you offer Bible studies. I am trying to change my life and strengthen my faith in the Word of Dios.'

"Inmate Gonzalo Escobedo was mailed his first Spanish Bible lessons on July 18, 2025. On the 28th of July, we had his completed study Test Pages. He shared this after answering the twenty questions: '[Yo he pecado] I have sinned. Yet Dios loves me, and Cristo died for me. I accept Jesús as my Salvador in this moment.'

"Today, a lady came into the office and quickly realized she was in the wrong office. She asked what we did and upon learning that we mail Bible correspondence studies to whoever wants them, she received the first study booklet of *My New Life in Christ* and she gave us her mailing address.

“In 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, the Apostle Paul wrote: *I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.*

“More than one thousand people are actively studying with approximately 40% being incarcerated and 3% being Spanish speakers. In the past year, 36 people have made first-time decisions for Christ. Praise the Lord!



Entrance of Bible Studies by Mail Office  
— Photo by Darryl Evans

George Baker founded the ministry and directed it for 13 years until 1992. Then David Beam directed the ministry, and after him, Gene Bunt. I have been serving as director since July 1, 2005. On December 31, 2025, I and my Joan will be stepping down from being Director and office administrator.

“The Advisory Board of Bible Studies by Mail is asking the Lord to provide new leaders who have ministry experience and regular financial support to join this work as missionaries. Your prayer support is greatly appreciated! We are confident the Lord is calling another couple to step in and fill these roles of leadership at Bible Studies by Mail in Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA!”

Sometimes it may seem that America is increasingly spiritually barren. But just as in Las Cruces, there can be beautiful mountains in the desert. Will you go over and help them? Do you have a heart to lead others to lead still others to Christ? Mountains of mail—Bible studies by mail—are waiting for you! 🌹



**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.



After years serving in South America as missionaries, **Darryl Evans** and his wife lead the SLM branch in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

# 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?**

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



 Source of light  
INTERNATIONAL

# COME OVER ... HELP TRAIN US

By Ron Barnes

*"Greetings Pastor Barnes, I hope you are well. My name is Acácio. I had the opportunity to participate in the Source of Light conference, and from that moment I was there, there was a fire that began to burn in my heart in the form of a burning desire to form more disciples. I prayed, and I will embrace a family group for prayers and Bible study. I decided to write this text for you, first to say thank you for the initiative of the conference and congratulate you on your missions work, because this is a gift from God. I hope to see you again soon. God bless you always, and thank you very much."*

This was but one of many similar messages I received following the SLM conference held in Mozambique this past summer. It was truly a privilege to be the speaker and to have such a good turnout, almost 800 people from 4 different countries. We focused on the topic of spiritual leadership for pastors and during the youth rally, the challenges young people face. These comments are not unusual after trainings like the one in Mozambique. Most responders tell me it is the only "formal" training they have received since entering the ministry.



Pastors Looking at the SLM Resource Table — Photo by Ron Barnes

Sadly, over 85% of all pastors and missionaries worldwide have had no formal Bible training, which is why SLM is increasing our efforts to provide next level training beyond our "basic" courses.

Nothing is more fulfilling to me than to be used of God to train these men for ministry. In fact, I could do it full-time with the demands we have just from our own fields. I have to admit, it's hard to come back to speak or teach in the States after men like these aren't eager for me

to end these seminars. They often save time at the end for questions and answers, and these sessions have typically lasted for hours at a time, answering specific questions to the issues they are facing in ministry, and often far off the topic. So, if they are willing to stay, I'm willing to keep speaking. That's why I travel with an iPad that has all my seminars and all my sermons as well as my Bible. I just never know what I am going to be asked.

But my ability and the ability of our current staff limit the amount of time any of us have to dedicate to this extremely important and growing Division of SLM: Training and Advanced Studies.

SLM has resources in our Advanced Studies department to provide the core curriculum to institutes, colleges, and seminaries here in the US and around the world. Currently, we have over 6,000 students already using the curriculum with the potential for many more. But to reach that potential for more, we just need more help.

As we continue to develop the program, our desire is to see people come who are particularly interested in curriculum development who can help foster the creation of new courses and possibly also teach them.

We hope to see teams of teachers recruited to travel to the fields and train on location and occasionally via the internet. Long-term or short-term missionaries could be used and even professors or pastors who would just teach on occasion.

But all these initiatives also require leadership and vision, someone to lead it! We have a good staff serving the Department to keep up with demand, but the time to have real and specific visionary leadership to coordinate the training for our 41 Branches and the other invitations we receive is long overdue.

Perhaps you have been asking God how to use your gifts in the ministry. Consider this an invitation to "Come ... help us train!" 🙏



2025 SLM Pastors and Leaders Conference on Spiritual Leadership — 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



# MANY THINGS

By Phil Winder & Brian Thompson

Property Being Pursued for the Guyana Branch — Photo by Dwayne Daniels

When you think about all the “many things” that go into building a house, it makes you consider the reasoning behind the construction. “Many things” go into a house so that “many things” can come out of a house. A house provides protection from the elements. A house provides safety and security. A house with a family inside becomes a home.

On the Source of Light Headquarters campus, a new house is being built for a missionary family. A house that will house a family that will turn it into a home. Our maintenance men and the volunteers building the house don't know the family who will live in the new home. We don't know, if the Lord tarries, how many families will call this new house “home.” It is exciting to be a part of a project that will house missionaries serving at the international headquarters of Source of Light for generations to come.

One goal of our Operations team is to provide safe, clean, nice housing for whomever the Lord calls to serve alongside us. There are “many

things” that go into the construction of a new home. Blueprints, permits, land preparation, block, stone, wood, roofing, windows, siding, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, kitchen cabinets, and a host of other items and tasks. Many people and skills, more than you might think, are needed to transform a “thought” into a “thing,” a vision into something to see.



Current Construction of Campus House at SLM HQ — Photo by Phil Winder

Our team is excited to consider the “many things” that will come from the missionary family that will take up residence in this home. Will they be a pressman and administrative assistant? Will they disciple Bible

students, teach the Source of Light lessons to pastors, leaders, and laypeople the world over? Only God knows the “many things” that will come out of 1251 Mission Road. We wonder: will you be part of the people who help with this house? Or who live in this house?

Our overseas Branch offices have “many things” that they are responsible for. As a Regional Director, Brian Thompson monitors the Branch’s funds and helps with project fund-raising so that the Branch can do ministry the best that can be done. Our Guyana Branch, in a country on the northeast corner of South America, must budget for renting a building that houses the correspondence ministry and a church that the Director pastors. However, they rent right now on six-month leases. Every six months, the landlord may ask them to move. It has happened multiple times. The church loses some of their members each time they must move. We are hoping to alleviate that issue by finding land and building a building.

The goal is to provide for the Branch a permanent place for the ministry work and give the Revival Baptist Church a solid meeting place. Of course, there are “many things” that go into planning, purchasing, and building to finish this goal. Please pray that the Lord will provide \$50,000 USD for the property. Ask



Dwayne & Jenelle Daniels, SLM Guyana DTB  
— Photo by Dwayne Daniels

God to help Dwayne and his Branch Board to find the exact place God would have for this purpose. Finally, our requests should evidence trust in God for the provision to complete the whole project.

Just as many things and people are involved in building a new campus house (or a new Branch building) and many things and people come out of them, there are “many things” and ways that you can be a part of the future of Source of Light. You can pray for the projects. You could give towards the costs of construction. You could come (or go) and help. Several areas still need to be finished or funded. Furnishings, landscaping, and painting are a few. We would love to have you be a partner in what the Lord will accomplish with the “many things” we commit to His cause 🌿



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



**Brian Thompson** is Regional Director for North America & the Caribbean while also overseeing the Madison Discipleship School.

# HAVE YOU CONSIDERED CHRIST IN YOUR CHRISTMAS GIVING?

**According to USA Today, Americans spent a staggering \$241 billion in “holiday spending” in 2024.\* Statistics say that 70% of American spending in December is for gifts. Imagine what the ministries of Christ could do next year if every Christian set aside a special gift at Christmas for the Savior we celebrate!**



**In order to enjoy tax benefits for 2025, your gifts must be completed by December 31. Start early if you are giving stock transfers or QCDs as they will take more time to process than cash donations.**

**If you are 70 ½ or older, you can make a gift from your IRA called a QCD (Qualified Charitable Distribution). Your gift can count toward your required minimum distribution and will be tax-free up to \$108,000 this year or up to 60% of your adjusted gross income.**

**A gift of appreciated securities will avoid capital gains tax, and you can deduct the full current value of the securities, if you itemize. Noncash gifts are deductible up to 30% of your AGI; however, unused deductions can be used to lower taxes for up to five years.**

**Contact Brian Thigpen, CFO, at [bthigpen@slmin.org](mailto:bthigpen@slmin.org) if you have any questions.**

\*<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2025/01/16/how-americans-pay-for-christmas/77666449007/>



# HELP WANTED

Whether you can offer only certain days as a volunteer or prefer a non-typical missionary career, we just might have a place for you. Non-negotiable requirements include a heart to serve, a mind to learn, and two hands to help, but see below more specific needs in the Operations Department:

**Maintenance:** To participate in general upkeep of housing, buildings, equipment, and vehicles.

**Receptionist:** To be the face and voice of SLM HQ by greeting visitors, answering calls, directing inquiries.

**Steward:** To assist in light janitorial, preventive maintenance, safety inspections, event setup, etc.

**Landscaping:** To maintain our 25-acre campus mowing, trimming, blowing, edging, etc.

**Transportation:** To transport our missionaries to and from the airport, meetings, and churches as needed.

**ALL OPPORTUNITIES COULD VARY IN COMMITMENT BUT WOULD  
NECESSITATE CLOSE PROXIMITY TO MADISON, GEORGIA**

Contact [hr@slmin.org](mailto:hr@slmin.org) or [pwinder@slmin.org](mailto:pwinder@slmin.org)  
for more information.

## WHAT WOULD I DO – WHAT COULD YOU DO – IN JAMAICA?

By Elaine Schiffer

Excerpts transcribed from a phone call with Kimberly Thigpen in August 2025. Edited for clarity.

I was an insurance sales worker, and a secretary for a time.

I'd been invited down to Jamaica three different times, and all three times I looked at the woman and said, "What would I ever do in Jamaica?"

My husband, Don, and I started going down on short-term medical trips, but one of the times, we were going to be taken to some schools. They had five thousand toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste that they wanted us to give out.

The man who took me, Kevin Roper, is a Jamaican. I said to him, "What do we do in the schools?"

Kevin looked at me and said, "Give them the Gospel."

"In the public schools?"

"Yes!"

I was absolutely terrified. When I was going into the very first school, I looked at him and said, "Well, if I go in there and make an absolute fool of myself, it's not going to matter, because these people will never see me again." God has a sense of humor!

I came back to the States, and the next year I did go back one more time. At the end of the trip, I said to George (national leader appointed back in 1955 to the Kingston Branch, Source of Light's first international location) that I'd heard there was a boy's home and could we

visit? He said, "Yes. See who wants to go, and we'll go tonight."

On the way over there, I said to George, "Are you going to share a message or something?"

He said, "No, you are. Just do what you did in the schools."



*"It's been thirty-one years since we went to Jamaica the first time." — Photo by Elaine Schiffer*

Kevin had told him, "She doesn't belong in the pharmacy counting pills. She belongs in the schools." So, George wanted to hear what I did in the schools.

He later informed us that he was retiring from the medical teams but remaining with Source of Light. His dream was to get into the schools to do the lessons. He told us that the kids weren't going to the Post Office. They weren't paying for the stamps, so the lessons weren't coming back. He said, "I wonder if you'd be willing to get a team together and come speak in the schools and open them up for Bible lessons."



"We've never regretted what we've done." — Photo by Elaine Schiffer

Don told him that he had to work full-time but, "It's fine with me for Elaine to do it if she feels led and God provides the finances."

Two months later, I led my first team to Jamaica. I led 34 teams to Jamaica before we ever moved there. We were volunteers, and we continue to be volunteers.

The Kingston office couldn't keep up with what we were doing, and we knew that there needed to be a Branch on the East Coast.

I felt that God was leading us to move to Jamaica and start a new Branch. However, I kept my mouth shut, knowing that if God was leading us, he would show Don too. We were invited by a

Jamaican family to spend Christmas with them that year, and we did. When we were at the airport to return, Don looked at me and said, "I really think God wants us to move to Jamaica and start a Branch there."

Don took early retirement at age 62, and we started the Branch, Follow the Source, and incorporated it in 2008.

We have about 2,500 students, and we actually go to the schools. We pick up and grade 1,250 lessons each week. We go to half the schools and deliver lessons, then grade the other 1,250 and deliver those to the others schools the following week.

We also do kids clubs on Saturday, sometimes one, sometimes two. During Covid, all the teenagers in the Bible club didn't stop coming, so we started leadership training for them.

In addition to that, we also have seniors who come once a week on Sunday evening to our house. And over the summer we return to the States and report to churches supporting the ministry and speak in new churches.

We're busy!



"Come and find out what it's like!" — Photo by Elaine Schiffer

We have two one-bedroom apartments in Jamaica. We have senior citizens from the States who are retired who come and serve with us. Seniors can come and stay up to three months without a visa, and they help in the office and things like that. That's been a great thing. But many of those who once regularly came can no longer return because of health reasons.

We're really working and praying for someone to come alongside and learn from Don. Don's an engineer. He wrote the computer program we use. He's the only one who knows how to do any of the technology. He designed our solar power system; we operate on 90% solar. All that he does, no one else knows how to do. We have one man there who, when we get back, we're going to talk to him about starting to learn things. He's scared to death to touch anything!

We are fervently looking for a Jamaican to work alongside us, to eventually take over the work. But to also have another American here to replace us

would be ideal, teaching in the schools and continuing the connections with churches and work teams in the states. For anyone considering serving in Jamaica, call us, talk to us, get some information. Come and stay a couple of weeks and see. If you're thinking long-term, come and stay three months and work alongside us and see what you think.

We can use help in so many different areas. Somebody caring for the facilities, working in the office, working with school kids, there are so many different things. There's always something someone can do. Come and find out what it's like! 🌺



"When teens come, the schools love it because it's something special for the kids. We go in and do maybe puppets, maybe music, maybe skits, things that get the kids' attention, and bring them the Gospel." — Photo by Elaine Schiffer



**Elaine Schiffer** and her husband, Don, have been Directors of the Jamaica Branch Follow the Source since 2008. Contact them at [elaine@followsource.org](mailto:elaine@followsource.org) or 585-209-0239

# SOURCE OF LIGHT'S BASIC DISCIPLESHIP LESSONS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE!



Just go to [www.slmcourses.com](http://www.slmcourses.com) to find the same good content and encouraging interaction. Register there to become a student with us.

**Is online format not for you?** The paper lessons are still being sent out. You can ask to do the courses through correspondence.

Contact Brian Thompson in the Madison Discipleship School at [mds@slmin.org](mailto:mds@slmin.org) or [slmcourses@slmin.org](mailto:slmcourses@slmin.org) for more information.

## Here is what active students are saying about the courses:



I would like to join the Bible course for us to grow spiritually through your teachings and materials.

– Richard (Tanzania)



I'm interested in taking classes to become a Christian counselor. I think it's what God wants me to do. Blessings.

– Melissa (United States)

Many people are asking for help to understand the Bible all over the world. These are just a few of the requests that ask us to "come and help us."



**World Wide  
Bible Institute**  
SOURCE OF LIGHT INTERNATIONAL

# AVAILABLE ONLINE!

*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 2:15

World Wide Bible Institute is available online! Go to [wwbionline.org](http://wwbionline.org) and fill out an application to become a student with us.

Online format not for you? No problem! You can join the many students doing the courses through correspondence.



Contact Brenda Barnes, Director of the Advanced Studies Department, at [training@slmin.org](mailto:training@slmin.org) for more information or to request a catalog.

## Here is what students taking the courses are saying:

"Thank you for this awesome study. I learned so much about one of the hardest books in the Bible." (referring to the WWBI Daniel course)

– James

"I recently finished the Roman Catholic Doctrine course. Talk about 'wow' and 'stop me in my tracks' - this did it! Wow, that one really had me in a tailspin, but I managed to get it done. I was totally honest about which questions I had to look up. I didn't realize how much of a difference there is in the Catholic faith and other faiths! As far as I am concerned, the EZRA Institute and I fit just fine!"

– Helen

"This course has made me stronger physically and spiritually as well as mentally, and I actually hated that it ended." (referring to EZRA Institute Bible Survey course)

– Phyllis

# 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)

## PRAYER

◆ Please pray for Shirley Rice, who serves in the Advanced Studies Department, who is undergoing challenging cancer treatments. Please pray for strength and grace as well.

◆ Brian Thigpen is taking on the responsibilities of the Field Accountant. Pray that God will guide him and give him wisdom and strength to fulfill his regular responsibilities and this role as well.

◆ We are grateful that the Lord is enabling us to once again print *The Reaper* in house. Please pray for our Print Shop staff. Their printing schedule is full, and there are occasional glitches in the operation of the press that throw their schedule off. Pray that God will give guidance in resolving press issues quickly and patience for our Print Shop staff. Please continue to pray as well that God will provide additional staff for the Print Shop.

◆ The new Source of Light children's courses will be printed soon. Please pray that finishing touches will be completed in a timely manner and the courses will be a blessing to children worldwide in the years to come. Pray also for the translations that are being prepared for these courses.

◆ Many of our National Branches need monthly prayer and financial partners. Pray that God will send just the right people who will be enthusiastic supporters of these ministries, who will encourage the missionaries, and who will help with the financial needs of their ministries.

◆ Continue to pray for our Staff at Headquarters and our International

Staff who are getting older, that God will provide people to come alongside them so that they can train them as replacements when they retire. We currently have an urgent need for an individual or couple to train with Darryl and Joan Evans to assume the responsibility of Branch Director in New Mexico. Please pray that God will send just the right person or couple.

◆ We are grateful that many of our fields can print within their countries or continents now. This reduces the cost of shipping and customs fees. However, there are still great costs involved for the printing for equipment maintenance, intercontinental shipping, paper, ink, staff to run the printing equipment, etc. We see the requests for our materials growing. Please pray that funds for printing will grow with the needs and that lessons will be available to those who need them.

◆ The Madison Discipleship School has seen a reduction in student participation. Please pray that God will restore student interest and that we will see an increase in the lessons being processed.

◆ Our International Field Staff have a lot of responsibility with maintaining the reports necessary for accountability and for meeting the requirements by our government for those receiving funds abroad. It is not easy in countries where the internet and infrastructure resources are lacking. Please pray that our staff will be able to joyfully keep up. 🌸

## PRaise

♦ We praise the Lord for His provision of another staff member, Amber Bates, in the Accounting Department here at Source of Light. God is always faithful to provide what is needed. We also praise the Lord that Sally Hensley is recovering from medical procedures and has been able to return to work.

♦ We are grateful for the many volunteer groups who have visited Source of Light this summer. It has provided much-needed help in the Madison Discipleship School, routine maintenance in Operations, and help with the new house being built on campus. We are also grateful for a new lift that the Operations Department was able to purchase that over time will save money due to no longer needing to regularly rent this piece of equipment. We also praise the Lord for the safety that He has provided for workers as they have worked on the construction of the new house.

♦ Though additional financial partners will always be needed as the ministry grows, we are continually grateful for those partners who faithfully pray for the ministry and give so that we can continue ministering here in America and abroad. Our financial partners are truly a part of the ministry of Source of Light and will share the rewards of the work.

♦ We are grateful for the testimonies that our students send in, which encourage us and help us to see that these little “paper missionaries” (as we like to call our lessons) are truly making a difference in the lives of the people we serve. We recently received a testimony through our World Wide

Bible Institute program that reflected the effectiveness of the course and was greatly encouraging to our staff in that program. We praise the Lord for how He is working through all the materials of Source of Light.

♦ We praise the Lord for a volunteer, Ray Bark, who assisted in the Operations Department in a variety of ways during the summer months. He was a great help with yard maintenance during the heavy grass-growing season.

♦ We are thankful for Mr. Ray Walker who retired from service with Source of Light in November of 2021 after 60 years of missionary service. Ray celebrated his 92nd birthday on August 8th of this year. Even though he is retired, he is frequently called upon to edit prayer letters and other things. We are grateful to the Lord for Ray’s sharp mind and his willingness to serve in this capacity as a volunteer.

♦ We are grateful for God’s provision of a new Director in one of our Branches in South America. We have been praying for some time that God would send us a replacement for Guillermo Salazar who directed our Branch in Chile and is moving into retirement. God has answered our prayer, and Chile has a new Branch Director, Gabriel Orellana.

♦ We are grateful for our retired Source of Light missionaries and partners who faithfully follow the ministry of Source of Light; some even participate in our Wednesday chapel via Zoom. It is a joy to see them! One of our missionary partners, Donna Wohlfert, still provides services when needed. 🌿

## IN MEMORIAL

### GIFTS IN HONOR OF...

**Joshua Keith** by  
Air Duct Solutions LLC

**Sheila and Byron Shupp** by  
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### GIFTS IN MEMORY OF...

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**Gary Simon** by  
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**Mary H Cole** by  
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**Melody Zink** by  
Mr. Phillip Jack, Jr.  
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Mrs. Annabel Deichman  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Sans

**Tom Gustafson** by  
Mrs. Cheryl Gustafson



**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:**  
**[slmin.org/donate](https://slmin.org/donate)**

**By Phone:**  
**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.***



**Source of light**

INTERNATIONAL

1011 Mission Road  
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p. 706.342.0397  
f. 706.342.9072  
e. [slm@slmin.org](mailto:slm@slmin.org)

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