



the REAPER

VOL. 71, NO. 2 | Summer 2026

**GO ... TEACHING
THEM TO OBSERVE
ALL THINGS**

MATTHEW 28:19-20

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.

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go to slmin.org/reaper

GO ... TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS

By Ron Barnes
A letter from the Editor

We've all heard sermons on the Great Commission and the command to GO! But rarely is the focus of the sermon what we are expected to DO! Lately, I've been pondering the latter part of the Great Commission: "teaching them to observe all things." Really? We are asked to teach ALL THINGS?

Even though it's probably not in consideration of this passage, it is generally the fear most people have, if not even an excuse, for not going. That is, the fear of not knowing what to say. "What if I don't do it right?" "What if I forget something?" "What if I don't know the answers to their questions?" These are paralyzing questions that prevent people from, at the very least, fulfilling the first part of the Great Commission, which is going! But this is entirely why SLM is committed to producing and distributing the lessons we have

developed over many years, so people can confidently take the Good News to others with a clear and intentional presentation of the Gospel and initial stages of discipleship.

SLM provides resources to effectively carry out the Great Commission for not only our own missionaries, but other missionaries, churches, pastors, and any average Christian, and they give them the confidence to know what to say ... so they too can GO!

This is exactly the case of a man named Leo you may remember from a past *Reaper*. Leo escaped Venezuela after he learned there was a warrant for his arrest because of his regular speaking out against the corruption in Venezuela using his platform as a journalist. But when the government had had enough, he escaped through Colombia and made his way to North Carolina. It was there he grew in his faith, giving credit to the SLM resources his local church used, which he had never had access to in Venezuela.

As he grew in his faith, he felt convicted to go back to Venezuela and take these SLM resources to the ministries and churches he was connected with, to provide for their people and to be more effective in

evangelism and training. He himself had no formal Bible training, and wasn't a pastor, but felt he could be used to facilitate providing the tools SLM had to offer.

So, with a handful of courses, he snuck back into Venezuela at a "soft border" and began setting the groundwork for a SLM ministry. Carefully, he has had to make connections broadly while at the same time trying to evade detection by police.

I knew with the recent change of regimes, it would only be a short amount of time before we heard from Leo, since before we maintained an "urgent only" protocol of communication since he left. And sure enough, he was eager to chat.

I just finished a lengthy Zoom meeting, just before the writing of this article, where he has articulated the plan for moving forward given the fact that things have quickly changed, and he has put into place systems for delivery of materials and networks for distribution and training.

Even though he is a well-educated man, Leo acknowledges that he feels ill-equipped to teach "all things," but is thankful that he and those he is working with will have the resources to be equipped and to equip others. He also articulated the courses are needed now more than ever since the churches that do exist are fraught with poor teaching and doctrine, with almost no Bible being taught whatsoever. When things more fully open up, more false teachers and



Venezuelan Capital City of Caracas — Photo by Bona Lee (Unsplash.com)



Flag of Venezuela — Photo by Aboodi Vesakaran (Unsplash.com)

teaching will flood the nation, which is why we have to respond quickly.

We will have a test run soon of getting materials in and then flood this opportunity with the money we will have at our disposal for Venezuela when we are sure we can deliver them safely.

These are exciting times to be alive. I'm hoping by the time you receive this *Reaper*, we are telling similar stories about Cuba, given the changes going on there.

In restricted-access countries, the most difficult things to get access to are the very things that SLM has committed to provide: printed resources, still the most effective

way to see people disciplined. In many countries where SLM works, people have risked their lives carrying the SLM resources because they are convinced of the effectiveness of their use.

God has used these courses effectively in the hands of the trained and untrained, and occasionally with no personal contact whatsoever from a Christian. This is why we have worked very hard to create curricula that will teach as many of the crucial things in Scripture as possible and then how to study on their own in the Word. We then format them and translate them into as many languages as possible so that Source of Light can fulfill, to the best of our ability, the latter part of the Great Commission, providing the tools to “teach them all things.”

This *Reaper* is committed to stories of the men and women serving around the globe who are effectively utilizing these tools and those lives changed as a result. It is our prayer that you will be inspired by these stories, but also challenged to play the part God would have you play in the Great Commission, with the confidence that SLM will help you along the way. 🌿



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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IT TAKES A CHURCH TO TRAIN

By Bruce Dare

Is going and sharing the Gospel enough? Is getting together to study the Bible all we need to do? In a day of zooming church livestreams and multiple social mediums, these questions become all the more important, and the wrong answers all the more dangerous.

As Theologian Mark Dever has pointed out, fulfilling the Great Commission involves more than just personal evangelism. It even commands more than mere individual discipleship. Jesus told us to go, and the purpose of our going is to make disciples (of all nations). But He then instructs us to baptize (in His name) and teach (all He commanded). What is necessary for those two things to be done fully and faithfully? We need *the church*. Only through a called, gathered body of believers can we rightly obey Christ's commands.¹ How else could we not forsake *the assembling of ourselves together* (Hebrews 10:24-25; cf. Matthew 18:20)? How else could we fulfill the “one-another” commands in Scripture (Romans 12:5, 10, 16; 15:5, 7, 14; cf. John 13:34)?

In order to teach and obey all that Christ commanded, we need other believers who have been called out and come together as churches. This is also at the heart of Source of Light's existence and mission. We seek that people be brought “into a mature relationship with

Jesus Christ” but also “into fellowship with a local church family.” Now, we all know situations where the ideal is difficult or may be impossible. Thank God for ministries like SLM that serve this niche as well. But we also know of great stories where local churches were established, even in prisons. They may seem a little different, but they are churches.

This is also part of the story for W.D., our National Director in the Central Zone of India. He joined Source of Light “in 1981 as an evangelist taking care of Telugu Bible lessons in Hyderabad.” He soon moved to work with the team in Bangalore for two years, got married, and returned “as a Director for Andhra Pradesh state.” As he shares, “When I was sending lessons and starting Bible study fellowship groups, Brother Solomon Peter advised me to start a



Local Church Building and Renovation — Photo by W.D.



Tribal Ministry and Pastors with W.D. — Photo by W.D.

local church at Hyderabad.” And in view of Christ’s total command, it’s a good thing. Evangelism and sending lessons and starting fellowship groups were not the end goal. “In 1986, we started a local church at Nacharam village named Nacharam Grace Gospel Church.” Especially in these circumstances, you can be sure the church did not consist of Christian church transplants. “I only started with very few non-Christian converts.”

From the beginning, Source of Light courses have been an integral part of the church ministry. “My church youth have completed all our SLM Bible lessons, and I am proud to say that they are all from non-Christian backgrounds and baptized.” Not only have hundreds comes to Christ, but many are now “trained teachers working among 200 to 250 children on every Sunday at our local church.” The ministry is heavily focused on preparing their people, to themselves, serve and teach through many organized meetings.

“I have been calling the people to my church, giving three days accommodation and providing food for this disciples training camp.”

One critical element of local church health or even existence is men called by God to lead and shepherd as pastors. As W. saw the need for this, he turned to the same source of materials that he always had. “When Brother Bill Shade came to our church, he advised me to start WWBI college in my church and gave a contract signed by him. Then I started it in the name of Mrs. Ruby Shade, so it is Ruby Bible College. By God’s grace, we have completed three batches with graduation services. We used WWBI curriculum in the Telugu language.” Pray for this ministry to restart as it had been discontinued due to lack of funds.

Whether the program is formal or not, the training of leaders continues. In fact, the church elders are central to another significant aspect of Central

Zone ministry: “the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is reaching many remote tribal villages and has been starting churches.” W. continues to traverse jungles and climb mountains with them to share the Word with those who’ve never heard. “By God’s grace, we are reaching 15 remote tribal villages with the Gospel through social work by conducting medical camps ... and helping the needy children. We have established five churches on the top of the tribal hills. God has given six wonderful and burdened tribal pastors serving the Lord among seven tribal people groups.” Even in midst of immense challenges for his own church in the city, W. is just as concerned for the support of these tribal pastors and their establishment in the truth.

Speaking of such challenges, they are facing obstacles and even threats in Hyderabad. “We are so grateful to our Lord that God has helped us to build this building and raised local funds from our own church congregation ... I am very sad to say that regularly I have been receiving threatening calls from neighbors of our church to me and my wife ... On one Sunday, we were in worship service in the church when some group of church neighbors called me out, and they held my neck collar and scolded me with bad words and asked me to close the church because of sound and parking problems ... We are praying that moving our church congregation to the upper floor will make the hall soundproof, and the ground floor will be the parking place.” Please pray that God will give them wisdom adjusting to this need.



Sunday School Teacher’s Training Class — Photo by W.D.

The passion and persistence of these brothers and sisters in prayer before the Lord and in the proclamation of the Gospel is a convicting testimony of the power of God. His Word needs to be preached across the jungles and over mountains, but it calls out churches to obey and teach all of Christ’s commands, and to do this *together*. It takes a *church* to train this way. May we be faithful and see the Lord prevail! 🌿

Endnote:

- i. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/20-quotes-from-mark-devers-new-book-on-great-commission/>



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.

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



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 or slmcourses@slmin.org for more information.

WORLD WIDE BIBLE INSTITUTE IS AVAILABLE ONLINE!



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 for more information or to request a catalog.

WHAT ACTIVE STUDENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE COURSES:

"Please, Father God, continue providing for Source of Light International to reach those in need, as I have been, which has made the difference between life rather than death. I am grateful to you for them. Amen."

— L. Greene

"The lessons I learned from this study brought tears to my eyes and will last me a lifetime."

— J. King (studying *Epistles of John* course)

TEACHING EVEN MORE THINGS - SPANISH, SPAIN, AND BEYOND

By Brenda & Ron Barnes

It had been a few years since an SLM administrator had been to Spain, and with so much happening on the ground there, it was necessary for Brenda and me to see things firsthand and to hopefully put some things into place to respond quickly to their needs. Both Brenda and I had fairly in-depth conversations that needed to be had, and so a quick trip was planned to our old stomping ground of Europe.

Since taking over the World Wide Bible Institute, Brenda has been working feverishly to see it not only completed in Spanish, but now also online. "The possibility for learning more deeply the Word of God in Spanish is one of the greatest needs we have according to our Hispanic National Directors," Brenda explains. "It's why we needed to go to Spain to work with our missionaries there, specifically, Paulina Vecchiarelli, who is spearheading the Spanish WWBI online with her team in Spain.

"Making sure the courses are correctly inputted requires thorough testing, which is the reason why Paulina and I spent so much time together."

According to Lifeway Research, less than half of all Hispanic pastors completed Bible college or Bible institute training, and most don't have time or the resources to go away full time to study.¹ While this is a much higher average than the rest of the world, this is where WWBI can meet a great need for Hispanic leaders worldwide, providing solid Bible college/Bible institute training at the pace of the student.



Brenda Barnes and Paulina Vecchiarelli
— Photo by Olga Vecchiarelli



Emanuel and Daniela Steinle —Photo by Emanuel Steinle

In one of the meetings we held, Jorge Vecchiarelli, SLM Director for Spain, shared that the SLM “Basic” courses are in great demand as pastors are showing greater interest in seeing their church members more deeply rooted in their faith by having resources to better equip them.

The basic courses have also been, in recent weeks, used in a strategy for new church plants. Just a few months ago, a new church plant in Barcelona was started as a weekly Bible study based on the use of a course called *A Country Called Heaven*. It is an evangelistic tool that clearly presents the Gospel and gives young believers the first steps in their Christian walk.

Jorge’s vision is that others will see this as a model for church planting and themselves begin new church plants around Spain and soon, Italy. The ministry in Spain continues to bear fruit, and Jorge is praying

and actively recruiting teams to work with him.

The first couple to come work with Jorge and Olga are Emanuel and Daniela Steinle, working in Centelles at a church plant with the Vecchiarelli’s. Here, they have taken local jobs to enter the community and establish personal relationships for the Gospel. They moved two years ago from Argentina to Spain to work alongside the Vecchiarelli’s, and Daniela has been assisting Paulina with testing WWBI Online in Spanish.

The work in Europe is slow, but with the help of South American Spanish speakers, Spain is being reseeded with the Gospel, quite effectively, which is a change from the last 20-30 years where Spain was often referred to as the “Graveyard of Missions in Europe.” This is a great breakthrough for the country of Spain, but there is much more work to do.

The team continues to explore new opportunities for the Gospel, and of course all of this is bathed in a strong commitment to prayer. Jorge and the team in Centelles recently walked the city, crying out to God in every corner for open doors to share the Gospel.

They actively hold youth conferences and pastors’ conferences. They attend every gathering of believers they learn of, introducing them to the resources SLM has to offer, helping them be more effective in discipleship.

Jorge is close to recruiting a second team from Argentina but is really hoping the handful of local churches in Spain will also engage in this effort. Having tools to help them in this process has been a key ingredient in making all of them more comfortable in their evangelistic and discipling efforts and has given them more confidence to “Go.”

At the same time, the enemy has been on the attack, most recently with the collapse of the ceiling of the meeting place for the church plant in Centelles. Praise the Lord, no one was hurt, and the Lord provided the funds to restore it and the things damaged, but we must continue to pray that God protects these workers in the harvest.

Please pray for the efforts of putting Spanish WWBI online, for the new children’s courses being translated into Spanish, for some fresh, new



Centelles Church Praying for the City — Photo by Jorge Vecchiarelli

artwork necessary for the European Spanish courses, and for the funds to have the resources on hand to provide churches and ministries the ample courses needed to “teach even more things” than have ever been available to them before. 🙏

Endnote:

- i. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2024/03/hispanic-pastors-us-churches-lifeway-survey-community-servi/>



Brenda Barnes has served as a missionary in Hungary and the Czech Republic as a teacher and discipler as well as having home schooled all three of her children. She serves at SLM as the Director of the Advanced Studies Department, WWBI Registrar, Reaper staff, and Hospitality Coordinator.

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?

TEACHING “AS MANY THINGS” AT CAMP - SLM CHILE

By Ron Barnes



SLM Chile — Photo by Gabriel Gallardo

expanding the ministry. But when even day-to-day tasks were becoming a challenge, and with no prospect in sight, we began to pursue outside contacts in Chile.

It was interesting that we learned about Gabriel Gallardo and his wife through a mutual friend in Chile who was involved in, of all things, camp ministry. I told them at our initial interview that camp ministry was really the inspiration for the children's courses when a man named George Eager wrote many of them decades ago for the follow-up of his campers.

Glenn Dix, my grandfather, encouraged him to join forces with SLM and allow us to illustrate, “lay out” and print the courses in a more formal fashion, and that partnership has been fruitful around the globe. Yet interestingly enough, it is still an extremely effective tool for camp ministry and being used as such in the US and around the world.

Camp ministry is such a wonderful way for young people in particular to hear the Gospel in a concentrated

When the time came, SLM Chile was having difficulty finding a new Director. Health challenges for both the Director and his wife were frequent, and it grieved them they no longer had the strength to do the whole job, which involved continually

way, but it has its limitations after the week, particularly if the goal is more than just giving the Gospel or, more precisely, carrying out the fullness of the Great Commission, making disciples. It is certainly a challenge to “teach all things” in a week.

The courses provide a way for camps to connect with churches to follow up with these campers locally and help them to the next stage, depending on where camp left off, hopefully losing little momentum, but naturally providing an opportunity for young campers to continue to grow.



SLM Chile Meeting With Youth Interested in the Lessons
— Photo by Gabriel Gallardo

For Source of Light Chile, it was an excellent way to pave a path of new contacts after the recent transition to our new Director, Gabriel, who sent the following report of the outcome of the month of camp:

“At Tierra Alta Camp, we had a good opportunity to publicize our ministry, Fuente de Luz Chile, and present the material to a wide audience. This instance was especially strategic for us, since not only children and young people participated, but also pastors, leaders, and parents who attended on the last day. Each week we set up our booth, where we were able to explain what our ministry consists of and how the material from Fuente de Luz can be of support to both people and churches.

In the first week, dedicated to children, approximately 140 attendees participated. As a ministry, we gave each one the book, *Storytime*, allowing the material to reach not only them, but also their families. Many parents and leaders came to our booth, made inquiries, and showed interest in using the resources.

During the older youth week, we saw a special interest in personal Bible study. It was received as a useful tool for spiritual



Youth Using the SLM Courses
— Photo by Gabriel Gallardo

growth, and several young people brought resources to start personal Bible studies.

In addition to introducing the various courses Source of Light has to offer, we managed to generate numerous contacts with churches, leaders, and even people linked to educational establishments, which opens doors for future visits and collaborations during the year. Although most of them did not know Source of Light ministry previously, though here for many decades, this instance allowed us to significantly expand our presence in Chile to an entirely new network.

For us, the camp has been a true blessing and a starting point for the work to come: visiting churches, formally presenting our material, and establishing churches associated with congregations, individuals, or schools who wish to use Fuente de

Luz’s resources as a tool for teaching and spiritual growth.”

Many of us, yes, including me, made deep, long-lasting commitments to follow Christ and to serve Him at a camp. And camp, in spite of the challenges to even stay afloat these days, still is an effective way to break through layers of sin, break through bondages, and allow people to let down their guard for the Gospel to penetrate even the darkest of hearts.

Camp ministry continues to be a viable tool of evangelism, and Source of Light has provided tools to allow camps, churches, and parents to continue the spiritual journey after the spiritual awakening that happens at camp by providing studies for every stage of a believer’s walk.

Continue to pray for Gabriel and Katy as they reengage the churches, pastors, and schools with the Gospel through the use of the materials. Pray that God continues to use them in the camp ministry they are involved in, teaching “as many things” as they can each week, and then following up with the rest after. Pray for God to provide the support they need to run the ministry and the funds to provide the resources broadly. 🌿



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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 **Source of light**
INTERNATIONAL

CONGO COURIERS

By Bruce Dare

What a miracle that the post came yesterday, he thought. And now again? But wait, that is my friend, Alain! He is bringing the lessons.

As you can imagine, postal service in the Democratic Republic of Congo has had an erratic track record. But sometimes the mail has been delivered. And there was a time when they might be confused with what I've decided to call the "Congo Couriers" from Source of Light. These couriers were not of your commercial sort either, though what they carried was a "treasure in earthen vessels." What did the Congo Couriers bring? Well ... light. To be specific, it was *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* (1 Corinthians 5:6-7). They brought the Gospel, the truth, the first things someone needed to know as a disciple of Jesus Christ. But as we all know, *teaching them to observe all things* does not often go uninterrupted.

Regrettable breaks in the teaching are simply part of the story for SLM in the DRC. When Brian and Gwenda Trapp first went there in 1994, they were just looking for "good Bible materials." Aside from the nice-looking but soul-damning literature from the Jehovah's Witnesses, Bible study helps were

seemingly non-existent. Then Gwenda "remembered having done Source of Light Bible studies as a child." Following some time back in the US, the Trapps "contacted Source of Light about forming a partnership" and "returned to the Congo with boxes and boxes of Source of Light materials."

With the help of a national short-term volunteer and his group of friends, supporting documents were translated, and they "began promoting the ministry and distributing the lessons." The discipleship school "was launched from a small laundry room outside of their home ... Soon, lines were forming outside the small office as volunteers waited to collect lessons for distribution." As Bernadette, a student later turned into an organizer herself, remembers, the office "was really busy!"



Congo Couriers Head Out to Spread the Light
— Photo by Gwenda Trapp

People coming with some papers in hands and going after receiving some other papers, and I was wondering what was going on there? Then I decided to ask the brother behind the desk. He answered me that these people you see coming and going are Bible correspondence students.”

The ministry was not always so rapidly unhindered. The Trapps left the D.R. Congo in 2002, and Vedette Nlandu was named Director. Gwenda notes, “Those days of transition were not easy for the staff. They were lean days.” So much so that, when Brian and Gwenda were making plans to join SLM Headquarters in 2007 (which they would do some years later), they decided instead to return back to the DRC.

Involvement was intermittent not just for the Trapps but for SLM too. “It is interesting to note that there had been someone using the Source of Light materials at some point prior to this. Someone came with a certificate to show where he had left off in his studies. Apparently in a time of unrest, the previous work had been disrupted



Current Students of SLM Congo with Lessons
— Photo by Vedette Nlandu

and all the records destroyed. But we were able to allow the students who had records of their previous work to pick up where they had left off.” Imagine the resilience after all that time!

Thankfully, the current staff keeps on going. Vedette shares, “The work we do touches all levels: children, youth, and adults. We provide courses according to age group in schools.” They also “have a volunteer who delivers lessons to prisoners” and “a system in place, of volunteers who act as liaisons between the churches and the ministry.” They regularly have responses to the question, “When did you receive Christ?” indicating it was through a previous lesson, and students have great loyalty to them. Vedette tells of a student who “started taking lessons, and her mother asked her about them and found them very interesting, but she didn’t want her daughter to attend this church. One day, she decided to go to the pastor to tell him that she didn’t want her child to worship there, but she found her with Christian booklets, which are very good to read. The pastor asked her if she knew where they came from. She answered, ‘No.’ He told her, ‘They came directly from here.’ The mother changed her decision, and her child could continue to worship at the church. To date, they have already obtained four certificates.”

As any course of study, especially with such a critical matter as learning the truth of God’s Word, it is critical that it be done in an orderly way. This has been true for SLM Congo, either with students themselves or others connecting, but there are always threats. Our Branch has faced a persistent struggle to keep inventory

consistent due to supply issues. The latest shipment attempted from HQ in 2022 has been lost ever since. Though the material was clearly addressed to Kinshasa (in the *Democratic Republic of Congo*), it was delivered to the post office in Brazzaville (in the Republic of Congo). Though only a river separates the cities and a few words distinguish the nations’ names, getting the materials transferred simply would not happen.

With the high cost of shipping regardless, coupled with the potential loss (estimated at over \$2,000 for this problem scenario), a different solution needed to be found. God is blessing as a Risograph duplicator has been purchased for the Branch with hope that the ministry in DRC can repeat the success of this method time-tested in Kenya with similar efforts in Uganda



Grading and Graduation at ADS in Brazzaville
— Photo by Bernadette Musengezi



Congo Office Staff with Risograph Machine
— Photo by Vedette Nlandu

and Zambia. The team now has the machine with limited supplies and is undergoing training. (Our budget for printing in D.R. Congo is \$3,000 for 2026). Please pray as this is quite a transition for the staff and will include several upstart costs and strains. But we hope it instills a new vision for ministry as they will be able to not only fill current gaps but also print as needs arise.

The way has not always been smooth or unbroken, but the Gospel is still being carried and taught. I agree with Vedette: “Let us always pray that our God will continue to increase the number of disciples.” We look to the Lord for the current Congo Couriers, that their courage be well-supported and contacts be well-supplied, that any person still lost will believe and any lesson lost will arrive. 🌿



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.

LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO SERVE?

HELP WANTED at the SLM Madison Discipleship School

We are seeking willing people, volunteer or career, for the following:

Spanish Coordinator - Bilingual (English, Spanish) who can work in the office 25-40 hours per week grading, recording, and overseeing discipleship for our Spanish-speaking students. This person needs to be spiritually mature and ready for the responsibility of encouraging and helping new and growing Christians.

Prison Coordinator - Discipling prisoners. grading, corresponding to students' needs, helping keep track of the facilities that our students are in. We need a person willing to talk with DOC officials and facility workers to arrange agreements and see our lessons abide by restrictions for the students to faithfully get their lessons.

For more information, contact Madison Discipleship School Director Brian Thompson at bthompson@slmin.org.



FOUR CONTINENTS, ONE PURPOSE

By Kimberly Thigpen

Source of Light partners with three fields that use Portuguese language lessons:

1. Brazil in South America
2. Portugal in Europe
3. Mozambique in Africa

Historical exploration and conquest explain how one language can spread to three continents, but the healthy partnership between the three—connected through us here in the US, which makes continent number four—can only be credited to Christ.

With Portuguese material dating back to the days of shoulder pads and big hair, it's to be expected that those courses created before SLM had any computers are showing their age.

Opportunity to update the courses has evaded us, with Brazil's Director juggling sometimes three jobs to provide for his family while doing ministry. While he

seeks to raise support, God provided us another way through Adil and Érica Reis, missionaries called from their home in Brazil to reach Portugal. Adil became Portugal's DTB Director in 2018. His wife, Érica, is gifted not only in translation, but in leadership. She has overseen translators, worked with leaders to assess if courses could be updated or needed redoing, and communicated well with Headquarters throughout.

And she gets things done.

Érica translated a set of children's courses and is currently proofing Brazil's translation of *Practical Christian Living*.

Of the new children's courses, Érica said,

"Children's materials are greatly needed in Portugal. There is a severe shortage of good materials based on the Word of God that are attractive to children.

"I have really enjoyed these new courses for children, as they are very objective, easy to read and understand, explain the Biblical content well, and are more attractive with good layout.

"We believe they will be very useful, both for use in churches in Portugal and in homes by parents and in schools for evangelism and discipleship."

Her team is retranslating *Basic Bible Truths* and will be adding missing lessons.

Recently, she introduced a new person to her team:



Portuguese-Speaking Discipleship Training Branches
— Photo by Kimberly Thigpen



Érica and Adil Reis, Missionaries to Portugal
— Photo by Érica Reis

“Yesterday, I had a small meeting with the Coordinator of the ADS in Palmela, Jessé Alencar. He is the son of missionaries who are planting a church there. He really likes our courses. He is doing an excellent job in his small church. Also yesterday, the first certificate was awarded. He is quite young. He is a software programmer. He has some ideas to develop an app for the SLM courses.”

Jessé has already become an important part of the BBT retranslation. Regarding the need for it, Érica explains:

“The BBT we have in Portuguese has been around for over 40 years, since the 1980s. And a lot has changed since then.

“Comparing it with the originals, we realize that many portions of text with good and important explanations have been omitted.

“The layout is also very old and unattractive, making it tiring to read. And there are no illustrations to help reinforce the teaching.

“We know that when we talk to someone about studying doctrines, it already gives the impression of something heavy and tiring. With better illustrated books and visually appealing layout, these studies will be more enjoyable and the results more satisfying.

“I don’t mean to say that the BBT of years ago was not useful in the Lord’s work. Quite the contrary! All this work of translation, printing, and dissemination that was done

by our brothers in the past was and still is a great blessing. It’s just a matter of updating it for the new generations.”

Her desire for high-quality work is impressive. Here’s one of her emails to me as Literature Coordinator:

“I decided to take another look to check if everything was correct. I’m working on it now ... It’s amazing that every time I reread the texts, I find a word or two that needs changing. I’m worried about sending something that can’t be changed later. Especially when it’s about the Lord’s things.”

The decisions are important. The courses carried through Mozambique, Brazil, and Portugal have eternal ramifications, so it matters that we are communicating God’s Word well.

Now with the internet and ability to span those continents in seconds rather than months or years by mail, we have the capability to connect with fields, get quick feedback, and expand and improve Portuguese lessons to make them as effective now as they were back when they were first typed on typewriters.

While Érica works on translation, Adil is busy as Portugal’s DTB Director, planting and assisting churches, counseling, and overseeing prison outreach. Here is his story about the prison he visits every Tuesday:



First Baptism for New Church in Cartaxo
— Photo by Érica Reis



Cartaxo Baptist Bible Church in Portugal — Photo by Érica Reis

“The ministry at the Vale de Judeus Prison began with a request from inmate Flaide Ferreira Jorge, through his wife Vânia, for him to receive spiritual guidance from a pastor.

“So, I began the process of obtaining the necessary permission from the Portuguese Public Security Secretariat. This process took three months to complete.

“After starting weekly meetings every Tuesday, lasting two hours, Flaide made his decision for Christ through the *Country Called Heaven* course.”

Flaide said, “The Word of the Lord brought peace to my heart, strength to my body, and today I know that no matter how dark the place, when you have God in your life, you are never alone and you will never feel fear.”

Adil added, “He began inviting other inmates to join the study group. Then the others began inviting others to join the group, reaching a total of 14 students enrolled today, with four more who want to join.

“Currently, since December 2024, Flaide is free, living with his wife and children and working.

“At his trial, the five certificates from Source of Light courses he had taken

were important to the judge’s verdict, as they demonstrated his good behavior and commitment to his studies.

“Due to the growth of the group, I suggested three names to be recognized within the prison, and they chose Source of Light Evangelical Baptist Church. To my delight and that of the team, the prison guards have recognized and informed the inmates that we are called the Baptist Church.”

Adil and Érica Reis have much hope for the ministry in Portugal.

“We want to promote the Source of Light school by giving a good presentation of each course in more churches in Portugal, thereby awakening people’s desire to study the Bible more. As a result, we hope that more ADSs will be formed.”

And when they do, with God’s help and in His time, we’ll have good lessons ready to help them teach all things. 🌿

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

LESSONS TO TEACH ALL THINGS

By Kimberly Thigpen

We live in a country of abundance, while others suffer in want. This is not only true about money; it is true of good Bible discipleship material for believers.

I remember a time, when I lived in Bangladesh, I met a girl from Europe. She was amazed when she heard America had entire stores full of Christian books. She couldn't imagine such a luxury.

If we want to study a certain topic in the Bible, a book is easy to find, or an internet search can bring up hundreds, if not thousands of articles, sermons, or podcasts for us to choose from.

Not so in remote places, where the internet does not exist, or places of persecution, where a search from a

seeker can mean a death sentence.

Research shows that 85% of the world's pastors have no formal Biblical training.¹

We are working to help change that number, but truly valuable material needs to be purposeful, progressing from truth to truth in a way that people who have never heard of the Bible or Christ can understand, be saved, and then grow. This takes planning and preparing and sometimes plodding through delays and discouragements.

So, after 75 years and over 100 million lessons printed, are we ready to stop?

Not until the Lord does!

This is an exciting season for literature. First, I'm happy to share that, after five long years, our new children's courses are finally ready to print! Each age group has four booklets with four lessons per booklet. Tests will be in the center of each booklet to be pulled out and mailed in for grading.

We're currently working to finalize a small eight-page children's evangelistic booklet that missionaries can give out instead of giving out hundreds of full 32-page booklets at outreaches. This will save them significant money and also not deplete their stock.

Several fields have already been translating the new Source of Light Kids courses, and, as God provides the help, these translations will be put into the design templates and made ready for use. Those of you who prayed for our needs, please don't stop. We've had two volunteers begin to help with design remotely and might have another soon in Spain.

Languages translated:

Bengali — Ages 6-8

Hindi — Ages 3-5 and 6-8 (in progress)

Portuguese — Ages 3-5 and 6-8

Spanish — Ages 9-12 and 6-8 (in progress)

Tagalog — Ages 9-12 (in progress)

One translator from South America said,

"Honestly, these lessons really filled my heart. Some of them even made me cry, because even though they are for children, they are God's Word and God's truths. I learned so much and was reminded of these truths during important moments in my life."

Our Director in Brazil said of one of his translators,

"Her mother testified that she found her in tears doing the translations, because while translating, she studied the material."

Meanwhile, other work goes on. A non-SLM group has translated *My New Life in Christ 1* into Ukrainian, something we've been asked for since the war began. Please pray we can find a Ukrainian who knows Adobe InDesign who can help us complete it. We'd hired someone in the Ukraine, but he lives in Kiev and is not able to continue due to the bombing.

Another non-SLM group has translated *Light from the Gospel of John* into Malagasy.

The Braille team here at HQ with their volunteer proofers are almost to the point of having all SLM courses available in Braille.

Bemba and Chichewa translations are ready for formatting, plus ones in Creole and Tagalog. *Who is Jesus Christ* was translated into Arabic for use in a land of persecution and danger. New Directors in Zambia and Portugal are assessing and correcting old, outdated translations. And missionaries to Spain



Bengali Version of Source of Light Kids
— Photo by Kimberly Thigpen

want to begin a European Spanish version of the Source of Light Kids courses once the South American Spanish version is completed.

There's much more to do. A course for young adults is in the ideas phase, and then it's on to our adult lessons. If we want to teach ALL THINGS, what's missing? What can we do to make our lessons better, more effective, and meet specific needs?

It's a season of bearing fruit but also planting for the future. The God who made all things and upholds all things will certainly provide for us, His own, to teach all things to those who will become His. 🌱

Endnote:

- <https://trainingleadersinternational.org/special-projects/46/training-pastors-for-the-next-generation>



Proofing Makes Perfect. At Least We Hope So!
— Photo by Kimberly Thigpen



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

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
slmin.org/donate

PRAYER

- ◆ Please pray that God will make a way for our SLM Branch in Haiti to receive their lesson materials in a timely manner so that their ministry is not hindered.
- ◆ We have lost several staff members this past year at Source of Light. We also have some staff who struggle with health issues. We have been encouraged in recent months to hear that several new families are preparing to move to Madison to minister at SLM Headquarters. Please pray that God will provide financial partners and all that is needed to help them to begin and sustain their service at Headquarters for many years.
- ◆ Our SLM Discipleship Training Branches around the world are looking to God to meet their literature needs for 2026. Please pray that God will provide all that is needed to print, ship, and distribute the literature to our students in the coming year.
- ◆ Our SLM Team in Colombia, South America has several of their staff who have health concerns. Please pray that God will strengthen their team and bring healing.
- ◆ Samuel Milanez, our SLM Director in Brazil, is working three jobs to support his family while trying to prioritize ministry. Please pray that God will provide financial partners for him so that he will not be so stretched.
- ◆ Our SLM missionary in Myanmar continues to struggle with health issues. Please pray that God will bring healing.
- ◆ God has provided a Risograph printer for the SLM Team in the D.R. Congo. They are looking forward to being able to maintain their stock locally. Please pray for the staff as they receive training for running the machine and that they will be able to maintain their lesson supply.
- ◆ Fanie Buys, SLM Director in South Africa, asks us to pray that the postal services will improve and that their online student enrollment will increase.
- ◆ Pray that God will provide additional reliable volunteers for our International Branches.
- ◆ Several of our ministries in Africa need additional monthly support. Please pray that God will raise up financial partners for their ministries who will be faithful in the years to come and partner with them in prayer for their ministries.
- ◆ Please pray that God will provide a reliable vehicle for our Source of Light Branch in Portugal so that they can deliver lessons to their Associate Discipleship Schools.
- ◆ In Togo, God has given opportunities to establish churches, but they face great challenges finding pastors, purchasing land, and constructing buildings for worship for the new congregations. Please pray that God will provide in these areas. In the orphanage ministry in Togo, they have three children who would like to go on to the university. Please pray that God will provide for these children as well.
- ◆ Please pray for Jeremie Esson, newly appointed Director in the Ivory Coast. Jeremie is gathering funds for his upcoming marriage, trying to get a house constructed, assisting Isaiah and Mansah Bernasko with their health needs, and operating as the new Branch Director of Source of Light Ivory Coast! We are very pleased with Jeremie's diligence in his new role. Pray that God will guide him and provide for him. 🙏

PRaise

◆ We praise the Lord that the postal strike in Canada is now over, making it easier for the Branch there to serve their students.

◆ Samuel Milanez, our SLM Director in Brazil, praises the Lord for how He is using their television program. They are contacted by people who share how effective the ministry has been in their lives.

◆ Miguel Sanchez, our SLM Director in Bolivia, shared that in 2025, he was able to make several mission trips to rural villages and that it was a joy to see the believers rejoice in what they were learning through the lessons. He shared that there are now 14 villages among the Guaraní people who are using the materials with about 230 students.

◆ Our missionary in the Central Zone of India praises the Lord that they were able to distribute 5,045 lessons and that 762 decisions were made for Christ in 2025.

◆ Our Source of Light missionary in the Northeast Zone in India praises the Lord that that his daughter, their only child, has joined the work and is being used of God with the children and to lead teams. They also praise the Lord for the provision for a church building and a motorcycle and that God is working in the hearts of people despite persecution and opposition.

◆ Takuji Yamazaki is praising the Lord for feeling better after experiencing multiple health issues over the past years.

◆ At the end of 2025, Source of Light Portugal shared the following exciting progress in their ministry. They have established seven Associate Discipleship Schools with more than 30 students. Fourteen of these students

were incarcerated. Two of these prisoners have completed all the courses and are now released and taking care of their families. This Branch also shared that they were able to purchase the property where their church meets and that it was organized legally. They witnessed the baptism of the first Portuguese member in their church in 2025 as well.

◆ There was a time, after some unrest in their country, when our Branch in Mozambique was restricted from going into prisons. They could only send the lessons. They are praising the Lord that they were given permission to resume their in-person ministry to the prisons in 2026.

◆ We praise God for how He has worked through the Joseph Project Orphanage that is run by Source of Light Togo. In 2008, they started with 25 orphans. They currently are ministering to 12 children. Four orphans have learned a trade and are now independent. Another is studying to be a mason, and another has just received funding for his apprenticeship as a truck driver.

◆ In the village of Malicheu, people had to travel long distances to access a church. Our SLM Branch in Zambia commissioned a volunteer to lead the mission to start a church in Malicheu. They give glory to God, because a church was planted in that area in September of 2025. They have seen the hand of God as people joined to learn God's Word and to fellowship with one another. Ten people have been baptized so far, and the membership is growing. 🌿

IN MEMORIAL

GIFTS IN MEMORY OF...

Eula Keener by
Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Banks

Gail Thatcher by
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Thatcher

Greg Miller by
Mr. and Mrs. John Cranmer

George Alexander by
Mr. and Mrs. John Cranmer

Joseph Stucky by
Mrs. Frances Busenitz

Katherine Thatcher by
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Thatcher

Lela Yarosh by
Mr. Dallas Webster

Mike Flaharty by
Mr. and Mrs. John Cranmer

Myrna Clothier by
Mr. and Mrs. John Cranmer
Dr. and Mrs. Almand Marshall

Melody Zink by
Mrs. Mary Anne Heisey
Mr. and Mrs. John Crisp
Ms. June Beeler
Mr. and Mrs. David Haas



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

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

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