



THE IRVIN FAMILY

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST: UGANDA, AFRICA

July 2022

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

-- Psalms 119:41-45

Greetings Brethren,

There is great consolation in Christ, and we sorrow not even as others who have no hope. These realities are strengthened as we approach life with affections set on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father. The more we move from living lives that are earthly-minded to lives focused on treasure in heaven, the natural outworking will be individuals who live in the Spirit. I am not suggesting I am an example, but lately, I find myself taking great pains to protect my family's earthly treasure. More importantly, I am deeply concerned with protecting my family.

The ignorant dictates of political despots have caused evil men and seducers to wax worse and worse. The lewd fellows of the baser sort feel justified in their perversities, often citing Putin's inflation as their motive (this utterance is also being used in Uganda). As daily life becomes more expensive and those who live in deep poverty plunge further therein, security becomes an elevated issue. While I presume myself to be amongst the crowd whose affections are on things above, recent events have me greatly concerned (but not shaken) about our treasure here on earth.

In the past two months, brother Gross and I have been called by two different missionaries, who were temporarily away from their homes, for help. Both missionaries had been robbed, one of them is a direct neighbor, and they were robbed twice in July alone. Gross and I went to their homes to try and help assess the damage and to sure up their vulnerable homesteads until they could return. While objectively worse things could happen, one cannot help but feel deeply uneasy when homes are molested in this way. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord; and do our best to greatly increase security. We have already taken some measures; others will be required to fortify our home; these will be implemented as we can. Please pray we accomplish these urgent tasks before the thief breaks through to steal.

Now the positive; as people who depend on consolation in Christ, we are reminded of this solace while we continue to serve the Lord. Despite the troubles of this world, Christ is continually concerned about his own. With that in mind, I am excited about the progress we have made with Bible translation. Though we have had humble beginnings, Genesis Chapters 1-3 have completed rough drafts after our first week of translation work. Genesis 1 has a completed second draft and is ready for the next level of constructive scrutiny. Our process for review somewhat resembles the process used by the King James Translators. The more I study their work, the more I am dumbfounded that so few modern translators rely upon their methods.

Part of our process is this: First, brothers Gross and Michael prepare two individual rough drafts of a chapter in question. They then come together and compare their respective work, making changes for clarity and uniformity to the King James Bible as needed. When this is complete, they will have a unified copy, and that copy will be passed on to national Pastors, Pastor Paul and Pastor Ssebanja. These men will review for consistency and readability; if they find issues, they will explain their findings in writing for Gross and Michael to check. If they find merit in the explanation, they will make changes accordingly; if not - the draft will remain the same. Then the draft will go to missionaries Keith Stensaas and Marlin Peterson. Again, if they find issues, they will put their findings in writing for the original translators to review. Once these levels of review are complete, we will send the draft to a sister church in Kampala for them to read. Their feedback will be critical in ensuring we do not exist in a self-congratulatory bubble. If they can read and understand it, we will have our final copy of God's word in Luganda.

To see the progress thus far is motivating. In its current form, we have a rough draft that reads like the King James Bible but with Luganda words. We have faced many difficult word choices already, but we have taken care to use the most appropriate in the Luganda language. Please pray for the men involved in this endeavor. I fail to see any task as necessary than ensuring the people we minister to have an accurate copy of God's word. With the Lord's help and your prayer, we will see this task through to the end. We have been fortunate to have an outlet whereby we can safely ship materials and equipment to Uganda. Of course, the shipping costs are high, but somehow, for specific equipment, it is cheaper to send it from America than to buy it in country. For example, we needed two new laptops for the translation work, the current laptops will not suffice. I ordered two others from the US, and they are now on their way to Uganda. We still need some equipment, certain of which must come from the US, and others may be sourced from Uganda. Thank you for praying.



One staple form of ministry in the word of God is that of public ministry. In fact, it is one of the most consistent realities in the New Testament. The Lord and his apostles preached the gospel in the open air to the masses. The gospel was rarely preached in a formal assembly of the saints; the gospel was taken to the streets and the markets. We have established public ministry here at Masaka Independent Baptist Church. Many church members have fallen in love with this form of ministry. I have found it to be one of the most self-empowering activities to participate in; the brethren standing together with Jesus Christ against the world's godless multitudes. It provides great excitement in the Christian life. Therefore, with the Lord's help, we will take the street preaching ministry on the road.

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The idea for the ministry came in two parts, I have had this desire for some time, but I had not put much thought into the timing. Early in July, Pastor Paul, the pastor of Masaka Independent Baptist Church, asked me if I would be willing to travel to Matete with a group from our town church to preach the gospel and distribute tracts. I was excited to participate; on the second Saturday of July, a group of us left early in the morning for Matete. The church at Matete is a relatively new church plant; Pastor Bonnie descends from Mbirizi, where Ssebanja Henry is the Pastor. Pastor Ssebanja grew up in the ministry of missionary Keith Stensaa; I believe they worked together to start the church in Mbirizi. In terms of reproducing like-minded churches, Pastor Ssebanja is a great example. He has a wonderful spirit, and his fidelity is daily to the Lord's work.

Pastor Ssebanja arranged the street preaching endeavor in Matete. They set up speakers in the middle of town, and I was honored as the guest preacher. A translator and I preached for five hours and forty-five minutes. An entire town was my congregation; it was one of the most exciting events of my Christian life. Others of our group, along with a group from Pastor Ssebanja's church, went to the markets and preached the gospel in the open air. We distributed thousands of tracts and engaged in numerous one-on-one conversations. By the day's end, around nineteen people made professions of faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord gave us good success, and this day of labor gave the new church plant in Matete a goodly boost.

With this in mind, I am resolved to take our street preaching on the road. I plan to take two young men with me; we will spend two days in the village; in the beginning, we will emphasize the younger churches and new church plants. Once they have been covered, we will expand to the longer-standing churches. The agenda will be to spend the first day in fellowship and Bible teaching. The second day will be spent duplicating the day we spent in Matete. Preaching to the town en masse as well as localized street preaching and tract distribution. I will need some time to get this ministry up and going. To run things effectively, I will need to purchase certain equipment (specific camping equipment, a second vehicle for traveling deep in the villages, and an increase in our tract printing). Please pray for us as we get this ministry up and running. These men get so excited when someone comes and shows them how to do what they love: serve Jesus Christ.

But, that is not the only new ministry on my mind. We will also begin preparations for another vital ministry. While I learned all I know about street preaching from my home church (The Bible Baptist Church of Deland), the motivation for this next ministry came from Cornerstone Baptist Church in Carthage, Tennessee. For some time now, Cornerstone has had a Pastor's School to teach and encourage the men who attend. Pastor Ron Ralph not only uses this as an opportunity to help men in the ministry, but Cornerstone Baptist Church goes out of its way to be a tremendous blessing to the men who attend. We will reproduce this ministry here in Uganda. Brother Keith has started a goodly number of churches, and over time he has also come to work with several others also. A significant part of his ministry is spent in the towns and villages where these men live, teaching and training them. Between the Street Preaching Ministry and the Pastor's School, I hope to complement his work. Please pray for us as we work together to implement these ideas.

One last ministry-related note: A carnival came through Masaka in the first week of July and blessed us with its noisy presence. I am not sure if this is an African-type phenomenon or if it is exclusive to Uganda, but the people have no concern whatsoever for respecting their neighbors. Often cargo trucks will drive through town loaded with eight to ten of the largest speakers one has ever seen. They blast music and commercial-style announcements, the bass in these speakers will nearly cause one's heart to go into Atrial Defibrillation. The carnival had speakers that put the norm to shame; their thumping could be heard from around 9 am until 4 am the next morning. Of course, this is a frustrating reality we have come to terms with living in Uganda; it's just how it is here. But, a group of Bible School students, under the encouragement of brother Keith, saw this as an opportunity. They went into the carnival and distributed tracts to hundreds of people, and a few made professions of faith in Jesus Christ.

With all we accomplished in July, more than thirty people made professions of faith in Jesus Christ. Our churches are encouraged, the brethren are excited, and the word of God is faithfully going out to the lost. On a final note, my family continues to do well. After many requests, we got family photos made in Kampala. They will be attached to the email distribution for anyone who needs updated photos. Kristin is doing well; she was specially created by God to be a mother; she does a tremendous job with our children. Bethany will soon be two years old, but mentally she will soon be about twenty-five years old. Adrian continues to grow fast; his personality shines through more each day. Thus far, he appears to be moving in the direction of a gentle giant, but time will tell. Thank you so much for reading this letter; please continue to pray for the ministry here in Uganda, Africa.



God bless,

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