



THE IRVIN FAMILY

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST: UGANDA, AFRICA

February 2023

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.
Acts 26:22-23

Brethren, we salute you in the name of the Lord Jesus:

The Apostle Paul ceased not to witness as he progressed in life and travels. As a Christian, it was fundamental to his being. "Help from God" was the source of his witnessing to both small and great. Witnessing and help from God was fundamental to the lives of those who were the subjects of the biblical record. While I believe it would do us well to make this a matter of personal discipline, I would be remiss to suggest it could be accomplished without help from God. We are both personally responsible, and we have also been given that divine source of support Acts 1:8 so vital to Christian function. Therefore, life as a Christian who follows Paul as he follows Christ is rooted in dependence on the Holy Spirit and witnessing for Christ.

This idea motivates much of what we hope to accomplish as missionaries. Two foundational requirements are to witness and to raise men and women who will follow us as we follow Christ. But this cannot be accomplished without help from God. The Lord helped us immensely in February! We began a new semester of Bible School at Masaka Baptist College early in the month. Brother Keith Stensaas has given me the honor to teach verse-by-verse through the book of Daniel. First, what an incredible book. Not only for its great prophetic insight but also for the character of these men who faced great political adversity and stood steadfast in their faith. The character and faithfulness of Daniel are unbelievably convicting biblical realities. Second, the prophetic visions and dreams provide great depths of biblical exploration that lead to monumental understandings. We began the first class with a detailed look at Judah's history leading up to their captivity in Babylon. The Bible School students and myself are significantly challenged by this great book at every turn.

The Lord's help is not limited to our learning and admonition but immensely helped this month with our many witnessing endeavors. Beginning with Lusana, our Village Public Ministry had great success. Two days of Public Ministry and door-knocking led to ten professions of faith in Jesus Christ. Most of our witnessing took place in the several Trading Centers around Lusana. Trading Centers emerge over time as large numbers of people open needful markets or stores, and large numbers of people begin to visit the area consistently. These Trading Centers are essential for the local villages to access needful (and sometimes unneeded) merchandise. The Trading Centers are often located on main roads with many cars or motorcycles passing through. Lusana is off the beaten path; driving there is a rarity. The only way in requires a vehicle to climb a large hill over a footpath to the church. The Sunday following our witnessing, four people made the trip up the hill, likely on foot, to Lusana Baptist Church for services with God's people. This was a blessed time in beautiful countryside with needy people.



In February, more than a few Muslims made professions of faith in Christ. Our town church faithfully continues its public ministry and door-knocking in Masaka. Multiple Muslims this month made professions of faith; one lady asked us to please be careful contacting her and discipling her because she doesn't want her husband to know. He is a Muslim, and his response may be less than kind. In any case, these ex-Muslims will face great difficulty if they proceed steadfastly in their profession of faith in Christ Jesus. Please pray that they decide to follow Jesus with grace and safety. This month was blessedly fruitful. In one week, we had twelve professions of faith; the men and women who labor faithfully with us were rejoicing at such an increase.

Another unique development was the abnormal number of professions of faith at our Public Ministry in Masaka. Public Ministry is a foundational biblical principle, but in the modern era, it often effectively serves as a form of plowing, sowing, and watering. I have witnessed publicly for the Lord in the United States, Egypt, Uganda, Dubai, and Afghanistan. As a form of ministry, it is overwhelmingly focused on large-scale sowing and rarely produces immediate fruit. Though at times it certainly does, the Lord occasionally gives us the blessing of immediate increase. In February, the Lord blessed us with a sudden increase multiple times in Masaka Town. This tremendously encourages the men and women who so faithfully attend these ministries.

I enjoy few things in life more than teaching God's word. I was again blessed this month with an opportunity to preach for Masaka Independent Baptist Church. My topic was again another aspect of Standing Vs. State. This time we dealt with the biblical realities related to gifts given to us the moment we are saved versus the rewards the Lord encourages us to go after throughout our Christian life. When we understand the responsibilities God placed upon himself versus the responsibilities God placed upon the saved man, we can effectively focus our attention where it is needed.

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The Men's Sunday School class continues to develop well. We continue to make our way chapter by chapter through the book of Matthew. When Matthew is complete, we will follow directly into the book of Mark until the Four Gospels have been expounded unto God's people. The young men assisting me with the teaching are doing an excellent job. They study and prepare each week faithfully. Teaching in this capacity is a growing opportunity for these men.

Among the Sunday School teachers is brother Gross. I recently wrote a prayer letter concerning his biblical desire to honor his mother. I asked if any were interested in assisting with building a house to meet his mother's needs for a home and safety. Brother Gross dedicated himself to this task without fail, even placing other significant decisions on hold until his mother was secure. Many of you responded with financial help; I hope you know what an encouragement this is to a young man like brother Gross. He has a great spirit and a tender heart. The work on the house is progressing well; he is learning the brutal realities of building a home in an inflationary period; prices are only good for the hour, not even for the day. But the house is being built and will be finished as he can. I can not thank you enough for helping him the way you have!

Brother Gross is also heavily involved in the Luganda Bible Translation Project. He is one of the main translators and doing an excellent job. He is well into the book of Joshua. The first level of review for the book of Genesis is nearly complete. About half of Genesis has been through the second level of review. And the first seventeen chapters have been through the third level of review. Please pray the Lord will send more faithful men to finish this work.



As I close this letter, thank you for praying for us these past two years. February is the two-year mark for us; it has been a blessing. So much has happened in two years; it seems like we have been here for ten years already. In two years, we have established ministries, had hundreds of professions of faith, had several disciples, taught Bible School classes, taught mothers to have biblical homes, taught Sunday school classes, preached on the streets, in homes, in businesses, in Masaka, in the villages, taught TBI's, been sick, been healed, been hurt, been healed, gave birth to our son, and so on. Much of what we have accomplished, with the Lord's help, came so easy because the Stensaas family first laid the foundation, and then they greatly helped us along the way. Serving the Lord with our lives is mortal men's greatest work. And somehow, I get to be part of it all! Praise the Lord, and thank you for your prayer and support.

Thomas, Kristin, Bethany & Adrian Irvin
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