

THE IRVIN FAMILY

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST: UGANDA, AFRICA



July 2023

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions: That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Daniel 2:17-18

The Lord's blessings are tremendous; as of July 31, we have covered ten chapters of the book of Daniel at Masaka Baptist College. Reading about Daniel's character, excellence, prayer life, fasting, and faithfulness to God amid intense pressure is instructive. I have gained from studying and teaching this book; I pray others have the same wonderful experience. Fellowship with Daniel is exciting, convicting, and edifying. The book inevitably frames the reader's mindset regarding prayer. Daniel's commitment to prayer and fasting are outstanding characteristics of the book, only rivaled by God's repeated helpful intervention on Daniel's behalf. Of course, the book lays out great prophetic detail and timelines, but Daniel's prayer life is the need of the hour.

The Lord himself corroborates certain prophetic details of Daniel in the Book of Matthew. We have taught through Matthew in the men's Sunday School for two years. I began with introductory material regarding the Four Gospels and started verse-by-verse through Matthew. After about one year, I involved certain faithful young men in the Sunday School teaching. As they learned to study, develop outlines, and articulate the word of God to their brethren, I slowly stepped back more and more. We moved to a Chapter-by-Chapter approach, which the Church will continue until the entire Bible is covered repeatedly over the years. Praise the Lord; I turned this ministry over a few months back to Brother Quinto's leadership; Sunday School is now led and taught by competent Ugandan men. They no longer need my presence or assistance. In July, they finished the Book of Matthew and moved into the Book of Mark. They're teaching with depth and conviction. Due to this experience, Pastor Paul has at least five men he can call upon to fill the pulpit anytime with depth and conviction.

Many of these same men are intimately involved in the street preaching ministry. The Lord helped me, and Pastor Paul allowed me to establish Public Ministry on behalf of Masaka Independent Baptist Church. It began with a small group of believers willing to give the idea a chance and quickly evolved into an established church ministry. The men in Bible School have proven themselves zealous to preach the gospel. Throughout the week, they study salvation-related verses and prepare notes on what to say to the masses each Friday. Others come to hold signs or distribute tracts and John/Romans. Around one thousand tracts and three hundred John/Romans go out to the lost each week. The young men involved in this ministry have again made it their own; they no longer have any need for me. Ugandans lead this ministry and preach the gospel with great zeal.

Continuing with evangelism, Pastor Paul also allowed me to reorganize the Church door-knocking ministry. We began by creating maps of the local area within walking distance for our church members. This proved to cover large areas of homes and businesses. The people who attended this ministry were organized into two groups and each given a map to cover. Sunday evenings, each group goes out to their respective area and preaches the gospel door-to-door on a personal level. Initially, the church members involved were dependent upon me for assistance. They knew the basics of soul-winning but needed help to answer many of the objections or questions they encountered. Over time, they became more emboldened and less dependent. Until nearly three years later, they, again, do not need me at all. I am confident we have a hand full of Christians here who could be dropped anywhere in the world, and they would preach the gospel to anyone as long as they could communicate. The street preaching and door-knocking ministries have become Brother Gross's special love. He keeps stats of his monthly adventures; he knows how many were receptive, how many rejected the gospel, how many were saved, and how many people continued after making a profession of faith. He is now running the door-knocking ministry and doing unbelievably well.

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Three of these young soul winners (Rutabgysha Gross, Waibi Robert, and Nyanzi Davito) go with me monthly to teach the village churches how to preach publicly and to organize a door-to-door evangelistic ministry. The men that travel with me teach others what they do at their home church. This has been a fruitful ministry; each visit to each village church produces several contacts and salvations for that village church to follow up with. We announce to the area that a Bible Believing Church exists, and the word of God goes out in an intensely concentrated manner. We went to Matete in July, and the Lord saved twelve souls. An innumerable company heard the gospel, and the reception was wonderful. We are in the process of turning this ministry over to Ugandan leadership.

Speaking of salvation, Africa is capable of facilitating exciting ministries. Uganda is no exception to what seems to be an unwritten rule. On average, ministry-wide, we have seen between three hundred to five hundred professions of faith per year. This is undoubtedly the result of God's people's continuous efforts to preach the gospel in public, homes, businesses, and villages. I again feel the need to temper these numbers with the unfortunate reality that only a fraction of those professions follow up with us in any meaningful way. But some do show up and settle well to their Local Independent Baptist Church.

My wife's class on biblical motherhood has been a tremendous tool to build up the ladies in our Church who are interested in God's expectations of motherhood and marriage. My wife prepares lessons particular to the needs of mothers and teaches them to teach their children and love their husbands intimately. My wife does an incredible job in our home. Her love and concern for our children and myself are exceedingly wonderful. She so enriches our lives I fail to grasp the proper level of articulation to explain fully. I am so thankful to the Lord for my wonderful family. My wife is now working to turn her notes for these classes into a booklet that interested ladies can circulate and reference.

Finally, the Luganda Bible Translation continues strong. The Buganda people need God's word. The Lord helped us to put together a team of men who have strong character, love the word of God, and understand the problem we are attempting to solve. The people to whom we minister need the word of God in their language, and we need to present them, to the best of our ability, an accurate copy of God's word. We have good men and a robust process to accomplish this needful task. Please pray for Brother Gross, Brother Walugembe, Pastor Paul, Pastor Ssebanja, Missionary Keith Stensaas, and Missionary Marlin Peterson. These men have trusted me to put together a plan that honors the word of God and produces a readable copy of God's word in the Luganda Language. In the end, I pray we can reproduce our method around the world.

My purpose in the preceding news leads me to a special announcement. The Lord helped us accomplish much in Uganda in a short time. Of course, we preface our path to success with a strong foundation. I have greatly benefited from the fellowship, friendship, and example of missionary Keith Stensaas. Due to his long-term presence here, we were able to come in and help Masaka Independent Baptist Church in some needful areas. When we came to Uganda, my Pastor asked me to work with Brother Keith for one year and then move on from there to establish our ministry. It has become clear that Masaka Independent Baptist Church is doing well, with ministries we established under national leadership, and the time has come for us to determine what the Lord would have us do next.

I have relentlessly prayed and fasted over this idea over the past few months, seeking direction from the Lord. We prayed about a few possible locations, and after a few visits to Rwanda, my wife and I were confident the Lord was leading us back to the United States. I struggled with this idea, which led me to pray all the more, and I began researching the need back in the US. Our country is in a sad state and destitute of God's word. Using the BSALT.org website, I gathered a snapshot of each state's condition. If you are familiar with this website, you will know its numbers are not absolute and have some margin of error. But it will provide a good overview of Independent Baptist Church's concentration, or the lack thereof, by county across America. Based on the states in the Southeast, here are some alarming numbers:

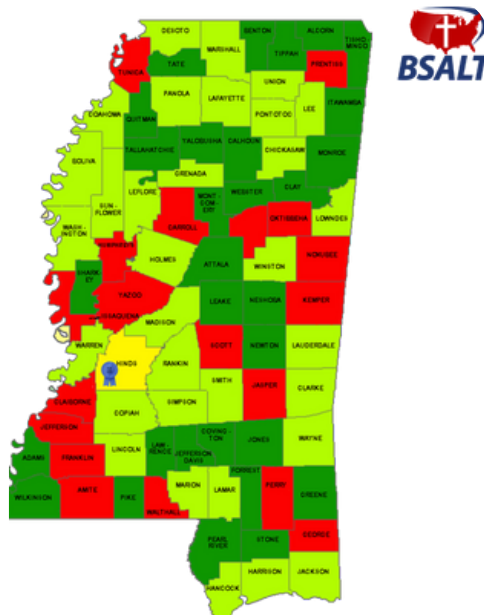
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1. Florida: **83.5%** of counties have no Church or an insufficient number of Churches.
 - a. BSALT Numbers: **1,854** Churches are needed overall; **505** currently exist.
 - b. **9** Counties have **0** Bible Believing Churches.
2. Georgia: **75.4%** of counties have no Church or an insufficient number of Churches.
 - a. BSALT Numbers: **983** Churches are needed overall; **422** currently exist.
 - b. **48** Counties have no Bible Believing Churches.
3. Alabama: **67.1%** of counties have no Churches or an insufficient number of Churches.
 - a. BSALT Numbers: **471** Churches are needed overall; **301** Churches exist.
 - b. **13** Counties have **0** Bible Believing Churches.
4. Mississippi: **62.2%** of counties have no Church or an insufficient number of Churches.
 - a. BSALT Numbers: **295** Churches are needed overall; **180** currently exist.
 - b. **19** counties in Mississippi have **0** Bible Believing Churches.
5. Tennessee: **57.8%** of counties have no Church or an insufficient number of Churches.
 - a. BSALT Numbers: **630** Churches are needed overall; **434** currently exist.
 - b. **16** Counties currently have **0** Bible Believing Churches.
6. Kentucky: **75.8%** of counties have no Churches or an insufficient number of Churches.
 - a. BSALT Numbers: **431** Churches are needed overall; **187** currently exist.
 - b. **46** Counties currently have **0** Bible Believing Churches.
7. Virginia: **50%** of counties have no Churches or an insufficient number of Churches.
 - a. BSALT Numbers: **788** Churches are needed overall; **323** currently exist.
 - b. **32** Counties currently have **0** Bible Believing Churches.
8. North Carolina: **69%** of counties have no Churches or an insufficient number of Churches.
 - a. BSALT Numbers: **938** Churches are needed overall; **581** currently exist.
 - b. **17** Counties currently have **0** Bible Believing Churches.
9. South Carolina: **91.3%** of counties have no Churches or an insufficient number of Churches.
 - a. BSALT Numbers: **456** Churches are needed overall; **246** Currently exist.
 - b. **10** Counties currently have **0** Bible Believing Churches.



The need for Independent Fundamental Baptist Churches - By County
Need based on each Church sharing the Gospel with 10,000 people per year
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Approaching this situation from this purview grieves our hearts and inspires us anew. Eventually, the Lord helped us come into contact with Go Forth Baptist Church in Lucedale, Mississippi. Lucedale is situated in George County, a needy County according to the BSALT Map. The Church has been through some struggles over the past few years; like many Churches, Covid wreaked havoc on their situation. Six people remain at the Church and have been fighting to keep the Church open and alive. I conversed with them for over a month, and they asked if I would come and be their Pastor. My wife and I prayed and fasted over this decision for two weeks, and we Thank the Lord for answering our prayer!

We are currently preparing the translation work to continue, with my participation from the US. We will see this invaluable work through to the end. When the translation is complete, my goal is to return to Uganda, Lord willing, with 2 million to 5 million Accurate Luganda Bibles for distribution. Of those, I plan to leave large numbers of Bibles with Missionaries in Uganda's Buganda Regions (Luganda Speakers). I pray the Lord allows us to continue financially supporting this ministry; if you are interested in helping, please let me know.

Apart from that, we are not asking you, our supporters, to continue our support after our departure from Uganda. Go Forth Baptist Church is not able to support us at this time. Therefore, I expect to work full-time to support my family, the Church, and the Luganda Bible Translation. Our departure from Uganda is set for November 6, 2023. The task at hand is daunting, but thus far, the Lord has blessed and encouraged every step of the way. We are confident this is what the Lord would have us do, and we would greatly appreciate your continued prayer. I will call all of our supporting Pastors to speak with them personally. In the meantime, if you have any questions and would like to call or email me, please do so.

God bless you,

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Ambassadors for Christ | Uganda, Africa