



THE IRVIN FAMILY

Ambassadors For Christ | Lucedale, Mississippi



PRAYER LETTER | MAY-JULY 2024

I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 17:14

Our time here at Go Forth Baptist Church has been productive and busy. The Lord has blessed us in many ways, and I am excited to share those blessings with you. I begin with an update regarding the ministry in Uganda. Soon after my family arrived in Uganda, Brother Gross and Brother Waibi, and I planned to start a street preaching ministry in Masaka. But we were under a severe lockdown that caused us to be hesitant about getting started. The lockdown was brutal, and the police response could be volatile. This lockdown was long-term; my family (Kristin and Bethany at the time) did not leave our home for eight or nine months. Eventually, we decided to test the waters anyway and see how things would go. The three of us decided to go alone. We picked a prominent corner near the market in Masaka, and with its elevated position, we could preach to the multitudes. We heard nothing from the police; from that day forward, our public ministry was alive and well.

From that corner, we gave out around fifty-two thousand tracts per year. In June, Brother Gross informed me that not only has it continued strong, but they are now preaching weekly at three different street corners in Masaka, Uganda. This growth is a testament to the dedication and faith of our members. The blessing in this comes in understanding the personnel needed and the participation required by God's people to cover three different corners in Masaka. This is evidence that the Church continues to grow and that the people there are interested in serving the Lord together.

The translation work continues steadfastly in Uganda. The third level review of Genesis is complete, and the final review will begin, Lord willing, on Monday, July 8th. This final review requires all translators to discuss the choices made and make hard decisions about the final copy. This last revision will produce the book of Genesis in Luganda. This is a significant milestone and a cause for great excitement. The translators expect that by the end of 2024, they will work exclusively on edits and revisions. Brother Gross has completed his translation of the entire Bible, and Brother Walugembe is moving fast on. Please pray for the brethren in Uganda, the Lord is doing a great work there, and we are excited to see it through.

In Mississippi, we have focused tremendously on God's word. We just finished a three-month course on the contests between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God. Lord willing, these Monday night Bible studies will be the precursor to a future Bible School. We had significant participation, though it did slim down toward the end. Thus far, since November, we have preached more than sixty sermons from Romans chapters one and two, around thirty-one sermons covering fundamental Bible doctrine; by the time you read this, we will have finished the entire book of Matthew, the three-month course on the Kingdoms, and several sermons on the Lord's supper. Starting in early July, we will begin preaching through the book of Ruth on Sunday evenings. As for the Monday night classes, we will take a three-month break, and starting on the first Monday of October, we will begin a three-month course of study on the Lamb of God in Scripture.

I included stats about Mississippi's spiritual condition when I announced our move from Uganda to Lucedale. BSALT estimates that a Church needs to reach out to about ten thousand people on average per year to build a healthy congregation. With the help of Victory Baptist Press, our Church was able to mail the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to every residential home in all of George County, Mississippi. This means that every home in our county (more than twelve thousand homes) has heard from us at least once in our first eight months. On top of these mailers, I designed a tract and a Church invitation that we pass out weekly during public ministry. We take them to events and sometimes pass out hundreds of them. Furthermore, numerous people each week see the scripture signs we hold up that declare "Jesus Saves Sinners." Please pray that we see great fruit from these labors in our town.



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I want to introduce you to a great opportunity. Go Forth Baptist Church will partner with Pilgrim Baptist Church (Cookeville, Tennessee) to hold a family camp. The primary purpose of this camp is to allow servants of the Lord Jesus Christ to step away for a few days and deeply invest in their families. This is a needful venture in which I am excited to take part. It is open to Bible Believing Pastors, Missionaries, and families interested in getting away in a camp-like atmosphere and spending intensely focused time with their families. There will be preaching and other useful activities, but the primary purpose is for you to get alone with your family. I will speak for myself in this matter; I work full-time, pastor full-time, preach six sermons per week, do public ministry, and try to invest in the lives of my Church-members. I sometimes work in the same house as my family, but sometimes I only see them when passing by from one task to the other. I do spend focused time with my family, but by necessity, it is on a limited basis. We have family altar together each night, and we go out and participate in Church and public ministry together, but I greatly desire this time when we can take a moment to breathe and spend time together.

Our Churches will be giving to provide for this camp, hoping to reduce the costs for families who desire to attend. We will be staying in a cabin-style campground in Middle Tennessee, and the idea is for everyone to be reasonably comfortable. We don't want this to become a rugged camp experience that steals away our focus on our families. Lord willing, we desire this to become a yearly event in which we minister to families who recognize the need to separate themselves from this world and refocus on the people they love the most. If you are interested in attending or helping with this endeavor, please let Pastor Jimmy Fortunado or me know. There will be a link below to a website with all the needed information.

<https://pilgrimbaptist.church/family-camp/>

In December, Pastor Chris MacDonald and I will travel to Honduras to visit missionary Don Hilbun. Brother Don started Go Forth Baptist Church and soon after followed the Lord to Honduras to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. He has a Church planting ministry and a Children's Home. Our visit will be a tremendous honor and a great opportunity to teach young men the Bible. Please pray for us as we make our way to the mountains of Honduras.

Another significant matter of prayer is a ministry that will begin this fall. Coming up in the Bible Baptist Church in Deland, Florida, we had the privilege to participate in an incredible ministry. Bible Baptist Church took on a gospel preaching project called Operation Samaria, which they preached in every city in Florida. It took a few years to complete, but by the project's end, every Florida town had a public witness for Christ. Brother Brant Zeller of Banners Unfurled has decided to duplicate that ministry here in Mississippi. With "Mission Mississippi," we will preach the gospel in the top 170 cities in Mississippi by population. We will take this on each fall until it is complete. We will use the Fall because I have no free time to take this on during the grass-cutting season. When the grass slows down, I will trade that time for public ministry in the various towns of Mississippi.

Another project I have taken on is going house-to-house. If you think of us each Thursday at 6 p.m., please pray for us. We will go house to house, engaging people and hanging door hangers with a Church invitation and a gospel tract. Typically, it is me by myself, or when we are in a neighborhood, we make it a family event. After all the walking in the heat, I take my family to get ice cream. It is a wonderful time with my wife and children.

I have an exciting update from Uganda. Genesis is complete! We have a completed and accurate copy of the book of Genesis in the Luganda language. Furthermore, Exodus through Joshua are all finished with level 2 review. This is all excellent news and reveals a group of translators diligently laboring in the word of God! Please continue to pray for them as they complete this incredible work.

Finally, please pray for my family and me. My schedule is packed, and I have no time to be down. I work and Pastor full-time. We have four sermons each week, six weekly for three months on and three months off, door to door on Thursdays, public ministry downtown on Friday, Second Saturday part of the year, I cut the grass at home and the Church each Saturday, and now Mission Mississippi. More importantly, we will have our third child born any day now in August. None of this is written to boast or to complain, but it is a genuine request for prayer. My family and I love what we do, and we hope to serve the Lord in this capacity as long as we are physically able. I have no time whatsoever to be down due to sickness or for any other reason. It is important to us that these responsibilities are met until the Church grows and we have more helping hands. We are so thankful for your prayers, support, and concern! Your servants in Lucedale, Mississippi.

God bless,

Thomas & Kristin, Bethany, Adrian, and Shiloh Irvin
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