



Northern Light:

Gospel Missions in Iceland

Dale & Linnea Kellar

Reaching
& Teaching

Who We Are

Dale and Linnea both grew up in the metro Detroit area. They were both raised in Christian homes and came to faith through the witness of their parents. While in high school, Dale felt a strong desire towards pastoral ministry; Linnea grew up with a passion for global ministry and seeing the lost won to Christ. God united both of these passions upon their meeting and overseas missions became a long-term goal for their family. The Kellars got married in July 2017 and have been blessed with three wonderful children: Cedar, Zion and Avonlea. Dale completed his B.S. in Intercultural Ministry at Cornerstone University (Grand Rapids, MI) and received his M.T.S. in Pastoral Theology from Reformed Baptist Seminary (Taylors, SC). Linnea also pursued studies in Systematic Theology at Reformed Baptist Seminary (Taylors, SC). Dale completed a Ministry Internship at Cornerstone Baptist Church (Roseville, MI) and served on staff as the Associate Pastor at Eastport Baptist Church (Eastport, MI). They are currently active members at Five Points Community Church (Auburn Hills, MI) where they are leaders in both the Youth and Children's Ministry.





Our Values

The Gospel

We believe that it is only through the gospel of Jesus Christ —his life, death, burial and resurrection on behalf of sinners— that man can know God, glorify him and enjoy him forever.

The Local Church

We believe that it is through the ministry of healthy local churches that the Lord works in the world for gospel growth.

Faithful Partnership

We believe that where the Lord has raised up faithful gospel ministers, we should seek to aid and walk side by side with them. In Iceland, that means partnering with established local churches, associations and ministries for the sake of the gospel.

Our Journey

The Kellars were prayerfully seeking God's next steps for Dale's vocational ministry when, in March 2020, the world seemed to come to a standstill. Churches closed for several months and, through a series of incredible events, God continued to bring the nation of Iceland to the forefront of their minds and hearts. After much prayer, research and networking with faithful gospel workers in Iceland, they knew the Lord was calling them to the north. God was directing the Kellars towards joining Reaching & Teaching International Ministries, a missions agency focused on making mature disciples, establishing healthy churches and training local leaders. At the same time, the Kellars met with the leadership of Loftstofan Baptistakirkja, the founding congregation of a church planting network called *The Iceland Project*. Located in the greater Reykjavík area, Loftstofan is a beacon of hope in a nation that is strongly opposed to biblical Christianity. They will be joining the church upon arrival in Iceland while they continue to receive ministerial training and cultural acclimation. They will also be studying at the University of Iceland pursuing certification in Icelandic as a second language. The long-term vision of The Iceland Project is to see a network of biblically-minded churches planted throughout the nation, and the Kellars are overjoyed to be called to be a part of that mission.







Iceland: Quick Stats

Population: 375,000

Area: 39,000 mi.²

Language: Icelandic (primary), English (secondary)

Settlement: 874 AD

Religious Landscape:

Evangelical Christian: 0.03%

Icelandic Lutheran Church (secular state church): 63%

Non-religious/Unaffiliated: 23%

Independent Lutheran Churches: 5%

Roman Catholic Church: 4%

Norse Paganism: 2%

Other: 3%

The Gospel Need

Iceland: it's not the end of the world, but you can just about see it from there! This sparsely populated nation sits alone in the middle of the north Atlantic Ocean. The rugged landscape features active volcanos, immense glaciers, black sand beaches and barren highlands. Living on the Arctic Circle, Iceland experiences 24 hours of sunlight at the height of summer and around 3 hours of sunlight at midwinter. Unsurprisingly, the Icelandic people are equally rugged, tough and determined. It's no wonder that, in a land of such extremes, the Icelanders have developed a way of life that demonstrates their ability to survive and thrive in any circumstance. In fact, the unofficial slogan of the Icelanders is, "Þetta Reddast," which loosely translates to, "Everything will work out in the end!"

Originally settled by pagan Vikings, Catholicism arrived in Iceland around the year 1000 AD. Catholicism was eventually replaced by Lutheranism during the Reformation and to this day, 63% of the population are registered members of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland. The state-sponsored church is largely controlled and funded by the government. Unfortunately, the national church has become extremely liberal and is now essentially a secular organization. For example, the children's Easter program put out by the state church in 2020 prominently featured a "transgender Jesus." A coalition of Icelandic bishops recently released a statement arguing that those who promote pro-life causes are clearly under the influence of a cultic mindset. Most Icelanders are still baptized as infants, but many will never step foot inside another church meeting at any point in their lives. The lack of belief was demonstrated in a recent national survey which found that, of those polled aged 30 and under, exactly 0.0% claimed to believe in a creator God. Even the clergy in these churches do not need to hold specific doctrinal beliefs and many are self-professed atheists. Historic church buildings can be found all throughout the nation, but most of them stand as empty shells of a bygone era.

In actuality, about 0.03% of the population consider themselves to be Bible-believing Christians, which in Iceland's population adds up to around 200 people. Therefore, Iceland is the least evangelized nation in Europe.

The progressive Icelandic culture regularly rejects and clashes with the historic Christian faith and practice. Most Icelanders, even those still registered as members of the state

The Gospel Need, cont.

church, do not claim any sort of religious identity. A majority would say they are either atheistic or simply uninterested in anything religious or spiritual. When asked about their views on life's biggest questions, many Icelanders would reply with a hearty, "Þetta Reddast!" and move onto a different subject. The Icelanders are also typically content with their situation in life as the government is able to provide for them in various ways.

This is the challenge of gospel ministry in Iceland: How do you share the gospel in a culture of spiritual apathy and with people who do not see any need for a Savior?

As followers of Christ, we know that Jesus is the only solution to our enslavement to sin and our separation from God. It is our identity in being united with Christ through his death, burial and resurrection that gives our lives true, deep and lasting meaning and purpose. Individuals who are not following Christ must find their identities in worldly things: relationships, success, pleasure, etc. When someone builds their life upon these fragile foundations, they are always at risk of losing it all and seeing their world collapse around them. The only true and lasting foundation is found in the gospel message of freedom and reconciliation. That is the good news revealed in God's Word, proclaimed by his people and sent out to a dark and needy world.

In light of this, we have confidence that God has not abandoned Iceland! The Lord is evidently working amidst this physically and spiritually dark nation of the north. Through a few small, faithful local churches, God is using his people to spread the gospel throughout the nation with the goal of seeing new churches planted and new souls won to Christ. It is our desire to join our Icelandic brothers and sisters in gospel ministry and outreach. Though we know the work will be slow, painful and arduous, seeing Icelanders captivated and reborn through God's grace will be worth it all.

“Ljósið skín í myrkrinu og myrkrið tók ekki á móti því.”

Jóhannesarguðspjall 1.5

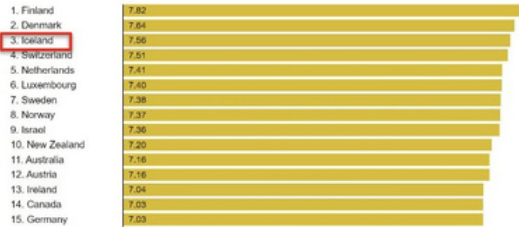
“The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.” John 1:5

The Gospel Need, cont.

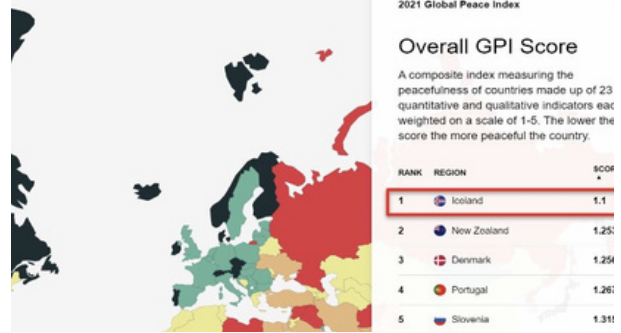
Happiness Index, 0 (unhappy) - 10 (happy), 2021 - Country rankings: The average for 2021 based on 141 countries was 5.57 points. The highest value was in Finland: 7.82 points and the lowest value was in Afghanistan: 2.4 points. The indicator is available from 2013 to 2021. Below is a chart for all countries where data is available.

Measure: points, Source: The World Happiness Report

World All 2021 PNG Download data Find a country on the chart



**World Happiness Index (2021):
#3 Iceland**



**Global Peace Index (2021):
#1 Iceland**

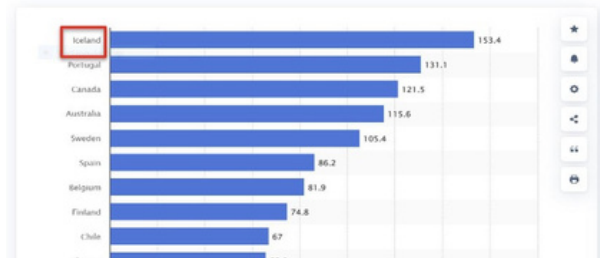
TABLE 1.1 The Global Gender Gap Index 2021 rankings

Rank	Country	Score		Rank change	Score change		Rank	Country
		2020	2019		2020	2019		
1	Iceland	0.992	0.992	-	+0.016	+0.111	79	Thailand
2	Finland	0.981	0.981	-	+0.029	+0.065	80	Kazakhstan
3	Norway	0.849	0.849	-1	+0.007	+0.050	81	Russian Federation
4	New Zealand	0.840	0.840	2	+0.041	+0.089	82	Tanzania
5	Sweden	0.823	0.823	-1	+0.053	+0.009	83	Cyprus
6	Namibia	0.809	0.809	6	+0.025	+0.122	84	Malta
7	Rwanda	0.805	0.805	2	+0.014	n/a	85	Uruguay
8	Lithuania	0.804	0.804	35	+0.059	+0.096	86	Paraguay
9	Ireland	0.800	0.800	-2	+0.002	+0.056	87	Viet Nam
10	Switzerland	0.798	0.798	8	+0.019	+0.098	88	Romania
11	Germany	0.796	0.796	-1	+0.010	+0.044	89	Dominican Republic
12	Nicaragua	0.796	0.796	-7	-0.008	+0.139	90	Belize
13	Belgium	0.789	0.789	14	+0.059	+0.081	91	Nicaragua
14	Spain	0.788	0.788	-6	-0.005	+0.056	92	Lesotho
15	Costa Rica	0.786	0.786	-2	+0.003	+0.092	93	Brazil
16	France	0.784	0.784	-1	+0.003	+0.132	94	Liberia
17	Philippines	0.784	0.784	-1	+0.003	+0.032	95	Kenya

**Gender Equality Index (2021):
#1 Iceland**

Health, Pharma & Medtech - Pharmaceutical Products & Market

Consumption of antidepressants in selected countries as of 2 (in DDD per 1,000 inhabitants)



**Antidepressant Consumption (2021):
#1 Iceland**

Statistically, Iceland is reportedly one of the happiest, the most peaceful and the most equal nation in the world. Yet, they are also the highest consumers of antidepressants per capita worldwide. What might this reveal about the spiritual need of the Icelanders?

Our Vision for Ministry

Timeline goal: to be fully funded by Summer 2023

Ministry commitment: a minimum of three terms in Iceland*

**One term is typically four years*

First Term Vision: Language & Culture

The Icelandic language is a very important part of the culture. It will be imperative for us to learn the language through the degree program at the University of Iceland as well as form sustained personal relationships with the Icelanders. We will also be covenanting together as faithful members of Loftstofan and will pour into the church's ministries as the Lord leads.

Second Term Vision: Leadership & Training

As we continue to invest in the church, our desire is to increase our ability to serve and lead in partnership with the other members of Loftstofan. In this term, we will be focusing on deepening our involvement in the church and continuing to build relationships within our community. With our growing understanding of the Icelandic language, we will aim to strengthen our gospel witness among those who have never heard.

Third Term Vision: Launch & Plant

Should the Lord open the door, we hope to be a part of a core team of members who will launch out from Loftstofan to plant a new local congregation in a targeted location of need. Believers in Iceland long to see a strong network of healthy, biblical churches thriving in communities all around the nation. Ultimately, we are eager to serve the body of Christ in pursuit of that vision in any way God leads.





From Our Pastor



To our brothers and sisters in Christ--

It is my pleasure to recommend to you Dale and Linnea Kellar as missionaries to Iceland. The elders and church at Five Points confirm their call to this mission, as well as their Christlike character and deep desire to see the nations hear and know of the glories of our saving God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Not only are they members in good standing of our local church, they are also a wonderful, godly couple who love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. They have become an integral part of our church community as they use their gifts to serve others for the glory of Christ. It's our joy to present them to you for this gospel partnership, and will continue praying that the Lord will provide all they need to see the people of Iceland praise God with us, both now and forever!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JJ Sherwood', written in a cursive style.

Pastor JJ Sherwood

On behalf of Five Points Community Church (Auburn Hills, MI)

Partnering Together

"How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!'" Romans 10:14-15

With God's great mission comes great need for our family as well. First and foremost, we need your prayer support. Moving overseas, especially with small kids, in order to do the work of gospel ministry can seem overwhelming at times. In a culture like Iceland, there certainly is a lot of transition and change. Would you please pray for us? Also, in order to make this happen, there is a great financial need. Not only are we raising the moving costs, but monthly living, ministry, and school expenses as well. We need to have 100% of our monthly budget coming in before we are able to deploy to the field.

You may be familiar with William Carey, the gospel worker in India who is frequently referred to as the father of modern missions. Before he left for India, he had a conversation with his dear friend Andrew Fuller. Describing the need for faithful partners in the mission, Carey told Fuller, "I will go down into the pit, if you will hold the ropes." Likewise, we cannot take the gospel to Iceland without a steadfast group of rope-holders who will use their resources, given by God, to help us in the task.

We are looking for individuals, families and churches who would prayerfully consider regularly giving to this ministry so that we might be able to fully dedicate ourselves to furthering Christ's kingdom in Iceland. It is our prayer that you might consider joining our support team as we work to see the nation of Iceland transformed through the light of Christ!

Connect With Us

Prayer

Please consider joining in prayer as we seek to honor the Lord in this transition and in this new season of ministry. If you would like to keep up with us, our family, our needs, and our ministry, please scan the QR Code below to get signed up for the newsletter.



Support

It would be an honor if you would consider joining us as financial ministry partners. We see supporters, both individuals and churches, as genuine partners in the work ministry and as exercising a spiritual gift. In Romans 12, Paul says, "So in Christ, we though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us... if it is giving, then give generously." Please scan the QR Code below to access the giving page.



Contact

We would love to hear from you! If you have any questions or would like to reach out, please do so.

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