

Gospel Messengers Church E-Newsletter

Dec 2019 Issue

Thanksgiving is more than just eating. It is a time to reflect and celebrate the blessings of the Lord you have received throughout the entire year. You take time off, no matter how busy you may be, to thank Him. Irrespective of the challenges or how troubled you feel, there is always something to be thankful for. Even though the Thanksgiving offerings present an opportunity to express our appreciation to God, our gratitude must not be limited to that. God is searching for your gratuitous heart, not what you have to offer physically.

Editorial Greetings!

Here comes The Messenger E Newsletter. Last time it was a Magazine, but because a message can instantly be sent to thousands of people across the globe by just a click of a button, we have decided to publish an e newsletter.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to you our esteemed readers, well-wishers and the entire Gospel Messengers Family for your continued support over the years.

We wish to congratulate all the graduates this year. You have made us proud.

This issue contains the children, youth, marrieds, and evangelism departments. Imani Milele Children's Mission Uganda 2019 has not been left out. You will also find different ServeNow Projects including donation of classroom blocks, sponsorship, donations of bicycles to ministers who trek very long hours during ministry, basic series booklets and the New Testament Bibles. Don't miss out on the health section and the current political affairs. We have also included a powerful testimony of the survivors of the accident.

We have featured Madam Hopkins Joyce Ssemanda's interview, who has diligently supported her husband, Pastor Moses Ssemanda Mbuga in ministry.

This publication is open to the entire Gospel Messengers Community, friends and partners. Feel free to share with a friend.

Don't be hesitant to share with the editorial team your comments and input in order to make these publications relevant.

Enjoy the Thanksgiving Celebrations.
Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2020.

Editorial Team

Josephine Nalule Kagulire

Edgar Bagayana

Ivan Higenyi

Innocent Mbine

Pr. Dithan Kaddu

ServeNow

ServeNow is a not-for-profit charity organization based in the USA whose focus is to serve people in need by caring for orphans, widows, underprivileged children and youth as well as equipping the Church for greater fulfillment of its ministry and providing humanitarian assistance where needed. It operates in several countries, Uganda inclusive. Through its partnership with Gospel Messengers Ministries, it has reached several places all over the country in activities such as sponsorship to vulnerable children, construction of permanent classroom structures to replace the worn out temporary ones, provision of bicycles to pastors who trek very long distances for the sake of ministry, donation of the Basic Series booklets and New Testament Bibles. Numerous testimonies are shared weekly about the impact of ServeNow activities to the people of Uganda.



Evangelism

Evangelism, the spreading of the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness, is a key goal of Gospel Messengers Ministry and has been greatly supported this year with Outreach Missions .



Mothers Day Netball match



As part of the Mother's Day celebrations, a netball game was played where girls competed against mothers. The game was very intense with a lot of pushing and shoving of the girls by the physically bigger mothers. The more athletic girls won the game anyway.

It was a very fun day with lots of laughter and excitement.

Fathers Day Football Match.

Borrowing a leaf from the mothers who had played a netball match against the girls on Mothers' day, the fathers of Gospel Messengers' Church also played a football match against the singles of the church.

Prior to the match, a lot of hype was built up by pastor Dithan Kaddu who ,with a group of other fathers, started practicing every evening in preparation for the match, jogging and stretching so that they would be in perfect health at the time of the match.

On the D-day, the pitch side was filled with all kinds of people supporting their respective teams, singles for singles team and fathers for fathers.

The match was extremely intense and remained tied for a long time with either side making dangerous attempts at the others 'goal post. Eventually the singles managed a very narrow and lucky win. However, the marrieds felt like winners too.



Pictorial from the Fathers Vs Boys football match

Graduations



The year 2019 has seen many of our sponsored children graduate from different universities. Most of the graduates had been sponsored since primary school by Imani Milele Children.

Feature-Interview with Madam Hopkins Ssemanda.



Background

Madam Hopkins is the wife to Pastor Moses Ssemanda Mbuga. They have been married for 27 years. She was born by the late Samuel Lukwago (a teacher by profession) and Evelyn Namuyimba (a midwife by profession). However, she grew up with her grandparents, the late Samuel and Alice Kisero, whom she treasured so much.

She went to Kitukutwe Primary School (Nursery - P.2), Kira Primary School (P.3 - P.6) and later sat for her Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) from Gayaza Primary School, with a dream of being admitted at Gayaza High School for her secondary education. Though she got the admission, her grandparents could not afford paying her school fees in that school. She was later given a bursary (S.1 - S.4) at Kololo Senior Secondary School, where her father was teaching then. Because no relative was able to support her high school education, she enrolled for a Secretarial Course at the College of Business Studies, Nakasero after completing Senior Four.

In 1985, she joined Oscar Cillo Forex Bureau, where she worked for two years before the bureau wound up. Its former manager referred her to Research and Marketing Company, where she worked until 1988 when the company transferred into more profitable business in Kenya. They had wanted to take her to Kenya, but she refused and remained jobless until 1991 (From 1989 to 1991, it was a struggle, believing God for survival one day at a time. Together with her two siblings, she could spend days without food. However, amidst all this, their faith in God was strong. They could literally believe God to place food on their plates and much more. She resorted to hawking, selling second-hand clothes to earn a living.)

When she was given an opportunity to work as a Bursar at Happy Hours Primary School. Throughout her ten years of employment there, she was given different responsibilities such as being in charge of Stores, Nursery Section (even when she could not teach) and Staff Welfare. This was because of her hard work and faithfulness.

What is your Salvation story?

During my college years, my grandfather passed on. It was such a trying time for me as I loved him so much. He was a strong believer of the 'Tukutendereza' Anglican group. Shortly after that, I dreamt that Jesus was appearing to me. He tapped me on the shoulder and I fell in a trench of water; I felt my life coming to an end. I pleaded with Him to have mercy upon me. I saw my late grandfather interceding on my behalf. Immediately, Jesus tapped me on the shoulder again and my life got revived. I secretly made up my mind to get saved. However, I didn't want people around me to know, in addition to abandoning fellow Anglican Church goers. I liked the Anglican Church because of its organized, well laid out systems. Besides, I was a choir member. In 1987, I joined Victory Christian Center, where my sister, Janet Kaddu, was fellowshiping from. After a few months, I was attracted to Pastor Kayanja's city lunch hour fellowships so, I joined Miracle Center Church, then located at Kabuusu.

When and how did you join the Gospel Messengers' Church?

At Miracle Center, Dr. Osborn Muyanja, a brother to my husband together with Benon, a brother to Pr. Dithan were my good friends. We used to evangelize and sing in the Youth Choir together. Because I could train the choir at Miracle Center, Benon requested me to assist in training the choir at the Gospel Messengers' Church. In 1988, I started training the Eagles' Choir. However, I was still not a church member until I got married to Kabona in 1992. I don't regret having joined the Gospel Messengers' Church.

How and when did you join St. Mbuga Primary School?

When I was growing up, my dream was becoming a teacher though my mum wanted me to join her in the medical field. Because I didn't get an opportunity of pursuing high school education, I opted to join a secretarial course. This was because Secretaries used to be smart as well as speak good English.

Although I did not become a teacher, I have been very near schools since 1991 at Happy Hours Primary School. After my first trip to USA in 2001, I came back with a vision of starting up my own school but my husband requested me to support him at St. Mbuga Group of Schools. Since Happy Hours Primary School was a well established school, yet I had a lot of responsibility in the school, I painfully resigned in 2002 to join St. Mbuga. However, deep within me, I had a conviction that God wanted me to join my husband in the Children's Ministry. By the time I joined, the school was only up to Primary Three, with a population of about 40 children and four teachers. However, by third term, the school population had grown to over 200 children.

Talk about the Children's Ministry/ Imani Milele Children.

Imani Milele Children is an organization that by the grace of God is growing steadily in its ministry of Rescuing, Educating, Developing and Improving lives of the needy children. Each year, we move a notch higher. God has brought our way men and women who have added value to the organization. We have chosen to be teachable in all ways, and to learn from others. I can't forget the stormy season that befell the Children's Ministry when our very own betrayed us. During those hard times, there are people in USA who stood with us. I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate them, beginning with Pr. Mike Lyle, Bonny & Bart and finally, Barbara Gibby. It is at this time that I would also wish to appreciate my son, Sam Straxy, for his tireless sacrifice towards the organization. We started working with him when he was a young boy. At first, we could despise his advice but because of his assertiveness, he could insist as a result of which he has taken the organization steps ahead. He is the one who initiated the choir, which is a great resource tool through raising awareness for the plight of Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Uganda. In a special way, my husband has played a great role in the success of Imani Milele Children. He sacrifices a lot for the sake of others and the Ministry at large. I have learnt a lot from him.

What are your achievements over the years?

Talking about achievements, I have never been involved in anything and it fails. I commit myself to ensuring that whatever I venture in succeeds. However, I don't want to boast. It has always been by the grace of God. We have registered overwhelming growth in Imani Milele Children. St. Mbuga Group of Schools has seen a great shift. The schools started with only Lusaka Center with three children studying under a mango tree, followed by temporary structures made of mud and bamboo in the outreach centers. The total population in the eight centers, with permanent classroom blocks, is now 4,356. Our children excel countrywide not only academically, but also in co-curricular activities. The children I have raised testify about the way I have raised them.

Who are the people behind your success?

First is my husband. He supports me, believes in me and gives me freedom in whatever I do. I wish to thank him for accepting me the way I am and for loving my children. Next are my late grandparents, Samuel and Alice Kisero. They nurtured me into the person I am today. I cannot forget my maternal aunt, Robinah Mugambwa. She was a very tough lady, but she taught me to be hardworking. Finally, my former boss, Mr. Mutyaba Stephen, Director, Happy Hours Primary School, gave me an opportunity to work with him, and I learnt a lot in the working environment especially in school management.

Amidst the achievements, what Challenges have you faced in life, family, Ministry and work?

Imani Milele Children and St. Mbuga Group of Schools are growing very fast but with a challenge of limited funds to meet the ever increasing needs. The leadership challenge I face is that apart from a few individuals who do not know what to do, many have the potential but are money-minded. They don't have the organization at heart and are big burden to us because they do not deliver. The greatest family challenge is that up to now, we are still renting and do not own a family home.

How have you managed to overcome the challenges?

Patience as I focus on God.



What is your passion or where is your heart?

My heart is sold out to the children and the youth. I feel I have a lot to share with them and guide today's young generation. I also enjoy music though I am not a good singer.

What skills do you possess?

I am a song-writer. I have written 74 songs. All these were inspired by the Holy Spirit depending on the prevailing situation. I also possess leadership skills.

Being a woman, how have you managed the different leadership positions all these years?

I don't do anything that I know I will not be able to accomplish or anything that I don't feel at peace with. I have therefore managed all the leadership positions because it is my passion. I enjoy leading the people I work with.

People know you to be kind, loving but tough at the same time. What is your take on this and how do you manage this character?

I love to see people on the right path. I cannot tolerate irresponsible behavior especially to those I love. I am open, straight forward, calling a spade a spade. That is why people think I am tough.

What does it mean being a Pastor's wife and how have you managed it?

It is not easy to be a Pastor's wife. It must be a calling to be one. This position hinders you from doing some of the things you like to do. That calls for sacrifice. You need to have a lot of wisdom otherwise you may be the source of your husband's downfall in Ministry.

What is our message to pastors' wives?

Sacrifice and support the man of God. He needs a lot of your emotional support. Do not cause the downfall of your husband.

What is your message to the children and the youth?

Respect, respect, respect!!!! The success of a child is hidden in listening to not only your parents, but also those above you. Normally, adults may not tell you their failures but want to help you not to go through the hardships they went through. Note that no child is wiser than their elders. Endeavor to listen to one with more experience in a particular field than you even if they are younger than you.

What is your message to adults?

Advise young children to have discipline. The saying goes: "It takes a village to raise a child."

What is your message to the body of Christ?

Let's go back to the Biblical foundation. Note that whatever is outside the Word of God is not true. There is a lot of modernization in today's church. Romans 12:2a instructs us not to be conformed to this world."

Who is your favorite personality in the Bible and why?

David. He did a lot of evil but always fell before God in repentance. Secondly, he knew the greatness of God and could glorify Him at all times irrespective of the challenges he was going through. This is evidenced in the Psalms he wrote.

What is your favorite composed song and why?

Hmm!!!! I don't have any favorite. All the songs I have written have particular messages. I write them following different situations. The one I remember so much is "Omukwano gwa Yesu gwa kimemete." In the days I wrote the song, there was a lot of unforgiveness in Churches. People could condemn fellow believers to the extent of chasing them from such churches. God led me to write the song, reminding us that His love is unending.

What about your favorite song by another writer and why?

I like hymns because of the great inspirational messages they have.

So, describe yourself?

I am a person who loves any disciplined person and one with wisdom. A person who has the fear of God and respects others.

Sunday School Children.

Teach a child the right way and she will not depart from it when she grows old.
The upright spiritual growth of children is taken as a critical issue in the Gospel Messengers Church. Children are ministered to separately on Sundays and introduced to the Bible and Salvation at a pace that they can understand. This shields them from ignorance and misinformation from any other sources that may try to twist the gospel of Jesus or introduce false doctrines to them later on.



Hymn Night

A hymn is a type of song usually religious, specifically written for the purpose of adoration or prayer and typically addressed to God.

Gospel Messengers' Church came up with this idea of a night where only hymns are sung in a way that makes them attractive to the youth. The intention was to open people's eyes to the beauty that is in this kind of music. The Hymn Night turned out to be one of the most beautiful nights of the year, with breathtaking performances by a variety of artists and choirs.

Worshippers present got an opportunity to receive Holy Communion, crowning the night with a candlelight moment.



Youth Overnight

The Youth of Gospel Messengers Church organized an overnight with lots of worship, praise, swallow-ship and sharing the Word of God. The guest speaker was Pastor Senfuma Stephen (Innerman).



Planting A Seed in Post-Genocide Rwanda



My name is Pr. Joseph Gisagara, the zone leader of Gospel Messengers Churches in Rwanda. Twenty years ago, God spoke to me to begin church ministry. Like the biblical Moses' hesitation when he was called upon to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, I had a litany of excuses for not heeding the call immediately. At the time, I was grappling with chest pain, and this pain was so intense that I could not do my carpentry work. I asked God to give me a sign: "Lord, if starting this ministry is Your will, You have to heal me first!"

God delivered me from the chest-pain, and renewed my strength like an eagle's. This was proof that He was indeed sending me. I had no idea how and where He was sending me because I did not have money or a building to start from. All I had was a burning desire and a call from Him. This drove me into intense prayer and fasting. A few days later while walking in the neighborhood, I came across an old, dilapidated building. God spoke to me precisely that I should occupy that crooked house so, I moved in. Those of you who follow history will know if I say that this was a house abandoned by someone who had fled the 1994 Rwanda Genocide. The first church member I got was a man I had hired to excavate a pit latrine. Later I brought in my family to serve along with me.

Steadily and faithfully, God started adding numbers, but just as the church was beginning to become vibrant, we received government warnings to close church activities in that house. As a leader I believed that what God had started would not crumble like a pack of cards yet, I knew we needed a better structure. We fasted and prayed passionately, asking God to provide land and money to enable us construct a better church that would meet government standards.

Little did I know that Rev. Moses Ssemanda Mbuga would visit Rwanda and God would use him to make all the difference. During his visit, many pastors discouraged him from coming to our church because it was too small for a minister of his caliber and stature, but he came anyway. He encouraged us to raise our faith and focus on the author and finisher of our faith. All of a sudden, the owners of the house also came back from exile to re-possess their property. We shifted the Ministry into my tiny house, and squeezed in there every Sunday for a number of months, waiting on God for a better place.



One day, a church committee member and I traveled to Uganda to meet Rev. Moses Ssemanda. Later, I learn't that at that time, he had financial challenges. Nevertheless, he dug deep in his pockets and gave us some money that was used to buy land for the church, neat the government state house. We could afford a wooden temporary structure but still, this was not what the government wanted. Rev. Moses has stood with us when more than 700 churches including Gospel Messengers Church in Kigali, were closed down by the government of Rwanda in 2018 ostensibly for not meeting state requirements. He did not abandon us when we applied for the construction permit and throughout the construction process up to the final dedication on 17th November 2019. For this and more, we are eternally grateful.

Today as we speak, the Gospel Messengers Church is well established in Rwanda, fully recognized by the government of the day. We also have two other branches in Eastern Rwanda. We give all the glory to God.



Before



Now

The Marrieds' Trip To Western Uganda.

The Married couples of Gospel Messengers Church traveled to Western Uganda to visit the upcountry home of one of their members (Mr and Mrs Mwine). The aim of the trip was simply to bond more as a community of married members.

They hired a 72-seater bus that carried the over 70 members that paid up for the 3-day trip. It turned out to be fun and an educational trip for all that traveled.



Youth Outing

The Youth of Gospel Messengers Church had an outing during the Easter Holiday. They simply wanted to have a fun moment.



Youth Production

The youth organized a production event where they had performances, dances and a play based on the biblical story of the prodigal son. The event was very well attended and enjoyed by the audience. The play in particular was very captivating. The audience was seen shedding tears at some moments and laughing out loud at other moments. The actors all fitted their roles perfectly, courtesy of many months of practice.

THE HEAVENLY EXPERIENCE
PRODUCTION



THE YOUTH
Present
“Can I Just Come”

Venue	Gospel messengers church lusaka
Date	3rd November 2019
Time	4pm
Tax	Free of Charge

Miraculous Survival in a Deadly Accident .

No one expects an experienced driver to get involved in a road accident without putting up a fight. It happened on Mityana Road on 11th August 2019, when Pastor Elijah Kambugu and his team of Evangelists were returning from an evangelical mission in Katuugo Gospel Messengers Church, Mubende district. The 30 years experienced driver - David Musisi Kakeeto - fought hard to avert what would have been a fatal accident. Fortunately, he and several of his passengers came out unscathed and a few others with minor scratches and stitches! As the van veered off the road, the survivors confessed that they shouted the great Name of “Jesus” in unison. We learnt later from eyewitnesses and Pastor Elijah himself, who was in the co-driver’s seat, that onlookers cut their way into the vehicle with axes in order to rescue the Pastor and pull him out of the mangled wreckage! In fact, when a traffic police official saw the state of the van, he commented: “The person who was seated in the co-driver’s seat must be dead or with serious injuries.” He could not believe that he was talking with the very person who only sustained minor bruises. The vehicle was completely written-off, but the trailer, which caused this head-on collision, came out with mere scratches! We thank the Almighty God for saving the lives of these ten Christians.



Mission Uganda 2019

Imani Milele Children, a ministry of the Gospel Messengers church, focuses on Rescuing, Educating, Developing and Improving lives of Orphans and Vulnerable Children. Putting emphasis on the health of the communities we serve, a team of

41 Americans alongside 46 Ugandan trained doctors, nurses, dentists, eye specialists, nutritionists, surgeons, counselors together with 80 Imani Milele Children staff held a free medical camp to offer free medical services in Rwenjiri, one of the Imani Milele Children Centers. These short term missions are designed to catalyze long term transformation for team members, staff members but primarily for those to whom we minister to.

6,808 patients were registered. Even now, some referred patients are still being seen by doctors and sponsored by Imani Milele Children for matters which could not be resolved during the mission week.

Over 1,000 children benefited from the Kids Resource Program. They received, hygiene items like toothbrushes, toothpaste and soap. Girls also were given a gift of reusable personal hygiene kits. They also enjoyed a VBS style fun-filled kids program. 185 adults accepted Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. Among so many cases, there was a striking one of pregnancy related emergency. A 35 year old lady reported with a history of severe abdominal pain and vaginal bleeding for two consecutive months, dizziness and a blackout.

At the same time, she was breastfeeding a nine months old baby. She had not attended any health facility during that period due to lack of financial support.

On examination, she was found to be severely anemic, with an HB (blood levels) of 6g/dl, the normal one ranging between (12 - 16)g/dl. She was also very dehydrated and with a very low blood pressure (70/50)mmhg. Emergency abdominal ultra sound scan showed she had a hemoperitoneum (blood within the peritoneum region), with a positive blood hcg (pregnancy test positive). Confirmation made for a possible chronic leaking ectopic pregnancy (a fetus implanted/growing outside the uterus). She least expected that she was pregnant because she was breastfeeding and not sure of her gestation. Her condition was life threatening to the extent that doctors feared she wouldn't make it to the nearest referral hospital had she been referred immediately. The closest regional hospital, with a functional theatre was 3 hours drive away irrespective of unforeseen medical care. A decision was made to have an emergency Laparotomy (surgical opening and exploring the abdominal cavity for any possible source of bleeding with focus on the female reproductive organs to look for an ectopic pregnancy or perforated uterus) instead of referral.

The surgeons took a risk to open her with her low hemodynamics (very low blood pressure in shock and very severe anemia). On opening, approximately two litres of blood was found in the abdomen (both fresh and clots), with a ruptured right fallopian tube with an intact dead. This tube was therefore amputated, all bleeders were stopped and the blood was drained. This operation took a full hour but it took her six hours to get back to normal. An emergency blood transfusion was done after securing two units of whole blood from Kiboga Referral Hospital. She was monitored overnight and discharged.

Indeed, a life was saved. To God be the glory.



The Saturday Ministers' Meetings

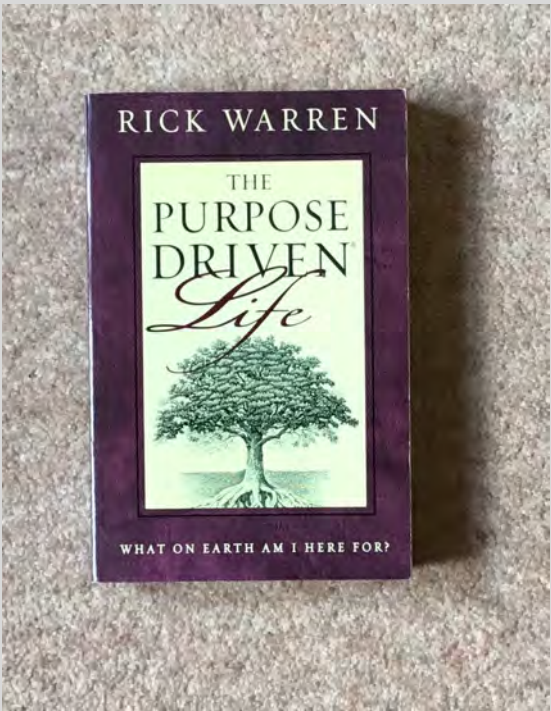
This is a Ministers' meeting where the leaders of the Gospel Messengers Church share candid views on living as a Christian from the perspective of a church minister.

This year the meetings have mostly been facilitated by Pastor Dithan Kaddu.

At the beginning of this year 2019, the theme was about how to be a good soldier in God's army as described in **Ephesians 6:10-18**



In the last half of the year, the meetings mostly dwelt on the book "A Purpose driven life" by Rick Warren.

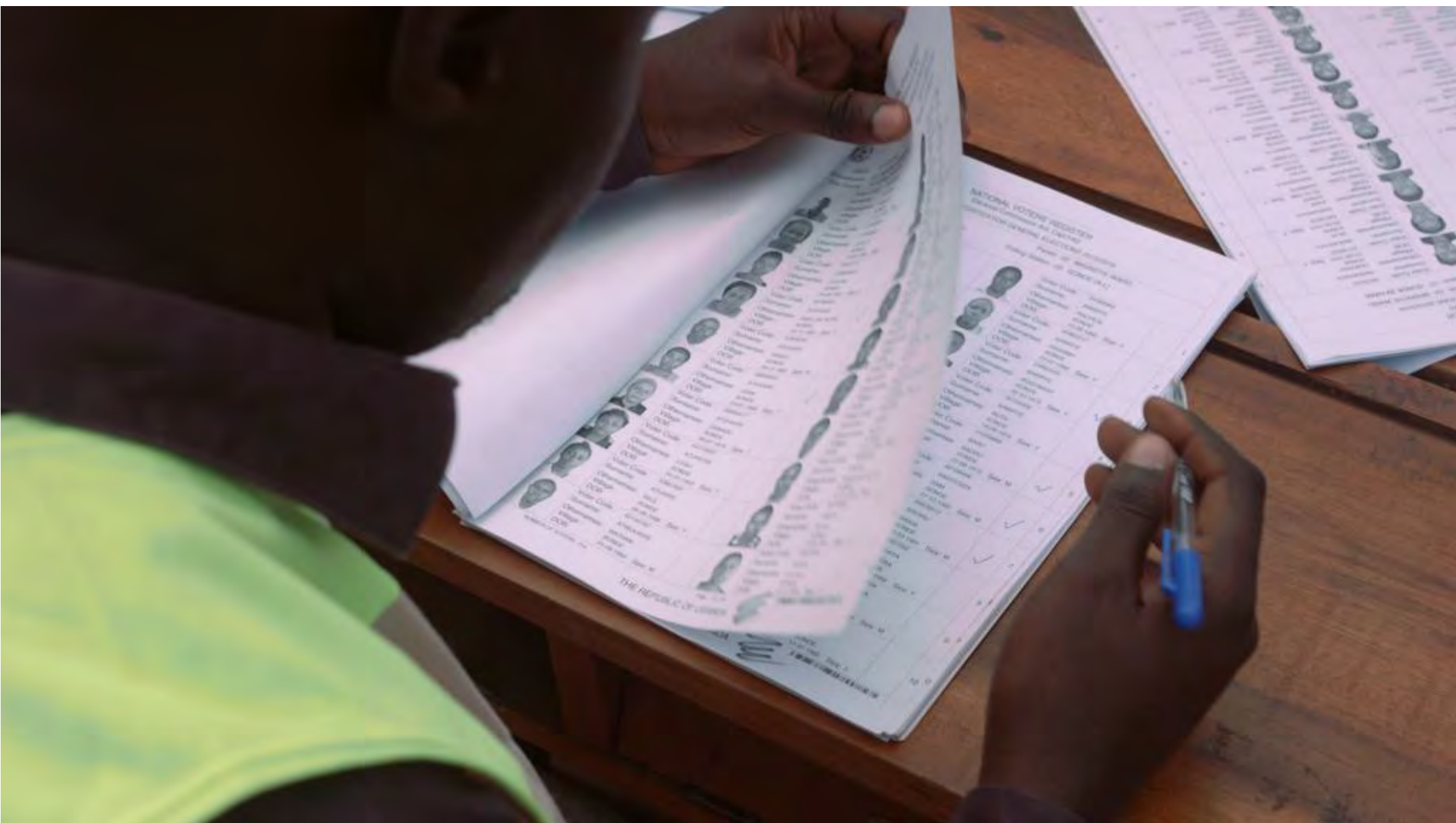


The best thing about the meetings is the very casual atmosphere whereby the pastors are not preaching but sharing ideas and listening to opinions of church members in an open environment.

Current Affairs

Did you know that registration as a voter enables you to nominate, support nomination of a candidate, contest for an elective office and vote for a candidate of your choice?

If you are not yet registered as a voter, please go and register at the registration centre in your parish. The update of the National Voters Register ends on 11th December, 2019.



<https://www.ec.or.ug/search/byid/>

With that link, you can check your voter information if you are unable to go to the LC for voter register verification

Please fill in the details and check for your name in the list of voters in the polling stations in your division and parish. Be a Ugandan who is a responsible citizen and ready to practice his or her voting rights. It's good to know your exact polling station than spending the whole day jumping from one polling station to another and end up not even voting.

<https://www.ec.or.ug/ps/list/>

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Without good health, personal effectiveness is a non issue. Stress affects the heart, metabolism, immunity and the psyche.

It is a leading cause of headache, high blood pressure, stroke, heart diseases even drug addiction. Can affect feeding habit either poor appetite or slowing down digestion and metabolism. This results in indigestion, constipation, ulcers and obesity. It causes chronic fatigue, irritability, anger, frustration, mood swings, occasionally causes insomnia (lack of sleep).



Management of stress

- Read the Word of God (Phil.4:6-7; 1 Pet.5:7).
- Get rid of overload, prioritize your routines.
- Delegate responsibilities
- Take periods of break/rest/retreats
- Do physical exercises.
- Take adequate fruits, vegetables, water.
- Have adequate sleep (Adult: 8 hours daily; 6 hours at night.)
- Drink water (daily intake: six to eight glasses of water).
- Take stress pills .

To Speak or Remain silent; Church leaders and Politics



Dr Kilama Denis

There are two fundamental realities that guide us in answering this question:

1. First, God has a unique call and mission for the church that supersedes all. This implies that politics is important, but not all important above the specific mission of the church as an organization.

2. Second, the Christian worldview has implications on every aspect of our lives including our political views. God's word informs every aspect of a Christian's life. There is no dichotomy between the spiritual and political life of the organic church, it is one.

The difficulty for the church leader is then; how does my Christian worldview influence my political opinion as I fulfil God's mission for the church?

To generally speak on a political dispute because my Christian worldview influences all my life is fallacy. Similarly, to generally keep quite on a political dispute because the church has a unique mission is flattery. We should hate flattery and speak truth. Politicians should be aware that church leaders can praise you in order to mislead you. Should church leaders speak or be silent on political disputes?

1. There is a time to speak. For the prophets like Amos and Jeremiah, to be silent when God had asked them to speak was to defy God's very words. The church as an organism in Uganda has spoken against immorality in our society, loudest of all was on the anti-homosexuality bill. Why can't it speak against corruption?

2. There is a time when speaking diverts the church from its core mission and as an organization is caught up and divided along partisan lines. This diverts it from its core mission. The church in Uganda has occasionally wrongly been caught up in partisan politicking.

So the critical question for Church leaders in times as is: How do we know when to speak and when not to speak? This implies the "when" and the "how" of speaking about politics is very essential. Let us be like the sons of Issachar in 1 Chronicles 12:32, "they knew the times and seasons."

Jesus models for Church leaders how and when to speak on political disputes. Jesus lived in a pagan, corrupt Roman government. King Herod ordered the killing of all male children below two years. The Roman tax system was very oppressive, the empire's social system was built on slavery. Jesus dealt with politics, no wonder for the Romans he died a political death. This was a total opposite of democracy.

Specifically, Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees and Herodians in Matthew 22:15-22 provides us with some clues on when and how we should relate with politics as Church leaders.

In the story, the unusual combination of Pharisees and Herodians attacked Jesus. Normally these two groups were bitter enemies but now were united against Jesus. The Pharisees were a religious group opposed to the Romans. Herodians were the Jewish political supporters of Rome. They sought to trick Jesus on the question of taxes to Caesar. If Jesus agreed that it was fine to pay taxes to Caesar the Pharisees would say he is opposed to Yahweh, the only king they recognized. If Jesus said taxes were not to be paid, the supporters of Herod would arrest him and accuse him of rebellion. The idea was putting Jesus in a place of no escape. This is a question where only two answers seemed possible Yes or No.

We see the wisdom of Jesus in defense against the Pharisees and Herodians.

1. The first thing Jesus did was to expose their flattery. He asks, why tempt me you hypocrites? You are not asking for information but to tempt me. The motive for speaking ought to be godly.

2. Second was expose the fallacy. Jesus asked for a coin and asked whose image was on it. The coin was evidence that God had allowed them to be under Caesar. The content of the message ought to be godly.

3. Thirdly, Jesus exposes their fears. It is either God or man, creator or creature. Jesus challenges them to give to Caesar what was Caesar's and to God what is God's. The method of speaking ought to be godly.

Therefore on whether to speak or not to speak on political disputes, it is important for church leaders to understand the when-motive, the how- method and the what- message. To do otherwise is neither safe nor wise. Silence can be interpreted as agreement driven by either flattery, fallacy or fear.

Author is the Senior Pastor Lugogo Baptist Church.