



## 50-DAY PRAYER AND FASTING SEASON

19<sup>th</sup> August – 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023

### PRAYING FOR THE BUSINESS AND ECONOMY SECTOR

#### Isaiah 60: 5, 6

*Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult,  
because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.*

*A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense,  
and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.*

#### PRAYER GUIDE

##### WEEKLY FOCUS 2023

Week 1:	20 <sup>th</sup> August – 26 <sup>th</sup> August	Family and the Business/Economy Sphere
Week 2:	27 <sup>th</sup> August – 2 <sup>nd</sup> September	Church and the Business/Economy Sphere
Week 3:	3 <sup>rd</sup> September – 9 <sup>th</sup> September	Government and the Business/Economy Sphere
Week 4:	10 <sup>th</sup> September – 16 <sup>th</sup> September	Education and the Business/Economy Sphere
Week 5:	17 <sup>th</sup> September – 23 <sup>rd</sup> September	Media and the Business and the Economy Sphere
Week 6:	24 <sup>th</sup> September – 30 <sup>th</sup> September	Celebration/Arts and the Business/Economy Sphere
Week 7:	1 <sup>st</sup> October – 7 <sup>th</sup> October	Global Business/Economy

##### THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE 2023/24 PRAYER SEASON ARE:

1. To seek divine enablement for the Body of Christ to rise to its place in the Business/Economy Sphere.
2. To pray for the economies of Uganda and Africa to rise to their divine destinies.
3. To pray for the restructuring of the global economy to a more righteous and just one.
4. To seek divine enablement for the individual, family, and organizational fulfillment of divine destinies in our generation and the ones to come.

##### Main Prayer Focus of the Week:

1. To pray for the rise of Kingdom sons and daughters in the business aspect of the Media Sphere: Print, Audio visual and Digital.

## WEEK FIVE: MEDIA AND THE BUSINESS/ECONOMY SPHERE

17<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023

### Proverbs 22:6,7

*Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.  
The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender.*

## CONTAINING AND MITIGATING THE MEDIA TOWER OF BABEL

David Sseppuuya

Media is a very influential sector in any society, throughout history, and more so in the modern world that is at its most interconnected since the days of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11). Whereas the spoken language was the main medium of interconnectedness in the days of the Tower of Babel, today the main medium of interconnectedness is technology.

### Genesis 11:1

*“Now the whole world had one language and a common speech.”*

We can now confidently say, “now the whole world has one technological stage to launch media, and that is the Digital Era.” Different civilisations, at varied points in history, had different forms of media. In the biblical days, they used trumpets. Incidentally this weekend is the Feast of Trumpets. They also used stone tablets and scrolls. In Africa, the drum was used; some societies had town criers. I am in conversation with a senior government official who hails from Kigezi, and I have learnt from him how people used to communicate with one person standing at the top of one hill and shouting across the valley to a person on another hill. There is a person in the Prayer Movement of Uganda who I have been desperately trying to connect with – I have put out alerts for his phone number or place of work/residence, in vain. The only contact of his that I have is a postal address, but I have not bothered with that. Why? Because communication by post office box – snail mail – is now nearly obsolete.

In whichever form, media’s influence is evident: the Press has been dubbed the Fourth Estate (after the Executive, the Judiciary, and the Legislature). In the Services Sector, it is one of the largest private or public corporate players, for example:

- BBC and News Corp (Sky, The Times, The Sun) in the UK;
- Nation Media Group in Kenya;
- CNN and The New York Times in the US;
- Facebook, YouTube, Google across the entire world.

The strength of media is such that modern media companies like Facebook/Meta, X/Twitter, Alphabet/Google, are known as tech companies. They have necessarily lost or underplayed the media tag and accentuated the technology one. They are not to blame – it is a sign of the times.

As far as business goes, media has great visibility – be it a tech giant like Facebook, a pacesetter like the BBC, a national newspaper like The New Vision or The Daily Monitor, or

even an upstart website like Mulengera News. That visibility gives media that extra value, which other businesses, say an import-export operation, a school, a cleaning company, or a car dealership may not have. In 2014, Facebook purchased WhatsApp for \$19 billion (the GDP of a small African country). It is questionable that WhatsApp was worth all that amount at the time, though now its value has grown in leaps and bounds. The key point though is that in making the business decision to purchase, Facebook had seen that WhatsApp's market reach was growing, it had seen its own vulnerability, and it saw an opportunity to keep a new player out of the hands of other tech rivals.

### **Waning Power of Traditional Media**

Media is an industry in flux. We are living in a time when the power, influence and business thrift of traditional media is waning. A few examples (local and global):

- The New Vision/Vision Group issued a profit warning this week.
- The Daily Monitor is no longer audited by the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), a voluntary global body where newspaper sales and circulation are declared and published regularly.
- Red Pepper publishes occasionally (someone intimated to me that they only publish when someone has paid them to write and publicise a story!)
- Last November, Next Media Group, which runs **NBS** Television, fired 30 employees in what management described as "digital realignment and restructuring" of the media company. Once profitability is down, organisations usually look for cost centres where to save - staffing is often the first victim.
- Last month, it was announced that News Corp's profits were down 75%. News Corp, which owns Fox News in the US, Sky TV, The Sun, and The Times in the UK, as well as the Hollywood film company 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fox and the book publisher Harper Collins, was once the world's largest media company in terms of total assets and the world's fourth largest media group in terms of revenue. Their profit result has been weighed down by lower print and digital advertising.
- In June, Germany's Bild tabloid, the biggest-selling newspaper in Europe, announced a €100m cost-cutting programme that will lead to about 200 redundancies, and warned staff that it expects to make further editorial cuts due to "the opportunities of artificial intelligence".

### **Two Problems**

- a. Media companies are being hit by technological changes. Advertising, which is media's lifeblood, has migrated to digital platforms, and even there it is neither substantial nor widespread enough to ensure every player's prosperity. Advertising normally goes to the big players. I am a subscriber to Spotify, the global music-streaming giant, and it shocks me to see local Ugandan adverts on Spotify.
- b. Media companies are also being hit by changing consumption habits. Consumption of digitally purveyed products is perceived as being free.
- c.

## One Non-solution

News companies have tried to make consumers pay for their content by putting up paywalls: the aforesaid Times of London (News Corp) used to be my favourite British newspaper; when they put up a paywall I simply switched to The Guardian. Locally The New Vision has a limited paywall, but I doubt that they make anything much out of it; instead, their digital/web presence is really limited, compared to its rivals. Some years ago, Nation Media Group either intimated, or tried, to put up a paywall for its products, but that seems to have been abandoned. Therefore, it is not easy to develop a business model on very little/waning revenue, and in which the main product is consumed for free. It is very difficult!

## Seven Opportunities

However, we who know the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have opportunities if we put on our prophetic lenses and rely on the Holy Spirit, Who was given for our guidance.

1. In a prophecy of the End Time, the prophet Daniel was told, *“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and **knowledge shall increase.**”* (Daniel 12:4) Knowledge goes forth through media – there will therefore be a need for media to purvey this increased knowledge, and so we need discernment.
2. The dynamism of the Digital Era means new opportunities will arise. There is need for patient and discerning minds that are able to both play the long game and also make quick reactions: long game because it can take time to have an ROI (return on investment), but also quick reactions because of nature of sector: a globally available and exposed sector, and also because many times the pioneers of a given subsector get a head-start on others, and it becomes harder for one to join a crowded and possibly fragmented space.
3. Consumer habits are constantly changing: keep track of trends and see where opportunity is. It has never been more important to be prayerful than now, when man doesn't know, God does know.
4. Opportunity for youthful zest: when there are fewer of supposed establishment players, or as establishment players struggle to get a grip on what's happening, e.g. Uganda's two biggest media houses are still holding on to old capital assets that don't necessarily gel with the Digital Era
5. Opportunity for a reset: Media has been dominated by an agenda advancing neoliberalism laced with humanism which, by definition, is opposed to God. We can mitigate the influence of the Media Tower of Babel
6. Opportunity to invest in growth companies/enterprises: Safaricom being promoted in Silicon Valley this week by President Ruto of Kenya. Let's be strategic and have foresight.
7. Pray – it is the intercessor's calling to pray opportunity into place: *“Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”*

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**THANKSGIVING:**

Thank God for:

- Giving mankind the ability for in-depth communication. Through language we can understand truth, communicate it, and appreciate each other's feelings.
- The diversity of methods of communication and the many languages we can communicate in.
- Those who are using the print media to communicate truth in every sphere of society.

**ASK GOD'S FORGIVENESS FOR:**

- The failures of the Body of Christ in using media for advancing the Kingdom of God in all spheres.
- The promotion of evil and the agenda of the Kingdom of Darkness through the media - lies, nudity, pornography, violence etc.

**PRAY THAT:**

- Those called to the Media Mountain will hear the trumpet call to arise in all spheres of the media mountain especially as it relates to the business mountain.
- Many will come to know God and come to the knowledge of the truth through the media in the years ahead.
- More and more people who reflect the biblical worldview will enter the space of the media as anchors, writers, producers, technicians, and owners of media houses.
- Truth will triumph over lies as sons and daughters of God's Kingdom advance and dominate the spaces in the media sphere.
- More children of God's Kingdom will arise to express the creativity of God the Father through the media.
- Policies that will promote the positive use of the media will be enacted.
- Policies that restrain the use of the media to propagate lies, slander, and pornography will be enacted and robustly enforced.
- Programs and curricula that are training mass communicators will be reviewed and reformed to produce individuals with a constructive and positive approach to using the media for the national good.
- The government ministries and agencies that oversee media: Media Council of Uganda, the Uganda Communications Commission, the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology together with the Ministry of Ethics and Integrity will all effectively carry out their respective mandates. Pray for the effective leadership and management of these organizations.

## SCRIPTURES FOR PRAYER

### PSALM 68:11

The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.

### DANIEL 12:4

But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, **and knowledge shall increase.**”

### I CORINTHIANS 9:22,23

To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. **I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.** I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

### MATTHEW 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

### MARK 13:10

And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.

### ROMANS 10:14,15

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!”**