

Tumwebaze's murder should act as a wake-up call

Last week, Uganda stood still at the news of the brutal killing of Pamela Tumwebaze, the director of student affairs at Uganda Christian University (UCU). A mother, leader and mentor to countless young people, her life was violently cut short in her own home.

Beyond the investigations and headlines, beyond the public outrage and mourning, there is a quieter and more painful reality.

Somewhere, two young children will wake up and reach for a mother who will never answer again. Long after the news cycle moves on, long after court proceedings conclude, those children will still be serving a sentence for a crime they did not commit.

And we must dare to ask ourselves a difficult question: If someone can plan evil without thinking about the two children left behind, what went wrong in their upbringing? This is not about blame. It is about individual's conscience.

WHO IS SHAPING OUR CHILDREN?

Every adult was once a child. Every violent hand was once small and dependent. Every hardened heart once trusted someone for protection.

Conscience does not disappear overnight. It weakens gradually when it is not nurtured. We are raising children in an era that prizes performance, speed and achievement.

We celebrate grades, trophies, promotions, and financial breakthroughs. But who is intentionally shaping empathy,



PARENTING
DICKSON TUMURAMYE

cultivating restraint and teaching our children to imagine the human consequences of their actions?

HOMES AS FIRST MORAL CLASSROOMS

Before society influences a child, before peers shape them, before institutions refine them, a home lays the foundation. It is at home that children learn whether human life is sacred or expendable. It is at home that they learn whether ambition must bow to integrity.

It is at home that they discover whether other people's pain matters. Moral decay does not begin in dark alleys. It begins when values become optional in our living rooms.

BEYOND THE CRIME SCENE

When violence happens, we often focus on the victim and the perpetrator. Rarely do we linger on the invisible victims – the children. A mother's love is not easily replaced. It is not a position that can be advertised and filled. It is security at bedtime. It is the voice that says, "You will be fine." It is the gentle correction that shapes character. It is the silent prayer whispered over a sleeping child.

One day, those children will attend school events and instinctively scan the crowd for a familiar face that will not be there. One day, they will face milestones – examinations, graduations, perhaps even marriage, and feel the quiet ache of absence. When we harm a parent, we are not only ending a life. We are reshaping the emotional future of children.

Children who grow up without parents often carry invisible wounds. Some will become resilient. Others will struggle silently with insecurity, grief, and unanswered questions that surface in unexpected seasons of life. Have we become so desensitised that we no longer pause to imagine these ripples?

PREPARING ADULTS IN OUR HOMES

The tragedy confronts us with uncomfortable reflection. Are we raising successful children or safe human beings? Are we producing sharp minds, but neglecting soft hearts? Are we training children to compete fiercely but failing to teach them to care deeply? Parenting is not merely about providing food, shelter and school fees. It is about forming conscience.

If children grow up in homes where dishonesty is excused, cruelty is tolerated, or selfishness is rewarded,

those lessons sink deep. If they hear repeatedly that "life is about survival at all costs," they may internalise a dangerous belief that other people's lives are secondary to their own desires. Character is not built accidentally. It is shaped intentionally through correction, conversation, and consistent example.

TEACHING MORAL IMAGINATION

One of the most neglected virtues of our time is moral imagination, the ability to see beyond oneself and anticipate how actions affect others.

When a child lies, do we simply punish the behaviour, or do we help them understand the trust that was broken?

When siblings quarrel, do we only separate them, or do we teach them to see each other's hurt?

When news of violence reaches our homes, do we scroll past it, or do we gather our children and discuss the sanctity of life?

We must teach our children to ask: "Who will be affected by what I do?" Because when conscience is alive, it interrupts evil before it matures. It whispers, "This will hurt someone." It cautions, "This will leave children behind." It restrains, "This is not right." But when conscience is neglected or silenced, and morals decay day by day, society pays a heavy price.

A NATION AT MORAL CROSSROADS

The killing of Tumwebaze is not only a criminal matter. It is a mirror before us as parents, educators, and leaders. It asks us whether we are forming a generation guided by values or driven solely by ambition.

If someone can plan evil without thinking about two children left behind, what went wrong in their upbringing?

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