'No need to shout while praying'

Students learnt to mind God's Word more than what socials pressure them to feel and think about.

BY KARIM MUYOBO

As the first school term draws near, the back-to-school excitement that once revolved around pool parties, house parties, bash parties, holidaymakers and hangouts is evolving. Now, children as young as five are trading holiday fun for faith, finding comfort and identity in Christ.

On a warm Saturday morning, more than 40,000 students from schools across Kampala streamed into Phaneroo Grounds in Naguru, dressed in bright colours. But they were not there for games; they had come to worship, pray and learn how to carry Christ into their classrooms.

Apostle Grace Lubega, founder and leader of Phaneroo Ministries International, used the annual Interschool Conference to call upon students to be witnesses of Christ, not loudly or confrontationally, but wisely.

"Some of you are in schools where you are discouraged from talking about Jesus," he preached. "Still, be witnesses, but use wisdom."

Boldness in the midst of threats

Drawing from Acts 4, Apostle Lubega reminded students that after Christ ascended into heaven, He left His disciples with a mandate: to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth. They taught nations, healed the sick and cast out demons.

"They performed many miracles, signs and wonders until the world around them was disturbed by their teaching," he preached. Religious leaders including priests, Pharisees and Sadducees—later conspired to suppress the Christian movement. Some believers were arrested, while others, like Stephen, were stoned to death.

Citing Acts 4:26, Apostle Lubega explained how the disciples, led by Peter and John, locked themselves in a room to pray amid growing threats:

"The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ." "They did not pray for safety," he preached. "They prayed for boldness." Verse 29 records their prayer: *"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,..."*

He also cited Acts 4:31: *"And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."*

Apostle Lubega urged students to embrace courage without confrontation—a lesson critical for school environments where religious expression may face limitations.

Shine quietly

Apostle Lubega warned students against actions that could bring them into conflict with school authorities, such as shouting prayers in classrooms or dormitories.

"Do you need to shout for the world to know you're praying?" he asked. "How many of you heard Jesus shouting when He prayed? Perhaps His disciples never even heard Him in His private moments of prayer."

He recalled a case in which university students were arrested for noise pollution after loud prayer meetings. "You were not arrested because you love Jesus," he preached. "You were arrested because you lacked wisdom."

The takeaway was: win souls while remaining at peace with teachers, administrators and neighbours.

Generation under pressure

According to Apostle Lubega, hostility toward Christian expression is growing worldwide. He cited Scotland, where schools have restricted public discussion of God, and US, where moral decline among youth is accelerating.

"Children aged 13 and 14 are already battling drugs and sexual immorality in countries that were once strong in faith," he said. Uganda, he warned, should not assume immunity.

"What has happened elsewhere can happen anywhere. Guard your faith while you still have the freedom to express it." He encouraged students to see their future professions as platforms for service, not just personal achievement.

"Some of you will be doctors for Jesus. Some will be engineers, pilots, worship leaders, mothers and fathers for Jesus," he preached. "Don't just be anything; be something for Jesus." He added that parents find peace when children choose God early, saying faith gives direction long before worldly success arrives.



TIP

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Praying with alignment

Apostle Lubega urged students to pray for things that advance God's mission rather than personal gain.

"Never pray for things that do not align with God's purpose for your life," he preached. He explained that God works only with what people willingly surrender.

"The first thing God wants is your heart. God does not use more than you give Him," he added. He outlined three prayers every believer should pray: Search me, bend me and use me.

To be "searched," he said, is to allow God to deal with pride, selfish ambition and moral compromise. To be "bent" is to become humble and flexible enough to serve anywhere. And to be "used" is to remain available, even when service is uncomfortable.

"Never look for a position," he told the students. "Look for service."

Sharing personal stories from his early ministry years marked by manual labour and unseen service, he said God entrusts influence only to those willing to start small.

Quoting Isaiah, Apostle Lubega said "Many people are gifted but unavailable. Faithfulness requires commitment and availability."

He encouraged students to become consistent soul-winners—not only during conferences but daily life. He said, "Every soul you win matters."

God, the true architect

Nicollette Lubega, Apostle Lubega's wife and a Phaneroo minister, addressed the students drawing from Psalm 139:13-16: "For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb... I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

She added that children today live in a world dominated by personal branding, social media filters, platforms and performances.

"But in the middle of all this noise, the most important question remains: Who are you?" she asked. "Who are you without your friends, your school, your family status, your voice, or the things that make you feel, 'I'm it'?"

Many students, she said, feel "under construction" by different architects—social media, peers, parents, trends and algorithms, especially in the AI era.

"The world pressures you to perform and impress," she preached. "We must shift our focus from performance to design, God's design because God's the true architect of your identity.

"You are not a self-made project," she added. "You are a handcrafted masterpiece."

God's grace is sufficient

Psalm 139, she explained that God intentionally formed their inner being.

"Your perceived flaws, weaknesses, insecurities and differences, are part of God's design," she said. "You may feel too short, too quiet or not as gifted as someone else. But Scripture reminds us that God's grace is sufficient, and His strength is made perfect in weakness."

Matthew 7:24-25 emphasises that identity built on grades, popularity or social approval is fragile, like a house built on sand.

Students were encouraged to see themselves not through the lens of social media or peer pressure, but through God's Word as the ultimate measure of worth and identity.

Worship music filled the grounds and students prayed together, the message was clear: faith in schools is not about rebellion or noise, but about conviction, wisdom and purpose.

Children during the interschool conference organised by Phaneero Ministries International recently. PHOTO/ KARIM MUYOBO

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