

# Holistic Transformation



The International Child Protection Conference (ICPC) was held in Nairobi, Kenya, at Daystar University in August. I was thrilled to be among the 462 participants. I went with an open heart ready to learn and experience new understanding on child protection matters. The call of this conference was to move from vulnerability to resilience, innovation and evidence. Issues of child protection on the African continent come from a backdrop of cultural challenges, global issues facing children and existing advocacy limitations and scholarly practices that provide gaps that hinder protection of children.

Chaplain Dr. Stephen Nduto (Daystar Univ.) opened the event by sharing this from Jesus' perspective.

“Matthew 19:14, ‘Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them’ is the cornerstone of our mandate in moving children from vulnerability to resilience, innovation and evidence.”

Jesus provided three important mandates:

**Protection** – He blessed and prayed for the children

**Intervention** – He rescued them from adult abuse by calling on them to bring the children to Him.

**Awareness** – For the Kingdom of God belongs to them. Beware that children have an important place in His Kingdom but also in this world.

The keynote speaker, ICCM leader from The Philippines Pastora Teresita Chua, emphasized that God wants us to ensure shalom (peace) for all our children. Shalom in the life of a child is a time where their heart is well, their vital structures and communities are at peace, their intellectual dimension is progressive, and their spiritual domain is growing.

The home should be a haven for every child, but

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There are more than 2 billion children in sub-Saharan Africa and more than half of these live in poverty. They experience gender-inequality, child neglect, malnutrition, jeopardized health, poor/no education access. **BUT** in the face of the African child vulnerability there is resilience. This does not mean we ignore their vulnerability; rather we need to limit these vulnerabilities by fighting for change that puts children at risk to places of safety and creating structures and environments of safety. We must champion the cause of children.

sometimes it isn't. Cases of incest, child labor, or in cases where the child is trained to be a marketable prostitute make the home unsafe for a child. We who are not home to such children must come out and be the *she bear* who fights to protect her cubs (Hosea 13:8).

Our God-given instincts must drive us to be vigilant and active in the protection of our children. This *she bear* characteristic is what we imitate from God. It is engraved in our hearts because we are created in His image and likeness. We need to stand in for all the children who, because they do not have parental advocates, are vulnerable, disenfranchised, marginalized and are therefore subject to all forms of exploitation. God, the ultimate *she bear*, commands us to provide love for our children.

There was such an amazing time of learning. Her concepts rocked our boats from the traditional approaches we use. We will not remain the same.

**P**ersist and do not give up on matters of child protection.

(Photos from top left: Teresita Chua pictured with ICCM alumna Violet, Youth camp participants, Violet presenting at the FMCK Youth camp.)



**V**iolet (Vio) Goro will graduate in December from Kenya University. Immediately after attending the ICPC Vio requested time at the FMCK Youth camp. She writes, "At the conference I was challenged to help the children in any way I can."

She used skits and songs in creative ways to convey the message of child protection awareness. She illustrated things that threaten child development (for example: drug abuse, gender-based violence, lack of education, violence towards children). She encouraged people to work in the church's children's ministry, so more children can come to know Jesus.