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TODAY'S

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*Reflections of the past*



*in Today's Spotlight*

**INSIDE: Missions**

**Andrew S. Lamb, MD, FACP**, spent the first 37 years of his life in or around the U.S. Army, growing up as an army “brat” and moving nearly every year. He graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1977, and married his wife Cathy two weeks after graduation. They served in Germany for three years before he decided on a medical career. He graduated from the University of Alabama School of Medicine in 1984. While serving at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, he deployed to Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm as Chief of Medicine for the 86th Evacuation Hospital. In 1992, he entered private practice at Kernodle Clinic in Burlington, North Carolina, where he remains in full practice. He serves as a GHO team leader to Moldova, El Salvador and Nepal. Dr. Lamb and his wife Cathy have three sons and reside in North Carolina.



## Training and Healing through PAACS

by **Bruce C. Steffes, MD, MBA, FACS, FWACS, FCS (ECSA)**

The sign over the exit door in the church proclaimed, “You are now entering the mission field.” In his article, Dr. Scheel made the same point—we are all called to proclaim the gospel no matter where God puts us. That is the principle underlying all that the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) does. We are training young African physicians to meet the unmet need of surgery in sub-Saharan Africa. In a recent article published in the *New York Times*, the point was made that 56 million people need surgery *today*. We know that all of those need healing of their souls as well as of their bodies.

PAACS is a commission of CMDA and was founded in 1996. We now have 40 residents in training with more expected in 2013. We have 27 national and career missionaries serving as faculty for eight programs in Kenya, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Gabon, Niger and Bangladesh, with others hoping to join us. Last year, more than 150 short-term faculty volunteers came and made a difference in the lives of African men and women. A total of 25 general surgeons and three pediatric surgeons have graduated, and virtually all are serving in underserved rural or urban areas, sharing Christ as they use their surgical skills.

General surgery in the developing world is surgery of “the skin and its contents.” Short-term missionary surgeons and physicians are vital in teaching both the faculty and residents the skills they will need when they are the only surgeon for up to 2.5 million people. Earlier this year, I was making teaching rounds as a “visiting professor.” One resident would occasionally disappear and someone else had to give the report on the missing resident’s patient. Concerned about the work ethic and sense of responsibility he was showing, I was about to upbraid

him when he pulled me aside and apologized for his absence. He led three people to the Lord on rounds. His example of making the main thing the main thing took the wind from my sails. I could hardly say, “Well, it is okay this time but don’t let that happen again!”

As I serve on various mission fields, it is exciting to get to know these young men and women. It is deeply satisfying to watch them and see the mentoring and teaching blossom in their lives. Frehun Ayele, a product of both general surgery and pediatric surgery training within the PAACS system, is scheduled to return soon to Addis Ababa in his home country and start a pediatric surgery program at Myungsung Christian Medical Center. He writes,

“Calling doesn’t mean comfort or lack of conflict. It is clear and continuous assurance by God Himself. In my seven years in PAACS, there have been many achievements and many frustrations, but the quality of PAACS training is obvious all over East Africa. There is wonderful leadership and great work for God. But for me, PAACS is more than that: it means God’s way and His means of pushing me closer to His calling and to the way of life He intended me to live.”

As the result of a personal spiritual crisis, I walked away from my practice in the U.S. 15 years ago, not knowing what God would have for me. I ended up being a “missionary.” Why do I continue to be an unpaid volunteer missionary with PAACS? Because God is working



and I get to have a front-row seat. PAACS is serious about both professional training and discipling because it may ultimately affect the entire continent. I do it because I see graduates returning to other hospitals, making a difference not only spiritually and medically but also in the financial security and level of care in these hospitals. I also support PAACS because it is the most cost-effective ministry I know. For the price of supporting one North American missionary for five years, we can train four African physicians for five years.

Most of all, I am a “missionary” in the sense that Dr. Scheel meant because, as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, “. . . Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (TNIV). I must be a missionary because I understand what a tremendous price Christ paid for me and I do not wish to live for myself.

**Bruce C. Steffes, MD, MBA, FACS, FWACS, FCS (ECSA)**, has

served as the Executive Director of PAACS since 2006. He has been a member of CMDA since 1974, and is also a member of the Continuing Medical and Dental Education Commission. He graduated from the University of Michigan, studied surgery at the University of Florida and received an MBA from Duke University. He is also certified in tropical medicine by the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene. Dr. Steffes is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, the West African College of Surgeons and the College of Surgery of East, Central and Southern Africa. He and his wife are authors of *Medical Missions: Get Ready, Get Set, Go!* and *Your Mission: Get Ready, Get Set, GO!*, both available through the CMDA Bookstore.



## *How God* Transformed My Life

by George Stewart, MD

**A**s I prepared to retire from medical practice in the fall of 2005, I was sad because I felt as though 40 years of training, research and experience in pulmonary disease and critical care medicine were being discarded. But God knows better.

In October 2005, I accepted Christ as my Savior and Messiah. That sadness I was feeling quickly transformed into joyfulness as I discovered a new purpose for my training. Instead of wasting four decades of experience, God opened the door for me to become involved in international medical education. In May 2006, I participated in my first medical mission trip to Liberia in West Africa. I was part of a mission team from our church with three pastors and three doctors. That first trip profoundly affected me. After seeing the devastation at Liberia’s JFK Medical Center, I returned to my home in Alaska committed to helping find the equipment and supplies needed at the hospital. Since that time, I have returned to Liberia on three more mission trips teaching providers how to use the materials we were able to send them.

It wasn’t until I returned from my first trip to Liberia that I became involved with CMDA. At a meeting of the Christian Medical/Dental Fellowship in Anchorage in 2006, I had the privilege of meeting CMDA’s CEO Dr. David Stevens. At his suggestion, I joined CMDA and got involved with Medical Education International, one of

CMDA’s outreach ministries. In 2007, I went on my first MEI trip to Kazakhstan. I was so honored and delighted

to be part of this teaching ministry. I’ve always enjoyed teaching, and God enabled me to share my medical knowledge with the medical students and my love of Christ when the opportunity arose.

My involvement with MEI and CMDA has continued to grow during the last few years. I have participated in three trips to China, even functioning as the team leader on one trip, and I am also now a member of the MEI Advisory Board. In 2013, I will be participating in a CMDE teaching program in Thailand for missionary physicians.

It is truly a blessing to have these opportunities to respond to God’s calling. Since coming to Christ in 2005, my path has been filled with joy, peace and a desire to serve others in Christ’s image. I have learned how to say “YES” when God calls me to a mission. Whatever skills I brought to the bedside while I was still practicing were there because God used me to care for those patients and their families. Now HE is directing me to carry the word of Jesus and teach healthcare to others around the world through medical education.

*(Author bio on following page)*

