



**W**elcome to the first edition of the PAACS Alumni Newsletter celebrating the St Luke's PAACS Alumni Surgical Society. This biannual newsletter will be exclusively devoted to our PAACS graduates serving both as an encouragement to them and praising what God is doing in each of their lives. In each newsletter, we will highlight a few of our alumni who are dispersed across Africa doing kingdom work for Christ. PAACS spiritual dean, Stan Key, will also share with us an encouraging devotional from God's Word. In this issue, we focus on Dr Aiah Lebbie, a pediatric surgeon in Sierra Leone, and Dr Jacques Ebhele, one of our newest PAACS graduates in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Praise God for their stories and the journeys they have embarked upon. We appreciate your feedback and prayers.

— Thomas C Robey, MD  
Editor; trobey@mcw.edu

## Serving the Lord in the DRC

— Jacques Ebhele, MD

**D**r Jacques Ebhele is one of PAACS most recent graduates, having just finished his surgical residency at Bongolo Hospital in Gabon. He was born and raised in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and currently lives in Bunia, a city of over 400,000 people with only 2 surgeons (a native Congolese surgeon and a Canadian surgeon) covering all the surgical needs of 2 hospitals in the city and 2 huge adjoining provinces. Jacques will be the third surgeon. Jacques recently shared with us the challenges and joy a PAACS graduate faces in finding a job post graduation. "Almost all of the hospitals in my area wanted to hire me, but the decision about which one to pick was the hardest task I have ever faced. It required numerous site visits, much energy, time and financial resources and multiple discussions with various people to make the final decision." The placement also must meet PAACS's policy for PAACS residents who received financial support throughout their training. For each year of support during the residency, the resident must give a year of service. Dr Ebhele stated that this was well explained to him before he began his residency. He also shared that it was a collective decision on his final practice location. "First, I made the decision to come back to my home country to serve the population most in need of surgery. The final decision between the various hospitals was the result of prayers, discussion with my PAACS program director, Dr Keir Thelander, and the local church, governmental



health leaders and colleagues in the area. It was not an easy decision to make." Dr Ebhele's family was in prayer for him throughout this decision process. He feels at peace that God has answered his prayers and brought him to the place God had in mind.

Dr Ebhele's journey to PAACS began in 2008 when his father in-law heard about PAACS during his time in the United States receiving his education. Jacques had always wanted to become a surgeon but was not sure about when, where and how to do that. He felt that the news from his father in-law was a miracle from God. From there he searched the PAACS website, liked what he saw and applied for a residency position. PAACS has made a huge impact on his life not only training him to become a surgeon but also making him a disciple of Christ. Dr Ebhele's patients are positively impacted because of this. "PAACS trains us to take care of their body and soul. I pray that it would be the same in my practice in the DRC." Dr Ebhele also felt that one of the unique things about his PAACS training is that, "PAACS cares about our spiritual life. PAACS shaped me in such a way, that I practice surgery with the goal of glorifying the Lord. My personal life is a victory in Christ and for Christ. Christ made my dream come true through PAACS. I am thankful to the Lord, then to PAACS as a wonderful organization that produces special surgeons. Through PAACS, I became a surgeon who knows Christ." Please keep the Ebhele family in your prayers as they continue their transition back to the DRC.

## The Wounded Surgeon

*Like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand – Jeremiah 18:6*



by Stan Key,  
PAACS Spiritual Dean

**I**t's amazing what God can do with dirt! At creation, he made man out of the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7). Similarly, in the work of re-creation, God likens the process to a potter at his wheel working with clay (Jer. 18). Yes, in the hands of the Master, a little dirt and a little water can become a thing of beauty. But note it well: this dirt is alive; this clay has a mind of its own. It can choose whether or not to cooperate with the Master's plan.

I wish I could tell you that God's purposes for your life did not involve pain, but nothing could be further from the truth. To create the masterpiece he has in mind, God will need to hurt the dirt and slay the clay. The process will involve pounding, squeezing, spinning, shaping, reshaping, and then doing it all again. Then, just when you think you can't stand any more, the Master Potter will scoop you up and throw you into a fiery furnace. Yes, there will be moments when the lump of clay wants to run screaming from the Potter's House crying, "Enough, I can't take any more!" But don't run. Though the process may hurt, allow him the privilege of finishing what he started. Stay on the wheel. Remain in the furnace. God knows what he is doing. Trust him. He is making a masterpiece.

# A PAACS Ebola Fighter in Sierra Leone — Aiah Lebbie, MD



Dr Lebbie, Dr Salia was at a PAACS training program in Cameroon. “He told me pleasant things about the training program and encouraged me to apply.” Dr Lebbie is currently the only pediatric surgeon in Sierra Leone. Prior to the Ebola outbreak, he would run a pediatric surgical clinic at Holy Spirit Hospital four days a week with elective surgeries on Wednesdays. He was chief of surgery at the hospital and would visit hospitals across the country coordinating surgical care throughout Sierra Leone.

**D**r Aiah Lebbie decided to become a surgeon because of the great need for surgeons in his home country of Sierra Leone and his “admiration for the rapid response of patients to certain surgical operations”. He graduated from the PAACS surgical residency program at Mbingo Hospital in 2010 and completed his fellowship in pediatric surgery at Bethany Kids in 2013. Dr Lebbie was introduced to PAACS by the late, Martin Salia, MD, who recently died after contracting the Ebola virus in Liberia. At the time he shared PAACS with

The Ebola epidemic has led to a significant reduction in pediatric surgical patients coming to his hospital and led to the closure of the OR. He now spends most of his time coordinating infection control for his hospital and seeing pediatric medical cases. Dr Lebbie reports that the Ebola crisis has greatly affected the children of Sierra Leone resulting in many deaths both from the virus as well as from non-Ebola disease because many parents are afraid to take their children to the hospital, resulting in unnecessary illness and deaths at home. Moreover, many children in Sierra Leone have been orphaned due to the

epidemic and the educational system in the country has stagnated. Dr Lebbie’s own family has been confined to their home for fear of contracting the deadly disease. His children are unable to attend school. He has had one cousin and her husband die from the disease leaving behind 4 children whom his wife and he are considering adopting. Despite these terrors, Dr Lebbie reports that God has been faithful in answering their prayers, “God has kept my family safe and I have had the privilege of ministering Christ to sick children and their families and some have accepted him as their Lord and Savior, which has been my greatest achievement.”

Dr Lebbie’s long-range goals are to establish a pediatric surgical service in his country, training future pediatric surgeons and sharing Christ with them. The spiritual and surgical training he received through PAACS has led Dr Lebbie to provide more compassionate care for his patients. His PAACS training has also strengthened his walk with Christ both in his prayer life and spending more time in God’s Word. Most of all, being mentored by PAACS lead-

ers has made him look at life with a different eye. “I see life as one that is intended to serve the needy, the poor and the sick. I now derive greater satisfaction in life than I could have ever imagined before joining PAACS.” Most of all, Dr Lebbie insisted that the readership understand that “PAACS is the answer to the acute shortage of surgeons on the African continent.” Dr Lebbie asked that we continue to pray for the safety of his family during the Ebola outbreak and he would also like to thank those that have provided him with pediatric surgical instruments, which has helped facilitate his dream of setting up his pediatric surgical practice in Sierra Leone.

*Editor’s note – please lift all the PAACS graduates who are serving in Ebola stricken areas up to the Lord in prayer: Jerry Brown, MD (Liberia), Ruffin Loua, MD (Guinea Conakry), Jean Faya Yaradouno, MD (Guinea Conakry).*



## What our PAACS Graduates need...

All our graduates need more surgical supplies, sutures and instruments. Below are more specific requests. Please contact them if you can help!

- |                         |  |   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Dr Jean Claude Bataneni | <a href="mailto:jcbat25@gmail.com">jcbat25@gmail.com</a>                   | SIGN nail set, oxygen concentrators, suction machines and insulin                   |
| Dr Jerry Brown          | <a href="mailto:fahnloe@yahoo.com">fahnloe@yahoo.com</a>                   | VP shunt passer, ultrasound, orthopedic drill, chest tubes, ped foley catheters     |
| Dr Henry Ine            | <a href="mailto:henrotine@yahoo.co.uk">henrotine@yahoo.co.uk</a>           | SIGN nail set, visiting orthopedic surgeon  |
| Dr Aaiiah Lebbie        | <a href="mailto:aiahlebbie2005@gmail.com">aiahlebbie2005@gmail.com</a>     | Neonatal/pediatric endotracheal tubes, a pediatric rib retractor, anesthetic agents |
| Dr Anthony Nesoah       | <a href="mailto:ngoanesoah@yahoo.com">ngoanesoah@yahoo.com</a>             | Visiting teaching faculty   |
| Dr Chukwudi Okorie      | <a href="mailto:okorieco@mail.ru">okorieco@mail.ru</a>                     | Portable, endoscopic urology equipment  |
| Dr Tewodros Tamiru      | <a href="mailto:dr.tediaddis2008@yahoo.com">dr.tediaddis2008@yahoo.com</a> | GI endoscopes, visiting urologists, CT and plastic surgeons                         |

## Please join us in praying for our PAACS Graduates

*[Editor’s note: With the increasing number of graduates, there are too many requests to list them all in this edition. The remainder will be shared in the upcoming editions.]*



- Dr Frehun Ayele – Ethiopia
- Dr Jack Barasa – Kenya
- Dr Jean Claude Bataneni – DRC
- Dr Jerry Brown – Liberia
- Dr Jacques Ebhele – DRC
- Dr Ighoghwo Etuh – Uganda
- Dr Henry Ine – Tanzania
- Dr Aaiiah Lebbie – Sierra Leone
- Dr John Muma – Kenya
- Dr Anthony Nesoah – Cameroon
- Dr Chukwudi Okorie – Nigeria
- Dr Heuric Rakotomalala – Madagascar
- Dr Yali Ramazani – Cameroon
- Dr Sahalnirina Rasamimanana – Madagascar
- Dr Tewodros Tamiru – Ethiopia
- Dr Simplicie Tchoba – Gabon

- For the Bethany Kids-Pediatric Service @ MCM
- For wisdom for leadership, work and family
- For peace and safety during national elections and his boys’ schooling
- Praise God for his protection of his family from Ebola
- For his family’s adjustment to their new surroundings
- For his family to remain faithful to the Lord through his fellowship
- For God’s blessings on their ministry at the hospital
- For God’s wisdom – should they remain at this hospital?
- For God’s guidance with his practice
- For God’s termination of the Boko - Haram
- For God’s protection of those being persecuted in northern Nigeria
- For the new hospital and their children’s education
- For their potential move back to the DRC next year
- For their children’s education in the USA
- For national elections and wife’s travels to school
- For my work, family and wisdom