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Because He Lives

DR. MUGISHA NKORONKO, TANZANIA

My name is Dr. Mugisha Ntiyonza Nkoronko, a PAACS graduate from the surgical training program at Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre (ALMC) in Tanzania. I was born in rural southwest Tanzania and raised in a Christian family. I am a husband to Vera and a father to Aislinn and Einstein.



Tanzania, like other sub-Saharan African countries, suffers a critical surgical shortage of surgeons. It is this same shortage that necessitated my father, who suffered a severe head injury in 1995, to travel more than 1,000 kms to find a surgeon who could drain the blood clot in his brain. This accident motivated me to become a medical doctor and then a surgeon, so I can be a part of the solution to meet the critical need for surgeons in my country. This experience, which could have resulted in a tragedy for my family, caused a desire within me to stay in my country and provide surgical care for the people who are most in need of help like my father.

It is through PAACS that I learned to be a Christian surgeon and to be a part of the solution to many pathologies that requires surgical attention. I first read about PAACS while doing a Google search and heard of it from my friend who had started training with PAACS as a surgeon at ALMC. I also read through the PAACS website and was convinced that this training could help me to serve my people as a surgeon. I applied and was admitted at ALMC.

"I am committed to spending my life as a practicing surgeon, serving God and His people."

The PAACS training program was rigorous. I almost gave up after the first year but, with God's help, I persevered. PAACS exposed me to both surgical and spiritual skills on how to alleviate the physical and spiritual suffering the human body experiences in the world. I graduated from the PAACS ALMC training program in 2019. PRAISE GOD.

After graduation, I accepted a position at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center. I am currently employed as a surgical registrar and am waiting a promotion after I receive my license. Praise the Lord, who is our sustainer and provider, for He cares for me and my family.

I am committed to spending my life as a practicing surgeon, serving God and His people. As I progress in my surgical career, I hope to be engaged in surgical education and research. In addition, my wife, Vera, and I have started a foundation, Netcare, to advocate for surgery, leadership, and gospel missions in Africa.

I am convinced that because Jesus lives, I can face tomorrow.



2020 has been an interesting year. The effects of the Coronavirus pandemic have been felt globally, and we all have had to adjust. As we usher in this special season and reflect on the birth of Jesus, it is also a good time to reflect on the blessings, challenges, and growth that we have witnessed both at a personal and collective level. Let us fix our eyes and focus on Jesus, our Lord and Savior, who is also the author and finisher of our faith.

In this edition, we feature articles about our PAACS graduates, Dr. Mugisha and Dr. Mwaura. Dr. Ed Scearce, PAACS Spiritual Dean, will also share insight into the word of God. We hope you are inspired by these stories and encouraged to see how God is using them to serve Him and His people.

Congratulations to the newest PAACS graduates. We welcome you as new members to the alumni association. Finally, we invite our PAACS alumni, new and old, to submit articles for the forthcoming issues. If interested, kindly contact the editors.

Stay safe, and God bless you!

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21 Countries with PAACS Graduates



The Lord Lights My Path

DR. ELIJAH MWAURA, KENYA



My name is Elijah Mwaura, PAACS Surgeon (GS) at PCEA Chogoria Hospital, Kenya. I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, a husband to one (Carol), and a father of two girls (ages two and five). I was brought up in a large family with seven siblings in Central Kenya and graduated as a doctor from Moi University at Eldoret Kenya.

I heard about PAACS after my medical training through a newspaper advertisement. PAACS was not commonly known as a surgical training program at that time. There were only two training classes before mine at Tenwek Hospital. My training through PAACS at Tenwek Hospital in Kenya was excellent. I was able to get hands-on, intense, and quality surgical training. Despite the rigor of the program, my training was also very enjoyable. Everyone at the PAACS program made me feel like we were all part of a family.

Since 2015, I have been working at PCEA Chogoria Hospital in Kenya, a place with a wonderful community. I am the Chief of Surgery and also the Program Director for COSECSA. I can now see that my training through PAACS prepared me for these leadership positions. My surgical interests are minimally invasive surgery and upper gastrointestinal surgery. This region of Kenya has had many cases of gastroesophageal disorders which has led my focus in this direction.

"I am praying that the Lord will not just light my path, but also help me to walk in His path."

As I move forward in my work, I want to be more involved in providing surgical training, mentoring, and discipling similar to what I received at PAACS. I want to give back to my community and people what I received through God and the PAACS ministry. I am praying that the Lord will not just light my path, but also help me to walk in His path. I desire to fulfill the purposes which He has for me.

We have felt the effects of COVID-19 in my work at Chogoria Hospital. In the beginning of this pandemic, the number of patients we treated decreased. There was a lot of fear and uncertainty in the community and few people wanted elective surgery. There were even many questions and fear among the physicians and surgeons about what would happen if one of our patients had COVID-19. This is where I must continue to trust God through this situation. However, the fear has subsided, and the patient numbers have increased. We still face a challenge with referrals and transfers. The inconvenience of determining the COVID-19 status of the patient before referral is a big problem. Hopefully, tomorrow brings better tidings.

Please continue to pray for me and my family. May I walk in the path that God has set before me and fulfill His purposes and plans as a believer, leader, surgeon, husband, and father.

Think Like Jesus

DR. ED SCEARCE, SPIRITUAL DEAN

The mind is a powerful thing. It is capable of taking us to dizzying heights and dismaying lows in a matter of moments. Certain professions require a particular mindset. This is most certainly true in the surgical world. Perhaps we could say, "To be a great surgeon, you must first think like a great surgeon."

The same is true for the spiritual area of our lives. To be a fully devoted follower of Christ, you must think like Christ. Here is how the Apostle Peter stated it; "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,..." 1 Peter 4:1 (ESV)

Notice the imperative in this verse: We are to "arm" ourselves. It has the meaning of "making preparations for some activity", "to equip oneself." Every great surgeon makes certain they are prepared and that their OR is equipped for the upcoming surgery. To do less would be a travesty.

Likewise, as believers, we must equip ourselves for the mission God has set us upon. The equipment referred to here is not some instrument we hold in our hand but a mindset, a heart attitude. We are to arm ourselves with the same way of thinking that Jesus displayed. Our actions will reveal if indeed we are thinking like Jesus. Below are a couple of ways that come out of the context of 1 Peter 4.

We live for the will of God. (v. 4:2) Our godly lifestyle surprises those who are not believers. (v. 4:4) We love one another earnestly. (v. 4:8) We show hospitality willingly. (v. 4:9) We seek to glorify God with our every action. (v. 4:11)

We expect to suffer for our faith. (v. 4:12; 2:21) We look for opportunities to share the gospel. (3:15)

We do not retaliate. (2:23)

We entrust our lives to God. (v. 4:19)

As you "think" through the above list, are you in need of an attitude adjustment? Remember, it is possible to do some or perhaps all on the list and yet not think like Jesus. This is not a checklist of things we must do. Who we are is revealed by what we do. It is a heart and mind attitude of living as Jesus lived. We cannot do this in our own strength. We need supernatural help. That is why Romans 12:2 exhorts us to "...be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Oh God! Help me think like Jesus!

