



# The PAACS Bulletin

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## **OUR MISSION**

PAACS' mission is to glorify God by training and discipling African surgeons and related specialists to become Christ-like leaders and servants providing excellent and compassionate care to those most in need.

## **OUR VISION**

PAACS envisions a growing number of African surgeons and related specialists living out the Gospel and ministering to the sick.

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## FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

**Susan Koshy, JD, MPH**  
Chief Executive Officer

Dear PAACS Family,

On February 14, the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) marked 30 years of ministry. For three decades, we have been privileged to train surgeons and related specialists, discipling leaders who serve with both skill and Christ-centered compassion.

In 1996, Dr. David Thompson and a small group of missionary surgeons decided to launch a residency and discipleship program in Africa. The vision was clear, to train and disciple African surgeons and related specialists to deliver excellent care, lead with Christ-centered character, and share the love of Christ with their patients. Thirty years later, that vision is established and continues to expand.

To our donors and partners, your prayers and generosity are the investment behind this 30-year mission. Because of your faithful support, surgical and related specialty care, as well as the Good News of Jesus, will continue to reach the poor and underserved across Africa for decades to come.

To celebrate this milestone, 30-year anniversary videos are available on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#). Additionally, Dr. Thompson has released *The Curse of Bongolo Falls*, documenting how one faithful beginning grew into a continent-wide movement.

To further celebrate our 30th anniversary, please join us on June 20th at New Hope Christian Church in Whitestown, IN for [Held by His Hands](#). The program begins with a VIP dinner, followed by a PAACS presentation and a concert featuring Big Daddy Weave. Admission is free. We would love for you to attend and celebrate God's faithfulness to PAACS for 30 years. For more information, please email [Peggy.Ndlovu@paacs.net](mailto:Peggy.Ndlovu@paacs.net).

We have also launched special 30th-anniversary storefronts featuring commemorative apparel and gifts with our anniversary logo. You can find these exclusive items at our PAACS [Lands' End](#), [Print Your Cause](#), and [QB](#) storefronts.

We will continue our celebration of 30 years of the PAACS ministry March 1-12, 2026, as we gather at Brackenhurst, Kenya, for the PAACS Junior Boot Camp. This Boot Camp will be an intensive time of clinical learning and spiritual growth that sets the foundation for the approximately 50 new residents who began their journey with us in January 2026. These trainees are the future of surgical and related specialty care across Africa. I am looking forward to my time with our new residents and PAACS faculty at the Junior Boot Camp.

As we equip this next generation, our hearts are full of gratitude for the 30 years of faithfulness that have made this mission possible. We celebrate all that God has accomplished and look forward to the future of PAACS. May He continue to bless this ministry for many more years to come.

Blessings,

Susan A. Koshy, JD, MPH  
Chief Executive Officer



# PAACS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

**David Thompson, MD, FACS, FWACS**  
**PAACS Founder**

Has it already been thirty years since PAACS started? Some of today's PAACS residents weren't even born in 1996, and for them 1996 is ancient history! Back then Archbishop Desmond Tutu was holding hearings in Pretoria to investigate apartheid-era human rights violations, and an uprising in eastern DRC backed by Rwanda and Uganda sought to oust the DRC's dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko. That same year Nigeria's Olympic football team won the gold medal in Atlanta, defeating Argentina 3-2, and the Democratic Republic of Congo was called Zaire. That same year, the Christian Medical and Dental Association held its 65th Annual General Meeting in Bamako, Mali. The ratio of trained surgeons to population was one per 200,000—one-fifteenth of the ratio in the United States and Europe. So, it's no surprise that in February of 1996, a meeting of tired missionary surgeons from hospitals around Africa, several academic surgeons from the U.S., and a CMDA representative went completely unnoticed by the world. But God was there too, and he certainly noticed!

To me it seems like yesterday when one day as I was praying to God—complaining might be a better word—and griping that He didn't seem to be hearing my plea to send another surgeon to help me. I had prayed that prayer for two years, and God hadn't done what I asked. But on that day as I was praying, I heard in my heart the words, "You train them, David!" My immediate reaction was that it was a ridiculous random thought, so I kept pleading with God. Almost immediately those same words came again, only more forcefully: "You train them, David!" My initial answer to God was, "How? I am already working myself to exhaustion as the only surgeon in south Gabon! How can I add that to my plate?" God didn't answer. Eventually I began asking Him to show me how I could train surgeons, and over the next six months I realized that I already had the answer: train them exactly as I was trained over five years, including use the same textbooks and examinations, and teach them gradually in the operating room and on postoperative rounds. What would be different would be disciplining my residents in God's Word during their five years of training. Looking back on it all, I can only say, "It was God's idea, and he made it possible!"

How do I know that? Because I was there at the Brackenhurst Conference when in faith ten or so missionary surgeons and visiting academic surgeons who were teaching at the conference bowed in prayer and asked God to help us do the impossible and establish surgical residency programs in our hospitals! At the time, none of us missionary surgeons had academic credentials, our hospitals had no funding to build housing for residents or support them, and some expressed serious doubt that any of Africa's governments or universities would recognize or even tolerate our surgical training programs. But we had God on our side, and the sobering awareness that if we did not succeed, most of our hospitals would probably disappear within a decade or two after we grew old and retired.

# PAACS 30TH ANNIVERSARY (CONT'D)



**David Thompson, MD, FACS, FWACS  
PAACS Founder**

Of course, we were not the only heroes in the founding of PAACS, and not the only ones who believed that God could do the impossible. The first residents to sign up to be trained for five years of their lives in our unimpressive hospitals were the first residents to volunteer! Dr. Paolo Baltazar was the first, and he was encouraged by Dr. Bob Foster, one of Africa's best-known missionary surgeons. During his decades of service in Angola, he established not just one, but several mission hospitals, including the CEML hospital in Lubango. Dr. Stanley Quanbeck, a missionary surgeon from Madagascar who attended some of our formative PAACS meetings at the Brackenhurst Conference encouraged one of his protégés, Dr. Harison Rasamimanana, to apply to be our second resident. Both of these first graduate surgeons finished in 2002 and are still serving at Christian hospitals in their home countries. Their example of faith encouraged others to apply, and the rest, as we say, is history!

From the beginning to the present, the gracious and merciful hand of God has blessed PAACS, and on all of us who have trusted Him and served Him in obedience.



**PAACS Founders  
Kenya, 1996**



**Dr. David Thompson (Left)  
Dr. Paolo Baltazar (Center)**



**1<sup>st</sup> PAACS Graduate  
Dr. Harison & Wife with Dr. Thompson**



**Dr. Thompson Teaching Dr. Baltazar**

# WACS (WEST AFRICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS) 2026



**Keir Thelander, MD, FACS, FWACS, FCS (ECSA)  
Executive Vice President**

PAACS had a strong presence at the WACS meeting in Accra, Ghana, February 8-12. As a preconference ALL-SAFE, a PAACS facilitated program for laparoscopic training, hosted about 20 surgical residents for a one-day training in laparoscopic surgery and simulation. The opening ceremonies were a wonderful event to hear from the president of Ghana and other surgical and health leaders in Ghana. A few PAACS grads, PAACS residents, and faculty were in attendance and presented papers on their experience in laparoscopic surgery among other topics. PAACS graduate, Dr. Blessing Ngam from Mbingo spoke on laparoscopic training simulation and implementation. PAACS EVP, Keir Thelander, presented on PAACS as an organization and its impact in Africa, giving a challenge to broaden the rural-based training of surgeons. Dr. Aminat, 5th year resident from Galmi, presented her work on bowel perforation exclusive of typhoid perforations. The conference was highlighted by the awarding of certificates to the membership and fellowship levels with PAACS graduate Dr. Jerry Brown, from Mbingo now in Liberia, becoming a WACS fellow by election. Some meetings were held with WACS leadership to discuss pathways to recognition. Pray with us that the Lord will open these doors for our trainees and graduates.



## **Visit to EP Church Mission Hospital of the International Health and Development Network**

On Thursday PAACS EVP and Academic Dean Emeritus, John Tarpley, made the long journey to almost the Togo border to visit a hospital looking to have a PAACS training site. Dr. Edem Agamah was our host as he is the founder and visionary as well as director of the hospital. Dr. Agamah began this work in 1996 (their 30th anniversary just like PAACS!!!) He has made almost 50 trips since that inception with the facility now growing to 100 beds, developing a surgical service, and a growing OB/GYN service. This area of Ghana is impacted greatly by syncretism as spirit worship is prevalent. PAACS looks forward to seeing the growth, development, and prayerfully eventual beginning of PAACS training in Ghana. Prayers are needed for guidance, direction, and open doors.



# MALAMULO OUTREACH

**Brent Sherwin, MD**  
Program Director, General Surgery  
Malamulo Adventist Hospital

For the last several years I have felt impressed that our program needed to get involved with outreach to the community surrounding our hospital. Through a series of talks with our local community leaders and traditional authority, God opened the doors for us to be able to start this project in January 2026. We were blessed to combine our outreach with the dental team at the village of Magwira which is a 20-minute drive from the hospital. The surgical team who went included myself, Dr. Matthew Kolleh (PGY5), Dr. Joela Hayibor (PGY2) and our translator Maxwell. During our time at the village health center, we were able to discuss a number of topics such as BPH, prostate cancer, gastritis, and esophageal cancer. A crowd of approximately 70-80 people were in attendance, and they had many insightful questions. It was an incredible experience to go to our patient's "home" to discuss some of these common surgical conditions, and we were also able to screen several of them to come to the hospital for further care. We pray that God continues to bless these outreaches as we go on a monthly basis into the community.





# A LEGACY CONTINUED: THE 13TH PAACS GRADUATION AT TENWEK HOSPITAL

**Mercy Mitei, MD**  
Assistant Program Director, General Surgery  
Tenwek Hospital

On January 16th, we were thrilled to celebrate the graduation of our trainees who completed training in December 2025. Graduating residents represented four key disciplines: General Surgery (Dr. Ian Simel), Orthopaedic Surgery (Dr. Oscar Rotich), Obstetrics and Gynaecology (Dr. Fred Omondi) and Cardiothoracic Surgery (Dr. Lijalem Garba). Their achievements stand as a testament to years of rigorous training, mentorship, and dedication to compassionate, high-quality surgical care rooted in faith and service.



A defining highlight of the ceremony was the address by the guest of honor, Dr. Philip Blasto, who is a graduate of the Tenwek PAACS program and now the Chief of Surgery at AIC Litein Hospital. In a heartfelt and inspiring speech, Dr. Blasto challenged graduates to remain Christ-centered surgeons, emphasizing that technical excellence must be matched by humility, integrity, and authenticity in leadership. His message underscored the calling of surgery as both a profession and a ministry, encouraging new graduates to lead with compassion and genuine character as they serve their communities.

# SALINE PROCESS EVANGELISM TRAINING



**Ed Scarce, DMin, ThM**  
Spiritual Dean

For the past four years PAACS has been in the process of incorporating evangelism training for all of its residents and faculty. It is called Saline Process Evangelism training. We have worked with ICMDA and with Drs. Rachel Nunn and Mark Topazian to facilitate the training and to certify PAACS on Teacher Trainers. This month we had our first training seminar led solely by PAACS faculty. Praise be to God! Below is a report from Dr. Laurie Elit who serves at Mbingo Baptist Hospital in Cameroon. Thank you Dr. Elit and Dr. Chukwuemeka for serving in such a vital capacity! It has an impact throughout your hospital and across PAACS.



**Laurie Elit, MD, MSc, DTMH, FRCS(C)**  
Faculty, Gynecologic Oncology  
Mbingo Baptist Hospital

After years of trying to bring the Saline Process program to Mbingo Hospital Cameroon, the first in-person course was held Feb 13-14, 2026. Two homegrown trainers, Drs. Chukwuemeka Nwegbu and Laurie Elit led the training. Attending were 20 residents, faculty, chaplains and hospital administrators. The training did



not come without certain distractions. Emeka who played John in John's journey was literally on a crutch due to the flare of a recent knee injury. A noted highlight of the training was the mixture of health personnel and chaplains in the small groups. It gave them an appreciation of each other's role in the spiritual journey of the patient. A vision was birthed for sharing the gospel not just one on one with patients at Mbingo but to train all 500 hospital staff at this site and ultimately at the 10 other Cameroon Baptist Convention Healthcare facilities.



# KIJABE SHORT TERM MISSION TRIP

**Elizabeth Drum MD, FAAP, FCPP, FASA**  
**Secretary**  
**Board of Directors**



I had the pleasure of visiting Kijabe, Kenya Feb 4-13, 2026.

My primary purpose was to support the work of the Anesthesiology Department while Dr. Matt Kynes is on home assignment in the US. An additional goal was to work with some of the 9 anesthesiology residents, most of whom I joined in clinical care, educational programs and bible study. I was delighted to work along-side Dr. Eunice Kageha and Dr. Rebecca Dufe, the first two graduates of the PAACS Anesthesiology residency program, who are now consultants in Anesthesiology at Kijabe and hopefully soon-to-be faculty members for the PAACS Anesthesiology residency program. They were members of the first class of graduates of the CANECSA curriculum, and Dr. Eunice received an award for the highest scoring candidate of all the CANECSA graduates from 12 different countries!

In addition to supporting the residents, anesthesiologists and Dr. Greg Sund, I had the pleasure of meeting and working with several PAACS surgical residents and consultants. I spent time supporting the new neurosurgery program and also met with other local champions at Kijabe including David Shirk, ED of Friends of Kijabe and Dr. Britney Grayson, Chief Medical Officer of Bethany Kids. Work on the new housing construction project for residents is underway, and the first phase is projected to be completed by the end of 2026.

At the weekly Chapel program, I learned that in 2025 Kijabe had a total of 67 residents and 224 visiting learners and there were almost 10,000 surgical procedures performed at Kijabe hospital!

# PAACS NEWS



## 30TH ANNIVERSARY MERCHANDISE STOREFRONTS

To mark this anniversary, we have launched two new PAACS merchandise storefronts, alongside our existing Lands' End store:

Print Your Cause – featuring 30th anniversary apparel and scrubs

Queensboro – offering a wide range of apparel and accessories across various price points

Lands' End - providing premium business-casual styles and accessories



### HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF SHIRLEY SUE CROPSEY

Shirley Sue Cropsey, a devoted servant who spent 20 years as a missionary and nurse in Togo, passed away on February 9, 2026. Shirley opened her home with generous hospitality, led Bible studies, mentored spouses of medical professionals, served faithfully in children's ministry, and nurtured meaningful relationships through a faithful, far-reaching correspondence ministry. Her positive attitude through decades of medical challenges was a testimony to her unwavering confidence in the goodness of God, even in the midst of suffering. Her legacy lives on through her husband, Dr. Robert Cropsey, their four sons, and thirteen grandchildren, all of whom she nurtured in the love of Jesus.



MARCH 23, 2026



# PAACS Global Day of Fasting & Prayer

Join the PAACS family around the world for a dedicated day of prayer and fasting as we celebrate 30 years of God's faithfulness. Together, we will give thanks for His sustaining grace, His abundant provision, and the countless lives He has touched through the training and discipleship of African Christian surgeons and related specialists.

Let us unite in gratitude for all He has accomplished over these 30 years and in confident hope for all He will continue to do in the years ahead.

Fast as the Lord leads, and join us in prayer on March 23rd.

Email [Peggy.Ndlovu@paacs.net](mailto:Peggy.Ndlovu@paacs.net) for more details.

## PRAYER GATHERING #1

US & CANADA

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH

1:00 PM ET / 12:00 PM CT

11:00 AM MT / 10:00 AM PT

AFRICA

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH

8:00 PM EAT / 7:00 PM CAT

6:00 PM WAT / 5:00 PM GMT

## PRAYER GATHERING #2

US & CANADA

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH

8:00 PM ET / 7:00 PM CT

6:00 PM MT / 5:00 PM PT

AFRICA

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11TH

3:00 AM EAT / 2:00 AM CAT

1:00 AM WAT / 12:00 AM GMT

# PRAYER & PRAISE

- Pray for God's favor over all PAACS training programs, that they will glorify God and be used to impact Africa for His Kingdom.
- Pray for all the attendees at the Junior Bootcamp Conference held March 1-12 in Brackenhurst, Kenya, including first-year PAACS residents, along with the speakers, facilitators, and families.
- Pray that the Held by His Hands concert will be a powerful night of worship, where every heart is stirred by God's faithfulness and the mission of healing in Africa. May His hand be upon every detail of the evening as PAACS seeks to provide the resources and surgeons needed to carry His hope to the poor and underserved.

Each month, we pray for residents by name. Please join us this month by covering these residents in prayer:

- Habtamu Tadesse
- Misgana Aylate
- Yodahe Tadesse Woudineh
- Nahusenay Besha
- Endomiyas Zenebe
- Biruk Tafesse Meja
- Dereje Hunduma
- Fitsum Tamiru Deressa
- Bantayehu Jifara Negasa
- Betsegaw Desta Tirago
- Sirak Minale Demisse
- Dawit Beyore
- Getiso Tarekegn Asfaw
- Kalkidan Gulilat Taddessa
- Naol Jigi
- Mekbib Abebe Mekengo



# ARTICLES ON SURGERY, OB/GYN, AND ANESTHESIA

*Compiled by Margaret Tarpley*

- [Surgery, Ob- Gyn, Anesthesia Update February 2026 Operating Together: Challenges and Solutions for Sustaining Impactful Global Health Partnerships From 18 years of the RCSI/COSECSA Surgical Training Collaboration](#)
- [Invited Commentary on: Operating Together: Challenges and Solutions for Sustaining Impactful Global Health Partnerships From 18 Years of the RCSI/COSECSA Surgical Training Collaboration](#)
- [Patient knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on Chronic Wound Infections in Tanga Regional Referral Hospital, Tanzania; A qualitative Study](#)
- [Worldwide Radiation Dose in Coronary Artery Disease Diagnostic Imaging Initial Calcium Derangements in Major Trauma and Outcomes Cautionary Tale—The Details Are in the Data](#)
- [Traumatic Fractures of the Pelvic Limbs in Children in the Paediatric Surgery Department of Don Ka National Hospital: A Review of 35 Cases](#)
- [Time-to-Surgery in Orthopedic Trauma Across Sub-Saharan Africa: A Scoping Review Transforming Maternal Health in Ethiopia: Leveraging Human-Centered Design to Co-create Innovative Behavioral Interventions](#)
- [Clinical Process Quality of Qntenatal Care in Low and Middle-Income Countries: Cross-Sectional Evidence from 13 Countries](#)
- [Towards Improving Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response in the African Region: An Analysis of 25 Countries from 2015 until 2022](#)

**[Read more articles compiled by Margaret Tarpley by clicking here!](#)**

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