



The PAACS Bulletin

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PAACS

PAN-AFRICAN ACADEMY
OF CHRISTIAN SURGEONS

PAACS 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.

PAACS VISION

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

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO



Dear PAACS Family,

*Susan Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer*

With Thanksgiving upon us in the United States, we pause to reflect on our many blessings. For 28 years, PAACS has been shaped by God's guiding hand, exemplifying Ephesians 4:16: "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." We celebrate each member of the PAACS family, each fulfilling a unique role in our shared mission.

Our residents, faculty, and graduates are central to this work. Residents, every step of your journey to becoming surgeons and specialists is vital—not only in offering excellent surgical care but also in delivering the gospel's healing message. As 1 Peter 4:10 reminds us, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." Faculty, your commitment to training and discipling residents extends far beyond the operating room, reaching each person who entrusts their care to our programs. Graduates, thank you for carrying our mission far and wide, bringing surgical care and sharing the Good News in communities where both are needed.

We are equally grateful for our administration, Board of Directors, and volunteers. Your wisdom, leadership, and support are the foundation of our daily operations, ensuring that PAACS remains a beacon of excellence and faithful service.

Our appreciation also extends to our donors and partner organizations. Your generosity empowers our trainees to master each new surgical technique and share the healing message of the gospel with patients and their families. Together, you allow PAACS residents to shine brightly in the lives of those they serve, as Matthew 5:16 encourages: "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

As we look to the future, may we stay united in faith and purpose, trusting in God's continued guidance. Together, each of us plays a part in strengthening and growing this mission.

Blessings,

Susan A. Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer
PAACS



SENIOR TRAINEE CONFERENCE 2024

*Keir Thelander, MD
PAACS Executive Vice President*

From October 26-November 2, 2024, PAACS' conference for penultimate year trainees took place at Brackenhurst Conference Center in Kenya. With 30 attendees, engagement was significant from the trainees with each of the speakers. We thank PAACS grads and speakers: Drs. Philip Blasto, Ken Muma, Fabruce Ramaherimamonjy, and Akinniyi Fadipe, covering Finding a Job, Hospital Administration, and Starting a Hospital, while also helping cover the spiritual leadership topic presented each morning.



Also, welcomed the couple of Dr. Lilian Mameti (Ob/Gyn, Kijabe) and Dr. George Otieno (Cardiologist, Kijabe) who spoke transparently and impactfully on marriage and keeping the bond strong. Topics such as life balance, burn out, parenting, and singleness, amongst others, were covered by new participants from Pan-African University in Nairobi (Drs. Makena, Alumada, and Kibuti). Dr. Cheryl Ross covered Conflict and Conflict Resolution.

“

A word of appreciation to PAACS and all the stakeholders involved in setting up the conference. The chief year was looking very terrifying but after the conference I am encouraged and equipped.

”

Team Tarpley enlightened us all on the use of technology, even AI, for research and medical information updates, while Tarp shared just a few of his innumerable lessons learned over his decades long career. Drs. Bossom and Roth, new friends of PAACS, presented and facilitated discussion on the ever challenging topic of cross-cultural work and communication.

Continued on next page

CONFERENCES



CONFERENCES



As always the research posters were overall of high quality, especially the five posters selected for presentations. Congratulations to prize winners Dr. Debebe (1st prize, Soddo GS), Dr. Simel (2nd prize, Tenwek GS), and Dr. Dufe (3rd prize, Kijabe Anesthesia). One added surprise during breaks at this conference were rousing games of cornhole during tea breaks and meal breaks. Clearly competition brought out some new and fun sides of each trainee.

A noteworthy quote from a trainee after hearing from Dr. Fabruce was "How can we nominate Dr. Fabruce for a Nobel Prize?" A huge thanks to Dr. Drew Huang, PAACS Assistant Director of Education, who developed the conference schedule, planning, and recruitment of speakers, in collaboration with Rachel Huth. PAACS conference success relies on high levels of collaboration and participation from our trainees. We thank God and look forward to hosting the 4th senior trainee conference in October 2025.



GLOBAL MISSIONS HEALTH CONFERENCE

Keir Thelander, MD
PAACS Executive Vice President

PAACS again hosted a booth at the GMHC from November 7-9, 2024. Susan Koshy, PAACS CEO, Keir Thelander, PAACS EVP, and Joanna Thelander, PAACS advocate, received many inquiries and conversed about PAACS, what we do and how we do it, with many interested medical students, residents, and attending surgeons.



Friday evening the carry-in boxed dinner was a packed house, with over 75 in attendance to hear an update on PAACS as well as from Drs. Tim Love (Gen Surg PD – Soddo), Sam Fabiano (Gen Surg Prog Co-Dir – CEML) and Benjamin Roose (Recent Faculty Kibuye). Come see us at GMHC next year November 6-8, 2025!



WHY I KEEP COMING BACK TO BONGOLO

Bill Nelson, MD

Short-term Missionary to Bongolo Hospital, Gabon

I started coming to Bongolo Hospital in 2015. I was a fairly new general surgeon and wanted to be involved in a PAACS program on a regular basis. Despite not speaking any French, Dr. Keir convinced me that I should come to Bongolo with my family, and I would see that God would use me there. Meeting the six PAACS residents, that were there at that time, the hospital staff, and the team of missionaries that served at the hospital I quickly discovered that he was right. Despite a job change and a pandemic causing a hiatus, I have been here now 5 times since then, each time for 3-4 weeks. For the past few trips, I have been privileged to bring one of the residents from my U.S. program with me.

I am a general surgeon out of Pittsburgh, PA that spends most of his time behind a laparoscope or a robot console. I don't provide any useful sub-specialty insight or expertise that the faculty here don't already possess. If I was not here, the operations that I do would be done just as well by someone else. That is not why I come. The primary reason I come is to serve the Lord by investing in the six young men that have all left their own countries and communities to come and learn to be not only surgeons, but also strategically placed instruments of God to advance His Kingdom. Every year I see them grow in their clinical skill and their character. As they rise from intern to chief, I get to be a part of the Potter's work in shaping them into Christ's ambassadors. Today alone, I got to have morning devotions with them, M&M, pray with them throughout the day, operate with them, eat with them, and spend the evening in worship with a group of missionaries, the residents and their families! It is hard to imagine a better way to spend a day.

The second reason I come is to serve the Lord by serving the missionary team. Whether it is providing gap coverage, call coverage, times of worship, fellowship, encouragement, or just playing with their kids. It is a joy to spur on my brothers and sisters who lay down their lives for this place. Loving, serving, and equipping the people of God is an unqualified honor.

This trip each year reminds me that, even at home, my job is about Jesus and His Kingdom. It always feels disingenuous to say that I come here to teach when I have yet to take a trip that I felt that I taught more than I learned. I feel as though that may never happen.



PAACS BONGOLO CELEBRATES DR. ABRAHAM FAYA CAMARA'S GRADUATION

Petronella Kufa

On September 22, 2024, the PAACS General Surgery Residency Program at Bongolo Hospital in Gabon proudly celebrated the graduation of Dr. Abraham Faya Camara, the latest surgeon to complete the demanding training program. Dr. Camara, originally from Guinea Conakry, has been a dedicated resident at Bongolo Hospital, serving patients with skill, compassion, and deep faith.



The graduation ceremony was a special moment for the Bongolo Hospital community as they gathered to acknowledge Dr. Camara's achievements and the countless lives he has impacted during his residency. He has consistently demonstrated exemplary surgical skills, a strong commitment to patient care, and a genuine heart for service.

Dr. Camara's wife Marthe along with their four children – Esther, Marie, Anja, and Eugene have been a constant source of strength and encouragement for him during his residency. Their unwavering support has been vital in helping him through the challenging years of training.

As Dr. Camara steps into the next phase of his journey, we are excited to see how God will continue to work through him, using his surgical skills to bring healing and hope to those in need. His future is bright, and we are confident that his impact on healthcare in Guinea Conakry and beyond will be profound.

The PAACS community celebrates this important milestone in Dr. Camara's life and is thankful for his example of servant leadership. We pray that he, his wife, and their children will be blessed as they embark on the next chapter of their journey, continuing to serve with the love of God.



KIJABE HOLDS THIRD ANNUAL WOMEN'S RETREAT

*Britney Grayson, MD
PAACS Faculty, BethanyKids*



In October, the Kijabe PAACS Women in Surgery group held our 3rd Annual Retreat. We were blessed to spend a long weekend at a peaceful farm overlooking nearby Lake Elmenteita. Twelve residents and three consultants attended. The theme for our time was "Reach Your Highest Place" and we were so thankful to have guest speaker Dr. Natalie Pickering, a PhD psychologist and certified coach, leading us.

Jeremiah 33:3 says, "Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." We started the weekend with the idea that God can reveal our innermost selves to us - our drives and motivations, what gives us joy, and more. Dr. Natalie helped us see how reaching our highest place is only possible with God and the wisdom He gives us to know ourselves and this world. Through this, we can have healthy relationships and be good physicians to our patients.

We finished the weekend in John 4:10 - "Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'" What a beautiful reminder that God is the one to fill us and Jesus is our living water. There was incredible conversation, fun, fellowship, and worship in the midst. Please pray for the women in our group, that they would turn to God first for answers, for knowledge, and to be filled, so they then can pour into others out of the overflow.



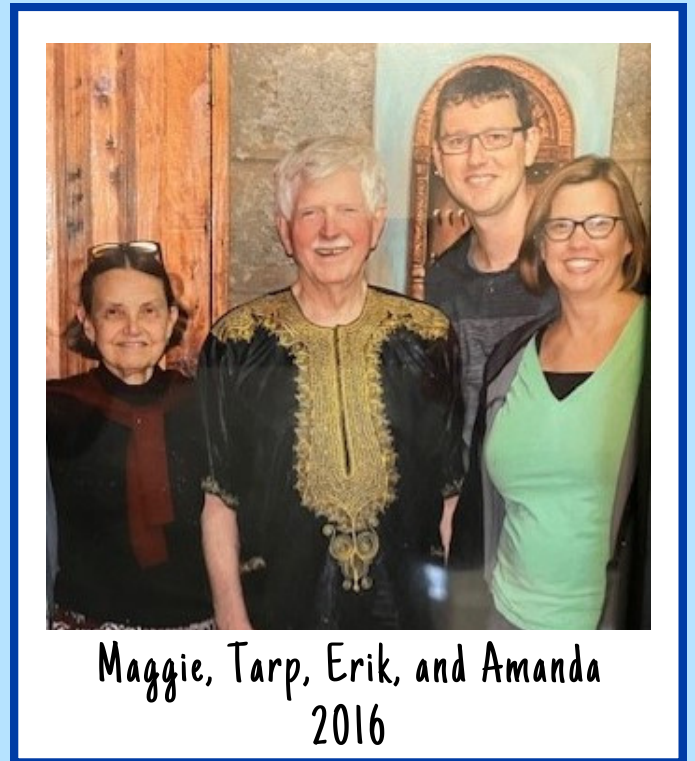
HOW TO SURVIVE MY MMed - WHY RESEARCH?

John Tarpley, MD
Academic Dean



The first six months--July to December 2016—after leaving Vanderbilt, Team Tarpley (Maggie and I) worked at the AIC Kijabe Hospital under the Research and Education Director, Dr. Evelyn Mbugua. When we asked how we might be of use, Dr. Mbugua replied: “Create a culture of research” directed at the medical and clinical officers at Kijabe. She gave us an hour each Monday for twelve weeks with lunch (“If you feed them, they will come.”). Dr. Erik Hansen, MD, MPH, paediatric surgeon at BethanyKids (BK) Children’s Hospital Kijabe and a resident with us at Vanderbilt for seven years, joined us as a key member of our threesome.

In January 2017 we transitioned to Kigali, Rwanda at the University of Rwanda Teaching Hospital with a secular NGO. In February 2017, Team Tarpley was invited to attend the meeting of PAAS, the Pan African Association of Surgeons: “Global Surgery Implementation in Africa” at the African Union Commission, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. PAAS is comprised of two colleges and an association: WACS, COSECSA, and Association of Surgeons in South Africa (ASSA). In retrospect, our attendance constituted a “God-gift” in that we met Dr. Kat Chu, an American colon & rectal surgeon living and working in Cape Town, South Africa. We three knew of each other via our work in Rwanda under the leadership of Dr. Robert Riviello, a trauma surgeon and PAACS member. A sustained friendship ensued those few shared days. Dr. Chu, on faculty at University of Cape Town (UCT), knowing of our basics of surgical research course in Kijabe invited us to a junior trainees’ conference at UCT to talk to the UCT trainees on “How to Survive My MMed” in their four-year general surgery residency program.



*Maggie, Tarp, Erik, and Amanda
2016*

Fast-forward to September 2021 when I became PAACS Academic Dean following Dr. Bill Wood of Emory. From its outset PAACS recognized the importance of research. The PAACS Research Committee was first led by Dr. Dan Poenaru, a Canadian paediatric surgeon who started the Kijabe BK Pediatric Surgery Fellowship. He subsequently returned to Montreal Children’s Hospital where he earned a PhD and recently received the prestigious Order of Canada. (See PAACS Bulletin, August 2024 for entries on Drs. Wood and Poenaru.) After an initial wave of enthusiasm for research at a few programs, the interest waned. Over the past two years, inspired in part by the output of quality research by several programs such as the Parkers and residents at Tenwek coupled with COSECSA interest in stimulating and likely requiring research, PAACS has rebooted its Research Committee with former PAACS Board Chair Adrian Park as the Chair of the Research Committee. At the recent October PAACS Conference Drs. Park, Chu, and Thelander all spoke on the revitalized initiatives and rationale for encouraging research by our faculty and trainees. Next month’s Academic Dean column will highlight their presentations for incorporating research into our curriculum. PAACS intends to keep the academic bar high and produce surgeons, obstetrician/gynecologists, and anesthesiologists of the highest quality. We strive to improve care via quality-improvement studies at our institutions.

COME AWAY, TOGETHER, AND PRAY

Ed Scarce, DMin
PAACS Spiritual Dean



It is a very accurate statement to say there is vast opportunity for doing good via the ministry God has given to PAACS. Of the many PAACS sites I've had the privilege of visiting, I've never heard anyone say, "Well, we are caught up, there's nothing to do". In the busyness of the ministry God has granted to us let us never forget the importance of coming away together to pray. It is the power that grants us the physical, the emotional, the mental, and the spiritual means by which we accomplish the mission of God.

Jesus is our example here. As we follow the progression of His ministry, the busier He got the more often we see Him getting away to be alone and to pray. Though we don't know all the details of this communion with God, we are given glimpses into what this looked like. Sometimes it was private, sometimes it was in the company of others. At times it was the voice of God in His life via scripture. At times there were pressing concerns. At times these periods of prayer included fasting.

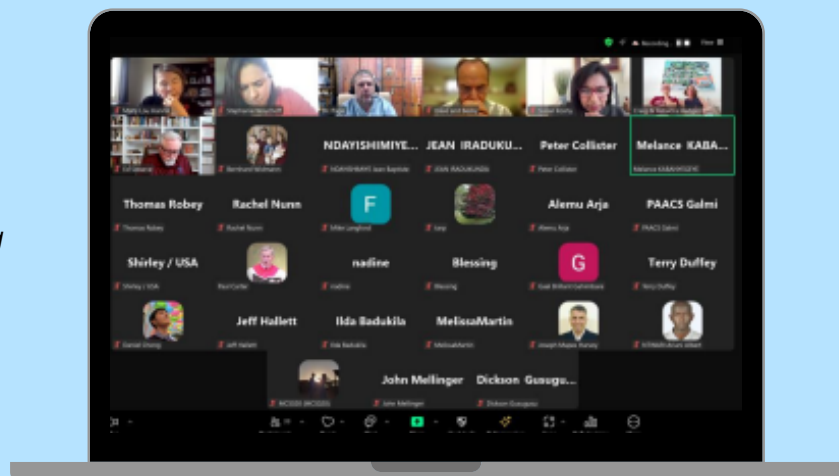
The one constant was Jesus seeking communion with His Father. This was the ultimate goal. South African pastor and writer Andrew Murray has put it this way in his book *Living the Prayerful Life*.

"Prayer is not merely coming to God to ask something of Him. It is, above all, fellowship with God and being brought under the power of His holiness and love, until He takes possession of us and stamps our entire nature with the lowliness of Christ, which is the secret of all true worship."

This is the ultimate goal of PAACS Global Day of Prayer and Fasting. Yes, the petitions are very important. Answered prayers have been what has moved this ministry forward in the advancing of God's Kingdom. But perhaps the corporate communion and fellowship with God, that unites us together, is of utmost importance. May we continue to seek these times together.

On November 11th, we had the occasion to come together twice on this day. It was declared a day of prayer and fasting. It was a time of communion with God and each other through the ministry of prayer. One hundred twenty-two individuals signed up to fast and pray. Fifty-seven gathered on a Zoom call to pray together. It was in obedience to the charge Paul gives to us in 1 Tim. 1:1-4

"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 Ti 2:1-4 (ESV)



It was truly a time of communion with God. May we continue to do so to the praises of Jesus Christ!

FIRST ALL-SAFE COURSE TAUGHT IN FRENCH

Grace Kim, MD

PAACS Board Member, General Surgery Council Chair



Members of the ALL-SAFE team traveled to Conakry, Guinea to teach 19 surgeons from West Africa how to perform basic laparoscopy in a two-day course sponsored by Mercy Ships. The course was the first ALL-SAFE course taught in the French language and made use of the popular ALL-SAFE site which has been newly translated into French. Participants received didactic instruction in basic laparoscopy and were able to work through simulations in laparoscopic appendectomy and cholecystectomy. Teaching staff included Simplicie Tchoba (Bongolo), Abraham Camara (Bongolo), and Marius Tchinde (Mbingo). At the conclusion of the course, the ALL-SAFE team received a standing ovation.

ALL-SAFE is a collaboration of surgeons and researchers who have created an open-access, web-based site to teach basic laparoscopy led by Grace Kim and David Jeffcoach. The collaboration is closely affiliated with PAACS, and the initial pilot sites were PAACS general surgery training programs.

<https://www.allsafe.education/>



MALAMULO BABIES



We have been blessed recently with two of our residents at Malamulo Adventist Hospital having babies!

Gracious Sankhulani, one of our Chief Residents, and his wife Janet welcomed a son, Gian Gracious Sankhulani, to the family on August 19, 2024.

Admire Munjeri, one of our Chief Residents, and his wife Daphne welcomed a daughter, Azriela Aitanyansha Munheri, to the family on September 5, 2024.



EXCITEMENT AT MBINGO



At Mbingo Baptist Hospital we've celebrated both a wedding and new bundle of joy recently!

Marriage of Tiba Lavinia a second-year resident and Mr. Apongpo Bertrand 26.10.24

Birth of a baby boy to Keja Esmond second-year resident and Keja Mercy: Obed-Chrysoar Belefeyin date of birth 15-09-2024 birth weight 3600g.



ICON IN SURGERY PRESENTATION IS NOW LIVE

Last month, we announced PAACS Academic Dean, Dr. John Tarpley was recognized as an Icon in Surgery at the ACS Clinical Congress. He gave a prestigious presentation celebrating his impactful career in global surgery and medical missions. Now, the video is available to watch!

Dr. Tarpley's journey—from 15 years as a medical missionary in Nigeria to training surgeons worldwide—offers wisdom and inspiration for all.

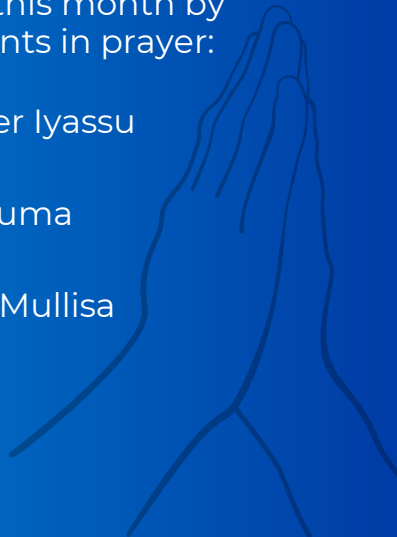
[Click here to watch it >>>](#)

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.
- May God sustain, protect, and provide His grace to all PAACS residents, faculty, graduates, and their families. Pray for their spiritual well-being.
- Pray for PAACS Senior Trainees as they prepare for COSECSA Exams at the beginning of December.

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

- Wotango Abenezer Iyassu
- Yohannis Nigusu
- Ebsa Bekako Duguma
- Naol Jigi
- Dereje Hunduma Mullisa
- Dawit Beyore
- Nahusenay Besha



Giving Tuesday is almost here!

Help us reach our goal of **\$25,000** to fund the training and discipleship of one PAACS resident for the entire 2025 academic year! Together, we can equip a future Christian surgeon or related specialist in Africa to bring healing, hope, and life-saving care to countless patients.



 **GIVE TODAY!**

ARTICLES ON SURGERY, OB/GYN, AND ANESTHESIA

Compiled by Margaret Tarpley

- [Providing a Safe Pregnancy Experience for Surgeons: A Review](#)
- [A tripartite taxonomy of character strengths & virtues: toward professional identity formation in medical students & physicians](#)
- [Defining Critical Quality Attributes and Composition Parameters for Burn Wound Dressings: Antibiotic-Anesthetic Films as a model](#)
- [Stab Wounds of the Abdomen: Epidemiological, Clinical, Therapeutic and Evolutionary Aspects in the General Surgery Department of the N'zérékoré Regional Hospital \(Guinea\)](#)
- [Ovarian Aging and Fertility](#)
- [Reducing Low-Value Care in Pediatric Trauma](#)
- [Hypotension and Adverse Outcomes in Moderate to Severe Traumatic Brain Injury A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis](#)
- [Esketamine administered epidurally as an adjuvant to epidural ropivacaine for labour analgesia: a prospective, double-blind dose-response study](#)
- [Less is More: Overlapping Communication in Trauma Resuscitation](#)
- [Mentorship in medical education: reflections on the importance of both unofficial and official mentorship programs](#)

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

CONNECT

