



THE PAACS BULLETIN

Monthly Newsletter
Issue #228
July 2023



Inside the operating room at Bongolo Hospital



Dr. and Mrs. Mark Snell with Mbingo Baptist Hospital's first-year PAACS residents



White Coat Ceremony for the PAACS Orthopaedic Program at Tenwek Hospital

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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



*Susan Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer*

Dear PAACS Family,

As we start the new fiscal year, we want to say a big thank you for your amazing support and hard work that led to remarkable achievements for PAACS in FY22-23 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023). We couldn't have done it without you, our strong PAACS family. Together, we did great things, and we're proud to have such a wonderful community propelling us forward.

Looking ahead, we envision an even more remarkable year for PAACS. Our fiscal year 2023-2024 budget has been approved by the Board of Directors and is set to experience significant growth, with an increase of over \$800,000 from the previous year. This growth will allow us to expand our programs, reach new countries, provide additional training for faculty and residents, and positively impact more lives than ever before. We look forward to embracing new opportunities and expanding surgical and specialty training which will reach underserved communities in Africa and share the hope of Jesus with those in need.

As we embark on this journey of expansion and progress, we remain steadfast in our reliance on God's guidance and wisdom. Trusting in His grace, we move forward with confidence, knowing that He will provide and continue to shape our path.

We recently held a virtual gathering of PAACS alumni, witnessing the power of our growing network firsthand. Twenty-three graduates from around the African continent attended this Zoom meeting. The camaraderie and support shared among our alumni, both personally and professionally, was truly inspiring. Together they were able to inspire, strengthen, and pray for one another as well as problem-solve and share knowledge. This united front enables us to overcome challenges, celebrate successes, and foster an unmatched sense of belonging.



PAACS Alumni Virtual Gathering

In the coming months, let us remain focused on the vision of PAACS, to train and disciple more African surgeons and related specialists who will live out the Gospel and minister to the sick. Together, we will continue to make a lasting impact on the lives of individuals and communities across Africa. With our collective efforts and God's grace, we are confident that we will reach greater heights than ever before.

Thank you for your unwavering support, dedication, and prayers. We are honored to stand alongside each one of you as we begin an exciting new fiscal year for PAACS.

Blessings,

Susan A. Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer
Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS)



GOD'S GRACE IN BONGOLO

*David Thompson, MD
PAACS Founder*

I had the privilege of serving as the Interim Medical Director of Bongolo Hospital for the month of June. A number of our faculty doctors and residents were away, on home assignment, or taking medical leave. The remaining surgical service was Assistant Program Director Dr. David Skavdahl and three junior residents.

The day after I arrived, two pickup trucks drove up to the emergency department, each with four accident victims lying in the truck bed. One was unconscious from a severe head injury and others had multiple fractures. Ten workers from a palm oil plantation had collided head-on with a logging truck. Two were instantly killed, but eight survived. It was amazing that any survived because it was three hours before the men were rescued and transported to Bongolo.

Immediately, Dr. Skavdahl and the PAACS residents examined the injured men with a portable ultrasound machine. Once the men were stabilized in the ED, they were moved to the surgical ICU. But unfortunately, the hospital's one-year-old x-ray machine was down.

Just days before the accident, a 20-foot container was delivered to Bongolo. It was packed with donated medical supplies and two portable x-ray machines - a new one donated by Samaritan's Purse, and a used machine that a local healthcare center donated in April. Our local church in California helped crate and ship it, just in time to be loaded into the recently arrived container! I helped open the crates and unpack the portable machines, both of which worked perfectly. Dr. Skavdahl and his team were able to see the extent of the fractures and make plans to surgically stabilize them. Over the next few days, all the men survived, except one who died of a pulmonary embolus, despite prophylactic heparin.

Reflecting on the incident, I marvel at God's grace. Only God could have arranged so precisely the arrival of the portable x-ray machines, and the skill and availability of Dr. Skavdahl and his team of PAACS residents. Only God could have enabled these workers to survive three hours on a jungle road without help, experience His grace, and hear the Good News explained by our surgical team and the hospital's chaplains. Sadly, none of the injured men came to faith in Christ, but they and their family members will never forget the kindness and skill of the hospital and the PAACS team. I believe God has just begun calling those whose lives we saved that day and reminding them of His love and His offer of forgiveness. Neither will our young residents soon forget how God used them to save the lives of these men and put them back on the road to health.





"I GOT TO LIVE MY DREAM" Thanking Dr. and Mrs. Mark Snell for Their Time in Mbingo

*Laurie Elit, MD
PAACS Faculty, Mbingo Baptist Hospital*

On July 8, the PAACS residents and missionary staff at Mbingo Baptist Hospital gave a heartfelt farewell to Dr. and Mrs. Mark Snell, or "Mah and Pah Snell." Six years ago, Dr. Snell's dream was to train surgeons in Africa, and although Mah Snell was not sure what gifts she brought to this dream, they embarked on a journey that involved training in general surgery initially at Banso and more recently at Mbingo Baptist Hospital in Cameroon, where he served as Program Director of the PAACS General Surgery Program.

Pah Snell was thanked for his ability to give clear directions, his training especially in laparoscopy, and his mentorship, which sometimes provided just a listening ear while hiking the Mbingo plateau. He will be remembered for his godly example of apologizing when he discerned an action was wrong, and he was noticed for not making the same mistake twice. Many remarked on his ability to fix almost anything, like the OR compressor.

Mah Snell was thanked for the countless snacks/meals that appeared in the call room and the many meals she orchestrated in their home. The PAACS wives noted that the kids will miss her afternoon tutoring sessions and access to their home to play sports.

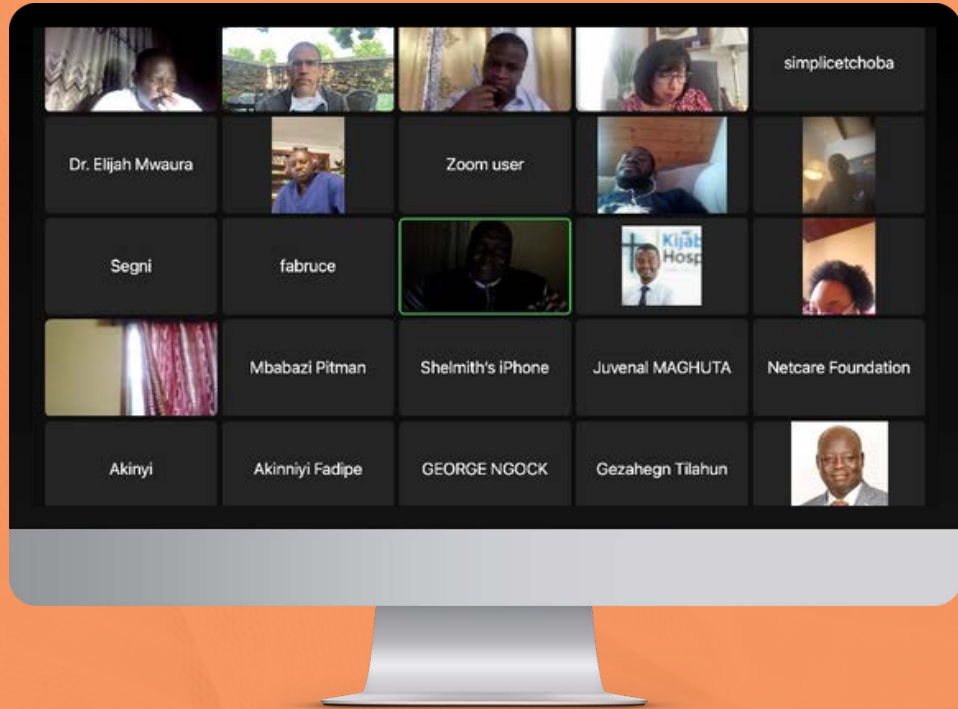
Pah Snell thanked God and the residents for allowing him to fulfill his dream. He handed the general surgery training mantel with encouragement and confidence to Drs. Sama (Chief of Surgery), Emeka, and Prosper.



PAACS ALUMNI VIRTUAL GATHERING

Steve Doane, MD

PAACS Board of Directors Member & Alumni Liaison Committee Chair



On July 6, PAACS hosted a virtual gathering for alumni across Africa to discuss present challenges in their lives and work. Twenty-three graduates joined the Zoom meeting to listen and to share including Dr. Dieudonne Lemfuka, Graduate Representative of the PAACS Board of Directors, as well as Dr. Steve Doane, Chair of the PAACS Alumni Liaison Committee, and Susan Koshy, PAACS CEO.

Dr. Dieudonné Lemfuka moderated the conversation that ranged from topics such as accessing continuing education and specialist support for a broad variety of cases, to improvement of relationships with hospital administrators and finding good education for surgeons' children. There was initial brainstorming to facilitate cross-coverage for graduates deprived of vacation for long periods of time, as well as improved communication between graduates on WhatsApp and other platforms.

Everyone was very happy to reconnect with colleagues they had not seen for many years, and there was enthusiasm to continue these virtual conversations every two months on focused topics.

Tentatively, the next meeting will be hosted on **September 8 at 4pm GMT**.



UPDATE FROM FORMER PAACS FACULTY: Dr. Wendy Willmore

*Wendy Willmore, MD
Former PAACS Faculty*



Dr. Willmore publishes a prayer newsletter via email. Here are excerpts from her July 2023 edition:

It's been a really eventful year. This second Abrahamic trek of mine took me through eight African countries.

Being in Eastern DRC was an instructive study in human nature and the grace of God hard at work. It was definitely my hardest short-term assignment this year with difficult food, difficult language, difficult working conditions, etc. Bunia is a city of refuge under martial law (as is Goma). The general level of anxiety is very high in the city, and levels of trust are very low. This reciprocal couplet permeates everything from friendships, medical work and all the activities of daily life.

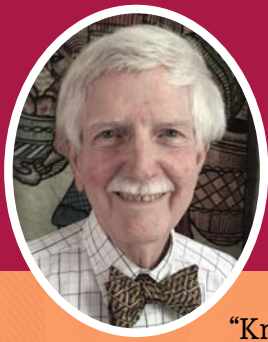
And yet the servants of God still “shine like stars” (Philippians 2:15). The expatriate missionaries that I met in Bunia have all accepted that working in Eastern DRC means being perpetually “ready to run” because “it’s perfectly safe here until it isn’t” (Matthew 10:23). Our local Congolese brothers and sisters do not always have that option, so they suffer, adapt, and reflect the heart of God anyway.

Most of my work during the over two months that I spent in Bunia was taken up by helping local surgeons including Dr. Samuel Nigo, a long-suffering PAACS-trained surgeon originally from the area with many family connections to Centre Medicale Évangélique. He and his family were very hospitable to all of us. Very shortly after I arrived, Nigo told me “I haven’t had a vacation in five years. Do you think I can take a month off while you are here?” I readily agreed.

Next, I visited HEAL Africa Hospital in Goma where another PAACS graduate is serving, Dr. Jacques Bake. It was good to visit him and see the work that he is doing there to treat the mostly very complex cases that present there. I had the pleasure of operating with him and his very large trainee group, giving surgical Grand Rounds and helping to prepare residents for oral examinations.

At the very tail end of my journey, I returned to Tanzania to accompany Dr. Keir Thelander and Dr. John Tarpley on their visit to assess Nkinga Hospital as a possible PAACS site. The 8-hour drive from Arusha to Nkinga and then back again was good fellowship and the visit was very positive for all concerned.





"Know Thyself," Proverbs, and Emotional Intelligence: Part I

John Tarpley, MD
Academic Dean

"Know Thyself"* was the inscription on the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. In a presentation recently at the Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health, Shayna Humphrey, M.Ed. led a session on emotional intelligence. Her first of five points was "Self-Awareness." The remaining four were: Self-Regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills. Per Daniel Coleman, "Emotional Intelligence is the capacity for recognizing and managing our own feelings and reading other people's emotions and responding accordingly."**

A major obligation for a chair of a department is recruitment. A mistake can take years to correct, likely substantial sums of money, legal challenges, etc. Chairs have learned that emotional intelligence (EI) and the emotional quotient (EQ) are more important than intelligence and the intelligence quotient (IQ).

The book of Proverbs, part of the Hebrew Bible's Wisdom Literature trio with Job and Ecclesiastes, has much to say that relates to EI and EQ. As shared previously in a past Academic Dean Paragraph, I read the Psalms and Proverbs monthly as part of my daily devotions, thereby "hardwiring" them into my brain. In this month's submission I share some verses from Proverbs 1-12 from the GNB TEV. I encourage you to read Proverbs 1:1-7 prior to reading the following extracts from Proverbs 1-12.

- 3:7a** Never let yourself think you are wiser than you are.
- 3:13** Happy is the man who becomes wise—who comes to have understanding.
- 4:5a** Get wisdom and insight.
- 4:6** Do not abandon wisdom.
- 4:8** Love wisdom.
- 4:13** Your education is your life.
- 4:23** Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts.
- 9:6b** Follow the way of knowledge.
- 9:8b** ...if you correct a wise man, he will respect you.
- 9:10a** To be wise you must first have reverence for the Lord.
- 9:11** Wisdom will add years to your life.
- 10:10b** ... one who openly criticizes work for peace.
- 10:12b** ... love forgives all offenses.
- 10:19** The more you talk, the more likely you are to sin. If you are wise, you will keep quiet.
- 10:21b** ... you can kill yourself with stupidity.
- 11:12** It is foolish to speak scornfully of others. If you are smart, you will keep quiet.
- 11:25** Be generous, and you will be prosperous. Help others, and you will be helped.
(In the NAS: "He who waters will be watered.")
- 12:11b** ... it is stupid to waste time on useless projects.
- 12:15** Wise people listen to advice.
- 12:16b** Smart people will ignore an insult.
- 12:20b** ... those who work for good will find happiness.
- 12:24** Hard work will give you power; being lazy will make you a slave.
- 12:25** Worry can rob you of happiness, but kind words will cheer you up.
- 12:28** Righteousness is the road to life; wickedness is the road to death.

To be continued in August *DV*.

* [Know thyself](#) - Wikipedia, accessed 15.07.23

** Goldman D, Working with Emotional Intelligence. Bantam Dell, 1998, New York

WHITE COAT & FOOT WASHING CEREMONY

Welcoming New Residents to the PAACS Orthopaedic Program at Tenwek Hospital

Welcome to the PAACS Family, Drs. Elisha Kiptoo and Mike Ronoh!



NEW ASSOCIATE DIR. OF EDUCATION

Dr. Drew Huang joined the PAACS Administrative Team in July as the Associate Director of Education.

Drew served as a faculty member of the PAACS General Surgery Program at Bongolo Hospital in Gabon from 2018-2020.

He maintains a clinical practice at the BC Children's Hospital in Vancouver as a pediatric plastic surgeon. Drew and his wife Kimberley have three children, each born on a different continent (US, France, Taiwan).

Please join us in welcoming Drew to the team!



PRAY

- Pray God will bless all the PAACS training programs across Africa.
- Pray for God's mercy, protection, blessings, and provision for all PAACS residents, faculty, graduates, and their families.
- Pray God will provide wisdom and guidance to the PAACS Board of Directors to lead this organization.
- Pray God will bring new donors, churches, partners, and foundations to pray and financially support the work of PAACS.
- Pray for the extra \$800,000 PAACS must raise to meet our financial goal this fiscal year.
- Please pray for the success of the Laps for PAACS event September 30th and that we meet our financial goal for the fundraiser.

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

- Penngan Keafon Nchifor
- Vitumbiko Erwin Mwafulirwa
- Caleb Mzati Kapengule
- Madalitso Newby Kumwembe
- Mumba Wongani Kangabakako
- Leul Shigut Kejela
- Ayenew Gaye
- Yohannes Wayessa
- Natnael Temesgen Sumoro
- Kalkidan Gulilat Taddessa
- Zenebe Haile Edomiyas
- Getiso Tarekegn Asfaw
- Mekbib Abebe Mekengo

GIVE

DONATE - U.S.

DONATE - CANADA

DONATE - OUTSIDE
U.S. & CANADA

ARTICLES ON SURGERY

Compiled by Margaret Tarpley

- [Representing Global Surgery and Sometimes, All of Africa.](#)
- [SPECIAL ISSUE CANCER IN KENYA. Annals of African Surgery.](#)
- [Establishing Pediatric Trauma Programs in Low- and Middle-Income Countries.](#)
- [Academic global surgical competencies: A modified Delphi consensus study.](#)
- [Surgery in the Pregnant Patient: What, When and How.](#)
- [Current Implementation Outcomes of Digital Surgical Simulation in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: Scoping Review.](#)
- [A Brief History of Anesthesia in Somaliland.](#)
- [Finding Faith Through Listening.](#)
- [Critical Behaviors for Perioperative Improvement Teams.](#)
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