



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*

As we embrace the warmth of August, I am excited to share some inspiring updates and opportunities within our PAACS family.

First and foremost, I am pleased to announce that registration is now open for our Fall PAACS Conference scheduled for October 10-12. This gathering is a cornerstone event for our network, offering a unique platform for learning, sharing, and fellowship. Please mark your calendars and join us as we continue to advance the excellence and reach of Christian surgical and related specialist training through PAACS. If you are interested in attending, please reach out to [Stephanie Waychoff](#) for more information.

In addition, the 2024 PAACS Alumni Travel Fellow, Dr. Philadelphie Dembele has safely arrived in California. Dr. Dembele is a 2013 PAACS graduate from Bongolo Hospital in Gabon and is now serving in Mali. Over the next few weeks, he will journey across the United States, making stops in New York, New Jersey, Tennessee, Georgia, Michigan, and Illinois. This trip will not only enhance his educational experience but also provide him an opportunity to share impactful stories of PAACS at various events and churches. We are excited for him to represent our mission and connect with supporters and new friends alike.

On the collaborative front, we are actively working with multiple foundations to secure new grants that will help us expand our programs and initiatives. I have been meeting with leaders from some of these foundations, strengthening our ties and exploring new avenues of support. We look forward to fruitful outcomes throughout this next fiscal year.

As we seek to widen our network of support, I invite our PAACS community to assist in connecting us with other foundations, granting organizations, and even donors that resonate with our mission. Your recommendations and introductions can make a significant difference in fostering new partnerships and opportunities.

Lastly, I want to extend my gratitude to all PAACS graduates who participated in our recent PAACS Alumni Survey. The feedback is invaluable in shaping our future direction and enhancing our programs. We learned a lot through this survey. Their voices help us ensure that PAACS continues to serve effectively and with purpose. The preliminary results can be found on page 6!

Thank you for your continued commitment to PAACS. Your support and engagement are essential to our mission of training and discipling surgeons and related specialists who bring healing and hope across Africa.

Blessings,

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

RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

Louis Pisters, MD
Chair, Board of Directors



Have you ever felt you were in the right place at the right time, called by God? That's exactly how I felt during my recent trip to Malamulo Adventist Hospital in Malawi. I traveled with another urologist, Dr. Matthew Smith, on his first short-term mission with PAACS. We prayed before leaving, asking God to guide us to the patients who needed us most, and God answered that prayer in powerful ways.

We encountered three young women with obstetrical vesicovaginal fistulas (VVF), caused by obstructed labor without timely Caesarean sections. These fistulas create a hole between the bladder and vagina, causing constant urine leakage. American urologists rarely see these cases, but I had experience from years ago, working with Dr. Chukwudi Okorie, a Nigerian PAACS graduate who had done a urology residency in Russia before becoming a PAACS general surgery resident. Chuks (for short) and I had repaired many of these fistulas during short-term trips to Cameroon. I shared with Matthew before leaving that these trips always involve bi-directional learning. We learn as much from the PAACS residents as they do from us.

One of our patients, a 22-year-old woman from Mozambique, had a large VVF. During surgery, we couldn't see the urethral mucosa, and I felt stuck. Then, I sensed the Holy Spirit reminding me, "You are a urologist. Have you ever fixed a hole in the bladder from above?" It had been over a decade since I last repaired one of these fistulas with Chuks, but I immediately remembered that we had always fixed these fistulas from both above and below. Following that approach, we successfully completed the surgery. The patient did well, as did another similar case we handled, while a third patient was too early post-labor for repair. These VVF cases are challenging but offer valuable teaching opportunities for PAACS residents, and through it all, may God be glorified.

In addition to the VVF surgeries, we performed six cystectomies for bladder cancer—four of them for squamous cell cancer related to schistosomiasis—and several urethroplasties to repair strictures. It's amazing how God designed us to use buccal mucosa from the inner cheek to patch the urethra. These were also great teaching cases, and again, may God be glorified.



One of the highlights of the trip was working with Matthew. Jesus sent His disciples out two by two, and here we were, two urologists serving in Malawi. Matthew did an outstanding job, introducing the PAACS residents to refurbished Olympus scopes we brought with us and providing lectures and demonstrations on basic cystoscopy and transurethral resection. Watching the residents learn and grow as they assembled the scopes and observed Matthew's procedures was incredibly rewarding.



God's provision continued throughout the trip. Bill Walker, a skilled pathologist, arrived at Malamulo during our second week and helped diagnose a crucial case of prostate cancer invading the bladder. We also conducted mock oral exams to prepare the residents for their COSECSA examinations.



Reflecting on this trip, I realize that I once doubted my usefulness in short-term missions, thinking I needed the comfort and tools of a fully equipped cancer center. But God meets us where we are and equips us for the work He calls us to do. I encourage anyone considering a PAACS trip to take that step of faith—God will ensure you're in the right place at the right time.

You too can be in the right place at the right time.



IN MEMORY – DR. BILL WOOD, PREVIOUS PAACS ACADEMIC DEAN



We honor the life of former PAACS Academic Dean, Dr. William Wood (Bill). He was a world-renowned surgical oncologist, devoted mentor, and servant leader, who has gone to be with the Lord on Sunday August 18, 2024. As the Academic Dean of PAACS from 2012 to 2021, Dr. Wood's passion for advancing surgical care and education transformed countless lives across Africa. He made significant contributions to the development of the PAACS curriculum, leaving a lasting impact on the training of future surgeons. He is survived by his loving wife, Judy, his four children, and several grandchildren. He will be greatly missed.

PAACS GENERAL SURGERY REMEDIATION EXAM

On July 26 and 27, 33 trainees sat for the remediation exam for PAACS General Surgery. Ten were required based on previous exam performance and 23 trainees took the exam for increasing their experience and knowledge.

Congrats to those who were successful. A few were not, requiring some tough decisions for PAACS and them. Please pray for wisdom and discernment for all.

2024 ALUMNI SURVEY RESULTS

44% Alumni responses

The respondents average was the following:

80% Discipling others

94% Intentionally training others in surgery



Each year one
PAACS graduate...



sees
2,500
patients



performs
800
procedures



shares the Gospel with
265
people



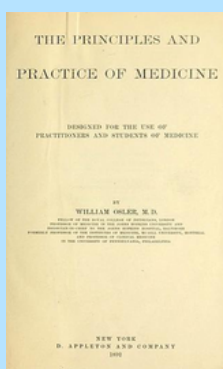
PAACS AT PRESCRIPTION FOR RENEWAL

Between August 15 and 18, Samaritan’s Purse hosted their Prescription for Renewal Conference in Orlando, FL. PAACS was represented strongly. Dr. Will Copeland, PAACS Neurosurgery Program Director, spoke about starting a Neurosurgery training program in sub-Saharan Africa and Neurosurgical Missions. Dr. Keir Thelander, PAACS Executive Vice President, presented on “Training in a Bilingual Cross-Cultural Setting”. Dr. Thelander and Joanna Thelander spoke on “Serving as a Family on the Mission Field”, and previous PAACS Program Director Dr. Jim Brown explained how he uses “Creativity in Surgery” and “Teaching Surgeons in Africa”. PAACS previous Tenwek Orthopaedic Surgery Program Director and Faculty member at the Kijabe Orthopaedic Surgery program also presented at the conference. Dr. Wanda Lam, PAACS Faculty Member at Nkhoma, shared about Common Surgical Scenarios in Malawi. Additionally, CMDA CEO, Dr. Mike Chupp, who was PAACS Faculty in General Surgery at Tenwek Hospital, gave a talk on “The Healthcare Missionary Job Description”. Finally, PAACS short-term faculty member and Head and Neck Council member, Dr. Jewel Greywoode spoke on “Training in Short-Term Medical Missions”. PAACS clearly was well represented at this impactful event. In 2025, Prescription for Renewal will take place October 2-5 in Orlando. Please consider attending.

RECOMMENDATION FOR/TO USANS: ATTEND YOUR STATE CHAPTER MEETING OF THE ACS AND SHARE ABOUT PAACS

John Tarpley, MD

Sir William Osler (1849-1919), a preacher’s kid from Bond Head, Ontario, Canada and author of The Principles and Practice of Medicine textbook in 1892, is revered as “The Father of Modern Medicine”.



Osler encouraged physicians to become active in their local, regional, and national medical societies catalyzing what we now call CME (Continuing Medical Education) in the USA and CPD (Continuing Professional Development) in sub-Saharan Africa. I prioritize attending the TN Chapter of the ACS each August and the Clinical Congress of the ACS each October. At this year’s TN ACS meeting in Chattanooga I was privileged to present on “Short-Term Global Surgical Engagements: Getting to a Win-Win.” A panel with the same name at the 2023 Boston ACS Clinical Congress addressed this topic.

The ASA News issue of November 2023 was dedicated to Humanitarian and Global Surgery and edited by Dr. Jay Smith. I recommend you access this issue at Archives - American Urological Association (auanews.net)

Two articles regarding volunteerism were written by PAACS members:

- [HUMANITARIAN The Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons Trains Surgeons to Tackle the Problem of Surgical Disease in Africa – American Urological Association \(\[auanews.net\]\(http://auanews.net\)\)](#), Sutherland R. AUA News. November 2023
- [HUMANITARIAN An “Alternative Vacation”: A Volunteer Fortnight to a Training Center in Sub-Saharan Africa – American Urological Association \(\[auanews.net\]\(http://auanews.net\)\)](#), Tarpley JL, Hansen EN. AUA News. November 2023:11-12.

For me, as one interested in surgical education, such meetings provide me an opportunity to not only share about PAACS but also support medical students and residents who are often presenting for the first time.



AFRICAN SURGEONS TO UNDER-SERVED COMMUNITIES

Deborah Eisenhut, MD

Previous Faculty, Mbingo Baptist Hospital

The African Surgeons to Under-Served Communities (ASUC) committee is pleased to announce that three PAACS graduate missionary surgeons have been chosen for the first year of the project. ASUC will provide a portion of the missionary's financial support for five years allowing extra time to raise full support.



Dr. Jacques and Dinah Ebhele and their four children are missionaries with Partners in Evangelism International (PEI). Their ministry, the Christian Surgical Network, is responding to the tremendous burden of surgical need in an area of their home country of DRC wracked with extreme poverty, killings, kidnapping and insecurity. Dr. Ebhele is building a surgical hospital in Bunia, the Mercy Surgical Polyclinic, that will serve the poor. They also organize surgical campaigns in existing hospitals. Their overall goal is to shine Christ in the darkest part and of their country during one of its most difficult times.

If you wish to become a financial supporter of the Ebheles (one-time gift or recurring) [click here.](#)



Dr. Clarisse Giruncuti and her husband, Audace, live at Galmi Hospital in Niger with their two children where Dr. Clarisse is finishing her PAACS surgical residency. They have recently been appointed as SIM missionaries. At Galmi Dr. Clarisse has focused on providing high-quality surgical care to the under-served surrounding community. In her work she performs life-saving surgery and mentors other healthcare professionals. She and her husband serve in their local church and are involved in evangelism and health care work in nearby villages. Audace works in informatics and is an elder in the local church. They are working with SIM to determine their place of service after graduation.

If you wish to become a financial supporter of the Giruncitis (one-time gift or recurring) [click here.](#)



Dr. Emmanuel Ikwutah is in his final year of his PAACS surgical residency at Galmi Hospital in Niger. His training has given him the desire to share the love of Christ through excellent surgical care. He is in the process of becoming a medical missionary with SIM and hopes to serve at Hospital de Kalukembe in Angola, a rural hospital serving people traumatized by war and with limited access to surgical care.

If you wish to become a financial supporter of Dr. Ikwutah, contact Dr. Deborah Eisenhut at Deborah.eisenhut@sim.org. She will notify you when his appointment as an SIM missionary is complete and his account is open.

The ASUC program is accepting applications for the second year of the program. If you are a PAACS missionary surgeon serving in an under-served, unreached area and are having trouble raising support, this project is for you. Please note that participants must be missionaries with a sending agency or be intending to apply. They will have one year from the date of acceptance into the program to complete their missionary appointment. Residents in their final year of training who are intending to become missionary surgeons are welcome to apply.

Contact Dr. Deborah Eisenhut at Deborah.eisenhut@sim.org to obtain an application.



“YOU ARE WHAT YOU READ.” PART 2 OF 2

John Tarpley, MD
Academic Dean

We continue with excerpts from *From Strength to Strength – Finding Success, Happiness, and Deep Purpose in the Second Half of Life* by Arthur C. Brooks. (Portfolio/Penguin, 2022)

“I am a Roman Catholic convert ... raised in an observant Protestant home.” J.S. Bach: “... the most salient aspect of his personal story ... was his relationship with God.” (p. 156)

“Nicodemus is a saint in the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches and, charmingly, the official patron saint of curiosity.” (p. 160)

“To practice faith requires time and effort ... Any advanced practitioner of faith or spirituality spends as much time on this as a fitness buff does at the gym, because that’s what it takes to make progress... your spiritual development is that important. You must make the time by scheduling your meditation, prayer, reading, and practice. Every day.” (pp. 164-5)

“Make Your Weakness Your Strength.” ... “Arguably, Paul is the inventor of Christianity as an organized religion.” “For when I am weak, then I am strong,” II Cor 12:10b. (pp. 171-2)

“The Buddha ...taught that to be at peace, we must accept the impermanence of life and existence.” (p 192)

“There are four learning steps in becoming a “modern elder”: evolve from a fixed to a growth mindset, learn openness to new things, collaborate with teams, and counsel others.” “In your next phase of life ... What activities will you keep? What activities will you evolve and do differently? What activities will you let go of? What new activities will you learn?” (p. 203)

“Mischel found ... good things come to those who wait—and work, and sacrifice, and maybe even suffer.” (p. 206)

“The work you do has to be the reward. ... Whether that end is money, power, or prestige, the instrumentalization of work leads to unhappiness.” (p. 207)

“... two kinds of happiness that scholars refer to as hedonia and eudaimonia. Hedonia is about feeling good; eudaimonia is about living a purpose-filled life. In truth, we need both. Hedonia without eudaimonia devolves into empty pleasure; eudaimonia without hedonia can become dry. In the quest for the professional marshmallow, I think we should seek work that is a balance of enjoyable and meaningful.” “At the nexus of enjoyable and meaningful is interesting. ... “Is this work deeply interesting to me?” (pp. 208-9)

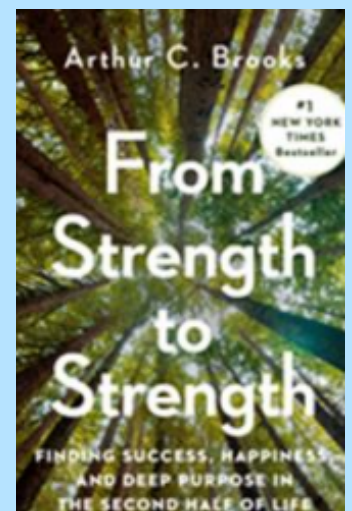
Conclusion: “I developed my friendships and family relationships and deepened my spiritual life.” ... “... we must fight our natural instincts if we want to be happy.” “Our worldly urges for money, power, pleasure, and prestige come from our ancient limbic brains.” (p. 214)

“I have learned and now strive to live: Use things. Love people. Worship the divine. Take love up one level and we have worship. The writer David Foster Wallace once said, astutely: There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship.” (p. 215)

Tarp Question/Comment: How do I want to spend my life, the second half of my life?

A proverb from the DRC states: “We only have that degree of freedom to decide what or whose slave I will be.” Money, possessions, position, pleasure, power, etc. vs. Paul’s choice - δοῦλος Χριστοῦ, Slave of Christ. (Rom 1:1.)

From David Farmer.



**CONGRATULATIONS TO PAACS RESIDENT
RAOUL MBANGO AND ON HIS RECENT
MARRIAGE TO OLGA LEILLA MUHIMPUNDU!**

"We are thankful for this new step in our life. God has been with us until now and our union is a fruit of His goodness. Pray for us that our family will be able to serve God in all circumstances."



Dr. Mbango is a second-year general surgery resident and Dr. Muhimpundu is a future general surgery resident (starting in January 2025) at Kibuye Hope Hospital in Burundi.



**PAACS IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT DR.
DAN POENARU, PAACS PEDIATRIC SURGERY
COUNCIL MEMBER, HAS RECEIVED THE
PRESTIGIOUS ORDER OF CANADA!**

His extraordinary work in pediatric surgery, including his involvement in the starting of the PAACS/Kijabe Hospital/Bethany Kids Pediatric Surgery Program in Kenya and establishing three medical schools in Africa, has greatly impacted African healthcare.

Congratulations, Dr. Poenaru!



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 pursuit of God in work, family, and life for PAACS residents and faculty.
- Pray God will bring new donors, churches, partners, and foundations to pray and financially support the work of PAACS.
- Pray for residents who are preparing for the written COSECSA exam in September.

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

- Admire Munjeri
- Gracious Magombo
- Rumbidzai Mlewah
- Joseph Mkandawire
- Sharon Bonya
- Emmanuel Kyobe
- Matthew Kolleh
- Estifanos Bafa Babulo
- Trymore Sithole



ARTICLES ON SURGERY

Compiled by Margaret Tarpley

- [The Glasgow Coma Scale at 50: looking back and forward.](#)
- [Childhood cancer surgery in low- and middle-income countries.](#)
- [Surgeon Perception and Attitude Towards the Moral Imperative of Institutionally Addressing Second-Victim Syndrome in Surgery.](#)
- [Eclampsia or epilepsy? The intriguing experiences of pregnant women diagnosed with preeclampsia and eclampsia: A descriptive exploratory study.](#)
- [Cultivating emotional intelligence in general surgery residents through a patient-centered experience.](#)
- [Continuous Positive Airway Pressure Treatment and Hypertensive Adverse Outcomes in Pregnancy. A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis.](#)
- [Medical Expertise — Balancing Science, Values, and Trust.](#)
- [The Relativity of Suitability—The Surgical Appliance Conundrum in Africa.](#)

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

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GIVE (OUTSIDE
U.S. & CANADA)

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