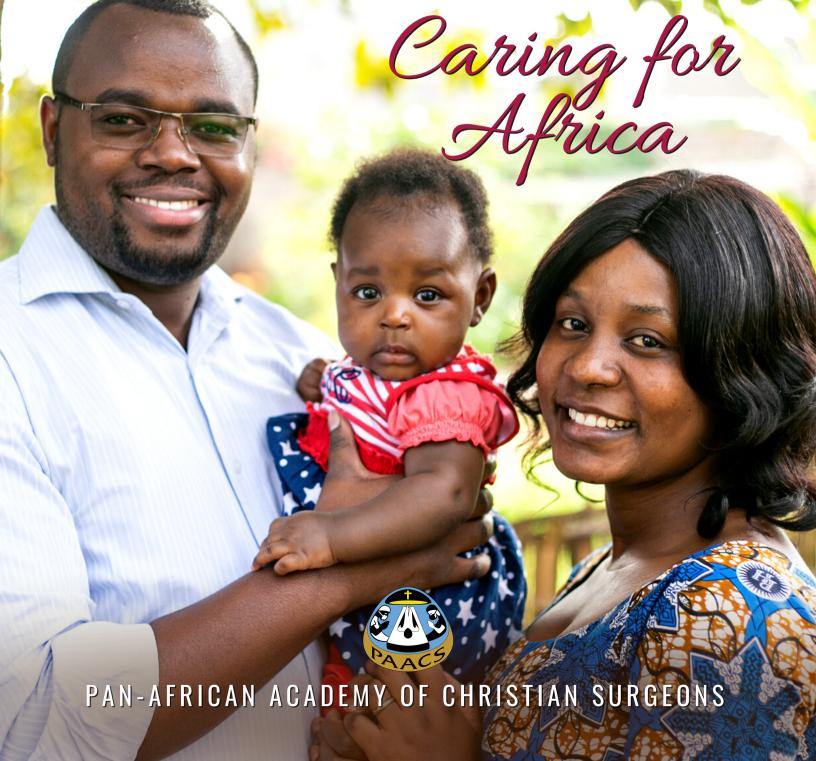
PAACS 2021 EDITION

TRAINING HIS SURGEONS CARING FOR HIS PEOPLE SHARING HIS LOVE







Dear PAACS Family,

I am pleased to present the 2021 PAACS magazine which contains several inspiring stories from our residents, faculty, and graduates. These faithful servants are the fruit of the work, faith, and resources sown in love over the years into this ministry. As PAACS continues to grow and reach new heights each year, we are blessed to be reminded of the ways that God continues to care for and bless his children through this ministry.

My hope is that these stories will encourage you to lift your eyes to the Lord from where our help comes. May God's face continue to shine upon the PAACS family with favor and grace.

Sum A. Kosky

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

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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A special Thank You to Mandi L. Morrin for her significant contribution to this publication.

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Leading in the Midst of Conflict

Featuring James A. Brown, MD

PAACS Program Director at Mbingo Baptist Hospital in Cameroon

Dr. Jim Brown is no stranger to missions. He went on his first mission trip nearly 20 years ago. Unfortunately, he is also no stranger to conflict on the mission field. He has spent the last several years leading the PAACS program at Mbingo Baptist Hospital through a prolonged period of regional conflict. And yet, he still continues to lead and serve, because the hard times are what have shaped him as a physician, as a teacher, and as a Christian. Jim grew up in Charleston, South Carolina, graduated from the Medical University of South Carolina, and then completed an internship and general surgery residency while on active duty in the U.S. Navy. He ultimately spent 20 years on active duty with many varied assignments and deployments worldwide. The Navy taught him a lot about leadership, team work, focusing on mission, personnel management, hospital administration, and flexibility. After leaving the Navy, he joined a private practice surgical group before following God's lead to full-time missions in 2007. After language school in France, he arrived in Cameroon in October 2008.

In 2003, he went on a mission trip to a small hospital called Meskine in Cameroon's Far North region. Meskine had not had a visiting surgeon for months. "When I arrived, I was met by a huge crowd of patients waiting for the surgeon," he remembered. "Within an hour, I was in the operating room with some of the most complicated cases I had ever cared for. I had been on many other short-term mission trips, but I had never seen suffering, death, and desperate surgical need like I saw at Meskine."





He was quite shaken by the experience, and it was during this time that he first heard about PAACS. "I realized that [surgical training] was exactly what was needed and what I wanted to do. As much as I loved and valued short-term missions, I knew I rarely impacted the overall healthcare of the places I had served. I saw PAACS as a means to have a long-term impact in a part of the world where millions of people had no access to safe, affordable surgery and where many had no access to the gospel."

They first served at Ngaoundere Protestant Hospital, where they opened a new PAACS program. However, after more than two years of intense effort, this program failed and was closed. In 2011, they moved to Mbingo Baptist Hospital, a 300-bed facility where Jim is the PAACS Program Director and Chief of Surgery.

During the last three years, their region in Cameroon has been engulfed in a violent conflict between an Anglophone insurgency and the predominantly Francophone central government. In November 2018, the PAACS program at Mbingo was suspended because of security problems in the region, and the residents were dispersed to other sites in Cameroon and Africa to continue their training. Though the conflict is still ongoing, overall security in the area has improved. "Even though there is less fighting immediately around the hospital, we continue to receive gunshot wounded victims and other kinds of injuries related to the conflict. We are still subject to lockdowns and insecurity on the roads. Many patients are afraid to come to Mbingo. We have taken care of many victims from both sides of the conflict, which creates its own security risks, with each side accusing us of taking care of their enemies," Jim said.

And yet, the residents continue to grow under Jim's leadership. "Suffering and working through constant grief sharpens self-awareness and dependency on God as nothing else can," he said. "There is great joy in watching residents develop character and make good independent decisions. I love to see them grow spiritually. Many have never worked in a Christian environment."

Our foundation in Scripture enables us to teach integrity, compassion, telling the truth, taking personal responsibility, showing up, and relying on God for all we do. And we have the indescribable joy of seeing hope restored, suffering relieved, and health improved for countless patients. Even in the hard things, and there are plenty of hard things, we learn to trust God's eternal purposes when we do not understand."

A total of 19 fully trained surgeons have graduated from the program at Mbingo, and they are serving in nine countries. Some of these graduates are in very difficult places where they bring an extensive skill set and integrity to areas of great need. They are fulfilling the PAACS vision.





"All of our graduates are still in Africa," Jim said. "It is not possible to measure their impact in their various work sites, but I know many of them are doing great work in challenging places. PAACS graduates have a vast skill set when they graduate, and they have been trained to a very high standard of care. The surgical needs in Africa are staggering, but I know PAACS has more and more impact as we continue to graduate more surgeons."

"He teaches me a new level of brokenness almost everyday..."

As Dr. Brown continues to follow God's call to serve as a missionary and lead these residents in the midst of conflict, he said, "I tell people that this work is a hundred times more difficult than I ever imagined before coming to Africa. The only thing that has kept me here is the deep assurance of God's call. Otherwise, I do not think I would have survived. It is too hard. At the same time, the work is also infinitely more rewarding than I ever imagined. There is great joy when I see residents learning and growing in godliness, and patients getting the care they need. I marvel that God has given me this incredible experience. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would have the privilege to be a surgical Program Director in Africa. I came to Africa 13 years ago with many shallow, self-absorbed, sentimental, romanticized ideas about missions. Those ideas were soon shattered by hardship, resistance, suffering, failure, and loss. But those ideas needed to die, and God has replaced them with a much deeper, firmly rooted, realistic, hopeful vision for the work. He teaches me a new level of brokenness almost everyday, and a dependence on Him that I could never learn if I had not had this experience. I would not trade the hard things for anything this world can offer."

What are the primary needs of this site currently? "We need a secure environment in our region. We need for this war to be over, to have our roads repaired, for patients to be able to get to us without fear, and for visiting surgeons to come again. We need more faculty, especially general surgery faculty. We need to restore many of the staff we have lost in the past three years. We need an incountry supply procurement system that works. We need stable electricity and more reliable, faster internet services. And we need fearless, visionary, supportive hospital administrators."

From Strangers to Family

Featuring Solomon Machemedze, MD 4th Year PAACS Resident, Bongolo Hospital, Gabon

For Dr. Solomon Machemedze, his motivation to become a doctor was the result of the pain he felt in losing his father when he was only eight years old. From that time on, he knew he wanted to keep others from experiencing the same thing he went through as a young child. In his own words, "I remember promising my mother (who was also bed ridden at the time because of health issues) that I was going to be a medical doctor just after losing my father. I felt like I had been let down by a lack of enough medical care for my dad, and I wanted to be a doctor in order to save so many other fathers out there." Now as a resident in the PAACS General Surgery program at Bongolo Hospital in Gabon, he is getting the chance to do exactly that.

The oldest of three children in his family, Solomon went to school in his home country of Zimbabwe before studying medicine at the University of Algiers in Algeria. He spent a period of six months learning French before he could start medical school. He graduated in November 2017 and shortly thereafter joined the residency at Bongolo in January 2018. He is currently in his fourth year of training with PAACS.

Solomon describes his journey into being accepted into the PAACS residency as "miraculous and a booster of faith." He fell in love with general surgery the first time he stepped into an operating room as a medical student. A good friend introduced him to PAACS, and he was accepted just after finishing medical school.

He was attracted to PAACS because of its mission to train minds and hands to give compassionate, quality care and to disciple hearts to be like Christ. "I think I can take it back to that moment when I was eight when I mentioned to my mom that I wanted to be a doctor to 'save other fathers out there'," he remembered. "I know this was just a grief-stricken child speaking, but I think God sowed a seed of desire to serve others. With that backstory, and now me hearing about this Christ-driven academy that trains people to actually go and give back to the most vulnerable communities in Africa, the pieces came together, and they matched in a gobsmacking way."

In the four years he has served and trained with PAACS, Solomon has met complete strangers who have turned out to be true brothers and sisters. As residents, they eat together, celebrate together, cry together, cheer each other up, share the Word, and pray together. "I have encountered individuals from faraway places with all sorts of accolades and achievements who were humble enough to leave all their comfort in order to come and share with us their knowledge, skills, and their walk with Christ," he said.

When he faces challenges with patients, Solomon knows that he cannot solve every problem for every patient, no matter how hard he tries. It's a lesson that reminds him to depend on God and cast all his cares on Him. He knows the importance of being consistent in praying with his patients and strives to allow his compassion to be a reflection of Christ.

As a result, he has seen his faith grow during his time with PAACS. "One of the factors that has inspired and influenced the growth is that I spend a significant amount of time at the hospital where everything we do begins with prayer," he said. "I have seen people who have walked out of the hospital alive. Yet, when they came in, everyone, including the textbook, predicted their death. These are constant practical reminders that the Healer is indeed God, and He is alive and watching over His people."

Those constant reminders also equip him to share that faith with his patients. He prays with each patient before a procedure in the operating room. "We try as much as we can to evangelize through compassionate care that stirs up the desire in some of our patients to know why we act the way we do, and we take the opportunity to let them know of the example that we try to follow, which is Jesus Christ," he said.

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This ability to share his faith as he continues to learn about surgery has been hugely impactful on his life. The nurturing of his faith coupled with surgical skills will later give him access to an audience in rural Zimbabwe that is probably yet to hear or be reminded about Jesus. After Solomon graduates from the PAACS program, he plans on going back home to serve at a rural mission hospital in Zimbabwe and share everything he has seen, heard, and learned during his training.

In Solomon's eyes, PAACS is impacting Africa just like PAACS has impacted him personally. He said, "Not only does neglected rural Africa now have access to quality healthcare through PAACS, it also now has an opportunity to hear about and experience God's love. I have seen physical healing, some of which is actually very miraculous. I have witnessed some people give their lives to Christ after receiving care that they have never received anywhere else. I have experienced pure love and unity whose source is Jesus Christ. And I am being blessed with skills and knowledge packaged in the most important thing a human being can ever receive— Jesus Christ."





Becoming Both Doctor and Pastor

Featuring Lemfuka Afidu Dieudonne, MD PAACS Graduate, Bongolo Hospital, 2019

I was born and grew up in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in a family of five children with a Christian background. During my teenage years, my parents settled in the western part of the DRC, while my father worked as director of a palm oil production company. At that time I used to change schools almost every year, as his job required us to rotate around the country to oversee production. After 15 years of work, my parents decided to relocate permanently to the capital city of Kinshasa to give my siblings and me a chance to receive a better and more stable education.

Since childhood, medicine has always been my passion, and I used to tell my mother that I would be a doctor or a pastor. Then one day she asked me why I couldn't become both doctor and pastor at the same time, something I didn't think would be possible. After I graduated from high school, I convinced my parents to allow me to apply for medical school. I went to medical school at the University of Lubumbashi, where I met my future wife, Christelle, when we were classmates. After graduating in 2011, I later found a job at ELWA Hospital in Liberia in West Africa in early 2013. While I was working in Liberia, Christelle and I got engaged.

Not long after, in April 2014, I returned to the DRC for our wedding. It was an exciting time, as I also received the letter of my approval to start residency with the PAACS program just days before our wedding. It was during our wedding preparations that we initially heard about the first case of the Ebola virus in Liberia. When we returned to ELWA Hospital after the wedding, the number of cases skyrocketed, and the outbreak was soon beyond our control. Imagine being newly married and facing such a challenge with the risk of contamination growing higher each day. As the situation worsened, both Christelle and I were quarantined before we could leave to start my residency with PAACS at Bongolo Hospital in Gabon. At that time, West Africa faced the same challenges our entire world has experienced in the last year with the pandemic. However, we trusted in the Lord and lifted our eyes above to ask God for intervention, protection, and provision. We were able to leave Liberia the day before all borders were closed, joining the others at Bongolo only a month late.

From the moment I heard about PAACS, I was captivated by its mission and vision, and I knew I wanted to be a part of this ministry. I originally applied to join the Arusha program in Tanzania, but there weren't enough available slots. When the PAACS leadership asked if I was interested in joining a different program, I readily accepted—I would have gone anywhere as long as it was a PAACS program. My motivation to join the residency was my passion for surgery and the huge need across Africa in terms of well trained and qualified medical professionals who can provide a high quality of care. I wanted to be among those who seek to give such care to patients.

My time with PAACS included some of the best moments of my life, even though the residency was challenging. All of my previous training had been in a French system, so switching to being trained in an English system was a huge challenge. In addition, I was trying to balance life as both a newly married man and a resident in a demanding training program. I had to learn about marriage and surgery at the same time. My wife is also a doctor, which added another factor to our busy lives. After our first daughter was born at the end of my first year of residency, we would sometimes find ourselves both on call on the same day. Figuring out those logistics provided yet another obstacle that we learned to overcome together.

Despite that, PAACS is a large part of our life story, as it impacted our academic, social, and spiritual lives. We were far away from our extended families, yet our new PAACS family surrounded us and helped us grow in various aspects of our lives. We were able to meet wonderful men and women of God who mentored us, and they remain good friends, strong partners, and supporters to our ministry.

My life completely changed in all aspects when I joined the residency. Serving others is one of God's commands, and God used PAACS to get me to obey His command to serve. PAACS has not only made me a unique surgeon, but it's also made me a true leader as I am influencing the next generation of African physicians. Nevertheless, I am just an instrument He is using to glorify His name.

With more than 100 graduates now serving in 21 countries across Africa, I believe PAACS is one of the answers to the need for surgical workforce in the continent.

Every day, the surgical care we are providing across Africa is making a difference and having an influence on our patients and in the hospitals. When people see the quality of care delivered by a PAACS graduate, they always ask, "Where were you trained? What is the name of your training institution?" Before I answer, I thank God for my training through PAACS. Glory and praise to God for the privilege given to me to be part of this ministry and to receive such training that Africa desperately needs.

My path through medical school and residency was a long journey, and I have now graduated. We are serving as SIM missionaries back at ELWA Hospital. That journey made me realize how God has led me to become both a doctor and a pastor who is God's servant to minister with compassionate care and share the gospel with the sick.



Mentoring the Next Generation of Graduates

Featuring Beryl Akinyi Ooro, MD PAACS Graduate, AIC Kijabe Hospital, 2017

Today, Dr. Beryl Akinyi Ooro is a general surgeon at AIC Kijabe Hospital in Kenya and the Assistant Program Director of the hospital's PAACS residency. She spends her days treating patients and teaching residents. Most importantly, she understands the daily struggles residents face during their training because it wasn't too long ago she was walking in their shoes as a PAACS resident herself.

Beryl was born and raised in western Kenya. Both of her parents were teachers, and she was the second of seven children. Beryl completed her undergraduate medical training at the University of Nairobi from 2005 to 2009. "Going into medicine was not an active decision that I made; mostly my parents made that decision for me," she recalled, "but staying in medicine is the decision that I have actively made."

She next completed an internship at Tenwek Hospital in Bomet, Kenya, where PAACS has a surgical training program. It was her first time hearing about PAACS, and it impacted her next steps in medicine.

When she first joined the PAACS general surgery program at Kijabe Hospital, the diploma was not yet approved by the medical board in Kenya. "It was a faith journey at the time. I was not sure how or where to practice after graduation. All I knew was I would get quality training with great mentorship," she said.

What drew Beryl to PAACS was being able to heal patients physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The joy of seeing a patient walking home better than they came to the hospital motivated her to become a



better doctor. That motivation was further cultivated through the PAACS family helping her understand the calling to serve others. "I had great mentors during my training, and seeing their passion and dedication to serving Christ drew me in a similar direction," she said.

She grew to love the training aspect of her residency, and quickly recognized that becoming a trainer herself would help meet the huge need for surgical care in Africa. She became determined to join the surgical education workforce after she finished her five years of training.

During a three-month external rotation, Beryl traveled to Mbingo Baptist Hospital in Cameroon. The experience proved to be both enlightening and life-changing. There she met her future husband, Royas Mawe. Soon after they were married and now have two young children.

"The scope of general surgery is very wide," she said. "I was trying to meet all the demands of residency, learning to operate, finishing all the weekly reading material in time, gaining confidence, overcoming self-doubt, and trying to prove that a woman can be a good surgeon." All of this and still being available for her family was Beryl's greatest challenge during her residency. And yet, as she completed her training, her desire to become an educator only grew stronger. She couldn't pass up the opportunity to serve in a PAACS institution to share what she learned with others.

Now, in her role as Assistant Program Director, Beryl has seen that dream come true, and she continues to strive to be a better teacher and mentor every day. AIC Kijabe Hospital is a 300-bed facility located about 60 kilometers from Nairobi. As a faith-based hospital, it serves mainly the low to middle income class in Kenya. They have about 20 full-time surgeons of different specialties, and they see about 10,000 cases per year.

As Beryl's responsibilities have grown and changed, she now realizes the amount of work it takes to train a resident, and it is her joy to see them reach graduation. The residents she trains represent an extremely diverse group of people, both in terms of their medical school and country backgrounds. That diversity is intentional. Part of the core mission at AIC Kijabe Hospital is to train not just for Kenya, but to improve healthcare for the entire continent of Africa. Beryl appreciates continually learning new cultures and practices from them. "They make me humble every day," she said. Today the most rewarding part of her work is seeing new trainees grow each year through the mentorship they receive in the PAACS program.

Today, Beryl sees PAACS impacting Africa through the number of highly skilled surgeons who are working in low resourced areas of Africa. She also sees that impact being made through other PAACS graduates just like herself who are directly taking the lead of steering surgical education as faculty at other PAACS programs. "I have great mentorship through older, more experienced surgeons within PAACS," she said. "It's like you have a big surgery family that is always available to help you grow." Each member of that family is offering highly skilled services to their own people while shining the light of Jesus to them in the process.

The smile on patients faces when they get better, and the pride and joy that you see on a resident's face when they are able to execute a given task independently are what keeps her motivated to continue to serve through PAACS. "Africa is my home," she said. "I know its surgical needs; there is room for growth in the field. I am happy contributing to the training of surgeons for a better future for Africa."

The smile on patients faces when they get better, and the pride and joy that you see on a resident's face when they are able to execute a given task independently are what keeps her motivated to continue to serve through PAACS.

One-on-One with a PAACS Resident

Featuring Jacques Fadhili Bake, MD

4th Year PAACS Resident, Soddo Christian Hospital, Ethiopia.

PAACS: To get us started, tell us a little about your background.

Dr. Bake: I grew up in a Christian Protestant family of seven children, three girls and four boys, being the second born of the family. My father is a teacher at a public high school, and my mother sells various items in a kiosk. I went to high school and university in Goma, which is a town of North Kivu, a province of Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. This was challenging since my family had to pay school fees with the poor resources they had, and I had to work while studying to fulfill other needs. I praise God that I was a painter, and I was able to combine both and succeed at school! I am married to Olga Luanda Bake since November 2018, and we have one daughter, Gwen Zawadi Bake, who was born in 2019.

PAACS: What drew you into medicine?

Dr. Bake: I chose medicine because I wanted to become a doctor since childhood, and the idea was supported by my parents. After falling from a wall while climbing with friends, I sustained multiple injuries on both hands and needed surgery. As I was taken by my cousin to a health center in my parent's absence, something strange occurred. I couldn't be admitted due to lack of fees supposed to be paid in advance, which led us to move to a different health center, where we were accepted. But they were unfortunately unable to perform the surgery, so I was finally taken to another health center where I underwent my surgery without having to pay any money in advance. From there on, I was persuaded to the call of a doctor so that I may assist my people who are in great need of healthcare. When I completed high school, I was ready to join faculty of technology because my father could not afford to pay my school fees in medicine while a teacher. But by faith, he encouraged me to pursue my study in medicine. God miraculously intervened, and I completed the undergraduate level.



PAACS: How did you first hear about PAACS?

Dr. Bake: I heard about PAACS for the first time from one of my seniors, a non-PAACS surgeon, who was the former coordinator of COSECSA at HEAL Africa. At that time, I was in the first year of residency, and he showed me how PAACS is a program with excellent surgical training and may be good for me to join.

PAACS: Why were you motivated to join the residency?

Dr. Bake: First of all, I was interested in joining the PAACS residency because my country, which is a low-income country, has a scarcity of surgeons and needs humble doctors. The model of Jesus Christ that PAACS provides will train me to share the love of Christ with my patients and bring hope to the hopeless. And I was convinced that PAACS will disciple and train me to practice surgery as a minister, and, therefore, I will have the privilege to be trained to take care of poor and sick people physically and spiritually.

PAACS: Tell us about your time so far in the PAACS program.

Dr. Bake: PAACS is a blessing to me and my family. We are having a great time, and the fellowship

between us residents and faculty and between our wives is really amazing. We care for each other. The other fact is the willingness of faculty to train and to show the way, for both surgical practice and spiritual growth.

PAACS: What was the biggest challenge you have faced during your residency so far?

Dr. Bake: I am from DRC, a French and Swahili speaking country, and here in Ethiopia patients speak Amharic, some of my co-workers communicate only in Amharic, so the big challenge I have is the difficulty of communication! I am learning Amharic, but after a year, I am still unable to take history from a patient without someone translating for me.

PAACS: How have you learned to incorporate your faith into your practice?

Dr. Bake: By understanding my faith, I learned to let myself be teachable and work in a way that's pleasing to God. As it is said in the epistle of Paul to the Colossians, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men." (Colossians 3:23, NKJV).

PAACS: Are you sharing your faith with your patients and others regularly? If so, how?

Dr. Bake: As I mentioned above. I have the issue of talking to patients due to the language barrier, but one story remained with me. This is about a Christian diabetic adult patient able to speak English who presented during my night duty and was referred for incarcerated inguinal hernia while having necrotizing fasciitis. He underwent many surgical procedures and had a long stay in the ICU. I had the opportunity to pray and to share the love of God with him while he was in the ICU. His faith remained intact, praising God while suffering in the body, and God responded to our prayers. He improved and was discharged alive.

PAACS: What would you say is the biggest way PAACS has impacted your life?

Dr. Bake: Outside of the excellent surgical training, the biggest impact in my life is the fellowship I have now. Knowing that I am a member of a Christian

PAACS: What are your plans for after graduation? How do you want to serve God in Africa?

Dr. Bake: I would like to be a part of a group of surgeons who are serving the underserved population in Africa by taking care of them in a holistic way and training medical doctors who wish to pursue surgery. I plan to serve God in Africa by ministering while taking care of patients with love and compassion. With my wife, we are planning a way of having missionary trips in some rural hospitals in need.

PAACS: How do you see PAACS impacting Africa today as you serve Him?

Dr. Bake: As a surgeon who is in contact with many hopeless patients, I have the great opportunity to share the hope we have in Jesus Christ, the gospel. Through PAACS, we are being equipped for this purpose, but also, patients are receiving excellent and compassionate care provided with love. This aspect is not in other training programs that we have in Africa.



"I have the great opportunity to share the hope we have in Jesus Christ, the gospel."



PAN-AFRICAN ACADEMY OF CHRISTIAN SURGEONS

56 million people in Africa are in need of surgical care. In some areas there is only 1 surgeon for 250,000 people. In other places, it is worse – 1 surgeon for 2.5 million people. The Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) is a strategic response to the need for surgeons in Africa. PAACS trains African physicians as surgeons to care for the poor and the sick. PAACS also disciples these surgeons to share the love of Christ with their patients to bring hope to those who are suffering.

MISSION

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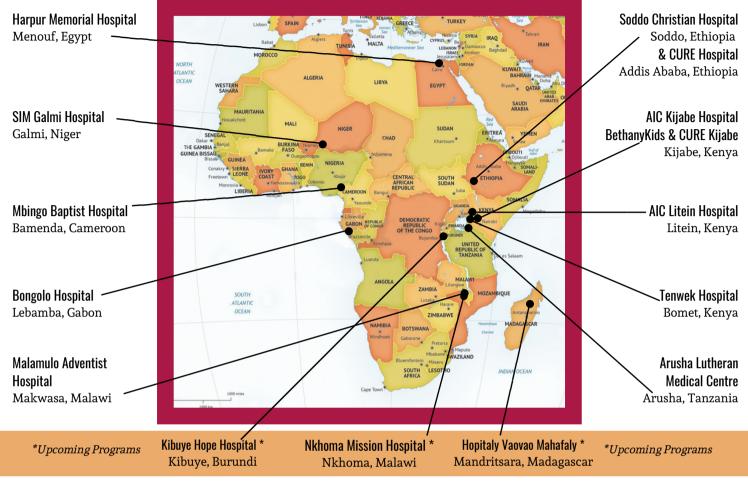
We estimate one PAACS graduate will touch approximately 2,752 lives in one year, through clinical and surgical procedures.

Combining all current PAACS graduates, over a estimated 25 year career, approximately 7.5 Million lives can be touched.



PAACS has issued 118 Graduate Certificates and another 18 are expected by the end of 2021.

PAACS LOCATIONS







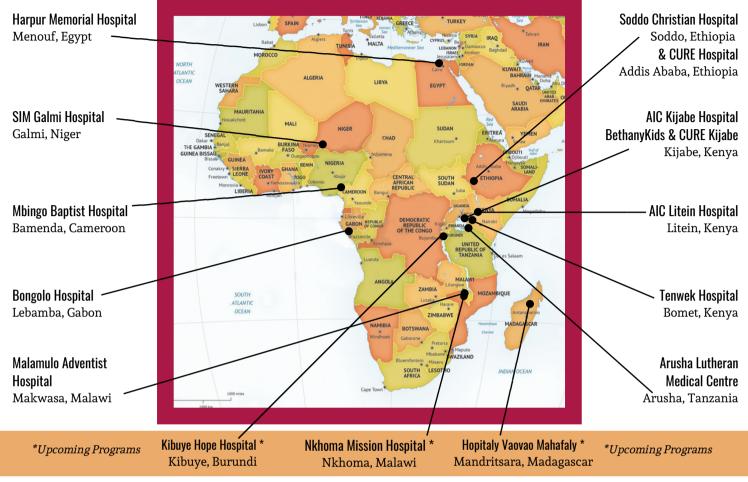
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