

# PAACS

2022 Edition

CARING FOR AFRICA



PAN-AFRICAN ACADEMY OF CHRISTIAN SURGEONS

TRAINING HIS SURGEONS  
CARING FOR HIS PEOPLE  
SHARING HIS LOVE



# From the Desk of Susan Koshy, CEO

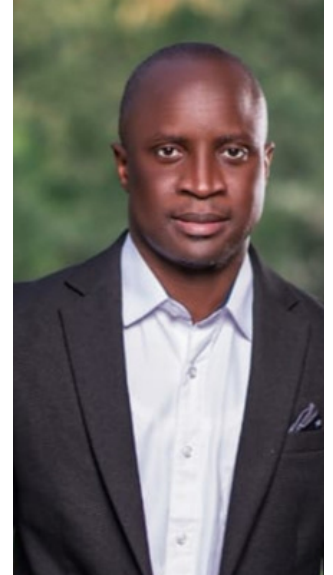
Dear PAACS Family,

It is my honor to present the 2022 PAACS Magazine to you. As each year passes, the blessings of God continue to multiply in our ministry. What a privilege it is to document the stories and testimonies of our faithful residents, faculty and graduates in this magazine each year. These open, honest "epistles" from the front lines give us a glimpse into what it looks like to follow God wholeheartedly and be used to uplift an entire continent with healing and hope.

I pray that as you read these stories of faith, that your faith would be strengthened and that you would be inspired to go wherever the Lord leads you to glorify and advance His kingdom on earth.

Blessings,

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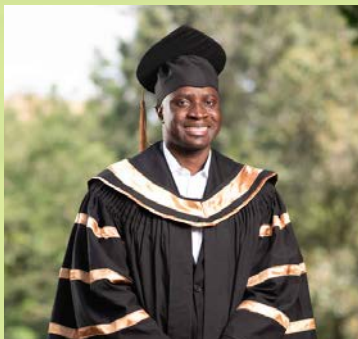
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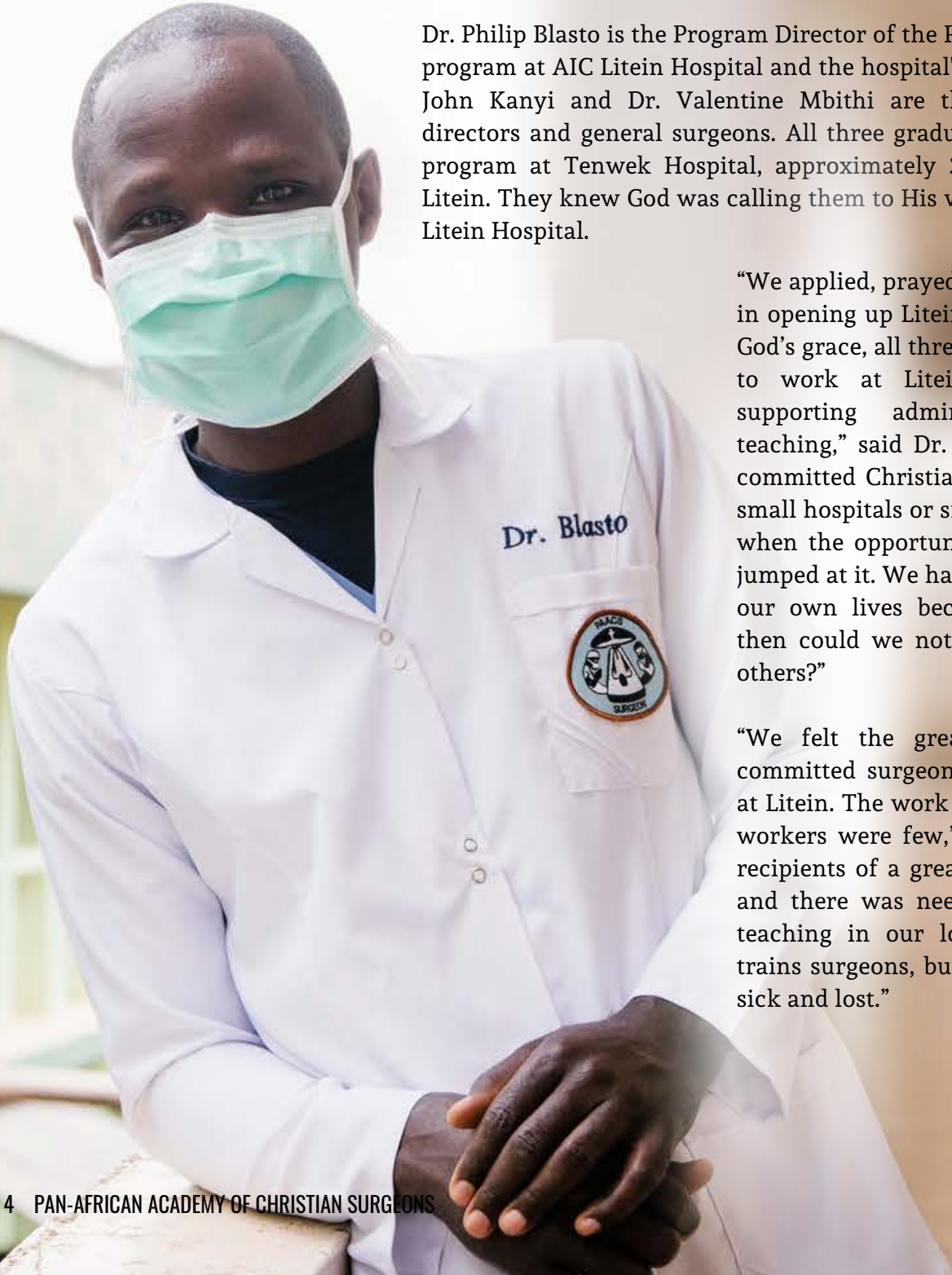
*A special Thank You to Mandi L. Morrin for her significant contribution to this publication.*

# Revolutionizing Healthcare in Kenya

## Featuring PAACS Faculty at AIC Litein Hospital in Kenya:

- Philip Blasto, MD - Program Director
- John Kanyi, MD - Assistant Program Director
- Valentine Mbithi, MD - Assistant Program Director

At AIC Litein Hospital in Kenya, three graduates of PAACS began the first PAACS general surgery training program to be run completely by PAACS graduates. They are fulfilling the mission of PAACS and watching it unfold before their eyes as they seek to grow the number of African surgeons who are living out the gospel and ministering to the sick.



Dr. Philip Blasto is the Program Director of the PAACS general surgery program at AIC Litein Hospital and the hospital's Chief of Surgery; Dr. John Kanyi and Dr. Valentine Mbithi are the assistant program directors and general surgeons. All three graduated from the PAACS program at Tenwek Hospital, approximately 25 miles southeast of Litein. They knew God was calling them to His work by serving at AIC Litein Hospital.

“We applied, prayed and saw God at work in opening up Litein as a surgical site. By God’s grace, all three of us were employed to work at Litein, and we have a supporting administration regarding teaching,” said Dr. Blasto. “The need for committed Christian surgeons serving in small hospitals or small towns is great. So when the opportunity to train arose, we jumped at it. We have seen the benefits in our own lives because of PAACS, how then could we not want to spread it to others?”

“We felt the great need of full-time committed surgeons to care for patients at Litein. The work was plentiful, and the workers were few,” they said. “We were recipients of a great training at Tenwek, and there was need for Christian-based teaching in our locality that not only trains surgeons, but also ministers to the sick and lost.”



The community surrounding AIC Litein Hospital primarily consists of three tribal groups: the Kipsigis, the Kisii and the Maasai. Being rural Kenya, this community has a need for increased quality, affordable, compassionate healthcare, which is mainly provided by faith-based hospitals. The PAACS program has increased the capacity of AIC Litein Hospital to provide much-needed service in the surgical department. It also gives back to the community, as it disciplines the residents to be surgeons who are willing to offer Christ-centered surgical care in rural Kenya, where the need is great.

AIC Litein Hospital has 220 inpatient beds, and it now welcomes more than 200,000 outpatients in a year. With six surgeons, including one gynecologist, two orthopedic surgeons and three general surgeons, the hospital conducts more than 2,500 surgeries a year. They have more than 140 nurses on staff, plus a variety of other clinicians. While everyone evangelizes to any patient depending on their willingness to receive the gospel, the hospital has a dedicated chaplaincy department that offers spiritual care to the staff as well as any patient in the wards or within the outpatient setting.

“We are able to see more surgical patients and give more time to their care due to the increased numbers of doctors in the department,” they said. “There is also an increase in capacity to do operative procedures as the residents are gradually able to do cases on their own or with minimal supervision.”

Starting a new PAACS general surgery program is not without its challenges, of course, especially the first few months. The three leaders had a heavy responsibility of being teachers, mentors, and faculty. “Honestly, it’s hard work juggling between

regular duties, clinical duties, spiritual duties, and academic duties and then also have a balanced family time,” they said. “We have a great appreciation and respect for our teachers.” They are thankful to be surrounded by a large community of mentors, friends, and prayer partners who offered guidance, assistance and prayer when needed.

This new program already achieved an important milestone when the first residents passed their initial PAACS exams, plus the COSECSA exam in year two. There are currently four surgical residents training at Litein: Ruth and Wycklife in their third year, Peter in his second year and John in his first year.

The directors said, “The training provided by PAACS disciplines residents to offer Christ-centered, quality, compassionate surgical care. For our residents, who are Christians, this gives them satisfaction in their work and the confidence that once they graduate, they will be able to offer this care wherever they will work. As the residents advance in their years of training, this increasing confidence is evident in their work, and they greatly appreciate the opportunity given to them by PAACS.”

A clipboard with a silver clip at the top, holding a white sheet of paper. The paper contains a handwritten-style weekly schedule. The text is as follows:

General weekly schedule:

- Monday - Surgical Outpatient Clinic
- Tuesday - Theatre
- Wednesday - Surgical Outpatient Clinic, Weekly Quiz, Bible Study
- Thursday - Theatre, Quiz Review With Consultant
- Friday - Theatre. Alternating - Morbidity and Mortality meetings, Journal Club, and Resident Presentations/Grand Rounds

## A Christ-Centered Approach Brings Miracles and Increases Faith

Necrotizing infections can feel like a tidal wave where you have no control. Just as God can calm the sea, He controls the intimate details of the smallest bacteria. The residents at AIC Litein recently witnessed God's power through an infection in one of their patients. His severe necrotizing infection was unable to be controlled by the team. Several trips to the operating room were no match to the strength of the infectious process. The team was frank with the patient and his family. They laid down their concerns and discussed the possibility that he may not survive.

Daily they would clean and dress his wound and offer antibiotics. The team shared about Christ's healing power and that Christ, the Healer, was needed to help the patient. Both the family and the patient were invited to trust in God for healing that was beyond what the PAACS surgeons could offer. They encouraged the family to not only pray for the patient and his healing, but for God to give the team wisdom in his care.

**Then the miraculous happened.** Their efforts began to slow the progression of the infection and eventually it stopped. The patient started to recover and soon needed reconstructive surgery. Today he is alive and well, to the glory of God! As a result, the patient and his family had increased faith in God Almighty because He was able to heal through the surgeons doing all that they could. For the surgical team, it served as a reminder that God is the Ultimate Healer, and our lives are in His hands.

It is a powerful example of how the team of faculty and residents at the PAACS program at AIC Litein Hospital are embodying the vision of the ministry to spread the gospel while attending to patients. They've seen patients give their lives to Christ and others strengthen their faith. Among their co-workers there has been a deepening of faith and enhanced teamwork. PAACS is a great asset in improving healthcare in Kenya. The Christ-centered approach on patients has revolutionized their care.



“PAACS has been a great asset in improving healthcare in Kenya,” they said.  
“The Christ-centered approach on patients has revolutionized their care.”



# A Tool in the Creator's Hands

**Featuring**  
**Dr. Ngam Blessing Ngoin**  
**PAACS Resident at Mbingo**  
**Baptist Hospital, Cameroon**

*"I always told myself that I would be a surgeon, because I like doing things with my hands. I like fixing things or creating new things. I am also a lover of the things and ways of God. PAACS sounded like the way to go."*

Have you ever seen someone sick to the point he can barely recognize his family, wake up days later and tell you, "Good morning," with a big smile on their face? Or maybe a caregiver who has lost all hope, and the next day they greet you with a bright smile? There is nothing more rewarding!

For Dr. Ngam Blessing Ngoin Epse Mobit-Othniel, her journey into medicine started at an early age. Growing up she witnessed many smiles and joy spread throughout families because of the care her parents, Joseph and Grace, provided. As nurses working with the Baptist Health Board in Cameroon, they are the reason she was drawn to the medical field. To this day, as a resident in the PAACS program at Mbingo Baptist Hospital in Cameroon, the smiles that she is bringing to her patients keep her motivated!

When she first started medical school, her parents were working at Mbingo Baptist Hospital. Her father would encourage her to complete summer internships at the hospital and there she was quickly introduced to PAACS. During surgery service under Dr. Ekwen, an alumna from the PAACS program at Mbingo, she began to be empowered by him. She did caesarian sections, hernia repairs and appendectomies, and

even scrubbed in with him on several other complicated cases. Her love of surgery was obvious. She didn't think she would need any further motivation to apply to PAACS. She wanted to be trained just like the wonderful surgeon who was mentoring her.

At the time, she was only 20 years old. The only residents she had seen were older men already married with kids. From what she could see, there was no female presence in the residency program. It made her question if she could complete the program as a recently married young woman. She began asking herself, "Do they accept women into the residency programs? Will I be able to take care of my home and still be a surgery resident? How can I leave my husband and go away for five years? How do we comply with the requirements for couples? My husband has a job! He can't leave all that behind to come be with me all the time. My family is definitely going to fall apart!" She thought about these details as she battled with herself while considering the option of applying. After nearly all the alumni she had met reinforced that other females had previously been accepted at Mbingo she realized, "If they could do it, why not me!"



*"PAACS is a place where residents are trained to be good surgeons and God-fearing people at the same time. Is there anything better?"*

**"I have always wanted to work in a supportive environment," she said.** "A place where I could be a surgeon and still be able to pray with and for my patients. A place where I would be allowed to tell my patients about the love of God and lead them into the Savior's waiting arms. PAACS is a place where residents are trained to be good surgeons and God-fearing people at the same time. Is there anything better?"

After applying and going through a testing process, she was accepted into the program at Mbingo. Slated to start training in 2019, the war crisis escalated in the region of Cameroon and start dates were pushed. Eventually she started work at Mbingo in August 2019 as a surgery house officer. Thinking all new residents would be sent to other countries to start their residency, there was great joy at Mbingo Baptist Hospital when the return of the PAACS program was announced. She would begin her residency in January 2020, nearly six months after she began as a surgery house officer and a year after her originally planned start date.





***"The ward was mostly full. I would go home tired and hungry and cry myself to sleep. What did I get myself into? Was I sure to make it through? Would I survive another day?"***

"I had learned to do many procedures by actually doing them during real cases and not via simulations. I had been involved in very complicated surgeries that I barely understood. The war had sent away all our senior residents and we were forced to grow faster than we would normally. We had very frequent calls and very busy work schedules. We were expected to shoulder responsibilities that would normally be asked of a senior. We had no choice! It was hard! It was demanding! The patients would not stop coming! The war was not ending! We kept having critically ill gunshot patients as well as the other cases. The ward was mostly full. I would go home tired and hungry and cry myself to sleep. What did I get myself into? Was I sure to make it through? Would I survive another day?"

Now in her third year of the program, Dr. Ngam has learned to balance the busy hospital schedule with home life. This year she was also joined by two new female PAACS residents who started at Mbingo in January.

As she reflects on her years with PAACS so far, she realizes how she has witnessed God's sovereignty every day. "It's not by my works but simply by His grace. 2 Corinthians 12:10 says that when we are weak, He is strong. The strength to run a 30-hour shift is definitely not from me. The healing of my patients doesn't come from me. I am simply a tool in the Creator's hands, and I trust God to use me for His glory." Countless times she thought there was no possible way for a patient to survive, yet they do. Again and again, prayers have changed the course of a difficult surgery. Many people have come to Christ after surviving a terrible disease process or surgery. All to be used for His purpose.

As she continues through the program at Mbingo and looks ahead to the future, she said, "I am called to serve the poor and underprivileged. It's not going to fetch me a lot of money, and I have already come to terms with that. I would love to continue to provide care to the underprivileged. They, too, deserve quality healthcare. I would also love to teach surgery. I greatly admire the teachers I have now, and I can't wait to impact other doctors like they have done me."

# Following His Call to Bongolo

Featuring Drs. Zachary and Jennifer O'Connor

PAACS Program Director and Assistant Program Director at Bongolo Hospital in Gabon



**“We are here because this is where God called us, and we are still here after 10 years because of the great team we serve with and the hundreds of people who are behind us in this ministry.”**

Zach and Jen (as they are known) first met while they were both attending medical school at Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After getting married, they then completed general surgery residency together at Kansas University-Wichita. As the first physicians in each of their respective families, Zach and Jen both felt like it was a calling into medicine. They now have been married for 18 years and have one son.

Today, Zach is the PAACS Program Director and Chief of Surgery, and Jen is the PAACS Assistant Program Director at Bongolo Hospital in Gabon. They first got involved with PAACS after hearing an old-fashioned tape recording of PAACS Founder Dr. David Thompson giving a talk on the theme, “No place is safe.” In the talk, he challenged the audience to question the value placed on “man-made or man-created safety” compared to the blessings of walking in obedience to God’s will and the call to serve Him wherever He may send us. They said, “We didn’t really know anything about PAACS or Bongolo Hospital at that time. Later when we were fourth year surgery residents, we attended the Global Missions Health Conference in Louisville, Kentucky where we learned about the Samaritan’s Purse Post-Residency Program from Scott Reichenbach and about PAACS from Dr. Bruce MacFayden.”

Attending that conference was a turning point for their careers. “We both felt called to the mission field and have a passion for teaching surgery,” they said. “The Lord opened the doors for us to serve for two years with Samaritan’s Purse, but choosing the actual site was difficult because many mission hospitals told us they either didn’t want two surgeons or didn’t have housing.”

Later that year, Dr. Thompson and PAACS Executive Vice President Dr. Keir Thelander invited them to Bongolo Hospital in Gabon. Located in a remote area

nearly eight hours away from the capital of Gabon, Bongolo is a 150-bed hospital that sees more than 40,000 outpatients per year, including patients from across the surrounding countries. The hospital has about 150 employees and provides a full range of services, including chaplain services.

“At the heart of all we do in the surgery department, reaching the lost through quality and sustainable surgical care and education remains our mission,” they said.

Many of the surgery residents at Bongolo come from countries outside of Gabon, such as Angola, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Mali and Zimbabwe. Given the remoteness of the hospital, the residents receive a well-rounded education in all aspects of general surgery, which includes urology, orthopedics, gynecology, and more.

Both PAACS and the other training programs have helped raise the bar of medical and surgical care offered at the hospital. Zach and Jen both feel that is thanks to the hospital’s administration and staff who have been so supportive and involved with the goals of PAACS. For example, starting an electronic x-ray system and keeping the medical records were systems historically stimulated by the presence of the PAACS and ophthalmology programs.

PAACS also contributes to the spiritual life of the hospital, with the general surgery trainees participating in regular hospital devotions and community ministries. Additionally, the residents are committed to evangelism, which encourages the hospital staff to boldness in sharing their faith. Members of the staff and the local church see this as a mission effort that allows the local community to touch the entire continent. In addition, many of the residents and their spouses have been involved in local ministries like the worship team or youth outreach.

“We enjoy seeing them work as a team to support each other and provide optimal surgical care to our patients in a way that prioritizes spiritual realities as well as excellent physical outcomes,” said Zach and Jen.



As a couple, Zach and Jen believe that serving at Bongolo in a remote, resource-limited setting has refined and sanctified them in numerous ways. “Our relationships with the surgery residents and with visiting surgical volunteers have challenged and grown our faith and lives in many valuable ways,” they said. “As it says in 1 Corinthians 1:26-27, the Lord didn’t call any of us to Bongolo because of our own qualifications. Serving at a mission hospital is humbling.”

*For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;*  
*1 Corinthians 1:26-27*

With each challenge, there is a refining and sanctification process that is going on. There is so much to learn here, but those lessons also turn into rewarding experiences. Probably the most rewarding aspect is the opportunity to disciple and train godly men and women to use surgery as a ministry. In addition, the relationships with members of the community and local church, the staff, the surgery residents and their families, the churches and supporters back home and volunteer visitors are incredibly valuable.”

As they continue their work at Bongolo, both Zach and Jen realize they wouldn’t be able to continue serving without so many people both in Gabon and back in the U.S. supporting them and their ministry in countless ways. They are motivated by the power of the gospel to train servant leaders who are competent surgeons, willing to follow Christ with abandon.

And the results they see from the PAACS programs in Gabon and across Africa are making a difference and truly impacting the continent for Christ. “We are seeing mission hospital capacity increase as graduates take up positions around the continent. In some cases, we see new or revitalized ministry going on as a result of their work,” Zach and Jen said. “In other cases, we see expanded services in other established hospitals within the PAACS network that provide additional training opportunities for our current trainees. We are excited to be one small part of the PAACS family that is dedicated to this same goal.”

# Finding God's Purpose

Featuring Dimingo Gomez, MD

1st Year PAACS Fellow, BethanyKids Hospital, Kenya



*“From our trainers in PAACS I have seen and learned a character or quality that I had not seen amongst many surgeons, humility,” he said. “I had thought that pride was a normal quality for a qualified surgeon. PAACS alumni who have trained me have demonstrated that humility is a virtue even for the greatest of surgeons, and I believe that has redirected my life.”*

Dr. Gomez, originally from The Gambia, spent his early education years living with his grandparents in a village without easy access to healthcare facilities. When he graduated high school, he knew he wanted to work in the field of medicine because it would offer him the ability to bring joy to people. However, the required years of training were going to be a sacrifice for his family. It was a worthwhile sacrifice. After seven years of training, plus an internship, he moved to Liberia in 2013 to begin working as a general practitioner. During this time, he met Dr. Jefferson Sibley who told him about the opportunity for surgical training through PAACS. Dimingo was later accepted into the PAACS general surgery program at Kijabe Hospital in Kenya.

Dimingo officially started in the PAACS program in January 2017, and he has spent the last five years learning how to be a great surgeon and how to grow in his relationship with Christ.

In his own words,

**“I couldn’t have asked for a better program. Training through PAACS has no doubt contributed so much in making me a Christian surgeon. Before PAACS, I was a Christian and I could have been a surgeon in any other training program, but during the last five years training under PAACS I have realized that these two don’t have to be separately practiced; in fact, they make each other better in the same person.”**

As a 2021 graduate of the PAACS general surgery program at Kijabe, Dr. Gomez has spent the last five years gaining confidence in his capabilities, growing in Christ, and sharing his faith with patients daily.

He prioritizes and is intentional in ensuring that his actions bring glory to God. It has redirected his life. A redirection that has helped him find God's purpose for him as he begins as a new fellow in the PAACS pediatric surgery program at BethanyKids.

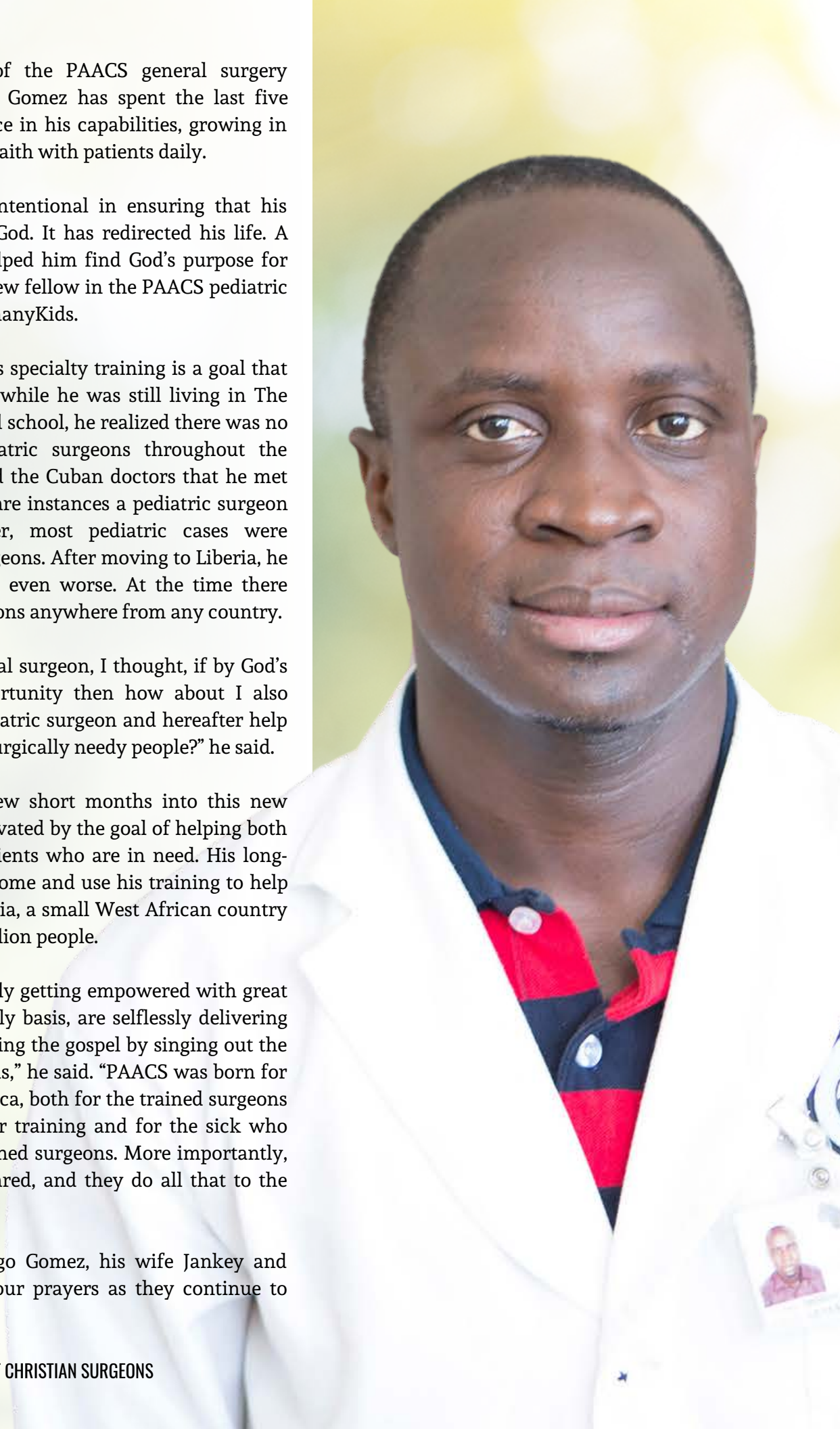
Taking the step towards specialty training is a goal that developed in his heart while he was still living in The Gambia. During medical school, he realized there was no trained Gambian pediatric surgeons throughout the country. He appreciated the Cuban doctors that he met who came to help. In rare instances a pediatric surgeon would arrive, however, most pediatric cases were handled by general surgeons. After moving to Liberia, he saw that the need was even worse. At the time there were no pediatric surgeons anywhere from any country.

“As I trained as a general surgeon, I thought, if by God's grace I have the opportunity then how about I also formerly train as a pediatric surgeon and hereafter help a larger population of surgically needy people?” he said.

Dr. Gomez is only a few short months into this new program, but he is motivated by the goal of helping both adult and pediatric patients who are in need. His long-term goal is to return home and use his training to help the people in The Gambia, a small West African country with more than two million people.

“I see an Africa gradually getting empowered with great surgeons who, on a daily basis, are selflessly delivering patient care and spreading the gospel by singing out the Word and by our actions,” he said. “PAACS was born for selfless acts toward Africa, both for the trained surgeons who get a fully paid-for training and for the sick who have access to well-trained surgeons. More importantly, the Word of God is shared, and they do all that to the glory of God.”

Please keep Dr. Dimingo Gomez, his wife Jankey and their son Edward in your prayers as they continue to train with PAACS.





*“Words are and will never be enough to tell you, the PAACS family, how much you have all touched my life, that of my family and, by God’s grace, the lives of the people I shall serve. I and my family are sincerely grateful for this great sacrifice you are making in helping me achieve my goals,” he said. “I will encourage everyone who desires to positively impact the world and Africa to be assured that one of the best ways to do this is to be a part of the PAACS family and help many more young doctors in their journey. God bless PAACS, and God bless Africa!”*

# One-on-One with a PAACS Graduate

Featuring Gezahegn Tilahun, MD

*Originally from Ethiopia, Dr. Gezahegn Tilahun is a PAACS graduate from the General Surgery Program at Soddo Christian Hospital in Ethiopia. He now serves as PAACS Faculty member at Soddo.*

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

**Dr. Tilahun:** I was born and grew up in the countryside of south Ethiopia. My childhood was challenging but full of joyful memories. I was raised up by a single parent, my sweet mam. No woman was like her for me until my wife. I met my wife just after graduating from medical school as a general practitioner. She had just finished high school and was assigned to nursing college where we met. We loved each other and married in a year. The following year, we had our first daughter. We have three children: two girls and one boy. They are 19, 15, and 12. Our last child had pathological jaundice. She is sweet, even though she has limitations. We are seeing beyond the unseen. I invite you to pray for her with us.

**PAACS:** *What drew you into medicine?*

**Dr. Tilahun:** God enabled me to score well on tests and to understand science. He also gave me a good heart for others. I felt the pain of others and wanted to help in some way, but I didn't decide which profession to go into until after finishing high school. While waiting for the results of my university entrance application, my aunt died in a hospital. This led to me choose medicine. God favored me to go to the best medical school in Ethiopia of that time: Addis Ababa University.

**PAACS:** *How did you first hear about PAACS?*

**Dr. Tilahun:** While serving as a general practitioner, my wife and I had a burden for our patients' spiritual lives. Sick patients are at the gate of heaven or hell. I did not want my patient to die before hearing what Jesus Christ did for him or her. I chose nighttime to share my faith with my patients, even though most were unbelievers. I was concerned where their souls would be after they died. In the meantime, my wife and I were praying for the right opportunity and right time for specialization. We anticipated life and residency would be very difficult with children.





In fact, I joined residency late. A PAACS graduate who was looking for a job during his fifth year asked me if I knew of a vacancy in nearby hospitals where I was working as a general practitioner. He told me about PAACS. I learned from him what was already in my heart. PAACS equips us to serve spiritually and physically. What a blessing!

**PAACS: Why were you motivated to join the residency?**

**Dr. Tilahun:** I had seen enough patients who needed surgery but died because it was not available. I could not fix a bowel obstruction or a uterine rupture with antibiotics alone. I was only a physician without surgical skills. My family moved to Soddo after we heard about PAACS, even before applying for the program. We first were employed at Soddo Christian Hospital, with my wife as a nurse and me as a general practitioner. When we moved to Soddo in 2012, the acceptance age in PAACS was changed to 35. God gave me favor, and I was accepted as a resident at the age of 36. That was one of the biggest challenges I faced.

**PAACS: Tell us about your time in the PAACS program.**

**Dr. Tilahun:** I learned surgery from devoted, God-fearing mentors. They taught me to “choose well, cut well, and go well.” God used them to grow me both spiritually and academically. Here, I forward my sincere gratitude to Dr. Paul Gray, Dr. Andrew Chew, Dr. Paul Lock, Dr. Chi, and many more. When I look back, residency was both sweet and challenging, smooth and rough. There were times when I doubted that God called me to the program. The next day I found myself encouraged and saying, “Oh, the Lord is preparing me for something awesome.”

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

**Dr. Tilahun:** PAACS equipped me surgically, but more and more every day, PAACS helped me to totally surrender to the Lord.

**PAACS: What made you want to serve at Soddo as opposed to somewhere else?**



**Dr. Tilahun:** Around the end of my training, I was asked if I was willing to stay if given the opportunity. I agreed and stayed for several months. Then I left to go to another hospital. I thought I was done at Soddo, but God was not done. He called my family back. My family prayed almost a month to make the decision. Really, it was God’s call, and I returned back to Soddo.

**PAACS: Tell us a little about Soddo Christian Hospital and the work you are doing.**

**Dr. Tilahun:** Soddo is located on the southern part of Ethiopia. The hospital catchment population is supposed to be about three million people, but people come from far areas looking for better care. We receive patients from neighboring countries such as South Sudan and Somalia. There are nine surgeons in our hospital. Five of them are missionaries from the U.S. There are three general surgeons: Dr. Tim Love, Dr. David Jeffcoach, and me. We see about 150 outpatient cases in the surgical referral clinic and the emergency room per week. More than half of our patients are trauma patients.

**PAACS: Tell us about your experience during the conflict in Ethiopia when other PAACS faculty relocated.**

**Dr. Tilahun:** It was a hard time. My goal was two-fold: that the hospital would continue taking surgical patients and that PAACS Ethiopia also would continue. I didn't want the program to be suspended. It was unplanned and sudden. I lost partnerships, friendships, and the usual helpers when I needed them. I praise the Lord there were no major vascular cases or foreign body aspirations in that time. However, the Lord was with us. He was faithful, and the program went smoothly.

**PAACS: What type of impact does the PAACS program have upon the hospital in general?**

**Dr. Tilahun:** PAACS has a great impact on the hospital. Construction is booming with a lot of construction workers. More health workers are being employed, and the main hospital income comes from surgery. The hospital is known nationally and was awarded a prize, got expansion land, and has a good name in the community.

**PAACS: What keeps you going every day despite the hard work?**

**Dr. Tilahun:** The Lord, His Spirit, and His Word keeps me going. He is faithful and loving always. When I am down, He is there to lift me up. I hear His voice say,

“Didn't I tell you not to be afraid? Don't be afraid; I am with you!” My wife is a strong and committed woman. Her prayers and partnership helped me a lot. The love I have for my children is another energy source. God blessed us with excellent relationships with all the missionaries.

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

**Dr. Tilahun:** I pray for my patients at home, before rounds, and before surgery. I try to develop personal relationships with my patients as much as possible. Even though we operate, it is God who leads our mind, decisions, and hands. It is God who heals tissues.

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

**Dr. Tilahun:** PAACS is giving the continent Christ-minded surgeons. These surgeons impact a lot more. They treat, teach, and make disciples.

**PAACS: What type of results are you seeing in Africa through PAACS—in your patients, your personal life, your co-workers, etc.?**

**Dr. Tilahun:** PAACS is striving to bring excellent surgical care to the doors of Africans. However, that is not the chief goal. It is to win souls and bring glory to our sovereign Lord through Jesus Christ.





## PAN-AFRICAN ACADEMY OF CHRISTIAN SURGEONS

Fifty-six 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 – one surgeon for 2.5 million people. The Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) is a strategic response to the need for surgeons and related specialists in Africa. PAACS trains African physicians as surgeons, anesthesiologists, and obstetrician/gynecologists to care for the poor and the sick. PAACS also discipless these surgeons to share the love of Christ with their patients to bring hope to those who are suffering.

### 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.

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 an estimated 25 year career, **approximately 7.5 Million lives** can be touched.

# 5

PAACS is a 5 year surgical and spiritual training program.  
\$25,000 per year per resident;  
\$125,000 over five years

# 10

PAACS has training programs in 10 countries: Burundi, Cameroon, Gabon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Tanzania

# 22

PAACS has 22 training programs.

- 13 General Surgery Programs
- 3 Orthopaedic Surgery Programs
- 1 Pediatric Surgery Program
- 1 Neurosurgery Program
- 1 Head and Neck Surgery Fellowship
- 1 Cardiothoracic Surgery Fellowship
- 1 Obstetric/Gynecology Program
- 1 Anesthesiology Program

# 20

PAACS has graduates in 20 African countries.

# 125

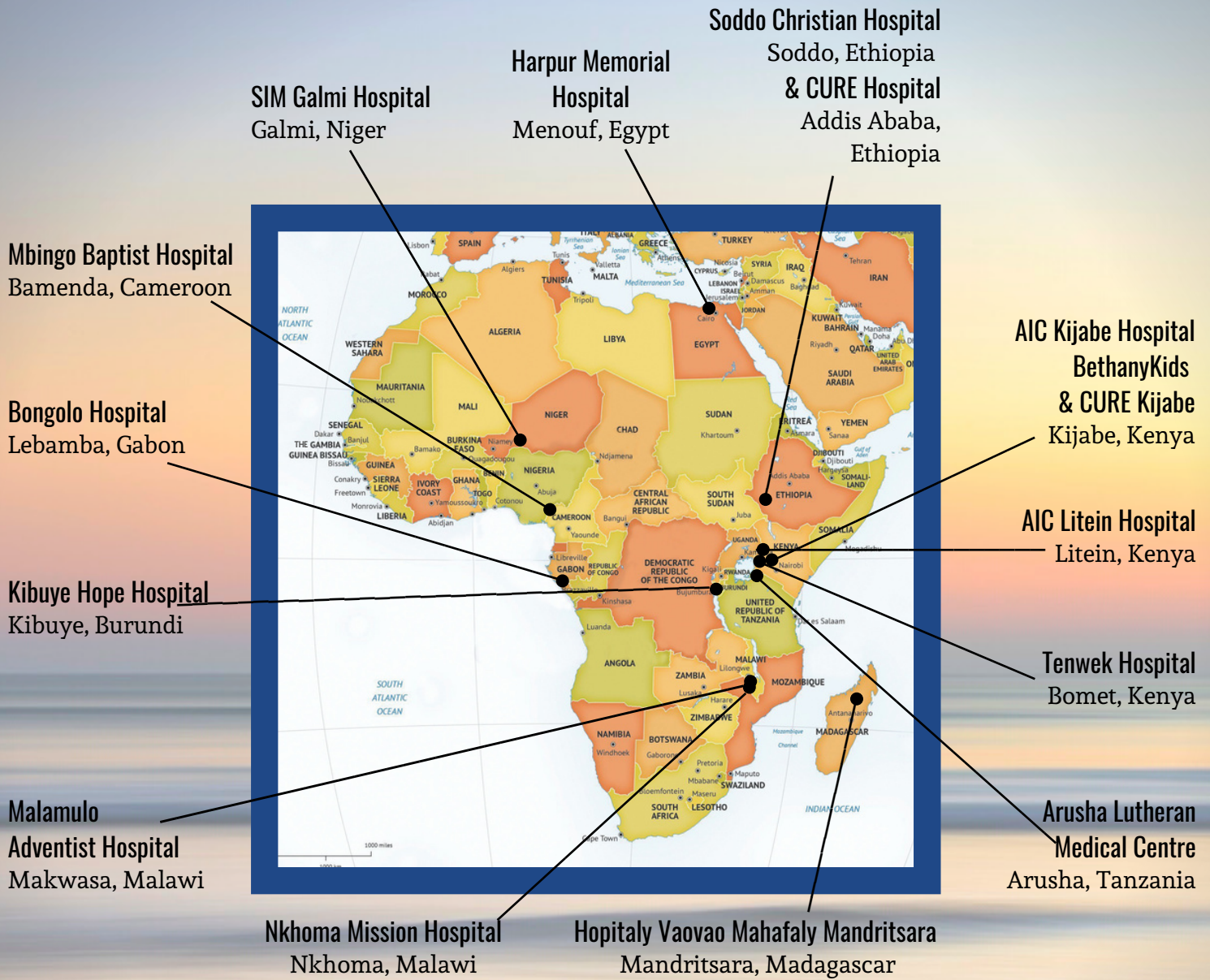
PAACS has 125 residents in training.

# 135

PAACS has issued 135 Graduate Certificates and another 17 are expected by the end of 2022.

\*Based on 2021 PAACS Alumni Survey

# PAACS LOCATIONS



**DONATIONS ONLY:**  
PAACS  
PO Box 735262  
Dallas, TX 75373-5262



**CORRESPONDENCE ONLY:**  
PAACS  
440 W. Colfax St. #1458  
Palatine, IL 60067

PAN-AFRICAN ACADEMY OF CHRISTIAN SURGEONS