



God Is Right Beside Us

DR. ELVIS MBANZABUGABO

My name is Elvis Mbanzabugabo. I was born and raised in the northern region of Burundi in a large Christian family. At a young age, our parents instilled in us strong moral and Christian values. I left home for boarding school at the age of twelve. In spite of the temptations of adolescent peer pressure, I was mostly successful in maintaining those values.



When I was finishing my high school studies, I started having a serious conflict between my inner conscience and my outer lifestyle. This resulted in feelings of guilt that I suffered for a long time. I knew that I was not right with God, but I continued to try to solve my problems on my own. It was not until two years later that I realized that what I needed was a personal encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ. I will always remember the evening when I gave my life to Him. The feeling of guilt was traded for a feeling of justification and inner peace, along with the assurance of eternal life.

I heard about PAACS from colleagues and a friend of mine, Dr. Jean Luc Kazoya, who had just been accepted into the PAACS residency program at that time. He knew that I had a passion for surgery and a dream to see improvement in surgical care in low resource areas like my country. By a divine opportunity, I met Dr. Sanoussi Yakoubou in Nairobi. He also encouraged me to apply for the PAACS residency program. I didn't know then that he would later turn out to be my Program Director. I was accepted at the SIM Galmi PAACS program for the academic year of 2015-2016.

SIM Galmi Hospital is located at the edge of the Sahara Desert in South-East Niger. The Galmi training program has a high volume of cases that result in long and tiresome days and nights. And yet, it was a wonderful environment for learning and gaining experience. Our Program Director used to tell new residents that the five year-period of training that they were about to start may be the hardest period they will have to endure for the rest of their lives.

The five years went on, day after day, but the heavy load was lightened by the other hardworking and committed residents under the direction and leadership of godly and dedicated mentors.

It is now almost two years since I started practicing. I am currently serving at SIM ELWA Hospital in Liberia, where I joined Dr. Juvenal Musavuli and Dr. Dieudonne Lemfuka, who are also PAACS graduates. Our earnest desire has been the one we acquired from our training; to deliver excellent and compassionate care to the poor and sick, and to share the love of Christ with those who are suffering. We are also dedicated to mentoring young doctors rotating into our surgical department. We continue to face many challenges, but God has always been right beside us all along the way, and we are so very grateful for His presence.

Planting Seeds for Future Workers

One day, a drug-addicted young boy came to us with an infection in his leg. We took care of him and grafted his wound. During his hospital stay, we had the opportunity to share the Gospel with him many times. One day, he and his mother found me in the clinic, and he told me that he had quit smoking and started going to church as a result of the words of God we shared with him. He said he was inspired by the attitude of our surgical team and would like to become a medical professional himself.



Dear PAACS Family

I pray that 2022 has launched well for you and your loved ones! We gladly present to you the June 2022 PAACS Alumni Newsletter, Volume 15. We pray that it finds you well in your various locations.

In this edition, we feature articles about our PAACS graduates, Dr. Juvenal Musavuli and Dr. Elvis Mbanzabugabo, both graduates from SIM Galmi Hospital in Niger in 2018 and 2020 respectively. They are both currently working as general surgeons at ELWA Hospital in Liberia.

As you read this newsletter, I pray that you will be encouraged by their stories, and I hope it will be a source of inspiration as we continue to serve and share the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All PAACS alumni are invited to submit articles for the forthcoming issues. If you are interested, please contact me at the email below.

Yours in Christ,
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21 Countries with PAACS Graduates



126 Graduates
have served in the
under-resourced
areas of Africa.



Don't Neglect Small Beginnings

DR. JUVENAL MUSAVULI

My name is Juvenal Musavuli Maghuta. I'm the last born in a family of eight siblings, with three brothers and four sisters. I am from Eastern Congo, close to the Ugandan borders. I am married to Nzuva Sifa. God has blessed us with two children, Joshua who is nine years old, and Imani who is five. Despite warfare in my region, I was able to attend medical school at a local Catholic University. I later completed my degree in General Medicine at the State University in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

After my graduation, I got an appointment in Rwanda at a new district hospital called Butaro. It was supported by Partners in Health, a non-profit organization. I was fortunate to work closely with some short-term international staff and those appointed at the district hospital. With my interest in surgery, I was appointed as the General Practitioner attached to the surgical department.

In 2011, one of the visiting surgeons, Dr. Robert Riviello, asked me about my dream for my career. I told him that I would like to get specialized training in surgery. He talked to me about a Christian organization training African surgeons, and the next day he brought one of the PAACS newsletters along so I could learn more about it. He asked if I would consider joining PAACS. After getting more information, I said, "Yes, I want to join". He responded first by explaining some of the difficulties and the financial challenges involved, but then said that not only will PAACS offer you a residency position, but the group of visiting doctors here now have offered to provide all your financial support.

I was so deeply touched. I was amazed that other people who barely knew me would use their own money so that I can achieve my dream to become a doctor for "soul and flesh". Later, in August 2013, I joined the PAACS surgical residency program at SIM Galmi Hospital in Niger.

This was a completely new experience with challenges and successes. One thing I realized was that cultural differences were very evident and ever present. SIM Galmi Hospital is in South Niger, close to Nigeria. This is a fertile oasis and a busy place receiving patients from North Nigeria and those around the region of Tahoua and Maradi. Some even come from as far as Abidjan because they strongly believe in the excellence of the service given at SIM Galmi Hospital. There is a saying in the region - "Sai Galmi", meaning "only Galmi". It applies to the Hospital. It means when Galmi has failed, then I leave it in God's hands .

Despite the very busy schedule of work, the spiritual time was highly respected, and the Program Director at that time, Dr. Joe Starke, was pleased to see us growing in this area as well. We were always encouraged to share the Gospel or pray with patients. We were taught to create these opportunities. Since SIM Galmi is a hospital with multinational practitioners, the residents are given the opportunity to learn to work with a multicultural team.

One more important lesson I learned is that God works with those who are ready and available. We often attended local churches, but sometimes we needed to drive 40 km to attend a church close to our denomination. After much prayer, God sent a pastor from a nearby town, and we began a service in a mud house. After prayers and questions, we gathered and God sent us a pastor from a nearby town. Within a year, this nucleus (with some missionaries) grew to a point that a church building was built. A strong Christian school project was also started, where Christian curriculum would be freely presented to the children so that they can grow in their knowledge. God doesn't look at the multitude. Don't neglect the small beginnings. Today, four years later, this school has more than 250 children, and God is still providing.

At the end of my five years of residency, I chose to serve in a country where the need is great. With my wife, Sifa, and my children, Joshua and Imani, we moved to Monrovia, Liberia on January 4th 2019. Liberia is a post-conflict country, and the health system was highly affected by Ebola in 2006. There were fewer than fifteen fully trained general surgeons in the country. My calling was that I would go where I am most needed.

We thank God for the preparation time in Niger. We believe our time there was a comprehensive education for our work, both as clinicians and as missionaries of the Gospel message.

PAACS graduates, Drs. Musavuli, Dieudonne, and Mbanzabugabo were recently featured in an article in the March 12, 2022 edition of World Magazine.



Read the article online at paacs.net/worldmag.html

The God of Second Chances

**A Patient Testimony from
Dr. Juvenal Musavuli**

A patient who had been attacked a couple of hours earlier and whose life was threatened was brought into our hospital. We quickly resuscitated him and rushed him to the operating room. After surgery, I heard my scrub nurse mumbling and expressing some disapproval because this man was a known criminal. She was upset that we were fixing him so nicely in spite of his past. Over the next two days, he was ready to talk and listen. I shared the Gospel with him and explained that this was a second chance that God was offering to him. The chaplain followed up on him, and the police handled the investigation after he had healed.

One Sunday, at the end of a church service where I attend, I was greeted respectfully by a young man and realized he was the patient that I treated. I give credit to the Holy Spirit who can use our few words and our hands to create faith and to bring healing into peoples' lives.