



# Light in the Darkness

Dr. Ted John, Program Director & Dr. Jason Fader, Faculty  
PAACS General Surgery Program  
Kibuye Hope Hospital, Burundi

In the heart of Burundi, where hope battles against staggering odds, you will find the PAACS General Surgery Program at Kibuye Hope Hospital (KHH). This hospital stands as a beacon of light, facing head-on the stark reality that Burundi is among the top five countries with the fewest surgeons per capita. Amidst the tremendous need for surgical services, PAACS is training and discipling African Christian surgeons to stay in Africa and serve their communities, embodying a long-term, viable solution.

Dr. Ted John, who serves as the PAACS Program Director at KHH, feels that God brought him to this hospital to join Dr. Jason Fader, who served as the only general surgeon at the hospital for years. Dr. John knew he wanted to join Dr. Fader in serving God and be a part of training and mentoring the next generation of surgeons for Africa through PAACS.

Since coming to KHH, Dr. John has witnessed the great need for surgical care in Burundi and the devastation that can occur when there is a lack of availability of trained surgeons. The story of one patient, Gerard, is clearly etched in his memory. Gerard was rushed to the hospital after a catastrophic car accident in which he had multiple injuries to his chest and abdomen. In most parts of Burundi, where there are no surgeons, Gerard would not have survived. His body was badly mangled and surgical intervention was necessary for his survival. There were times when his blood pressure was quite low, and Dr. John didn't think Gerard would survive. The surgical team prayed together and asked for God's help as they put their skills to use. Against all earthly odds, Gerard continued to cling to life after the surgery.

Dr. John recalls that he and a PAACS resident stood by Gerard's bedside explaining how close he had come to death. They shared that while they had provided their best care, God was the reason that he was still alive. Gerard told them he used to go to church, but it had been a long time since he had spoken to God. Together they thanked God and prayed in faith for complete healing. Gerard smiled and was grateful for the encouragement and hope they provided. Gerard's condition continued to improve, and he was eventually allowed to go home, walking and breathing normally. The day of his discharge was a testament not just to excellent surgical care through PAACS surgeons, but to God's grace and faithfulness.

Dr. John says "It is a joy and a blessing to care for patients like Gerard in rural Burundi. It is my daily prayer that patients who come to our hospital experience the love of Christ and turn to God as they receive excellent, compassionate care." Dr. Fader echoes the sentiments of Dr. John, "It is encouraging to see the concept of whole-patient care developing at the hospital. Residents are seeing that we have an opportunity to minister to patients spiritually. What a privilege!"



PAN-AFRICAN ACADEMY OF CHRISTIAN SURGEONS

# 2023 PAACS Highlights



**"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."**

**Joshua 1:9**

*Just as Joshua was instructed to face new challenges with courage and the assurance of God's presence, the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) has embraced 2023 with a spirit of strength and faith. This year, PAACS expanded its reach into **11 countries**, training **147 residents** in **24 programs** across Africa. We pray that the stories and information in these pages inspire you to praise God for all He has accomplished through PAACS this year.*



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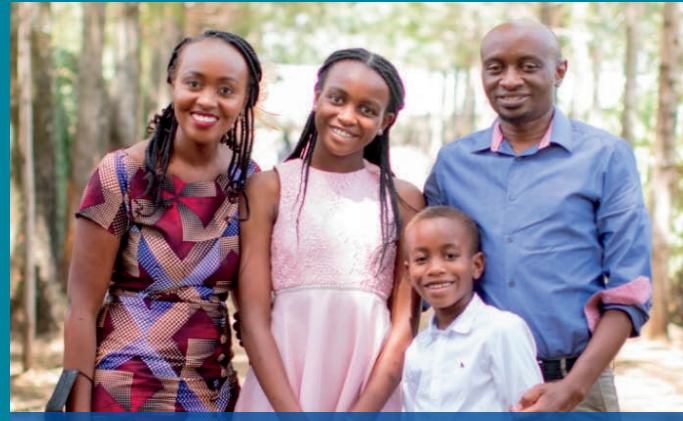
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**"Where is God taking us as we serve Him through PAACS? No one knows for sure, but He who created PAACS and sustains it knows, and He invites you to join Him!"**

**Dr. David Thompson, PAACS Founder**

**Read more**





Dr. Jack Barasa, Assistant Program Director  
PAACS General Surgery Program  
AIC Kijabe Hospital, Kenya

## Training Leaders

The first resident of the PAACS General Surgery Program at AIC Kijabe Hospital in Kenya, Dr. Jack Barasa, graduated in 2013. He has come **full circle** and faithfully served God as the Assistant Program Director of the same program from which he was a graduate. Dr. Barasa credits his success to his PAACS training, **"PAACS not only taught us excellent surgical skills, but also shaped us into servant leaders."** In fact, both the current and former CEO of AIC Kijabe Hospital are also PAACS graduates.

AIC Kijabe Hospital is a melting pot of cultures where PAACS faculty and residents get the opportunity to care for and share the gospel with people from all over Kenya and surrounding regions, seeing about 150,000 outpatients and 50,000 inpatients each year. There are 13 operating theatres doing approximately 8,500 procedures every year, many of which would have been unaffordable or unattainable for most patients.

As both a surgeon and trainer, Dr. Barasa reminds himself and the PAACS residents of the great privilege they have to bring both physical healing and spiritual hope to their patients. He says, **"We proclaim that Christ is the ultimate healer and we all strive to point our patients to Him."** Dr. Barasa and the team have seen patients and their families come to Christ even through horrible circumstances. Both PAACS and the hospital's spiritual ministry isn't just an add-on, it is the magnetic core attracting an ever-growing community of patients, students, residents, and staff.

Dr. Jack Barasa's remarkable journey is a living testament to what happens when excellent training, discipleship, and an unquenchable thirst for serving God come together. And he does it all while pointing everyone he encounters towards the ultimate source of healing: the loving arms of Christ.

## A Pebble Turned Into an Avalanche

Dr. David Thompson  
PAACS Founder

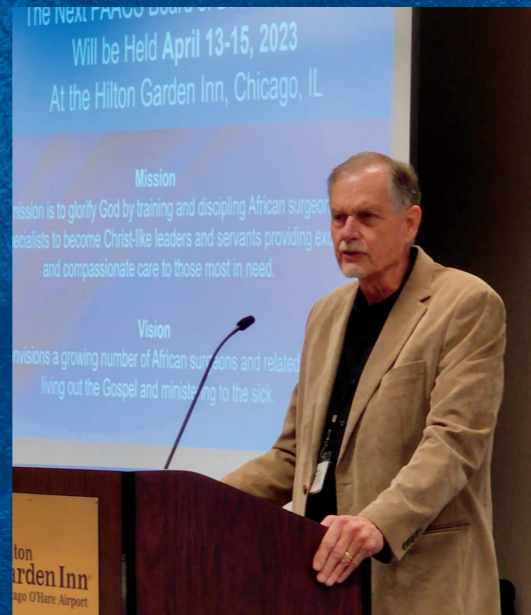
When PAACS Founder Dr. David Thompson and his wife, Becki, arrived in Bongolo, Gabon, in 1976, they could have never dreamed what God had in store. By 1989, Dr. Thompson was the only surgeon in the region. He was on call 24/7 and working 80 hour weeks. He was exhausted and knew this wasn't sustainable. So every morning for two years, he pleaded with God to send another surgeon to help him. Then one day as Dr. Thompson was praying, God responded with three transcendent words: **"You train them!"** The Lord laid a plan in Dr. Thompson's mind over the next few months. That plan led to the training and discipleship of 144 PAACS graduates thus far and counting!

The growth of PAACS over the last 27 years is a miracle of God's grace. Dr. Thompson said, **"I am blessed to have been the one God chose to throw a pebble that started what has turned into an avalanche! No human could have planned the phenomenal growth of PAACS, and God alone deserves the praise and glory."**

Dr. Thompson now divides his time between four main ministries: prayer, family, PAACS and PAACS-related ministries, and serving his local church and community. Reflecting on the faithfulness of God throughout his life and work, Dr. Thompson said, **"God wants us to present ourselves to Him so that He can carry out His plan for us, not our plans for Him. The good news is - His plans are always wonderful!"**



The Thompsons' 1977 prayer card



Dr. Thompson speaking at a recent PAACS Conference



BethanyKids Facebook

## All it Takes is a Spark

Dr. Catherine Jackson-Cole, Resident  
PAACS Pediatric Surgery Program  
BethanyKids Children's Centre, Kenya

Dr. Catherine Jackson-Cole is a second year PAACS Pediatric Surgery Resident at BethanyKids Children's Centre in Kenya. She is not just a surgeon. She's a source of hope in an area where medical care is often out of reach for many.

It all began with a spark – a vision of the kind of surgeon she wanted to become. The spark started with her teacher and mentor, PAACS Graduate and Pediatric Surgeon in Sierra Leone, Dr. Aiah Lebbie. Before joining PAACS, Dr. Jackson-Cole would observe carefully the care, love, and compassion shown by Dr. Lebbie to his patients. She recalls, **"I watched my mentor do things differently from the other teachers at my hospital and I thought, if I ever become a surgeon, I want to be like him."** This one man, a PAACS graduate and wonderful surgeon, Dr. Lebbie, changed the trajectory of her entire life.

Through PAACS, Dr. Jackson-Cole says she has become more disciplined and observant as an individual. She loves seeing patients healed, and she is growing closer to her God-given purpose. It's a testament to the PAACS program's approach, which shapes not just the surgeon, but the soul within.

Her decision to train at BethanyKids was rooted in reverence for her mentor, Dr. Lebbie, who trained and graduated from BethanyKids. This hospital stands as a sanctuary and a place of healing for countless children in need. When asked about the number of patients she sees, Dr. Jackson-Cole was overwhelmed, saying there are simply too many to count, each with their unique stories and challenges.

As she strides forward in her mission, she leaves behind a trail of hope, healing, and a legacy that will inspire countless others to follow in her footsteps. Though her desire is to return home to serve Sierra Leone after her training, she has learned to hold her plans loosely saying, **"Wherever He sends me, I will go."**