

Changing the world *Continued from previous page*

That decision has led Fonda and Chuck to share their financial resources—and themselves to help others. **Chuck '78**, a professor of

psychology at Hope, directs the college's Phelps Scholars Program and oversees the first-year seminar, and Fonda works to ensure that the future is bright for at-risk children.

Saving lives and a people—one surgeon at a time

Medicine as a career was already a plan for **Paul Edward Gray '98** when he came to Trevecca, but his summer mission experience at Reynolds Memorial Hospital in India, through Youth In Mission, added a new dimension to that plan. “God put missions on my heart that summer,” he says. Later a Trevecca professor encouraged Paul to “commit the situation to prayer and ‘put it on the back burner’” because “God will tell you if missions is his plan for you.”

After graduating from Trevecca and midway through the University of Louisville School of Medicine, in Kentucky, Paul attended a missions conference in that city and felt a leading toward medical missions. This time Paul committed to that call. With no information about the specifics of God's plan, he focused on surgical training until the Lord made the specifics clearer.

After medical school Paul moved to Dallas, Texas, where he completed residency training in general surgery at Baylor University Medical Center. He



Paul Edward Gray MD is pictured in Ethiopia with two medical residents in the PAACS Program.

met and married his wife, Becca, in Dallas. Toward the end of his residency, Paul had the opportunity to serve one month at Bongolo Hospital, Lebamba, Gabon, in western Africa. Bongolo participates in the Pan-African Academy of the Christian Surgeons (PAACS), a Christian surgical training program that is working to ensure that Ethiopia has trained surgeons. (Ethiopia has only 140 surgeons for its 88 million people.) In Gabon, God confirmed to both Paul and Becca that he wanted them to work with PAACS. After consultation with PAACS,

Paul and Becca made plans to join the work at the PAACS hospital in Ethiopia, Soddo Christian Hospital and later were accepted as missionaries with Global Outreach International.

After graduating from residency, Paul worked for one year at Baylor as a trauma and critical care surgeon while he and Becca raised support. They relocated to Soddo, Ethiopia, in August 2008, and Paul began teaching surgery, and Becca worked as a dietitian at the hospital. Now the program director for PAACS in Soddo, Paul has been asked to become medical director for the hospital. Paul explained the course his career has taken: “God has proven himself sufficient and gracious again and again in the face of challenges beyond my abilities.”

At Soddo Christian Hospital, Paul makes rounds with the PAACS residents, sometimes speaks at chapel, performs surgeries, and responds to medical emergencies as they come in. As part of the PAACS curriculum, he leads weekly teaching conferences and a weekly Bible study for the residents. “I am very thankful for the chance to disciple and train surgeons while providing medical care,” he said.

The medical and surgical needs in Ethiopia are severe and challenging. The maternal mortality rate in this region of Ethiopia is 1 in 12 (in the U.S., it is 1 in 14,000). Even very treatable surgical illnesses are often fatal. Malnutrition is a serious problem, and the challenge of limited resources is constant. But Paul has found encouragement in the many patients who do find healing, both physical and spiritual and in God’s faithfulness.

Being a missionary surgeon in Africa was not Paul’s original life plan, but he points to Proverbs 16:9: “The mind of a man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.” Paul is thankful that God’s plan is much better than anything Paul might have come up with. “Though there are trials and challenges, God has used them to draw me into a deeper walk and communion with him—and that outcome is worth everything,” said Paul.

**PAACS is a non-denominational Christian organization committed to the education of general surgeons in Africa and to the achievement of a high level of professional competence among its members.*

Serving citizens—solving problems one at a time

When the newly elected governor of Tennessee, Bill Haslam, took the oath of office in January 2011, **Jeremy Harrell ’06** and his wife, **Michelle (Lennon) ’03** savored every moment. As deputy campaign manager/political director and member of Haslam’s senior staff, Jeremy had been responsible for helping develop campaign strategy, researching the voting history of all ninety-five Tennessee counties and how issues and local political races affected voter turnout in those counties, and strategically using that data to organize campaign stops and get-out-the-vote efforts. Explaining that kind of work, Jeremy said, with a smile, “It’s three parts science and two parts instinct.”

That political instinct grew out of his childhood interest in politics, fostered as he listened to his dad talk about county elections. That interest expanded to national politics when Ronald Reagan ran for reelection in 1984.

His interest in politics led Jeremy to Trevecca when he was almost ready to graduate from a state college in South Carolina, near his home in Sumter. Looking through a Trevecca Catalog, Jeremy discovered that Trevecca offered a joint history/political science major. “I really became interested when I realized that I could complete that major in a year and a half,” he explained.

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