



Bob and Andrea Parker

ID: 07251 Country: [Kenya](#) Region: Africa

Biography

We are called to [Tenwek Hospital](#) in [Kenya](#), where we serve as general surgeons. Not only do we have the opportunity to provide surgical care to patients but we also have the honor of teaching young African Christian doctors to become surgeons and leaders of their communities. As surgeons, we could impact the individual lives of many people. However, we also have the possibility to multiply that much further through discipleship and training.

Bob: When I was a child, I recognized that I was sinful and needed forgiveness. Jesus became my personal Savior around age 10. I was baptized in the church at age 11 at the same time as my mother (who was new to faith early in my childhood) and older sister. I was young, but I understood.

In high school, after a few years when I had stopped going to church where I never “fit in,” I began to intellectually learn about religion and different faiths. It was in this time as I read the gospel that I was fascinated that the Jesus I was meeting was not what I had thought. This Jesus I came to know, I came to love and developed a relationship with.

At college, I became more involved in Christian community. I went on a medical missions trip to Ecuador. It was there that I understood the reality of the love of Jesus for the poor and for humanity. Realizing that Jesus had called me to work with the poor, it was clear that I would pursue medicine as my avenue to serve. This was my realization of the mission God has set before me.

I went on to medical school. During 2005, I had my first opportunity to serve in Kenya; I returned later to work at Tenwek Hospital from 2007–2008. It was an amazing experience, and I saw how a community of like-minded missionaries could provide such compassionate care for people in need. And I began to realize how the provision of surgical care was necessary. I felt called to pursue surgical training.

In my third year of medical school, I met my wife, Andrea. As I got to know her, I was amazed by our similar outlook and goals in life. I was amazed by her story of redemption and inspired by what God was doing in her life.

I completed medical school and, subsequently, my training in surgery in 2014.

Andrea: I was raised in a Christian home and accepted Jesus Christ at a very young age. I grew in my understanding of Jesus Christ and His presence in my life throughout my childhood and into my college years. As a child, I was exposed to missions through our church missions conferences. At that early age, I began to develop a love for people and missions.

The summer before my freshman year of high school, I had my first opportunity to experience medical missions. This was on a short-term trip to the Dominican Republic, during which our team worked with a family practitioner who lived and worked full time in the DR. This was my first opportunity to experience a culture so different from my own. During a couple of the days, we set up a makeshift clinic in the very rural, mountainous areas, and the doctor saw hundreds of patients for hours and hours. These people had no access to medical care except for the rare times when the doctor would set up these clinics. In some cases, people would walk for days to be seen. It struck me that many of the diseases we were seeing that had been left unattended would have been easily treated in the United States. I had a powerful realization that this could not be what Jesus had in mind for us and His heart must break to see the disparities. These people are the creations of God just as I am, and He loves them just as He loves me. I began to struggle with my existence in affluence while others struggled to survive. I felt very strongly that God was calling me to medical missions with the purpose of being the hands of Jesus extended.

In college, I went through a very difficult period during which I experienced a tremendous amount of questioning, doubt, and anger. In response to those struggles, I made the decision to no longer be a Christian. Three days after my college graduation, I found out that I was pregnant. Over the course of the pregnancy, it became very apparent that my then-fiancé was an alcoholic. Ultimately, I was able to escape that situation. With the help, support, prayers, and love of my parents and because of the unrelenting love of God, I began to reexamine Christianity and the teachings of Jesus. I realized that I was so angry and so unhappy and that the life that Jesus was offering was what I wanted. I recommitted my life to Him my second year of medical school.

My third year of medical school, I met my husband, Bob, also a third-year medical student. We had many things in common, not the least of which was our relationships with Jesus and our commitment to use medicine to serve the underserved. In Bob, I saw one of the most Christlike people I had ever known, someone in whom the fruit of the Spirit—peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control—was so evident.

I decided to pursue training in general surgery for my residency. I realized the impact that providing surgical care can have on a community and the doors that it can open to share the love of Jesus Christ.