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**NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER, BUT BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD:  
REPORT ON THE MEDICAL MISSION IN UGANDA 2024**

Zechariah 4:6, "So he said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty."

After surgical missions in Uganda always taking place on the island of Buvuma in Lake Victoria for many years, in 2022 we worked for the first time at Bethesda Hospital in Soroti after a two- year break due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Soroti is a small town about 6 hours' drive northeast of Kampala. Since our mission was cancelled for some reason in 2023, I prayed that the mission could take place in any case - no matter what obstacles might arise.

On the night of June 10-11, I woke up with excruciating pain in my cervical spine and later realized that I could not stretch my left arm with any force. Suddenly, I didn't know if I would ever be able to operate on a person again. At about the same time, I learned that my medical colleague Anke couldn't take part this year because she wouldn't be able to get a vacation due to problems at her job. I felt extremely discouraged and under a lot of pressure. I also remembered my prayer request from the beginning of the year. During this time, God gave me a word from Zechariah 4:6. The medical mission was not dependent on the competence of the participants nor on my state of health or other external conditions. It was something that God wanted to do through his spirit.

September 26, 2024, was the day of departure. The following day, we were able to prepare and sterilize surgical instruments in Kampala so that we could start our work in Soroti without much delay. As expected, we were confronted with many more patients than had been previously announced, and many had extremely enlarged thyroid glands. During the following days, it became clear that God had wisely put the team together. Katja and Sabine both had a lot of experience and complemented each other well. Stefan was able to operate on a total of 17 patients with huge thyroids, although the environment, instruments, and materials were not ideal for this.

On Thursday, a near-fatal incident occurred. During the first thyroid operation, there was extreme bleeding that the patient had lost several liters of blood, and her circulation became unstable. The hospital did not have an intensive care unit. However, we managed to get two more blood units. The red blood cells did not seem to be enough to stabilize the circulation. I felt a heavy burden because I was medically responsible for this operation.

But what could I do? While Katja and Sabine did their best to help the patient possible, I withdrew first with Maria and then with Paul to pray for the patient. We had no power or strength at our disposal. But God helped through his Spirit. He gave the patient strength so that her circulation stabilized, even without the medication and blood plasma that she would have received in Europe. After 4 hours, we were able to wake her up from the anesthesia, and she was able to fully recover from the procedure. Our team was just as shocked by this event as the patient. But God's Spirit was also working among us, even though not all of us were Christians. God's Spirit made us one. Everyone did what they could. This event showed me very clearly that God is alive and active. Ultimately, we were able to perform 46 operations in 5 days, including 17 thyroid operations. I am very grateful that we were able to operate on all the patients who were called in for this operation and who also had an indication for surgery, so that we didn't have to send anyone away without treatment.

On the way back to Kampala we visited a possible future location. On Saturday evening, our team was invited to dinner by the staff of the Bethesda Clinic in Kampala. This was an opportunity to gather and exchange our impressions. The mission was a very positive experience for all participants. In conclusion, I would like to thank and give glory to God, who through this effort has impressively shown that he does not work through might or power, but through his Spirit.