

Dear Friends,

My wife, Julie, and I would like to begin this article by saying *Thank You* to everyone in Ohio & the USA who have been praying for our family and for me as I recover from the recent surgery on my spine. We deeply appreciate the prayers lifted up on our behalf, to our Lord, by all of our friends. I know that many of you have been very concerned for me, for my health, and I want to share with you how I am recovering. Also, some of you may have questions about our Ghana Mission and the Akrampa students, and I want to keep you up to date on these topics also.

### **The Akrampa Students:**

While I am at home recovering from surgery, all normal things are continuing at our Akrampa School. In the past when I have had surgery, it has been in Ohio. Due to that, I have worked hard to develop an excellent support system here in Ghana, for the school, that I can supervise via phone calls, emails and other virtual communication. The Head Teacher of the Akrampa School – Eva, my longtime assistant – Mercy, the other teachers at the school, and *sometimes* even my own son – Benjamin, all work together to ensure that our Mission objectives remain in place while I am recovering. Eva goes to the market and purchases all of the food items for the Breakfast Program. The teachers work together to cook and serve the Breakfast Meal. I have trained a few of the teachers to fill in for me to teach the Gospel Lessons, which I write and send to them, to share with the students. And only if I am not able, my son Benjamin (who has a college degree in banking/finance) & a full-time career in banking, helps me with the finances. Everyone is fully committed to making sure that our students receive the care and attention they depend on, while I take the needed time to recover from surgery. I really miss being there with our students, spending the days talking with them and seeing their smiling faces. I will be back in Akrampa as soon as my surgeon clears me, medically. **I thank God that I have the support on the ground to do what I would normally do so that the work is not hurting at all. This is temporary.**

### **My surgery in Ghana – March 2026:**

You may be wondering: *'Didn't Pastor Ben have surgery on his spine in 2024?'* The answer is yes; I did. On 8/29/24, I had my first ever spinal surgery in Lorain Ohio. The surgery was called a Laminectomy. I wrote about it fully in my *September 2024 Article* – please go online to read that past article, to understand the history, at this website: [www.bethesdaonthebay.org/ghana](http://www.bethesdaonthebay.org/ghana)

In 2024, Julie and I were in Ohio from early July until we went home to Ghana on December 9<sup>th</sup>. For many months after that I felt quite good and was very happy to have undergone the surgery.

Then the pain and symptoms in my lower back and spine began to return around June of 2025. Julie and I were very concerned. I began to seek medical care and advice from the doctors here in Ghana. For a period of time, I was doing Physical Therapy in the hopes that it would help with the pain. When PT did not alleviate the pain, we moved into more testing. Pastor Jimmy contacted my (2024) surgeon from Ohio to have my medical records sent to Ghana.

The investigation by my doctors in Ghana into the cause(s) of the pain confirmed that my lumbar spine *should have been* fused during the Laminectomy surgery done in Lorain in 2024. Because *that didn't happen* the nerves had become severely compressed again, which led to the return of the pain and the need for a second surgery.

I have repeatedly shared that I have always preferred treatment in the USA, if that is possible, due to the advancement in logistics and facilities there, more so than here. But having this new surgery became urgent and at that point I could only pray and trust the system here in Ghana.

I began to research doctors in Ghana and was blessed to find **Dr. Patrick Bankah**. His title is: Consultant Neurosurgeon, Head of Department of Surgery at the *Korle Bu Teaching Hospital* (KBTH). And to his immense credit, Dr Bankah did much of his medical training in the United States. The KBTH hospital is Ghana's largest and foremost hospital that also is the institution that has the Medical School. In recent years, three universities in Ghana have also opened campuses for the training of doctors in Ghana. These factors & prayer helped to give me peace.

I was admitted to the hospital on Friday March 27, at 10:30AM Ghana time. The surgery was scheduled for Sunday March 29, 2026, which was Palm Sunday this year. I was told later that it was about 7 hours of operating time by my surgeon to complete my surgery. I spent almost two weeks - March 27<sup>th</sup> till April 9<sup>th</sup> - in the hospital. This is the first time I can remember ever missing taking part in celebrating Palm Sunday, Good Friday & Easter Sunday as a Pastor or as a congregant. Julie and I thank God for the successful surgery and the care of my doctor and the hospital staff.

This *experience* was different from the surgery that was done in Lorain. In 2024, in Lorain, the same surgery (Laminectomy) was done, but this current 2026 surgery was different because it was a LAMINECTOMY WITH FUSION strengthened with bone grafts. The doctor inserted implants - titanium - and did bone grafts to reinforce the implants. The post-surgical pain is very different, and I understand it is because of the new **titanium implants** which have been introduced during this surgery into the lower back to support my lumbar spine. Decompression of the nerves was the targeted procedure. The same part of my lumbar spine was operated on during both surgeries - L3, L4, & L5. I began Physical Therapy again while in the hospital and will continue to have Physical Therapy once a week for a short time following the surgery.

My surgeon says that the main factor in my healing will be the combination of REST and *slowly* resuming normal activities as my spine heals. The new titanium implants need time to bond and fuse with the natural bone. I have been told that it is going to be about 6 to 12 weeks before I can feel better. Again, this is temporary and I look forward to getting back to work in Akrampa as soon as my surgeon gives the appropriate medical clearances for me to do so.

### **Now, the question you want me to answer is: 'How do I feel post-surgery?'**

I feel really good and firm around my lower back, already, and I am looking forward to successful healing and subsequent freedom from pain, or less pain, in the days, weeks, months & years ahead. The surgeon and his team realized their goal, and my expectations of this surgery are peace of mind and the **ability to continue to work with joy and no stress**. Thank God my pains are coming down gradually, enabling me to walk better. Indeed, I feel so strong and comfortable with myself. Yesterday when I went for a follow-up appointment my doctor advised me to take it slowly & not be fooled by the feeling that I am enjoying now so I would not take risks but allow the titanium implants to bond and heal. By the grace of God, I should be fine and strong enough to resume work, slowly, surely, as directed by my surgeon.

Please continue to scroll down to see **2 photos** of my recovery. Please don't be alarmed, the photos are Not graphic or disturbing. I just want to share this journey with my friends.

- *Please continue to keep our family in your prayers. ~~~ Blessings, Pastor Ben*



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**Photo 1** - I was admitted to the hospital in Ghana on Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am. I was already tired from all the processes before entering my room in the hospital ward, so I fell asleep for a nap upon getting to my hospital bed. We didn't know that while I slept our oldest daughter Isabella took this picture. Julie had also dozed off in the hospital room chair from all of the stress. Julie and our children came to the hospital every day to visit with me during my almost two-week stay. ~Now that I am back at home, Julie is taking excellent care of me!



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**Photo 2** - This is a photo that I snapped on my phone, of the computer screen showing the X-Rays of my spine, post-surgery. You can see my natural spine, and also the new titanium implants that were placed on my lower spine, during this March 29, 2026, surgery in Ghana. *Disregard the horizontal lines across the photo, they are a reflection caused by the flash on my phone's camera.* I only have a small bandage on my lower back to cover the incision from the surgery. This X-Ray also shows my artificial hip, which was implanted years ago in Ohio.