

# Scalpel's Edge



## Peru: Anticipation vs. Reality

By Andrea Horazdovsky, February 2011 Mission Team Member

### *In Anticipation*

I learned about Scalpel At The Cross from my husband, Ryan. We were married this past July. For a long time now, we have been talking about doing mission work together. Ryan is in his 4<sup>th</sup> year of residency in Orthopaedics. I am a Child Life Specialist at the University of Minnesota, Amplatz Children's Hospital. We met at this hospital jointly caring for a little boy.

to serve children and their families, and to make them feel more comfortable and at ease with the situations they have been given. Working with children is my calling. I feel blessed to be able to get to know children on a different level than most. Children trust me during the most difficult and vulnerable time in their lives. I feel fortunate that I am a person that brings a smile to their face and hope to share that in Peru.

As an individual, I have always felt passionate about helping others. My day to day job as a Child Life Specialist is

In March 2010, I had the privilege to join a mission trip to the country of Bolivia, which may have similarities to the culture

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# Thoughts About Peru

by Dr. Jason Holm, February 2011 Mission Team Member

Dear Dr. Cole,

I was struck by Pastor John Piper's discussion of Jesus as The Great Physician this last weekend and it had me thinking of my Peru experience. The discussion was in reference to John 8:43-45. Jesus is using pretty harsh language with the Pharisees in pointing out the reality of their sinful state. Piper mentioned that a truly great physician is not one who sugarcoats something as serious as cancer, for example. It is critically important for people to understand the reality of the disease that they are facing in order to deal with it appropriately. Jesus was doing the most loving thing for these people, while at the same time offending them to the core.

In our profession, we are not harsh with the patients directly, but we try to be blunt and forthcoming in regard to their pathology or bad habits. They don't expect every visit to the physician to be pleasant. Jesus was at times reassuring and at times quite pointed in helping people to understand their need for The Physician.

In Peru, the need for orthopaedic care is great. As you mentioned several times, many of the patients were there to simply have their problem identified. They recognized that they had pathology, but they didn't always understand what exactly it was or what they should do about it. When we laid out the treatment plan, most of them were quite pleased, whether we recommended an intervention or continuing to adapt as best they could with their current level of function.

Unlike in Peru, where we did not always have the means to make the exact diagnosis and provide the perfect solution, the Great Physician has all of the answers in regard to our diagnosis and has the perfect solution. And it's free! Yet, many choose to ignore the gospel. While in Peru, we at times recognized a straightforward problem, explained the pathology to the patient and outlined a relatively simple

solution. And it was free! Yet, several patients didn't show up for surgery. I'm thinking, for example, of the lady with clear, painful triggering of multiple digits and the gentleman with a clavicular nonunion despite a previous attempt at fixation.

Why were they not interested in pursuing this "gift" that we were hoping to provide? All they had to do was acknowledge they had a problem and say "yes" to the proposed intervention. I could offer many reasons why they might have chosen to reject our treatment plan. Could we have played a role in this decision? If we had explained it better, discussed it in more depth, drew out pictures, showed models, etc., would it have made a difference? Perhaps. Ultimately, it was not an entirely unreasonable decision for the patients to make as long as they understood the consequences.

One would think that it would make even less sense for a person to recognize that they have some sort of pathology in their soul, have the true diagnosis explained to them with scripture from the Great Physician, hear that there is a free gift that provides so much more than just a solution to their pathology, and still attempt to ignore their state or find alternate treatments which are doomed to fail. It seems that the majority of people who reject the gospel don't have a clear understanding of their diagnosis.



Everybody can acknowledge that they have sinned but it is the wages of this sin that people are often not willing to grasp.

It is becoming socially unacceptable for even pastors to speak bluntly or harshly with regard to the pathology that exists in lost souls. It would be tragic if we, as physicians, did not have the opportunity to point out a cancer for what it really is and explain to patients that the outcome is at times something as offensive as death. No patient wants to hear this (and no doctor is thrilled to pronounce it), but when they have had the opportunity to process the meaning, the patients will almost always be grateful to the one who helped them see their true state. We should not be hindered in proclaiming the Gospel, despite the numerous "patients" who do not fully process its meaning and consequences.

As orthopaedic surgeons, we are so privileged to bring hope and life changing treatment to patients who are often dealing with significant disability. In Peru, this is greatly amplified as we are dealing with patients who usually have no other options for treatment. It is from this platform that we have the opportunity to share a treatment plan for a far more significant disease that only Jesus can cure. What an awesome privilege and responsibility!

I hope that God will continue to work through me as a result of my time in Peru and guide my pursuit of excellence as a surgeon, while at the same time fashioning me into an increasingly bold and skilled ambassador of the Great Physician.

I thought I'd just pass on these thoughts that I had during the Saturday evening service and again thank you for the opportunity to join in your mission to Pucallpa. I'm ready to go back tomorrow and I hope that the opportunity will be available again in the future.

Thanks again,  
Jason Holm, M.D.

# Scalpel At The Cross Trip Report

Mission Trip February 25 – March 6, 2011

Peru, South America – Lima / Pucallpa

by Kelli Hooks, Mission Team Coordinator

The February 2011 Scalpel At The Cross mission trip included 4 Orthopaedic Surgeons, a Peruvian doctor and 8 support members. The team evaluated 62 patients in Clinic and completed 26 surgical procedures on 24 patients. We were able to see 10 past patients that were given their final follow-up.

## ORTHOPAEDIC CARE (Ages 6-70)

**Patient 1:** Right Thumb – Suture Removal

**Patient 2:** Left Clavicle – Hardware Removal

**Patient 3:** Left Forearm Fracture – Open Reduction/Internal Fixation with Plates and Screws

**Patient 4:** Right Humerus – Open Reduction/Internal Fixation with Plates and Screws

**Patient 5:** Left Shoulder – Resection Arthroplasty

**Patient 6:** Left Clavicle – Hardware Removal, Irrigation & Debridement

**Patient 7:** Right Distal Humerus – Open Reduction/Internal Fixation with Plates and Screws

**Patient 8:** Left Arm – Lipoma Excision (removal of mass – sent for pathology)

**Patient 9:** Right Wrist – Hardware Removal

**Patient 10:** Right Acetabulum – Closed Reduction of Right Acetabulum and Placement of Femoral Traction Pin

**Patient 10:** Right Acetabulum – Open Reduction / Internal Fixation with Plates & Screws

**Patient 11:** Right Tibia – External Fixation Removal

**Patient 12:** Right Tibia / Fibula – Non-Union Reconstruction / Internal Fixation with Plates and Screws

**Patient 13:** Right Distal 1/3 Tibia/Fibula – Internal Fixation with SIGN Nail

**Patient 14:** Right Humerus – Non-Union Reconstruction with Plates and Screws

**Patient 15:** Right Tibia – External Fixation Pin Adjustment

**Patient 16:** Right Distal Radius/Ulna – Malunion Reconstruction with Plates with Locking and Screws

**Patient 17:** Left Knee – Medial Meniscus Plica Excision

**Patient 18:** Left Knee – Cortizone Injection – (also wrist brace for Carpel Tunnel Syndrome)

**Patient 19:** Left Hip – Femoral Head Resection (Girdlestone Procedure)

**Patient 20:** Left Knee – Medial Meniscus Repair

**Patient 21:** Left Proximal Tibia – Irrigation and Debridement of Shotgun Wound

**Patient 22:** Left Humerus – Non-Union Reconstruction with Plates and Screws

**Patient 23:** Left Elbow – Malunion Reconstruction with K-wires

**Patient 23:** Left Elbow – Malunion Reconstruction with Plates and Screws

**Patient 24:** Left Femur – Hardware Removal







Andrea watches as Ryan performs surgery in Pucallpa, Peru.



## Peru: Anticipation vs. Reality

*continued from front cover*

and people of Peru. I remember the people in Bolivia to be very grateful and appreciative of all that we could provide. I remember the intense heat and huge meals. I remember running on adrenalin and then crashing as my head hit the pillow every night. I remember the closeness that I felt to God as I learned about the bigger world, environment and different culture. I look forward to sharing such a powerful experience with my husband.

One thing that I feel nervous about is the language barrier. In preparing for this trip I am taking a Spanish class. Being that this is my first attempt at learning Spanish, I do not feel confident in holding conversations with families. I will be deeply appreciative for translators, who can work side-by-side during my time, preparing the children and families for surgery. Though there will be the challenge of communicating, the most universal means of communication can be found through play.

It is a week and a half prior to this trip, and Ryan and I have learned that we are pregnant with our first baby. After digesting the news, I went into immediate “mommy mode” to begin researching Peru regarding the safety of our unborn child. In this research I have learned that I cannot take any

medications for Malaria. With this news, I also learned that the mosquito population is very high, as it is the rainy season in Pucallpa. After many phone calls and emails to my OBGYN, the travel clinic, Dr. Peter and Mrs. Nancy Cole, I have made the decision to put my trust in God. Ryan and I have prayed and feel drawn to this mission. We have faith that God will protect us and our baby.

As we prepare for the trip, Ryan and I have even gone to REI and did what any “normal” parent would do. We bought every type of insect repellent in the store. We spent hundreds of dollars on insect free clothing, and to top it off, a bee keeper hat! We are prepared for anything! Or so we thought...

### In Reality

When we arrived in Peru, we learned that there had been flooding in Cashibo, where the mission house, Jungle Bunks, is located. The road leading to the Jungle Bunks was flooded in various areas, keeping people from driving in and out. With this news, Dr. Cole and Lisa Schroder made an executive decision to stay at a hotel. We were all a little bummed because we were looking forward to staying in the Jungle Bunks.

One evening, Dr. Cole and the team decided to make the journey







out to Cashibo. With 2 pick-up trucks, 11 people, and all of our baggage, we drove through 3 bodies of water to get to there. I have to be honest, I was very nervous. The waters were so high that, for a safety measure, we rolled the windows down and took our seatbelts off, in the event of needing an emergency exit. All that I could think about were the creatures that were swimming in the water.

With the grace of God, we made it! Even though I was a passenger, I felt so proud. We did it! Little did I know, that this was just the “tip of the iceberg.”

When we arrived at the Jungle Bunks, we discovered that the boardwalk was underwater as well. By this time, it was dark outside. The water on the boardwalk was ankle deep and there was no railing. All we had was each other to hold onto. We each gathered our courage and the things that we needed for the night, and slowly walked the boardwalk. All that I could think about was the 12-foot drop-off of water on either side of me, the baby in my stomach, and the creatures in the water. Once again, with the grace of God, we made it safely! Needless to say, that was our first and last night staying at the bunks. The next day we returned to the hotel in Pucallpa.

My experience at the hospital was unforgettable. Though I managed to get sick for 2 of the days, I quickly learned how different the hospital in Pucallpa is compared to the hospital I work at near our home in Minnesota. I was stunned by the amount of people that came to see our doctors. I was amazed at how much they trusted us. Even though some

of us did not speak their language, they trusted us with their loved ones. It was interesting to see how little they have at the hospital. I thought about the hospital where I work. Each patient has their own room, with each room having a computer, refrigerator, closet, plasma TV, Wii and every possible toy you could think of. It makes me wonder how necessary all of that is. The hospital in Pucallpa had at least 3 people in a room, no pillows, no TV or comfort items. Yet, they are still so grateful.

As I suspected, the language barrier was difficult for me. There were countless times when a person or child would approach me, asking questions. I would have to quickly run and grab someone to translate. While I felt extremely grateful for having a translator, I felt inadequate. I hope to study Spanish a little more prior to going on another trip.

Our time spent in Pucallpa was eye-opening: everything from the streets with no lanes, to the people weaving in and out of traffic, to the stray dogs, and the children without clothing and shoes, and the homes without walls, doors, and rooms. I had seen poverty in Bolivia, but I didn't remember it being this bad. It broke my heart to think that this is their reality. It made me think about all the “stuff” I have that is completely irrelevant. My new shelves from Crate and Barrel, the coffee table that matches just perfectly to my kitchen table, my car with heated seats, my bed with 2 large pillows and 5 decorative pillows; suddenly, I felt embarrassed. How could I have gotten so caught up in this “stuff?” The crazy part is, after spending a week

in Pucallpa, I learned that these people are happier and more grateful than 90% of people that I know who have “everything.”

It makes me think, “What is it to have everything?” Is having “everything” having the latest and greatest trends in clothing, furniture, or running from thing to thing, cramming 10 things into 1 day? Or is having “everything” having family, friends, love, happiness, contentment with just being? I have thought about that a lot since our return from the trip. I think about our baby and what kind of parent I want to be. I want to make sure that my child has “everything:” family, friends, love, happiness, and contentment with just being.

We are happy to announce that we just had another ultrasound. The baby is doing wonderfully! It had a strong heart beat and was wiggling around. The baby's first international trip was a success! We are looking forward to meeting our little angel on October 11<sup>th</sup>.



*Ryan and Andrea Horazdovsky pointing to their baby and their future.*





## Vida en la Selva (Life in the Jungle)

by Danielle Cole, February 2011 Team Member and Missionary Serving in Pucallpa, Peru

So here I am, March 2011, 7 months since my departure from the States, living life in the tropical rainforest of Peru...and still alive. As many of you know from our previous newsletter, I came down in August 2010 to work for the school year as a teacher at SAM Academy with South America Mission. While doing this, I have also had the privilege of working with Scalpel medical teams, during their trips down throughout the year.

Before moving to the Southern Hemisphere, I had certain expectations, a few of which were correct and most of which were wrong! Through this experience, I have learned invaluable lessons and have begun to see the incredible realities of why it is that the Lord has brought me here. I want to highlight a few of these to show the work the Lord has done in my life in the year thus far.

**The Lord alone has the perfect plan for my future in mind:** If I had been told a year ago that I would be living in Pucallpa come fall, I would have responded, "You're crazy!" However, here I am now, seeing what an integral part of my future this experience has already begun to play. As a result of this gap year, I was able to get into my top choice university (Boston College) to start as a freshman Eagle in the fall of 2011! But more importantly, the Lord has built afresh, a foundation on which I can build my future, a foundation solidly centered around His Word. "...the

rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock" (Matt. 7:25). Additionally, various volunteer experiences I have had in the local hospital, and with our medical teams, have narrowed my focus to nursing school, revitalizing again my love for medicine and patient care. I have also found a love for education and teaching children! I hope to incorporate this passion and my new found skills in future endeavors the Lord has for me.

**He is sweeter:** A phrase often stated in my home church is, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." However, the reality of this statement didn't hit until I was stripped of everything and left with only Jesus. God had to move me to the Southern Hemisphere in order to fully teach me that He alone is my sustainer and I need to be content in Him alone. What a blessing this realization has been! I have discovered what it means to sit at the Lord's feet and be completely satisfied in Him. Taking my personal relationship with the Lord a step further, I get to experience daily what it is to bask in the Lord's presence and have Him smile upon me. "Better is one day in Your courts than thousands elsewhere..." (Ps. 84:10).

**It is a daily breakthrough, but He is faithful:** I find that life's discouragements often make me forget that I can succeed through Jesus Christ. The fact is, we are promised trials and struggle. But what God has promised is that He is faithful to us unto the end. It is a daily breakthrough, a conscious act on our part of daily surrendering heart and life to Him for that day. I will not ever have life fully figured out. But I am promised that, "...He who began a good work in me will bring it to completion..." (Phil. 1:6).

God has been doing some major heart reconstruction on me in 2010/2011. The reality of life in the jungle turned out to be different than previous expectations. But they have been greatly superseded by the glorious riches God has placed in my life. I have been broken and blessed. My year of a lifetime has taught me lifelong lessons and given me a deeper more satisfying relationship with my Savior, only to continue to grow!





# Still Amazed

by Kelli Hooks, September 2010 Team Member

In the the last issue of *Scalpel's Edge*, I was telling you how amazed I was by the way God brought me into this mission! Today, in this article, I am going to tell you again how AMAZING He is!

I had said from the start, I will not go to Peru, no way, no how, not going to happen. That quickly changed, not by my doing but by the Lord's. He knew I would one day go to Peru and, as always, His plan fell into place.

In conjunction with Danielle Cole's time in Pucallpa, it was decided that a mission trip would be organized with the focus of patient follow-up and maintenance. If I was going to go on a trip, this would be a great first trip for me to go on. I really didn't know what to do. "Do I go or do I not go?" was the ultimate question. I went ahead and got my passport, just in case this really was God's plan. "Could I really leave my husband and kids for 9 days? Would they survive? Would I?" Also the "what-if's" began to surface, but I am learning that a majority of the "what if's" are the devil's way of attempting to deflate us in our work for the Lord.

By 6 weeks prior to the trip, I still had not decided what to do. One Tuesday evening, my mom called to see if I had any leftovers that I could take to my grandfather. Grandpa is what I call my "Rock." He is 96 years old and although in failing health and his mind is sharp, and his love of the Lord is and always has been strong. I often call him "the ever-faithful servant" because he has always been faithful in his walk with the Lord. I headed over to his house, woke him in his chair, and told him I was there. He looked at me, knew something was on my mind, and asked me to sit in Grandma's chair to chat.

"Kel, what's going on?" he asked. I proceeded to tell him that I had an opportunity to go to Peru with the mis-

sion. He took my hand and said, "God has given you this chance. You need to go!" I smiled, told him I loved him, and headed home. Pulling out of his driveway I knew I was going to Peru. I had this overwhelming peace about my decision. God is so Amazing!

My family and friends all came together to fund my trip and again, being amazed, I saw God's love for me. Not only did I raise my trip expense, but also enough to cover some of the expenses that the mission had not budgeted for. Isn't it amazing how God provided for me to go and for that extra money he knew that we would need!

As we landed in Pucallpa, my first thought was "Wow, it's hot!" I can't put into words the feeling I had as we pulled into Cashibo, and I saw the jungle all around me. I was truly in awe of my surroundings, the beauty of this land was simply breathtaking.

The most memorable and truly amazing story I came home with was my "mint" story!

We took a flight with SAMAir to a tribe located deep in the Amazon jungle. It was exciting to take my first float plane ride and I was the "co-pilot." What an experience that was in and of itself! As we first flew over the village, the kids and adults all came running, waving their arms at us. It was like "Fantasy Island." Our pilot, Nathan, told us that we are like Christ-mas to these children. They know, when they see the plane, guests are arriving and most likely bringing gifts.

After some time of walking around the village, I was hot and decided to sit on a cement step outside the building they called their clinic. While sitting there, pondering how the heat of the jungle takes so much out of you, a little boy peeked around the building at me. I said "Hola," and he ducked back out of my sight. This happened a few



Kelli Hooks poses with the mint boys.

times before I remembered that I had put three mints in my purse prior to departing. I reached in and grabbed one, so when he peeked again I could show him the candy, in hope that he would come to me and visit. It worked! He came right away. I took his picture and he was fascinated with seeing himself in the camera. Before long, I had five little ones standing around me. The first little boy took the candy out of his mouth, and in Spanish, told the others I had gotten it out of my bag. To my dismay, I knew I only had three mints. That is all I dropped into my purse, and I had already given out the one. I knew I only had two left. There were four boys standing before me. I reached in and pulled one out, and they were all excited. Each trying to reach into my purse to get another one. I tried to tell them I only had "tres" (3), but they were bound and determined to get one. After giving out the 3rd mint, I said "no mas" (no more), but they were pulling and trying so hard to get more out of my purse. I simply shook my purse and reached in... to my AMAZE-MENT, I pulled out a mint! They were so excited. I shook my purse again, and sure enough, I found a 5th mint! I couldn't believe it! God had put those other 2 mints in my purse. How I don't know, but in the end all 5 boys walked away with mints in their mouths. What a treat for them and even more so for me!

God never fails to AMAZE me with His Love!

*In loving memory of Kelli's Grandpa, Amos E. Foor who passed away on April 10, 2011.*



# ***A Christian Medical Mission to the Peruvian Amazon***



## ***Prayer & Praise Points***

Scripture instructs that God inhabits the **PRAISES** of His people:

- for team/trip safety during this rainy season when the area we were working in and around was in a “state of emergency” due to record water levels of the Amazon.
- for enhanced relational and surgical productivity/efficiency with Hospital de Pucallpa during this recent trip.
- for local prayer partnership and translation services offered ministerially to Scalpel by the Peruvian nationals during our clinic/surgical days at the hospital.
- for the impact that Dani Cole’s year of service in Pucallpa has made in helping endear the ministry of Scalpel to ongoing local mission’s efforts in the area

We are also told that we have not when we ask not, so we **PRAYERFULLY REQUEST:**

- for establishment of our remaining 2011/2012 team trip dates and formation of well-balanced teams.
- for the financial support to offset increased trip expenses in March due to reliance on hotels/restaurants for team accommodation on account of flooding in and around Scalpel’s residence at Jungle Bunks.
- for the provision of an “on-site” residential manager for maintenance issues pertaining to upkeep of Jungle Bunks, and for successful resolution of current septic and water heating problems during these lean economic times.

