

# Scalpel's Edge



## Knowing Ourselves and Knowing God

**Securing the Cornerstone by Peter A. Cole, MD, Co-Founder & President, Scalpel At The Cross**

At the beginning of this year, I felt an intensifying stir in my soul that *Scalpel At The Cross* was beginning to scale a steep slope of blessing and influence. This new awareness riveted my attention in a way that I had not experienced before in the life of our ministry. There is no way of knowing where the top of this slope is, where it tilts left and right, nor its surface rough or smooth. These are times when the Holy Spirit infuses creativity, crystallizes purpose, and emboldens me to loosen the reigns and experience the wind.

Consider that in 2014, Scalpel At The Cross by midyear has surpassed all prior annual Medical Impact measures (see page 2); or that on January 1st our new Mission Director, Peggy Gasior, launched her bright career; that we sponsored a

first time College Student Ministry trip in May; or that the Board decided to hire our first ever SATC Missionary family to be stationed in Pucallpa in 2015. The list goes on, and you will learn of more in pages to follow and weeks to come! Yes, the blessing and influence is both enveloping and emanating. I had an acute sense that I needed, with a humble spirit and God's guidance, to strengthen the core of our leadership to match and prepare for this newfound responsibility. "But how?" I asked myself? What would be the best way to strengthen our foundation?

Strong individuals know themselves well and understand their purpose. A lack of knowing one's self leads to decision-making with wrong motivations and actions, which thwart important goals if not tarnish desired values. The same is true for a leader or an organization, such that when it knows itself well, strategies are developed which are consistent with its values and which amplify its purpose. With a clear understanding of itself, an organization will recruit new leaders and members with energy to catapult the vision through clarity of stewardship, efficiency in decision-making, and synergies of

talent. I believe that when a group "knows itself" this way, organizational integrity is promoted, and in our case, the integrity of a ministry. But again I was faced with the question, "How do I as a leader of Scalpel At The Cross, promote better knowledge of ourselves, our purpose, and our goals?"

I discussed this question with one of the Scalpel board members, Robert Korljan, whose wise counsel I frequently seek. Bob is well studied in the Bible and Christian literature, has a Master of Divinity from Covenant Theological Seminary, and happens to be a former pastor from our early years in Rhode Island, 1990-92. I asked Bob if he would take our Board of Directors and some key members of our ministry family through a moderated study that could meet on a regular basis to search and grow our faith individually and collectively. I figured such a collective study would promote "knowing ourselves" better, such that we could live our lives with greatest impact.

I became very excited about the study prospect when he recommended that our group read the book, *Knowing God*, by J.I. Packer. I was thrilled that he recommended reading this classic with my dear Scalpel

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# Mid-Year Medical Impact Surpasses All Expectations

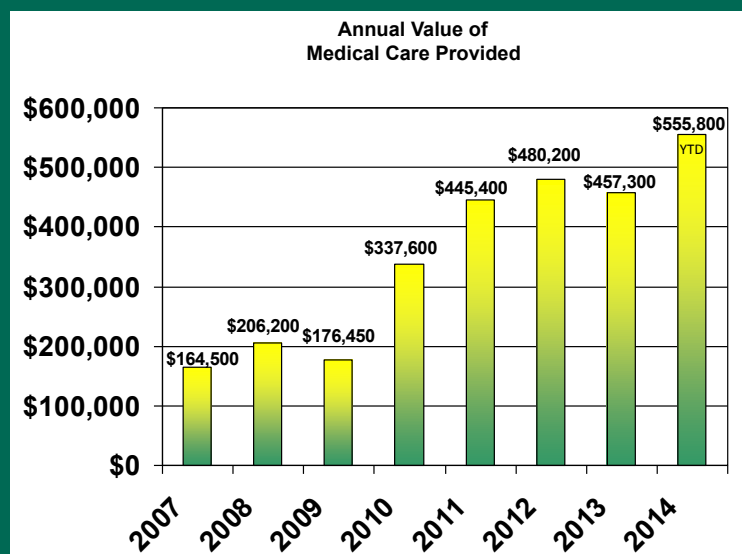
by Peggy Gasior, Mission Director, Scalpel At The Cross

It has been a very exciting year for *Scalpel At The Cross*! We are humbled by all that God has allowed us to participate in, especially as we experience growth and new challenges. This year, we are grateful to have had our first college mission trip with students from three different cities, as well record levels of medical care provided. Here are some highlights from 2014, made possible through your prayers, financial gifts and other resources.

Not including the just recently completed October trip, Scalpel completed trips in January and July with the help of 39 team members, who faithfully served with us, sacrificing time and resources to travel and minister to the Amazon. Including nine doctors, the estimated value of the donated team member time was \$48,000.

These two trips allowed us to provide medical consultation to 125 patients, with 43 patients receiving operative care, and an additional 66 patients receiving non-operative treatment such as physical therapy or cortisone injection. Beyond the on-site care we provided, our Ortho surgeon volunteers also evaluated x-rays and case details for 25 electronic consultation requests and provided medical and surgical recommendations. The total value of medical care provided this year before the October trip is estimated to be the equivalent of \$555,800 in the US! This medical and surgical care would not be possible without products and supplies, generously donated by many wonderful supporters, and valued at over \$90,000.

Our surgical ministry in the Amazon is made complete through the diligent and passionate work of our Peruvian Medical Director, Dra. Rosa Escudero, who runs the Surgical Follow-up Program between our campaigns. This year, Dra. Rosa completed 5 additional trips to Pucallpa for a total of 122 follow-up visits at 2-week, 6-week, 4-month and 12-month intervals post-surgical care.



# A Vision of the Future

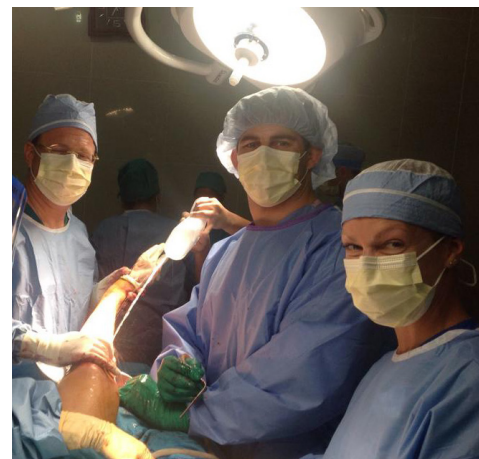
by John Wechter, MD, July 2014 Team Member

As I finish up orthopaedic residency and enter into my year of fellowship training, I want to make mission work central to my career. I have been looking for an organization that is Christ-centered and provides medical care in underserved areas. Towards that end, Dr. Cole agreed to bring me along on the July 2014 trip with Scalpel At The Cross. Our trip to Pucallpa was busy with clinic, surgery, worship, and early morning "boot camp" workouts attended daily by at least 10 team members.

The structure of Scalpel At The Cross shows considerable forethought, and very much simulates the way medicine is delivered in the U.S. I firmly believe that as a mission team, we provided the same level of care to patients in Peru as we characteristically have stateside. While the equipment we

used had its shortcomings at points, we nevertheless implemented sound orthopaedic principles. The set-up that Scalpel uses for follow-up care ensures that surgery is not just being performed with patient care being abandoned for others to deal with potential problems that arise. Rather, these patients receive regular consultations at scheduled intervals with outcomes being followed over the course of a year's period. This is the same manner in which things are done in the U.S.

I saw many people affected by this mission including the patients who were receiving surgery they otherwise would not have been able to, in addition to the perspectives of each member of the team, including myself. In reflecting, I think that true joy is obtained by removing many of the distractions of everyday life we've



*Dr. John Wechter prepping a patient for surgery along with Dr. Peter Cole and Physician Assistant Tina Most.*

become so accustomed to (cell phones, social media, etc.), while focusing on God, fellowship, and service to others. Specifically, this trip helped solidify my desire to serve God through medical missions.



## **Can YOU please help?**

You alone can sponsor an Amazon Hospital by purchasing a



## **SIGN Nail System**

Philanthropist and Orthopaedic Surgeon, Dr. Lew Zirkel, a friend of Dr. Cole's, decided to pour his life into a foundation which develops FDA approved Rods to fix broken long bones for a fraction of the price of what it costs in America, and without the need for high tech X-ray to place them in patients. His organization, SIGN ([www.SIGNfracturecare.org](http://www.SIGNfracturecare.org)), helps to outfit hospitals throughout the developing world, giving surgeons an ability to transform lives by doing something that is otherwise impossible in these settings. We currently have one system we have used for 6 years now, and we have the patient outcomes program to attest to its success.

We need two systems to continue meeting the growing demand we are facing in our two jungle hospitals. Please consider being a SIGN sponsor!

## **Appeal: Each SIGN Nail System costs 20K**

Each system gives us an inventory of 100 nails and all the instrumentation to place them.

Every nail placed is replaced for free!





# Memories Brought to Life

By Laurie Porch, July 2014 Team Member

I know few people who speak of their childhood more fondly than my husband, Dan. He grew up with his sister Penny in Pucallpa, Peru, as a missionary kid (MK) to Bob and Maxine Porch. These teachers ran SAM Academy, the school for MKs. Dan often recounts stories of those childhood years including motorcycle and canoe escapades, business endeavors like his candy re-sale shop, his popsicle stand, and the raising of Herba (the school pig that was being fattened for future school lunches). Memories abound of school plays, swimming at Cashibo, youth outings, and various individuals who made an impact on his young life. Those Pucallpa days were happy days.

That was 39 years ago! Surprisingly, Dan had never returned until recently when we were able to join a Scalpel At The Cross medical outreach team. Familiar places brought back vivid memories to “Danny’s” mind: “I spent hours under

that building...constructing roads and bridges”... “here are the notches in the wall where our hammock hung”... “this is where we carried the slop to feed Herba”...“my Mom planted that mango tree”...“I remember my Dad resting on a bed in that room recovering from hepatitis”... “that old man remembers me as a boy”.... “I pulled my boat on a string for miles up this river...” Tropical temperatures and smells, jungle sounds, and the “pecky-pecky” drone of a cargo boat passing by brought these memories to life.

It was with great joy that Dan and I were able to go back together, minister in his “home town,” and participate in the pastoral and medical aspects of Scalpel’s work. Needy individuals came with traumatic fractures, old fractures which had healed improperly, painful orthopaedic problems, and orthopaedic developmental deformities. These problems were a platform not only to



*Dan & Laurie Porch stop to pose for a picture at Dan’s childhood home at SAM Academy.*

minister to patients’ physical needs, but to address their spiritual needs. Many patients welcomed prayer for themselves and for their families as they waited their turn to see the medical staff. Scalpel’s vision to bring “a gift of light, hope, and surgery to Peru” was fulfilled right before our eyes! Opportunities do abound in this growing jungle city! And yes, much has changed in 39 years, but the hope of the gospel continues to be the greatest need in this city where Scalpel has been given a mandate to proclaim the truth and bring medical expertise and healing in the name of Jesus!



*Dan & Laurie enjoying a moment at La Jungla located on Yarinacocha.*



*Dan handing out candy to the kids at a remote Indian village.*



*Pastor Dan praying with a relative of one of our patients.*



*Dan & Laurie leading the entire Scalpel team in evening worship at the Jungle Bunks.*



# Prayers & Praises

by Prayer Posse

- Funding to support implants, instrumentation, & supply needs for surgeries performed in the Amazon.
- Creative fundraising opportunities for the support of a Peruvian based Scalpel missionary family who is looking to move to Pucallpa in summer 2015.
- Logistics of upcoming medical campaign in February 2015.
- God saturated Scalpel board conference discussions throughout the fall and early winter, culminating in a Miami based meeting January 2015.
- God's anointing of Scalpel's three 2014 medical mission campaigns, in addition to an outreach based student led mission trip focusing on children's ministry, evangelism, & construction.
- Smooth leadership transition of mission directors from the very competent hands of Lisa Schroder to the very capable ones of Peggy Gasior.
- Profitable board meetings in both early June & late August centered on strengthening our personal walk with the Lord, potential expansion of our board and staff, & the employment of innovative technology to be used in the jungle.





# July 2014 Trip Report *by Kelli A. Hooks, Mission Coordinator*

The July 2014 Scalpel At The Cross mission team included 3 Orthopaedic Surgeons, 1 Orthopaedic Resident, 1 Physician Assistant, 2 Nurses. We had 9 additional team members who supported our OR staff as well as our ministry to the patients. The team evaluated 65 patients in clinic and performed 21 surgeries on 20 patients!

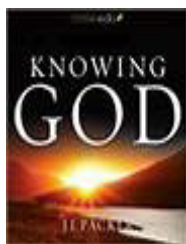
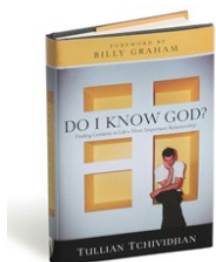
Patient 1	Right Wrist - Malunion Distal Radius	Right Wrist - Corrective Osteotomy with Left Iliac Crest Bone Grafting
Patient 2	Left Tibia - Midshaft Hypertrophic Nonunion, Intramedullary Broken Screw	Left Tibia - Nonunion, Reconstruction with Compression Plating
Patient 3	Left Elbow - Supracondylar Distal Humerus Nonunions	Left Elbow - Derotational and Alignment Osteotomy and Reconstruction
Patient 4	Left Femur - Diaphyseal Nonunion	Left Femur - Removal of External Fixation, Irrigation and Reaming & Intramedullary Antibiotic Nailing
Patient 5	Right Humerus - Diaphyseal Nonunion with Failed Fixation	Right Humerus - Reconstruction of a Failed Humerus Diaphyseal Nonunion
Patient 6	Massive 8 cm Radius Bone Defect and Nonunion	Left Distal Radius - 3 cm Shortening Ulnar Osteotomy and Distal Radial Bone Defect Reconstruction
Patient 7	Right Femur - Nonunion with Antibiotic Nail and 2cm Leg Length Discrepancy	Right Femur - Reconstruction of Nonunion with Iliac Crest Graft & Intramedullary Nailing
Patient 8	Left Shoulder - Dislocation	Left Shoulder - Latarjet Procedure
Patient 9	Bilateral Clubfeet Post Ponsetti Closed Management	Bilateral Feet - Percutaneous Achilles Tenotomy and Long Leg Casting
Patient 10	Right Tibia-Fibula Fracture - Broken Antibiotic Nail	Right Tibia - Hardware Removal and SIGN Nail with Iliac Crest Bone Grafting
Patient 11	Right Tibia-Fibula - Segmental Bone Loss Proximal Tibia with Nonunion	Right Tibia-Fibula - Reconstruction of Proximal Tibia with Iliac Crest Bone Graft & Intramedullary Endosteal Plating
Patient 12	Left Tibia-Fibula Diaphyseal Fracture -Type IIIA Open	Left Tibia-Fibula - Irrigation & Debridement - SIGN Nail Left Tibia
Patient 13	Left Femur - Failed ORIF with Massive Bone Loss	Left Femur - Reconstruction with Endosteal and Lateral Plating and Right Iliac Crest Bone Grafting
Patient 13a	Left Distal Femur - Reconstruction Failure	Left Femur - Revision Reconstruction with Iliac Crest Bone Graft
Patient 14	Right Shoulder - Heterotopic Ossification and Impingement	Right Shoulder - Removal of Heterotopic Ossification
Patient 15	Left Hip - Subtroch Fracture Failed Fixation	Left Femur-Hip - Girdlestone Arthroplasty Left Hip
Patient 16	Left Tibia - Varus Malunion	Left Tibia - Proximal Tibia Osteotomy with Correction of Valgus via Opening Wedge, Right Iliac Crest
Patient 17	Bilateral Blount's Disease	Bilateral Tibia - Vara Lateral Tibial Epiphyseal Ablations
Patient 18	Right Tibia-Fibula - Nonunion of Metaphysis, Right Fibula Nonunion	Right Tibia-Fibula - SIGN Nail & Iliac Crest Bone Graft
Patient 19	Right Tibia-Fibula Fracture - Open Type IIIA	Right Tibia-Fibula - Open Reduction Internal Fixation Tibia - External Fixation Right Tibia - Irrigation & Debridement
Patient 20	Right Femur - Metaphyseal Pathologic Fracture with Tumor	Right Distal Femoral - Placement of External Fixation





## Knowing Ourselves and Knowing God *continued from page 1*

family, recalling the profound influence this book had on my life shortly after I came to know Jesus personally as my Savior back in 1984. Bob and I agreed that Christ is the cornerstone for Scalpel At The Cross, and we need to secure its integrity by righting our hearts with our Creator and Savior. To help gear up for this study, which began a few months ago, I had each member of our Scalpel family read a precursor, *Do I Know God?* written by Tullian Tchividjian. I figured a critical and personal assessment of this question for each of us would generate more acuity as we launched into *Knowing God*, a weighty treatise from one of the foremost theologians of our lifetime.



*Do I Know God?* by Tullian Tchividjian - The author of this book does a wonderful job of using his own life experiences, written with great candor, supported by Biblical truth, to help answer the vital question. It is warm and fast reading, and very much on a layman's level, whether wobbling in the faith, seeking to know, or mature but needing revitalization. He unpacks the theme of God's free gift of grace, and highlights that we do not need to "perform" to earn God's favor.

*Knowing God* by J.I. Packer - In 2006, *Christianity Today* voted this title one of the top 50 books that have shaped evangelicals. The book expounds on differences between knowing about God and knowing God through the context of a close relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. This thought-provoking work seeks to transform and enrich the Christian understanding of God, helping us to become travelers rather than balconiers in our faith journey.

Indeed, our journey to know God better and to seek Him first, has been rewarding beyond measure. The discussion has been provocative, vulnerable, disarming, and rich. I am confident that we are doing something important, and something disruptive, in strengthening the core of the ministry and influencing its leaders in a way which builds organizational integrity, equips us to scale this steep new mission slope, serves and accounts to you better, and glorifies God foremost.

**Ephesians 2:19-22**, <sup>19</sup>You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup>having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup>in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.



*Bob and Peter at the annual Scalpel At The Cross board meeting in Arizona.*



*Bob ministering in Peru.*



*Like father like son!*