

SCALPEL'S EDGE

Scalpel AT THE CROSS
A Christian Medical Mission
to the Peruvian Amazon

A GIFT OF LIGHT, HOPE AND SURGERY TO PERU

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“ Just as there are skeletal deformities, it is appropriate to consider that there are spiritual deformities. ”

—Peter A. Cole, MD

SKELETAL AND SPIRITUAL DEFORMITY

by Peter A. Cole, MD — President, Scalpel At The Cross



Before reading beyond this paragraph, consider the manifestations of a crooked bone that doesn't heal in proper alignment. What if you broke your leg and it healed in a "turned out" position; or imagine you were born with a congenital condition like clubfoot whereby your foot "turned in" 90°? Perhaps you do have such a deformity?

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SKELETAL AND SPIRITUAL DEFORMITY



My subspecialty as an Orthopaedic Trauma Surgeon, includes not only the treatment of broken bones, but also the reconstructive surgery involved in correcting skeletal deformity.

Reconstruction of a malaligned bone is very complex surgery, often involving the cutting and reorientation of bones, lengthening of tendons, scar tissue release, and even skin expansion.

Let's take an example. I had a patient come to me recently who had an injury that healed with half her pelvis bone shifted north along the spine a couple of inches on the left side of midline. Her right shoulder blade was also broken and tilted downward. She was an athletic young woman who had been struck by a car while cycling in Chicago. Though she survived the accident, and the doctors helped to save her life, she had major deformities after her bones healed. She explained to me that her body mechanics were messed up, such that it was hard to be on her feet all day. Because of the shortened pelvis on the left side, her leg lengths were abnormal. Additionally, when she sat in a chair, she would tilt to the left because her butt-cheeks were not symmetric due to the higher ischial tuberosity on her left. This tilting caused her to bend to the right to correct her back when she sat at a desk computer. She had a leg-length discrepancy caused by this pelvic obliquity such that the left leg seemed shorter. Her opposite hip developed a bursitis because she would cant leftward while ambulating, stretching her iliotibial band over the right greater trochanter.

At the end of long days in the office, her foot and left knee would hurt from compensating, and her back was strained. She gained weight and became depressed. She had been an avid swimmer, yet when she would try to swim to stay fit, she could not properly swing her right shoulder over the top or outward properly, which caused her

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shoulder to “pop” over the ribs, resulting in an ache in her neck. She needed daily Ibuprofen to reduce the pain and often self-medicated just to get through the weeks of relentless symptoms. Her social life was negatively impacted; she lost her boyfriend, and relationships with loved ones became strained. She felt isolated and knew that no one could understand her plight. Hopelessness followed as she pondered many years to come with these disabling deformities. She tearfully described the sequela of these bone deformities.

Just as there are skeletal deformities, it is appropriate to consider that there are spiritual deformities. Consider that the Bible describes God creating us to be in a relationship with Him. This creation was His purpose. It is written, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.” (1 John 4:10) Our primary purpose, God’s inspired Word says, is to serve and enjoy Him. “Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; meditate on and talk of all His wondrous works and devoutly praise them! Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord!” (1 Chronicles 16:9-10) In fact, we see in the first book of Genesis, that His creation of male and female brought Him great satisfaction, and indeed He desired to be in union with Adam and Eve. “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God, male and female He created them.”

(Genesis 1:27) This relationship was ruptured by their disobedience after listening to Satan and pursuing their own will rather than God’s. In their shame, sin and suffering were born. Recall the serpent said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” (Genesis 3:1-6)

Indeed, our sinful behavior creates separation from God—always, and the pursuit of our own will over His will for our lives promotes spiritual disharmony and emotional burden. This spiritual deformity is most severe for the individual who actually rejects God altogether, denying His existence or simply pursuing false gods or paltry idols. Life in disunity or separation from God will ultimately lead to emptiness and want at best,

and an eternity of damnation at worst. The gospel of Matthew states it clearly, "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matthew 25:46)

It is gratifying to be in a field where I can get to know people and help to treat their skeletal deformities. In the case of my patient, I developed a plan to resolve the painful manifestations of her crooked bones. It was very important for me to listen to her carefully to understand all her symptoms. Then I followed with a careful physical examination to see where she was tender, measure how short her left leg was, and compare her left to right side shoulder motion. Next I ordered special radiographic studies to see the shape of her pelvic ring and check the angles on her broken shoulder.



I correlated the physical exam and X-rays with the symptoms she had in order to solve the diagnostic puzzle and to develop a treatment plan. My treatment included a cortisone shot for her right hip to take away the painful inflammation of her bursitis, a custom shoe-lift inside and outside her left shoe, and a special pillow designed for her left buttock to keep her upright and comfortable

when sitting at her desktop. Lastly, I performed a surgical reconstruction of her shoulder blade and collarbone, which involved re-breaking the shoulder blade and fixing it with plates and screws at the proper angles to align her shoulder. With these treatments, I provided her great relief to the pain in her right hip and a balanced and comfortable sitting position, allowing her to be productive for long hours at the computer. I gave her a symmetric gait by balancing her leg lengths, which took away the foot and knee pain. Best of all, she returned to swimming gracefully in the pool and riding smoothly on a bicycle promoting excellent spirits and weight loss. She soon became filled with hope for a pain-free and fulfilling future. She could imagine dating again, and she no longer sought escape mechanisms such as drinking.

Likewise, God has given us treatment options to help realign us and treat our spiritual deformity. This is why Christ is referred to as the great Physician. "If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer." (Exodus 15:26) He made us to be in union with Him, and He desires to communicate with us through our active prayer life. "And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him." (1 John 5:14-15)

He has given us the Spirit-inspired, written Word for study and meditation to know Him more. We can learn more about the law from the Bible which guides us on how we should live (such as in the wisdom literature of the book of Proverbs), and can also read books such as the Psalms to give us hope when we are going through sorrowful times. The Lord not only desires our active prayer life and knowledge of the Bible, but He has provided us opportunity for fellowship with other believers, His children who make up the body of Christ known as the Church. The fellowship of believers is powerful, and God purposes it to help us be accountable to one another, be encouraged by each other, and collectively glorify Him through worship with song, sermon, and offering back to Him of our gifts given to us by Him in the first place. "Praise the LORD! Praise God in His

sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty heavens! Praise Him for His mighty deeds; praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise Him with flute and harp! Praise Him with tambourine and dance; praise Him with strings and pipe! Praise Him with sounding cymbals; praise Him with loud clashing cymbals!" (Psalm 150:1-6)

There is a principle in the field of orthopaedics, that form and function are directly related. The corollary to this statement is that deformity and dysfunction are related, and we have discussed examples, which illustrate the point. Such is the case with spiritual dysfunction caused by isolation from God, which we create in our lives. Yet, you should know that even in isolation, whether spawned by our sinful ways, or the desert seasons which God purposes, God's grace is a free and undeserved gift, and His mercy will reign if we invite Him in and accept His Son. God can and will reconstruct our deformities and heal our strained symptoms because He is a God of love, and in fact, He is love. "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:8) In the field of skeletal reconstructive surgery, the goal is to restore length, alignment, rotation and stability. There is also a spiritual reconstruction that restores spiritual lives to proper length, aligns lives with His heart, rotates lives to point in the right direction, and stabilizes lives on the rock solid foundation of God Himself. ✝

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A PART OF THE WHOLE

by Jordan Ellerbe



This past August I was blessed with the opportunity to serve on a Scalpel At The Cross medical campaign to Pucallpa, Peru, for the very first time. Come to think of it, there were a number of firsts that I was able to experience; first time in an operating room (O.R.), first time on a medical mission trip, first time seeing my wife (Danielle) in her work environment, the list goes on and on. As a finance major at Bentley University in Waltham, Massachusetts, it's safe to say that my medical knowledge is, well, not extensive to say the least. When it comes to balance sheets, income statements, statement of cash flows, R.O.E, R.O.I, R.O.A, capital budgeting, etc., I may be of some assistance. But I have no formal training whatsoever in the medical field. Any knowledge that I do have of medicine has been obtained from countless conversations with my wife who is a Registered Nurse at Boston Medical Center and board member for Scalpel At The Cross.

Some may be asking themselves, "Well, what does a non-medical professional do on a medical mission trip? How can one be of any use?" These are questions that I had to bring to the Lord in the months leading up to the trip. I knew that Jesus was calling me to "declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds among all people" (1 Chronicles 16:24) in Peru, but I did not know how I would be used. As a college ministry leader



“As a college ministry leader in my local church, I knew that my heart would be to serve the team. In Pucallpa, that meant serving in the spots that needed to be filled: picking up equipment, driving, leading devotionals, serving in any area in any way I could.”

in my local church, I knew that my heart would be to serve the team. In Pucallpa, that meant serving in the spots that needed to be filled: picking up equipment, driving, leading devotionals, serving in any area in any way I could. I knew since God called me there, He had areas in which He wanted me to serve. No, I was not going to be scrubbing in, nevertheless I saw that there was a need for someone to operate the newly designed software (Backpack EMR) that Scalpel has recently integrated into their operations. God opened a door for me to be used in interaction with patients, before and after surgery, as well as in the collection of information that the surgeons wanted to share with each other or review after the surgery.

The apostle Paul says in Colossians 3:23, "whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men." It was an honor and blessing to serve the Lord through Scalpel At The Cross. I witnessed God's glory and power displayed as He saved limbs and souls through our team. I am reminded of 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 where the apostle Paul, through the Holy Spirit, explains to the church in Corinth how there are many body parts but only one body. This analogy explains that every person in the church is just as important as the next. For example, the worship team and pastor have no sound without the sound engineer. In Christ, not everyone is called to be a pastor or worship leader; some are called to be the sound engineers, and this is true for mission trips as well. It was an absolute blessing to be used by God, and to see His glory on display in such a powerful way over the course of ten days in Pucallpa, Peru. Praise the Lord that God uses the medical professionals who volunteer to serve with Scalpel, as well as the faithful sound engineers! ✝

INNOVATION RENOVATION

by Lori Most

In 2015, at the time of CrossCare's introduction, we

knew that while

CrossCare was created with innovative technology, it was developed as a prototype with phases for ongoing improvements and more advanced features as we grew and moved forward. We looked at options to enhance CrossCare using Scalpel funds, but with the high costs of software development, we quickly realized that we would need quite a bit of funding, not only to make enhancements to the software, but to even simply maintain it.



Other medical mission organizations were having very similar discussions and were looking for ways to track their patients electronically. Because of the high costs to build a custom solution, most were turning to Excel or other EMRs on the market that were limited in functionality or unable to provide the right fit. Putting all of these issues together, and after much consideration and prayer, I decided to quit my "day job" as a software consultant and start an organization whose purpose is to create and maintain patient-tracking systems for medical mission teams - Binary Bridge! My hope was to take what we learned from building CrossCare and create a universal EMR that could be used by Scalpel and other medical mission organizations.

With Binary Bridge as a partner in this endeavor, Scalpel At The Cross has been able to pilot a new solution, BackpackEMR, during two trips this year! The first was on a mini-trip in May that focused



specifically on use during patient follow-up appointments. Isaac Mendoza, our Peru Medical Coordinator, and Dan Porch, our missionary on the ground at that time, were able to give feedback on the new system and include suggestions for future versions.

We also used the new EMR during the medical mission trip in August, where we ran a smooth clinic, while at the same time uncovered some hidden "features" (which is tech-speak for "bugs!"). We are working on resolving those for our next trip in November!



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Please prayerfully consider supporting the incredible possibilities that this new EMR opens up for Scalpel and other organizations, possibilities for growing a patient outcomes program, and for added features such as calculated metrics, secure video chat, and enhanced follow-up data collection. †



WHAT'S YOUR... GLORY?

by Peggy Gasior

"WELCOME TO HOLLYWOOD! WHAT'S YOUR DREAM? WHAT'S YOUR DREAM?" THIS IS THE OPENING AND CLOSING QUESTION FROM THE MOVIE, "PRETTY WOMAN". IT MAKES SENSE... PEOPLE MOVE TO HOLLYWOOD TO PURSUE THEIR DREAMS OF FAME, FORTUNE, AND GLORY.

If you grew up in a Christian environment, "glory" was probably a common word, used regularly in reference to God. But what about the glory with which God designed mankind when He, "...made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor." (Psalm 8:5)

When we seek glory for ourselves, we forfeit our God-given glory and begin a desperate search for things that will never satisfy apart from God. Most of us are not looking for fame, fortune or glory at a celebrity level, so we may not think much of lost glory and the resulting broken relationships, anxiety, exhaustion, and all the "-holics". Our most tragic, broken relationship is with God, but the good news of the gospel is that our true glory may be rediscovered. "God chose to make known...the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27) Christ in

us is our glory, and "we all, who...contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord." (2 Corinthians 3:18)

My glory is Christ in me, inviting something glorious into every moment in my life, into the mundane daily tasks, the behind-the-scenes administration of a medical mission to Peru, and the investment in people's lives whenever and wherever there is opportunity.

As we approach another year's end and consider the overwhelming gift and glory we have in Christ, I think of you with gratitude. In 2017, your support enabled Scalpel to complete three medical trips: in February, August, and



November. The three medical trips included 33 team members, with total donated medical time valued at \$92,800. The first two medical trips provided an estimated \$295,000 of medical expertise to 31 patients and included purchased and donated medical supplies valued at \$58,000. We also had the opportunity to send four team members on an administrative trip in May.✝

Annual Donations 2011-2017 YTD



We are humbly and faithfully pursuing God's glory through consistent ministry to the people of Peru. Each year costs increase, so we ask you to join us by supporting Scalpel At The Cross this year-end and year-round as you are able. Let's finish strong!"

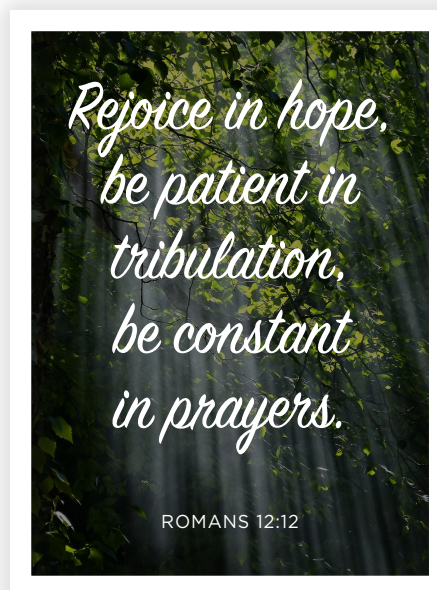
PRAYER POSSE PONDERINGS

by Nancy E. Cole

I have been struck recently by both the fervency and frequency with which I plead my case before God's throne of grace in a quiet desperation of sorts. It could be attributable to the fact that I am an empathic person and am deeply affected by what those around me are going through. Or alternatively, it might just be the season of life I am in currently where our children are older and the stakes for their welfare are greater. Or even perhaps, it has to do with aging and becoming more personally acquainted with those in my midst who are struggling with health, finances, and overall emotional well-being. Coupled with these heightened sensitivities is my keen awareness of what sometimes feels like an overwhelming oppressiveness of the earth's groanings. While these things make me speculate about Christ's imminent return, a more worthwhile effect has been the manner in which they've driven me to acknowledge my utmost dependence on my heavenly Father...most evidenced by time devoted prayerfully on bent knee.

Whatever the origin of these disquieting feelings, I am ever so grateful for the confidence I have in a God who meets me with grace at every new edge each morning as I arise to engage His new and tender mercies for the day. As October unfolds, and I have been studying the early Reformers (who catalyzed the notion of common people having a personal relationship with the living God through direct access to Scripture), I feel blessed to be on this "side" of that movement. As Tony Reinke of *Desiring God* puts it, "Look deeper into the Reformation, and you will see that it's more than printing presses and theses nailed to doors. It's the story of ordinary believers, poised in the words of Scripture, reclaiming the primacy of Jesus Christ for their lives, their marriages, their families, and their eternal hopes."

Knowing full well that I can read and process God's inspired Holy Word for myself opens up avenues whereby my faith can be regularly fortified as I "feed" on His truths and



promises. How liberating it is to open the manual of life and glean juicy nuggets from the Creator Himself which fuel my daily living and the range of sentiments that hold sway on any particular day under any given circumstances. With open entry to the Lord as my sanctuary and safe haven, I am afforded the soul rest I yearn for so critically by simply opening up *The Good Book*. The "balm of Gilead" lies within my reach just for the asking. How amazing is that?

While I have been a believer since my early twenties, it is only recently that I began the practice of praying the Word back to God Himself when I am meditating on the Scriptures. This discipline has been the means by which I have become absolutely assured of the power of the Word. Praying God's Word has proven, single-handedly, to be the most powerful weapon in my arsenal for healthy living. Refreshment comes each time I pray the Lord's truth and allow its veracity to wash over me anew as described in Ephesians 5:26, "...He washes her with the water of the Word." God is indeed a strong tower, and I run to Him freely (praying His promises right back to Him) and find myself saved!

Perhaps due to the nature of my clinical practice wherein clients are facing trying and painful

afflictions of great import, I have needed to be convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that grace will always, unfailingly, show up in critical moments. Though I am a weak vessel in and of myself, I am convinced that the Lord ministers through me as I pray the Word over the situations I encounter with my clientele.

Look at how passionately the exemplars of the faith nail their concerns to the steadfast Rock of Ages. David pens his affections this way in Psalm 16:8, "I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With Him at my right hand I will not be shaken." Unflappable. Unwavering. Resolute. In Psalm 142:5 he goes on to exclaim, "I cry to you, Lord; I say, 'You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.'" Raw. Transparent. Vulnerable. And then there is Jeremiah's prayer in Lamentations 3:24, "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him." Optimistic. Expectant. Aspiring. These examples so poignantly illustrate matters where God's people open up to Him in a very tender, unadulterated way. Oh that we might not just read through, but rather, pray through the Bible in this very same manner, often tying God's promises to what we are specifically praying for. Praying His Word fortifies my belief in His Word because it feeds my spirit with His promises, and helps me release my concerns into His sovereign, capable hands.

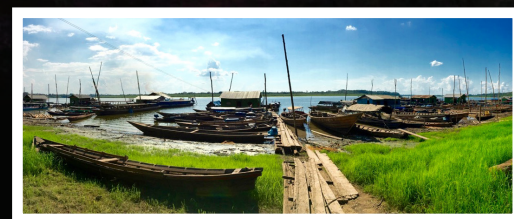
I am able to face the challenges of today, whether for myself or those I love and care for, because of my ability to pray back to the Lord His very own Word...indeed God is my refuge and portion, under whose hand I will not be shaken, and under whose hand I will therefore have hope. I strongly encourage you to try this discipline for yourself, and trust it will be of benefit to you in the undergirding of your faith as God and His Word are authenticated to your souls.✝

We are grateful for God's provision to and blessing of the ministry of Scalpel At The Cross. During our February and August medical trips this year, we provided an estimated \$295,000 of medical care with the following procedures:

Bi-mall ankle fracture-open reduction internal fixation (ORIF)
Pelvic fracture-Ex-Fix Pelvis
Humerus fracture-Ex-Fix humerus
Distal Femur fracture-Ex-Fix knee
Right hip pathologic fracture-Curettage, ORIF with iliac crest bone graft
Left tibia nonunion-Reconstruction with iliac crest bone graft
Ankle contracture-Heel cord lengthening + casting
Tibia nonunion-Ex-Fix removal, ORIF + iliac crest bone graft
Clavicle distal fracture-ORIF
AC joint dislocation-ORIF Hook Plate
Ankle contracture post trauma-Tenotomy, contracture release, tendon repair, skin graft
Humeral nonunion-ORIF + iliac crest bone graft
Painful hardware removal
Tibia/Fibula nonunion-Ex-Fix + left iliac crest bone graft
SIGN Nail-Hardware removal
Tibia infected nonunion-Hardware removal and antibiotic spacer
Painful hardware-Distal femur hardware removal
Knee contracture-Quadplasty, manipulation under anesthesia, contracture release, tendon repair
Healed femur fracture-Ex-Fix removal
Distal humerus malunion-Supracondylar humerus osteotomy
Femur nonunion-Ex-Fix removal, reconstruction + Iliac crest bone grafting
Tibia Plateau Fracture-ORIF
Distal tibia nonunion shotgun wound-Reconstruction + Iliac crest bone graft
Ankle Fusion-Removal of SIGN Nail, posterior tibiotalar capsulotomy
Ankle contracture s/p fracture-Achilles lengthening
Lateral condyle fracture-ORIF
Open femur fracture from shotgun blast-Irrigation + debridement + Ex-Fix
Supracondylar distal humerus fracture-ORIF
Tibia nonunion-reconstruction with Iliac crest bone grafting

* ORIF = Open reduction internal fixation

* Ex-Fix = External Fixator



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or contact us at:

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