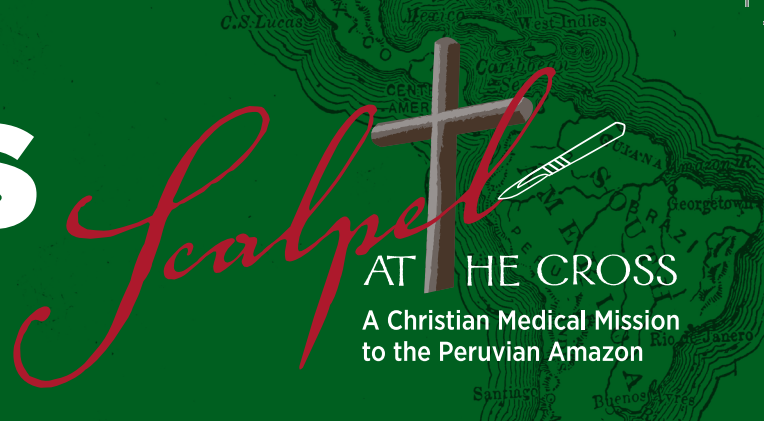


SCALPEL'S EDGE



A GIFT OF LIGHT, HOPE AND SURGERY TO PERU

SPRING 2022 | ISSUE 36

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Leadership
- Two Years in the Making and Worth the Wait!
- Praise & Prayer
- Mission Vitals

“Not long ago, we were an American ministry caring for Peruvians and supplying every measure to render that care. Moving forward, we seek to work more intentionally with Peruvians who lead Peruvians, so we can realize mutual dreams.”

—Peter A. Cole, MD

LEADERSHIP

by Peter A. Cole, M.D.
President and Co-Founder,
Scalpel At The Cross

I cannot think of a better time to broach the topic of leadership. I don't want to speculate on history, but not in my lifetime has there been a more poignantly relevant moment for leadership: not for our lives, not for our families, not for our mission, nor Peru or America, nor the CDC, NATO, WHO, nor humankind. In this article, I will discuss some of the important qualities for effective leadership and then place those into our ministry context, before finishing with exciting new leadership announcements at Scalpel At The Cross.

First and foremost, we ought to seek integrity in our leaders. Whether in our secular or Christian structures, I believe the integrity of a leader is paramount. Vision without integrity will crash to the ground like a meteorite inside our atmosphere. Boldness without character will burn to ashes in blind adventures. We must begin to promote integrity at every turn and move away from ascending people in search of glory. We must stop getting duped by words that don't match behavior, emotional assertions that don't fit facts, and talent that deceives naïve souls. A leader with integrity will search for truth, listen and report honestly, seek higher planes with courage and represent the needy amongst us. She will take the high road, do and mean what she says, and face whatever trial of consequence. Integrity also begets integrity. It is magnetic and yields loyal employees, purity in process and goodness of solutions.



Secondly, it is important for a leader to have a clear vision and the ability to build strategies that accomplish the goals which support that vision. Scalpel At The Cross seeks to “share the love of Christ through a medical mission in the Peruvian Amazon,” abundantly. That is a lofty vision, but it would be just words without successful implementation of projects and pathways which manifest in changed lives. Successful leaders mobilize teams and harness resources to execute the strategies which grow the vision. Hopefully, through the past eighteen years, you have witnessed the scaling of our values in North and South America, as well as a transformative impact on our respective cultures. Through this same time, I hope you have been able to taste the joyful tears of patients and their families whose limbs and lives have been restored on manifold scale. I make

Continues on page 2

LEADERSHIP



Clayton and Meggie Nelson

these comments and observations with fear and trembling, and with consideration that my limited skills and efforts don't match up with such grand results; rather, they reflect the influence of the Holy Spirit working through gifted teammates and miraculous circumstances year after year.

I've alluded to the necessity of a great team for a growing and effective ministry, and it

is now time to expand our own executive structure at Scalpel. Yes, it's a really big year! With great pleasure I am announcing right now, that Scalpel At The Cross has a new Vice President, Clayton Nelson, MD. I am overwhelmed with gratitude to have Dr. Nelson assume major responsibility in this important new position. He is ready!

GROWTH IN U.S.

Dr. Nelson took his first trip with Scalpel back in 2016 when he was a third-year orthopaedic resident at the University of Oklahoma. He stayed in close touch with great tenacity through subsequent years, even as he completed the prestigious Jefferson University, Philadelphia Fellowship in Hand Surgery, and an impactful mini-fellowship in Santander, Spain with Dr. Piñal in microvascular and upper extremity reconstructive surgery. He is the founder of the Oklahoma Hand Center in Oklahoma

City and has served on the Board of Directors for Scalpel At The Cross for three years. His exceptional wife, Meggie Nelson, is a Physician Assistant and served in the jungle with Clayton on her first Scalpel trip in January. Together they parent two children, Carter (10) and Adley (6), who supply the rosters of several youth sports teams.

From a leadership point of view, I want to call out my observations of Dr. Nelson's humility, clarity in judgement, decisiveness and servant leadership. He is circumspect, confident, resourceful, loyal, intelligent; needless to say, his integrity is very apparent. Dr. Nelson will be taking on primary responsibility for Patient Care and Outcomes, inclusive of planning surgical campaigns and the follow-up, equipment and supplies, and CrossCare2 Electronic Health Record. He will be working closely with Kara Rodriguez on these matters and Esteban Cardona on Mission Communications.

GROWTH IN PERU

One of the byproducts of working in the same location for a long time is the thrill of witnessing an emergence of leaders inside Peru who love Scalpel At The Cross and desire to co-own its responsibilities. This reality extends beyond mere partnership and collaboration; indeed, they want to run the mission with us, insisting on sharing in all labor and trial. Scalpel At The Cross is now more effective for this reason, and we need them! Not long ago, we were an American ministry caring for Peruvians and supplying every measure to render that care. Moving forward, we seek to work more intentionally with Peruvians who lead Peruvians, so we can realize mutual dreams. We are creating governance and employment structures at Scalpel At The Cross, which promote economic sustainability and healthcare expansion. Over the past ten years we have


identified five key individuals who have established an impressive track record with us, who bring unique and different talents to the ministry and who have demonstrated the highest integrity.

Over time you will get to know them as we feature each in upcoming editions of Scalpel's Edge, however now I would like to introduce you to our new Scalpel At The Cross Peruvian Leadership Team. These are all gifted and God-fearing people. They bring to the mission, knowledge, context, creativity and hard work. They are trustworthy, honorable and respected in the community. They all love Jesus and have embraced our ministry completely. I have known them all, very well, for many years, and have worked with each closely.

These stellar individuals have wonderful stories and are divinely chosen, based on the beautiful weave and circumstance that

would otherwise be improbable. They will truly support the qualities of leadership I have described. I am excited for you to get to know them in the months to come. At the end of the day, however, I want to acknowledge our supreme leader, God himself. God's integrity is perfect, ***"The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he."*** Deuteronomy 32: 4

God's vision is clear, ***"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."*** Proverbs 3: 5-6

God's goals are powerful, ***"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*** Jeremiah 29: 11 

SCALPEL AT THE CROSS

PERUVIAN LEADERSHIP TEAM



Isaac Mendoza

Director of the OP&OR Facility
and Security Chief for the
Miracle Campus

- Trained Orthotist, Prosthetist and Physical Therapist, Associate Pastor at Mil Palmeras Church in Pucallpa
- Isaac and his lovely wife Landys have been connected to Scalpel for 15 years and will live on the campus.



Laines Scharff

HR and Legal Affairs

- He has worked with Scalpel for 5 years, but is a friend of allied missionaries for > 15 years.
- His wife, Carmen, is a Professor at the Universidad Nacional de Ucayali in Pucallpa.



Luzmila Cahua Cruz, MD

Medical Director

- Medical training in Lima, completed a 6-week, US trauma fellowship
- Exceptionally gifted, attending every surgical campaign for the past 8 years, and working in the medicine department at Hospital Salud in Pucallpa.



Luis Rengifo, MD

Profesor Emérito

- Decades-long Chairman of Surgery for Hospital Regional de Pucallpa. Now retired.
- Accompanied Scalpel's first team in 2004, married to lovely wife and hostess Muñeca.



Timoteo Hidalgo

Building and Construction

- Designed and constructed the perimeter for the Miracle Campus
- His family has worked closely with allied missionaries in the regions for > 20 years.

“

These stellar individuals have wonderful stories and are divinely chosen, based on the beautiful weave and circumstance that would otherwise be improbable. They will truly support the qualities of leadership I have described. I am excited for you to get to know them in the months to come. ”

—Peter A. Cole, MD



TWO YEARS IN THE MAKING AND WORTH THE WAIT!

By Clayton Nelson, MD

"BUT BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO TRUSTS IN THE LORD, WHOSE CONFIDENCE IS IN HIM. THEY WILL BE LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE WATER THAT SENDS OUT ITS ROOTS BY THE STREAM. IT DOES NOT FEAR WHEN HEAT COMES; ITS LEAVES ARE ALWAYS GREEN. IT HAS NO WORRIES IN A YEAR OF DROUGHT AND NEVER FAILS TO BEAR FRUIT."

JEREMIAH 17:7-8

In February, 13 team members embarked on the first medical campaign with Scalpel At The Cross in nearly two years. While we have patiently awaited the “green light” to return to Pucallpa, we placed our confidence in the Lord that, when we were ultimately able to return, we would bear His fruit in our endeavors. When we learned January would be our opportunity, a team out of Oklahoma was anxiously awaiting this call! This would mark the maiden voyage for many Okies who had waited nearly two years since a previously postponed campaign. To say the wait was worth it would be an understatement!!

Since I first became involved with Scalpel At The Cross as an orthopaedic resident, it has been on my heart to share my experiences in Pucallpa with those back home in Oklahoma. Any opportunity to share a picture or a story with a co-worker, family member or friend was a way to show the work God was doing through Scalpel. As years went on and stories spread, I became inspired by my friends in Asheville and Minnesota to lead an Oklahoma team to experience what Scalpel At The Cross was doing first hand. The response from my fellow Oklahomans was tremendous, and we had a team signed up and ready to go in no time! Unfortunately, as with many things, the pandemic postponed the best-laid plans. While we waited, we continued to pray and trust in the Lord that when our time came he would work through us. Our team ultimately included orthopaedic surgeons, physician assistants, anesthesia, nurses, surgical technicians, cast technicians, and an orthopaedic medical device rep. What we did not realize is, following the devastating effects of COVID in Pucallpa and at Hospital Amazonico, each of these members would fulfill vital roles in the campaign.

The return trip was fruitful in so many ways, and we saw God’s blessings all around us. Of course, over two years in our absence, many things had changed; the journey was not without a few obstacles. However, we did not “fear when the heat came”, both literally and figuratively! Despite equipment confiscation, canceled flights, changes in hospital administration and personnel, through God’s grace our team was determined to persevere, hopeful that weathering a few storms might open the door for smoother trips in the future. On Monday, the first operative

day seemed excessively challenging, with new pathways and protocols to safely get surgical patients to the operating room. As the hours ticked away, we were unsure how we would navigate obstacles throughout the week. Through tireless efforts by our trip leader, Kara Rodriguez, alongside Isaac, Dr. Cahua and Luzmila, it was back to old times by Tuesday. Throughout the week, we were able to assist the Hospital Amazonico staff in ways they needed, as they assisted us in caring for patients.

The highlights were endless, but it was exciting to reestablish relationships with hospital staff that we had not seen in two years. A new clinic space within Hospital Amazonico was temporarily utilized, allowing us to see over 100 patients in a day. We implemented ultrasound-guided, regional pain blocks and injections to help manage pain and decrease the need for postoperative patient admissions. We completed more than 20 surgical procedures, many for conditions that had been delayed or neglected over the past few years. Outside the hospital we introduced our Oklahomans to some of our incredible missionary families and spent long overdue time with their families. We experienced the surrounding areas of Cashibo and saw the Miracle Campus firsthand.



Since being back in Oklahoma, the stories at work and around friends have only magnified; it has been such a blessing to hear the impact the people of Pucallpa and Scalpel is having all over. As I think about the future, I can’t help but think of the same question we kept getting towards the end our campaign, “When will Scalpel be back?!?”. It was so comforting to finally be able to answer that the drought was over, the roots are deep, the leaves are green and that we will be back in just a couple of short months! ✝





"When will Scalpel be back?!?". It was so comforting to finally be able to answer that the drought was over, the roots are deep, the leaves are green and that we will be back in just a couple of short months!

Welcome BACK to the Jungle!

**Jimmy Sisley,
Local Businessman in Pucallpa
and Volunteer Interpreter**

It has been almost two long years that have separated us from seeing the work of God through the doctors and staff volunteers of Scalpel. I loved seeing various doctors and support staff again, after this mandatory stop due to the pandemic. But I must say that the wonderful thing about this is that despite having almost two years go by, I still see the same love in this group to serve others. This love is reflected in the blessings to the patients, in seeing their faces illuminated and grateful for the hope of improving their ailments and discomfort. Seeing volunteers who have no personal interest other than to serve others helps me understand even more the meaning of God's Grace. Thank you, Scalpel At The Cross, for being a blessing to our country, to our Peruvian Amazon, to our lives. God bless you all.

**Sammy Rodriguez,
January 2022 Team Member**

Almost two years in the making, my first mission trip outside the USA was amazing, enlightening, and spiritually fulfilling, so much so that I signed up to go again with the April 2022 team! Working hand-in-hand with the American and Peruvian doctors, nurses, and technicians gave me a deep appreciation of this noble medical mission. The resiliency of the patients and family members in Pucallpa is incomparable, and I enjoyed praying with patients and sharing the word of God. I cannot wait for the next experience in Peru! ✝



Upcoming Campaigns:

March 31 - April 10

Specialties: General ortho and trauma

Lead Surgeon: Dr. Jason Caron

Team Members: 12 members

June 2-12

Specialties: General ortho, trauma, foot & ankle

Lead Surgeon: Dr. Mark Hedrick

Team Members: 18 members

PRAISE & PRAYER

by Nancy E. Cole

"I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron."

Isaiah 45:2

Father God, we come before you on bent knee, face bowed, hands outstretched. We are humbled, having nothing but dependence to lay at your divine altar. Receive us graciously, without expectation of anything other than our need. Weak-framed and embattled, we are assured that you decipher each groan and petition we lay at the foot of the cross.

Who are you, Lord, who longs to commune with desperate beggars? Why do you so patiently pursue us? When will you tire of offering soul-care as we falter to find shelter and sure footing? It is hard to fathom a God with such disparate parts: mighty, majestic, holy, eternity-inhabiting, yet lowly, meek, compassionate, and ever-near. Thank you for serving us, Lord God, even as we attempt to serve others in your name.

Left to ourselves we're ill-equipped for the day's work. Though you've enlarged our vision, we can't actualize necessary steps in its fulfillment. Our minds are lost in aimless reverie until you break through with staggering promises that inform our affections, inflame our hearts, and buoy our spirits.

Holy God, show us your "God-ness" by establishing every enterprise we undertake on your behalf. Work for us as we wait patiently for you. Steep us in Your Holy Word from which your life-giving nature flows readily. Help us be curators of your voice. Procure our faith and help us believe YOU are enough. Be our soul-anchor and our rest-giver; guard us and keep us; glorify yourself in providing our needs, so that we might lay down our lives in love for others.

Praise:

- strong end-of-year giving for both general fund and Miracle Campus
- gratitude for our first medical campaign to Peru in two years; evaluating over 100 patients in clinic consultation, administering multiple cortisone injections, and performing 20 surgeries in areas of hand, upper extremity, and trauma
- implementation of new electronic medical record (Cross Care 2) with improvements in saved patient data, team iPad connection, and overall ease in review and selection of surgical candidates
- compelling Joy of Generosity Retreat in Austin, TX for our board of directors

Prayer:

- healing of our patients, both in body and spirit
- efficiency in planning upcoming medical campaigns: 3/31-4/10 and 6/2-6/12
- less prevalence of COVID in Peru with eased restrictions and less stringent travel requirements
- wisdom/favor in moving orthopaedic equipment through Peruvian customs, as despite legal contacts, appropriate documentation, and approval from the ministry of health, we continue to encounter roadblocks
- seeking donations of orthopaedic implants to support surgical needs of our patients, particularly in the area of joint replacement
- capital campaign fortitude and boldness in both our ask and reach
- hiring of part-time executive assistant to the mission director ✝

2022 SATC YTD MISSION VITALS



1 Trip
January

\$57,890
Estimated Value
of Medical Supplies



13 Team
Members

\$39,242
Estimated Value
of Time Donated



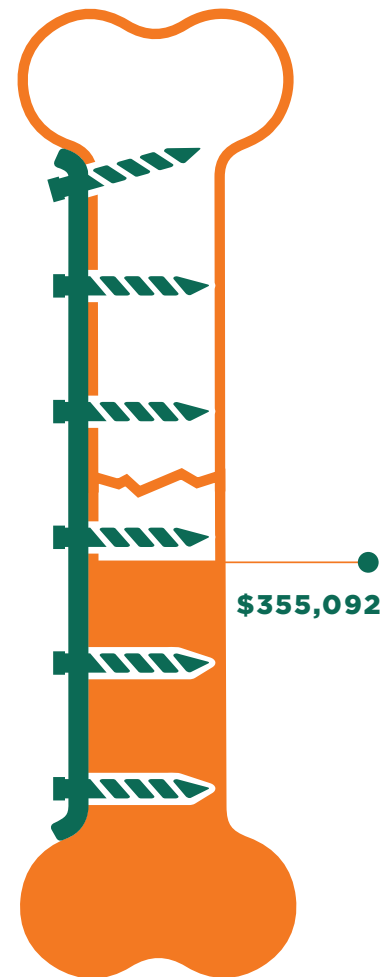
20 Surgical
Patients

\$272,200
Estimated Value of
Medical Care

2016-2021 General Fund Annual Giving Summary (Totals shown include Board giving)



GOAL
\$1 MILLION



please support our mission

Online giving is easy and
convenient at:
www.scalpelatthecross.org/donate

or contact us at:
P.O. Box 558436 Miami, FL 33255
www.scalpelatthecross.org / 305-922-4486