

SCALPEL'S EDGE



AT THE CROSS

A Christian Medical Mission
to the Peruvian Amazon

A GIFT OF LIGHT, HOPE AND SURGERY TO PERU

FALL 2022 | ISSUE 38

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Building a Boat in the Desert
- The Confidence of Things Hoped For, The Assurance of Things Not Seen
- A Family Affair
- Faith in Action
- Praise & Prayer
- Mission Vitals

“As they pass through the valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs, the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.”

— Psalm 84: 5-7

BUILDING A BOAT IN THE DESERT

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

Tony, a dear friend of mine, recently shared with me a song, Build a Boat by 30-year-old singer-songwriter Colton Dixon, former American Idol star, saying it reminded him of what we are doing in Peru. I placed my headphones on to listen and was riveted with inspiration. The metaphor in its lyrics, for our new Miracle Campus, was inescapable. I listened and listened again. I hope you will too. The next morning during my quiet time in the scriptures, working my way through the book of Psalms, I read the following, a perfect autumn verse: “Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs, the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.” (Psalm 84: 5-7) Oh my! This was one of those times the Holy Spirit

caused me to levitate into miracles, understandable only by knowing God and meeting him in the Zions of biblical meditation. Let me explain.

Baka refers to a place of weeping, in this case a desolate valley described by the psalmist probably figuratively, but also physically, as a dry place and a pass-through of suffering for the Israelites on route to Jerusalem for worship. **Zion** refers to a city of holiness and refuge, where the Lord protects his people and reveals himself. Back to Build a Boat however, the tie-in for me was obvious as our Scalpel At The Cross team approaches the end of a miracle year. It seems crazy, but we've been building a large boat in the desert, simply assuming that water's gonna come, and we're gonna sail. I better not stop to think about that one too much--just focus, true north! “Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see,” says Hebrews, the scripture on which the song is based. I can tell you that kind of faith is a very exciting place to be. Let me share the chorus of the song and describe why the boat we are building is in a desert.

Continues on page 2



BUILDING A BOAT IN THE DESERT

*I will build a boat in the sand, where they say it never rains
I will stand up in faith, I'll do anything it takes
With Your wind in my sails, Your love never fails or fades...
I'll build a boat in the desert place
And when the flood and the water starts to rise, yeah
I'll ride the storm 'cause I got You by my side
With Your wind in my sails, Your love never fails or fades
I'll build a boat, so let it rain*



“ Why do I refer to Pucallpa, Peru in the Amazon Jungle, as a desert? It's a perfect metaphor as highlighted in Dixon's song, because no such facility exists in this region of the world, nor has anything like it ever existed in this remote wilderness just beyond the horizon of civilization. So let it rain! ”

Scalpel At The Cross bought land and broke ground this year on a new campus in Pucallpa, Peru. The Miracle Campus will augment the medical work our teams have been doing in regional government hospitals for two decades. This new campus is our boat. We need \$2,000,000 to build it and sail it for five years. Why do I refer to Pucallpa, Peru in the Amazon Jungle, as a desert? It's a perfect metaphor as highlighted in Dixon's song, because no such facility exists in this region of the world, nor has anything like it ever existed in this remote wilderness just beyond the horizon of civilization. So let it rain!

I hope you have been following our Miracle Campus construction online and in previous Scalpel's Edge editions. We have

completed our first building structure, a beautiful watch-house on a stream, not far behind the walls and gate of the picturesque new property. By the time you read this article, the new 4,500 square foot facility (OP&OR) to house the guts of our future operations, including a fabrication site for orthotics and prosthetics, a physical therapy center and a global training and research center, will be underway. It will be a strikingly beautiful new facility, and we know the rains will come to sail it like a mighty vessel through oceans of patient needs, even if through gale force winds of resistance, logistics, doubt, red tape, ignorance and evil. We're building a boat, so let it rain, Jesus! I would like to underscore the desert of healthcare which exists in the Amazon basin.

Consider that, when Nancy and I began to visit Pucallpa in 1990, there were 150,000 people and two hospitals with eight operating rooms. Though it was way overrun then, there now exists over 500,000 people and the same two hospitals and eight operating rooms for everyone in every surgical specialty. Consider there are no orthotic and prosthetic fabrication sites to provide for the needs of patients after surgeries, including amputations, the closest being in Cuzco, which is 1,200 kilometers away or 28 hours by bus. Consider that the physical therapy we so desperately depend on for good results after orthopaedic surgery in America, does not exist as an occupation in this part of Peru, and training cannot be found unless you go to Lima. Our physical therapy employee, Isaac Mendoza, has just left to spend six weeks in Costa Rica at an elite physical therapy center to shore up his training. Our Orthotics and Prosthetics team is working on American and Peruvian options to staff the center, so OP&OR can set sail in the Fall of 2023. So let it rain, Lord! Rain the dollars it will take to build and run these facilities, in addition to a beautiful chapel and hospitality center on the Miracle Campus. Rain the education to drown ignorance, for professionals to train and rise to treat and train others, to rise again to treat and train others, and to rise again until we are a mighty center of education in our own right. Rain down and wash away the barriers of politics and pride, the menaces of corruption and crime, the insecurity of fear and doubt.

Bring us on our pilgrimage to the autumn of Psalm 84, a place of springs that fill the desert, which cover with pools of more rain, as we go from strength to strength, till we appear before God and zillions of patients in Zion with blessed healing of bones and hearts alike. †

THE CONFIDENCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN

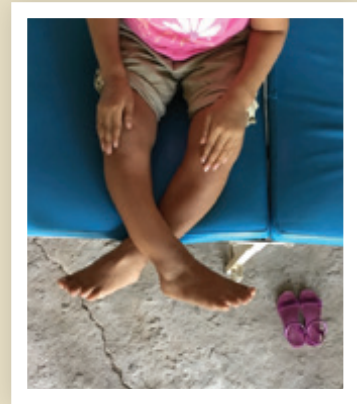
By Luke Mezzenga

On clinic day during the October 2022 campaign, I saw an X-ray showing the true impact of Scalpel At The Cross. I was checking patients in when Dr. Cole nudged me: “Luke, look at this X-ray.” As someone who works in the software industry and can count the number of X-rays I’ve seen in my life on two hands, I didn’t expect to understand much. However, when he explained the X-ray, I saw the intersection of faith and medical mission work in a whole new way.

The night before, Rick Hjelm shared a devotion with the team, aptly putting Hebrews 11:1 in light of medical care. The verse states, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” I saw this confidence and assurance firsthand from the patients I met. I saw their hope and faith in God’s provision for their lives through Scalpel At The Cross.

The most tangible example of this was the girl which the aforementioned X-ray belonged to. We’ll call her Rosa. She’s a 9-year-old girl with severe procurvatum and varus deformity. For those not well-versed in medicine like myself, this means her legs are extremely bowed.

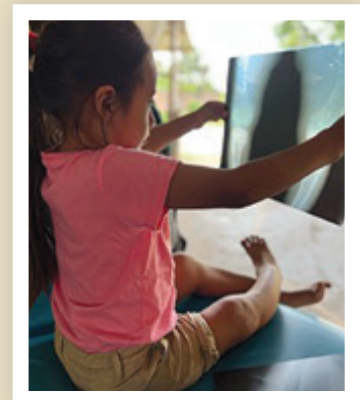
I noticed her right away by the unusual way she walked into the clinic. Looking at the X-ray, Dr. Cole explained her past operation and how her legs are healing thus far. In short, her growth plates are arrested by brackets on one side, so as she grows, her legs will straighten out. The X-ray showed they are indeed getting straighter. Once she is fully grown, if they’re not completely straight, Scalpel will perform surgery and make final corrections so she can walk normally for the first time.



After looking at the X-ray, we gave it back to Rosa. Imitating us, she lifted the X-ray into the light. I could only imagine what she was thinking as she examined it. It was communicated to her that her legs are healing as intended, and she will one day walk normally. However, the timeline for this is uncertain as it depends on when her legs finish growing. In those young eyes, I could see the confidence in things hoped for and the assurance of something she cannot yet see. This gave a whole new perspective on the faith of a child and reminded me God doesn’t work on a timeline that’s quickest, easiest or most efficient for us, but a timeline that is best for us. In Rosa’s case, the safest, most effective and overall

best course of medical action is only possible because of the long-term commitment of SATC.

I’m excited for Rosa and her future. For Scalpel, this is not just a long-term vision on a piece of paper. You can see the longevity of this mission in the face of Rosa who looks at her X-ray with confidence that her condition is temporary and the assurance that she will one day walk normally. Rosa knows Scalpel will be there through her journey. This speaks volumes about the incredible work God is doing through the Scalpel family. ✝



A FAMILY AFFAIR

by Clayton & Meggie Nelson

The Nelson family is from Oklahoma and recently had the opportunity to travel together on the October Vision Trip. Clay has been traveling with Scalpel since 2016, and his wife, Meggie, recently joined him on her first trip earlier this year. Carter (11) and Adley (6) have had questions for years about Peru and were thrilled to have the opportunity to visit and see firsthand what Scalpel At The Cross and Peru are all about! Once home, we asked them some questions about their experience and the many memories they made.





What did you like most about Pucallpa?

- C:** It was cool seeing how they live and how everything was outdoors. It was really fun seeing and hanging out with the missionary families. And I got to ride a dirt bike!
- A:** Playing with my friends and helping some of the families. Seeing how different it was and the view at Jungle Bunks and a really good chocolate store!

What was the hardest part about the trip?

- C:** Seeing some of the houses and how hard it could be to live there.
- A:** Not being able to drink the water!

What was your favorite part of the trip?

- C:** My favorite activity was playing soccer and learning to catch fish with my hands with the missionary families!
- A:** Seeing the monkeys! Playing with friends.



What was your least favorite part of the trip?

- C:** I don't know...I loved all of it.
- A:** Leaving and saying goodbye was hard for me.



What was your favorite food?

- C:** The steak was really good. I loved Chifa! That was amazing.
- A:** I liked all of the desserts that we got to try! And the fruit popsicle at church!

What did you miss about home?

- C:** I really didn't miss anything. I would really like to live there.
- A:** My pets!

Do you want to go back and, if so, when?

- C:** YES! January!! I WISH I could go in January, but want to go as soon as possible.
- A:** YES! Forever! Either today...or maybe July!

Was there anything hard to see?

- C:** How hard it is to get around and that many don't have cars. Also, how many kids had to work.
- A:** Seeing hurt people or people with lost arms and legs was hard. Seeing lost dogs was sad too.

Did you learn any Spanish? What was hard about not knowing the language?

- C:** I knew a few words before going but didn't learn much there. I couldn't understand some of the kids when I was trying to play soccer with them!
- A:** A little...hola, adios, amigos and gracias! It was kind of hard trying to speak with some of the kids I met.



What was the most beautiful thing you saw?

- C:** I really liked the Miracle Campus! There were a lot of trees, cows, barbed wire fences around it, and it just brought me back home to Oklahoma.
- A:** The view from the airplane! I loved seeing the jungle!



How do you plan to stay in touch with the people of Peru?

- C:** I hope to visit them soon!
- A:** Sending messages. And sending pictures and notes!

How do you think you can help future mission trips?

- C:** I could play with kids while they are waiting on their parents in clinic or surgery.
- A:** Take toys to share with kids.

What would you tell someone going on a Scalpel trip that hasn't been before?

- C:** It's so fun! And you might want to learn a little Spanish before you go!
- A:** It's very cool, and when I went, I loved it! It's hot!



FAITH IN ACTION

*by Richard Hetzel,
Missionary with AMG International*

HAVE YOU EVER PLANTED A SEED THAT DIDN'T GROW? IT WAS A DUD. IT DID NOTHING. IT WAS DEAD. COMPARE THAT TO A SEED THAT PRODUCED A PLANT. HOW HAPPY YOU WERE TO SEE THAT PLANT GROWING! NOW, COMPARE THAT SEED TO OUR FAITH. A GENUINE FAITH IN CHRIST WILL PRODUCE SOMETHING. JAMES CALLS IT GOOD WORKS.

James asks a very important question. Can that faith save you? We know it is the grace of God that saves us, but we receive that grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-10). The only type of faith that can save us is faith that has Christ as its object. Now, this may sound very basic, and it is! But many are deceived in thinking they have placed their faith in Christ, when it is really in themselves.

Please hear me. We are not asking people to suddenly produce good works. That defeats the purpose. Good works are born out of a faith that is alive, placed in Christ. If you realize you need to produce good works, then ask yourself whether you are truly God's child. A genuine faith in Christ will produce something.

When I see Scalpel teams in Pucallpa doing as many surgeries as possible, I see faith in action, good works, a sign of their faith in Christ. We see compassionate people wanting to know God and help others. The fruit of the Spirit is evident in their character; their actions are simply proof. We are called to the Amazon jungle of Peru to reach Peruvians, natives, anybody we come across for Christ, and to train pastors so they can, in turn, reach their own people. We share the gospel of Christ and prove by our actions that God is who He says He is. When Scalpel teams come and prove by their actions they are followers of God, their example gives us credibility, as the natives see others also claiming to follow God.

As Robert Mulholland Jr. says in his book *The Deeper Journey*, "The world will know that God has sent Christ not simply because we pronounce it to be so but when they see Christlikeness lived out in their midst in our lives in the world."

Is your faith firmly placed in Christ, or are you deceiving yourself and playing Christianity? Do your actions reflect what you say you believe? Do you do good works born out of faith in Christ and your love for Him? Our faith in God is what justifies us before Him, but our works vindicate us before men. I challenge you to examine your life, your daily routine. How much of your time and resources are spent on others? Would others say you are a follower of Christ based on your actions? Do your actions prove you have a dead or a living faith? I certainly pray it is the latter! ✝



PRAISE & PRAYER

by Nancy E. Cole

Praise:

- Successful SATC vision presentations to local churches.
- Ambitious October "Miracle Campus" trip objectives of patient follow-ups/operative care, campus building planning, videography & strengthening of strategic alliances with local mission agencies/ Peruvian leadership fulfilled.
- Phase 1 construction underway; staff home completed and OP&OR foundation being laid.
- August Scalpel Board meeting which energized and unified our mindset over growth & scope of work.

Prayer:

- Full physical/spiritual recovery of this year's 65 surgical patients, as we disciple and follow-up clinically.
- Hosting 250 guests at "Miracle for Peru" Fundraising Gala on December 3rd to benefit first rehab facility of its kind in the Peruvian Amazon. Praying God's name is hallowed through an authentic Peruvian experience and stories of remarkable patient outcomes.
- Joy of generosity for our donor base as their vision enlarges and they feel grafted into the work of the mission.
- Miracle Campus financial provision & plans for phases 2&3 buildout, including a chapel and hospitality/education center.
- Restructuring of board roles to optimize efficiency and clarify duties amidst rapid expansion. Determination, stamina and full reliance on the Lord as they balance full-time careers alongside Scalpel's development.
- Wedding festivities celebrating the Scalpel union of Dra. Luzmila Cahua Cruz to Dr. Cody Sessions on November 19th!
- January, April, July & October 2023 medical campaign planning.



SCALPEL'S NEWEST VP DR. JASON J. CARON

We are pleased to announce and welcome Dr. Jason J. Caron as our second Executive Vice President.

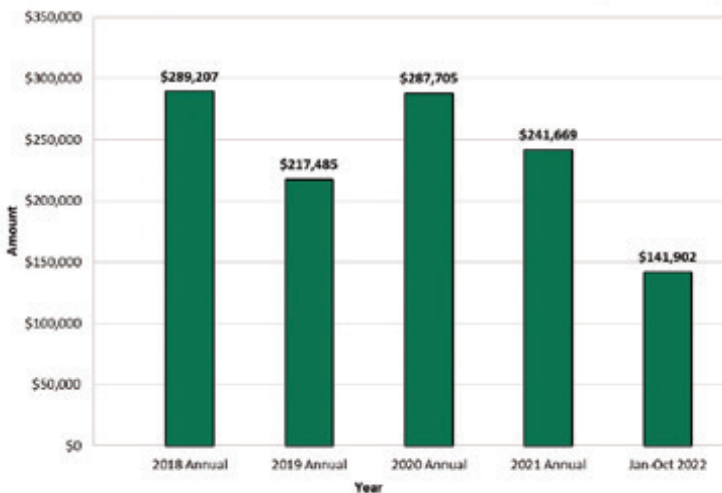
Jason has served with Scalpel for 15 years as a board member and lead surgeon. He brings a deep understanding of the mission, teams and Peruvian culture. This is reflected in his passion to minister physically and spiritually to Peruvian patients, missionaries and team members with humility, wisdom and love.

Hear from Jason himself: "I have been very encouraged by how God is increasingly using Scalpel At The Cross for His purposes in Peru. Peter Cole has led diligently over the years, and it has become clear to Peter and the board that additional leadership is necessary to execute on the ambitious plans we have moving forward. As such, Clayton and I have been sequentially brought on to help to fortify Peter in his executive role. I am excited to serve in this capacity and I look forward to seeing how God will continue to use Scalpel for His glory in Peru." ✝

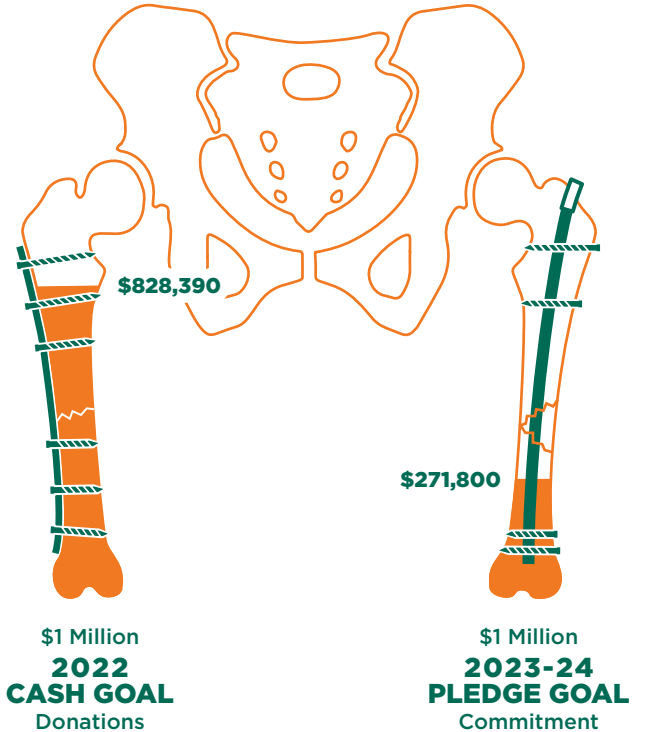
2022 SATC YTD MISSION VITALS

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Number of Trips | 4 |
| Estimated Value of Care | \$825,000 |
| Surgical Patients | 65 |
| Estimated Value of Time | \$138,563 |
| Team Members | 51 |
| Estimated Value of Med Supplies | \$254,966 |

2018-2022 General Fund Annual Giving Summary



CAMPAIGN MIRACLE CAMPUS



Aerial view



Staff home

Welcome to our staff home!

Please support our mission

Online giving is convenient and secure at:



or contact us at:
P.O. Box 558436 Miami, FL 33255
www.scalpelatthecross.org / 786-405-9958

