

# SCALPEL'S EDGE



AT THE CROSS

A Christian Medical Mission  
to the Peruvian Amazon

A GIFT OF LIGHT, HOPE AND SURGERY TO PERU

SPRING 2023 | ISSUE 39

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Tiger by the Tail
- Scalpel Reflection
- Milestone Moments  
From The Miracle for  
Peru Gala
- Politics in Peru
- Go Out Deeper and  
Let Down Your Nets
- Praises & Prayers
- Mission Vitals

“Miami has been our host city for one-third of our 19 Board of Director meetings, and here we are again. Welcome to Miami!”

## TIGER BY THE TAIL

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



Our annual Scalpel At The Cross Board Meeting took place in Miami in early March! We convene every nine months, with frequent ad hoc virtuals, but there is nothing like the buzz of our in-person leadership meetings. It is good to reunite again at our spiritual Scalpel Headquarters in America, a location where there will be a mission nexus of operations one day, where one could access a learning center, experience our history, plug into the Scalpel Global Health Research Institute, meet friends of the ministry, inspire new ideas, seek refuge, access counsel, and enter a virtual family room with our Peruvian brothers and sisters in the Amazon.

Indeed, Scalpel was conceived in the heart of Miami, back in 1990, where the Coles and Gahagens dreamed of aviation and medical ministries from embryonic stages. Do explore our history at [www.scalpelatthecross.org](http://www.scalpelatthecross.org) for this tale of providence which inspires a sense of wonder every time I visit this marvelous metropolis on Florida's southeast tip. We have vital Scalpel At The Cross communities in Minnesota, North Carolina, Arizona, Oklahoma, Nebraska, New England and the Pacific Northwest, diversification which is a healthy sign of God's ministry, but Miami is host to the Scalpel Soul. South Florida is the cauldron of The West's epi-equator peoples, and Miami blazes into our

*Continues on page 2*

# TIGER BY THE TAIL

Latin American sister headquarters in the jungle of Pucallpa, Peru. It is the home to important church partners, university affiliations, the Peruvian consulate, several of our ministry leaders, and of course the highest density of Peruanos in North America. Miami has been our host city for one-third of our 19 Board of Director meetings, and here we are again. Welcome to Miami!

“Where are we going, and how do we get there?” We’ve got an irascible tiger by the tail right now, and frankly, it’s very exciting, “...so I need you to grab onto it with me because we got some taming to do,” he says with a smile. Coming off a fabulously successful Miracle Campus Capital Campaign for the construction of our complementary site of operations, expectations are high, and the tiger is hungry. For so many years, we sought simply to follow God, and there was much listening. Our team executed on the Surgical Campaign Model of ministry, hosting occasional medical teams for one- and two-week periods operating in the government hospital. On the home front, we have grown an eleven-member Board of Directors with a small staff of two in the United States and six in Peru. We’ve tried to pay close attention to patient outcomes, spiritual leadership development, reflection of Christ in patient care, and introduction of Jesus to our team members. It was quiet, steady growth, circa 2004-2020.

Since 2021, feeling called and led by the Holy Spirit, exhorted by Peruvians, prayerfully heeding, we cast a new vision, raised a million dollars, tripled our donor family, and quadrupled expectations for “The Miracle.” We’re building an Orthotics and Prosthetics & Orthopedic Rehabilitation Center (OP&OR), and we

are in the deep end of the pool on logistics, scaling patient care, and convening Peruvian leaders.

“Under the leadership of VP Clayton Nelson and Mission Director Kara Rodriguez, we will be scaling our capacity for teams, travel and treatment, and growing our campaign and hospital strategy, even while advancing our patient outcomes program and CrossCare, Scalpel’s electronic medical record.”

Strong leadership should come first, followed by clear governance, in order to manage growth effectively. We have added outstanding individuals to our leadership team, new Vice President, Dr. Jason Caron, and an Executive Director of Growth and Strategy, our talented son, Peter Cole, Jr. Together with Vice President, Dr. Clayton Nelson, and Mission Director, Kara Rodriguez, the team doubles.

Under the leadership of VP Clayton Nelson and Mission Director Kara Rodriguez, we will be scaling our capacity for teams, travel and treatment, and growing our campaign and hospital strategy, even while advancing our patient outcomes program and CrossCare, Scalpel’s electronic medical record. Under the leadership of VP Jason Caron and Executive Director Peter Cole, Jr, we will be building a communications and development team on the US side, and operationalizing the Miracle Campus on the Peruvian side. Interviews are underway, so if you have faith-filled friends with appropriate giftings, maybe God is speaking to you now; please refer! There is

great work ahead, and I am not simply hopeful, but assured, that God has filled the seats. We are simply trying to determine with whom!

Although there are necessary ingredients to add to strong leadership: fervent prayer, powerful fundraising, and mastering the science of implementation, I believe they all boil down to prioritization centered on mission. Knowing thyself is paramount; for how useful would it be that several strong leaders veer in laudable but discordant directions? At our core we are a medical ministry, and we have our eye on the ball when we are treating unseemly bones, helping people heal from musculoskeletal conditions. If no one fixes bones and replaces joints in a part of the world where this is void, then we must lean into this work full tilt and fire. But that’s not all, right? What I’ve described as the top priority is yielding our best actions when we get it right, but this work would still be lacking without, The Why, which transcends the highest priority. Our Mission Statement is to be a lighthouse for Christ through a medical ministry in the Peruvian Amazon. I’ve highlighted the medical ministry already, but that ministry exists to be a Lighthouse for Christ. In other words, it would be possible to do the best work in orthopaedic surgery yet shine no light for Jesus, and fail. How we get to where we are going depends wholly and solely on this point, and whether we are a Mission Director, Surgeon, Translator, Builder in Scalpel At The Cross, we have to understand our Why and execute as though it was true.

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*  
-Ephesians 2: 10 ✝

# SCALPEL REFLECTION

By Dani Cardona, January team member



When I was approved for the January 2023 campaign with Scalpel, I simply thought God was fulfilling one of my deepest desires to go on an international mission trip. It was something I had been wanting to do for years but had not been able to. What I didn’t know was God had so much more planned and would blow my mind with what He had in store.

“Just like He promises, He used my pain and suffering to show me He will always be there for me, and through Him, I can do all things.”

The years, 2021- 2022, were some of the darkest years of my life. I went through a very difficult life situation that left me feeling abandoned and hopeless. I was left to face life completely alone and utterly dependent on God. Just like He promises,

He used my pain and suffering to show me He will always be there for me, and through Him, I can do all things. God performed countless miracles and lifted me in ways I had never imagined. My faith has never been stronger. I was also trained in recognizing spiritual warfare and learned to arm myself and fight back with the truth. These past few years taught me that God is true to His promises, and He is always taking care of us and protecting us.

Fast forward to January 2023, I am standing in the OR praying over patients right as surgery is commencing. Every single patient felt vulnerable in those moments right before procedures began. All of them eagerly accepted my offer to pray for them once more. I had the gift of being able to hold hands, gently caress the patients, pray for them and remind them they are not alone, that God will always be with them. One particular patient, a 30-year-old female who showed up to surgery completely alone, really captivated me. She said she had no family except her 15-year-old son who was not there. She kept begging for him to come see her, and I felt restless knowing he likely wouldn’t come. I spent a good amount of

time with this patient, reassuring her that just like He is always there for me, He is always there for her. I told her with complete confidence that she is never alone and can trust in our heavenly father. I know if I hadn’t gone through the suffering of the previous years, I would not have had peace and confidence to share these words with her. The next day during rounds, I was able to pray for her again and encourage her to join a local church. Her son did not come to see her.

Outside of the OR, spiritual warfare was rampant. Through our devotionals and honesty within the team, we recognized how the enemy was playing with our minds to discourage us. I once heard in church that the more important the mission, the stronger the attacks. This was so clear to us. Through the bond created in such a short period of time, we were able to lift each other in prayer and fight back with the word of God.

What an incredible experience this was. It forever marked me, and I thank God each and every day for the pain and suffering I endured. None of it was in vain, and it allowed me to serve the people of Pucallpa in ways I never thought possible. He is so good and so perfect, how blessed are we to be called His? ✝



# MILESTONE MOMENTS FROM THE MIRACLE FOR PERU GALA

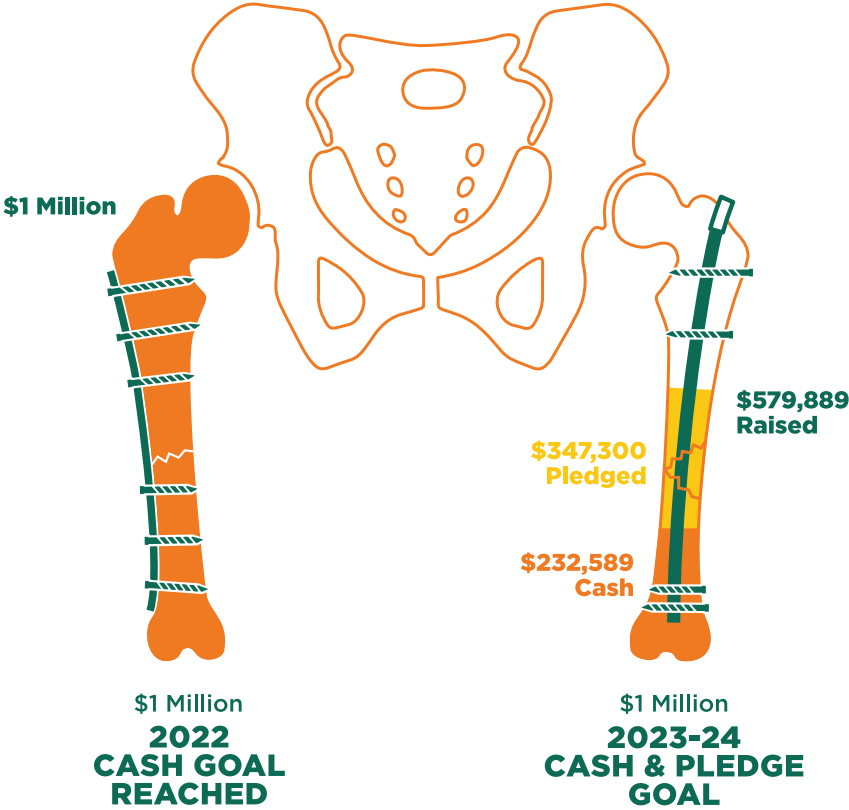
On Saturday, December 3rd, Scalpel At The Cross hosted our largest fundraising event to date, the Miracle for Peru gala. This momentous occasion was held at the Radisson Blu Mall of America hotel in Bloomington, Minnesota. Upon arrival, guests were greeted with a signature Peruvian cocktail, a passionfruit pisco sour, and were escorted to shop at our beautiful market, featuring authentic, curated merchandise created by the local people of Peru. After supporters took a photo with our very own Larry the Llama and enjoyed Peruvian appetizers, they were ushered into the ballroom for the main event by the wonderful dancers of Mi Peru - Minnesota. The dance troupe dazzled guests with their traditional performances and colorful outfits, followed by wonderful singers and presenters. The evening was magnificent in every way... an inspiring keynote address by former MN Viking, Matt Birk, moving patient testimonials recounting hope and healing, motivational leadership narratives, and opportunity for giving... all pointing to evidence of the goodness of God through this medical ministry in Peru.

Thanks to our attendees and faithful supporters, we can continue to make a significant difference in the lives of Peruvians. Funds raised during this event support the building of our new rehabilitation campus in Pucallpa which will house the first-of-its-kind orthotics and prosthetics fabrication site and deliver orthopaedic care to the underserved of the Amazon Basin.


If you would like to make a donation, there's still time! Visit our Miracle Campus website to learn more and make a contribution. We are so grateful for your prayers and support.

[scalpelatthecross.org/miracle-campus](https://scalpelatthecross.org/miracle-campus) +


## MIRACLE CAMPUS CAMPAIGN



BY THE NUMBERS




233  
Attendees




\$285,969  
Amount raised


Anticipated patients served in the first year once the Scalpel At The Cross Miracle Campus is open:



15  
protheses  
for amputees



30  
braces  
for patients



300  
physical therapy  
patients

DECEMBER 3, 2022

Page 4



# POLITICS IN PERU

by Dra. Carmen Laura Alva Rodriguez, Professor of English & Education, Universidad Nacional de Ucayali Perú



Peru is a country with great diversity and cultural richness, with many animal, vegetable, and mineral resources, as well as countless beautiful places to visit. Peruvian food is also delicious and highly recognized.

In recent years, Peru has been facing serious political problems. Pedro Castillo, a primary school teacher with little political experience, was democratically elected. He was known as a teacher union leader and made clear his sympathy with the left-wing movement and its followers, so many people put their trust in him because they

identified with his humble or poor origin and also because he belonged to the highlands of Peru. However, his political inexperience was constantly evident in his statements, and this created frustration and discontent in the population. In addition, the support he received from congress or parliament was in progressive decline, which led to his decision to close them down. That decision led to his dismissal as president. Because Castillo did not have the support of military authorities, he ended up arrested and imprisoned, and the first vice president, Dina Boluarte, assumed the presidency. This became more complicated because many supporters of Castillo showed their rejection of the new president and the congress of the republic by starting demonstrations in some areas of Peru, causing serious damage to public and private property and calling for removal of the president or her resignation, as well as closing of the congress and the new constitution. The demonstrators were repelled by the authorities, which caused clashes with the police resulting in human losses. These

protests became stronger and stronger, but with more distortion and confusion when it became known that the terrorist movement was allegedly behind this. Not being heard in the provinces, protest marches reached the capital, continuing clashing with the police and calling for closure of congress, removal of the new president and new elections.

The marches and road closures intensified until finally, the president proposed new elections for the year 2023. The demonstrators did not agree because they also called for the closure of congress. At present, although the protests have ceased, there are complaints against the current president for human losses in the demonstrations, which reached 60 dead people. The roads that were blocked have been opened, and it is expected this will continue for the good of all Peruvians, because these protests (which is a right that Peruvian citizens have), bring uncertainty and economic instability.

# GO OUT DEEPER AND LET DOWN YOUR NETS

by David J. Shapiama, Pastor, Pucallpa PERU



The job of fishing is one that requires patience, much effort and skill. It is dirty work and many times even lonely. But for the majority of people in the Amazon jungle, going fishing is not a recreational activity, rather a daily necessity for the livelihood of their families. From a very young age, men learn from their fathers and become experts in finding the best spots where the fish abound.

In the passage of the miraculous catch (Luke 5), Luke tells us that after a long night of work, feeling tired and hopeless, Simon and his friends were washing their nets by the shore. Jesus approached Simon and asked to get into his boat so he could teach the crowd that was pressing to listen to the word of God. After Jesus teaches, He tells Simon to go out deep and fish. Although Simon has been fishing all night to no avail, he obeys and does what the Master says.

Like Simon, many times the Christian worker feels tired and frustrated at not achieving desired results, thinking it is time to mend the nets and put them away for a while. Nevertheless, like Simon we must listen to the Master's invitation: "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish."

**1. Faith (v.5):** For an expert fisherman like Simon, it required faith to accept what the Master was suggesting. Given Jesus' instruction, Simon replies: "Master, we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing." In other words: We've been doing this since we were very young. We know what we are doing. We are tired, but if you say so, I'll let down the nets.

**2. Obedience (v.6):** Simon took action. He went deep and cast his net. Action is obedience. Taking Him at His word, perhaps halfheartedly, Simon did something about it. A miracle! The unexpected and the impossible happened, "their nets were so full of fish they began to tear!" Faithful obedience always produces results, and these results will give glory to God, not to man.

**3. Cooperation (v.7):** There were so many fish they needed the cooperation of their partners. Undoubtedly the results caused great astonishment and happiness for those dependent on this work. Realizing the abundance of the catch, the only thing left to do was seek help and recognize there was enough fish for all who were willing to work together.

When we think it is time to dock our boat and put our nets away, God says go deeper. As fishers of men, we get tired and feel hopeless when we see little to no fruit, but God says go deeper. We are to not give up, but let Jesus guide us to where the fish are. We are to have faith in where He has told us to go. We are to obey what he has commanded us to do. We are to work in cooperation with fellow fishermen to bring in the catch.

Like Simon we must recognize the Master is more than just that, He is also Lord! And He tells us, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!" (v.10) We only have to follow Him. ✝

# PRAISES & PRAYERS

By Nance Cole, Prayer Posse

## PRAISES

- Generous outpouring at the "Miracle Campus Gala", raising upwards of \$285,969
- Progress (amidst supply chain issues caused by political unrest) on rehab center, phase 1 building
- Productive Scalpel board meeting laying infrastructure for 2022's massive growth, including a second VP & an Executive Director of Growth & Strategy
- Protection & provision for January team, assessing 66 clinic patients, operating on 22 patients
- Safe delivery of baby Wesley to our Jungle Bunks caretakers following a serious condition endangering both mother and child
- Lord's sparing of Isaac Mendoza's (our physical therapist) clinic, following a fire which destroyed the adjoining business; grateful for no injuries and strategically-placed water tank.

## PRAYERS

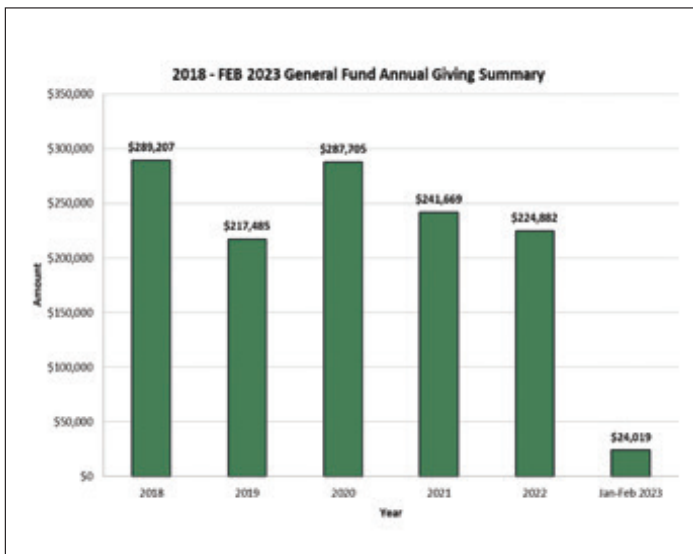
- Scalpel's rapid expansion outpacing staff resources; pray for hiring of a Director of Development & Communications; 2023 will be a year of visionary execution!
- Protection & provision for upcoming campaigns in April, July & Oct/Nov... transformative, live-giving experiences for our team, patients, hospital staff & missionaries
- Wisdom & peace for Peru politically as protests and roadblocks continue to disrupt transport & delivery of goods/ services to many regions of the country (including Pucallpa); February trip to an area outside Cuzco was cancelled as a result
- Mid-February landslides in southern Peru resulting in upwards of 30 deaths
- 11,000 cases of dengue fever in Pucallpa, including one Cashibococcha missionary & one from Shipibo tribe across the lagoon ✝

MARCH 2023

# MISSION VITALS

## TABLE OF CASES FROM THE JANUARY 2023 CAMPAIGN

Patient	Diagnosis	Procedure
1	Genu-varus left leg	High Tibia Osteotomy
2	Right clubfoot	Percutaneous Achilles Tenotomy & Casting
3	Right leg failure of fixation	Hardware Removal, Debridement, and Revision
4	Left tibia nonunion	Removal External Fixator, Tibia Osteotomy & Reconstruction, Iliac Crest Bone Graft, Fibular Osteotomy
5	Left femur antibiotic nail	Femur hardware removal, SIGN Nail with Bone Graft
6	Left femur infected nonunion	Femur hardware removal, Irrigation & Debridement, Antibiotic Nailing
7	Left tibia osteomyelitis	Tibia Hardware removal, Reaming and Irrigation, Antibiotic Nailing
8	Left infected humerus nonunion	Humerus Irrigation & Debridement, External Fixation
9	Right tibia infected hardware	Tibia Hardware Removal
10	Left ankle painful hardware	Ankle Hardware Removal
11	Left radius fracture	Radius Open Reduction Internal Fixation
12	Left hand tendon laceration	Flexor Tendon and Nerve Repair
13	Left 3-5 finger contractures	3-4 Digit Flexor Tenolysis and 5th Digit Osteotomy
14	Right ulna painful hardware	Ulna Hardware Removal
15	Left thumb mass	Excision Giant Cell Tumor
16	Left hand polydactyly	Finger Amputation
17	Left radius infection	Distal Radius Open Reduction Internal Fixation and Bone Grafting
18	Painful humerus hardware	Humerus Hardware Removal
19	Right clavicle fracture	Clavicle Open Reduction Internal Fixation
20	Left humerus gunshot wood	Humerus Foreign Body Removal and SIGN Fin Nailing
21	Neuromas left arm ulnar nerve	Arm Double Nerve Transfer
22	Left ulnar and radius malunions	Both Bone Reconstruction



# of trips:	1
# of surgical patients:	22
# of team members:	15
Estimated value of care:	\$251,200
Estimated value of time:	\$43,654
Estimated value of medical supplies donated:	\$93,533

Online giving is easy and convenient at:  
[giving.ncsservices.org/scalpelatthecross](https://giving.ncsservices.org/scalpelatthecross)  
 or contact us at:  
**P.O. Box 558436, Miami, FL 33255**  
**[www.scalpelatthecross.org](https://www.scalpelatthecross.org)**  
**786-405-9958**

