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Campus Milagroso
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“ There is a time
for everything, and
a season for every
activity under the
heavens. ”

- Ecclesiastes 3:1

COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

The Goodness of God in Sweet Seasons of Leadership

BY PETER A. COLE, M.D. - *President, Scalpel At The Cross*



One of the reasons Minnesota has held on to me for so long relates to the beauty of *changing seasons*. I find the vivid revelation of our Creator weekly in the transitioning, filled with anticipation for something next, on the land and lakes, up in the sky--always new--goodness. The word *season* in this sense evokes a sense of change, and towards that end I think the phrase “*changing seasons*” is somewhat redundant. Although the patterns of weather are cyclic, the term *season* also connotes a period of time, more than a short period, perhaps months to many years.

Seasons of life speak to me of a kind of sovereignty, as though influenced by powers beyond our control, impacted at least indirectly by forces of nature or circumstance. We should embrace such supernatural themes as the author Solomon vividly states in the famous opening verse, and goes on to underscore later in the Chapter, Ecclesiastes 3: 11-14. “*He has*

made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil--this is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.” Clearly even cold seasons, hard seasons, dry seasons, long seasons have a purpose the verses state, ones that cannot be seen in the present but appreciated historically or perhaps only in our Lord's divine plan. “*All things work together for good to them who love God, and are called according to His purpose.*” (Romans 8:28) It is inescapable not to recognize that both Ecclesiastes and the most quoted verse in the book of Romans, add something more to the concept of God's sovereignty--His purpose. There

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COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

is nothing that happens by chance or fate because everything aims ("so that") to cause people ("the nations") to sing praises to God and fear His name (Psalm 67).

So it is, with an organization under heaven. Yes, there are *seasons* in the life of a ministry. These periods are characterized by tenures of leadership, strategy management, growth investments, drought or windfall, and certainly circumstances beyond its control, and to which we rightly ascribe God's intention. They can be long and hard and dry, but carry purpose as well.

For two decades Scalpel At The Cross was a ministry distinguished primarily by a surgical campaign model which grew with a steady rising slope of musculoskeletal patient evaluations and orthopaedic surgeries. Our guiding light has been to share the love of Christ through this medical ministry and bless the people of Pucallpa, Peru, the indigenous peoples of the Amazon Jungle, and the missionaries who serve them. To this mission-chassis we have been intentional to attach a formal patient outcomes program, partnerships across a missionary ecosystem, and a spiritual impact strategy. Our leadership has been as serious about North American impact as South American impact, and the ripple effect of influence has touched, if not transformed, thousands of lives both physically and spiritually.

While we began as a humble family mission, the recent 20-year celebration of our beloved Scalpel At The Cross coincided with the grand opening of the Miracle Campus in Peru, a two million dollar project which now provides a vital complement to our patient care through the fabrication of prostheses & braces and provision of physical therapy, all vital adjuncts for excellent orthopaedic treatment. Advancing a practice in a foreign country necessitates legal and logistics expertise, growing and nurturing a network of support from the local community to the regional government, the development of an



BOARD OF DIRECTORS - March 2025

in-country leadership team, and a multinational governance structure with clear accountability.

This kind of scaling cannot happen in a single *season*, and therefore turnover in personnel to keep Scalpel At The Cross dynamic, nimble, responsive to God's leading is inevitable. Change is healthy if not necessary and inevitable. Three major events have occurred this year in the life of Scalpel toward this theme of *changing seasons*:

1. Establishment of a maximum two consecutive 3-year Board of Director terms, resulting in 4 of 11 board members ending their tenure this year.

Each would be eligible for readmission after one year off the Board. Danielle Ellerbe (2015-2025), Mark Hedrick (2016-2025), Derek Eitreim (2016-2025) and Tim Lindquist (2019-2025) have graciously stepped down. I have been profoundly impacted by these faithful servants who gave graciously of their time, talents, and possessions to bring Scalpel to where it is in 2025—praise God! Between these beautiful souls they gave the mission nearly four decades of commitment.

We have begun an auxiliary leadership team named the Scalpel Ambassador Society, aka "The SAS," made up exclusively of former SATC Board Members in order to strengthen our

leadership base and allow continued access to their gifts and influence, while providing longitudinal intelligence.

2. Passing of the baton to our 4th Executive Mission Director.

Kara Rodriguez has stepped down and transitioned the role to our former Creative Director and Communications Specialist, Yukiko Centeno. "Yuki," as she is affectionately known, grew up on the outskirts of Lima, Peru, until moving to the United States for college and living in Miami since. She is a woman of deep faith and attends Christ Journey Church in Coral Gables, Florida, with her family.

She has served Scalpel with her heart and soul for the past two years, and consummated a complete overhaul of our website, refresh of Scalpel's Edge, and quantum leap for the Scalpel social media machine so impactful for ministry in today's world. She has endeared herself to our staff and leadership. You will get to know Yuki in the coming months as she immerses in our public eye.

We will all deeply miss Kara Rodriguez who has been called away from Scalpel for which she gave six years of her heart and soul. Kara helped to guide the mission through some of the most transformative chapters in its history, and is eager to unplug for the time



Kara and her husband Sammy - 2025



Yuki and her family in Pucallpa - 2024

being to focus on other areas of her life, including rest, marriage, and margin—a new *season*. All I can say is, Kara, you were, and you are, amazing!

3. The choice of a Senior Executive leader for Scalpel Peru. Thanks to the hard work of Kara Rodriguez and our legal team, Scalpel is now officially registered in Pucallpa under its Spanish name, Bisturí Ante La Cruz. This action requires a local leader to operate in a best-practice, legal standing.

I am nothing short of wonderstruck by the acceptance of Mr. Timoteo Hidalgo to the role of Vice President, Scalpel Peru. “Timo” will assume oversight and accountability for our growing Peruvian Team, and be responsible for upholding our mission and vision, growing and guiding Miracle Campus operations, and stewarding resources. He will report directly to the President of Scalpel At The Cross.

This faithful servant of God has worked for Scalpel for over five years in the capacity of president of the construction company which built out our new

campus. We have witnessed, firsthand, a deep commitment to God, a strong husband and father, exceptional bi-cultural intelligence, and great fruit of the Spirit. Mr. Hidalgo is an excellent leader with great integrity, even to the extent that he founded and planted a church out of the Miracle Campus project through his expanding construction team, which he will now transition to his brother and family to make room for his new responsibility. Thank you, Timoteo, and thank you, Jesus!

Folks, I am telling you that the Ecclesiastes’ metaphor feels profound to me right now. Although I feel sadness in the passing of great times and beloved leaders, I feel exhilaration in the transitions of *ministry seasons* in a similar way to the breathtaking wonder I experience in the *changing of seasons* in my Minnesota home. There is great peace in God’s sovereignty. ■



Maru, Lyndi, Kara, Yuki & Vannia

“For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.” (Hebrews 6: 10)



Timoteo and wife Maria Laura with their 2 boys



Timoteo, Dr. Nelson, Kara, Daniel & Isaac

LEADING A LEGACY

by Clayton Nelson, M.D.

Member of SATC Board of Directors and Vice President of International Operations

In 2019, Kara Rodriguez emerged as the leading candidate for the position of Mission Director at Scalpel at the Cross. The position had recently been vacated after an impactful and fruitful tenure by previous director, Peggy Gasior, since 2013. With this transition, the board sought a dynamic leader who could guide the mission through a new chapter of growth and refinement. Kara's natural leadership abilities and long-standing involvement in global outreach made her stand out early in the selection process. But it was her cultural fluency and God centered approach that uniquely positioned her to lead the organization's work in Peru.

Kara's reputation for strategic thinking and servant leadership had grown steadily through her prior roles in missions. Her ability to inspire teams, bridge cross-cultural communication gaps, and keep a sharp focus on organizational development made her an ideal fit for the mission of Scalpel At The Cross. As her candidacy moved forward, Kara was also entering a new season in her personal life—just before formally accepting the position, she married the love of her life, Sammy Rodriguez! Despite the major life transitions underway, she embraced this new opportunity to take on the role with confidence and a clear sense of purpose.

However, within just five months of Kara stepping into the position, the world changed dramatically with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Global travel restrictions brought mission trips to a halt and Scalpel At The Cross was forced to suspend in-person medical outreach efforts. For many, this would have marked a time of stagnation—but under Kara's direction, the mission pivoted with vision and resilience. Rather than letting the pause derail momentum, she turned the disruption into a season of development and organizational strengthening.

During this time, Kara led the implementation of a new electronic medical record (EMR) system to



streamline and modernize patient care documentation, ensuring the mission would be ready to return stronger and more efficient when travel resumed. She also focused on expanding the donor base, nurturing relationships with current supporters, while identifying new avenues for growth and sustainability. Her leadership during this unprecedented time helped position Scalpel At The Cross for long-term impact, reinforcing her role not just as a capable administrator, but as a visionary steward of the mission's calling.

As she settled into her role and mission travel resumed, her role as Mission Director quickly expanded into every facet within Scalpel. Over the years her involvement and accomplishments within Scalpel are too numerous to list, but her legacy is clearly etched into the foundation she helped build. Kara played a pivotal role in onboarding key employees who became the backbone of both the stateside and Peruvian operations. She refined the role of Mission Coordinator, ensuring each trip was seamlessly executed from team composition to patient logistics. Recognizing the need for a solid local structure, she helped establish the Peruvian Board of Directors, a move that empowered local leadership and solidified the mission's long-term presence. At the same time, she assisted in the rebranding of the organization, crafting a unified vision and identity that inspired trust, unity, and

broader engagement.

Perhaps one of Kara's most impressive qualities is her unmatched ability to cultivate relationships. She forged deep partnerships in Peru, earning the respect and trust of local communities, healthcare providers, and government leaders. Back in the United States, she galvanized support among donors, volunteers, and medical professionals, expanding the donor base exponentially. Her work in financial management ensured that every dollar stretched farther while maintaining the highest standards of care and accountability. Under her stewardship, the mission not only grew in size and scope but also in professionalism and strategic sustainability.

Conceivably Kara's most ambitious and meaningful accomplishment has been her most recent work in advancing the "Miracle Campus." Navigating logistical, cultural, financial, and regulatory complexities, she moved the project from dream to reality, step by determined step. Her leadership in this endeavor has become a beacon of what is possible when passion meets purpose, and her legacy will endure in every life touched by that campus for generations to come. Her vision and follow-through were instrumental in bringing the dream of the Miracle Campus to life, a permanent center for healing and education in the Amazon.

Kara has truly been the heart and soul of the medical mission trips to the Peruvian Amazon over the past six years. With her charismatic presence and unwavering commitment, she inspired countless volunteers and medical professionals to serve the community of Pucallpa. As Mission Director, her impact is profound and far-reaching, having guided the organization through a transformative period of growth and stability. Over her tenure, Kara not only provided medical leadership on the ground, but also became the strategic force behind nearly every major initiative that shaped the mission's modern identity. Her dedication is exemplified by the more than 20 trips she personally led and facilitated to Peru, each one reinforcing the group's commitment to delivering quality orthopaedic care to Pucallpa.

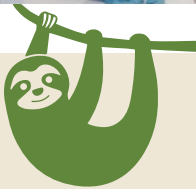
Organized and tireless, Kara has been the driving force behind the scenes, making sure every detail was accounted for—from supplies and staffing to travel and safety. She worked around the clock to ensure that each team was prepared and supported, often juggling multiple responsibilities at once. Beyond the trips themselves, Kara poured her energy into fundraising efforts and awareness campaigns that helped sustain and grow the mission's reach.

Her leadership went far beyond administrative tasks—Kara brought heart, courage, and joy to every mission. She had a unique way of making people feel seen and valued, whether it was a local villager receiving care or a first-time volunteer stepping off the plane. Those who had the privilege of serving alongside her often spoke of her generosity, tireless energy, and ability to remain calm under pressure. Her presence created a sense of unity and purpose that turned a group of individuals into a powerful, mission-driven family.

Personally, I had the opportunity to work firsthand with Kara and see just how much effort she poured into her role behind the scenes. Each week we'd meet on Thursday mornings and I was consistently impressed by the sheer volume of administrative responsibilities she managed with focus and grace. Her ability to juggle so many moving parts while making time for

meaningful collaboration spoke volumes about her dedication. Even outside of work, Kara's commitment to building relationships shone through - she and her husband Sammy even visited the "Oklahoma Team" to go country line dancing together! It was a great reminder that her leadership extended far beyond the office.

As Kara prepares to step into a new chapter in her career, she leaves behind a legacy of impact, love, and inspiration. Her absence will be deeply felt by all who served with her, as well as the countless lives touched by her leadership. While her path is shifting, the foundation she built continues to stand strong—proof of what one determined and compassionate leader can accomplish. Kara will be missed immensely, but her mission lives on in every life she helped change. ■



A MESSAGE FROM KARA:

As I pause and reflect on the past six years, I'm met with a wave of emotions. There's awe at the growth we've seen, especially in these last three years, and deep humility at the opportunity to be a part of it all. More than anything, I feel thankful.

Thankful for what we've accomplished together. Thankful for the friendships and partnerships that have formed, both with our incredible U.S. volunteers, donors, and our dear friends in Peru. I've been especially grateful for the chance to work alongside such a dedicated staff team, both stateside and in Peru, and to collaborate with a board that has consistently led with wisdom and faith.

I've personally grown so much in this role, and I'm grateful for the grace shown to me along the way. It's hard to sum up six challenging, yet incredibly rewarding, years with the mission. It's been a wild and wonderful ride. While my time with Scalpel is officially coming to a close, I truly hope our paths will cross again. I love the mission. I believe in the work being done. And I'm excited to see where God leads it next.

This isn't goodbye, but rather "see you later" as I step down and make space for someone new to lead. I have full confidence in Yuki. Her passion, her heart, and her commitment to the mission are so evident. I know she will lead with wisdom, grace, and strength as the next chapter of Scalpel's story unfolds. I'll be cheering from the sidelines and praying for the Scalpel community as you continue the work of bringing hope and healing through this medical ministry in the Peruvian Amazon.

LA CELEBRACION DEL CAMPUS MILAGROSO!

BY DANIELLE ELLERBE - Scalpel At The Cross SAS member

Merriam-Webster defines family as a group connected by blood, conviction, or common purpose. But what does family mean to you? For me, family is the people I've chosen to live, work, and wrestle alongside, the ones I trust with my hopes and who commit to walk with me through success, failure, and everything in between. I believe family is a divine gift, a glimpse of heaven on earth. As Psalm 139 reminds us, God is with us in every place, and through the people around us, we see His faithful presence.

That's exactly what I witnessed at the Grand Opening of the Miracle Campus in the Amazon jungle. The morning was electric with excitement, far from the usual jungle stillness. Under the soaring roof of a striking new facility, hundreds gathered: Swiss, Germans, Ecuadorians, Americans, and Peruvians. Doctors, nurses, administrators, laborers, patients, children, elders—all united by one mission...a tapestry of humanity woven together by the work God has done through Scalpel At The Cross.

Entering the building was breathtaking. White walls and intricate woodwork, vibrant macaw murals, gleaming prosthetic labs, 3D printers, and fully equipped PT rooms—every detail a testament to years of dedication. Yet, the most powerful part was the gathering itself.

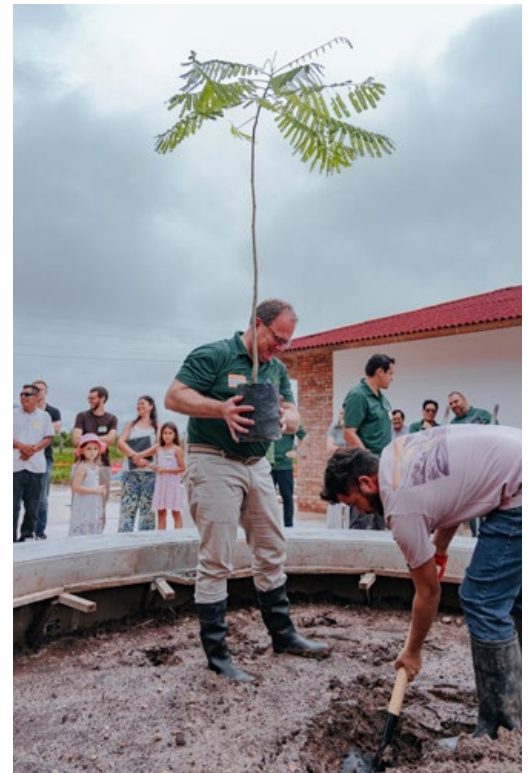
We heard heartfelt words from those who poured themselves into this mission across decades. People from all walks of life—different stories, skill sets, and timelines—all somehow part of the same legacy. Together, we shared meals, planted a symbolic Tree of Life, and celebrated not just a building, but a shared purpose. It was a reunion of a family formed not by blood, but by calling.

As the daughter of Scalpel At The Cross's founders, the mission has always been part of me. At eight years of age, there was no non-profit structure—just relationships with the people of Pucallpa, united in love and service. Nearly 30 years later, seeing

this dream mature into the Miracle Campus was awe-inspiring. This place is more than walls and technology. It's a beacon of light—a hub of healing and excellence, where students from the U.S. and Peru can learn from each other, where local staff are trained and equipped, and where patients from across the Amazon and beyond will be welcomed into the Scalpel family.

In the end, that's what this is all about. Not just medicine. Not just mission. But family—chosen, faithful, and beautifully united by one purpose. ■

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to enjoy a glimpse of our celebration!



PRAISES & PRAYERS

BY NANCY COLE

Director, Prayer Posse, Scalpel At The Cross

PRAISES

- Scalpel, a registered non-profit in Lima for many years, has finally obtained official non-profit status in Pucallpa under the name "Bisturi Ante La Cruz."
- Machines from Germany arrived to outfit our Miracle Campus prosthetic's fabrication site.
- A momentous ribbon cutting ceremony at the Miracle Campus Grand Opening in May, followed by our first physical therapy & prosthetic's fitting campaign.
- Significant strides in integrating all patient data into our CrossCare Electronic Medical Record.
- Scalpel's research arm's registration as an NGO with REDCap, coupled with recruitment of new collaborators.
- Two highly successful medical campaigns in April & July evaluating 218 patients, providing 75 cortisone injections, performing 5 echocardiograms & 1 EKG, operating on 37, and conducting 17 PT sessions with all patients and patient families being prayed with.
- Record rainfall rendered our Cashibo property inaccessible in April, but everything dried out by July and by God's grace none of Scalpel's structures were damaged.
- Scalpel representation at Tim Tebow Foundation Partner's Dinner, Gala, & Golf Tournament Fundraiser in Jacksonville.
- Successful board meeting in Miami filled with strategic discussion, mission updates, & key governance decisions.

PRAYERS

- Transition of our Mission Director position into two such roles (U.S. & Peruvian based). An internal Scalpel candidate (Yuki Centeno, Creative Director, will be stepping into the U.S. based role), and Timoteo Hidalgo (Miracle Campus Contractor) will occupy this role on the Peruvian side. We do ask that you lift up Peruvian personnel to fulfill our rehab care delivery model. We are ever grateful to Kara Rodriguez who has so faithfully filled both roles in these years of significant growth.
- Board of Director transition as 4 members rotate off & 4 new members fulfill this most vital commitment to our foundation. Three of our 4 previous board members have joined the Scalpel Ambassador Society.
- Logistical issues having arisen with Hospital Amazonico's condemning of all operating rooms (deeming them structurally unsound) & their appointing of a new Medical Director with whom we seek favor.
- While June's medical campaign was canceled on account of O.R. space at Hospital Amazonico being condemned, July's team was given 2 private O.R.'s at a local clinic (SERFARMED) which met our needs perfectly.
- Connection of our Miracle Campus facilities to the power grid; asphaltting & landscaping. Heightened security measures, as our work in Pucallpa has gained exposure, making us vulnerable to crime.
- Overall navigation of complicated red tape (paperwork, signatures, notarizations) in the developing world.



JANUARY - AUGUST 2025

MISSION VITALS



Number of Trips **3**



Surgical Patients **54**



Team Members **50**



Estimated Value of Care (1) **\$803,300**



Estimated Value of Volunteer's Time (2) **\$212,144**



Estimated Value of Medical Supplies Donated (3) **\$64,814**



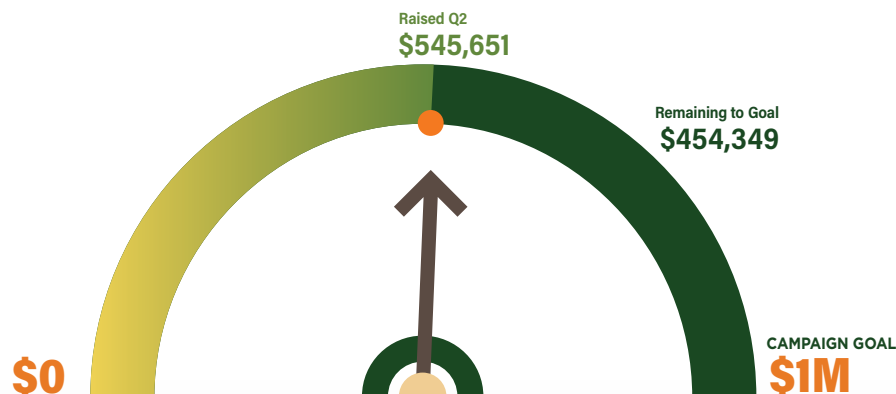
Number of patients evaluated in clinic **278**

Mission Vitals are reported to demonstrate objective estimates of contribution to patient care. This tool is only one measure of ministry vitality.

Scalpel At The Cross acknowledges and believes in the immeasurability of the Spiritual Impact of our teams' efforts in this domain.

We hope, rather, that the focus is appreciated in the reflections, anecdotes, and expression in the Scalpel's Edge editions which point to the incalculability of the Lord's hand at work. Spiritual Impact reports from each trip are available upon request.

2025 GENERAL FUND GIVING CAMPAIGN



(1) Estimated Value of Care:

Value of Patient Care = Assigning dollar value to each surgical/clinical procedure performed, categorized by procedure type. These values, though approximations, are conservative by U.S. standards.

(2) Estimated Value of Volunteer's Time:

Opportunity Cost of Medical Professionals = (Daily Mean Income of Medical Professionals) x (Number of Days Spent on Campaigns)

(3) Estimated Value of Medical Supplies Donated:

Value of Medical Supplies = Valuation Assessments provided by (Contributing Medical Device) + (Surgical Supply Company)



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