

# SCALPEL'S EDGE

A GIFT OF LIGHT, HOPE AND SURGERY TO PERU

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- + Little by Little
- + Where your Treasure is
- + Blessed Beyond Measure
- + A Ripple Effect
- + Praises & Prayers
- + Mission Vitals

“ I can personally see the “little-by-little” impact deepening the resolve of our key leaders, the strength of our governance, the capability of our legal team, the capacity of our reserves, and the breadth of our relationships. ”

- Peter A. Cole, MD

## LITTLE-BY-LITTLE

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



One of the joys I receive in Scalpel At The Cross is plunging into the Scriptures with our leadership team each month. We are currently tackling the Book of Proverbs and these times on Saturday mornings have been particularly sweet. Recently we got schooled on the value of delayed gratification with two verses which hinge together perfectly as designed by God. Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it. Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life. Proverbs 13: 11-12 (NIV)

Stories abound of tragic and colossal financial failure of people who get wealthy suddenly or cut corners in darkness to make a buck. Proverbs teaches us we ought not be surprised. The fact, however, that the verse on wealth is back-to-back with a statement on deferred hope and its manifestation in goodness, suggests we ought to expand the gathering “little-by-little” principle to other pursuits besides money. Paying your dues, suffering and pain, grieving loss, refining by fire, seem to have purpose in hope deferred, “little-by-little.” Whatever these kinds of circumstances, they make our hearts sick, which means we mourn and yearn and long to fulfill a desire,

and the more punishing the journey, the more wanting we become, sometimes even until we’re broken and defeated—heart sick. Then we cry out, “Only God can fix this.” Yes, exactly!

Yes, but why am I writing about this topic and how does it relate to Scalpel At The Cross? Well, we know that our timing is not God’s, and such it has been with the opening of our Miracle Campus patient practice at *Kilometro 15* outside Pucallpa, Peru. Though our glorious Grand Opening Ceremony was last May when we unfurled the doors to 150 visitors, and turned on the lights (with a generator) for tours and demonstrations and praise and worship, and miraculously found and hired our Directors of Prosthetics (Daniel Mueller) and Physical Therapy (Julia Kruse), the regulatory burden has been a gauntlet of bureaucracy from licensures, to bank accounts, to city electric. Someone who grew up in America cannot fathom the complexity of navigating the purchase of land, building of physical infrastructure, and establishment of a medical practice in the developing world. Though there is frustration and at times heartsickness from some in our Scalpel family, I can personally see the “little-by-little” impact

Continues on page 2

# LITTLE BY LITTLE

deepening the resolve of our key leaders, the strength of our governance, the capability of our legal team, the capacity of our reserves, and the breadth of our relationships. It is clear to me in retrospect, both that we were not ready to walk when we thought we were last May, and that we are driving foundational pillars deeper into the ground. We will be running soon, very soon, and by the time of your next Scalpel's Edge, Lord willing!

Gosh, this is not unlike the orthopaedic rehabilitation process from major trauma surgeries. Imagine getting hit by a car in a high-speed accident and going through several surgeries to stabilize and realign your broken face, pelvis, femur, and hands. It takes many months to regain function. Dozens of weeks go by with pain, stiffness, weakness, and emotional exhaustion. Frustration sets in and patients often cry in my office; yet when I ask, "Are you doing better than you were six weeks ago? Are you doing more than you were doing six weeks ago? Are you taking fewer pain meds than six weeks ago?" their cry turns to smile and they answer, "Yes, yes, yes!"

From 2004 - 2019, we were a small family ministry taking a few mission teams to do surgery each year. Over 20 years, little-by-little we have nurtured friendships with faithful donors, deepened our relationships with other organizations in Peru, cultivated mentors from mission communities in Pucallpa, partnered with local churches in the Ucayali Region, little-by-little. Look what's happened in just five years—yes,



Land dedication & Ground breaking ceremony - July 2023



October 2023



July 2024

yes, yes! Much of our other work in the Patient Outcomes Program, Hospital Management, Outpatient Surgery, and increased surgical campaigns have been allowed to happen instead—no one is standing still; yet, we simply want to stop deferring our hope, as the Scripture says.

As we are all in relationship with our Creator, we can find ourselves angry at God through waiting, pain, and suffering,

but there's a big "but" in the Scripture. As we see, "...but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life." Now consider what can possibly be better than a Tree of Life. This notion causes me to conjure up wellsprings of beauty, waterfalls of joy, and fountains of health. A tree of life is growing on the Miracle Campus indeed, and we're about to see it all. A tree of life is eternal, even unto Jesus and unto heaven as I have written previously. ■



December 2024



December 2025

# WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS

## REFLECTIONS ON THE 4TH ANNUAL SCALPEL GALA

By Kris Yi | New Board Member



As a first-time attendee of the Scalpel At The Cross Gala Fundraiser, I was not expecting to experience such a wide range of emotions. I was looking forward to a fun and meaningful evening, but what unfolded was more moving than I anticipated. From the very start of the event, I was overjoyed by the sense of community, unity, and hope surrounding Scalpel's mission of serving the people of Peru. It was clear that this was not just a fundraising event, but a gathering of people aligned around God's calling.

Throughout the evening, a beautiful story unfolded through dance, music, and powerful storytelling. Each performance and testimony revealed not only the beauty of Pucallpa, but also its needs and the impact that can be made when we come together in faithful obedience to God's calling. The Scalpel Gala team did an exceptional job curating an evening that was creative, hopeful, inspirational, informative, and clearly intentional in every detail. With more than 300 people in attendance, the room felt alive with appreciation and purpose. At my table alone, there was plenty of laughter, but



also moments of reflection and even tears. Each guest was deeply moved, stirred not only by the stories shared, but by the realization that they are part of something special: Scalpel At The Cross and a group of people responding to God's call in practical ways.

As I reflect back on the evening, I keep returning to Luke 12:34: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." We often interpret this verse in reverse, assuming that wherever our heart is, our treasure — time, resources, and energy — will naturally follow. But Jesus' words suggest something more challenging: the direction of our treasure actually guides the direction of our heart.

In many ways, this is exactly what Scalpel At The Cross has modeled. Scalpel didn't wait for perfect conditions or perfect clarity before acting. They stepped forward in obedience, investing their time, expertise, and resources into serving the people of Pucallpa. Through that faithful action, God has continued to grow their hearts, expanding their compassion, deepening their commitment, and

“  
What began as a step of obedience  
has grown into a powerful  
movement of healing and hope...  
”

multiplying their impact. What began as a step of obedience has grown into a powerful movement of healing and hope, and the gala was a perfect celebration of that. The evening was not only inspiring, but also convicting. I left with a renewed sense that faith is not meant to remain comfortable. It calls for movement, for trust, and sometimes for bold steps into uncertainty. I felt both encouraged and challenged to respond: to take action, to step out in faith, and to trust that as I invest my time, energy, thoughts, and resources into God's purpose, He will shape, change, and enlarge my heart in the process.

The story of Scalpel highlighted at the gala was an incredible reminder that transformation begins with a decision to obey. As we take those steps in submission, God creates a kind of snowball effect. Our hearts begin to follow, grow, and align more fully with His. It was an unforgettable evening, not only because of what was witnessed, but because it invited us to take a bold step forward in participating in God's mission. ■



PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO GET A GLIMPSE INTO AN  
UNFORGETTABLE EVENING!



# BLESSED BEYOND MEASURE

A MONTH INVESTED FOR THE LONG TERM

*by Meggie Nelson - Active team member with Scalpel for over a decade and wife of Dr. Clay Nelson, Vice President of Scalpel International Operations*

This past January, we had the extraordinary opportunity to spend an entire month in Pucallpa with our children, Carter and Adley. It is a month we will never forget. Clay and I had talked about spending an extended period of time in Peru for several years, but until this point it had remained just a dream. Leaving behind a home, schools, and a medical practice felt like an overwhelming amount to coordinate. Our kids, however, had other ideas.

They had been to Pucallpa twice before, and it is their favorite place in the world. After our family trip last March, Carter began campaigning for a month-long stay. He pushed the issue earnestly, ready to miss part of his 8th grade year and give up a season of sports, and we felt the Lord saying that this was the time. God opened door after door at home, at work, and within our public school system to make it possible. After Christmas, we joyfully packed up and headed to the beloved Jungle Bunks home in Peru. The month that followed was filled with blessings, growth, rejuvenation, education, and deeper faith. We weren't sure how we would both serve during the Surgical Campaign Week with our children, but once again the Lord provided. Watching our kids serve alongside us on clinic day is something we will never forget, and it was so refreshing to this mama's heart.

Our time in Peru unfolded in many different ways, all of them fruitful and faith-building. Clay spent time with our Peru-based staff, Daniel, Julia, Timo, and Isaac, both at the Miracle Campus and throughout the town of Pucallpa. He witnessed firsthand the many hurdles they faithfully clear as they serve our patients abroad. Their stories of faith, trust, and determination to obey and serve despite real obstacles were a powerful witness to us both. We are so grateful to have them as part of the Scalpel family.

We have been richly blessed with deep friendships in the missionary community in Pucallpa, and once again they astounded us with warmth and generosity as they welcomed us in. We rang in the New Year together, attended prayer nights, were invited to birthday parties, and were fed countless incredible meals. They opened their homes to us and took us on adventures to neighboring communities and tribes, both to serve and to witness the remarkable work being done to advance the gospel. It would be a significant



oversight not to acknowledge that we could not have had our children with us during the surgical portion of Campaign Week without the help of these dear missionary friends. None of this would have been possible without SAM Academy welcoming our kids into their classrooms and the loving teachers who cared so well for them, the missionaries who drove Carter and Adley to and from school, provided after-hours childcare, and fed them during our long days at the hospital.

In the weeks before Campaign Week, we had the privilege of seeing firsthand just how much work goes into preparing for an incoming team. I spent a couple of days alongside Tiffany, who thoughtfully selects every food item for specific team members and continually refines her processes to make each person as comfortable as possible. Michael makes multiple visits to the house each day, constantly upgrading, repairing, and planning ahead. Scalpel's Jungle Bunks home is in remarkable condition, especially given the environment it exists in, and that is a testament to the Simmons' faithful care.

While in Pucallpa, we had many opportunities to explore the surrounding area. A river cruise was a highlight, leading us to hold an anaconda and baby sloths while learning about the jungle, the river, and the many homes and villages along its banks. We also took the SAM Air floatplane to a remote village, where we toured the Bible Institute among the Shipibo tribe and heard about their extraordinary work training pastors and their families to carry the gospel deeper into the jungle. We tasted cacao seeds and walked through plantain fields, learning about the crops that sustain their communities. One day we were blessed to take our kids across lake Cashibococha to Santa Teresita village. We saw how families cook in outdoor kitchens and preserve freshly caught fish with salt for dinner without refrigeration, observed their beautiful handcrafted goods, and played a spirited game of soccer that we lost decisively.

Churches, hospitals, the Swiss Mission clinic, and the jungle itself all became part of our daily rhythm, while Clay saw patients and held meetings about upcoming Scalpel plans. Games were played, lakes were fished, and incredible meals were shared. Time and again, we found ourselves deeply encouraged by the hearts of so many faithfully serving in Pucallpa. Laughter dissolved into tears and tears back into laughter, and by the time our month came to a close, we were blessed beyond measure. ■



“ After Christmas, we joyfully packed up and headed to the beloved Jungle Bunks home in Peru. The month that followed was filled with blessings, growth, rejuvenation, education, and deeper faith. ”



# A Ripple Effect

By Lucca Golfari

Team Member of Surgical campaigns in 2024 and 2025

*"...He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor..."*

Isaiah 61:1-2

My first experience with serving God's kingdom came when I was eight years old. My mom taught Bible stories to the preschoolers, and I wanted to help. So I became her little aide, helping her teach the monthly memory verse to the little kids. I soon found my way into the tech booth at the back of my youth group, where I discovered how naturally I took to running the software that displayed visuals during messages. Admittedly nerdy, but a gift from God. So I began routinely helping wherever I was needed in the church, and saying yes to serving became somewhat of a second nature for me.

As time passed and I grew older, I crossed paths with Scalpel At The Cross for the first time in eighth grade. A close family friend who knew the widely beloved former Scalpel Mission Director, Peggy Gasior, recommended my mother to her as a candidate for the organization's first Creative Director. My mother was hired in the fall of 2023, the answer to so many of her prayers. The first ripple had dropped into the pond of my life.

At the time, all I knew was that my mom had a new job working with surgeons serving in Peru, her home country. Life went on. I was a freshman in high school, navigating everything that comes with that season. During that period I was still serving at my church, but longing for something more that matched the servant heart that I felt God had placed in me. Then, in the spring of 2024, I went on my first mission trip to Costa Rica with my church, Christ Journey. It was transformative. I had long been aware of the deep need across many Latin American countries and communities, having visited Peru on many family trips, but I hadn't done much about it until this point. I came home feeling genuinely fulfilled, carrying that quiet certainty that comes when you know you've done something that mattered. Therefore, shortly after when my mom asked us as a family if we wanted to join her on a trip to Pucallpa with Scalpel to help document patient stories, I said yes without hesitation.



And so we went on the August 2024 surgical campaign, and I simply fell in love with the mission. From waking up before the sun rose, ready to work, to the breathtaking sunsets over Lake Cashibococha, to the laughter and deep bonds formed with the team, to witnessing the joy on patients' faces as they realized how their lives had been forever changed — all of it revealed what makes Scalpel so special. God had confirmed for me that this was the outlet that my heart had been searching for. I signed up for my church's next student mission trip, fundraised, and traveled to Nicaragua in March of 2025. That trip reached me on a deeper spiritual level, teaching me how vital it is to lean into prayer and to ask God to move in bold, unmistakable ways. My prayer throughout that trip was for guidance and clarity on where He wanted my life to go.

Finally, one spot remained on the July 2025 Scalpel surgical campaign, the same trip where my mom would be trained to step into her role as the new Mission Director. So I went. During those days in Pucallpa, God moved powerfully in the lives of the patients, the team, and me. He showed me just how much I love what we wake up every morning to do: using medicine to heal hearts and bodies deep in the Peruvian Amazon. It lit two fires in me I had never felt before.

I now had the "mission bug bite" as Nancy Cole calls it, so I had to tell the whole world about Scalpel. I started at school in my public speaking class, presenting about the mission to my peers. I invited Dr. Woolley to come to campus, and talk to the aspiring pre-med students about their goals and what this route could look like for them. I took Scalpel to my church's

youth group where I had the opportunity to call for a clothing collection to take to Peru. What was interesting, and not at all a coincidence, was that mostly all the items collected were shoes. You see, some patients need the right foot support after lower extremity surgeries to continue their healing journey, and walk again. My church's youth group came through, with plentiful donations to supply endless smiles and overjoyed faces.

And the other fire? That earlier prayer I had for clarity was answered with a big arrow pointing to "THIS IS IT." God made it clear that I am called to serve others by providing them with the best medical care I can, launching me down a path of school, studying, and coffee, to lead to the ultimate goal of glorifying his kingdom through my service. Now as a junior in high school, I can confidently say Scalpel has impacted my outlook in life and its trajectory. My hope is that the ripple started by Peggy, leading to me, can further reach outward, whether through my friends at my youth group, my school peers, or the people we serve in Pucallpa that received the shoes. A hopeful reminder that just one drop can create a waterfall. ■



# PRAISES & PRAYERS

BY NANCY COLE

Director, Prayer Posse, Co-founder of Scalpel At The Cross

## **"A God Met Me There" post recently shared the following exposé on prayer:**

Most Christians don't reject prayer. They just relegate it. It's there...but not first. Not central. Not necessary—until something goes wrong.

### **So life is driven by:**

plans, pressure, responsibilities, and control. And prayer? It becomes the backup plan. The emergency button.

The "just in case." But that was never the design. Prayer was never meant to support your life.

It was meant to direct it. Because when prayer is only a spare tire, you may look like you're moving... but you're not being led. Be honest—

Is prayer what drives your life... or just what you reach for when everything else fails?

## PRAISES

- Perfect weather, exquisite venue, excellent attendance, riveting testimony of keynote speaker, delicious Peruvian food/song/dance, precise execution...all made for a wondrous 2026 fundraising "Healing Hearts & Bones Gala" on 2/7/26. Our aim of spreading a passion for the supremacy of His name amongst our community in Miami (Scalpel's headquarters) was surpassed.

- A fabulous January medical campaign to Peru provided 103 patient evaluations, 42 joint injections, 35 surgical interventions, & 50 rehab sessions. Patients affected by traumatic injuries, chronic conditions, & years of limited access to care are now on a pathway back to independence.

- Great feedback from our Peruvian team at 6 week patient follow-up from January's campaign regarding their postoperative progress.

- Dr. Clay Nelson & family's month in Pucallpa fortified & provided direction for our Peruvian based team as they continue building greater community.

- A productive March board of director's meeting in Miami, during which time we considered the city's global influence & how the influx of Christian generosity is changing its landscape; we brainstormed ideas for acquiring space which would optimize work efficiencies, assist with donor relationships, & offer legitimacy to our overall mission.

- A powerful weekend at the Tim Tebow Foundation Gala celebrating our shared vision in reaching the world's most vulnerable...who in Peru, are those suffering from musculoskeletal conditions without access to even the most basic surgical care. Our deep alignment with TTF in faith, urgency, & action make us ever grateful for their partnership.

- A small Scalpel team (Dr. PM Woolley, Dr. Clay Nelson, Timoteo Hildago, and Daniel Mueller) traveled to Diospi Suyana in Curahuasi, Peru, in April. They visited the German missionary hospital there to help identify ways in which our mission can learn from their model. The exchange of fruitful & insightful conversations will allow us to use their knowledge of starting a medical facility in Peru & apply it as it fits our organization.

## PRAYERS

- Daniel Mueller, German prosthetist/ Program Director of our Miracle Campus, grieving his father's recent loss to cancer.

- Although there will not be a medical campaign in April as is customary for us, our Medical Director traveled to Pucallpa to oversee our January patients' 10 week post-surgical check-ups; all are doing well.

- While Scalpel is now officially registered in Pucallpa as "Bisturi Ante La Cruz" & a local bank account has been opened in our name, our Peruvian bylaws are still undergoing required editing.



- Scalpel's property & assets are being transferred from our original registration in Lima, to Pucallpa; we pray for ease with this transfer & that government permits to fully operationalize our Miracle Campus will be granted very soon.

- Managing expectations of our Peruvian based team using various touch points of connection while they wait on the authorization of patients to be seen in our new rehab facility.

- Hookup of our Miracle Campus to the city's electrical power grid (already approved).

- Wisdom in negotiating purchase of an additional 2.5 hectares of land from either the Swiss Mission who has plots subdivided or Alianza Church who doesn't.

- A system overhaul for building medical campaign teams.

- Final decisions regarding team members for the July 30-August 9 & October 22-November 1 medical campaigns, in addition to a summer 2026 vision trip for prospective donors.

- Our appeal to the Hansjörg Wyss Foundation for support of ongoing updates to our Cross Care Medical Record system software, amongst other needs.

- Spiritual Warfare, as Scalpel undergoes vast growth which impacts so many lives both now & eternally; pushback from the enemy has intensified & we ask for protection & steadfastness going forward.■

JAN 2025 - DEC 2025

# MISSION VITALS

<b>4</b>	Number of Trips
<b>76</b>	Surgical Patients
<b>63</b>	Team Members
<b>\$1,270,500</b>	Estimated Value of Care (1)
<b>\$279,990</b>	Estimated Value of Volunteer's Time (2)
<b>\$74,814</b>	Estimated Value of Medical Supplies Donated (3)
<b>398</b>	Number of patients evaluated in clinic



JANUARY 2026

# MISSION VITALS

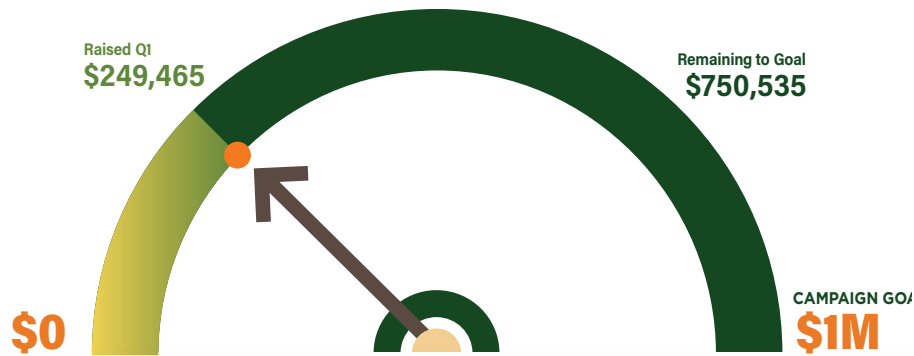
Number of Trips	<b>1</b>
Surgical Patients	<b>39</b>
Team Members	<b>21</b>
Estimated Value of Care (1)	<b>\$698,200</b>
Estimated Value of Volunteer's Time (2)	<b>\$64,519</b>
Estimated Value of Medical Supplies Donated (3)	<b>\$28,050</b>
Number of patients evaluated in clinic	<b>116</b>

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.

## 2026 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)



FOLLOW US @scalpelatthecross

**ONLINE GIVING IS CONVENIENT AND SECURE.**

Scan the code or visit our website to donate now

**CONTACT US AT:**

P.O. Box 558436 - Miami, FL 33255

[www.scalpelatthecross.org](http://www.scalpelatthecross.org) | 786 405 9958

