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" *Agape love implies sacrifice and without conditions. It is not emotional in nature, but enduring. It's a love which implies a decision to put in the work.*

" *- Peter A. Cole, MD*

ANTIDOTE FOR POLARIZATION

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



If I were to ask you, what is your number one priority in life, how would you respond? I have asked the question in small groups, and immediately, thoughtful people begin responding: health, happiness, freedom, security, family, peace. Awesome! It's kind of a fun question...provocative, even competitive. Take a moment to reflect on your answer. In today's academic environment, teachers are taught to say, "There's no right answer, just express what you feel." Are we really okay with that idea, that each person's response is correct? Is that possible? It's practically polarizing just for me to ask the question, yet I'm pondering the antidote.

Well, I think the right answer regarding the number one priority is to love. I am sure that sounds pretty exciting to most of you! Well, I believe it should, because the natural history of making this the number one priority becomes all the answers above; that is, if we apply the right kind of love. One of my favorite verses, simplistic and powerful, is 1 Peter 4:8, "Above all, love each other deeply, for love covers a multitude of sins." That's it—Love—the Holy Scriptures say so, right?

Barreling toward the mid-term elections, there's probably no more fitting message for our polarized population. The U.S. needs

love and so does the planet. At face value this is such a simplistic verse, almost trite. How nice, "Above all, love each other..." like, "Come on guys, can't we all get along!" Let us take a closer look and begin deconstructing the short verse. Above means over, higher, more important, and all means ALL, everything, superlative! The highest priority in all of Scripture, of everything the apostles ever preached, the number one and two commandments from God Himself, was to Love (Matt. 22:36-40 and Mark 12:28-31). Isn't that fascinating? I believe the reason becomes clear when you consider the whole context of Love in the Scriptures, which we could never completely cover in this article, but I'll try to launch it for you.

Love is such a powerful word with so many meanings, even to the extent that there are many types of Love; in fact, it is impossible to execute all the loves at once. The nuances of this four-letter word ring from linguistic origins, and though there have been described over 50 kinds of love, more common varieties include: philos or friendship love; ludus or playful love; eros, the romantic variety; pragma, enduring love; and storge, family love.

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ANTIDOTE FOR POLARIZATION

They are all great, but there is another kind of love which is intended in this verse from Peter according to the Greek origin of its author, and that is, agape love. Agape love implies sacrifice and without conditions. It is not emotional in nature, but enduring. It's a love which implies a decision to put in the work. It is sometimes extremely difficult, but it's an exhortation from the apostle Peter. Above all, love one another. Agape is not just a wee bit, like check-the-box, but to love sacrificially. One another means you and me, me and my neighbor, my neighbor and her enemy. Well, that's a bit uncomfortable, and as though that's not hard enough, the first part of this verse ends with the word deeply. Above all, agape-love one another deeply. Are you kidding me?! In other words, for results to manifest with maximum impact, the agape love of one should match the agape love of the other. Look, there's more; there's a comma after the word deeply.

"Above all, love one another deeply, for love covers a multitude of sins." Isn't this concept interesting? There is a reason provided for the deep agape loving we are exhorted to prioritize, and that is to cover sins, but probing this verse further, what does the word "cover" mean? The original Greek written text in Scripture here is kalupto, which means to hide or conceal, to overlook, like one is not holding another accountable. Kalupto carries a forgiving nature as though there is a goal of reconciliation. Imagine the impact on a marriage if spouses applied this love threshold, or on a peace treaty if Putin and Zelensky applied agape love mutually--treaties

begin with leaders, and constituents follow leaders—nations would heal. Well, I think there is a cautionary, if not sobering tone in the verse, because 1 Peter 4:8 says a multitude of sins, which by implication means not all sins. Perhaps the reason is that we are finite humans with limited capacity, unlike Him who is infinitely capable of covering all sin.

This human fallibility is what brings us to the entire fulcrum of history, the death of Christ, i.e. before Christ (BC) vs after death (AD). "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, so that whoever believes in Him shall not die but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Imagine that despite being betrayed by his friends, beaten, spit upon, even nailed to a cross by His enemies, Jesus' response was, "Father forgive them for they know not what they have done." (Luke 23:34) In other words, it is only super-human Jesus who can "kalupto-cover" all your sins, and not just a multitude of them, because God "agape-loved" you so much, and that is why He sacrificed His Son on the cross. Love, agape love, is the antidote to polarization. At Scalpel At The Cross, that is our goal, above all, to love each other deeply. ■



HE BINDS UP WOUNDS - JUAN CARLOS

By Channing Cole - Board Member

At just 21 years old, Juan Carlos Lopez Santillan became the sole provider for his mother and siblings following the passing of his father. He traveled deep into the Amazon jungle to work at a remote logging site where the nearest hospital was hours away. It was there that a logging accident shattered his tibia, requiring emergency surgery on site before he could be airlifted home to Pucallpa, where his mother, Maria, and sister, Rosa, received him. They were extremely frightened, but grateful he was alive.

In the months that followed, the hardware implanted in his leg became severely infected. The pain grew relentless and unbearable, and Juan Carlos fell into a deep depression. At his lowest points, he expressed that he wished he had not survived the accident at all. His family watched, prayed, and hoped.

In what could only be described as perfect timing, God brought the Scalpel team into Juan Carlos's life in July 2025. The infected tibial plate was removed, extensive debridement and irrigation were performed, and a powerful antibiotic regimen was initiated to eradicate what remained. The leg that many had feared was lost began its path toward restoration.

Yet the most profound healing happened beyond the operating room. Through heartfelt conversations with the Spiritual Impact Team and Scalpel translators during recovery, Juan Carlos, his mother, Maria, and his sister, Rosa, each prayed to receive Christ as Lord and Savior. Three hearts, in one room, made new.

At his most recent follow-up, Juan Carlos's incisions had healed cleanly with no signs of infection. His knee was bending and straightening, and his ankle was strong, flexible, and continuing to improve.

His family looks ahead with gratitude that no medical outcome alone could have produced. They are hopeful not simply because a leg was salvaged, but because three lives were transformed by the One who heals what no surgery can reach. ■



*"He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds."*

Psalms 147:3

LIVING THE GOOD LIFE

By Bryan Den Hartog, M.D. - Board Member

Many have asked about retired life after 35 years of orthopaedic surgery practice. Answering that question is difficult. Most people view retirement as a phase of life where you enjoy the fruits of your labor. They talk about bucket lists (vacations, golf memberships, homes down south...) as though this life is all there is...focus on self and pursue happiness. But do these things really bring a source of enduring contentment? Are they the best investment of our time and resources given there is no Biblical reference for the term, "retirement."

I recently finished a study on the book of Phillipians written by the Apostle Paul, who by the time of this writing was old, imprisoned, and chained to Roman guards. Despite this hardship, Paul encouraged this beloved body of believers in Phillipi to "rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). He'd given up a respectable role in the Jewish community, suffered through decades of severe sacrifice and persecution for the sake of Christ, and was eventually beheaded for preaching the gospel. This certainly doesn't sound like the "American Dream" of upward mobility. So why was he so content and able to remain hopeful despite his grim circumstance? What did Paul learn that most believers don't grasp? Paul's claim to the good life starts with a desire to pursue God's work, advance the gospel, and partner with people who "get after it."

The life of CT Studd (greatest cricket player of the 19th century from Cambridge, England) is illustrative of someone who applied these Pauline principles. At the height of his career he left the game and a life of wealth to become a missionary in the Belgian Congo, China, and India. His most memorable quotes include, "Only one life, will soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last," and "I pray that when I die, all of hell will rejoice that I am no longer in the fight." These things are only said by people who get after things



that matter by staking everything on the world to come.

We would do well to consider our own pursuits, and whether we're chasing things that ultimately perish (i.e., influence, fame, money, status, appearance, health) and rarely bring lasting contentment. A considerable number of professing believers want just enough Jesus to be socially acceptable, without conflicting with worldly culture. Jesus becomes a type of administrative assistant who helps us pursue what we want instead of allowing Him to be our CEO. Paul, however, exhorts us to get after what really matters...Jesus, and making Him known.

Few are called to reach the unreached on the mission field, while most are called to the marketplace to help send the few that heed the call to go. The great commission (Matt. 28:19-20) challenges us to go, or help send those who will. Why don't we do this? For starters, we are discontented people enticed by the amenities of this life. The Apostle Paul connects contentment to freedom to live for what really matters. He writes, "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being

content in any situation..." (Phil. 4:12-13)

Why can we have contentment in knowing Christ? Because we are promised an inheritance that far surpasses anything here on earth, and our faithful response is to store treasures in heaven that last eternally (Matt. 6:20). This hope enables us to live fulfilled lives now. Saint Augustine put it this way, "Our hearts are restless until we find our rest in Thee." What is true contentment? Perhaps it means living more simply by exercising the liberty of saying "no" to lesser things and "yes" to greater things of eternal significance. Paul goes on to show us that actively participating in advancement

*"I know what it is to be
in need, and I know what
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Phil. 4:12-13

of the gospel means looking for ways to partner. Paul planted churches and took risks for the kingdom of God, but couldn't have done this without the "venture capitalists" (VC's) funding his mission. You see, VC's look for unique products that meet broad needs (like the gospel). Want to up your VC game and get after what really matters?

Consider Scalpel At The Cross (SATC), which has a vision of expanding its ministry of serving the physical and spiritual needs of the Amazon basin. Meeting orthopaedic needs has given Scalpel an entrée into sharing the gospel and granting hope in Christ. Using medicine as a platform for advancing the gospel, they need VC's like you! As a medical provider for nearly four decades now, I have found SATC to offer a wonderful means for using my medical skills and finances in meeting patient needs, and for partnering in the work of advancing the gospel to the nations. All of this is an investment in what matters most. As we enter into this transition from full-time employment, my wife and I are learning to have an eternal perspective as it relates to investing our time/resources and allowing the Spirit to transform our minds to be more Christ-like. He gave His life for us. Our response is to give our lives to what really matters...Christ and Christ alone. If you want an honest assessment of how committed you are to "getting after it," ask the challenging questions. Where do you spend your money? How do you invest? Will your investments last eternally? ■



"Only one life, will soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last," and "I pray that when I die, all of hell will rejoice that I am no longer in the fight."

CT Studd



BUILT UPON THE ROCK

by *Fernanda Chavarria Hernandez - Assistant to the Executive Director*

Coming to Scalpel At The Cross was a huge leap of faith in my journey with Christ. I prayed to the Lord, "Take me to a ministry where You need me." Just a few months later, Yuki (our Mission Director) was nudged by the Holy Spirit to offer me the position as her assistant. When I initially prayed, I was only expecting to volunteer at church, but I never imagined it was going to be a job change! Needless to say, joining Scalpel has been a transformational experience.

I joined a surgical campaign in January just one month into the job! Before I went to Pucallpa, the Lord had put on my heart, "Built upon a Rock." I didn't yet know what that message meant. One of the things I was looking forward to was meeting the community in Peru. I was told that the mission was not only to fix bones, but also to heal hearts by sharing the light and hope of Jesus Christ.

When I arrived in Pucallpa, it all began to make sense. I realized, "Wow, ALL of this is really built upon the Rock of Jesus Christ!" I saw everything come together as a team from across the United States united in their willingness to give their time and talents to serve those in need. From the diligence, tremendous love, and care of the U.S. team behind it all—Yuki, Maru, Dr. Woolley, Lyndi, and Kim—to the intentionality of the founders—Dr. Cole and Nancy, along with their children, Dani, Peter Jr., and Channing—to the Peruvian team and volunteers, everyone is actively involved, praying and working together to make the impact of Scalpel possible.

The way all of these intentional hearts have come together for something greater than themselves, built upon the Rock not only organizationally, but relationally, is something to behold. I was perplexed by the sheer number of patients in need of medical care, deeply moved by how grateful they were to receive treatment, and overjoyed by the many souls being saved through the Good News.

Needless to say, I have also greatly enjoyed gaining a window into the

medical side, becoming familiar with the instruments and surgeries while witnessing firsthand how they can transform and restore function to the human body. Coming from a non-medical background, these experiences have sparked a genuine curiosity in me to better understand how it all works. I have been fascinated to see how God can use medicine, knowledge, and willing hands to bring healing and restoration to someone's life.

Then, when the gala fundraiser took place in February, I experienced that same spirit in a different context. I witnessed the incredible level of care and intentionality from those who came together as the Body of Christ, working alongside one another to bring the gala to life. Through enthusiastic service, encouragement, and supporting one another with their different skill sets, it turned into a beautiful night that moved the mission forward. At the gala, you could see so many servant hearts coming together around one shared purpose: to help those in need.

Following the gala was the board meeting in March to complete the trifecta. What I witnessed deepened my understanding of why the Lord had placed me here. For the first time, I saw a room full of professionals intentionally bringing their faith into their work. It showed me that after taking even one step of obedience, God provides what we need along the way—a community of people who will walk alongside us. The Lord showed me how He appoints people in our lives to carry out His divine plan beyond the normal confines of a workplace or a church. Every board member takes the time to contribute to the Scalpel family in their own unique way, whether through donations, decision-making, prayer, Saturday Bible studies, building connections, leading trips, or simply being present.

The last eight months of working with Scalpel have been groundbreaking. I have not only met people who are working together to advance the kingdom of God here on earth, but I have also found myself growing closer to Christ along the way.

Scalpel At The Cross not only transforms the hearts and bones of the patients we serve, but also the hearts of those who come together in pursuit of that mission. ■

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock."

Matt. 7:24-25



"Because of God's grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. "

1 Cor. 3:10-11

PRAISES & PRAYERS

By Nancy Cole - Director, Prayer Posse / Co-founder, Scalpel At The Cross



PRAISES

- Two highly successful teams (comprised of 22 medical & 9 vision members) overlapped campaigns for a 4 day period in Pucallpa. All 31 flights went smoothly, and 36 medical supply bags plus 3 special donations of orthopaedic machinery cleared customs without incident. The vision team was exposed to Scalpel's medical model "live," allowing them to acquire a better understanding of how vital their financial partnership is in furnishing us with the resources necessary to impact lives in the Amazon. The medical team was able to hold a robust clinic day during which time they evaluated 140

patients (screening for surgical candidacy, relieving pain through cortisone injections, & granting physical therapy to improve mobility & gait; additionally, every patient & patient family was prayed over). Twenty-one patients underwent fruitful surgical intervention, much of which was highly complex in nature, and 6 individuals made professions of faith in Christ after realizing their need for a sovereign God and the hope only He guarantees! Praise God that when broken body parts are restored, eyes are often illuminated regarding the necessity of heart mending as well.

- One of the greatest blessings experienced by both teams during their stay was witnessing our Miracle Campus's connection to the power grid of the city (after being without for well over a year's time)! Being hooked up to city power allows for full usage of the campus in seeing patients for rehab, in fabricating necessary patient orthotics/prosthetics, & in keeping our machinery optimum given its temperature-sensitive nature. This is a HUGE answer to prayer.

- Effective land transfer for Scalpel properties to Pucallpa, that were previously registered in Lima.

- Two sizable grant offerings from the Tim Tebow & the Hansjörg Wyss Foundations in hiring & supporting personnel for our new rehab facility & Miracle Campus patient care.

- The finalization of purchase of over 7 hectares of additional land from the Swiss Mission (agreed in principle), which lie in close proximity to our Miracle Campus.

- Eagerness to welcome Daniel & Rebeca Mueller and family back from Germany on August 31st to resume duties as Program Director & Communications Coordinator for the Miracle Campus; daughter, Kimy, will stay in Germany to pursue a gap year before beginning college there next year.

- Completion of the 1st phase of Miracle Campus landscaping which has beautified the property considerably.

- Hiring of grounds keeping, cleaning,

maintenance, and security personnel for the campus, as well as an administrative assistant, "Megumi," who is being trained on an Enterprise Resource Platform to help us comply with Sunat, the equivalent of the U.S. IRS, and a licensed physical therapist, "Julisa" who will be delivering patient care.

PRAYERS

- While our Miracle Campus electric meter has been successfully installed, it's still undergoing testing over the next couple of weeks before everything is fully operational.

- Ongoing application acceptances for our Miracle Campus municipality permits/licenses which require the licensing agencies to conduct onsite inspections of patient rehab sessions.

- A peaceful transition for Peru's new president, Keiki Fujimori, who was sworn in on July 28th, and political stability for the country as a whole under her leadership.

- October 22-November 1 Medical campaign logistics which are in process, with participants traveling from 8 states.

- Scalpel's ability to inspire potential volunteers, partners, and donors by revealing both the healthcare needs in Pucallpa and the plan Scalpel has for transformation of this entire remote rainforest community through medicine as a platform for evangelism. ■



JAN 2026 - AUG 2026

MISSION VITALS

2	Number of Trips	
50	Surgical Patients	
42	Team Members	
\$1,130,200	Estimated Value of Care (1)	
\$120,395	Estimated Value of Volunteer's Time (2)	
\$50,613	Estimated Value of Medical Supplies Donated (3)	
256	Number of patients evaluated in clinic	

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)



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