I have been in private practice for nearly 26 years in Horn Lake, Mississippi. I have treated thousands of patients over the years, but going to Peru on mission trips have been some of the most rewarding, humbling, and gracious experiences of my life. God taught me a lot and changed my entire perspective on giving the very first time I went, and the work on me continues with each trip.

For the 24 years that Sharon, my wife, and I have been married, we have tithed and supported our church. However, when it came to missions, my mentality was “missions was not my concern.” I am ashamed to say that I did not support missions. Three years ago, all that changed with my first trip to Peru. I came back a new person. I came back brokenhearted for the people of Peru and for their needs. I came back more thankful for what God has allowed me to oversee while I am on this earth. You see, God taught me that “I am missions.” My goal in life is to help save souls.

This January, my wife and our two sons traveled with me on a mission trip to Peru. Sharon assisted me with the patients while Alex, who is 17 and a senior in high school, and Ryan, who is 22 and a junior at University of Mississippi, shared the Gospel. Alex shared through an interpreter and Ryan, who speaks Spanish, was able to witness directly to many people. They both watched people accept Jesus as their personal Savior right in front of them. I am very grateful to God for blessing me with godly young men who love Jesus. I also thank God every day for their faith and their ability to witness to others.

Sharon and I yard sale all year long just so we can buy large suitcases, (those that will hold at least fifty pounds) backpacks, new to slightly worn clothes, and shoes to take to Peru. This year we took nineteen suitcases along with my portable adjusting table. The nineteen suitcases were filled to the 50-pound limit with the above items along with 250 pounds of cereal bars, candy, gloves and reusable shopping bags. We leave most of the suitcases there. We travel to the southern part of Peru, Canete to be exact, which is very dusty. The people love the suitcases to put their clothes in so that their clothes will stay cleaner. We take cereal bars because most of the people in the region have never eaten a cereal bar. If they are able to find them, they cannot afford them because they are very expensive. They love backpacks because they carry groceries, clothes and other items in them. One of their biggest needs is shoes, and yet shoes are heavy and it is hard to pack very many pairs in a suitcase. You will see some people wearing two different shoes many times. This breaks my heart!

I feel that I may not be able to share the Gospel as my boys do, but I believe that I can contribute to each mission trip by not only adjusting but also by showing the people God’s love through giving. Whether it is clothes, backpacks, or other items, I just want the people of Peru to know that God loves them. I feel by taking the items that we do, we are able to demonstrate God’s love for them in a practical way. They are always very appreciative of whatever we bring to give. We also have a very supportive home church, and this past year we had three different fund raisers for the Peru mission trip to help support those that were traveling as part of the team.

continued on next panel,
On this mission trip, I treated and adjusted 739 patients in 3-1/2 days. I was only able to do this through the hand of God and with the help of my friend and interpreter, Jaime Mejia. Many people—including churches, my family and the mission team—were all praying for the doctors on this trip. The most important fact, however, was that over 400 people accepted Jesus as their personal Savior. I became teary-eyed even as I write this article when I think of the reality that those people will never be the same. Hearts once harden are now rejoicing and praising God.

Last year was my youngest son Alex’s first mission trip and his first trip to Peru. Months leading up to our trip, he continued to tell me that he did not want to go, he did not know those people in Peru and he did not want to go help them. I continued during that time to encourage him, but he still did not want to go, even as we were boarding the plane. On the third day of that mission trip, I looked over at Alex, and he was crying. I knew then that God had touched his heart and broken it for the people of Peru. When we returned home, Alex made a visit to see our pastor where he confessed that he had accepted Jesus. He was baptized a few weeks later. This year, he could not wait to go. God truly used Peru to change his life. Alex has made a video that we shared at our church. It is on YouTube under Go World Missions Peru 2014-2015. I hope all of you who read this article will go and watch the video. It will touch your heart!

Ryan, my oldest son, is paralyzed in his feet and has limited movement from the knees down. This has never stopped him from doing anything that his heart desires. The first year I went to Peru, Ryan wanted to go very badly, but I needed to go first to see about the terrain - to see if he would be able to make it in his all-terrain wheelchair. To make a long story short, he went last year for the first time. He fell in love with Peru. This year he was able to share God’s Word and witness to the people in Spanish. He has come back from Peru on fire. He has been sharing his faith at college where he has been hesitant in the past to do so. Again, God transformed his heart. This is what I tell everyone, Peru will change you forever!

After each mission trip, we come back and share with our church family what God has done in Peru. We do not just go to minister, the people there minister to us as well. Ryan shared one morning at church and told the congregation that there was no excuse for people not to go and serve. He stated, “If I can go sitting in this wheelchair, there is no excuse why abled bodied people cannot serve.” I could not have said it better myself!

Dr. R. Alan Minks is a 1988 graduate of Logan Chiropractic College and a member of the CCA since 1997.