

‘Sozo’ Ministry Reports Miracles in Paraguay

As American missionaries to Paraguay, Jerry and Connie White see Jesus’ love and the Holy Spirit’s power daily change people in their church and in the hospital and prison where they minister with pastors and leaders from the Bible Teaching Center.

Until April 2014, the Whites didn’t know the power of one biblical word to transform the spiritual, physical, mental and emotional health of the Paraguayans they love and serve as pastors and directors of Living Water Teaching Paraguay.

“Sozo,” a Greek word that’s found 110 times in the New Testament of the Bible, changed everything for the Whites’ congregation, CEB Iglesia, and its surrounding South American community this year; the word means to be saved, healed, delivered, and made whole.

Sozo ministry is a unique inner healing and deliverance ministry aimed to get to the root of things hindering your personal connection with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. With a healed connection, you can walk in the destiny to which you have been called.

During three days of instruction in what’s called Sozo Ministry, the Whites and four associate pastors along with 12 members of their congregation learned how to help Paraguayans conduct direct, two-way conversations with the Holy Spirit. Many Paraguayans are from Catholic backgrounds.

The Whites, their staff and eight other trained Sozo Ministry leaders from Colorado then used their new tools over the next three days, conducting 30 one-on-one sessions with CEB Iglesia members, before taking the ministry into a children’s hospital and a prison that houses men and women.

Sozo's introduction into Paraguay is the first South American country to experience the fast-growing, intensely personal training that's reached 80 percent of the world's countries from its home base in Redding, Calif. Bethel Church began Sozo Ministry in 1997.

Nearly 200 Paraguayans – some of whom were not born again or filled with the Holy Spirit when they signed up for their private Sozo sessions – encountered a personal, relational God who, as a loving Father, desires to hear from and speak to them. Many were pleasantly surprised by their ability to hear God's voice in response to their conversations, and by their physical and emotional improvements after receiving Sozo Ministry.

A woman in her 20s and a member of the White's church says God – through Sozo sessions – changed her life, and physically and emotionally healed many others who've publicly shared their testimonies.

"I had bitterness and hate toward my husband, and I was a cold person," says Rocio Morel. "God has changed my life, removed the evil that was inside me, and made me happy. If Sozo hadn't come into my life, I would not have been healed.

"Before (Sozo), I couldn't understand where the love had gone," says Morel, whose husband is on the church worship team. "I felt so sad and hurt, but I am different now."

When Jerry White invited the presence of God into a worship service at the end of six days of Sozo Ministry, a man who had come to church with a demon inside him began to disrupt the powerful church meeting with screams. The dark spirit inside the man couldn't withstand the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit in the church, and left at the command of Jerry White and others who continued to worship and intercede during the commotion.

In several of the 185 Sozo sessions that were conducted in

during the first week of April 2014, ministers say they saw, heard or felt bones move and legs grow out as some of the Paraguayans spoke to God about their physical limitations, asking Jesus if he was willing to heal them.

Carmen Benetiz, a woman in her 50s and a member of the White's church, told Sozo minister Coree Sullivan at the outset that her spine was crooked and caused considerable pain. So, as Benetiz talked to God and Sullivan laid hands on her and prayed silently, both were amazed at the response.

"The straightening of Carmen's spine was amazing," says Sullivan. "My hand has never felt anything like that previously."

Two months later, Jerry White says Benetiz continues to improve overall but, in her upper spine where there wasn't as much movement as in the lower portion, the healing and recovery is a work in progress. Nevertheless, Benetiz is able to attend worship services at CEB Iglesia.

Dramatic physical, spiritual and emotional improvements are convincing enough for the Whites to pursue advanced training at the International Bethel Sozo Organization (IBSO) in Redding, Calif., where the ministry was birthed almost two decades ago.

In 1997, the year Sozo was founded, its leader received prayer training from healing evangelist Randy Clark, whose "Ten Steps" was inspired by the successful deliverance ministry of Pastor Pablo Bottari of Argentina.

Dawna DeSilva, a member of Bethel Church, began Sozo Ministry there after adding "tool sets" from Dr. Ed Smith of Theophostic Prayer Ministry and from scientist Aiko Hormann of Aiko Hormann Ministries.

Within a year, churches from around the globe had received

training from DeSilva and the IBSO.

Today, 80 percent of the world's countries employ Sozo Ministry in some form, though not all are attached to the official network website (), due to concerns about security in nations that are hostile to Christianity or refuse to affiliate for church-related reasons.

Eight years ago, the IBSO began to target the United Kingdom for training; four years ago, the emphasis was in Australia and New Zealand, according to DeSilva. There's now a growing network in Germany and Switzerland and smaller ones in Canada, South Africa and Asia, she says. A basic Sozo training DVD was completed in the Mandarin language in 2014.

"Our regional directors and Bethel missions teams have taken (Sozo) around the world on so many trips that it's impossible to say all of where we are.

"All I know is that God rocks and he loves setting captives free and renewing his children's minds," DeSilva says.

From her UK base in 2010, England's then regional Sozo director Faith Haupt labored to spread the ministry's influence into Africa with help from international groups The River Flows and Pro Health International, a missions group, with which she traveled to Nigeria that year to do medical interventions.

There were long lines of people in need of attention for physical conditions; and, seemingly, there was little Haupt could do without medical skills. "I told the Lord I didn't come here to sit in a little tent, and that I was going to pray for people using my Sozo training.

"As I would be praying for people, I would see emotional wounds that were so deep that I was only scratching the surface of their pain," says Haupt, who knows people affected today by radical Boko Haram's captivity of Nigerian girls,

some of whom are Christians in need of Sozo Ministry.

Unfortunately, doors for further Sozo training in Nigeria remain closed, despite the need for its more gentle, incisive ministry over deliverance that seeks to literally shake demons out of people.

Now back in the states as director of the The River Flows/U.S., Haupt carried Sozo Ministry tools in 2013 to India, where she worked directly with Dalits and alongside a pastor, his wife and their 600-member network of churches that are motivated to reach the “untouchables.”

“The women who are Dalits have a triple whammy – they are women, “untouchables” and Christians in a Hindu culture,” says Haupt, who personally performed a Sozo with the Indian pastor’s wife. “She still tells the testimony of her receiving Sozo Ministry, and how it changed her countenance and those of others who’ve had one.”

Currently, a translation of basic Sozo Ministry curriculum into the Telugu language is underway so that more Christian leaders can reach India and, specifically, the Dalits with the saving, healing, delivering, restoring power of God, says Haupt.

She acknowledges that teaching the Triune nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is difficult in a culture that believes in many “gods.” But Sozo’s emphasis on training people to communicate with a God who daily listens to and speaks with his creation simplifies the task.

In the Rocky Mountain region of the ISB0 which includes six western states, charismatic Pastor Bill Kline has trained Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Catholic, Reformed and non-denominational church leaders in Sozo Ministry since 2010.

A pastor at a revival-style church, Kline says over 3,000 Sozo sessions have been conducted at Resurrection Fellowship in

Loveland, Colo., where he is on staff and serves as regional director of the California-based ministry.

There's a two-week waiting list of people who want to have a personal Sozo session, and Restoration Sozo Ministry as it's called conducts on average 18 to 20 per week, or two to three over a five-day period.

Kline, another Spanish-speaking pastor and six others trained in Sozo Ministry traveled to Paraguay to teach the Whites and their church leaders basic tools for meeting physical, spiritual and emotional needs in their congregation, as well as in the hospital and prison populations in April 2014.

In Colorado, Kline personally offered Sozo Ministry to a Catholic deacon on the day that Pope Francis was installed as leader of the worldwide church.

The charismatic pastor says he wasn't surprised when, a few months later, Pope Francis addressed a Fort Worth, Texas congregation, asking his "fellow brothers and sisters to pray for him." The Texas pastor, Kenneth Copeland, led an international delegation of Christians in praying for and blessing Pope Francis in a video that's posted on YouTube.

In Utah, where Mormonism is a prevalent, Kline is training at least one Assembly of God Church in Sozo Ministry, which both pastors believe they will someday use with members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. With Utah and Colorado, other states in the Rocky Mountain ISBO network include South Dakota, western Nebraska, New Mexico and Wyoming.

Utah Pastor Mark Gering says he's excited about what how the Lord intends to use Sozo Ministry at Christian Life AG Church when it launches. The goal there, as in other places where Sozo Ministry is present, is to normalize the practice of holding two-way, Holy Spirit-led conversations with a God who loves to communicate with his creation.

First-time students like Gering report that they've had direct conversations with God, and that he listened and responded to their questions.

A typical Sozo team consists of a leader and a helper (who primarily provides prayer support for the entire session). There is no counseling during the ministry time, but team members remain sensitive to the needs of people receiving a Sozo and encourage them to set their own agendas for conversations.

"I do agree with Pastor Bill (Kline) that Sozo Ministry will be a great tool to reach LDS people," says Gering.

"I think that this will be a challenge to them in some respects, considering how they (Mormons) view the Godhead. But once people start connecting with God through this ministry their theology will be transformed.

"Once we launch, we believe that word-of-mouth and changed lives will lead LDS people to be open to receiving this ministry.

"I anticipate great testimonies coming out of this culture," Gering said.