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## Brazilian Chiropractic Outreach Center

A New Model for  
Chiropractic and Church Partnership

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Two years ago at the CCA convention, Pastor Randy Richner, a third-generation missionary with ABWE, challenged our association with a new type of chiropractic and church-plant partnership in Dois Irmaos, Brazil. The story really begins nine years ago when Pastor Randy planted a church in the Rio Grande do Sul state in Brazil. *(This area in Brazil is the least evangelized in the entire country and has the highest rate of suicide.)*

In the nearby city of Ivoti, Randy planted the Igreja Ministerio Biblico Ivoti Church, which has grown to 150 members. The church's foundation verse is "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Peter 4:10, ESV). Randy has a track record for planting churches in Brazil, and he's found ways to help them thrive. Since this area in southern Brazil is mostly unchurched, the church focuses on community outreach. Their church motto is "A heart for God and two hands for our community." Dr. Joel Lippert, a local Brazilian chiropractor who is a graduate of Feevale University, was one of the first converts at the church in Ivoti. He gave his life to Christ six years ago and has led the church's Monday chiropractic outreach ministry since his conversion. Dr. Lippert approached Randy about what else he can do to help grow the church.

With the success of the Ivoti church's chiropractic outreach ministry, Randy approached the CCA about how he and Dr. Lippert can best implement a community center that integrates chiropractic as an outreach tool. God provided an affordable place with facilities ideal to practice chiropractic and offer many other outreach ministries in Dois Irmaos, a city about 20 minutes from Ivoti. This summer, the Life Center in Dois Irmaos opened as an outreach center that offers chiropractic care, Biblical counseling, and English tutoring to reach the community. Currently, they hold weekly Bible studies at the center. The goal of the Life Center is to plant a full-fledged church in Dois Irmaos and reach many who are currently lost.

Through your support, the CCA has partnered with Randy and ABWE to help the community center begin a chiropractic outreach program. The CCA has supplied two chiropractic tables (*a stationary and portable*) and helps cover the rent for the building being used for the clinic/church. Part of the assistance the CCA provided was to send two experienced chiropractors to assist with the clinic's setup and opening. Dr. Lee Popwell and Dr. Josh McMillon, who both have experience starting multiple practices and using chiropractic in ministry, traveled to Brazil for this unique project. They spent five days in Ivoti and Dois Irmaos and were joined by Margareth Yamashita, a Brazilian chiropractic student, who provided essential

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*Brazil Outreach, continued.*

language translation. The purpose of the trip was to assist the Life Outreach Center with their chiropractic outreach setup. Dr. Lippert has worked as a chiropractor for 12 years but had never started a practice or outreach ministry like this one. Dr. Popwell and Dr. McMillon were able to help configure the chiropractic patient flow, office layout, and be present for the first chiropractic patients seen at the Life Center. Also, they met and worshipped with the local Ivoti church.



**Left:** Dr. Popwell speaking in the new church in Ivoti.

**Below:** Dr. Joel Lippert adjusts in his resident clinic at the church.



Some of the current challenges for the Life Center in Dois Irmaos include the strong pagan and occult influences in the area. Voodoo, ritualistic cults, and Catholicism are the dominant spiritual outlets people seek. Pagan statues and voodoo dolls are available to purchase in almost every shop. In this area, a church of 50 Christians is considered large. Chiropractic is in its infancy in Brazil. They face many of the problems that chiropractors faced years ago to be taken seriously and build a patient base. Chiropractors can work in multidisciplinary clinics but are not integrated into the national healthcare plan at this time. Most patients that come to the Life Center are referred by word of mouth. Since chiropractic isn't well known, there is a large patient education process to educate new patients on what chiropractic is and how it can help.

Currently, Dr. Lippert travels six hours every other week to work in another city for four days to make an income for his family. That is not a long-term solution to support his family or grow the ministry since he's away for four days every two weeks. The goal is for Dr. Lippert to make enough income to remain full-time in the Life Center, while still providing affordable care to the underserved populations. Maybe as this model center progresses, we can create a blueprint for future centers to use local chiropractors for outreach ministry.

Though the Life Center was only opened this summer, it offers Biblical counseling, English tutoring, Bible studies, and chiropractic care weekly. Currently, Dr. Lippert sees approximately 15 patients on Mondays. He also is seeing chiropractic patients on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. It's an exciting time for the CCA and the Life Center. With this new model of community outreach centers forming churches by serving the community's needs with chiropractic and other ministries, we have a long-term mission opportunity to engage many cities worldwide.