

JOURNALS POSTED ON JUNE 1, 2018

Heavy Hearts...



DENISE & JUAN ARAGÓN



SUPPORT PLEDGED



MEXICO

Dear friends,

Since our last newsletter, a lot has happened: we continue visiting our Tsotsil and Tseltal communities; we were encouraged by the visit of our Area Director, Adalia Gutierrez; Denise participated in IM's Peace and Justice colloquium in Thailand; we traveled to Nicaragua to visit our mothers; we received our first mission team from West Virginia; and we moved into another house which better serves the needs of our family. We're slowly getting back to rebuilding our routine.

[Here you can watch a video](#) showing a bit of the many things that have happened in the last few months.

As I (Denise) write this newsletter, I have a heavy heart.

A few questions come to mind at this moment: How do we serve God? Do we serve only when we feel like it? When we are super grateful? When we know our family is safe and out of harm's way? What if serving meant risking my life?

There are Christians living in closed countries where publicly sharing one's faith in Christ means death. I struggle with this for I know our family was called to serve in a place where we can openly talk about Christ and His love. Yet, slowly there is an idea creeping into my mind: "What if today is the last day I get to share about God's love with someone." I don't know when my last day on earth will be. Neither did the more than 80 college students recently murdered by the Nicaraguan government or the teenagers killed at Santa Fe High School.

Our lives journeys are full of paradoxes – situations with seemingly contradictory qualities. During our cross-cultural training at Mission Training International, we were reminded that as global servants we would face many paradoxes. We learned that a "pair of ducks" – a Yeah Duck and a Yuck Duck – could be used to describe these situations or events.

Recently, I encountered a situation that makes my heart heavy and

yet inspires me. Pastor Fausto is one of the most visionary pastors we've met in Chiapas, so far. He is passionate about evangelism and serving his community. Pastor Fausto inspired his congregation, in the Tsotsil community of Carmen Grande, to dream of a multipurpose building to serve their community, and little by little they've been collecting funds to make this dream come true. They see the building as a place where youth can gather to play fútbol (soccer), where the community can gather for meetings, where pastors and leaders can be equipped to serve their churches, and so much more. There are so many ways of sharing the gospel, especially with youth, and we are encouraged by his willingness to get out of the box to do so.

But, there is always a but, he recently contacted us to ask us to pray for him because he was sick, and it seemed he had cancerous tumors in his lungs. We felt blessed that a relationship had been established and he felt enough trust to call us to share his difficulty. Later that week, he came to San Cristobal for an appointment to get approval to receive free medical attention at a hospital. And I had the opportunity to prepare a homemade Nicaraguan chicken soup for him and his family.

I was also blessed to pray and cry with his wife, Isabela. She doesn't speak much Spanish, but we prayed together, and she poured her heart in tears before God. Pastor Fausto told us that she had been very sad and hadn't been able to express that sadness because their family didn't quite understand the gravity of his diagnose, but she did.

As Pastor Fausto, his family and congregation journey through this trial, our family has been inspired and touched by their amazing faith and trust in God. They've prayed and fasted asking God to do His will. Pastor Fausto even searched deep within his heart and asked God to reveal to him if he needed to ask for forgiveness and be reconciled with someone. He followed God's lead and asked for forgiveness from people he thought he had hurt in the past.

Isn't it astonishing how God works? We thought we would encourage Pastor Fausto and his family but instead they've been an inspiration for us.

Psalm 91 is one of my favorite psalms, and now that I read it, I see their faces:

*Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."*

Thank you for joining us in prayer for Pastor Fausto and his family.

Thank you for your prayers and support as we serve and equip God's people in Chiapas.

With gratitude and love,

Denise & Juan (Juancito & Ziba, too)