

**JOURNALS** POSTED ON JUNE 19, 2019

## Trials in The Journey



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SUPPORT PLEDGED





*And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power forever and ever. Amen. **1 Peter 5:10-11 (NRSV)***

*We will never know from experience God's richest blessings of comfort and compassion toward others until we ourselves have had trials. **T.J. Bach***

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Early in May, my family was traveling to Puebla for CICEM's board meeting. When we reached a town called Córdoba in the state of Veracruz, I (Juan) felt dizzy and with nauseas. I could barely walk. We decided to call an ambulance. But before the ambulance arrived, I called a friend, who is a medical doctor, in San Cristobal and I told him my symptoms. "For what you're describing, you seem to have vertigo. Go to a hospital and have an ENT check you," he said. When the paramedics arrive, they confirmed I was having vertigo. They suggested that I go to a local hospital for treatment. At the hospital, I received treatment, but I wasn't feeling any better. On the contrary, when I opened my eyes, I saw everything around me spinning with more intensity. So, I kept my eyes closed.

I told the doctor at the emergency unit that I wanted an ENT to check me. The ENT arrived almost 3 hours later; after examining me for a few minutes she concluded I had a severe vertigo episode. "I can't let you go. You will need to stay at least 3 days so we can treat the symptoms," she said. That night they started IV medication and I had blood work done.

Denise, the kids, brother Mariano from the Teltal area, and pastor Pablo from the Tsotsil area - who were traveling with us - stayed at a local hotel that night. We were supposed to arrive that Friday night to

Puebla, so Denise called our missionary colleagues, Keith and Deb Myers, to let them know what was happening.

On Saturday morning, CICEM's board decided to cut short the meeting to support us. Noé Trujillo and Keith Myers came to the hospital. And later they took our kids and hermano Mariano and pastor Pablo to Puebla.

That same morning, I had further blood work done and an audiometry evaluation. Because I had never had anything similar, the ENT suspected it could be a first incidence of Meniere's disease. But the blood work and audiometry results were within normal range. She explained that it's not possible to diagnose Meniere's with a single episode. And that I needed to be monitored during a whole year to be certain if it was indeed Meniere's. She decided to order a CT Scan of my ears.

The CT Scan results were not encouraging. The results showed I have a condition call Superior Semicircular Canal Dehiscence Syndrome (SSCD). "It's a rare condition, which requires surgery to fix it. You need an otoneurologist to do further analysis," she explained. I was flabbergasted by the news. I wanted to cry but manage to hold it. I asked her what she suggested, what's the best place to find the specialist. "At the National Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery in Mexico City they have the expertise and technology to treat you," she said.

I was released from the Hospital 4 days later. Our friend Keith Myers drove us back to Chiapas.

In Chiapas, we've sought an ENT to follow up. He ordered a comprehensive audiology evaluation. The results showed that since the vertigo episode I've had hearing loss. He believes the CT Scan done at the Hospital were not the right ones to diagnose SSCD. He thinks it might be Meniere's disease.

I'm currently taking medication but still experiencing balance problems. I only started driving again three days ago. Being thousands of miles away from family and friends makes it a little more complicated. But we've experienced God's love and care through our Mission Partnership Team (MPT), our prayer network, friends from our children's school, and our Tsotsil and Tzeltal sisters and brothers.

God put in the hearts of two of our Tselal churches to raise a love offering for us. They called to let us know they had a gift for us. Denise and I were deeply moved as we know the challenges they face. We didn't want to take the gift. But we realize that it was God's way of showing He is with us. We needed to be humble and vulnerable.

The Lord's opened the door at the National Institute of Neurology and Neurosurgery in Mexico City and I had an initial appointment with the otoneurologist on June 4<sup>th</sup>. I will have further exams and another appointment on August 6th and 12th. We're praying that after the exams and appointments, we will have a certain diagnosis of what's wrong and how to deal with it.

We continue to be in communication with our partners but have paused all traveling so we can focus on recovering my health.

We invite you to join us in this part of the journey by lifting us up in prayer so the Lord brings to our path the right medical team that can properly diagnose and treat me and the peace in our minds and hearts that everything will be ok.

**We know that with this trial God is inviting us to a deeper trust.**

Thank you for your prayers and support.

With much gratitude and love,

**Juan & Denise**