

PARTNERS FOR PERU

BRIAN & MYCHELLE
GARRISON

APRIL, 2009

Renewing the MIND

This has been a very difficult letter to write, in more ways than one. In the past few weeks our world has been turned upside down. But, it all began nearly 9 months ago...

In July, 2008, I (*Brian*) woke up on a Sunday morning and realized something was not quite right. I was experiencing many symptoms of what I deemed a mini-stroke (trouble speaking and thinking, and processing conversation). However, it did not affect in any way my motor skills, so I did not worry that much about it, nor seek medical help...FIRST mistake. ☹

Within 2 weeks the complications seemed to diminish, but never completely went away. So, for the following months life went on, albeit not completely normal. I still dealt with such problems as short-term memory loss, an obvious decrease in my cognitive abilities, and extreme fatigue, inability to focus on daily tasks (among others). Not connecting all the dots and realizing that a bigger problem may exist, I never revealed any of my symptoms to anyone nor sought medical help. (SECOND mistake)

In February, when I forgot Mychelle's birthday (THIRD mistake) ☺, I decided it was time to tell her what I've been dealing with for months. That began a long process of doctors' visits, many tests, lots of prayers, and several anxious days awaiting a diagnosis.

Last month my neurologist told me that what I had back in July of last year was **encephalitis**. Briefly, encephalitis is a viral infection that attacks the brain, and then usually runs its course in less than two weeks. The patient is then left to deal with the results of the attack on the brain. Or, simply put, the prognosis is directly tied to the extent of the injury to the brain.

Immediately after one has encephalitis the recommended course of action is REST...lots and lots of REST (which I did not do). Because this results in an injury to the brain one must allow it the time it needs to fully recover. This is only accomplished through rest. Another step is to take some tests (which we cannot have done here in Peru) to determine the extent of the injury as well as the recovery progress.

Therefore, at the request of the Missions Director, Jon Konnerup, and through the counsel of our sending pastor, and others, we find it necessary to take an immediate Medical Furlough in order to get the rest and treatments necessary to provide for a complete recovery. We will definitely keep you posted on the progress. Please pray with us for a full recovery and that God will allow us to return to Peru as soon as possible!

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