



# GOD'S *Sustaining* HAND

**G**iovanny Ortiz was born in El Salvador and raised in a Christian home. As the son of a pastor, his first memories are riding in the back of his dad's pickup truck heading to church with his family. Growing up in a Christian home and having a pastor for a dad helped create the character he needed to walk in the same calling as his father.

Pastor Ortiz, his wife, Priscilla, and their son, Nicolas, are planting a church in Leesburg, where the Hispanic population has seen tremendous growth. The church plant, **Iglesia Bíblica Bautista Emanuel Leesburg** (IBBE Leesburg), is located in Northern Virginia, where COVID-19 infections have been among the highest in the entire state, especially among Latinos.

Being immunocompromised due to an underlying condition makes it even harder for Ortiz. Six-year-old Nicolas was born with a respiratory condition, so COVID-19 could be especially dangerous

for him too. Priscilla works on the front lines at the hospital treating people with COVID-19. To minimize their risk, the family decided to live separately for two months. Pastor Ortiz and Nicolas moved into their grandparents' home. "It was really hard for us as a family, and seeing my son crying and asking me why he couldn't kiss or hug mommy was even harder," said Pastor Ortiz. "A couple of weeks later, I lost my job. I felt bad, but this allowed me to do what I love full time, which is to preach the Gospel and help my community." He added, "Even though I was risking my life being among people with me being immunocompromised, this was the only thing that kept me going."

Financial stress came, but the Ortiz family continued seeking God's will for their family and ministry. The Lord used Pastor Jared Huntley of **Pillar Church DC** to bless the Ortiz family financially through the hardest moments. "I'm so grateful for him and his church and our partnership with SBCV," Pastor Ortiz shared.

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Doing ministry in this pandemic has been challenging for the Ortiz family, but they have seen God's hand sustaining them through it all. God is also at work in the church plant. Iglesia Bíblica Bautista Emanuel was able to reopen July 12, and Pastor Ortiz testified, "We are seeing new people come to Christ!" ■