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The
**BERREY
FAMILY**
Prayer Letter



March 2020 Update: Life in Lockdown

From Tim:

Dear praying friends,

Our planned end of the semester at BJMBC came to a screeching halt due to the coronavirus, but technology enabled us to finish the classroom teaching online, and today we completed our last day of the school year. A lockdown of Manila sent our students and thousands of others scampering to their various destinations before basic transportation shut down about a week ago.

Never have we felt more the truth of James' words that we will go here or there *if the Lord wills*.

We would appreciate your prayers for us as we travel, *Lord willing*, from the Philippines to Atlanta tomorrow, beginning Saturday, March 21, until Sunday morning, March 22.

Upon our arrival, *Lord willing*, at Tim's parents, we will self-quarantine for a couple of weeks or so.

And we hope, *Lord willing*, to see some of you while we are in the

USA, if not in person perhaps virtually (as online church services become a normality for a time).

Lord willing, this virus will pass, but we know also that God has a purpose for this time of testing. Habakkuk's prayer is apropos: *in wrath, remember mercy* (Habakkuk 3:2).

May God use and keep you!

--Tim

From Laura:

Dear Friends and Family,

The last few weeks have been a roller coaster ride for our family, church members, students, and co-workers. (Many of you are experiencing the same ride; you are just about a week behind us.)

First, our government shut down all mass gatherings and schools for all levels. This was done with almost no warning. One day we were on track for the end of the semester; that night we were scrambling for a way to finish the school year. We thank God for Dr. Joel Arnold, who spent most of that night setting up an online system for us, including virtual classrooms for each class. Hurriedly we sent student home to their families and provinces as we searched for a way to get our foreign students home to their countries.

Then, President Duterte, about a week ago, announced that all of Manila would be placed under a lockdown. Our tickets (which had routed us through China) had already been cancelled and refunded. So, thinking of our daughter's upcoming college situation and our furlough schedule, we bought a new set of tickets thinking that we would head to the States, get our two week quarantine out of the way, and be ready to start our

schedule on time. With everything shutting down in Manila for the foreseeable future, we felt it was God's will for us to head on toward the place where we could be most useful.

Then President Duterte, in an unexpected move, announced that all foreigners would have until Thursday (yesterday) to leave the country, after which all international travel would be banned. Our tickets, at this point, were for Saturday.

We didn't know whether to feel relieved or discouraged. By this point we were trying to help our short term and single missionaries find tickets so they could leave to go home. We looked at tickets for ourselves, but the price to change was higher than we felt God wanted us to pay. Also, classes ended on Friday. We prayed--hard--and made the decision to leave it in God's hands. By this time, it was also clear the US was starting lockdowns and soon would be in a similar situation to ours. What to do? Only our Father knows. We prayed. And decided just to stay.

Then, in another unexpected move, President Duterte reversed his decision, allowing international travel. Suddenly we still had a scheduled plane ride. I had delayed packing, unsure of what would happen. We quickly kicked into high gear.

Tomorrow we are supposed to leave Manila. This, frankly, is a real struggle for us. Our hearts are divided. Neither country holds the work we had planned to do. But we are confident that God has a plan for us and He will reveal it in His time. It isn't a good time to travel, but that is also in His hands. We don't know the future, but we know the One Who holds it in His hands.

It is encouraging to me to consider this truth: *God's will for our family (and for our world) hasn't changed; we just have new information.* Each day has brought remarkable, unprecedented,

unimaginable changes to our life plan. But none of that takes God by surprise. He has been planning this all along.

We petition you for your prayers as we adjust our lives to fit God's will. We want to be used by Him wherever we are... as you also want, I know. Please know that we are praying for many of you, as we hear news of shutdowns in your areas also. May God help us all to be a shining light in a dark world.

Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. As a world, we are standing still. May we see God's powerful hand at work.

--Laura

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