

News from the Morris family

November 2020

Dear Bill,

Three weeks ago, we shared how the Lord was working through our service since last June. Today, we're sharing about how we're dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. Time and time again, our projects have been suspended, changed or canceled. The times where things went well were sandwiched in between times of frustration, stress and doubt. We've had to be patient, reinforce our perseverance and pray for the Lord's help and protection. We even had to reorganize part of the house so that everyone would have the best possible working conditions.

Last September, Timothy was supposed to start his senior year at Rutgers University in New Jersey as an international exchange student. The pandemic changed all that. The summer months were full of doubt, a need for perseverance, and a ton of emails exchanged between himself, Rutgers, his university in Nanterre (outside of Paris), and the agency organizing his US study program. The uncertainty about if he could finally study at Rutgers was unending. In the beginning, it looked like he would study on campus at Rutgers. Then Rutgers decided that all classes would be online. But later, a bomb dropped – Rutgers canceled their entire exchange program!



It was like a wild roller coaster ride: emotional climbs to the top of hope – several possibilities that one or another class might be online – were followed by rapid descents into doubt and discouragement as each of those possibilities were squashed one after another.

Finally, and urgently as classes were about to start, he enrolled at Nanterre for the Fall semester. Sudden technical problems turned a simple procedure into a new nightmare. And then a new problem arose – as his dad is at high risk for Covid-19, he needed Nanterre's Psychology Department to grant an exception allowing him to study online from home. This was necessary for two reasons: one, otherwise he would not be allowed to visit his parents, and two, he no longer had housing in the Paris-area! The battle to obtain the exception was a hand-to-hand combat (through email) with the University's administration. When at last the exception was granted, he told us that "he had run out of perseverance a long time ago!" And so, in mid-September, he started his online classes at Nanterre.

Then came a reversal of fortune! Last month, when all hope was gone, Rutgers sent an email to say that there just might be a chance, after all, to study on campus in spring! But then, the other shoe dropped. A second email announced that Rutgers had finally backtracked on that decision. That all said, Rutgers said that next spring they would allow him to take their courses online without leaving France. But to do so meant having Nanterre's administration agree to the arrangement. Tim immediately sent off an email with Rutgers' proposition. And now we wait and pray, not knowing in which direction the roller coaster will move.

Pray for the Lord's intervention in this situation which has been hard on Timothy.



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So that Marie-Anne would be less exposed to the virus, she and we decided that she move away from Los Angeles county (which has been hit very hard by Covid-19). Early in the morning of August 1st, her plane arrived at the airport in Paris. After two negative PCR tests, and 12 days of quarantine, she moved back into her old bedroom.



On August 17th, she started her last three classes for her two Masters from Pepperdine University. Due to different time zones, two of her online classes were in the afternoon (our time). However, the third class was from 2:45 to 4:45 am! To make sure she didn't fall asleep during class, Timothy would get up at 2:30 am and stay with her the whole time. Once she turns in a few papers, she will at last graduate from Pepperdine. Then she plans on taking a well-deserved and needed break.

***Pray for both physical and emotional renewal during her break.
Pray too for the Lord's leading once when she starts looking for a job in the US.***

Last summer, Jonathan should have traveled to England for the "Shell Eco Marathon Europe", but it was canceled like so many other competitions. As his internship was also canceled, he came home for the summer. Having at last obtained a government-guaranteed student loan, he was able to buy a car. On September 1st he drove back to Nancy (northeastern France) to start his fifth and last year of studies. But once there, because of the virus's resurgence, most of his classes went online. And now with the current nation-wide lockdown, he finds himself very much alone in a small studio apartment.



In late February, he is supposed to start an end-of-studies internship. However, due to France's current serious economic situation, finding such an internship may be difficult.

Pray for the Lord to guide him and to open a door as he looks for an internship.

Valérie praises the Lord for Marie-Anne's safe return home as it was becoming more and more difficult to encourage her through our regular video conferences. She's just started leading a weekly Bible study with two sisters in Christ. They want to spiritually build one another up, share prayer requests and family news, and stay united in Him. The few times they've met have already been a blessing. Valérie is also busy overseeing the family needs and "outside affairs": grocery shopping, drugstore, dealing with car repairs, workers replacing the house's heating system and some plumbing, and anyone who rings the front doorbell. All this to keep Richard "sheltered and safe" from any possible source of contamination.

***Pray the Lord blesses her desire to be a source of encouragement to family,
friends, and those around us through her words and prayers.***



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For Richard, the pandemic imposed many changes in his personal life and ministry. From the first lockdown in spring through July, his doctors strongly advised against leaving the house unless absolutely necessary. The reason being that his immune system has almost no defenses against Covid-19. Only in August did he and the family get the green light to visit with a very small number of friends. And here we are now, back in a government-imposed lockdown. (Hopefully for only a few more weeks).

The nation-wide health crisis means no ministry trips until the global situation improves significantly. Last summer, having foreseen the current situation, we made plans for a small recording studio in one of the bedrooms. Now that everything is in place, we can make high-quality videos in English as well as in French for our YouTube channel, as well as train and advise churches and missionaries around the world.

In spite of all these difficult situations and set-backs, we have some good news. Two months ago, Richard's doctor ordered a special blood test. The results revealed an almost total absence of markers for polyarthritis. While the doctors have not yet officially said he's been healed, he can feel the difference in his body. The monthly immunoglobulin treatment for his immunodeficiency, though, is still necessary.

***We are grateful for your prayers for Richard's health.
Praise the Lord with us for his improved health!***

We cherish your prayers over the past months for family and service as well for the future. We pray that during these difficult times, you too are encouraged by the Lord's presence and work in your life.

Richard and Valérie



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