



Family Circus Children's Ministry Update  
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 by Darrell Blatchley - Missionary to Asia's Little Ones  
**"Davao Disaster 2011"**

Hello again, friends.



At 12:02 AM Wednesday morning we received a call and text from our Family Circus team members Oning and Nene **"WE NEED HELP PLS WE ARE TRAPPED IN A BIG FLOOD."** The river was rising over its banks and our friends--a husband and wife--were trapped as were some neighbors. Sandy and I, and the wife's brother, sister, and

nephew, rushed over with rope, lights, drinking water and willing hands. We have an SUV (Thank you Speed the Light!), and where so much traffic was flooded and stalled we managed to get within half a mile of their home. The rest was on foot in the dark. Within an hour, 30+ died, 25,000 families were impacted by the flood, and many have gone missing, most of them in the southern section of town surrounding where Oning & Nene live.

We've heard unofficial, alleged reports of officials releasing water from a small dam which generated some electricity (We also have heard that the government denies the dam exists!) about one hour prior to the flooding, due to threat of breakage from the heavy rain, which, if this is the case, caused the river to overflow. It even flooded through the inside of the NCCC Mall and the Jollibee restaurant near their place. The street had 3 - 4 feet of water rushing down it, and it was estimated that the speed of the water was 35 mph, with lots of debris. A rope was tied across the street which was used to get to the other side, and there was a rescue team with life preservers. Hundreds of people were driven out of their flooded homes and were spectators to the disaster that was happening. I told the two guys with me to look out for each other, to stick close and hang tightly onto the rope or else we would get swept into the ocean

a short distance away. I started leading our procession across, keeping an eye out for all kinds of items both submerged and floating. Halfway to the other side, looking behind me I noticed that they were still standing by the road watching! The water was strong and came close to knocking me down twice, but the rope made the difference. Once across, I had to chuckle--It felt like I was a character in a children's Christmas story.\*

It took my companions about 15 minutes to get enough nerve to follow, and they had forgotten the rope and additional lights we brought. Already the 911 team discovered I had the best light around, and they borrowed it while trying to rescue reported stranded children, leaving me in fairly dark watery conditions at that point up to about my waist in filthy water as close as I dared to get to our friends' location and the river without proper equipment and assistance. I could reach our friends via cell, but they had low battery, and I could hear the panic and tears as they and others were stranded, and the water was rising. The water rose so fast that they reported it reached about 8' high in their house and within 5 - 10 minutes. They had been flooded before but never that bad nor that quickly. They



had to fight panic--they knew they faced death. As they sat on the roof of their house a few feet above the water, they made sure that their family, including Oning's sister, was right with God if they were to meet Him that evening.

We, including the 911 team, were stopped about 300 yards short of reaching Oning and Nene's house and the other stranded people. I was trying to go on but the 911 team wisely advised that it would be too

dangerous so close to the flooded river and tangle of broken homes obstructing the access, and at that point the water depth had crested and was dropping. The 911 team had so little equipment: life jackets, small lights, and a small (about 1/4") nylon rope. To have gone all the way to help the stranded, they would have needed a boat. I heard that they had perhaps a couple of inflatable



rafts they were using elsewhere that night. We had a small dingy donated by Convoy of Hope, which would have been an excellent tool, but we regretted not

being prepared to use it as we had no oars nor adequate life jackets. God willing in the next two weeks we'll find some funds, and next time we'll be even better prepared. Disasters happen regularly out here, and we are here to help, with a vision to create a Family Circus "Disaster Response Center."

Long story short, the night passed and they are safe, though muddy and with much work to be done to make their home livable. Later, after getting back to the vehicle, I joked with Nene's relatives that I felt like \*Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer with spectators watching the lone white guy crossing the raging flood. We laughed about it and Enan (Nene's brother) asked, "How many times have you done something like that? I was so scared." It was quiet in the vehicle, and after a moment to reflect, I responded, "Over the years, we've done it many times. That's what we're here for."

Oning and Nene and many of our Family Circus families have lost almost everything they owned, yet they rejoice that they survived it with minimum injury. Many families this week in Davao are in mourning. It's been 48+ hours since the flood and our guys are out there trying to help them find and pick up the pieces. Sandy has been doing laundry for whatever clothes they can recover. We got them a cell phone with a charged battery, water to drink, and water to use for cleaning. Nene and Oning have helped us to help others so many times. Now it's our turn to help them.

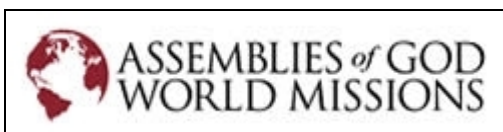
The guys just came back from the first trips out, describing Oning's house and area as being a muddy mess. The flooded creek carried so much from upstream and inundated everything, ripping apart houses, etc. The team just headed back for another trip with more help and items to make it more livable. As I walked through the devastated area our shoes sinking in the soft muddy paths, we rejoiced that more lives were not lost.

We'll be out canvassing other of our families in the area and assisting as possible distributing food, clothing, water filters, and other essentials as we are able.

The spirit of thankfulness is amazing in our Family Circus families who just lost all their personal belongings in the flood. As they wake up each morning thanking God that they and their family were spared. Poor? In possessions, "Yes!" Yet, 'Rich' in God & alive! In the midst of a community, where this week 30+ of their neighbors died and many more yet missing.

For the King & His kids,  
Darrell & Sandy Blatchley

PS If you want to help, either contact us for directions or send donations through the safe-link included below.



## **Darrell & Sandy Blatchley**

**Family Circus Children's Ministries**

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Click on the following link if you can help us financially in ministering to the King's Kids:

<http://www.familycircus.org/html/donations.html>

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- OR -

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