

Creekside Bible Church, Castle Rock, CO

From the Helm – Monday, May 26, 2008

The Colorado Team is scheduled to arrive in the wee hours of tomorrow morning. We've had a weekend of rain so there is still a substantial amount of exterior painting going on at the *AMOR/Beatriz*. I guess just getting her name painted back to the bow by departure time is a good enough goal for us today!

The chefs have been at market since 5 this morning. By 8 this evening, all the preparations should be said and done. Then, off to the fueling station for the 2-hour ordeal of taking on our 1,300 gallons of diesel, etc.

I expect this to be my last entry from land. The ETD for Lago Preto de Baixo is set for 03:00 in the morning. Of course, this is just "estimated".

God is good. He has kept all progressing nicely and has given me a peace that only He can bring in the midst of each days events. I have nothing but gratitude in my heart and soul for His providence in my life. It's amazing how He is faithful to continue to do for me what I can't do for myself. Thank You Lord for the privilege of watching you work. Thank You...

From the Helm – Wednesday, May 27, 2008

What an interesting deal today unfolded to be... Not only did the group arrive on time, but they flew through customs with only one bag being searched! All were onboard and ready for departure by 2:00 AM.

When we cranked the *Beatriz* to set sail, the drama of the day began... The engine made an unhealthy "clacking" noise and proceeded to blow 10 gallons of lubricant out the exhaust, into the river. All was silent for a moment. Carlinho, perplexed, replaced the oil and proceeded to blow 5 more gallons before deciding we had more than just simple situation going on.

We were on the phone trying to wake slumbering mechanics until dawn – no luck. Finally, by Noon, it was determined that the heads might be compromised. By midnight, after the heads were removed and taken to the shop, the problem has been identified to be in the cams and pistons...

All through the day, the group has been fantastic, patient and tolerant of the delays. They have eaten, slept, visited, eaten and slept, etc. Their spirit is sweet. God has given *me* a calm and persistent dependence that only He can provide – He has been faithful, as expected.

I made a multitude of “awareness” calls back home and have rested in the fact that whatever the day brought, event by event, is exactly what the Lord had planned all along.

We made our preparations and plans with the wisdom and information at our disposal. We acted prudently and efficiently. We have been good stewards. The plan has changed, not of our own making. So, Lord, it’s all yours. Wisdom to proceed must come from You – I will but follow as you lead...

It is now 4 AM, Wednesday the 28th. I am waiting for a reasonable hour to arrive to begin my search for a replacement vessel for the trip and see where it leads. The group will go on a tour of the city as we plunge into this new day of challenge and opportunity. I am “right-sized” and ready. The outcome will be sweet and right. I look forward to watching as God provides...

From the Helm – Thursday, May 29, 2008

07:00 AM - I have never found myself in this particular situation. We left Manaus under tow, by the *AMOR/Lori*, at 3:00 PM, yesterday. The mechanics were onboard and began the breakdown of our main engine. They worked till after midnight. When I awoke this morning at 5, the news was delivered to me that the lower end of the engine had to have a complete overhaul. So it is...

I ordered us to anchor below Itacoatiara. This is the point of no return for repair resources. I have dispatched my commander and Pedro to search out possibilities in the city. I have called the Elders of the Colorado Team together and asked for them to seek wisdom from God, individually. I have made all the decisions I will make based on the knowledge I have. Now, I will wait on wisdom from above. As James tells us, Wisdom is the one thing that, when sought with pure motives, God will give freely and abundantly – I rest on this promise. I will await His guidance...

I appreciate the prayers of the many back in the USA and here in Brasil. I am grateful for what will come to pass this day. God is faithful.

From the Helm – Friday, May 30, 2008

Got up at 2:30 this morning. Been negotiating a few flue-like symptoms. Should be good to go in a little bit. Pedro called from Manaus late yesterday and said the overhaul of the crankshaft, etc, should be completed by early this morning. They, of course, will head back here immediately.

After analyzing all the mechanic’s projection, hopes and dreams, I estimate that by this afternoon, we should be underway, under our own power for the first time this trip.. That is my prayer. In the meantime, I am waiting for the day to dawn. There *must be* a community nearby that needs a little help and hope. We will go explore.

After lunch, yesterday, The *AMOR/Lori* shuttled the group up to Itacoatiara to shop, look around, and stretch their legs a bit. A little diversion... The team is a blessing to me. There has not been a cross word throughout this entire "re-program". The devotionals have been uplifting. Beautiful people, indeed...

I appreciate all the continued prayers and emails of encouragement – they have had a calming effect on me. The peace that comes with the knowledge of intercessory prayer going on is indescribable – so, I won't try. I look forward to the day ahead. I rest in the fact that God is doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Through these trials, our inabilities magnify God's provision. It's all different but it's all good... I'll try to send another mail out when I actually hear the engine crank!

From the Helm - May 31, 2008

5:00 PM - Under way at last!!! God is Faithful!!!!!!!!!!!!

From the Helm - Saturday, May 31, 2008

In the morning and afternoon of yesterday, our team went out in the secondary vessels to see what they could see. It was a tremendous experience for them! They were able to witness to a number of people, two of which accepted Christ as master of their life. That's a good enough reason for me for all the delays in our trip thus far.

The mechanics and parts arrived yesterday at 2:30 PM. We've been up all night putting the pieces back together (actually, I've been watching..). It is now 4:00 AM and we are very near completion. Within the hour we should set sail for Lago Preto de Baixo.

As I look at the past several days, it has become clear that all these changes in plans were not changes at all. Our original plan, however good it may have seemed at the moment, simply wasn't what God had in mind. This makes it all the more exciting to get up each morning, knowing that after due diligence and good since has been exercised, God is sovereign regarding His will and ways. He doesn't ask us to figure anything out or engage in guess-work. He simply asks us to lean on His understanding and move forward in His provision as He provides. What a deal...

There have been lessons learned by each member of our team through all of this – as many as there are individuals among us. For me, it has been an affirmation of what I feel in my heart and soul. An affirmation that I need but totally depend, at all times, in however God's ways are revealed to me. I need not worry about the "whys" of events as long as I have done the next thing in front of me, as He has shown, with gratitude for being allowed to participate in it at all. The more tedious the situation, the more grace and comfort He provides. I thank you Lord for it all...

8:30 AM – Well, so much for setting sail in “an hour”.....

One of the injectors that went to rehab came back cracked. Simultaneously with this event, our main generator blew a circuit board. The appropriate calls have been made and we have teams working both in Manaus and Itacoatiara to rectify the problems.

The team is fully aware of our situation. They have gathered together to pray for relief. Our spirits are high. We wait on the next step in this adventure. Everyone’s continued prayers are very much appreciated at this time...

From the Helm – Sunday, June 01, 2008

11:30 AM – We just plowed through a series of “tapagems” (floating grass blockages) as I write this. Beautiful, tight canal. Damage assessment to the AMOR/Beatiz’s extremities will be taken upon clearing into Lower Black Lake. There is usually something. If it were easy, convenient and risk-free to reach these isolated areas, many would probably feel the “called” to come and share. The reality is, neither is the case...

Beautiful cruise last night under our own power for the first time in 4 ½ days. Sweet indeed. The mechanics and electrician left for land and we were underway at 5 PM, yesterday of the coast of Itacoatiara. All systems aboard seem to be functioning well – Thank You, Lord.

We arrived and anchored with Pastor Renaldo’s vessel (AMOR/Blough) along side at 1:30 this morning.

I am having a little trouble getting out on the sat phone for now. Maybe some wires crossed in the limbs! We’ll work on it this afternoon.

We are about to have lunch and go to shore for the remainder of the day. How beautiful it all is. All is well. Awesome indeed to finally be here...

From the Helm – Tuesday, June 03, 2008

Set up and finished out the day in Sao Raimundo yesterday. This a bit larger community than Bacabal (about 350). The people here are receptive and appreciative of what we bring them. I was able to pick up some other varied fruits for the kitchen: avocados, papaya, etc.

Dental had a tough time in the afternoon. Terry is a good and compassionate man. The teeth seem more solidly rooted around here. Bless his heart...

The service at the end of the afternoon was very well attended. A total of 4 made professions – good way to end *any* day out here.

All teams on location at 8 this morning. No gator hunting last night – winds were up and unsafe for our smaller craft. All slept well in the A/C. All are well rested.

Terry asked if I would take a chair with him today. I did so, of course. It was a good time of fellowship as we numbed and plucked. I had decided to shut us down at 11:15 when I saw an elderly man sitting off to the side, waiting. I felt compelled to seat him in my chair and take a look. Ended up cleaning out his uppers – total of 13 extractions. When I was finishing with the sutures, his wife walked up and thanked me. She told me the old man is Edno's Uncle – wow, what a small world we live in. His name is Lazarus. I look forward to visiting with Edno next week about this gentle old man. Should be some good history involved.

We were packed up and underway to Vila Manaus at 1 this afternoon. It was 3 by the time we docked and secured our lines. Oh, we have about 140 feet *less* anchor line as of this afternoon. Evidently, someone figured they needed it more than we did and took it off our hands while we were ashore! Oh, well. At least they left the anchor and marker behind for us...

- Arrived in docked at Vila Manaus at 3:00 PM. VBS went ahead and corralled the children (better than a hundred in about 10 minutes!) and played some games. Medical attended to 20 or 30 just to help out those who had more pressing needs. Dental and construction just hung out and enjoyed the children and some soccer.

At the close of the afternoon, we had a service. A solitary little lady made a profession of Faith. This lady turned out to be Pastor Ronaldo's Aunt! He didn't even know she was anywhere around. This is a beautiful thing for me to witness. Sweet, sweet thing.

We are at anchor for the night. It has been a busy day. It has been a good day. I have much to share about the significance of the public professions of faith that have taken place in the three villages over the past few days. It is exciting and humbling. Awesome significance to Ronaldo's ministry, the Team and the Kingdom. I look forward to a time of reflection and meditation on these things. I feel nothing but gratitude for it all.

From the Helm – Wednesday, June 4, 2008

The Beatriz was slower coming alive this morning. The Team is feeling the physical wear on the days. Spirits are high. A wonderful group of folks.

All teams on location by 7:30 AM. Vila Manaus is a big place. At least 1,000 inhabitants – most with some physical need or other. Medical and dental worked non-stop all day up until time for this afternoons services. Construction pitched in all around with other activities. There was no building need that stood out more than the rest in this place.

VBS does and did a beautiful work with the children. Pictures were taken, printed and delivered; games were played and Bible stories were told. Only God knows the eternal

impact of sharing with the children. I feel certain it is far-reaching. This is an area of ministry that I spend the least time observing but feel the most drawn to by its necessity and benefit to the communities. If we did nothing else at all, we would minister to the children and their mothers. They are of priority in my heart and soul.

From the Helm – Thursday, June 05, 2008

It is 10:30 AM. After a couple of hours of cutting our way out of the lakes, we said our goodbyes to the Turners as they sailed toward Santarem. We are now at cruise speed, headed westward, upstream toward Manaus. All are well. All are healthy. A time for rest.

Yesterday, our last day on location, ended with Pastor Ronaldo and his family coming upstairs to visit with the group. It was a special time for me, personally. I have learned through these days with him that he has very special challenges in the Region of Lower Black Lakes – unique challenges. He is expressly forbidden to share the Gospel in *any* public venue throughout the Lakes. He may not formally preach *anywhere*. He is limited to personal, private invitations to visit in homes. This is slow and tedious but God is blessing richly – I never doubted He would.

As the result of the Teams coming in, Ronaldo has gained access to individual families. Decisions for Christ have been made. Home Bible studies have begun. Over a 4 year period, we have come from people throwing rocks at the *AMOR/Blough* and the Pastor, to our Teams opening the doors through following as God leads.

Many have questioned over the years why so much time, money and human resources have been and are being spent to bring Groups to the Valley. The answer has been made *even clearer* to me these past days. Our teams are the catalysts by which God has chosen to open hardened hearts to His Precious, Saving Grace - His Gospel Message. My God doesn't need any of us or any effort we could possibly put forth. He has simply chosen to allow us to participate in His awesome plan. That's the way it is. That's *more* than good enough for me.

I become overwhelmed with gratitude and peace when I realize, daily, how blessed I am to be a part of all of these happenings. I take nothing for granted. I seek no hidden meaning in what I see. I contemplate no lofty ideals. I seek not my own way in things. I am awed at His ways. I rest in His security and provision. Thank You Lord. Thank You for it all...