

# **“From The Helm”**

## **Boyd Walker**

### **Middleburg**

*Monday, August 13, 2007*

The preparations for the Middleburg Group have gone smoothly. It is 4:00 PM and we are fueling the AMOR/Beatriz and the secondary vessels. We are ready to set sail...

I called the 1st Baptist Church in Maues to advise them of our coming. I was met with the news that they have had a number of problems internally over the past year. They have not been back to Limao and Limaozinho since we left last August. When Teresa told me this, my heart was first angered, and then settled into determination and excitement as to what God will do over the next days. Whatever He does, will be good indeed.

Many of the local convention churches here in the Amazon have long frustrated me with their seeming lack of collective concern for the un-reached. Most have comfortably settled in to care for themselves; developing “programs” to look busy; ignoring their surroundings as much as possible. I make this comment understanding how easily we look to our own needs. I also make this comment as a means of looking inwardly to make sure I keep myself in right thinking...

This is why we do what we do. This is why Middleburg is coming; to share where no one else has cared to share. I thank God for their willingness. For their desire to minister and plant seeds as and where God leads.

I have invited Pastors’ Edno (Lago Preto Area) and Moises (Satere India Nation) to join us on the trip. Moises is already awaiting us on location. I will dispatch the AMOR T&T to pick up Edno early Wednesday morning. I look forward to seeing these men again so soon.

Over the next week, I look forward to seeing God lead and work as He has all year. The days will come and go just as He has them planned. I look forward to watching it all unfold before us. So glad to be a small part of it all...

*Tuesday, August 14, 2007*

The team arrived pretty much on schedule. Everyone came through immigration and customs quickly – only one lost bag... Hopefully, it will catch up to us in Maues Wednesday afternoon.

It was great seeing Eugene, Ray and Charlene come through the doors! They are the “familiar” faces I’ve been looking forward to. Tory (the MK that traveled with us last year from Boa Vista) was at the airport picking up a separate group. It was good to see him again as well. His people will minister up the Solimoes for the week. I wish them well.

By 2:30 AM, we were underway. ETA for Maues is set for 10 o’clock tonight.

It is 11:30 and lunch is being served. The morning has been spent resting and visiting. We have a good group of people onboard. It will be nice watching how this all becomes family over the next days on the river.

*Wednesday, August 15, 2007*

We arrived in Maues in the late night and anchored offshore. A generous storm hit at 2:30 AM with wind and rain. It is sure good to have the A/C upstairs for when the tarps are down...

At 6 this morning, I called Teresa and by 8 o’clock, she and Pastor Moises were onboard and we were underway.

Teresa is a single missionary in her late 40’s. We sat on the bow of the Beatriz as we cruised. She has been frustrated for a long time about her church’s’ lack of vision for missions. She spoke at length about how she has had to sit because her church would not commit to the work in the interior. She spoke and I listened.

Finally, I asked her what in the world did her church’s’ lack of vision have to do with her going or sitting? What did her church’s’ lack of vision have to do with her not doing what she felt in her heart she ought to be doing? She is a good lady. I look forward to witnessing what God is doing in her life. I think she is beginning to realize she need be dependant only on what the Lord has for her. All else leads to frustration and futility. For me, the quickest way to get sick of mind and soul is to sit and wait on somebody else to join me in doing something that I know I should be doing myself whether anybody joins me or not. As long as I’m waiting on someone else, the deal doesn’t work for me at all...

We arrived at Menino Deus (Child God) at 9 this morning. I remembered the place as it came into sight. I remember sharing with Eugene in the bottom of a two story house at the far side of the village. I remembered the entire family accepting Christ in that place – sweet memory indeed.

When we went ashore, we were received warmly by all. They remembered us as well.

Clinic and dental were steady all day. VBS had two lively sessions in the pavilion. Evangelism divided in to 3 teams and took off in the AMOR's "T&T", "Dan Shipley" and "Phillip". By days' end, it had been a full, first day on location. A good day in every way.

The service tonight was held under the street light in front of the village. The children sang and Russ brought the message. He preached on "eternal life". It was good to listen. It was good see the crowds listen as well. At the end, several of the local leaders got up and spoke. This is a village that seems to have been changed in the last year. God's presence has that effect on things. I'm glad God showed us to stop here today. I'm thankful He's made me a part of today's events.

All are well. All are tired. Several are out gator hunting. I'll catch up with the "hunt" results in the morning. For now, my hammock calls for me...

*Thursday, August 16, 2007*

Well, today was just one of those days I was glad to have been alive for but equally glad to be done with. All went well. Just a bit higher difficulty factor in a few areas – particularly dental. No such thing as a "simple extraction" today...

We arrived in Sao Sebastiao early this morning. The village was familiar to me. I remembered it, somewhat, from last year. It was hot and poor – poor in spirit. The people seemed sad and stoic. All we could do was help them with their needs.

The evangelism teams were out and about all day. They visited just about every village in the Limaozinho area. The reports they brought back were positive. Ray, Eugene and Russ seem happy with the results they are getting with the "cube".

This evening we once again had a service on land. Practically every one from the village came to listen. There were no public decisions but the spirit was sweet. As the day progressed and we ministered, I witnessed the heart of the community melting. By the end of the service, several came forward to give thanks to God and the team for coming and helping them – for meeting both their physical and spiritual needs. The testimonies were moving for me.

The words of gratitude were just a reminder to me that Christ is proclaimed, many times, more through our actions than by our words. As we move along in our day, doing the next right thing on behalf of another, the reason we have come and done becomes obvious to those around us. Many times, we need not shout it from the mountaintops when it is obvious we are the fiber from which the mountain is made. Loving and sharing by the touch of our hand is the greatest witness we can bare.

It is getting late. We had a good time of sharing here on the Beatriz after the service. Tomorrow will be here soon. We are all doing well. I am grateful for the day and all that God chose to show me. I look forward to what He has for us tomorrow.

*Friday, August 17, 2007*

The day started early. Our team slept comfortably in the A/C – it is a blessing to have the option.

It was determined at share time last night that one of the evangelism teams would do a little construction project at one of the villages (Perpetual Soccoro). They are fixing the stairs that lead to the river. I was glad to see this type of involvement. The entire community will be benefited by the new stairs as well as the witness of those who are building it. A good example of living I John 3:17-18. I like it very much...

Pastor Moises left for Maues, once again, this morning to collect the bag that went missing when the group arrived in Manaus. It will probably be another “all-day” deal waiting for the flight then the paperwork. I guess it will be good to get whatever is in the suitcase that we have done perfectly well without up till now...

We arrived at Vila Batista at 9 o'clock. They were not expecting us so it took a few minutes to get things organized. It is a quiet, clean village. Come to find out that the Baptist church here has been abandoned for some time now. We are within spitting distance of Maues yet, the visits are few and far between. The people are hungry for comradery and Christian fellowship. I guess that's why God allowed us to be here.

The day's work was tiring. The construction project was finished. The only casualty was Ray's skinned finger! At least he'll have a scar for a story someday! The evangelism teams were out in force this afternoon. Several villages visited; a number of decisions for Christ. VBS had two good sessions as well. Many more children here than yesterday in Sao Sebastiao. Medical was steady, as usual. Dental had the privilege of not having a single patient over the age on 11!! Wow, I am beat...

The service this evening was led by Teresa and Edno. Interesting thing happened. There was a young missionary from Parintins at the service. While I sat and visited with him we found we knew several people in common. As we further spoke, he shared that he was about to move to a big lake a good long way from here to take care of the work there. The name of the lake is Maumuru. Well, the church he is going to take care of was started by an AMOR group back in 1991!

What a small world it is we live in. Praise God it works this way. I thank God He is sending this young man to encourage Maumuru.

By popular vote, the A/C will not be turned on this evening! “Ok” by me. It might be nice to see the stars out for a change. This is the land of the most beautiful night skies in the world. I love sleeping where I can roll over in my hammock and see the stars when I want to – something definitely anesthetizing about it. How fortunate I truly am to be able to witness it throughout the year. It is all good indeed.