

From the Helm

1st Baptist Orlando **June 15-25, 2006**

Tuesday, June 13, 2006

I've been up since 1:00 this morning. I just couldn't stay asleep. God has been so good about providing funds as they are needed for the trips. I just can't see how it is all going to work out in the end. I already owe a huge fuel bill and it seems like it will role this way until the end of the season. I'm going to need a bail-out for the first time in 4 years...

I sold a trip to a young man working with the IMB and the Florida Baptist Convention for August 14 – 22. I am doing the trip at cost with the intention of building a ministry relationship with the IMB missionaries once again. I look forward to it very much. We will be traveling to Maues and the immediate surroundings with evangelism teams. I know that area well and will spy it out even more intensely with the Orlando group this week.

A big blessing occurred today. A couple, who are very dear friends of AMOR and our family, donated the funds for a new Jon Boat and motor. I am going to order it today. It will be 6 meters long and have a 40 hp Yamaha 2-stroke outboard. It is set to be delivered around the 23rd of this month. You know, we could really use this US\$ 9,000.00 for bailing the trips out this year. However, this couple wants to give a boat. Evidently God has other means in mind for the bail-out...

- I have enjoyed having the boys and Dad with me these past few days. We have done a lot of running around shopping for the boat, etc. Poor Matthew accidentally threw his retainer in the trash at McDonalds at lunch today. We sifted through some of the most disgusting garbage I have ever seen before finally finding it. I have been hard on Matthew since we arrived from the Walnut Street trip. When it was just he and I on the Veloz, everything was perfect. Now that William and Phillip are around too, I think Matthew just misses the attention. So, he gets a little silly and rowdy. I really need to be more patient with him. He is such a fabulous child – I don't want to harp on him every time I turn around. I need to overlook most of what he does... Help me Lord, ok?

- The day is going to be short. Brasil plays its first game this afternoon. So, the entire country will shut down at Noon. I have to buy the boat, a shower head for my cabin, some sound equipment for the Beatriz and a hammock for Dad to take back to Cida. I also need to mail a couple of packages to Minas. Big, short day...

Wednesday, June 14, 2006

Today was bitter sweet. We took Dad to the airport and got him headed back to the USA. Even though he needs to be home with Mom and near to some decent medical care, I would love for him to be here with me as well. From the time teams left until yesterday, we did a lot together (all 5 of us and Anderson in a car the size of a matchbox!). The most significant thing that happened was our visit to the cemetery to see Winston's grave. I believe that it gave Dad the closure that he has needed to put everything to rest. It was hard for me to be there. After making all the arrangements and visiting the grave twice, I had told myself that I wouldn't go again. Winston is not there. So, I don't care to see it anymore. However, I know that it will fall to me the task of taking his children out to see their daddy's grave at sometime in the future...

- By 6 PM, all the purchases were onboard and the Beatriz is fueled and ready to travel. Now, we just wait for Orlando's arrival.

Thursday, June 15, 2006

Took a good nap last night. Got up at 11 PM and hauled William and Phillip to the airport to meet the team. Uncle Tommy and Aunt Tubby came out at about 1:00 this morning. When the flight was scheduled to land (1:35 AM) TAM announced the flight was delayed – 4:00 AM...

So, we waited and waited. I couldn't get comfortable or I would have taken another nap. The flight finally landed right on time (3:50 AM...).

The team took forever to come out. Jim and Jim finally appeared at around 5:30. The team has lost 3 of their bags. It seems that most every passenger on the flight lost at least one suitcase. It just took forever to get all the claims paperwork filled out.

We finally got the Beatriz at 6:15. After paying a big chunk of bills, we were underway at 7:00 sharp. ETA for Maues is set for 9 tomorrow morning.

- I stayed up as long as I could then lay down. Took a two hour nap till lunch was served. We stopped at Wellington's house at 1:00 PM. It was great seeing him. Gave him and "Jr." some things Dad had sent. Had a good visit and a strong cup of coffee. He is hurting financially to the point of no income due to the high water situation. He can't milk his cows for cheese and his sheep and calves are under attack by the caiman and jaguar. I feel badly for him. I gave him US\$ 400.00 and some burnt oil. He will be ok for awhile. The water should start receding soon...

- The Beatriz is not making very good time. She is heavy with freight, luggage and supplies. It has been at least 10 years since I remember traveling this heavy. At least our load will lighten every hour that passes during the days ahead!

It is 4 in the afternoon. I am just waiting for dinner to be served so that I may lie down for the night. I am tired. Lord, I am ready for the blessings You have in store. We are

actually going in “blind”, unannounced this time. I am excited about the possibilities. Lord, please keep us all safe and healthy...

Friday, June 16, 2006

It is 4:17 AM and we just passed Maues. We are making good time. I said all along that we would be in Maues by 3-4. John and the rest of the crew swore up and down it would be 9-10. I just know my “Beatriz” and the rivers better than they do I guess.

Our ETA for Vila Esperanca is set for 7:45 AM. I look forward to seeing Tuisa Everisto and his clan. Best I can figure is that we will be engaging in some rather simple conversation while sipping on sapo in just a few hours. Everisto doesn't speak very good Portuguese and I speak just enough Satere-Maue to ask for more sapo – so, we just have a good time laughing and nodding our heads a lot as if we understand each other's every word. Lord only knows what all we promise each other during these unintelligible exchanges...

- It is 5:00 AM and William is up and having coffee with me. He is an early riser on these trips just like me. My boys are true leaders. I am proud of them. William and Phillip raised the bar to incredible levels over the past several weeks. I am extremely proud of them. The only thing lacking now is a little more physical age – on the inside they are in their twenties. To the world, they are still young teenagers. It happened to me this way, too. It was frustrating for me and I'm sure it is the same for them. When you grow up way before your years, sometimes the world has to catch up with you before it will finally listen...

- We arrived in Esperanca at 10:00AM. No sign of Pr. Moises. Word has it that he is over on the Andira side. We will just go on with our trip and hope he shows up. I just wanted to help him and encourage him in his ministry. God's plan may be a little different though.

The Jim's and I went up to see Everisto as soon as the Beatriz was at anchor. I was shocked and saddened to find my dear friend sitting in a chair with tears in his eyes. Everisto had a stroke soon after we left last year that affected the right side of his body. His mobility is severely hampered and his speech is badly slurred. I could hardly understand him as it was. Now it is next to impossible. I am told he is doing better now than when he actually had the stroke. So, maybe he will continue to improve.

With the changes in Tuisa's health, he passed on the position of Tuchaua to his youngest son. I remember him to be a fine young man. I trust the good tradition his father started will continue.

Another bit of shocking news is that Grand Tuchaua Antonio was bit by a snake on Monday and is now in grave condition in Maues. The dynamics of the Satere's is surely changing... I felt last year that Antonio was very close to making a decision to accept

Christ. I hope and pray, Lord, You will give him another chance to hear and accept your Gospel message...

- The day went well for the team. After lunch, we got everyone set up and on location. We all worked at a nice slow pace – good way to begin. Everyone seems to be feeling well and in good spirits.

The service this evening was packed with villagers and guests. The Health Department is holding a seminar on the health care of women and children. So, most of the health agents from all of the aldeias are here – 50 in all. We sang and sang and then they sang and sang. Then I spoke a little bit and then they sang and sang again! It was a good time but, right now I'm ready for bed.

Saturday, June 17, 2006

Coffee was taken to me by my hammock at 4 this morning. It reminded me of when Winston was here. He always did this for me. I miss him...

Got the boys up at 5. They were insistent on it, so I did it. They want to be awake before the crowd – this is a good and healthy habit. All three of them worked hard yesterday. Matthew is getting a bit too silly for my taste – I will just have to see how far it goes. He let the girls on the boat “corn row” his hair yesterday. He looks like a midget Bo Derek in the movie “10”. This little guy needs to get a grip on things and I trust he does it soon. I would really hate to have to step in and clip his wings. Lord, give me patience please.

Today has every indication of being a long and busy one. I need to go over to Nazarre and get permission for us to work and make sure that the Beatriz can make it in to port. This is an area that we have wanted to minister to for some years now. Maybe it will be our next stop late tonight or early in the morning. Just have to see how it goes.

- After getting all teams on location and turning over the “reins” to William and Hardman, we set off for Nazarre.

Jim, Matthew, Big John, the Captain of Esperanca and I set out at 8:30 sharp. We had to stop in Vila Nova for permission to go further up the Marau River. While we were visiting with the Tuchaua, it became clear that he wanted us to work in Vila Nova as well. So, to be able to work in Nazarre, we had to commit to 2 days here – no problem. It's just the way things are up here. Everyone is in need. Everyone just wants a little of our time. Thank You Lord for the blessings of a good name. It will work out ok due to the fact that Jimbo informed me that we have an extra 2 days out here. They don't have to be back in Manaus until the 25th to leave on the 26th. That is great for the ministry. I'll just have 2 more days of payroll and operations for the trip. God will provide... (I know I say that a lot but it has necessarily become my motto this year...)

As we cruised, the river became small, winding and filled with overhanging trees. The Beatriz will have many challenges as she makes this trek. By the time we arrived in

Nazarre, the decision was made that the movements of the Beatriz needed to be during daylight hours. So, as soon as we had met with the Tuchaua and were granted permission, we headed back to collect our group in Esperanca for an early departure.

The trip home took is an hour and twenty minutes. I am “guestimating” that it will be 5 hours in the Beatriz...

- The departure from Esperanca was different this time. I felt sad. I realized that God could take any of us Home and any time He chooses. I further realize that this may be one of the few times I have left to see my friend, Everisto, in this life. He is a good man and I know he has given his heart to Christ – this is a great comfort to me as I leave this place...

- The cruising began at 3:30 this afternoon. We made good time the first hour. Then, the Beatriz slowed to a mere idle. Three hours in to the trip, the Amor/Phillip was tending the Beatriz though the curves – the channel got really tight for us. We finally stopped at our goal (a large village about 2 hours from Nazarre). Mission accomplished for the day! One of the bright spots for me is I only felt one small “bump” to the prop. It didn’t feel like more than a US\$ 200.00 chunk to me – just part of it...

I am worn out. It is only 7:30 but I think the day is done for me anyway.

Sunday, June 18, 2006

Awakened with hot, hammock-side coffee at 4 AM. Jimbo was up less than a half hour later along with William and Phillip. The boys got Shmango out of her cage and talked to her for awhile. She is only a couple of months old but is already trying to talk. She is a cool bird – gonna be beautiful someday.

- Underway at 5:30 toward Nazarre. I trust the Holy Spirit will move mightily and visibly in this aldea. I trust our team members will realize how fortunate they are to have access to this remote area and people. Nazarre is the futherest aldea that a vessel of any size at all can reach, and this, only when the water is at its highest level. I look forward to the day ahead.

The cruise was all I expected it to be. The sights were beautiful and the drama, spectacular. We had to have both Jon’s in the water tending the Beatriz. One worked just ahead of us clearing the overhanging limbs and the other turned us. Big John got stung multiple times by the wasps in the trees. Other than him, there were no other casualties.

- All teams were on location by 7:45 this morning. The people here are simple, humble. I was given a necklace and ring by one of the villagers – these people don’t seem to be nearly as materialistic as their brothers down river. This is a refreshing place. I feel God’s presence here.

- The construction team built an outhouse for Tuisa Miguel; VBS had a great time, as usual; medical was steady and my little crew pulled about 35 teeth. All in all, a productive day considering the fact that we had to shut down from Noon to 2 this afternoon for the Brasil/Australia game! We whipped them 2x0!!

- The service this evening was “classic Satere” style. The TV was blaring in the same building as we were meeting. The Tuisa was 40 minutes late and we were all tired. The Holy Spirit moved as we had asked anyway! Diorlando preached the simple John 3:16 Gospel message and 3 adults came forward accepting Christ as their Savior. What a tremendous blessing for us all to see. We were pretty much seeing our presence here as “tilling” the soil – not really even planting for the Lord yet. God had other plans. Now, where there was none, there are 3 brothers in Christ. Thank You Lord for allowing us to see this take place for Your honor and Glory...

Monday, June 19, 2006

It's 4:15 AM and we should be underway to Vila Nova within the hour. Yesterday was Father's Day back in the USA. I got double treatment this year. My boys were with me a few weeks ago on the Brazilian Father's Day and again yesterday! Not too many fathers get that kind of privilege.

We are about to get underway to Vila Nova. I have a couple of side trips to make along the way. The Tuchauas from a couple of the villages we passed to get here have asked for an audience with me. They want us to bring groups to their villages. There is a lot of work to be done here on the Marau side. I pray the Lord will provide the human and material resources need to make it happen. I will commit to nothing today with these men other than the promise to “try” and come back. The Lord will have to do the rest.

- Not long after stopping at Nova Aldea to visit with Tuchaua Alenkar, we came upon a very familiar looking canoe off in the distance. It was Pastor Moises and his family! What a beautiful sight!

The reason he had not met us in Esperanca is that all the radios are down up in the Santa Maria area. He had no idea we were in the area. He finally got word from the health agent from there that had returned from the meeting in Esperanca. He packed his family up and started out after us. He has been traveling since 3 this morning.

It was a good reunion. As I spoke and sat and listened to him, I felt very guilty that I have virtually abandoned him over this past year. He has had to work very hard just to stay alive and perform the ministry God has called him to. I resolved in my heart and mind that he will be taken care of from now on – he will receive the support he needs to preach the Gospel full-time. He has proven himself a dedicated minister of God's precious Gospel.

- As we past Boas Novas, a nauseated feeling rippled through my body and soul. Tuchaua Kazuza was standing out on the banks of the river with children all around him.

Our plans changed right that moment. We pulled as close to shore as we were able and shuttled in the teams for 3 hours of ministry to this beautiful man and his people. Kazuza is the reason we are here – he was the Tuchaua Geral of the Nation when we were originally invited to work here. He is a close brother in Christ. At the end of our time on shore, he took a necklace off his neck and placed it around mine – a gift that I will cherish...

Pastor Justo, with the Baptist Convention, was at the village as well. I had the opportunity to pin him to the wall about his work (or lack there of). He is too smooth a talker for my taste. But, being one myself, I saw right through him and determined I want nothing else to do with him. He just sits here and occasionally travels to the Andira side to teach a bible study. He is not reaching out to his people here. Over the past year, he has not visited even the villages within an hours' boat ride from his home base – repulsive misuse of human and financial resources. Another thing I came to find out is that Justo has been asked to leave the area by Tuchaua Antonio. Evidently, the Tuchaua saw through the smoke screen as well...

- Finally arrived in Vila Nova and were all on location by 3 this afternoon. Didn't get much done but we've honored our commitment. I told Tuchaua Joaquin that we will only be here through tomorrow evening after church. He had to agree. So, we will do all we can tomorrow and then move on to the sticks after church.

Construction will build two bathrooms and measure an area where new pipe needs to be laid. I think we will just send the pipe and water tanks to these people and let them install everything themselves.

Had a good service. No decisions but, had a pretty good turnout. The Tuchaua was 45 minutes late – these guys need to wear a watch... Moises preached in Satere from John 8:1-12. Surprisingly, I understood most of his sermon. I recall that last year, I was able to understand most of what he preached as well – very interesting indeed...

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

It is 4:15 AM, once again. I look forward to the day. I look forward to visiting with Moises. I look forward to what God has for me and the team. Thank You Lord for this new day of life. The group is in good health and spirits – the day is going to be blessed.

- The Beatriz will be awakening soon. The group is slower and slower to rouse. It is the time in the trip that all systems slow to the right pace. It is interesting though that Nassar's teams are extremely flexible and tend to get the job done without the stress of being "task oriented". It is how it should be.

- Tuisa Joaquin started early with his requests for water towers, etc. I believe what we will do in this case is purchase the materials and drop them off here for the people to install themselves. We will have satisfied their request and rid ourselves of the need for returning here every trip we make to the Nation.

- The team is doing quite well. We have 2-3 with what seems to be a simple sore throat and some allergies (sneezing). It is causing some unnecessary paranoia about “getting sick” but, I trust that will all settle down.

- As I was walking down the hill for lunch, the Captain from Esperanca showed up and said Everisto was swollen and itching and requested my attention ASAP! Well, Jimbo and I had some lunch and headed out to see what the deal was. When we got there, the poor little man did indeed look like a cute blowfish. I had anticipated that it was an allergic reaction to something he ate and packed some antihistamine just in case. So, I gave it to him, bought some more necklaces and a sack of farinha for the crew back on the boat, then, we were headed back to the Beatriz. The underlying reason Everisto called for me though was just to have a little more time to visit. He is a sweet man – the trip was worth the effort for sure...

- The service was great this evening. Moises preached again and the Tuisa, Capataz and Teacher all spoke words of gratitude. It was moving to hear the simplicity of their hearts and words. The Teacher gave a lengthy and passionate speech to his people about their past perception of “strangers” like us; how they had been taken advantage of and abused in the past. Then, he contrasted that view with our team and the good that we represented; the spiritual and physical help that we bring; the non-political nature of our calling. It was an amazing dissertation. The team was lifted up by the leadership to the highest level of respect and honor. Lord, You are responsible for it all. You have laid the groundwork. Thank You for all that is happening in this nation this trip.

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

Slept at the “sticks” last night. It is 5:18 AM and we just got underway to Santa Maria. We will have a good 4 hour cruise to our destination. Maybe during this time, Jimbo and I can get this “sick bay” stuff worked out. It seems really silly to me that everybody is walking around on eggshells.

- The boys are up with me this morning. It’s great having them here. I need to call their mother at some point soon just to touch base. I want to know how Mom and Dad are doing as well.

Arrived in Santa Maria at 9:30 AM. Along the way, Jim, William and I went to visit the little community where Moises lives. There are only 5 families here but it is all are Christians and the aldeia is destined to grow. I bought tapioca, sweet potatoes and farinha from them and we went to meet up with the Beatriz again.

All teams were set up and set up to operate by 11 this morning. We didn’t actually begin work until after lunch. Productive day even though we have 9 down with the “bug”. This little bug is different from the others this year. It attacks a little differently. What we have attempted to do is hit everyone with Cipro as the symptoms occur. This has

helped in some cases and has had little effect on others. I trust everyone will be worked through it by tomorrow.

At the service this evening I made a little speech about Santa Maria's response to the help we have been bringing via the teams over the past years. I made it clear that I was disappointed at the way they listen well and line up all day for medical and dental. Then, at the evening service, they sit around talking and carrying on while the message is being preached. I told them that were not just here to help them with their physical needs. Mostly, we are here to share the Good News with them! I have determined in m mind that I will not return to any village that does not at least pay attention to the Word of God as we present it...

Thursday, June 22, 2006

It is 3:20 in the morning and I am up and my mind is rambling. I need to call Waldemar, Tubby and my baby today. We are going to be 2 days late and nobody knows about it. It will be good to be underway this evening after the service. I look forward to the day but the team is ready to at least begin the long ride home.

I slept well but with the "reconfiguration" of the sleeping arrangements for the sick, I was hanging right over a young lady (Kristine) sleeping on a mattress. Little Ruby was so freaked out by the ordeal on deck # 2, she ended up sleeping in the cabin downstairs with my boys. She got the top bunk and all three of my dudes were scrunched up on the bottom bunk. I think it is a noble thing they did...

- This final day will *not* be bitter-sweet. I have a hospital visit to make in Maues and much to do in Manaus this weekend. I look forward to the blessings of the day but also look forward to the homeward movement, no matter how many days it takes to get there...

- All teams were on location early and most of the sick are now up and slowly gaining speed – Praise God. The day was slow but steady. VBS had a huge crowd of over 200! Dental just stopped because we had to.

When the afternoon came, medical shut down at 2:30 – Brasil played Japan... Dental was the only medical station that remained open. We worked and we worked. Ended up with 36 teeth then tended to several medical patients that had come in very late from down-stream. Finally ended the day doing surgery on a couple of snake bites.

We went straight to the church service at 7:15 this evening. I was exhausted – wasn't in exactly the best of moods either. The Lord has just now adjusted my attitude as I lay here in my hammock ready for a sleep coma to come down on me... I'm just tired.

Saturday, June 24, 2006

About the time I was falling asleep last night we stopped and dropped off all the remaining building materials and roofing at Pastor Moises' house. He will be able to cover the new church building they've started there. He was overwhelmed by it all.

Another thing happened yesterday that overwhelmed me as well. Jimbo came up to me and said that Orlando was going to assume full responsibility for Moises' financial support – US\$ 400.00 per month! Praise You Lord! Jimbo is a dear friend and probably the individual on this earth that best understands why I love the work that I do. His heart is deeply embedded in the Valley. I love him dearly and respect his unfaltering dedication.

Moises has been working with a great deal of difficulty over this past year. He has had no income whatsoever other than his crops and carpentry work. Yet, he has started 2 new works and begun construction of a pole barn to boot. He is worthy of this support.

We made a stop just after the “sticks” to pick up the measurements for pipe work in Aldea Mikilis. This village is just across the Marau River from Esperanca. We hope to do this project (among several others) in 2007.

- Arrived in Maues at 1:00 PM. The group went out shopping while we fueled and checked the prop before the 30-hour trek homeward. We are in no real hurry; we are all in good health and spirits; I spoke with Uncle Tommy and Aunt Tubby and Cida; we are ready to cruise.

Sunday, June 25, 2006

This has been a unique one to the Satere's. We have never seen so many public decisions for Christ as we did this time. This is the first time we've taken a group to the last navigable point on the River Marau (Nazarre) and when we got there, two *new* villages came were brought to our attention.

We have much to do here in the Nation. On the Urupadi side, two new villages await our future teams as well. I don't know exactly where all these villages came from. They have been here all along. I have just not *seen* them – my eyes were closed for some reason...

Jimbo and I will be praying and talking about the future of our ministry together in this area. We both feel that we need to be more consistently present – maybe more trips with fewer participants. We will just have to see what God has in mind and follow as He leads.

This has been one of the most unified groups we've had over the years. There has been no discord, bad attitudes or conflict with onboard authority. Plus, I received my first photo album from a trip, ever! Becky spent countless hours preparing one for me back in Orlando – it is beautiful. I will cherish it...

Well, it is Sunday morning and we are anchored in Janauari Landia waiting for the day to begin. Thank You Lord for your provision, protection and Divine providence. I love You and thank You for Your Faithfulness...