

# **From The Helm**

**Boyd Walker**

**Team Murray, KY**

From the Helm - Tuesday May 22

It is 2 PM. We are cruising at a good clip, two hours west of Itacoatiara. We have been making “baby step” progress all day long, moving forward at a less-than-anticipated pace.

The team from Murray arrived on-time at 12:30 AM. Customs checked every last action packer and ultimately confiscated all anesthetic, ointments, and eyeglasses. This hasn't happened in a long time. Now we know what these guys are serious about - we will abide fully in the future. We have all we need and will use it as God directs.

The final construction and preparation days on the Beatriz and for the trip were peaceful beyond the norm. I am grateful for this. Today, however, found exception to the serenity. We have been crippled by mechanical failure for the past 18 hours. Hour large generator has blown a starter and the main engine reduction gear has a serious hydraulic leak. I made the decision to press on so we could make headway on our 36+ hour trek to our location on the Upper Trombetas River. The AMOR/Dan Shipley struck out in search of a mechanic and parts. Mission accomplished and we are now underway toward Oriximina - ETA is set for tomorrow, early afternoon.

I look forward to the days ahead with Dad and Matthew, my youngest, on-board. Special sensations of completeness for me in the mighty Valley - blood and family have a calming effect on me. Not quite describable with words, so I won't try further.

The sat phone that I so anxiously awaited is working beautifully. Sent a few e-mails and answered a couple as well. Incredible too. Thank You Lord for your provision..

Boyd

1. Wednesday, May 23, 2007

It is four in the morning - Parintins is insight. I estimate we are 8-10 hours from Oriximina.

What a beautiful night of smooth sailing. Sleep was deep and restful. The Beatriz is performing admirably. The mechanics yesterday were able to make her new in a matter of an hour or so. The high-pitched whistle of her turbine tells me she is fit. The big generator is alive and well once again, with a new alternator and starter.

Had a good devotional with Richard Walker leading last night. He is easy to listen to. Told of the Grace of God illustrated with the characteristics and traits of the Amazon

River. God's grace is far-reaching, all-encompassing and dependable. It was a good, easy evening.

– Arrived in Oriximina at 1:30 this afternoon. Was able to have a board meeting of our affiliate mission here. Much accomplished while the group shopped around. Everyone is well and in good spirits. It is good to see several father/child couples onboard. I remember how grand it was to travel these rivers with my own father – the memories mean a great deal to me even today.

– We are now underway to our ministry location. We will stop in the night and pick up Pastor Braginha to take us the rest of the way to Cachoeira Porteira. We all look forward to what God has to show us in the next days.

#### 1. Thursday, May 24, 2007

Arrived in Aboim at 6:30 this morning. We have traveled a full 48 hours, including stops and repairs, to get here. We will be here through the day, today. After the services this evening, we plan to move on to Cachoeira Porteira for ministry there. The construction crew took off at 8:00 this morning to access the church building construction.

When we picked up Pastor Braginha last night, he told me that he did not plan for us to visit Cachoeira Porteira because he didn't have any believers there. For me, that was the only indication needed for us to go there indeed. It is the right thing to do.

Clinic, VBS and dental was steady all day. Medical treated everything from parasites to snakebite. Everyone is in good health. All are in tune with God's leading. It has been a good first day on location...

– The work day ended at 4:30 with pretty much everyone being treated and VBS having two successful sessions! The construction crew arrived at 5:00 telling tales of a beautiful land beyond the rapids. I look forward to seeing it for myself tomorrow and will try to get as many of the group as possible up as well. The logistics of transporting large numbers through the rapids is a bit tedious but will be a blessing for all who are able to go.

Services are in an hour or so after which we will have a surprise birthday party onboard for Keith Miller – It should be a relaxing, 4 hour cruise to Cachoeira Porteira. I look forward to the moving of the Holy Spirit this evening as we share with the people of Aboim the reason we are here.

#### 1. Friday, May 25, 2007

We arrived at Cachoeira Porteira at 1:00 this morning. The current is so strong up here that the Beatriz barely inched along in places. This is reminiscent of my travels on the Negro River. There, the Beatriz would come to near standstills as we shot the rapids near the Venezuelan border. Funny how I don't seek out such experiences as I did when I was younger...

It is nearing daybreak. I am getting my first glimpses of the village. The day and ministry will soon begin.

Construction went off to the building site around 7 AM. I took a boat up a little later with Dad and Wendell. What a fabulous place. The beauty of the swift river, rapids and greenery was breathtaking to me. The building is all but covered and, by day's end, will be partially sided and floored. Our team has worked overtime.

Clinic and VBS were very steady. Cachoeira Porteira has a population of 700-800. All are in need and it seemed that each and every person here was in one of our lines to be helped in some way! The Wai-Wai Indians also came down out of the reservation to be treated. It has been a complete and full day.

A little bit ago, we had a closing service where mostly children and young people attended. Several children not only raised their hand accepting Christ but also came forward for prayer. A moving end to a well worked day...

We are now headed down-stream to Tapagem where we will spend the day tomorrow in service. Tapagem is a dear community to me. I look forward to seeing how things have been since I was last there, four years ago. Thank You, Lord for the opportunities You've given us this day... Thank You for the health, attitude and flexibility of our team. Thank You.

1. Saturday, May 26, 2007

Anchored off Tapagem this morning. We are under a gentle rain as dawn approaches. It will continue throughout the day. Cooler for work.

– The day has gone exceedingly well. There are a great number of people who gather in this community from other nearby communities. Crowds have been attentive to the Gospel message but few have made public professions of faith over the years. I rest in the fact that all occurs in God's timing.

The team remains in good health. Construction took the day to rest but ended up fixing many things on the Beatriz and on shore. They also enjoyed the opportunity for many of them to see other areas of ministry.

My crew changed out our prop this afternoon. It is quite a task. When we finally tested the thing, it is off balance just enough to vibrate immensely! So, they will change it out again in the morning...

I kinda left Grant to himself in dental. He did just fine. Just takes doing a thing to get comfortable with it. I'm proud for him – God has equipped him for the task. Medical and pharmacy was able to wrap things up by mid-afternoon. Just as well. These ladies sit tirelessly, patient after patient. God's Spirit is apparent to me in their lives...

VBS had a "barn full"! It was tiring just watching the team as they ran around, sang and played all day long. I am glad God calls different folks for different activities! Energy to the max is the key ingredient in keeping up with the armies of children.

We are having dinner in a few minutes. We all look forward to the service tonight, and later, the cruise to Jamari. Thank You Lord for yet another day in Your Grace.

1. Sunday, May 27, 2007

Last evening, the service was well attended. The house was full. The Lord moved an adult man to make a public profession of faith – great to see the first of what will be many, come to know the Lord...

When the sun came up this morning, the village of Juquiri Grande was on the horizon. This is a community that has resisted the preaching of the Gospel for many years. Braginha has never preached here – the leadership is hardened.

We had planned to treat patients and hold VBS in this location. The well we were to dig, would be over in a Christian community by the name of Jamari. Dwain, Dad and I cruised over to check out the Jamari location this morning early. Soon, we came to the unanimous decision to drill the well at Juquiri Grande instead. We will put in a water system at Jamari in the future.

The crowds were good in all areas of ministry. Dental and medical were as busy as VBS. Much to our “delight”, Angela and the VBS crew gave out whistles and kazoos, first thing this morning! There was a joyful noise all around, all day long...

The construction team, turned well drilling engineers, worked diligently drilling. By days end, they had reached 55 feet. The goal is another 30 feet in the morning. Even though we have drilled many wells over the years, I had never personally accompanied the procedure. This time, Dwain has walked me through the process, step-by-step. I am excited about being involved. Our equipment is in great shape – we should focus more pointedly on this area of ministry in the future. It is an activity that yields tremendous physical benefit and cost relatively little. What a gift to these people of the Valley.

Speaking of water, our treatment plant onboard is working beautifully! I have found myself turning on the fawsets and flushing toilets on the boat, just to smell the chlorine! It smells so clean and sanitary! This is great...

A couple of our team sat the day out due to unrelated little illnesses. Exhaustion is probably the common factor. By days' end, everyone is up and at it once again. God has allowed this to be healthy, cheerful and flexible group. The sense of family is alive and well aboard the Beatriz.

The service this evening was refreshing. Many came forward asking for prayer. Nina gave a moving testimony. I translated, in reverse, for Pastor Braginha. The Lord was surely present amongst us.

It is 11:30 PM and the “Gator Hunters” just arrived back from the hunt. WOW! Dwain's boat scored a caimun over 10 feet long, weighing several hundred pounds! They took it alive. By the time the men wenched it to the bow of the Beatriz, took dozens of pictures and finally release her, she was definitely annoyed. What a deal! Dwain just wanted to let Terry Ellis know that he (Dwain Bell) was now the defending champ of the AMOR Caiman Hunters! The challenge goes on...

1. Monday, May 28, 2007

We are now cruising at a slightly reduced rpm due to the same little mechanical problems that have been plaguing us from the start. We have now lost one of our generators for the duration of the trip. The turbo unit is still running at an elevated temperature. But, we are cruising along just fine, headed homeward.

Our final day on location was blessed. VBS finished the morning session; Medical had treated everyone who came and was bagged out to the boat by 10:30; Dental pulled till Noon.

About the time that all other teams were shutting down, the new well pumped its first water!! What a thrill it always is to see such a sight. It never gets old. We are all grateful to be a small part of it all.

We had a closing service of greetings and gratitude to the four communities to whom we ministered and to God for allowing us the privilege of the opportunity. The villagers have been open and accepting of the gospel here. Up till 24 hours ago, this had never happened before. You know, it is a privilege within a privilege for me to come to these cold, hard places and watch as the Holy Spirit melts resistance away through the simple touch of a hand and a genuine smile that comes up from within. God does what no man, left to him, could ever do.

It is truly awesome for me to contemplate how God chooses to work in this world. In all His power, authority, sovereignty and wisdom, He will touch the heart of man only through the prayers and actions of His people. If we do not do and go as He leads, what He has planned for us as individuals will, most times, simply not get done at all... This is a humbling call for me – a call to be quiet and attentive to what He would have me to do or say in my next breath. If I am faithful in this, He never fails to make clear the next step. When He makes clear the next step, others are necessarily moved and edified as I walk along. Pretty simple deal – it's just how it works...

All are well onboard. The three that were under the weather yesterday are good to go. Spirits and attitudes are just right. I look forward to the 48 hour cruise to home port, Manaus. I thank all who have prayed and remembered us during these days. The task is done. These good and faithful servants are on their way home.

1. Thursday, May 30, 2007

Yesterday was a day of gentle cruising. The weather has been mild. Lots of sitting, resting, card playing and dominoes.

This morning around 4:40, a storm was brewing out of the south. This is a wind direction that isn't exactly "favorable". So, we tied off and let it blow over.

We are still traveling at a slower pace than desired, changing our ETA, Manaus, to late this evening. The group came to the consensus that we will forfeit the Tropical Hotel and cruise on in on the Beatriz. I made arrangements to have a bus in Itacoatiara if the group had wanted to arrive in the early afternoon – those plans were discarded.

So, here we cruise. We are approximately 16 hours from Manaus and all are content healthy and relaxed.

The devotionals onboard have been on Prayer. Richard has been anointed as he has shared. I am grateful to have been able to listen in. It seems the group has benefited as well.

It has been a privilege to have hosted the Murray team. It has been the "maiden voyage" for the New Beatriz. The kinks are being ironed out as gently as possible. The team has been a good sport, for sure...

With this entry, I will sign off for the trip. We all thank you for keeping check as the trip progressed and praying for us each day. Remember to keep AMOR and the other teams this season in your thoughts and prayers.

"From The Helm" will pick up with a new joint venture for Christ on June 5th upon the arrival of Walnut Street Baptist from Louisville, KY. Until then, May God richly bless, guide and keep you.