

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

As I sit here and write these lines to you I find it is impossible for me to express with mere words all the miraculous things the Lord did on our trip into the Amazon jungle. Words alone do not come close to expressing the gratitude that I feel towards all those in the Body of Christ that made this trip possible. All I know is that, rich blessings are in store for all of those that heeded the voice of the Spirit and helped to make this trip a reality. I will try to keep this letter as short as possible, but there are so many things I want to tell you. I beg for your endurance and patience.

Many were the obstacles in our way, both physical and spiritual, on this trip. But the Lord demolished all of them and blew every door wide open. When Dad and I embarked on this trip, the scope of our mission was limited to a small region of the Amazon that we felt would take many years (if not the rest of our lives) to complete the service of the Lord in that area. But our plan was just a small percentage of what the Lord had in store for us. In order for you to understand the magnitude of what the Lord is doing, it is once again necessary for us to travel into the past.

In 1984, Dad and I boarded a plane headed for Georgetown, Guyana (South America). Through the leading of the Spirit, the Lord had shown us that we were to begin a work with a tribe of Amazon Indians called the Wai Wai's that lived in the jungles of Guyana. We knew that Guyana at the time was under communist rule and that they would not let us just go in and preach the gospel to this tribe. We had a very simple plan. Fly in as close a possible to where the tribe lived and walk through the jungle for about two weeks to get to their village. We felt that if we could just get into the jungle we would be very hard to find and we would be safe from the communist government of Guyana. We never made it to the jungle. We were arrested in Letham, Guyana, and sent by airplane, in handcuffs with guns to our heads, back to Georgetown, where we would have faced certain prison and possible death. But the Lord used the pilot of the plane that was transporting us to help us escape on the first plane out of the country. We did not know where that plane was headed when we boarded it, we just knew it was somewhere in a different country.

The plane landed in Boa Vista, a city in the territory of Roraima in north central Brazil, South America. We found a hotel to spend the night in and took lodging there. Dad and I were both very confused. On one hand we were rejoicing that Lord had delivered us out of the hand of the enemy and at the same time distraught because we were not able to complete the mission that we had felt so strongly the Lord wanted us to do. Later on that same evening we were walking towards the front of the hotel we were in, refreshed after having had some decent food to eat and a good shower. We noticed a map of Brazil on the wall of the hotel. As we studied this map, that showed literally thousands of tributaries to the massive Amazon River, one river kept drawing our attention. It was not a large river; in fact it is so small that it only shows up on the most detailed maps of the Amazon. Its name was, Jatapu. We also noticed on the map that there was a road running from Boa Vista to the East Coast of Brazil, and that that road traversed the headwaters of the Jatapu River. Seeing that there was no possible way for us to complete the mission in Guyana, we decided that we would try to start a new mission in the Amazon jungles of Brazil. After all, we were already there, and why not at least have a look around? We decided that we would go to see this river called the Jatapu that seemed to jump out at us as we studied the map. I was only 14 years old at the time and had been very shaken by what had happened to me in Guyana. I began to notice how under developed this Amazon region was. As we walked to the bus station the next morning I began to reason that it would be almost impossible for us to know when we crossed the Jatapu river, as there would almost certainly not be any kind of sign indicating its name. Furthermore, we would cross many rivers before we got to it. So I asked Dad, "How will we know the Jatapu when we get to it?" His answer was, "I don't know, we will just have to trust the Lord". When we arrived at the bus station, I walked out to where to buses were arriving while Dad bought our tickets. A bus pulled into the slip where I was standing, and as the destination plate rolled over my eyes just about popped out of my head, for there was none other than the name of the river we had picked off of that map, "JATAPU". I ran in to tell Dad, and we met half way for he was running to tell me that when he went to purchase the tickets, he found out that the road we had seen on the map was only a projected road and was not complete. At this time it ended at none other than the Jatapu River. We both praised the Lord for showing us that we were still in His will.

If you have ever been raccoon hunting with dogs, you would know that the dog might on occasion lose the trail of the raccoon. When this happens the dogs will run around in circles and not bark. It almost looks as if the dog is confused or lost. But sooner or later he will find the scent of the raccoon again and will let out a long howl and take off like a bullet on the trail of the raccoon. It was like that for me when the name Jatapu rolled over on that bus. We had felt like we had lost the trail when we had to escape from Guyana, and we were running around in confused circles. But when we saw that the Lord had showed us the exact river, out of thousands of rivers, where the road ended, off of a map that we had never looked at before, all confusion was gone and our direction was certain.

When we arrived at the Jatapu River we were once again to face trials and obstacles. After talking to the locals we found out that there was not a single known Indian tribe in the whole area. Still encouraged by the sign the Lord had given us, we built a jungle hut a few miles down the Jatapu from where the road was. Three months later Mom joined us, and we lived there for yet another three months, during which time a question kept arising in our minds, "Why are we out here in the

jungle where there our no Indians or anybody to win for Christ?" Little did we know that hundreds of miles away through the Amazon jungle, a man we did not know and had never heard of was on his knees crying out to the Lord.

Through tear filled eyes a man on his knees prayed, "My Father that is in the sky, I want to go and find the people that have not been seen, to tell them about Your Son Jesus that died for them to take away all their badness. But I am alone and no one wants to help me. I must travel many days through the jungle to reach the area you have shown me. There will be no food there for my family. We will be hungry. Who will give us food? We will need presents to give to the unseen people when we find them. Where will the presents come from? My Father that is in the sky, who will You send to help me? I do not know. But I will go. Because of Your Son Jesus I pray this. Amen."

Who was this man who was praying for the Lord to send someone to help him? Where was this man planning to go? Who would the Lord send to help him and where would they come from? Little did this man know that six months before he prayed this prayer, two men, one 42 and the other 14, boarded a plane for the Amazon jungle. They had suffered arrest at the hands of a communist government, had escaped to a different country where they ended up out in the middle of the jungle in an area where they really could see no reason for being there, other than the fact the Lord had shown them this area off of a map. Who was the man who prayed? His name was, Elka, Chief of the Wai Wai Nation. Where was he planning to go that was many days through the jungle? The Jatapu River. Who did God send to help him? Larry and Vaughn Goff all the way from the United States of America. The Lord truly is wonderful! It reminds me of the verse in the bible, Matthew 6:8 "The Lord knows what your needs are before you even ask" (paraphrased).

Dad and I arrived on the Jatapu 3 months before Elka and his family set out for the Jatapu region. They set up camp on the Jatapuzine River approximately 10 miles through the jungle from where Dad and I had built our house. It would still be 2 months before we would meet and we met at a very critical time for the survival of Elka and his tribe. If it had not been for the Lord bringing us to the Jatapu area months in advance, in order for us to be able to build and establish a base camp for support, Elka would have most certainly have had to give up and return to his village to escape starvation. Then the Jatapu mission would have never existed.

It is overwhelmingly obvious that the Lord had intended all along for us to work with the Wai Wai's to reach the uncontacted tribes of the Jatapu region. But was that God's whole plan? In my first newsletter I explained how the Lord had prevented me from returning to the Jatapu for many years. It had been hard for me because I had seen the hand of the Lord move so mightily to show us this area, and I could not understand the reason why He would not want me to continue the work there. Then after many years I felt the Lord release me to return to the Jatapu. What would I find when I got there? Would the tribe receive me after having been gone for so long? Had the spirit of evangelism completely died out after the Lord had taken Elka home? These questions resounded constantly in my mind.

Dad and I arrived back in the Wai Wai village on the Jatapuzine River late in the afternoon on February 21st, after four long hard days of traveling by planes, buses, trucks and dugout canoes. We spent several days there fellowshiping with the Body of Christ and renewing old bonds. We had the privilege of giving out a case of brand new Bibles in the Portuguese language to those of the Wai Wai that could read Portuguese. We also gave several cases of knives and machetes to those that needed them (we purchased these out in Manaus City) along with hooks, line and some clothes we had brought from the United States. When we got down to the last case of knives, the pastors of the church asked if it would be alright if they could save the last case. They wanted to keep it to use for gifts to put out as presents for uncontacted tribes they were planning to go look for. It touched my heart to see them so willing to selflessly give away something so precious to them. A knife to an Indian is absolutely the most important thing they can own. It is essential for their survival and therefore is cherished above all else. A knife to a Wai Wai is like a car to an American. The pastors told us that they had been praying very hard for God to send someone to help them in their effort to contact the unseen people (this is how the Wai Wai's refer to the uncontacted tribes). The pastors thanked the Lord for sending us to them as an answer to their prayers.

In 1984 there were no known Indian villages in the Jatapu region. There are now three main villages and several small base camps. We visited one of the other main villages called "Cacual". Cacual was started by Kurunao, the eldest son of Elka, as a forward base from which to launch excursions deep into the area that Dad, Victor (my brother), my Mom and myself spent 6 years exploring and had several encounters with uncontacted tribes. The minute we stepped foot on the riverbank at Cacual we could feel a very strong presence of the Lord. When we looked into Kurunao's eyes and heard him speak we could see the same desire and spirit for evangelism that we had seen in his father, Elka's eyes. We spent two glorious days of rejoicing and fellowshiping with Kurunao and his village. One of the peak points of this time was when Rachel, Elka's daughter stood up during the church service and with tears told the story of how she had seen her father spend days on his knees praying the prayer that I quoted earlier on in this letter. She also told this to those that had not known us. She said, "When we were hungry, they gave us food. When we were sick, they gave us medicine. They helped us to learn how to work

with the Brazilian community so we could live better lives. If it were not for these men of God, we would not be here today. I know that God sent them as an answer to my father's prayer."

Dear brothers and sisters there are moments in our lives when we are overwhelmed with joy, and this was one of those times for us. There is so much that the Lord did on this trip that there is no way I could write it all in one letter. What I have written is only a fraction of what happened on this trip and does not even mention what the Lord has opened the door to happen in the future. I will give a quick summery of some of the things.

At one point in our trip I turned to Dad and said, "Dad I have this strong feeling that the Lord has much bigger plans in store for the Jatapu mission then what we are now seeing." The very next day in Manaus City, as we went to drink coffee early in the morning at the hotel in which we were staying, my words were to come true! At the table sat a little girl who I could tell was of Indian origin, but her mother was Brazilian. As we talked I found out that the mother was a bible translator working with YWAM and she had adopted this little girl from the tribe she was working with. When I told her what our mission was, she was almost speechless. Then she told me about two uncontacted tribes in her region that she had a deep desire to contact but did not know how to go about it. She told of how she had been earnestly praying for God to help her to find a way to encourage her tribe to go and make contact with these tribes. I invited her to bring some of the Christians from the tribe she was working with over to the Jatapu to be trained by the Wai Wai's on how to contact Stone Age Tribes. She was overjoyed at the offer and almost could not believe what the Lord was doing at that moment in time.

Here is another thing the Lord is doing. In the past year there have been at least two (possibly more) tribes that have been discovered by the Atroari tribe on their massive reservation, which is very close to the Jatapu. Reports are that one of the tribes is a tribe of pygmies, which is unheard of in the Amazon. The Atroari's are not Christians and are a very feared tribe, which have killed many people in the past and continue to do so. Access to their reservation is strictly controlled and forbidden by the government of Brazil and anyone that manages to get in illegally is usually killed by the Atroari's themselves. There is one Atroari that is a Christian though (Shikinyo is his name) and believe it or not, he is married to a Wai Wai girl! A rainstorm forced Dad and I to take shelter in an abandoned hut on our return trip up the Jatapu River. Shikinyo and his wife also were forced to take shelter in the same hut. We all spent the night in that hut and that night the Lord began to show us a plan to reach the Atroari's with the gospel. Since no one is allowed on their reservation the only way to reach them is to get them to come off of it. That night we began to formulate a plan to draw some of the Atroari off of their reservation to the Jatapu and win them to the Lord there. Shikinyo is the key to the success of this mission as he is the one we will send to invite them to the Jatapu. If the Atroari's can be won to the Lord then it would open the door for works with the other tribes that have been discovered within the borders of their reservation.

It is needless to say that it appears that the work of the Jatapu mission may soon become the heart of an outreach effort to the entire Amazon basin. Just the doors that the Lord has opened on this trip alone are beyond what we could have imagined when we boarded the plane on February 17th. There is much work to be done in the meantime. We already have an excursion trip planned for December of this year to locate a lost tribe in the Jatapu area. We have discovered a very large hill that is over 2000 feet above tree level. We plan to establish a long-term look out on top of this hill with a high-powered telescope. From this vantage point we should be able to scope a radius of 50 miles or more for campfire smoke from Indian villages.

We are also planning to rebuild the Jatapu base camp. Our current plans include building two structures, a house for us to live in while we are there and a large round house, which will serve as a multi-use structure for housing large groups and holding training and prayer meetings in. We will also hold festivals there and we also plan to invite the Atroari to attend. Many of the fruit trees we planted are still standing and we in are the process of getting the land cleared and prepared for the building to begin sometime towards the end of this year.

There is a great deal of work to be done and it will take all of your prayers and support to bring this to fruition. We cannot tell you how much we appreciate everything that all of you have done and just want you to know that you are all an essential part of this ministry. We cannot do this without you; this is your ministry just as much as it is ours. May God richly bless you for your faithfulness. We love and appreciate you all and pray also for you and yours.

On the front lines for Jesus,

Vaughn, Irene, Esther, Ephraim and Benjamin Goff

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On the Jatapu River is a Dugout Canoe



Larry with Fehma Wai Wai at his summer camp.



Pushing boats up through rapids.



What lies Beneath? Deadly Amazon Sting Rays



Fowa (Elka's only sister) & Macharuay



Jatupizine "Umana" (Large round house, used for large church meetings and celebrations).



Elishani (Irene's Niece) holding her cousin Melissa



Ahmuri (Elka's wife) with eldest son Kurunao (Chief of Cacual Village), holding her grandson.