

HOWe THINGS ARE...

September 2004

Hello! How are you? You cannot believe what I just did only moments ago.

Alright, first, remember how I asked last time I wrote for people to be praying about a possible short term trip to Brazil? Fabulous news: someone felt led to take care of the airfare for this trip. This was great because (a) airfare is the most expensive part of the trip so this significantly reduces the financial impact on me and (b) it was a neat confirmation that I am, indeed, supposed to go on this trip. I'm all happy. I have some dates for this trip: October 23 to December 23. I'll be providing computer support for the people in Cuiaba while their computer guy is on furlough.

So, I had everything all together for the visa application except I had left blank the city I was arriving in and the number of days I'd be in the country. This was waiting for when the plane ticket was actually purchased and then I had every intention of filling in those two blanks and then sending the application and required stuff off to the Brazilian consulate in Miami. I have no earthly idea how I managed to forget that the two items were still blank but I sent it off without filling in the whole form. This is very, very bad. There's absolutely nothing I can do now and I also feel like an amazing idiot. It would be fabulous if they took pity on me and got the information off the airline itinerary but I'm not thinking this is likely. More likely, they return the whole form and I re-pay for processing and postage and really hope it all gets done and returned to me before my flight leaves.

So definitely pray about that and here's an interesting observation of me: My first reaction was to try and figure out how to fix it. After fretting about it for some time, I came to the sad conclusion that there's no fixing it. At this point, left with no other options, I concede that this is in God's hands. It's as if I believe that only those things we classify as "acts of God" (earthquakes, hurricanes, visa applications once they've entered the postal system) are in God's hands. Apparently I believe that the mundane, regular things are in God's hands only if I turn them over to him; otherwise they don't enter God's dominion. It's a variation on "God doesn't care about the little things". Next I realized that I've just noted that the whole thing is in God's hands. This SHOULD in a normal human bring about a feeling of peace and assurance. Oh no, I'm all worried: "There's nothing I can do. This is quite the tragedy." On the upside, I did notice the problem in how I reacted relatively shortly after having reacted. There's a good chance, given similar circumstances, next time I would save myself pain and suffering by actually trusting God to... work all things together for good and that sort of thing. He is who He is you know.

Stuff you could pray about...

- **Praise** God for the provision of a plane ticket.
- **Pray** for my visa to be approved and returned (with passport) in time (preferably well before my flight leaves).
- **Pray** for the details of this trip, pray especially that I'll be able to handle whatever computer problems get thrown at me when I'm there. I'd kind of like to feel useful.
- **Praise** God for a volunteer who's come for three weeks to work on helping us set up standards for our field office networks. He showed up on scene with the skill set we needed at just the right time. Pray that his time with us is productive. I believe that what he's doing will help the East African office problem I talked about last time (sorry about how I keep referring to what I wrote last time like you've been holding your breath until I write again).

In case I don't get another letter out before I leave, my address in Brazil* :

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*they said to warn people letters take 10-14 days, anything bigger takes more than two months to get there

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(Enclose a note stating: For Sheryl Howe)

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