

Dear Friends,

I am writing this from 35,000 feet in the air - aboard a long flight across the Atlantic ocean. It is 12:30 at night, and this seat will be my bed tonight. I open with these details because, well, such is life as George Verwer's gopher; a whirlwind of airplanes, people, churches, books, and so much more.

This year began for me in early August when **George Verwer's** previous "**gopher**" (Nathan Smith) passed the baton to me. "Never forget the globe," Nathan warns as he hands me the enormous inflatable world globe George always preaches with. "You will carry this with you all over the world this year." And so, slowly, I learn the ropes of what it means to fill this role; the official job description being "anytime, anyhow, anywhere, no matter what the cost" (as George recently put it).

Next stop **Germany**, and the once-every-three-years **conference** for long-term OM'ers (Operation Mobilization missionaries). What a privilege to meet so many great yet meek people of God; people who had just the week before been serving tea in Tajikistan, doing "business as mission" in Nepal, and sharing the gospel through sports in Serbia - among other things in OM's 100+ fields.

The land of **the Netherlands** and "new recruit orientation" was my next stop. Being a new recruit, this was a place for me to learn and re-learn some vital lessons with 220 others from around the globe. This



The Canadian Group at the Orientation Conference in Holland

included teaching on cultural sensitivity. For example, did you know that in Arab culture it is considered very offensive to let another person see the sole of your foot? We learned a lot, but we also had a lot of fun; like when the **Canadian group** (of which I was part) hosted a "Canadian Break" half-way through the conference talent show and coerced some of the leaders on-stage for a techno dance competition. ☺

And then it was back to the home base in **England** for local meetings, typing emails for George, carrying books and... **driving practice** (on the left side of the road, in downtown London, with a stick-shift vehicle). Let me tell you, I was so bad in my third lesson that my driving instructor said, "You have actually gotten worse! I really think you should think about just driving an automatic." Needless to say, it was quite discouraging. The good news is that I am much better at stick-shift driving now. ☺

EXPOSURE

One thing I did not expect so much of this year was the almost-overwhelming *exposure*. Exposure to people of all backgrounds, with different hurts and needs and burdens. Exposure to churches big and small, with different visions and challenges and weaknesses and strengths. Exposure to needs around the world – like the 200 million “untouchables” of India, the millions of children orphaned by AIDS, the 500 million who were never born, the thousands desolated by the horrors of war in Sudan and Congo, the sobering reality of millions who have never heard of Jesus’ love.

But I am also perhaps more aware than ever of the healing power and life-giving freshness, the unifying joy and sin-destroying power, the Divinely-found and deepest-depth-reaching eternal beauty of

HOPE

In late September, I had the privilege of accompanying George on a visit to OM's new ship "**Logos Hope**" in **Croatia**. I had been reading about the Logos Hope (www.logoshope.org) for a couple of years by this time, so it was quite something to actually see this 12,000-tonne ocean-going liner and to interact with her crew of fifty or so. It was also a



The conference grounds in the Netherlands – Orientation, late August 2006

lesson in servanthood for me to see the OM International Director's wife down on her hands and knees scrubbing a very-dirty deck.

Not long after that, it was time for George, Drena and myself to fly to the **United States** for a **month-long tour** of meetings. This included their annual doctor's checkup in Tennessee, time with family in Idaho, meetings in California (my brother John was able to be with us for this weekend; great to see him again after 15 months), a dynamic Korean-American student conference in Illinois (in the town of Urbana, famous for the missions conference), and a motorhome-drive down to Georgia for meetings there.

This brings us to the present – to this flight from Atlanta, Georgia to London, England. It's a little later in the night as I type now, and I have just been handed my airplane dinner. ☺

As I sign off, I just want to thank you for, well, being on the same team as me. What an encouragement that we can be part of God's Story **together** (I Corinthians 3:9). Specifically, I know that many of you are praying for me, and I just want to thank you for that; and let you know that I am praying for you as well. Thanks too for your moral support, for keeping in touch, and for being part of the affirming and humbling way that God continues to provide for me so faithfully.

Until my next prayer letter—which I intend to write every two months or so—I want to encourage you to travel with me on my journey, anytime and often, by visiting my **prayer blog**: www.nigelbarham.com. I update it at least once a week with things I am learning and write it with you in mind.

Together in Christ,

Nigel

✉ **Email anytime:** nigel@nigelbarham.com

📞 **Phone anytime:** current # (always changes) at the top of my blog

» **PRAY** Visit my **prayer blog**: www.nigelbarham.com – updates, encouragement, challenges, itinerary, contact and support information, resources, prayers, links, videos, pictures, prayer requests, news.