

Brazil News



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Editorializing

How To Be Wrong

There is a wrong way and a right way to be wrong. And since we are all wrong at one time or another, knowing how to be wrong can be helpful.

There are three ways to be wrong:

- 1) Honestly wrong,
- 2) Knowingly wrong,
- 3) Wrong by being obsessively right

Honestly wrong – Our daily lives are made up of a series of decisions. Most of them are made subconsciously and affect only our personal routine. Even the incorrect decisions often are merely an almost imperceptible bump in the road with no lasting consequences.

Some of our decisions and actions affect others transitorily. Most are soon forgotten by all involved. In a healthy atmosphere, a wrong decision or attitude actually can almost always be cancelled out with a simple “Sorry!”, “Sorry about that!” or “Sorry, I guess I wasn’t thinking.” Usually the incident is instantly forgotten.

Not all of our decisions or attitudes are spur-of-the-moment. Some go through an incubation period in which they take on a life of their own. They can become either cornerstones or stumbling stones which we store away as way points on our mental GPS. Needless to say, we tend to assume they are accurate. To a point this is good. It is disheartening to have to endure the negative litany of someone who constantly doubts his own decisions and positions in life.

Yet, we are not always right in what we believe or hold as a fact. It is possible—very possible—to be sincerely wrong. Some of these attitudes, right or wrong, with the passing of time simply slip into oblivion; they die a natural death. Others do not. Some are tried by unexpected circumstances or challenged by others. When this occurs we sometimes find ourselves embroiled in tense situations. The very positions

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and opinions we held as unassailable are under attack. We see the sacred cows we so tenderly watched over being led to the slaughter.

That, folks, is when we find out who we really are, what we are made of. Several rules are now in order for when we are honestly wrong:

1) Do not confuse inalienable facts or beliefs with opinions or positions we have developed. We should never question established moral principals or unquestionable issues of right and wrong. Opinions, attitudes and positions, on the other hand, are formulated on our concept of propriety. It is possible in a room of five people to have five different opinions on a given subject. One need not be a nuclear scientist to understand that probably not everyone is right. But it does take some true character to understand that “maybe I am wrong.”

2) True character, as used here, is a triangle of common sense, honesty and humility (25% common sense, 25% honesty and 50% humility). In plain English, this means that issues are analyzed with common sense and honesty in an attempt to come to a proper conclusion, remembering that our edenic nature makes us subject to error.

3) It takes only one other person—a spouse, for example—to test our humility. This also occurs around the Sunday dinner table, in Sunday School, in meetings, among many other settings. The grace to listen to divergent ideas with sincere interest and comment on positive aspects of those views goes much further to properly understanding a situation or problem than to insist on what we consider to be the positive aspects of our own ideas. This is especially true when two or more individuals are discussing a subject and each carefully analyzes what the others have to say. When this occurs it isn’t unusual for a consensus to emerge that is actually an amalgamation of different ideas presented in humility. The louder or more forcefully an idea is presented to an individual or a group, the less the possibility of it being accepted.

4) Following are some Golden Tools found in the treasure chest of humility. Learn to say:

- a) I agree with you.
- b) I had never thought about it in that way.
- c) Let’s try it; I believe it will work.
- d) (and finally) I was wrong.

Knowingly wrong – None of what we have just said applies to those who are knowingly wrong. These are situations in which a wrong decision has been deliberately made and is stubbornly defended. Contrary to those who are honestly wrong and humility is the saving grace, here pride is the destructive element. The defense often presented is: “I’m wrong, I know it, but so are a lot of other people who do worse things than I.” Such individuals can seldom be touched by the hand of man. It is far more profitable to pray than to pound on a locked door. Opportunities should be watched for what appears to be a mellowing, when sound counsel may be cautiously given.

Wrong by being obsessively right – This is a tough one. There are times we

are absolutely certain we are right—and are right! This we feel gives us the right to pound our fist on Teddy Roosevelt’s figurative bully pulpit and boldly—or maybe diplomatically—denounce any views that differ from ours. We adopt a zero tolerance policy for those who promote ideas that we are certain are wrong—and really are! Right is right and wrong is wrong. And we are right. Yet we fail we grasp that our rightness is far more destructive than our opponent’s (for that is how we unconsciously see him) wrongness. This is one of the most dangerous forms of pride, the hardest to cure. It is a metastasized form of cancer that only responds to intense therapy. Worst of all, not only is this obsessive rightness self-destructive, but it often wreaks havoc in the lives of those who feel the brunt of this heavy-handedness. And thus right becomes doubly wrong.

In a word, being rightly wrong can be less malevolent than being wrongly right. ▲

Writing Straight With Crooked Lines

Back in the days when penmanship was still an art, an applicant’s handwriting was analyzed by prospective employers and weighed into the final decision of whether or not to hire. Meticulously crafted script was associated with solid character.

It is said that God writes straight with crooked lines. Were the Writer not the Almighty, we might suggest poor penmanship. But, since this seeming erratic writing does not indicate weakness nor indecision, we must conclude it is deliberate. In an imperfect world inhabited by imperfect people, “the [crooked writing] of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” If we believe this to be true, instead of sliding into the Valley of Despair when God’s crooked lines tempt us to believe He has been napping, we should climb the mountain and see the “work [that] was wrought of our God,” even while we doubted or failed to understand.

Some crooked lines are seen as a jumbled mass of question marks. In worldly settings the prenatal diagnosis of a less than perfect fetus often results in immediate rejection. In Christian circles, on the other hand, these special needs children find themselves enveloped in a cocoon of special love in which both parents and siblings freely sacrifice to provide every comfort for the special child.

It would be interesting to know how many thriving mission posts came about because of the interest shown by an individual or family. Hearts were saddened when with the passing of time the very trailblazers responsible for the work became discouraged and lost the way. Though a bump in the road the work continued, prospered and evolved into a congregation.

As some of you readers know our son Lucas was recently shot to death. He was adopted at birth and lived with us until his latter teens when he left home and began a life of roaming. Different times he returned home and stayed for extended periods, but eventually he would hit the road again. Both at home and in his roaming he made many friends, and a few enemies, one of which was responsible for his death.

We don’t know what went on in Lucas’ heart in his final days. His 13 year old son, who lived with his mother near Goiânia, told me that several days before his death his

dad called and said he was going to come and get him and they would come home. In one of my last phone conversations with him he said he couldn't go any longer without religion. Was his decision to come home also a decision to change his life? Only God knows.

Needless to say, in an experience of this kind we see large crooked scrawls. Yet, there is more to the story. Because of Lucas we adopted two of his siblings and one of his cousins came to live with us and is considered a daughter. Two other siblings were raised by others. Most of these, plus their children and grandchildren, today are Christians. Yes, for Lucas the line certainly was crooked, but as we look beyond we see the straight line.

It is true that there are crooked lines that seem to stretch out onto the horizon. It appears that the only straight line that can be found is in our own heart. In these cases we are closely watched by both believers and non-believers. If we can remain faithful in spite of everything that has gone wrong, that is a powerful testimony of the power of God. It is the ultimate straight line. ▲

Life in Brazil

Today

Those of you who try to keep abreast of what is happening in Brazil will have noticed that things are in a state of agitation both economically and politically.

To understand Brazil's situation the first rule to take into account is that not all democracies operate on the same wave length. Hummingbirds and wrens are both birds, but they look different, they eat different and they fly different. To compare American democracy with Brazilian democracy is to compare a hummingbird with a wren.

I think it can be safely said that American democracy, as envisioned by the founding fathers and set forth in the US Constitution is the purest form of government "of the people, by the people and for the people" in all history. Thus it is totally understandable that anyone raised in this environment will be bewildered by other democracies—the Brazilian, for example.

Someday I hope to go into detail on these differences (which can be read at bedtime instead of taking sleeping pills), but for now suffice it to say that by American standards Brazilian democracy is very chaotic. Like the beetle that defies all the rules of aerodynamics and shouldn't fly, so Brazilian democracy shouldn't work. But it does.

Paradoxically, the very element that permits Brazilian democracy to survive is what is rapidly dooming American democracy to mediocrity and eventual succumbence.

The keyword to democracy is freedom. In spite of all that is negative in Brazilian democracy, freedom continues to thrive—freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of expression, freedom to come and go. And yes, freedom of religion. The Ten Commandments, crucifixes and religious symbolism can be found in

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commercial establishments, public areas and governmental offices. Where freedom thrives there is hope.

Brazil's political and economic problems can be compressed into one word: corruption. Corruption is epidemic in varying degrees at all political levels, from the lowest to the highest offices. Thus, those who have a higher standard of honesty are stymied in their efforts to implant projects that are strictly for the benefit of the nation.

The economic situation has been much worse in the past when hyperinflation oppressed both the lower and middle classes. The difference is that today the source of corruption and financial mismanagement is being exposed at all levels. The untouchables are being touched—and incarcerated. The justice department is courageously prosecuting and giving figures on exactly how much both individuals and entities have stolen from the government. The press turns these figures into headlines.

Most economists believe that Brazil has not yet bottomed out and that 2016 will show little improvement. The nation today is facing...

- A projected 10 percent plus inflation rate for 2015, which is more than double what it should be for sustainable development.

- A weakened currency. The real/dollar exchange rate that hovered around 2.3 (2.3 reals to purchase one dollar) broke the 4.0 barrier recently and at present stands at approximately 3.7. This means that people traveling to the States (read as: to the Conference) are having to spend nearly twice as much to purchase dollars. The bright spot in this is that airlines have dropped prices on São Paulo/Miami/São Paulo tickets to less than three hundred US Dollars to keep their planes flying.

- Sales in the automobile industry are down around 30 percent. The positive side is that cars, especially basic models, can be purchased at reduced prices and depending on the down payment, with zero interest. Honda has a new factory all ready to go that will not go into operation because of slumping sales. All brands are equally hard hit.

- Federal and state projects are being put on the back burner, or shoved off the stove altogether. An example is the GO174 highway from Rio Verde that goes past the Colony and through the neighboring town of Montividiu. The traffic on this road is probably more intense than on the BR060 that comes through Rio Verde and on to Goiânia and Brasília. The GO174 has been dubbed the “Rodovia da morte” (Death highway) because of the amount of people who have and continue to lose their lives on this narrow, pot-holed highway with no shoulder. After protests and demonstrations, the state government decided several years ago to put in passing lanes. Recently bids were let out and it was announced on what day the work was to begin. A track hoe actually did a bit of cosmetic work so the project could begin, and then disappeared. With other state highways in much worse shape, as well as a number of uncompleted projects, if the GO174 highway gets its passing lanes, we locals will consider it the eighth wonder of the world.

- Banks. The Brazilian banking system is one of the most modern in the world for those who do their banking online. Major bank agencies can have 15 or more ATMs

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available for those who don't need to get in line and do their business at a teller window. These are lines that try men's souls. Waiting time to reach the window can vary from five minutes to up to 45 minutes with possibly a hundred clients switching their weight from one leg to another as they ponder what they should be doing instead of standing in line. ATMs can be found in supermarkets and other larger businesses.

For the last thirteen-plus years Brazil has been governed by socialist presidents. A basic tenant of socialism is supposed to be economic equality for all. It is true that the standard of living of the poorer class has risen under socialist leadership. The problem is that all too often the loaves and fishes handed out, together with easy credit, have yielded more votes for perpetuation in power rather than greater productivity. In other words, opportunity has been made possible with borrowed money. There is nothing wrong with this when there is a solid repayment plan. As it is becoming increasingly clear, the funding of this false economy has often resulted in cleverly concealed corruption.

This brings us to one of the great mysteries of socialism. If, as we have said, a basic tenant is the leveling of the economic playing field, why are our major banks making stratospheric profits while the rest of the country is in crisis mode?

The reason is quite simple. There are doubtlessly sincere socialists who have a genuine compassion for the poor and needy. However, it is my personal observation that worldwide the majority use socialism as a platform to advance their own financial situation. The apparent concern for the poor yields the necessary votes to remain in power, but here in Brazil the big winners are the politicians who are acquiring huge tracts of land and tens of thousands of heads of cattle, not to mention millions of dollars deposited in Swiss accounts. So, to answer the question, these politicians understand the importance of happy bankers. Weakened or collapsing banks make headlines and create panic. Thus it is in their best interest to violate a basic rule of socialism and let the rich become richer—so they too can become richer. That is the sad truth.

- Foreign investments have dropped significantly as Brazil's international economic rating continues to be downgraded. Money can buy votes and create a sense of artificial well-being, but it can't buy a good rating. In fact, corruption, which can't be hidden from international watchdogs, has a strong gravitational pull on these ratings.

Brazil is in the "emerging nations" category and to join the elite club of industrialized nations there is very little room for missteps. Today Brazil is not executing missteps, but rather stumbling backwards at an alarming rate. Until the economy can be stabilized, club membership forms are unavailable.

What is the prognosis? Brazil has an amazing resiliency and has been through worse crises than the current one. So it isn't a matter of survival, but rather of advancement, of becoming a world player. Without a moralistic U-turn that penalizes corruption and dishonesty, making it more profitable to honest vs. dishonest, Brazil will never "emerge." It will continue to be a nation characterized by a powerful elite, a reduced middle class and a perpetually bloated class of "have-nots." And that, folks, is the long and the short of socialism. ▲

Parking in Rio Verde

I would like to believe that the new parking system implanted in Rio Verde is truly modern. But, alas, I have found that when I think we have come up with something we can brag about, I find out that in the United States of America it is stuff found in history books. Anyway, here we go.

But I digress.

Parking space is nothing new. I suspect that in the old Western towns there were times when there was no place to tie a horse or buggy in front of the general store or the saloon. Don't ask me what they did—who knows, maybe they just dug a few more holes and put in more posts to which buggies and horses could be tied. It has never occurred to even the most audacious fiction writer that there was a time limit on how long a hitching post could be used without being ticketed by the town marshal.

Some 60 years ago in McPherson, KS signs were posted in the sidewalks informing drivers how long they were permitted to park their vehicles (this was before modern coin-operated parking meters). To make sure people didn't overstay their welcome, an old fellow (Don't ask me why he had to be old) would look at his watch and then walk down street with about a four-foot stick with a sponge tied to the end saturated with some kind of white paint. He would apply a small dab of this white paint to the tread of the front tire of each vehicle.

Then, if the allowed parking was 15 minutes, for example, he would check his watch and after 15 minutes had elapsed he would slowly return checking the front tires. All those that had a white blotch, indicating they hadn't been moved, were ticketed. The idea was that once a car hit the street the white paint would disappear and the driver would be eligible for more minutes.

For those who long for the days when things weren't run by chips, the "chipless" old man with a stick and white ink should conjure some warm feelings.

As Rio Verde edges up to the 200 thousand population mark, parking has become a nightmare in the commercial center. Entrepreneurially minded individuals began renting empty lots and turning them into paid parking space. The price, of course, varied, but for one hour would run at approximately the equivalent of one US dollar. This rather expensive solution still could mean walking a block or two to one's destination.

Most amazing was one of our local supermarkets, Campeão, where the ample parking lot was almost always loaded with cars, even when the store was nearly empty.

Why was there no parking space in the supermarket parking lot and in the center of town?

Simple. In both cases the parking spaces were not being taken up by customers, but by people who worked in businesses in the vicinity who left their cars parked there day after day for free for hours on end.

Campeão solved the problem by installing a mechanical arm at the entrance that

will only raise after a parking ticket is retrieved. Upon leaving the parking ticket has to be presented at a booth, where it is authenticated, permitting the exit mechanical arm to raise. Customers pay nothing. Non-customers must pay an hourly fee. The upshot is that except for when the store is really full, there is plenty of parking. In fact, this new system has worked so well that most of the time the mechanical arm is no longer needed.

Now, for the solution the city of Rio Verde came up with that I think is so out-of-this-world.

A disk some six inches across with a sensor and transmitter has been imbedded in the pavement in the middle of each parking space. When a vehicle occupies the space a signal is received on a nearby tower, which in turn retransmits to an operational center.

This brings us to the second part of the system. For approximately ten US dollars people who wish to use public parking in the commercial center of town can purchase a small sensor that is stuck to the interior of the windshield. It comes with credit for 40 parking minutes. The first five minutes are free. Upon parking the little gadget sends out a signal with the licence plate of the vehicle (which has been coded into the sensor), the time and where it is parked. After two hours the vehicle is fined.

If a vehicle without the sensor in the windshield and/or valid credits occupies a space, traffic officials roaming the streets on foot are notified on their handheld transceivers and they can head to that parking spot and write up a ticket.

Anyone with a smart phone or tablet can go online and see where there are parking slots available. As credits run low, all it takes is going online and acquiring more with a credit card.

A lot of money has been invested in this system so I suspect it will be around for quite some time. ▲

Needed: LH Writers

To write for adults requires a talent. To write for children is an art. To create literature that will captivate both children and adults, that folks, is a Gift with a capital G.

I tip my hat to many great writers and poets—men and women who have done with words what a painter does with paints, a sculptor with a chisel and a mason with a trowel. Many have won their niche in the earthly halls of fame. But on a pedestal, in a place of special prominence, I see Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of the Little House (LH) books.

Why the pedestal for Laura?

Imagine a hundred people, ages six to eighty six, seated in a room. Someone gets up and begins reading Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. Ten older adults appear to

be interested. Next comes Charles Dickens' Great Expectations. Approximately half show interest. Next, John Greenleaf Whittier's Snow-Bound. More than half listen.

Now someone begins reading from The Little House in the Big Woods. One hundred people, from six to eighty six, listen. They smile. They weep.

Why? Because of Laura's Gift to write simply enough for a child to understand and informative enough to get through to adults.

Let's run that formula through again: Simple enough for a child to understand and informative enough to get through to adults. The LH formula.

Gifts are seeds. All normal human beings are born with a variety of seeds. Some seem to sprout and grow spontaneously. Others must be planted and cultivated in a deliberate manner. The gift of writing seldom, if ever, is spontaneous. The seed must be planted. A slowly growing tree, it must be carefully tended. The more useful the gift, the more it needs to be nurtured.

We have not placed enough emphasis on the gift of writing. This is unfortunate, as these gifts don't develop overnight.

A brother recently told me he was interested in translating songs. He wanted to know what he needed. I told him the first thing was a large wastebasket. A tree sheds a lot of leaves before it produces fruit. We have writers who never developed their talent for want of a wastebasket. They wanted their work published from day one. So they ended up producing a lot of leaves and little fruit. That became their style.

Humility. A writer must have the humility to realize that not everything he produces is as good as he thinks it is. Great secular writers have had their works turned down by publishers. At that point they had the option of turning sour on the world – or of trying harder. The ones who didn't try harder never became great writers.

For those of my good readers who feel something stirring, just a bit of advice on how to go about becoming a LH writer:

- 1) Buy a big wastebasket.
- 2) Learn to type and become comfortable with Microsoft Word, which uses the standard format for the exchange of information.
- 3) Develop your literary eyes and ears.
- 4) Write, write, write. Write enough so that if even only ten percent of what you produce is used, you are still being useful.
- 5) Write for children of all ages, from six to eighty six. Move into their world when you sit down to write.
- 6) Write for the Lord, not for men. Song writers may at times find extra strength in the fact that if their song gets published, so will their name. Prepare to be an anonymous writer. At times your article will not bear your name. Really, that's the test of whether you are doing it for the Lord, isn't it? ▲

A Brazilian Story

The “Esmola”

by Mário de Moraes

[An “esmolá” is money given to a beggar.]

This happened in a little town called Costa Machado, in the state of São Paulo.

In 1964 this little place had only fifty houses. In one of them there lived a fine fellow, respected by all, called Raimundo Antônio da Silva, originally from the state of Paraíba. It was for this reason that the lieutenant on the police force appointed him as “block inspector,” a title which gave him the right to use a thirty-eight caliber revolver and the obligation of maintaining the peace in the town of Costa Machado.

During most of the day, delegado [roughly the equivalent of “sheriff”] Raimundo could be seen sitting at a rough hewn table in the delegacia [sheriff’s office], which was actually no more than an old board shack. And it was one afternoon that an old lady showed up. She must have been around eighty years old and was all shook up.

“What may I do for you, Madam?” asked the authority.

“The reason I’m here, seu delegado [seu is roughly equivalent to don in Spanish, a term of respect. Seu can also be a pronoun], is that Melquíades, from Sítio do Cavalo Morto [a sítio is a small plot of ground, in this case strangely called, Dead Horse Farm], killed my goat. I have no relatives or anyone who helps me. My entire livelihood depends on the milk I get from this goat. Now I don’t have anything to sell...”

Overcome by compassion, Raimundo decided to settle this problem. “Leave it to me, Madam. You may come back tomorrow morning at nine o’clock and I’ll see to it that justice is done.”

When the old lady left, he called his only policeman, who was also his brother-in-law, and gave him an order:

“Head out to the Sítio do Cavalo Morto and tell this Melquíades fellow to be here tomorrow morning at nine o’clock.”

So that my good listeners will understand better the setting of this story, I add here that this delegado was 5’ 6” tall, at that time had a second grade education.

On the following day, at eight o’clock, Raimundo was on the job. His sweetheart, a pretty Baiana [a native of the state of Bahia] called Isaura, came to see him. They were in the middle of a conversation, when the old lady showed up. After asking her to be seated on a crate, which served as a chair, they waited for Melquíades to show up.

At exactly nine o’clock Melquíades walked through the door. He was a tall man, more or less 6’ 3”. He wore bombachas [baggy trousers typical of the gaúchos from the state of Rio Grande do Sul. It would also indicate he wasn’t someone to be meddled with], he had a bandanna tied around his neck and on his head he wore a huge cowboy hat.

“You are senhor Melquíades?”

“That’s right.”

“Why did you kill this lady’s goat?”

“The pesky thing started eating my crops, so I got my double barreled 16 gauge shotgun and plugged it twice. That’s how the crazy thing died...”

“Didn’t you know that this lady is all alone in this world and that her livelihood depended on the milk she got from this goat?”

The man didn’t answer his question, so the delegado turned to the old lady:

“How much was your goat worth?”

“Around 350 Cruzeiros.”

“OK, Melquíades, give this lady Cr\$350.00,” was the sentence given by “judge” Raimundo.

The man who shot the goat began reaching for his own revolver, but when he saw the glint in the delegado’s eyes, as well as the thirty-eight tucked in his belt, he changed his mind.

“Here! Take this esmola of three hundred and fifty Cruzeiros! It’s yours!”

Melquíades turned around and was leaving when Raimundo called him back: “Just a moment! You haven’t paid this lady the three hundred and fifty Cruzeiros for her goat that you killed!”

“I haven’t paid?” asked an incredulous Melquíades. “Look at that money on top of the table!”

“You gave the lady an esmola. Come on now, get with it! Pay for the goat. Or do you want to be thrown in the jug for disrespecting authority?”

That’s how this poor old lady got seven hundred Cruzeiros for a goat that was worth three hundred and fifty at the very most. If you want to check this story out, look up Raimundo Antônio da Silva now a baker on Major Sertório Street, number 450, in the center of São Paulo. That is, if he is alive and still works there. ▲

This & That

Conference N America. It is rumored that the largest contingent of foreign visitors in the recent Conference was from Brazil. Judging by how empty the churches at Monte Alegre and Rio Verdinho were (and are), it is believable.

Conference Brazil. A year-end Brazil Conference for all the congregations and missions is being planned at the Monte Alegre Congregation to deal with situations and problems that are peculiar to this South American culture and economic reality.

The Weather. Possibly due to our imperfect memories, we find it easy to say, “I’ve never seen a year like this before.” I have arbitrarily set September 1 as the beginning of our rainy season. The statistics I am about to quote are from “my” Davis weather station. Needless to say, these results will vary from place to place. The average rainfall for the months of September, October and November of 2012, 2013, 2014 is 324.27 mm (12.77 inches). During this same period for 2015, that is, until the 25th of this month, we have gotten exactly 162.3 mm (6.39 inches). A bit of math will show you that this is almost precisely half of the previous average. This means instead of green fields of soybeans everywhere you look, some haven’t yet been planted, others are just coming up, some are up several inches, but seldom do they shade the rows, as would normally be the case. The big question is if rains will hold out for a second crop after the soybeans have been harvested.

Wal-Mart Brazil. I just now read in today's Wall street Journal that Wal-Mart in Brazil is being investigated because of an allegation of having paid an "individual" the equivalent of over a hundred thousand dollars to smooth the way for the construction of two stores in Brasília between 2009-2012. So, on my little dissertation on corruption and socialism in Brazil, please add the following closing paragraph: "*Corruption is a virus with no known vaccine that is able to infect even the mightiest.*"

A book to read. *Unbroken*, by Laura Hillenbrand, is the non-fiction account of amazing survival. Following is the publisher's description of the book: *On a May afternoon in 1943, an Army Air Force bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean and disappeared, leaving only a spray of debris and a slick of oil, gasoline, and blood.*

Then, on the ocean surface, a face appeared. It was that of a young lieutenant, the plane's bombardier, who was struggling to a life raft and pulling himself aboard. So began one of the most extraordinary odysseys of the Second World War.

*The lieutenant's name was Louis Zamperini. In boyhood, he'd been a cunning and incorrigible delinquent, breaking into houses, brawling, and fleeing his home to ride the rails. As a teenager, he had channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics and within sight of the four-minute mile. But when war had come, the athlete had become an airman, embarking on a journey that led to his doomed flight, a tiny raft, and a drift into the unknown. Ahead of Zamperini lay thousands of miles of open ocean, leaping sharks, a foundering raft, thirst and starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will. Telling an unforgettable story of a man's journey into extremity, *Unbroken* is a testament to the resilience of the human mind, body, and spirit.*

To tickle your punny bone:

- *The airlines have become so cash-strapped, they charged me for my emotional baggage.*
- *He was worried he would get a parking ticket. It was a case of mind over meter.*
- *Proper punctuation can make the difference between a sentence that's well-written and a sentence that's, well, written.*
- *My door was ajar, so I added jelly, now it's a door jam.*
- *Ambidextrose: An IV in both arms.*

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