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Editorial

The Eighth Wonder of the World

We remember Abraham Lincoln as a man of immense wisdom whose greatest accomplishment in life was to guide his nation through the throes of an internal war and emancipate an enslaved people. We find it hard to believe, as his somber countenance would seem to confirm, that he could possibly find time for other interests.

But he did. The consuming passion in his life was not only to bring together the North and the South, separated by ideological differences, but also the East and the West, separated by hundreds and hundreds of miles of hostile, roadless wilderness.

The first successful attempt at colonization on the eastern seaboard occurred on November 21, 1620 when a group of 102 Pilgrims set foot on the North American mainland, at what is now Plymouth, Mass. Despite extreme hardships—half of the group perished during the first winter—a foothold was established, later augmented by the arrival of other groups. Villages and cities sprang up, ever farther inland.

In 1542, fifty years after Columbus discovered America, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, a Portuguese explorer working for Spain, sailed up the Pacific coast from Mexico, looking for a water passage between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. This, of course, brought him in contact with what is now California, which he claimed for the Spanish crown. In 1579, Sir Frances Drake, an English sea captain, also touched on the coast of California during his voyage around the world. He promptly claimed it for the English crown, but unable to defend their newly acquired territory, the Spanish continued in control and in 1697 missions and colonization projects were established. As compared to the settlements on the east coast, these settlements were very weak and unprogressive. Thus it isn't surprising that in 1812 the Russians, in search of furs, established Fort Ross on the northern coast of California. By 1840 they had retreated, agreeing to lay claim only to Alaska.

In 1848 gold was discovered in California, and 1849 was the year of the gold rush. The population of California jumped from 15,000 to more than 100,000 inhabitants, as gold seekers arrived from all parts of the world. In 1850 California was declared a state.

The statehood of California helped create a novel situation, which can be described as two United States: the eastern United States and the western United States, separated by a vast, inhospitable, extremely dangerous expanse of both mountains and plains.

Someone in the east wanting to travel to the west had three options:

First: Ox cart, making possibly 20 miles a day. This meant leaving in the spring and hoping to arrive before winter set in. This route was especially difficult for women and children.

Second: Sail ship, rounding the tip of South America. This could take over half a year and many travelers ended up in Davy Jones's locker.

Third: Sail ship to the Isthmus of Panama, a treacherous land traverse though malaria and bandit infested jungle, and catch another ship on the Pacific side and up the coast to California.

The fertile valleys, forests and gold fields of California projected this Pacific state into national prominence. But how frustrating! It's riches could only be brought to the east coast in homeopathic doses by slow and precarious sail ships rounding the tip of South America. Likewise, machinery and goods produced on the east coast could be shipped to California by the same route, in reverse.

Both Abraham Lincoln and military strategists knew full well that should there be an uprising in California, or an invasion by a foreign power, it could take several months before word would reach Washington, and many more before troops could be deployed. The United States, at this point, was a nation divided. In the most literal sense of the word.

It didn't take a genius to know that a railroad was the only solution. But it did take a man like Abraham Lincoln to believe it could actually be done—and fate willed it that he should be in a position to do something about it. So it was that when Lincoln made his bid for the presidency on the Republican ticket in the early 1860s, the transcontinental railroad was an important part of his platform.

Today, a century and a half later, a distressingly large segment of the present generation has no idea what we are talking about, and much less understands the tremendous influence the transcontinental railroad had on both the nation and the world. The mind of modern man, programmed to assimilate space walks, genetic engineering, globalism and organ transplants, has forgotten that the transcontinental railroad, given the state of science 150 years ago, was as great a feat—or greater— than sending man to the moon (and infinitely more beneficial to mankind).

The intercontinental railroad, as approved by Congress and sanctioned by President Abraham Lincoln, extended from Sacramento, California to Omaha, Nebraska (rail service from the east coast had already come to this point).

One of the first hurdles to overcome was the route to be followed. This being on the eve of the Civil War, Union sympathizers and dissenters each tried to have the rail

follow a course that would be most advantageous to their cause should war break out (which they were convinced would be the case).

The route chosen—advantageous to the Union—had to be surveyed mile by mile and staked out. What the surveyors, using primitive instruments, were able to accomplish, borders on a miracle. Congress established that at no point could the roadbed have more than a two percent incline. Thus endless tunnels had to be bored through solid granite and enormous cuts made in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Rivers and canyons had to be crossed, lakes had to be circumvented. It must be remembered that large stretches of the line traversed unmapped areas. Courageous surveyors lived in the wild for months at a time, searching for the most suitable route. Little did they know that when the Interstate 80 was laid out approximately a hundred years later, surveyors flying in airplanes and helicopters, using sophisticated surveying instruments, discovered that with few exceptions, they couldn't improve on the route laid out by the original surveyors!

The logistics of building the intercontinental railroad are stupendous. The two thousand miles of rail laid had to have everything brought in, beginning with the workers (thousands of which were Chinese, brought to the US for this specific purpose—and possibly their best workers, barring the Mormons). Equipment, rails, ties, food, thousands of tons of black powder used for boring tunnels through mountains, indeed, the very locomotives and cars, had to be brought in.

For the Eastern Pacific Railroad, which built westward from Omaha, this wasn't all that complicated, as practically everything could be brought in by rail. But for the Central Pacific Railroad, virtually everything, including rails, which Congress demanded be "Made in USA," had to be loaded in Eastern ports and shipped around the tip of South America and on to California. The final lap of the journey was often made on ox carts (Even locomotives were sometimes moved on Paul Bunyon size ox carts where rails were nonexistent).

The odds faced in building the transcontinental railroad were formidable, especially for those building east out of Sacramento. Let's notice a few:

Workers. All workers had to be brought in. The initial solution was to recruit workers in the east and pay their fare around the tip of South America. At the best this wasn't very successful, but it became a downright farce after gold was discovered in California in 1848. Men would sign up, get their free ticket, work one or two days, and then skip out for the gold fields. (So intense was the gold fever that ship captains, together with their crews, would abandon their ships in the harbor upon arriving in California and strike out in search of a quick fortune.) The solution, as we have mentioned, was to bring in thousands of coolies from China. The bulk of the work was done by these dedicated workers, who in a short time became skilled at what they were doing, especially at working with black powder when blasting tunnels and cuts (which has a certain logic when one remembers that it was the Chinese who invented black powder).

The weather. Except in the most inclement weather, work kept right on, albeit at

a snail's pace. This meant that thousands of workers had to have something at least resembling living quarters. This might be railcars converted into dormitories, tents, shacks. As the ground became frozen, it became almost impossible to build roadbeds, or "grades," as they were called. In desperation, bosses would resort to having their men use black powder to loosen dirt that could be used in the grades. Depending on the water content in the soil, this could turn into a nightmare in spring, when the grade would literally melt, unceremoniously dumping locomotives and cars into muddy ditches. Often cuts were filled with snow, requiring thousands of man hours to be cleared so that trains could take materials to the construction sites. Flash floods would destroy bridges and fills in a…well, a flash.

Revolvers, knives and arrows. In a distinct reminder that evil goes wherever man goes, an entourage known as "Hell on Wheels," made up of whisky peddlers, prostitutes and gamblers, would set up business right next to the railroad camp and ply their ignominious trades. The volatile combination of women and whiskey made shootouts and stabbings a common daily occurrence. Then there were the Native Americans who took it upon themselves to harass the workers at every turn of the way. In the ensuing skirmishes, both arrows and bullets did their deadly work.

Financial difficulties. The amounts of money required in this venture were astronomical. Mountains of cash were needed to pay shipping expenses. At times it appeared the project would simply collapse, much as the thawing grades, and dump the promoters into bankruptcy. How money was raised, which included land grants on both sides of the railroad, is a subject in itself, which we won't attempt to explain here.

Corruption. In both the Eastern Pacific and Central Pacific companies, corruption was rampant. Indeed, at times when things were at their worst, the stockholders were paying themselves huge dividends, while not having money to meet their obligations nor pay their workers. Since the government was paying by the mile of rail constructed, where building was easy, flimsy excuses were found to take a circuitous route to add a few miles, where a straight track would have done perfectly well.

Tunnels, cuts, fills and bridges. Those four words sum up much of the work done, especially by the Central Pacific Railroad. Granite mountains were blasted through with black powder. The drills were actually a type of chisel that were driven into the rock with sledge hammers. Once the holes were deep enough, they were filled with black powder and capped with a short fuse. Often progress was measured in inches a day (and possibly by the amount of workers killed in the blasts). To speed things up, the tunneling was done from both sides of the mountain (and in at least one case a vertical shaft was drilled in the middle of the mountain from which work progressed in both directions, thus creating a total of four fronts, with the debris being removed by elevator). Amazingly, without laser and other sophisticated instruments, engineers were able to blast out long tunnels—even curved tunnels—with such precision that they would meet almost dead-on.

In spite of everything we have just mentioned, and much more, the railroad was completed. If on one hand there were many obstacles, on the other there were some

positive determining factors that made it possible to drive the golden spike at a place in Utah known as Promontory. We will mention only two of the positive factors:

The Civil War. It's true that the Civil War created shortages of both manpower and materials, especially black powder, as well as funds, thus hindering the construction of the railroad. But on the other hand, military engineers responsible for laying track for troop and material transportation for both the North and the South, gained valuable experience in track laying—a skill that was yet in its infancy. Once the war ended, soldiers, both Union and Confederate, joined the construction gangs; in some cases the bosses were generals or officers. This made it possible for the work to be organized and carried out with military precision, which doubtlessly gave the project an enormous boost.

A truly free nation. Contrary to Europe, a continent still feeling the effects of centuries of feudalism, in which liberty had not yet created a strong sense of personal incentive in the middle class, the Americans were, by European standards, a brash people. Like Mordecai, they would bow down to no one. A man with a will to work and an idea in his head had just as much a chance to get ahead as the noblest aristocrat. That was the kind of people it took to build the transcontinental railroad. Even the Chinese took great pride in the part they played and once the last spike was driven, became useful, productive citizens in the life of the nation.

Possibly the greatest miracle of the transcontinental railroad is the fact that men from all walks of life: engineers, generals, officers and soldiers who weeks before were shooting at each other, Chinese, Irishmen, Americans, businessmen, politicians, men of all professions, recently emancipated slaves, and yes, even crooks, were able to work together and create what has been called the eighth wonder of the world.

Until the steam locomotive, transportation, basically, was the same as it was in the time of Moses. George Washington could travel no faster than Abraham or Joseph traveled. Speed was limited to how fast wind could push a sail or to the fleetness of horses. It's true that early steam engines could be outrun by a horse. The difference was that after a short distance the horse would tire, while the steam engine would go on and on and on.…

Before long trains were careening down the track at the absolutely fantastic speed of 60 m.p.h. In the early days cinders from the engine smokestack would often set the wooden passenger cars aflame, but that problem was solved with improved construction and new speeds were constantly reached: 70 m.p.h.…80 m.p.h.…

If building the transcontinental railroad qualifies as the eighth wonder of the world, as someone has suggested, we would like to propose a rival wonder: Operating a train pulled by a steam locomotive.

Contrary to modern trains that come loaded with the latest electronic gadgetry and can essentially be run by a single person, the early trains had at least a six-man crew.

The conductor, who rode in the caboose—and this may be a surprise to you—was the master of the train, hierarchically above the engineer. The conductor had to undergo grueling training before being qualified for this job.

The engineer occupied the right seat in the locomotive cab, a carryover of the horse and carriage days when the teamster would sit on the right side of the front seat. The engineer's job was to keep an eye on the rail, and the signals, which then were always on the right side of the track, and, of course, to operate the engine.

The fireman, also called the stoker, was responsible for keeping steam up on the locomotive by feeding either firewood or coal into the firebox. When not pitching firewood or shoveling coal, he would occupy the seat on the left side of the cab.

The brakemen, plural, for usually there were at least three before air brakes became standard equipment, would ride in the caboose with the conductor, often with one up front in the engine. Theirs was a very dangerous job. The engineer did his own braking by easing his engine into reverse, but depending on the terrain and the urgency of stopping the train, the brakes would have to be set on the cars too. The brakemen would run along the top of the moving cars, stopping long enough on each one to set the brakes. As can be imagined, in stormy or icy weather, there were many casualties. The brakemen were also responsible for coupling and uncoupling cars on the sidings and giving the engineer the necessary signals to start and stop at the proper time.

Indeed, it is a miracle these trains worked at all, with the boss, the master of the train, sitting in the caboose with no way to communicate with the engineer and fireman, who were up front actually running the train, except for hand signals (which wasn't always possible). The engineer could only make the train go if the fireman cooperated and kept steam pressure up; depending on the situation, he could only stop the train if the brakemen leaped into action and did their job.

But it worked and the United States, for all practical purposes two nations, separated by a harsh wilderness, were united by the little engines that could. To spend six days traveling from the Atlantic to the Pacific in a swaying coach was certainly better than spending six months at sea in a bucking ship.

Most projects undertaken today in government, in business and industry, in the church, even in the home, have a remarkable similarity to the old steam trains. There are…

Conductors, those with the administrative and financial talents.

Engineers, those who have the necessary technical skills to see the project through.

Firemen, those with brawn to do the actual physical work.

Brakemen, those who tap the brakes when things start going too fast or spinning out of control.

When such a "crew" works together, projects prosper. When they don't, they don't. It doesn't take a genius to figure that one out.

When the good Lord handed out talents, some ended up with more than others.Occasionally we meet up with an individual who apparently was present during almost the entire ceremony and is what we might call "polytalented." And of course, there are those—not so rare—who spent just a few minutes at the

ceremony, but are convinced they walked away with a full load of outstanding gifts.

Seldom is there a great enough undertaking to require the services of the polytalented (especially in the church). Most projects prosper best with dedicated men and women who are able to do great things with a few ordinary gifts.

On the old steam locomotive, the conductor didn't have to know how to run the throttle, shovel coal or set the brakes.

The engineer didn't have to know how to shovel coal, and much less crawl up on the cars and set the brakes.

The fireman didn't have to worry about time schedules or picking up cars on a siding.

And yet, by each one doing his job the best he could, those old steam engines did miracles.

They United the States.

They united the large cities.

They united the small cities.

They united the towns.

Indeed, as the shiny rails were laid over virgin territory, settlers, towns and cities followed.

Industry and commerce followed.

Historians tell us about Benjamin Franklin and other founding fathers of the United States. They tell us about great presidents: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and others. They tell us about famous generals: Grant, Eisenhower, Bradley. They tell us about great statesmen, Kissinger and others. They talk about great inventors and industrialists, about Thomas Edison and Henry Ford. But scarcely a word about the common men who ran the steam locomotives, without which the story of the United States would be totally different. Hardly a story.

The bulk of the work on the transcontinental railroad was done by common men with common gifts. They were men who knew how to work together, each within his own field.

The church needs conductors, engineers, firemen, brakemen. The church needs conductors who are content to be conductors; engineers who are content to be engineers; firemen who are content to be firemen, and brakemen who are content to be brakemen.

Abraham Lincoln died before the transcontinental railroad was finished. Jesus Christ died so that the interstellar railroad to the Celestial Station could be finished. Now He asks his "crew" to make haste, because time is short. When the train pulls into the Celestial Station, that will be the greatest miracle of all.

[*My special thanks to Dub Williams from Newton, Kansas, a retired railroader, who was intimately acquainted with the old steamers. In fact, after speaking with him on the phone, I found it necessary to rewrite several pages of this editorial. Also a big thank-you to Jake Loewen, a steam buff, for the information he shared with me.*]

Inspiration

The Poem of Life

Orie & Anna Miller of Goshen, Indiana had hoped to be part of the January BN Tour, but things didn't work out so they ended up not coming. Needless to say, we were disappointed, as we are anxious to learn to know them. Yet as things turned out, we're glad they didn't come. During the time of the tour, their 16-year old grandson was killed in a snowmobile accident. It would certainly have spoiled their trip if they would have been here when this happened.

Orie sent me the copy of a poem that their grandson, Anthony Dale Eberly, wrote while in the 8th grade. I requested permission to print the poem, which Anthony's parents, Mark & Sandra Eberly, graciously granted.

The Poem of Life

Our life is like a poem
We're writing every day,
And many kinds of verses
Are lived along the way.

We often meet some trials
However great or small,
It depends on how we meet them
How short they seem, or tall.

If we are ever weary
Of walking on this road,
Remember, there's a Savior
Who'll help us bear the load.

Our life is like a ladder
We're climbing every day,
And when we get to Heaven
Happiness comes to stay.

Wouldn't it be inspirational if this beautiful poem could be put to music?

In his letter, Orie refers to the article written by Wilmer Unruh on his time in C.P.S. camp, in which he relates the death of Joe Kulp. Orie says, "Joe grew up to young manhood in this community, one brother, Ernest Kulp, attends church with us." ▲

What the Papers Say in Brazil

Crazy Cows

The mad cow malady that is giving Europeans, and especially the British, nightmares, is called *vaca louca*—crazy cow—in Portuguese.

Brazil has no crazy cows. At least not with the European mad cow pathology. As a Brazilian humorist was quick to point out, Brazil has plenty of crazy people, but no crazy cows.

So it was strange that Brazil and Canada should find themselves embroiled in a crazy cow dispute. Canada said, "We shall no longer buy cow meat from you because it might be mad."

Brazil said, "You have to be crazy."

And so the battle raged: mad or crazy?

Coincidentally, during the time the crazy cow war was at its peak, we had a bunch of visitors here from Canada. I should have known better, but in spite of the international bellicosity, I invited all these Canadians to come visit the cattle auction one evening in Rio Verde. There they all sat, a bunch of pale Canadians (no slam intended; it's not their fault they have to stay cooped up inside during their arctic winter), munching away on the free grilled meat the sale barn furnishes for all buyers and guests.

Then, lo! who should appear at our table, but the veterinarian responsible for inspecting all the animals brought in. He's a good friend of mine, so he stopped to say hello. He looked over the assembled Canadians and asked, "Who are these folks?"

The first thing I knew I heard myself telling the vet, "They're from Canada."

It's a good thing I'm color blind, because that way I can't tell you what color the poor vet turned as he took the full impact of that bombshell. Really, I should have been more considerate of the man. After all, he was responsible for the physical well-being of those thousand and some head of cattle and the last thing he wanted was some foreign virus that might turn them all crazy.

In as normal a voice as possible, he asked, "Are they part of that commission that is checking out our herds?" He was referring to a bunch of big-shot Canadians who were in the country checking out the crazy cow thing here to see if they could start buying Brazilian beef again.

I said, "Naw, it's my sister-in-law and her family. They're out visiting relatives."

That seemed to settle his nerves some. He didn't ask any more questions and I didn't offer any information about my relatives. Let sleeping cows lie.

Anyway, the crazy cow war is actually only an excuse to do battle, and it has little to do with cows. For a number of years Canada and Brazil have been nursing a mutual sore spot because of a niche they have dominated in the design and fabrication of small passenger jets which are sold on the international market. In the fierce competition, each side cries foul whenever the other makes a substantial sale.

The crazy cow thing has been settled, but love hasn't been restored. Look for more turbulence whenever either Canada or Brazil closes a juicy deal with a major airline.

Attention, all good Canadian readers: Should the next skirmish between Canada and Brazil again involve crazy cows, cattle auctions will be considered off-limits to all visitors in Brazil carrying a Canadian passport. ▲

Legalized Theft

There are approximately 400 thousand vehicles stolen annually in Brazil, half of which are found and returned to their rightful owners. Twenty percent are stripped for parts, ten percent leave the country and the remainder are sold, usually with bogus papers, and hit the road again.

It is believed that 20 thousand cars stolen in Brazil end up in the tiny country of Paraguay yearly, and that by now 60 percent of their fleet of half a million vehicles is "Made in Brazil," or rather, "Stolen in Brazil."

In an effort to bring some order to the house, Paraguay passed some legislation a few years ago making it possible for anyone driving a stolen vehicle to request "legal" documents, which are granted, with the stipulation that if during the next 30 months the rightful owner shows up and can prove he is the legitimate owner, the car must be returned.

This, for all practical purposes, makes buying a stolen vehicle a risk venture, but not a crime. Furthermore it frees the police of any responsibility of being on the lookout for stolen vehicles, and transfers to the original owner the responsibility of recovering his stolen vehicle. Very few will attempt to track down their stolen car, although major insurance companies will probably set up offices in Paraguay for this specific purpose. And do a landslide business.

A country that tacitly legalizes car thefts probably doesn't have an especially bright future. ▲

Telephones in Brazil— and on the Colony

Some of you good readers who have been subscribing to this little paper for a number of years probably wonder why I talk about telephones every chance I get.

We'll take a few statistics out of VEJA Magazine. In 1990, there were 10 million telephones installed in Brazil. Today, a decade later, there are 35 million phones installed.

In 1991 there were 10 thousand cell phones in operation. Today there are over 22 million.

Ten years ago, a telephone was being installed every 60 seconds. Now one is being installed every 6 seconds.

Ten years ago, a cell phone was sold every 30 minutes. Today one is being sold every four seconds.

Ten years ago there was a two year waiting list to have a conventional phone installed, and the cost was, at times, over 3,500 US bucks. For someone in a real toot, a phone line could cost upward of five thousand dollars. Today the waiting time is calculated in days and the price has plummeted to approximately 25 US dollars.

Last year over 10 billion dollars were invested in telecommunications.

Ten years ago there was a waiting period of 18 months for someone wanting to buy a cell phone. Today in less than an hour the buyer can walk out of a store with a new activated cell phone.

Ten years ago it was a status symbol to strut around with an enormous cell phone attached to one's belt. To be seen talking on one of those apparatuses in public made one's day.

(The story is told—quite believable—of a fellow standing in line in a bank, happily chatting away on his cell phone, very much aware of the envious stares of many pairs of eyes. The man's popularity rating skydived when his cell phone rang. In fact, the general hilarity was so great that he got out of line, tucked his tail between his legs and made a beeline for the door, as the story is told.)

Today, with every Tom, Dick and Harry strutting around town with a cute little cell phone on display, to be seen *without* one can be an indicator of one's importance. To strut down the street with no sign of a cell phone can mean: If people want to talk to me, they'll have to wait until *I'm* good and ready to talk.

Except for the Boa Esperança Congregation in Mato Grosso, where telephone service still isn't readily available to the general public, in the rest of the congregations and missions most of the members have either a conventional or cell phone, or both. On our general phone list, there are 73 conventional phones, 71 cell phones (with more that aren't listed). Thirty-six individuals have both a conventional and cell phone. ▲

The Future Is Here

VEJA Magazine interviewed the British historian, Kenneth Maxwell, who now lives in the state of Connecticut. A specialist in Brazilian affairs, Maxwell makes some interesting observations on how he sees things. Following are excerpts from the interview:

VEJA: George W. Bush and [Brazilian president] Fernando Henrique Cardoso will be meeting in March. Will this bring on a new era in relations between the two countries?

MAXWELL: I believe it will be a crucial encounter; Brazilians should bear in mind that these "meganegotiations" aren't a picnic. They are both strenuous and complex, with a high political content. They don't only involve the two chief executives, but congress and powerful interest groups… Brazil needs to approach this encounter

with a skilled team of negotiators that have an inside track with congress and private enterprise in both countries. Beside this, Brazilians must have a very definite idea of what they hope to accomplish.

VEJA: You lived in Rio de Janeiro during the sixties and since then have frequently returned because of your research. What kind of changes have you seen in Brazil during this time?

MAXWELL: What impressed me back then, because of the closed economy at that time, was the amount of consumer goods that Brazilians couldn't buy. Another thing I noticed then was the small middle class. Today you can buy practically anything in Brazil and the middle class is much larger. This is very good. On the negative side, back then it was possible to walk the streets of Rio any hour of the day or night, and even visit the slums. Today violence has increased and this is no longer possible. Brazil will have to get a grip on the crime situation by improving its judiciary system, as well as its police force.

VEJA: Do you believe that Brazil continues to be a country to be reckoned with in the future…?

MAXWELL: Brazil is not a country to be reckoned with in the future, simply because the future is here. Brazil has already found its place; it is the third largest democratic country in the world and is the leader of a commercial block. The United States can no longer ignore Brazil in its foreign relations. Brazil must also realize this and head into international negotiations on a one-to-one basis. ▲

What Helmut Schmidt Has to Say

VEJA: You have always been optimistic in regards to Brazil. Why is this?

SCHMIDT: My optimism in regards to Brazil stems, in part, from its fantastic natural resources and gigantic agricultural potential, as well as the formidable vitality of its youthful population. There are some obstacles that will have to be surmounted, one of which is the unbalance of wealth. Today the difference in the standard of living between those living on the Brazilian coast and the interior is as great as the difference between Xangai and Sichuan, in China. If China can manage to solve this problem in the next decades, it will have a powerful role on the world scene. The same is true for Brazil. Once Brazil manages to bring about social justice, it has a leadership role awaiting… When I say that Brazil may become a superpower, I'm not only talking about its military strength. The way I look at things, a world power is a combination of a number of factors, military might being only one of them. It is the result of economic strength, of social well-being, the absence of internal conflict, and territorial size. Whether we like it or not, because of its size Russia today is a world power, even after you forget its 10,000 nuclear warheads. Brazil doesn't need nuclear arms, but I don't cast aside the possibility of one day having them. ▲

A Story

Author unknown

The Bishop's Chairs

The Bishop had finished his breakfast. He was ready to begin the day's work. The bacon, the eggs, the buttered toast had all been of the best quality and done to a turn by his excellent cook. The cloth spread on the table was of the whitest linen. As for himself, his hair was smoothly brushed, his gaiters were snug up to his knees, and all his churchly garb was of fine cloth well fitted. The Bishop was not a proud man on his own account, but for the office that he held, of Bishop in the great Church of England, he believed that only the best of everything was good enough.

That was why, when he found that the fine old oak dining-chairs which had come down to him with his palace from the bishop before him, were growing shaky in their joints and worn as to their rungs, he had ordered that the best furniture-maker in the city be called in to look at the chairs and estimate the cost of repairing them; and while he was at it the furniture-maker should also construct six more chairs like the old ones so that the Bishop's hospitable table might have plenty of comfortable chairs for his guests.

And that was why his choice had fallen on a Quaker firm of furniture-makers, said to be the best in the city. A man from the shop had been asked to call directly after the Bishop's breakfast time.

"My lord," said the footman, very neat in his livery of plum-colored coat and knee-breeches, "the man is here to inspect the chairs."

"Very prompt," said the Bishop, approvingly. "I like that. Show him in, Hawkins. Let him measure them while I explain what is wanted."

"Yes, my lord."

The footman bowed and retreated, returning a moment later to announce.

"Mr. John Evans, to measure the chairs, my lord."

There was a disapproving look on his face as he ushered in a young workman in clothing as orderly as that of the Bishop himself, but very plain, and with his broad hat set firmly on his head. He did not bow; his young back was as straight as a tree.

"Well!" thought the Bishop, accustomed to bowing and to bared heads, "Well! So this is a Quaker! I never dealt with one *before!"* And aloud he said, "Ah! Good morning, Mr. Evans."

"Good morning, friend," the young man said with pleasant gravity.

At this address the Bishop fairly blinked, for even his wife called him my lord, as the title proper for a bishop. Then he thought to himself, "This is a young man of courage. Very unusual!" and to the disapproving footman, lingering in the doorway, he said, "You need not stay, Hawkins."

"Well, my friend," he said to the carpenter, "these are the chairs to be repaired. Can your shop put them in good order and make me a half dozen more like them?"

The young man did not break out in eager promises as the Bishop had fully expected.

"I will see," he said, and very carefully and gently, so as not to loosen the worn joints more, he went over each chair with his long skillful fingers.

When he had carefully examined the worn oak he told the Bishop just what should be done: certain rungs and stretchers must be replaced and all the joints strengthened; the chairs could be copied, certainly, so that the Bishop's dining-table could be extended to its full length.

"And how much will that cost me?" the Bishop asked.

"That I cannot tell thee, friend, until I speak to my employer, who is out of the city but will be coming back today. He can let thee know tomorrow."

"Very well. And I trust," the Bishop said graciously, "that the chairs will be as sturdy and honest as their maker appears to be."

"The chairs will be as good as we can make them," John Evans said quietly, and the Bishop was quite content with this moderate statement.

But when Samuel Hobart, the young man's employer, came back to the shop late that afternoon and heard the report of this visit to the Bishop he was uneasy that all had not been properly done to please this important customer.

"The new Bishop! He is a very particular man, I hear."

"He seemed to know what he wanted," John Evans said tranquilly. "Here are my notes and the measurements of the chairs."

Samuel Hobart hardly looked at them. "I don't doubt that thy measurements are correct. But a Bishop! We never had an order from a Bishop before. I hope thou showed him due courtesy. Why, I would hardly know how to behave toward a Bishop myself!"

John Evans looked down at the anxious little man somewhat pityingly. "I behaved toward him as I would toward thee or any other respectable elderly man."

Samuel Hobart shook his head. "Thou'rt a very 'stiff' Quaker, John Evans. I will visit the Bishop myself in the morning." He thought, "I will see what politeness will do to get me this order. Surely the Bishop must have been offended with John's behavior. John is a very good workman—none better—but he would no more take off his hat to a Bishop than would William Penn himself!"

Next morning, therefore, wearing his very best suit and a ruffled shirt purchased especially for the occasion, he took his estimate and walked to the Bishop's palace, past the imposing cathedral, and all the way he was trying to remember when he should call the Bishop "my lord" and when he should say "your lordship."

He did not go so early as John Evans had called the morning before, because he was afraid that it was not proper to appear so soon, and so it happened that he arrived at the stone steps of the palace at a time when the Bishop was engaged in a conference in his library with some other distinguished gentlemen; but the Bishop remembered John

Evans with pleasure and wanted to show him to his friends, and so he ordered that the furniture-maker be shown in at once.

"It will do you good to see a man true to his own conscience," the Bishop told his friends. "I did not, myself, realize how sincerely these Quakers practiced their belief in the equality of men, until this upstanding young carpenter called on me yesterday. No bowing, no titles! He would not flatter me, I believe, even if he thought that by doing so he could sell me a houseful of furniture!"

The little company looked around expectantly as the footman held back the heavy hangings at the door, to see the man so highly praised by their Bishop, and there they saw Samuel Hobart, bowing and scraping his very best, as he had practiced before the mirror the night before. He had by mistake also bowed to the footman at the door and was still somewhat embarrassed by the footman's smile, but he did not mean to let that keep him from making a good impression on the Bishop.

"Er-r, good morning," the Bishop said, surprised at the sight.

"Good morning, my lordship,—your—my lord," Samuel Hobart said, stumbling over the unaccustomed words. "I brought the estimates, my lord, which your lordship kindly asked for yesterday."

There was a little silence in the beautiful room. The furniture-maker lifted his bobbing head and looked around. He wondered if, after all, in his Quakerly ignorance, he had not been mannerly enough. Perhaps all of these other gentlemen were lords also, and should be addressed by title.

"You aren't the same man that came yesterday," said the Bishop, much displeased.

"Oh no," said Samuel Hobart. He decided that the Bishop must still be offended at John Evans' behavior. "Oh no, my lordship. That was a worthy young man, who is an excellent carpenter, but with no experience in dealing with customers of rank."

"But aren't you both Quakers?" The Bishop's tone was still sharp.

"Yes, my lord." Samuel Hobart began to feel very uncomfortable.

"Put the estimates on the table," the Bishop ordered. He felt that his friends were smiling at his discomfiture. "I have important matters to occupy me now. Tomorrow you may send up the young man who came first. I prefer to deal with him."

Without a word Samuel Hobart laid the paper on the table and turned to leave the scene of his hopes, and the kind-hearted Bishop, seeing his unhappiness, relented a little.

"Hark you, my friend," he said. "Let a man of experience give you a few words of advice. Don't be ashamed of carrying out your own religion, whether you are in a carpenter's shop or in a Bishop's palace. My religion differs in its observances from your young carpenter's, but I admire him for holding to his sincere convictions."

He looked around the little circle for approval and all the other gentlemen nodded agreement.

"And now, good-bye, friend."

"Farewell my—friend," said the furniture-maker, and he walked out past the haughty footman, blushing but with his head up. ▲

This & That

February visitors:

A number of the late Enos Miller's nephews and nieces, from Montana.

Glenn & Frieda Reimer and children Rodrick, Margie and Rogan; Randy & Cindy Reimer and daughters, from Enderby, BC; Bryon & Melody Toews and daughter from Whitemouth, Manitoba. Frieda is Emma Burns' daughter.

Lacy Davis, from Haswell, Colorado. Lacy is a cousin to the Burns tribe here in Brazil

Lloyd & Luanne Holdeman and children, Marjory and Julie.

Robert & Connie Jantz and son Logan, together with their daughter, Lisa, who taught school on the Patos Mission and returned to Moundridge with her parents.

Eddie & Jerry Schneider, from Georgia.

Arnold Zimmerman and David Yost, from Iowa.

The good 'ol days (which weren't all that good) may be coming to an end for the four prinicpal Brazilian airlines: Varig, Vasp, TAM, Transbrasil. A new cut-rate airline has just gone into operation. GOL, as it is called, is hauling passengers approximately 40% cheaper than competition. An example is the São Paulo/Brasília route. Varig: R$308; Vasp: R$245; TAM: R$210; GOL: R$189. (Divide those prices by 2.05 to get the dollar figure.) The winners in all this obviously are we.

On Sunday, February 4, there was a carry-in dinner at the Rio Verdinho social hall for the Reimer visitors. The following day the Reimers, Lacy Davis and Stanley Schultzes left for Mato Grosso to visit relatives.

On February 9, the Monte Alegre Congregation had communion. The visiting ministers were Franklin Wenger and Keith Nightingale. Right after the meetings Keith and Min. Arlo Hibner made a quick visit to three of the missions in Brazil.

On February 16, the youth girls had a shower for Keila, daughter of João & Charlene Souto, who on the 25th married Fernando Rodrigues, son of Tony & Maria Soares Rodrigues.

On February 17, we went off of daylight saving time. Our state senator is introducing legislation to do away with DST on a permanent basis. When you folks in the Central time zone are on daylight saving time, when it's 6:00 p.m. there, it will be 8:00 p.m. here.

On February 19, the Loewens had a carry-in dinner at the Monte Alegre social hall for their Reimer cousins.

On the 21st, some of the visitors and Colony people visited the Perdigão plant in Rio Verde. Really amazing.

We didn't manage that report on the trip to Curitiba and Iguaçu Falls. Maybe next month.

Facts & Figures

Temperatures

High	37.2°C	99°F
Low	18.1°C	65°F
Av high	33.0°C	91°F
Av low	20.0°C	68°F

Rainfall
113.5 mm — 4.5 inches

Relative Humidity
Hi 84% — Low 51% — Av 72%

Exchange Rate
One US dollar buys 2.05 reals