

# Brazil News

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Editorial

## **The Far Side of the Earth**

The younger generation probably doesn't know that many of us grew up not knowing what was on the far side of the moon. It wasn't until October 7, 1959, that a Soviet spacecraft sent back a few photos from this hitherto unknown side of the moon.

Between 1966 and 1968, American lunar orbiters photographed 98 percent of the moon's surface and on December 24, 1968, American astronauts aboard Apollo 8, orbiting the moon, were the first humans to personally see what is also called the "backside of the moon."

Until approximately five centuries ago, the earth also had a far side. The known world was limited to the Middle East, Eurasia and parts of Africa. Except for a few scientific minds, the populace believed that the world was flat. Thus when a ship set out for a distant port and was never heard from again, the belief existed that it possibly had been driven off course and gone over the edge. Literally.

On September 20, 1519, Fernand Magellan, a Portuguese sea captain, set sail with five ships and 241 men, with the express intention of circumnavigating the earth by sea. On September 6, 1522, nearly three years later, one ship, manned by a mere 17 men, limped back into harbor, minus Magellan, who lost his life on the island of Mactan, in the Philippines, in a skirmish with the natives. One ship was lost at sea; the sailors on one mutinied and returned to Spain, and one was abandoned on the return voyage for lack of able hands. Many sailors succumbed to scurvy and other sicknesses. The captain of one ship was executed for fomenting a mutiny. Yet, the 17 brave survivors who returned, proved (at least, to those with an open mind) that the world is round, and with an exciting report of a huge expanse of water, which they called the Pacific Ocean.

The king of Spain and his court listened with great interest to the narrative of a 50,610 mile voyage, that revealed the secrets of the far side of the world.

The far side of the world. Today, with possibly every square meter of the earth

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mapped by satellites, the far side of the world carries a strange, primitive ring. Just a little over 500 years ago, the North and South American continents weren't present on world maps. The earth, like the moon some 40 years ago, had a far side.

To suggest that the world still has a far side, a dark side, that is unknown to us, would sound strange. Yet, that is exactly what I am going to do. Some incidents in the last several months have helped me to see how little I see of the far side of the world. Read on:

There is a little lunch stand near the Banco Itaú where I do most of my banking business. When I am in a hurry, it is a tremendous place to have a quick, inexpensive lunch of *salgadinhos*. One day while having lunch, a boy, probably 10 or 11 years old came in. Looking up at me, he timidly asked if I would buy him a *salgadinho*, which cost 30 US cents.

I don't remember if I simply ignored him, or if I told him, "*Hoje não.*" (Not today). He didn't insist, just sort of backed off.

I thought I had my reasons for not spending 30 cents on the boy. To begin with, if he was hungry, why wasn't he out doing odd jobs for someone? Secondly, we are told that if we help this kind of people, we are teaching them to be beggars. I think I did quite a good job of showing that little boy that I didn't approve of his approach to life.

Then came the lesson.

A lady, possibly 60 years old, who was also having a snack, gently called the boy over to where she was. She smiled at him and then told Jerônimo, the owner of the establishment, "Please give this boy a *salgadinho.*"

And that wasn't all. She added, "Jerônimo, please give him a Coke to drink with his *salgado.*"

Nor was that all. Quietly, inconspicuously, she stayed close to the little boy while he had his snack. As he got up to leave, she gave him a hug and placed a bill in his hand.

Several weeks later I was in the supermarket on the other side of the street from the lunch stand. I saw a beggar, possibly 50 years old, walk into the supermarket. The man had nothing about him that one would desire to be near him. He would hardly qualify as a worthy specimen of the human race.

I made it a point of keeping a good distance from the man as I did my shopping. While I was at the meat counter waiting for the butcher to get the meat around that I had ordered, I saw the man coming toward me. I was backed into a corner and there was no gracious way to avoid the situation, so I gritted my teeth and remained where I was.

He said, "Help an old arthritic man who can no longer work."

Remembering the unfortunate happening in the lunch stand several weeks prior, I handed the man a bill, hoping that would get me off the hook.

It didn't. The man reached out his gnarled, cadaveric hand. Once again I was in a corner. I took his hand, hard and rigid, and managed what hardly had a semblance to a handshake. He thanked me and went on his way.

And I felt like I should wash my hand.

Tonight my son and I needed to do some work in the chicken barns after sunset and before the lights went on at eight o'clock, as the job needed to be done in the dark. The barns had the bedding removed after the last batch, were thoroughly washed and restocked with sweet-smelling wood shavings. The chicks were only several days old and the heaters were all on.

As I looked at that scene in the dull glow of the infrared heaters, I was impressed. Some 23 thousand chicks in each barn, were as close to heaven as they will ever get during the next 40 days. The bedding was soft and clean. Even though it was cool outside, the temperature was just right for chicks that age.

I thought of the millions of people in this world that would feel like the doors of heaven had opened to them if they could spend the night in these barns. I also thought about Carolina Maria de Jesus.

I went into a used bookstore in Rio Verde several days ago and found a book entitled *Quarto de Despejo* (Junk Room) by Carolina Maria de Jesus, written some 50 years ago.

Carolina was raised in a *favela*—slum. At a glance, she was a typical *favelada*—slum dweller; yet she wasn't. Carolina was not illiterate like most *favelados*; she had a second grade education. Her world wasn't restricted to the daily routine of her surroundings. With her scant income Carolina purchased books—probably used. She tried to keep up on national and international happenings by reading the paper and listening to the news on the radio. But what really set her apart from all others in the *favela* was the fact that she was a poet at heart, a writer.

Carolina's book is actually a diary in which she narrates life in the *favela* just as it is. The story that emerges has its peculiarities, but much of it would apply to the majority of the slums in the major cities of the world, where countless millions are born, live and die.

*Quarto de Despejo* takes us to the far side of the earth. It shows us what we have never seen, indeed, what we aren't even able to imagine. As you read excerpts from Carolina's diary, remind yourself that that is how people live on the far side of the earth.

*Italicized text in brackets are my explanations. I have converted cruzeiros into US dollars.*

### **15 July 1955**

Today is my daughter, Vera Eunice's birthday. I had hoped to buy her a pair of shoes. But the cost of food is so high that it separates us from our dreams. Actually, we are enslaved by the cost of living. I found a pair of shoes in the trash, which I washed and mended, so that my daughter can have shoes.

### **20 July, 1955**

I got up at four o'clock this morning and began writing. I opened the door and looked at the starry sky. When the King of the Stars showed its head, I went for water...

*[There is no running water or sewage system where Carolina lives. She must walk a distance to a*

*community tap. Since this is the only source of water for this favela, there is usually a long line, which explains why she usually goes early in the morning.]*

...I was lucky! There was no one else at the tap for water. I filled my can and hurried home. I bought milk and bread. When I was coming back, I met Ismael, who had a knife with a 12 inch blade. He said that Binidito and Miguel beat up on him when he was drunk and now he was going to kill them.

I tried to talk him out of fighting, but I smelled alcohol on his breath, so I left well enough alone. Ismael is a very level-headed man when he is sober, he used to be a telegraph operator. He understands the Bible and is able to give good advice.

### **21 July 1955**

I went down to the river to wash clothes and met Mariana. She is a nice, decent woman with nine children. She and her husband treat each other very well and try to live in peace with everyone. And raise their children. She told me that Binidito, Geralda's man, is picked up by the police every day. The cops got tired of having to go through this routine day after day, so they took him to jail and gave him a job there.

I hung the clothes out and left to pick up paper...

*[Fifty years ago there were sections of São Paulo where there was no garbage service. People simply threw their trash and junk on the sidewalk and people like Carolina would walk the streets picking up paper, cans, pieces of metal... All this would be sold, which would be their livelihood.]*

...It's really a trial to pick up paper. I have to take Vera Eunice, my two year-old daughter with me; she doesn't like to stay home. I carry her in my arms and the sack of paper on my head. Sometimes all this makes me rebellious, but then I bring myself under control. After all, Vera isn't to blame for being in this world.

I stop to reflect that I must be tolerant with my children. I am the only one they have in this world.

### **10 May 1958**

Brazil needs to be governed by a person who knows what it's like to be hungry. Hunger is also a teacher. He who knows what it's like to be hungry learns to consider his fellowmen and little children.

*[It's unfortunate that Carolina is no longer alive and can't see her dream come true in President Lula, a man who knows what it is like to be hungry.]*

### **11 May 1958**

It's night and I can't see the stars. My hut is loaded with mosquitoes. I will light some newspapers and swish them over the walls. That is the way that *favelados* kill mosquitoes.

### **13 May 1958**

It's raining today. All I have in the house is beans and salt. Even with the heavy rain, I sent the older children to school. I will write until it quits raining and then I'll sell the metal I have picked up to sr. Manuel. With that money I can buy rice and sausage.

I feel so sorry for my children. When they see the things I buy for them to eat, they shout, “Long live Mother!”

That makes me feel good, but I have lost the habit of smiling. My children eat and ten minutes later they are hungry again.

### **19 May 1958**

I got up at five o'clock. The sparrows had already begun their morning symphony. The birds seem to be happier than we. Maybe in their world there is friendship and equality. The bird world is probably better than ours in the *favela*, because we go to bed and don't sleep because we have gone to bed hungry.

### **20 May 1958**

Day was breaking when I got up. Vera woke up singing. She asked me to sing with her. So we sang. My other two children, João and José Carlos, joined in.

Yet I know I am living in the junk room. And that which is in the junk room is either burned or thrown in the trash.

Families with children move to the *favela*. In the beginning they are well-behaved and lovable. In a matter of days they are swearing and acting like brutes. They are diamonds that are changed into lead. It's like taking the things out of the living room and throwing it into the junk room.

As I see it, the world isn't progressing, but becoming more primitive. Someone who doesn't know what it's like to be hungry will say, “Whoever wrote this is crazy.” But someone who knows what it's like to be hungry will say, “Very well, Carolina. Everyone ought to have the right to have enough to eat.”

It's horrible when one's children ask, while eating, “Is there anymore?” These words, “Is there anymore?” keep pounding on a mother's mind as she looks at the dishes and sees that there is no more.

One day when I got back home, my children said they found some macaroni in the trash. Since we were about out of food, I mixed some of the macaroni in the beans. My son José Carlos said, “Mom, don't you remember? You said we wouldn't eat things out of the trash anymore.”

I couldn't think of a thing to say.

### **21 May 1958**

I had a horrible night. I dreamt that I lived in a livable house that had a bathroom, kitchen, dining room, and even a maid's quarter. I was going to celebrate my daughter Vera's birthday. We sat down to a table with a clean tablecloth. We had steak, bread and butter, fried potatoes and a salad. When I was helping myself to another steak, I awoke. What a bitter reality! I wasn't living in a nice house. I was living in the *favela*. In the mud, on the banks of the Tietê River. With a total of 18 cents. I don't have any sugar, because the children ate the little bit that we had yesterday.

Yesterday when I ate the macaroni that the children found in the trash, I was afraid

we would all die, because in 1953 when I was selling scrap metal I had picked up, there was a nice looking young boy there. He had found some meat in the trash and offered me some. He said, "Take it, Carolina; it's good enough to eat."

He gave me several pieces. Not wanting to offend him, I took several pieces, but I tried to convince him to not eat the meat. But he told me it was two days since his last meal and he was going to fix it over a fire. He built a little fire and began cooking the meat. He was so hungry that he didn't wait for the meat to cook, but ate it almost raw. It was more than I could take to see him eat the meat, so I left.

The following day they found this young man dead.

### **22 May 1958**

My children like soft bread, but when there isn't any, they eat hard bread.

The bread we eat is hard. We sleep on a hard bed. Life in the *favela* is hard.

I know there are Brazilians here in São Paulo who suffer a lot more than I do.

### **23 May 1958**

I got up all blue this morning because it's raining. My shack is in terrible shape. I don't have any soap to wash dishes... I say dishes, out of habit, but in reality my dishes are tin cans. If I had soap, I'd wash clothes. I'm not a sloppy person. If I go around dirty, it's because of the situation I'm in. I've come to the conclusion that for someone who isn't going to go to heaven anyway, there's no point in looking up.

I'm fixing a meal. I enjoy watching the lard fry in the skillet. What a beautiful sight! The children are all smiles as they watch the food cooking on the fire. Even though it is only rice and beans, this is a very special day for them.

### **27 May 1958**

In the meat packing plant they spray creosote on the meat they throw out so that we can't use it. I didn't have breakfast this morning and am dizzy.

I decided to buy some bread so I could have something to eat. What a difference food makes on our organism! Before I ate, the sky, the trees and the birds all had a yellow tint. Now everything looks normal again.

Food in the stomach is what fuel is to a motor. After I had eaten, I began working faster. My body became lighter. I walked faster. I had the impression that I was floating through space. I began to smile, as though I were seeing something really beautiful. And when you come to think about it, is there anything more beautiful than having something to eat? It seemed I was eating for the first time in my life.

### **28 May 1958**

It's raining. I have only six cents because I loaned ten cents to Leila who was going to get her child from the hospital. I would like to write, to work, to wash clothes, but I'm cold, and I don't have shoes to wear. The children's shoes are full of holes.

The worst of all in the *favela* is what the children see. There are a number of prostitutes who ply their trade practically in the open.

### 30 May 1958

My daughter Vera and I left for work. I was thinking: Does God feel sorry for me? Does God know that these *favelas* exist and that we are hungry...?

### 31 May 1958 (Saturday)

I was practically beside myself. I needed to come up with something to eat for today and tomorrow.

I made some coffee for breakfast and we ate some bread someone gave me yesterday. I put some beans on the fire and thought to myself: I'm really going places. It seemed like a dream.

Someone gave me some bananas and cassavca on Guaporé Street. As I was returning home, a woman on Cruzeiro do Sul Avenue asked me to throw a dead dog into the Tietê River; she said she would give me ten cents. When I got back she gave me 12 cents. I thought: Now I can buy soap.

### 3 June 1958

When I'm out of money, I try to not think that my children are going to ask for bread, bread, and coffee... I turn my thoughts heavenward. I ask myself: Are there really people living up there? Do you suppose they have a better life than we? Are the countries up there like those down below here? Or is there only one country? Are there any *favelas* up there? And if there are *favelas* up there, when I die, will I live in a *favela* in heaven...?

### 7 June 1958

The children had breakfast and left for school. They are happy because we had coffee this morning. Only he who is hungry is able to value food.

When I was picking up paper today, I met a negro. He was so ragged and dirty that it was awful. The rags he wore would qualify him to be the director of the *Sindicato dos Miseráveis*—Society of the Miserable Ones. He had a haunted look. It was as though he were unworthy of being a human being. He was eating pieces of candy that he picked out of the mud in front of a candy factory. He would wipe the mud off the candy and then eat it. He wasn't drunk, but he was unsteady when he walked—weak from hunger!

Another day I met him in about the same spot. I told him, "Wait here just a bit. I'm going to sell this paper for ten cents so that you can have some breakfast. It is so good to be able to drink some *cafezinho* for breakfast."

### 8 June 1958

The people who live beside the *favela* in better homes are ashamed of us. By the odious way they look at us, I can tell they don't want us to live here; we're an eyesore in their part of town. They detest poverty. They forget that in death, everyone is poor.

When we first came to this *favela*, we got water from Ida Cardoso, a neighbor who lives in a nice house. She made it plain that we could get water only on Monday through Friday. On Saturday and Sunday she wanted to sleep in. Just because we live in a *favela* doesn't mean we're dumb, but in this case we were all vaccinated with *sangue de burro*...

[Literally burro blood, an expression that means that they learned a hard lesson.]

We went to get water on a weekend and everything was locked up. A line began to form in front of her house. We shouted, "We need water for our children. What are we going to do without water?"

We went to another house and began knocking on the door, but no one answered. So we had to carry water from the paper factory, which is a long distance from here.

One Tuesday afternoon Ida Cardoso's mother-in-law was out by the faucet where we get water. She said, "What we need is a flashflood to carry this *favela* out of here and drown all of these good for nothing people."

When Tina, dona Mulata's daughter heard what she said, she declared, "She is the one who is going to drown in the flood."

Sure enough, in 1959 there was a flashflood and Pedro Cardoso, Ida's son drowned. When I heard that Pedro had died, I remembered Ida's mother-in-law, who wished that water, water and more water would come and kill all of us. Instead it was her own grandson who died. This happened so that she can understand that God is serious. Even we poor folk are God's children. If God would have told Ida that she would lose her son if she didn't give us water, we would be getting water there until today. Pedro had to pay the price of his grandmother's pride. The price of his mother's wickedness. That is how God takes care of things.

### 14 June 1958

It's raining. I can't pick up paper. The day that it rains, I must be a beggar. After all, I already am dirty and dressed in rags. I got out an old umbrella I found in the trash and went out in the rain to beg. At the meat packing plant I picked up some bones. This is worth something. I can make a kettle of soup. I heard a woman complain that the bones have no meat on them. I know it's not easy to not be able to eat meat. By what I have observed, God is the King of the wise. He placed both man and the animals in the world. He has made Mother Nature responsible for feeding the animals. If they had to be nourished like man, they would really have to suffer. I think this way, because when I don't have anything to eat, I am jealous of the animals.

### 17 June 1958

When it quit raining, I went out and began picking up paper. I gathered one sack and got only 24 cents. I picked up some tomatoes, some garlic. Then I hurried home, as Vera is sick. She had been sleeping, but woke up when I arrived. She said she was hungry. I bought some milk and made a little pudding for her. She threw everything up, together with a worm. She went back to bed.

I sold some metal to Manuel to come up with a little more money. I'm afraid Vera is



going to get worse and I don't have money to take her to the doctor. I am asking God to help Vera get better.

### **18 June 1958**

It's raining today again. Yesterday Vera expelled two worms out of her mouth. She has a fever.

### **1 July 1958**

There is a woman living in this *favela* that I always liked real well. Anytime I had the chance, I did her a favor. Then one day when my son, José Carlos, was playing near her shack, she threw water on him. Later I asked her why she did that. She replied, "I threw cold water on him, but next time it will be boiling water with lye so that he won't make trouble for anyone anymore."

Needless to say, the kind feeling I had for Chiquinha, that's her name, all vanished.

The following day Chiquinha came over and wanted to know if I wanted to fight with her, that if I did, she would go and get her butcher knife. I acted as though I hadn't heard her.

### **4 July 1958**

When my children were smaller, I would leave them in the house while I was out picking up paper. One day when I got home, João was crying. He said, "Mom, while you were gone Rosa threw [feces] in my face."

I lit a fire, heated water and gave my children a bath. I was horrified by what Rosa did. She is the worst human specimen I have ever seen in my life. Why is it that the poor have no feelings for the poor?

### **6 July 1958**

I heated some rice and fish for my children to eat. Then I went and picked up some wood to burn. It seems I have been predestined to pick things up. The only thing I can't seem to pick up is happiness.

### **7 July 1958**

When I go into the main part of town, I get the impression that I'm in paradise. It's so wonderful to see the well-dressed women and children. They are so different from those who live in the *favela*. The beautiful houses with flowers on the front porch give visitors a good impression of São Paulo. What they don't know is that the most famous city in South America is sick, with bad sores. The *favelas*.

### **28 July 1958**

I left João at home and took Vera and José Carlos with me to pick up paper. I was down in the dumps! I felt like committing suicide. Someone who is born today and manages to put up with this life until death is a real hero.

### 3 August 1958

Today my children will eat only hard bread and *feijão com farinha* (beans with grated and toasted cassava). I'm so sleepy I can hardly stay on my feet. I'm cold. Thanks to God, we won't go hungry today. Today God is helping me. I'm undecided as to what I should do. My shack is clean and I don't even know how to act. A house without the glow of a fire is so depressing. On the other hand, a kettle boiling away on a fire is a decoration; it dresses up a home.

I went to see dona Nenê, a rich neighbor. She was in the kitchen. What a scene! She was fixing chicken, another kind of meat, and macaroni on the stove. She grated a pound of cheese to mix with the macaroni, mind you! She gave me some *polenta* (corn meal mush made with chicken broth). It's been ten years since I've had something like this to eat.

In dona Nenê's house the smell of food was so delicious that my eyes filled with tears. I felt so sorry for my children. They would have liked to have been there.

### 6 August 1958

I made coffee for João and José Carlos. José is ten years old today. All I could do was tell him happy birthday, because I don't know if we're going to have something to eat.

### 11 August 1958

I heard my children yelling. I went to see what was happening. It was Joãozinho (little John), Deolinda's boy, who had a whip in his hand and was throwing stones at my children. I ran and took the whip away from him. I could smell alcohol on him. I thought to myself: He has to be drunk, because he's never acted like this before. His stepfather drinks, his mom drinks and his grandma drinks. They send him to buy drink. He must have been trying the *pinga* on his way home.

### 2 September 1958

I had a dream. It was a wonderful dream. I dreamt that I was an angel. I was wearing a pink, flowing garment with long sleeves. I went from earth to heaven, where I was able to pick up the stars and examine them. I talked with the stars. They organized a show in my honor. As they danced around me, they created a luminous streak.

When I awoke, I thought: I'm so poor. Since I am so deprived on earth, God sends me these wonderful dreams to comfort my afflicted soul. I thank God for His care.

### 14 September 1958

Today is the day of the Passover of Moses. He was the god of the Jews. He freed the Jews and they are free until today. The negro is persecuted because his skin is the color of night. The Jews are persecuted because they are intelligent. When Moses saw that the Jews were barefoot and wearing torn clothing, he prayed to God asking for comfort and riches. We negroes, on the other hand, didn't have a prophet to pray for us.

### **31 October 1958**

When I got home, the children were already there, so I heated some food. It wasn't much. They still are hungry. I'm depressed because there was nothing for me to eat. If a person doesn't work, he goes hungry; if he does work, he still goes hungry.

### **12 november 1958**

I need to go to work, but I'm so depressed. I washed clothes, swept the shack and made the beds. When I went to get water, I told dona Angelina that I dreamt that I had bought a beautiful house. I didn't want to live in it, because it's on the coast and I was afraid my children would fall into the ocean.

She told me that only in our dreams we can buy houses. In my dream I saw the palm trees leaning toward the sea. How beautiful! It's amazing how beautiful our dreams can be.

I had to agree with what dona Angelina told me. The Brazilian people can only be happy when they are sleeping.

### **21 November 1958**

I saw a number of people at Leila's shack. I asked what was going on. They said her little girl died. I decided to go to bed, but I awoke with the noise of a fight right by my window. Ida and Anália were fighting. The fight began in Leila's house. They don't even respect the deceased. Joaquim stepped in and told them to respect the dead child, so they went out in the street to fight.

From my window I can see the casket. Instead of seeing something that resembles a wake, I am seeing what appears to be a party.

It's a beautiful, warm night. That's why everyone is in a festive mood. Someone is playing an accordion; others are singing. It's noisy, but I'm going to try and get some sleep.

Here anything is reason for a party.

### **22 November 1958**

The hearse came for the body. Leila began to cry. Once the hearse was out of sight, she began to drink.

I can't get over how things are in the *favela*. People drink because they are happy. People drink because they are sad.

### **27 November 1958**

I sold my paper and got a dollar. When I got back to the *favela*, I met a woman who was complaining because she was evicted from her house. It's horrible to hear a poor person crying the blues. There is no poetry in the voice of a poor person.

In an effort to encourage her, I told her that I read in the Bible that God is going to come and straighten out this earth. She was all happy when I told her this. She said, "When will this happen, dona Carolina? How wonderful! Just to think, that I was about to commit suicide!

I told her to be patient, that God will be coming to judge the just and the unjust. She said, "Ah, then I will wait!"

### **19 Dezember 1958**

I awoke with diarrhea and vomiting. Sick, with nothing to eat. I had João sell some old rags and metal I saved back. He came up with 46 cents, not enough to even make a little bit of soup. It's really a trial to get sick in the *favela*. I believe that today will be my last day on earth.

I began feeling better. I sat up in bed and began picking fleas. The thought of death left and I began making plans for the future.

### **25 December 1958**

João came in and said he has diarrhea. It's from eating spoiled watermelon that someone dumped near the river. These merchants from São Paulo remind me of the caesars who used to torture the Christians. The difference is that today's caesars are worse than those of times past. Then people were tortured because of their faith; now they are tortured with hunger. But we can't quit eating.

### **5 January 1959**

It's raining. The leaks in the roof are driving me crazy. The roof is made of cardboard that is going to pieces. The river is coming up and flooding some of the houses.

### **6 January 1959**

I went to the store to buy rice, coffee and soap. Then I went to the meat market to buy meat. The fellow behind the counter looked at me sort of cross-eyed.

"Do you have lard?" I asked.

"No."

"Do you have meat?"

"No."

Then a Japanese came in.

"Do you have lard?"

The fellow behind the counter waited until he thought I was out of earshot.

"Yes."

I went home furious. So the *favelado's* money has no value? I thought to myself: Today when I write in my diary, I'm going to rub that \_\_\_\_\_ fellow's nose in the dirt.

Worthless fellow!

### **28 May 1959**

Life is like a book. It's only when we get to the end that we find out how things went. My life here has been black. My skin is black. The place I live is black.

[Carolina's age at the time of this diary was approximately 45 years. When Quarto de Despejo

*was published, 10,000 copies were sold in one week. Later the book was translated into 13 languages. The success of the book turned Carolina into an instant celebrity, much sought by intellectuals and politicians. Because of her frequent appearances on television, she became a household name.*

*With the royalties from her book, Carolina exchanged her 130 square foot shack in the favela for a brick house. Her next two books, Brick House and Proverbs, were total failures. Her promoters and the media lost interest in Carolina. She was forced to sell her house and shortly before her death was seen walking along a highway, picking up paper.]*

That is the far side of the earth. It's the side of the earth we would rather not see. And when we do, we feel like washing our hands. Maybe even taking a shower.

We say that all this comes about because of sin. How true!

They're reaping what they sowed. Not so true. They're reaping what their genitors sowed. And often they know only the woman (mother?) who brought them into this world. They're...

Dirty.

Smelly.

Immoral.

Carriers of contagious diseases.

Illiterate.

Irrational.

Dangerous.

Delinquent.

Parasites.

A few may be all that. Very few. Admittedly, not many would be classified as pleasant or loveable.

But folks, they have a soul.

And there are millions and millions of them over the face of the earth.

Carolina shows us that these dirty, smelly, carriers of contagious diseases, illiterate, irrational, dangerous, delinquent, parasitic people have feelings. They feel pain. They get hungry. Their loved ones die. They get tired. They are tempted. They dream. They believe that if God exists, He looks out mainly for the rich and educated.

Isaiah says that "the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save." The slum dwellers believe it is shortened.

Again Isaiah asks "to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

The Lord has many ways to reveal His arm, but often He chooses to do so through His children.

When Jesus said we would be His witnesses "unto the uttermost part of the earth," did He, the Creator, know about the far side of the earth?

If we believe that He knew about the far side of the earth, where does that leave us?

Where does it leave me?

It leaves me back in the lunch stand with the little beggar boy. Why couldn't I have invited him to come sit up on one of the high stools and have lunch with me? I could

easily have bought him several *salgadinhos* and a Coke. We could have talked. I could have asked him where he lived, what he does. I could have made myself a little friend.

But I didn't. I let another woman do that.

It leaves me back in the supermarket with the arthritic man with the gnarled hand. The man was begging because he was unable to work. Generously I gave him one real—30 US cents. And then felt like washing my hands. I didn't ask him how he was or bid him *uma boa tarde*, like I do to someone who is nice and clean.

That leaves me with Carolina Maria de Jesus, who has helped me see the far side of the earth.

I hope you have seen it too. ▲

## A Story

### **I Shall Know Him**

We are often inspired by the enduring words of Fanny Crosby:

*When my life work is ended,  
and I cross the swelling tide,  
When the bright and glorious  
Morning I shall see;  
I shall know my Redeemer  
When I reach the other side,  
And His smile will be the  
first to welcome me.  
I shall know Him; I shall know Him,  
And Redeemed by His side  
I shall stand,  
I shall know Him, I shall know Him,  
By the prints of the nails  
in His hands.*

On the Final Day, everyone will know the Judge of all the earth. Many, however, will not know the Redeemer. They won't know Him there because they didn't know Him here. While the redeemed reach out their arms to the outstretched arms of the Redeemer, the lost will cringe at the sight of the one who in the voice of thunder has announced to these damned souls, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

We are concerned that our name be written in the Book of Life and that as the Lord pages through this book, that He calls out our name. But we can't forget that for the Redeemer to know us, we must also know Him.

*The following story, author unknown, teaches us a beautiful lesson:*

## **The Man Who Rescued Me**

A little girl whose parents had died lived with her grandmother and slept in an upstairs bedroom.

One night there was a fire in the house and the grandmother perished while trying to rescue the child. The fire spread quickly, and the first floor of the house was soon engulfed in flames.

Neighbors called the fire department, then stood helplessly by, unable to enter the house because flames blocked all the entrances. The little girl appeared at an upstairs window, crying for help, just as word spread among the crowd that the firefighters would be delayed a few minutes because they were all at another fire.

Suddenly, a man appeared with a ladder, put it up against the side of the house and disappeared inside. When he reappeared, he had the little girl in his arms. He delivered the child to the waiting arms below, then disappeared into the night.

An investigation revealed that the child had no living relatives, and weeks later a meeting was held in the town hall to determine who would take the child into their home and bring her up. A teacher said she would like to raise the child. She pointed out that she could ensure a good education. A farmer offered her an upbringing on the farm. He pointed out that living on a farm was healthy and satisfying. Others spoke, giving their reasons why it was to the child's advantage to live with them.

Finally, the town's richest resident arose and said, "I can give this child all the advantages that you have mentioned here, plus money and everything that money can buy."

Throughout all this, the child remained silent, her eyes on the floor.

"Does anyone else want to speak?" asked the meeting chairman. A man came forward from the back of the hall. His gait was slow and he seemed in pain. When he got to the front of the room, he stood directly before the little girl and held out his arms. The crowd gasped. His hands and arms were terribly scarred.

The child cried out, "This is the man who rescued me!" With a leap, she threw her arms around the man's neck, holding on for dear life, just as she had that fateful night. She buried her face in his shoulder and sobbed for a few moments. Then she looked up and smiled at him.

"The meeting is adjourned," said the chairman. ▲

## Colonization

### **An Update**

**Boa Esperança, Mato Grosso.** This settlement is a fait accompli. Its approximately one decade of existence has left no doubt: The climate is excellent for raising crops. The regional infrastructure has improved dramatically. In the beginning, because of

high freight, fertilizer, lime, etc., brought in cost dearly, and crops being sent out were penalized. This is no longer the case.

This, of course, doesn't mean everyone is on Easy Street. Everything indicates, however, that the worst is now behind. The 11 families (one of which is now on the mission) have adapted well to the situation. Or to put it in a nutshell, the families are making a living and paying off debts.

A strong plus for the settlement is the fact that there are a number of tracts of land owned by brethren that will allow for expansion in the future.

A power line has been built through the area and within several months generators should grow silent.

**Palmas, Tocantins.** Really, it should be Tocantins I and Tocantins II, as two areas are presently being developed.

A strong plus for this area is the road situation. The land that has been bought in both area I and II is fairly close to good, paved roads. It is possible to take a straight-through evening bus in Rio Verde and be in Palmas the next morning.

A negative factor is the distance between the tracts of land purchased, which makes it difficult for going to church and having a school.

It appears it will be possible to raise good crops on the Tocantins settlements. Five years will tell the story in a more positive manner.

Eldon & Bonnie Penner and Harley & Adriana Penner have sold their place here on the Colony and are looking for ground in Tocantins. Other families are looking in that direction. ▲

## This & That

There has been a changing of the guard in the tract office. After David Miller was elected to the deaconry, he felt it would be too much of a load to continue with this responsibility. This is Cláudio's second stint in the tract work. There has been a substantial downsizing; at present approximately one day a week is spent at work.

According to the editorial in the September 11 issue of the *New York Times*, industrialized nations are paying out one billion dollars a day in farm subsidies.

The benefits realized by farmers in these countries are inversely proportional to the economic stifling suffered by farmers in emerging nations, whose products lose their competitiveness on the international market because of protectionism.

Now for the new babies: July 27, Roger & Sherilyn Hibner, a boy, Kylan Del; July 29, Hallis & Marcia Silva, a boy, Lonny; August 1, Eudes & Julie Reinor, a girl, Kelly Ann.

Daniel & Anna Kramer and Will & Ann Miller made a trip to Paraguay to visit a family, of Mennonite background, that is feeling a spiritual need. The man has 12 children, two of which are married. He says there are some 15 or 20 other families that also realize that their present religion is not satisfying the need of their souls.



## Brazil 17 News

This same man has paid a visit to the Colony here. The question now is: How are we going to help them?

In the last ten years in Brazil, the use of checks has dropped 45 percent, while the use of the credit card has increased 460 percent. Today 21 million Brazilians have 44.5 million credit cards.

Today there are more cell phones in operation in Brazil than conventional phones.

The Rio Verdinho School continues to bus its students to the Monte Alegre School.

The teachers at Monte Alegre this year are: Arlete Arantes, Cássia Nonato, Cíntia Sperb, Jacki Mininger, Joetta Burns, Iara Vieira, Yvonne Martin.

Vilma Martins, the woman who kidnapped two infants at birth, has been sentenced to eight years in prison on the first count. Her case has not yet been heard on the second count. Now there is a strong suspicion that she aided in the kidnapping of another child. Public opinion is running very high against Vilma, especially because she continues denying any wrongdoing.

The Chicken Soup books are being translated into Portuguese and are prominently displayed in most bookstores. It's true that these books have a sprinkling of humanism, but they certainly are a great improvement over a lot of the books that are read in this country.

Several issues back we wrote about the severe restrictions Brazil is putting on cigarette ads.

Now there is a tightening on beer and wine ads. A sign that things still can improve.

And talking about the dangers of smoking, a study shows that in the year 2000, cigarette smoke killed an estimated five million people, 75 percent of which were males.

That story I promised on African honey bees will have to wait until next month. The people from whom I needed to get information are all in Tocantins.

I had to change the radiator on my car today. The total bill for the new radiator and labor: 65 US dollars. The fellow who did the work is a top mechanic.

This same mechanic made an interesting observation. He said that when farmers went no-till a number of years ago, they hit some really lean years. But when Perdigão came, things got better again.

One US dollars buys 2.89 reals.

In EXAME Magazine's annual list of the 500 biggest companies in Brazil, notice the following ratings:

6th place: Volkswagen

9th place: Shell Oil

10th place: GM

20th place: Texaco

27th place: Ford

51st place: Perdigão

85th place: Xerox

102nd place: Wal-Mart

115th place: Goodyear

121st place: Caterpillar