

Brazil News



No. 145
June 2003

Editorial

The Heir That Wasn't Slain

Back in the days when monarchies were the accepted form of government, which actually was the case during most of the history of humanity, things took place that today put our minds into a tailspin. We only survive by shifting our imagination into neutral.

To be king meant opulence, authority, power and prerogatives. It meant a life of popularity. The price of such a life was high. Seldom could a king, no matter how powerful, feel truly at ease. He knew that his throne was the most coveted object in the kingdom. He had to be in a constant state of alert, wary not only of his enemies and open challengers, but also of visitors, of his inner court, of his bodyguards, of his own family.

Kings did not remain in power by exercising Christian virtues. They kept their throne through a delicate balance of promotions and eliminations. Those whom they considered trustworthy, they brought into their court. And those whom they saw as a threat to their position they imprisoned, exiled or slew.

Since the authority of kings was absolute and their decision needed not be endorsed by anyone, it took but one word, a nod, for a head to roll. No clemency; no appeals.

While there is a perverse logic to this mode of rule, we are unprepared for the extreme form of elimination: the brutal slaying of family members—brothers, children, wives—whom they saw as a threat to their sovereignty.

As kings grew older, they made a special effort to groom a successor, fully aware of the power struggle that would ensue once they closed their eyes in death—or even before. With a plurality of wives, each hoping her favorite son would succeed the king, there could be numerous serious contenders for the throne.

Once a successor was clearly established, it was exactly these potential kings who were slain. Indeed, it appears that at times this fratricide was indiscriminate, leaving no survivors who might someday aspire to the throne.

Thus, in the turmoil that accompanied the death of a king, it wasn't unusual for someone—the mother, a governess, an uncle, a guard...—to hide an heir, in hope that one day he would become king.

(We can't help but wonder if it wasn't for this reason that the nurse of Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, fled with the five-year old child when word came that Saul and Jonathan had died in battle.)

Viewed strictly from a human perspective, divorced of any religious considerations, the elimination of potentially troublesome heirs who might some day challenge the throne, does make sense.

Several months ago, in *Historical Gravity*, we wrote that “terrorism may very well turn out to be a more formidable enemy than communism.” Since then I ran across a book in my library, purchased a number of years ago, that relates the history of terrorism, and gives substance to the thought that terrorism will probably have a much greater impact on our lives than communism ever had. Terrorism is the illegitimate offspring of communism and is the heir that wasn't slain when the Soviet Union collapsed.

“The purpose of terrorism is to terrorize,” Lenin once reminded his listeners. He, whose DNA is viscerally imprinted on terrorism, could hardly have said it better. In terrorist Carlos Marighella's *Mini-Manual for Urban Guerrillas*, he makes it plain that terrorists kill for the sake of killing, and that that is “the urban guerrilla's sole reason for being.” That's the long and the short of it.

All terrorists claim to have a *raison d'être*. There are neo-Nazis, Maoists, Trotskyites, ultra-leftists, ultra-rightists, among many, many others. A terrorist is a terrorist because he has chosen to be a terrorist. The cause he espouses gives impetus and a supposed legitimacy to atrocities committed, but should all his goals be reached, he would continue to be a terrorist.

Yet, as terrorism is analyzed, a picture does emerge. The primordial targets of terrorism are democracy, capitalism, and especially Jewry. Thus a capitalist nation with a democratic government that supports Jewry is in the crosshairs of terrorism, as September 11 clearly shows us.

Terrorism far exceeds all other isms in sheer perverseness by the fact that it is fueled exclusively by hate. Shortly before his death in the Bolivian Andes, Ché Guevara, Fidel Castro's comrade-at-arms, wrote: “We must above all keep our hatred alive and fan it to paroxysm; hate as a factor of struggle, intransigent hate of the enemy, hate that can push a human being beyond his natural limits and make him a cold, violent, selective, and effective killing machine.”

There are no dumb terrorists. There are no medium intelligence terrorists. A high intelligence is an absolute must for survival. Often they carry a college degree. They plan their operations with the same precision and thoroughness that a team of surgeons plan a delicate surgery. The difference, of course, is that for a surgery to be considered a success, a life must be saved; for a terrorist operation to be successful, life must be destroyed.

Terrorist groups are called cells. While each cell has a high degree of autonomy, they are very closely interlinked. There is a constant exchange of intelligence and technology, of funds and armaments. Expenses are astronomical. One cell, which may be composed of only 10 or 15 people, can spend a million dollars or more per year. The bulk of this money comes from sympathizers, bank heists and other illegal means.

Terrorists prefer to operate in the open, that is, to use a clean alias, or aliases. Thus, using false passports with no criminal record attached, they can travel internationally in commercial airlines. To be “mugged” by the police and be placed on the Interpol’s most wanted list means going underground. No longer can such a one travel commercially or be seen in public places without an elaborate disguise, and even so at great risk.

A terrorist is not a rational being. His aims, his thinking process, his values, aren’t even remotely comparable with those of normal folks. A terrorist is an embodiment of the evil one, for his greatest pleasure is to kill, to steal and to destroy. Human nature craves recognition for achievement. A politician wants his slot on the evening news as the sponsor of an important piece of legislation; the athlete who makes the decisive goal in a basketball game loves to see his/her picture on the front page of the morning paper...

Similarly, and much more so, the terrorist becomes ecstatic as he watches dead and mutilated infants, youth and adults being carried out of a building he successfully bombed. He is overwhelmed as he reads the morning paper which shows the smoking remains of an airliner brought down by a ground-to-air missile which he fired. The preferred victims of terrorists are defenseless people. They know that the violent death of an innocent child will bring them more recognition than the death of a hundred soldiers, who, in a sense, are being paid to face death.

In an eloquent tribute to the RAF pilots who night after night took to the sky in frail aircraft to combat the hordes of Nazi bombers that crossed the Channel to drop fire and destruction on London, Winston Churchill said that never in the course of human history, did so many owe so much to so few.

As we analyze the terrible plague of terrorism, we can also say, that never in the course of human history have so many had so much to fear from so few. We are becoming callused to the death and destruction that a lone terrorist can inflict. September 11 shows us what a half dozen terrorists can accomplish. The destruction that, say, fifty or a hundred, terrorists could inflict in a matter of hours bumps the high end of our imagination.

Terrorists are dangerous, first of all, because they are invisible. Secondly, they are dangerous, not only because they have no conscience, but much more because their greatest pleasure comes from killing, stealing and destroying. There is nothing on earth that emulates more closely the spirits of darkness than the terrorist.

Civilized, democratic nations find it extremely difficult to deal with an invisible enemy. Today’s world powers are equipped to blow entire nations off the map, but stumble as they search for an invisible enemy.

When N America was settled, the native dwellers were highly skilled at invisibility.

Had it not been for the numerical and cultural superiority of the settlers, and their muskets and canon, history books would doubtlessly have a different story to tell.

Once again in Vietnam, a technologically superior nation was unable to overcome a little people that would disappear underground, literally, in miles and miles of complex tunnel networks, only to reappear, fire several fatal shots, and once again disappear.

We anxiously follow Middle-East peace talks conducted by American presidents. We breathe easier when historical enemies are brought together in Camp David and shake hands in the shadow of a tall president with outstretched arms and a benign smile. He, apparently, believes there will be peace. Those reading and watching the news believe there will now be peace. We too would like to believe there will now be peace.

But there won't be.

Ever.

The forced smile of the two opponents who shake hands (so akin to that of two little children who have fought and have been told they must now hug each other and say sorry) scarcely disguises the deep hatred which fills their hearts. The Israeli leader knows perfectly well that he is shaking hands with one who over the years has sponsored terrorism and is responsible for innumerable deaths. Yet, for political reasons, they submit to this bit of screenplay.

(The Israeli, because he needs the financial and moral backing of a powerful nation; his opponent, because he has everything to gain by a good dose of public approval. We are citing no names, but you readers who follow the news are also following what is being written here.)

There is a good possibility that terrorism will escalate into an invisible World War Three. It may well be mankind's final war.

In Historical Gravity we said that the United States of America today is being rejected by the majority of the nations of the world, while other nations (the extinct Soviet bloc, Cuba, China...) with atrocious human rights records, are being absolved by public opinion.

There is a reason for this.

The smell of battle is in the air. World leaders are perfectly aware of the ruthlessness of terrorism. Especially Third World nations are conscious of their impotence before terrorism. And so, to appease the gods of destruction, they are ostensibly giving the United States a cold shoulder, while coyly sidling up to nations with terrorist connections.

Brazil is an excellent case in point. President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, is supposedly a socialist, yet his administration is definitely right-wing, with a strong emphasis on a robust market economy. At the same time he is a good friend to Venezuela's Chavez. Recently he spent a day in Cuba with Fidel Castro. Something doesn't seem to add up. But it does. The president is doing lip service, especially in the latter case, to the progenitor of many terrorist cells. While it is a stance we don't admire, we must admit there is logic to this long-range survival policy.

We have said that the cost of the war against terrorism may lead to eventual financial

insolvency. In a recent interview, futurologist Alvin Toffler, author of Future Shock, makes some disquieting observations. He believes that the war against terrorism will require a “Big Brother” type government...

(An explanation is in order. Toward the end of the 1940s, English writer George Orwell, in his book 1984, created an imaginary character known as Big Brother, whose work was to create a spy network with hidden cameras that would secretly pry into all aspects of everyone’s life. Today Big Brother brings to mind the KGB, the Soviet secret police that in its heyday monitored the lives of all those whom authorities mistrusted.)

From its inception, the keyword that best describes the spirit of the United States of America is liberty. Notwithstanding the evident moral decay of this nation, freedom continues on a very high pedestal. It is possibly the only truly great value that continues to be defended by all, by both saint and sinner. Without a doubt, the war against terrorism, will infringe sharply on what today is called freedom. There will be less and less privacy, which by definition, means less liberty. The question: Will the American people accept a partial police state...yes, with some of the characteristics of the defunct KGB?

Not only is this a disquieting thought, but also terrible irony. Communism survived for approximately 70 years in the Soviet Union due to its omnipresent secret police. Is it possible that the survival of democracy will now also depend on some kind of a Big Brother surveillance apparatus?

When Communism went down in defeat and the Cold War terminated, we believed this world would be a safer place. What we didn’t realize at the time was that an heir that wasn’t slain would shortly rise up, and with renewed vigor, set out to accomplish that which the fallen king proved himself incapable of doing. ▲

Thinking Out Loud

The Song that Shall Testify as a Witness

Moses’ time on earth was drawing to a close, so God arranged a special meeting in the tabernacle: God, in a pillar of cloud, together with Moses and Joshua.

The Lord began by saying, “Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers.” What followed wasn’t pleasant. In unmistakable language, the Lord told Moses and Joshua that His people would rise up and be carried away by “the gods of the strangers of the land.” They would break the covenant which He had made with them and then His anger would be kindled against them; He would hide his face from them.

What happened next in this tripartite meeting is strange. In fact, so far as we know, there is no record of it ever happening before or after. God told Moses:

“Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers,

that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear.

“Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel.”

We can't help but wish that someone would have made us a copy of that song. But since no one did, we must use our imagination. The song must have lingered on the miraculous deliverance from Egypt and the time of purging in the desert. It must have told of the land flowing with milk and honey, of lands and homes they would possess after crossing the Jordan. He must have told about the fields and homes which they would possess in a land that flowed with milk and honey...

The cadence of the song may have slowed at this point to permit special emphasis on what was to follow: But, the land you are about to enter is inhabited by a heathen people with strange gods. You must utterly destroy this people, or they will destroy you. You must crush their gods, or you will eventually bow down and worship them. As the incoming tide brings you riches, beware lest the outgoing tide carry you to sea...

Israel was commanded to sing this song. The children were to sing it. The youth were sing it. The young parents were to sing it. The middle-aged couples and grandpas and grandmas were to sing it.

For those who were sincere, it was a constant reminder of the dangers which awaited them. For the carnal, who fell into sin, it was a witness against them. With their own mouth they must have sung hundreds of times the warnings which the Lord God gave them in the tabernacle. When divine justice was meted out, no one could plead ignorance, for had they not sung the song of the Lord? Had they not sung of His righteous judgments?

It would possibly be a bit presumptuous to suggest that the Christian Hymnal was compiled at the door of the tabernacle. And yet...

...Or better yet, get out your CH and turn to page 7, where you will find the classified index. Notice the scope of topics covered.

Now turn to page 588 and take a look at the topical index. Scan the songs under each entry.

If it were possible to combine the message of these 657 songs, we would cover every aspect of Christian life, including a warning and call to the lost. We believe that the Song of Moses also covered the entire spectrum of religious life for the children of Israel. As they sang this song, it testified against them as a witness.

And when Sunday after Sunday we sing from the Christian Hymnal, doesn't it do the same for us?

Indeed it does! Jesus says, “As I hear, I judge.” And what does He hear? Among many other things, He will doubtlessly hear us singing. Each of these songs He carefully stores away in His infinite memory.

Brazil News

Imagine the judgment morning as the saved and the lost individually come before the judgment bar to hear their sentence. We see a lost soul, trembling, unable to tear his eyes from the stern face of the Eternal Judge.

In a voice of thunder, the Judge demands, “Give an account of thy stewardship!”

“Tell me! After accepting the spilt blood of My precious Son, why did you turn your back on me?”

In abject terror, the lost soul can only stare into the flaming eyes of the Judge. And then, as if hitting the start button, the sweet voice of a mother is heard, singing with her small child:

Jesus loves me this I know...

Trembling, the lost soul listens to the hundreds of times he and his mother sang together. His voice slowly grows stronger. He is heard singing in Sunday School, then in services. He hears himself singing the songs out of the Christian Hymnal. He hears himself singing:

What can wash away my sin?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus...

He is taken back to the pleasant days when he sang:

I love to tell the story,

Of unseen things above,

Of Jesus and His glory,

Of Jesus and His love...

Since time is no longer, the lost soul is able to hear every song he ever sang from childhood until he finally decided Christian life wasn't for him.

We don't know if the Judge will give prisoners in the dock a chance to defend themselves. If he does, what can be said? Just as the Song of Moses testified against the children of Israel after they had gone astray, so will the songs that a lost soul sang during his lifetime testify against him as a witness.

On the other hand, should God hit the start button when the saved stand before Him, glorified, we believe their voices will blend with the voices of waiting angels in the most beautiful harmony ever heard. The song so often sung in sorrow here on earth, will now ring forth in a new reality:

Safe in the arms of Jesus,

Safe on His gentle breast,

[Here] by His love o'ershadowed,

Sweetly my soul [now rests].

Hark! 'tis the voice of angels,

[Which now do sing with me],

Over the fields of glory,

Over the jasper sea...

This would be a beautiful note on which to end this article, but it would mask what should be a deep concern to God's children, a concern that should be voiced with greater urgency, for if the songs we sing will testify against us as a witness, how do we account for some of the songs which so easily float from our lips?

Songs today range from spiritual, like those found in the Christian Hymnal, to abjectly immoral and satanic. In between these two extremes, we have songs of all degrees. On the high—spiritual—end, we have the songs that without a shadow of a doubt have been inspired by Heaven. Then come those that have a religious message, but appear to have been inspired by man more than by God. Or, if you will, songs that probably didn't originate from the door of the tabernacle and bring little, if any, glory to God.

Increasingly, these songs, that place more emphasis on the music than on the message, are being heard in our midst. Like the Athenians, who “spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing,” we spend too much time, “either to [sing], or to hear some new [song].”

These “new” songs (unfortunately, some written by our own people) are slowly dulling our senses. We are losing our perception to what is truly spiritual, from the door of the tabernacle, and what is tainted with carnality, inspired by man.

This brings us to a soul-searching question. On the judgment day, when our life is flashed before our eyes, which includes the songs we sang here on earth, will the angels join in when these questionable songs are played back? Or will they testify against us as a witness? ▲

What the World Hears

In the annual Perdigão meeting, in which awards are given to top broiler and hog producers, some kind of entertainment is always furnished. This year popular Brazilian singers were shown on a giant screen.

What I saw was an eye opener. Our magazines and newspapers often show these singers clutching a mike and singing with a contorted face. One can't help but wonder: What are they singing? What does their singing sound like?

I found out.

When Roberto Carlos, Brazil's most famous singer, comes on stage, he is received as a king, or as a god, which he certainly is to thousands of people. To touch him, just the “hem of his garment,” is a miracle, a once-in-a-lifetime experiência.

I found out that popular singers don't sing like we do. Not even a little bit. They stand up. They sit down. They walk around. They look up. They look down. They close their eyes. They hug themselves. They spread their arms wide. They smile. They frown. They contort their features.

They don't sing a verse of song like we do, and then another. They sing a few words and then go through their motions. Then they sing a few more words.

I could understand very little of what Roberto Carlos sang, but the words he sang appeared at the bottom of the screen. That way I could follow along.

Most impressive was when he finished a song and would bow deeply to the audience. Almost as in a trance he would close his eyes and smile widely. Then in a simulation of

profound humility, he would murmur, Obrigado! Obrigado! Obrigado! (Thank you...)

It's true that what he sang wasn't immoral or debasing. His songs are short phrases interspersed with long, dramatic pauses. If there was a theme to his songs, I guess I wasn't sharp enough to catch it. What I heard—saw—was a series of disjointed phrases with no message, but with the capacity to throw the audience into a frenzy.

Yet the people loved it. They clapped, they cheered, they swooned. I asked a brother in the church who was raised in the world if his flesh still enjoyed that kind of singing. He said yes, it did.

What does this tell us? It tells us that even I, if I listened to that kind of singing long enough, would probably learn to enjoy it. It also tells us that for a man to sing what Roberto Carlos sings, and have hundreds of thousands of fans, something is wrong someplace.

Where does that leave the singers who draw huge crowds in rock concerts, whose mouths froth with immorality? Singers whose facial expressions and body motions play out the rot they are singing?

Christians must avoid this type of music at all costs. It is a systemic poison that penetrates the spiritual pores of listeners and goes into the bloodstream. Even though conversion gives victory over such music, in the flesh there remains a residue, ready to spring to life in a moment of discouragement.

We here in Brazil who have a lot of members who grew up in the world, and on mission fields where the same is true, we must bear in mind that when they hear worldly music, it has an entirely different effect on them than it has on us. To me, and I believe to most of us who were raised in Mennonite homes, this music is repulsive. The fact that they still feel an attraction for worldly music doesn't reflect on their conversion or sincerity. In all fairness we must admit that we are attracted to certain things that to them seem so foolish.

Both we and they must realize that to be strong we must be aware of our weaknesses. We must help each other, which is the road to victory. ▲

Several Brazilian Stories

A Day in Court

[This little story was published in BN no. 0, a brief issue sent out as a test balloon to see if there would be enough interest to start this publication. It now sets the stage for another Brazilian story, by Mário de Moraes.]

The saying that everyone is entitled to his “day in court” is literally true in Brazil. While it is true that a lot of legal maneuvering is done to gain time, when a case comes before the judge, oral arguments are limited to one day. This is also true in murder trials.

Over 30 years ago, I had a little English school in Rio Verde. Among my students was a doctor by the name of José Póvoa.

One morning as I was coming by one of our local hospitals I noticed a number of people outside in animated conversation. Dr. Póvoa was in the group. I stopped to find out what was going on. The story he told me was this:

A man and his wife were raising their niece. Since she had been with them most of her life, she was considered one of the family.

At the time this took place, the girl was around 16 years of age, a young lady. It happened that a vagrant worker became interested in her. I don't know the details, if they actually began dating.

At any rate, one day he wanted to go out with her. When she refused, he lost his head and stabbed her with a scissors. Realizing that the girl was critically wounded, he began trying to commit suicide—with the same scissors. He didn't get the job done, even though he managed to inflict some minor wounds on himself.

About this time the girl's uncle, or dad, as we shall call him, showed up. He found his daughter dying and the would-be murderer trying to end his life. Contrary to all Brazilian custom or way of thinking, he placed them both in a vehicle and took them to the hospital.

His daughter died. The murderer's wounds were bad enough to require hospitalization.

After the girl's body was taken home and the usual conglomeration of neighbors and friends had assembled, people began to point out to the dad that it wasn't proper to not do anything at a time like this. What kind of a dad was he that wouldn't avenge his daughter's death?

Peer pressure is a powerful thing. The man began to see logic in what he was hearing. He decided to pay the man in the hospital a visit.

When the murderer saw him enter his room, he immediately began apologizing for what he had done, adding that as soon as he could get out of the hospital he would go to jail to pay for his crime.

Benevolently the girl's father told him he wouldn't have to go to jail. "Yes," the man insisted, "I will go to jail."

"No you won't," the other argued. And to prove his point, he pulled a 38 and killed the man.

Several months later I was in town doing some legal work. Walking past the courtroom, I noticed court was in session. Having a little time to spare, I decided to sit in on a bit of the trial. I found out it was the man who shot his daughter's murderer in the hospital who was in the dock.

After the jury was empaneled and other preliminaries taken care of, the judge asked the prosecution to present its case.

The prosecutor arose, faced the jury, and in a kind voice began to talk about the problems the legal profession was facing at the time, the rise in criminality. He mentioned that even in the USA, a developed nation, there were many problems.

He talked for possibly 10 or 15 minutes. As I remember it, he never once mentioned the crime committed by the man on trial. To say the least, it was a beautiful example (at least by Brazilian standards) of the caring side of a public prosecutor. With this he rested his case.

Now came the time for the defense lawyers. They loudly, eloquently and emotionally defended their client. The gallantry of his deed was heralded for all to hear.

The defense rested its case and the jury, after a brief deliberation, came up with a verdict of not guilty. The man was free.

In the different sessions I have sat in on since then, the best argument continues to be the most used one: "Gentlemen of the jury..." The voice now rises to thunderous crescendo, "You would have done the same thing under the circumstances." Everyone of the jurors know it is true, so that leaves them little option when it comes time to deliberate.

I know many murderers here in Brazil. Some of them I know very well. When I had my store, they were some of the best customers. Their word was as good as gold.

Strange?

Not really. That is, if you understand Latin American culture. The story I just told is a prime example. As I remember it, the girl's dad was a mason. He was by no means a rich man. Very likely he had never done anything like this before in his life. And he had never planned on doing such a thing. He merely did his duty.

I have often said that Brazil can be a mighty dangerous place if you get off the right track. However, for the non-resistant Christian, it is probably one of the safest places in the world. They highly respect someone who tries to do what is right. The same man who will kill his enemy will give his life for a friend.

Needless to say, not all crimes are as "noble" as this one. I had a customer who shot a man under a bed, in circumstances I won't go into here. That would be a little hard to explain, even to a Brazilian jury.

One day his wife came into the store. It was shortly before the man was to have his day in court. I asked her how things were looking. Her answer reveals what can easily happen when the murderer is from a wealthy family. "Look", she said, "we have spoken to all the [possible] jurors and it appears everything will be OK."

It was.

Does it all sound kind of primitive? Really it does.

But then I read in my Time and Reader's Digest about how the judicial system operates in the US. It obviously is eons ahead of our system here. I read of how criminals go free because of some small technicality. I read of the malpractice suits, absurd civil suits, and get the impression that the criminal has more rights than the honest citizen.

Know what? I almost think our primitive system is more advanced than your ultrasofisticated one.

In all this there is one consolation. For the true Christian either system works. Even though there is much corruption, many honest men still remain in key positions. Our duty is not to judge, but to obey. ▲

A Brazilian Story

by Mário de Moraes

Evaristo, the Lawyer

The deep voice of Judge Costa França is heard:

“The defense may present its case.”

Evaristo de Moraes looked to his side where the defense lawyer, Sá Freire, was supposed to be seated, but he had disappeared. The trial had to go on, so he arose and unsteadily walked to the lectern. To begin, he spoke unsteadily, but then his voice became more confident.

The district attorney, responsible for the accusation, gave the unknown young lawyer a withering look of contempt. It would take someone mighty presumptuous to stand up to him. Or perchance, didn't the young lawyer know that he was the mighty one that made the most experienced lawyer tremble in their boots?

To make matters worse, because of the nature of the crime, it would be nearly impossible to acquit the defendant.

Young Evaristo de Moraes ignored the antagonistic expression of the county attorney and spoke directly to the jurors, who listened intently to his reasoning. This wasn't easy. Not knowing he would be called upon to assist in the defense, he knew very few details of the case.

It all came about so fast. At that time, only 23 years old, Evaristo worked as the assistant of another lawyer. His dream was to one day become a trial lawyer.

Then one day a former law school classmate showed up and asked him to assist him in a murder case. Evaristo recognized this as tremendous opportunity, but quickly pointed out he had never spoken in a major case. Decidedly, he didn't want to take the risk of making a fool of himself.

Sá Freire didn't give up. “You needn't worry. You probably won't have to say a word, as I'll be handling this case.” So Evaristo agreed to being his assistant.

Now, as Evaristo was beginning his defense, he didn't know that his classmate had decided there was no way he could win the case and had simply flown the coop.

Back then—this was in the year of 1894—this particular courtroom was famous for not handing down acquittals. Between Judge Costa França and Lima Drummond, the wily district attorney, very few lawyers had the nerve to even show up in court. The district attorney had a tempestuous personality and more than once, when things didn't seem to be coming his way, he would reach under his coat for a revolver and brandish it for all to see. The jurors quickly decided that the defendant was guilty.

When Evaristo rested his case, Lima Drummond had no doubt; he, Lima Drummond, was about to chalk up another guilty verdict. He didn't even go to the bother of making a closing statement. What he didn't know was that this young lawyer was destined to become the most famous trial lawyer, not only in Rio de Janeiro, but in Brazil.

When the jurors returned from their chambers with a verdict of acquittal, Lima Drummond exploded:

“Impossível! Impossível!”

This was but the first of a long series of victories which Evaristo de Moraes would enjoy during his lifetime as a defense lawyer.

Evaristo de Moraes died in 1939, when this writer was 14 years old. What has just been written is a tribute to this great lawyer...

To Evaristo de Moraes, my father. ▲

The Church in Brazil

Our Version of the Bible

A situation missionaries and immigrants must face in a non-English speaking country is: What version of the Bible to use? Sometimes there are a number of versions from which to choose; in other cases, there may be none available.

Many who have never been involved in such a situation, unthinkingly believe there will automatically be a King James Version for the local or national language. In fact, we are sometimes asked by visitors if we have the KJV in our Portuguese Bible. Needless to say, the KJV version is an English exclusivity.

Contrary to the KJV, which was undertaken by a select group of scholars, the translation of the Bible to the Portuguese language began as a one-man project.

The translator, João Ferreira de Almeida, was born in Portugal in 1628. At 12 years of age, he was living on the island of Java, where he read a Spanish tract entitled “La Diferencia de la Cristiandad.” He was so impressed by this tract that he got converted, leaving Catholicism and accepting the way of the Gospel.

In 1644, when only 16 years old, Almeida began translating the Bible into Portuguese. However, upon finishing his translation, no one was interested in printing the Bible and sometime later he lost the entire manuscript.

In 1648, Almeida began a new translation of the Bible. In 1656, he was ordained to the ministry and for some time dedicated himself to prison visitation. He then became a missionary in southern India, where he pastored a number of churches, until 1660.

Almeida concluded the translation of the New Testament in 1676. He sent the manuscript to Batavia for publication, but the proofreaders were so slow that the book was never printed. So the manuscript was sent to Amsterdam, where the first Portuguese New Testament was finally printed in 1681.

Almeida got to Ezequiel 41:21, when he was overtaken by death. In 1748, the Rev. Jacobus op den Akker, from Batavia, finished translating the Old Testament, and in 1753 the first complete Portuguese Bible was printed in two volumes.

Since the vernacular of those days differs so much from current Portuguese, the less educated are often at a loss as to what is meant. Thus, over the years, a number of

Brazil 14 News

revisions of the original translation have been made—these made by groups of scholars, although possibly less erudite than those involved in the KJV translation.

The revision used by the church in Brazil was the *Atualizada*. This was the version that Denton Burns happened to buy on the first exploratory trip to Brazil. By default, the first Bibles purchased here were this same version.

As Brazilian members came to the church, a preference was shown for the *Corrigida*, which it was felt was closer to the KJV.

As the church grew, this version also came under scrutiny. Being one of the older revisions, both the syntax and vocabulary often made for cumbersome reading.

Then a new version of João Ferreira de Almeida was produced by Editora Vida. This version, written in easier to understand Portuguese, without falling into the ditch of modernism, was studied extensively and then adopted by the Church in Brazil as our official Bible.

This version has served us well over the last approximately 15 years. However, some of our middle class Brazilian brethren feel it contains some deviations from the original. Somewhat annoying are the brackets constantly used to denote segments of text supposedly not found in the original.

Approximately five years ago, Zondervan Publishers purchased Editora Vida. Since then—whether by Zondervan’s influence, I don’t know—the *Contemporânea* version has been downplayed and the Portuguese version of the New International Bible is being touted as the ultimate and best. As the different models of the *Contemporânea* Bible are sold out, Vida is no longer doing reprints.

We aren’t sure if this is alarming or an open door. For some time some of our Brazilian brethren have been talking about another version of João Ferreira de Almeida, called the *Corrigida Fiel* (faithful correction). A box of these Bibles was purchased and distributed among interested brethren. So far the feedback has been positive. Especially encouraging is the fact that this revision was done using the KJV as a benchmark. A comparison between the KJV and the CF, show that this definitely has been the case.

The Brazil Publication Board has decided to present this version to the next Brazil Annual Meeting, on January 1, asking for permission to use it conditionally for one year in everything but permanent material produced (books, etc.). If, during this year, the CF is approved in actual use, in the following Annual Meeting permission would be requested to make it our official version. If approved, then if asked by visitors if we use the KJV in Portuguese, we can answer, “Well, sort of.” That’s worth something. ▲

This & That

On August 5, our local town of Rio Verde celebrated its 155th birthday. On October 24th was Goiânia’s 70th birthday.

My office assistant, Eduardo Vieira, and his wife Susan, spent their vacation in Patos, his hometown.

The Monte Alegre School started a new school year on August 18. The Rio Verdinho students are being bussed in.

On August 10, Adejenes Lima, our Brazilian deacon at the Monte Alegre Congregation, was released to assume the leadership of the “church in town,” the Rio Verde Congregation. In membership, this congregation is now in second place, after the Monte Alegre Congregation.

On August 23, the late Marilyn Hibner’s goods were sold at auction.

According to O Popular, Wal-Mart should have a new store in Goiânia some time next year. Once actual construction begins, they will be working on a 120 day time schedule to have the store in operation. Obviously, plans don’t always work out, but if they do, Brasília should be next on the list, and then Anápolis and...yes...Rio Verde. Who knows, maybe four or five years from now.

Harley & Adriana Penner purchased land in the state of Tocantins and have now moved.

Daylight saving time has struck again, October 18. Our governor and congressmen have done their best to get an exemption for the state of Goiás, but so far have been unsuccessful. But as they say, there is more than one way to skin a cat. Public offices, schools, businesses, you name it, are considering opening one hour later as of November 4, thus annulling the effect of the daylight saving time. Stores that open at 8:00 for example, will open at 9:00. I have no doubt but what if this maneuver is successful, the Colony will follow suit.

This one just doesn’t come out right in English, so you Portuguese and Spanish speaking folks help yourselves. Um bêbado passa na porta de uma igreja pentecostal e durante alguns minutos fica ouvindo o barulho vindo de dentro. Finalmente pergunta ao porteiro: “Rapaz, e esse barulho todo...?” O porteiro responde: “Irmão, Deus está operando...” O bêbado interrompe: “Mas sem anestesia?!”

Becky, daughter of Dan & Marlene Kramer, from Boa Esperança, is teaching school on the Patos Mission.

Roseane, daughter of Stephen & Dete Kramer, from Boa Esperança, is teaching the children on the Acaraú Mission.

Jakelline Lima, daughter of Adejenes & Aparecida Lima, from the Rio Verde Congregation, is teaching Jair da Costa’s and Anthony Koehn’s children in the Tocantins settlement.

John & Sheila Kramer’s term has expired on the Acaraú mission. They have returned to their home congregation at Boa Esperança. Sérgio & Katrina Alves have taken their place.

Silvana Rosa, from the Rio Verdinho Congregation, is teaching school in the Boa Esperança School.

Ministers Mark Loewen and Dean Mininger held revival meetings at the Pirenópolis Congregation.

On September 7 Robert Kramer, son of Dan & Marlene Kramer, of Boa Esperança, and Élia, daughter of Moacir & Sebastiana Rosa, from the Rio Verdinho Congregation, were married.

Brazil ¹⁶ News

Leonardo & Cláudia Neves adopted a 11 year-old girl, Fernanda.

Fyanna, daughter of Daniel & Anna Kramer, is teaching school for the missionary children in Curitiba, Paraná.

Marcos & Wanda Duarte, from the Rio Verdinho Congregation, moved to the Boa Esperança Congregation.

Beginning September 10, special classes for married couples were given three nights a week, for a total of 10 lessons.

This has been a dry, dry season. And a hot one. October has been exceptionally hot. We had a high of 39.8°C (103.6°F) on September 25. Rains normally begin in September, but this year they are coming a month late. Fortunately, with no-till farming, it doesn't take farmers long to get their fields seeded once the rains set in.

Until some 15 years ago, almost all cars in Brazil were two-doors. Now most are four-doors. Even today almost all cars are stick-shifts. According to Quatro Rodas, an auto magazine, this will begin changing. To say the least, this will be a welcome change.

For approximately 25 years, Brazil has used alcohol as an alternative fuel for cars. There was a time when over 95% of the cars coming off the assembly line were alcohol. Today that number is probably less than 5%. Since alcohol is produced nationally, made from sugar cane, and doesn't need to be imported, the government would like for more alcohol to be used. For years now, gasoline has an approximately 15% mixture of alcohol. Now major auto manufacturers are coming up with a novel solution: motors that burn either gasoline or alcohol, or mixed. Thus, when pulling into a service station, after checking the price of both fuels, it can be decided which would be more economical. "Fill 'er up! Make that 10 liters of alcohol and 20 of gasoline."

Emma Burns had a hip replacement surgery in Goiânia and is doing very well. She hopes to be back at her loom weaving rugs before too long.

I suspect our Sunday School attendance will be way down in the Mnte Alegre and Rio Verdinho congregations during Conference. It appears quite a few will be attending. Most of the staff members in Brazil will be there.

The dollar/real exchange is hanging in at 2:87 reals to the dollar, with small daily fluctuations.

Photographers like to do their little "Say cheese" thing before snapping a picture. If a Mennonite farmer in Brazil needs his picture taken these days, all the photographer has to say is, "What is the price of soybeans?" to get a molar-to-molar smile.