

Brazil News



No. 170
16 MARCH 7

Editorial

The Dogs Under the Table Eat...Crumbs

Sometimes small books tell a big story. That is the case with *Palace Beautiful*, an allegory of the fall and rise of the soul.

Millions of sermons have been preached on Matthew chapter 25; countless books have been written, and an infinity of allegories. The Master's words: "For I was an hungred...I was thirsty...I was a stranger...Naked...I was sick...I was in prison..." are especially fertile soil for picturesque lessons on earthly situations of eternal value.

An excellent example is that of the old cobbler who was told in a dream that the Master would pay him a visit the next day. Awakened by this glorious revelation, the cobbler spent the rest of the night preparing for his celestial visitor. With delicious porridge simmering on the stove, he anxiously awaited the heavenly knock on his front door that would crown his days.

Alas, the knocks on his door that day were very earthly. Yet, no one was too poor or humble to receive a vigorous invitation to enter and enjoy his hospitality, the warmth of his home, and yes, the porridge prepared for a heavenly visitor.

That night he was told that he had indeed entertained angels unawares.

That is about as close as we come to explaining how the Lord of lords and King of kings could possibly be hungry or thirsty, or sick or in prison—by proxy.

Yet He did get hungry, for after His resurrection, when the Lord suddenly appeared in the midst of the eleven, He asked, "Have ye here any meat?" And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them."

In *Palace Beautiful*, the keeper of this holy abode is sternly warned about the Black Dwarf. He is told to diligently guard the palace, "as though it were a matter of life or death. Fear no foe from without, for no enemy can possibly effect an entrance from outside unless you decide to renounce your allegiance to me and willfully admit them; but keep careful watch within."

Brazil 2 News

He then comes to the point: “Beware particularly of a certain Black Dwarf, who is not only cruel and bloodthirsty, but has skill as a sapper and miner above any in the universe. Beware, I say, for he is a traitor and hath power to so disguise himself that he is able to deceive any save myself. Should he make his appearance (as is more than likely) in any part of the palace, hold no parley with him, but bid him begone in my name, for he will seek to make you captive.”

Time went by and the King did not return. The keeper began to feel discontented and one day he decided that instead of working, “he would spend just one day in innocent pleasure and rest.” This weakened his spirit and that night as he was having his evening meal, “he was startled by a sigh or a groan that seemed to come from beneath the table. Instantly there flashed into his mind the through of the Black Dwarf, and his heart throbbed violently!”

After he had somewhat regained his composure, the keeper lifted the edge of the tablecloth and saw a wizened little man crouching there. The apparent inoffensiveness of this creature emboldened the keeper and he demanded who he was what he wanted in Palace Beautiful. “Come, show yourself! Account for your presence here.”

“Right gladly shall you be obeyed, good sir,” was his instant reply, followed by a request that the keeper dim the light. The keeper saw no harm doing this little favor, as the glare of the light apparently hurt the midget’s eyes. Even that, however wasn’t enough to suit him, so the keeper placed a dark shade over the lamp, whereupon the strange visitor came out from under the table.

Before any conversation could be started, the visitor had another request: “Pity, kind sir! It is a long while since I tasted solid food, and I am starving. Homeless, friendless, hungry, I come to cast myself upon your kind charity.”

Our first impulse is to believe that this hunger was feigned. Let us, however, at least for the duration of the writing, accept that the hunger was real.

The keeper knew he was flouting the king’s regulations by entertaining this stranger—and told him so. Asked for his name, he responded, “Amalek.” He then made a short, flowery speech, thanking for the meal and offering to show his gratitude by playing some sweet music on his flute, for it “shall please your senses mightily.”

The keeper objected, saying it was his bedtime. But, declaring that he might never come this way again, the keeper agreed to let him play just this once for him.

The old man played for hours. So enchanted was the keeper that he brought out wine. After both had drunk freely, he again said it was bedtime. “One more tune,” plead the strange visitor.

When the old man finally stopped playing, it was the keeper who begged him to continue. Finally, near daybreak, the keeper went to his chambers to sleep. When he awoke to an eerie, rasping sound, the sun was high. There, in bed with him, was none other than the Black Dwarf, snoring loudly and contentedly.

After he had gained the upper hand in the palace, the dwarf’s logical explanation to the keeper was: “You see, you and I are necessary to the other. Left to myself I should starve to death; left to yourself you would pine away for lack of a little pleasure. You see, our

Brazil News

interests are mutual; our care must be reciprocal. You look after the feeding question—I'll provide the music. See?"

(It would be unfair to the reader who hopes to read this booklet to reveal the details of how the Black Dwarf became the master of Palace Beautiful and the keeper his slave. And then the outcome of the story.)

Most of us appreciate a good, well-prepared meal. This is especially true when we work hard and think about coming home to delicious meal prepared by our wife, mother... One of the amenities of life is an occasional meal is a quality restaurant.

It isn't always that there is someone at home to prepare us a meal. But our wife or mother has left food in the fridge. Maybe even a note, instructing us to heat the food in the microwave. That can actually be quite good, although never as good as something direct from the hands of the cook.

There are situations in which there is no one to do the cooking. So eating in a restaurant becomes a tolerated routine. It's a long way from a cozy kitchen with loved ones, but better than going hungry.

And of course, we all know what it is like when our wife or mother isn't at home at meal time and we go to the fridge and dig around until we come up with something to make a sandwich. Again, it's better than going hungry.

There are people who only occasionally eat a well-rounded meal (and even that not by our standards). The rest of the time their digestive system is on standby. They survive on what we wouldn't touch. To them it is a way of life.

Then there are those who are hungry. Always. "I'm full," isn't part of their vocabulary. They have never said it and probably never will. Their revised version of the Lord's Prayer is, "Give us this day our daily crumbs." All that stands between them and starvation are these crumbs. These daily crumbs.

Yet, as these wretched creatures search for crumbs in municipal dumps and roam the streets scavenging trash cans, they feel a brief sense of elation upon finding table scraps not yet in an advanced stage of putrefaction. They are carefully gathered up and taken home (home?), there to be shared with other family members. They say, "That was good!"

We shudder to think that men, women and children, created in the likeness of the heavenly Father, should be reduced to such utter revulsion. Our stomach churns just to think of any physical contact with them. (The rich man doubtlessly felt this exact repugnance for Lazarus.) Death would be preferable to such degradation, we say.

If, as we have suggested, spirits—good or evil—become hungry if not fed, then we must conclude that their tastes are very similar to ours. They appreciate good food, on time, and plenty of it. We must also conclude that their tenacity for survival is at great as ours—in fact, probably even greater.

If that is the case, then these spirits enjoy a delicious meal in a home setting. But if that is not available, they will eat restaurant food. Or they will snack out of the fridge. And finally, if they have to, they will survive on crumbs.

We have no trouble understanding the illustration of a throne in our heart, the chair on which the controlling power in our life sits. We want to add another piece

of furniture to this all-important room: a table. It is at this table that the spirit that controls our life gets its nourishment.

We sometimes stumble over the words of James when he says we should count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations. Even though curiously worded, we can be sure these temptations refer to the subtle devices—land mines, if you will—that the evil one adroitly buries in our pathway. His words seem to suggest that when we suddenly find ourselves in an area sown with land mines, we should not berate ourselves or feel that we have lost the way. Rather, we should rejoice because the Spirit supplies us with a mine detector that permits us to find our way through this mine field into which we have fallen, *without* harm to our spiritual body. Truly, this is a victory worthy of great rejoicing. Without a doubt, these words of James refer to temptations that are generated from without. Never should these words console us when the temptations are generated in our own heart.

We decide which spirit will sit on the throne, or let's say, at the table, in our heart. And remember, this spirit, good or bad, is going to ask for food. We will be impressed by his appetite.

Unlike the situation described by James, we at times discover, like the keeper of Palace Beautiful, that a spirit has deceived its way into our heart. Normally when this happens, for a time we tell ourselves that we are “falling into divers temptations.”

This can be very confusing, but we can tell which spirit is setting to the table of our heart by the kind of food he asks for. The good spirit asks for spiritual food; the bad spirit for carnal food. Victory is possible only when we place spiritual food on the table for the good spirit.

We have said that the temptations described by James are like a mine field laid by the enemy *without*. When our heart is dominated by the evil spirit, we discover that we are tempted by the mines laid by the enemy *within*. We battle with sever temptations the whole day long, even though there is no outside stimulus. Beware. The Black Dwarf is in charge.

When the keeper of Palace Beautiful perceived that the innocent looking little man under his table really was the Black Dwarf, he made repeated efforts to thrust him out of his heart. We too, after recognizing that our heart has been invaded, attempt to rout the enemy. But we soon discover it is easier to let him in than to get him out. And this is where we often make a potentially fatal mistake. We recognize that an evil spirit is eating at the table of our heart and that he *has* to go. We get the idea that the best way to get him out is through starvation. In no uncertain terms we order the spirit away from our table and refuse his pleas for food.

It works. There is victory over temptation. Our heart rejoices. The evil spirit has been expelled!

Or so it seems.

He is nowhere to be seen. Not even at mealtime. What we don't know is that the evil spirit has not actually left our heart; he is hiding downstairs in a dark corner of our basement—getting hungrier and hungrier. Then one day we find him trying to raid our refrigerator. We send him a packing. Cowering, he beats a fast retreat and again we believe we are rid of him.

Brazil ⁵ News

But we aren't. Finding he no longer has a place at our table, he begins going through our trash, through our slop. And so he survives. The fact that he doesn't eat at our table anymore consoles us, but that true, sweet victory is not ours. In spite of all that we would like to believe, we are being ruled by—excuse me—a slop-eating demon that only comes up from the basement long enough to forage in our trash.

We don't understand why we are tempted day after day, and even though we don't feel like we are suffering any overwhelming defeats, neither are there any significant victories.

We may feed this evil spirit crumbs for a while, but he will become bolder and bolder, and our longing for his music will grow stronger and stronger. Our last state will be worse than the first.

As the keeper of Palace Beautiful found out (excuse us for telling), there is only one way to truly have victory over the Black Dwarf—Crucifixion! And even then, as the keeper also found out, there is a need for constant vigilance lest the Black Dwarf squirm his way off of the cross.

Starvation of the evil spirit does not open the door for the good spirit to return. Within our heart and mind we will continue feeding this spirit with filthy crumbs, with garbage, that we ourselves are producing—and casting to the dogs eating under our table.

Fortunately, this needn't be the ending to this writing. When the Black Dwarf is securely crucified and the table of our heart has been thoroughly scrubbed by the celestial Fuller, we can rest assured that, like the old cobbler, we will be blessed with many hungry visitors who will sit up to our table and bless our lives.

In His homily to the twelve on the night of His betrayal, Jesus said, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.” But for us to eat at the Master's table eternally, we must invite Him to eat and drink at our table during this life. ▲

History

Colony Highlights

Next year it will be 40 years that the first families moved to Brazil. To give our readers a chronological view of some of the more important events in the history of the Colony, Faith went through her diaries, consulting her Mom's (Emma Burns) where necessary, to come up with the necessary facts.

In November of 1968, the first two families with permanent visas went through customs in the *Aeroporto Internacional de Brasília*.

The Middle Sixties – The move to Brazil can be attributed to no one person. Different brethren were giving thought to the possibility of a move to another country. There were several reasons for this:

Brazil ⁶ News

A desire to have our own schools. We must remember that at that time we didn't have our own school system in N America.

Cheap land. Good farm ground could be bought in different foreign countries for almost nothing.

Mission work. The idea of *evangelization through colonization* was present right from the beginning.

As those interested in a move of this type aired their feelings, an impromptu group began to form, made up of scattered brethren from coast to coast.

February 21, 67 – Five brethren: Dan J. Miller, Denton Burns, Elmer Dyck, Harold Dirks, and Reno Hibner, left by plane to visit Brazil and Paraguay. The approximately 20 days they were gone made it clear there was real potential in South America. Especially in Brazil.

January of 68 – By this time the Colonization Board had become involved in the project. Three brethren were chosen to make a second trip: Glenn Koehn, representing the Colonization Board, Reno Hibner and Denton Burns. Enos Miller and Dave Giesbrecht were also present as interested persons.

This trip zeroed in on Brazil. Not only was land looked at, but government officials were contacted to find out what would be required to obtain permanent visas, if the Brazilian constitution gave religious liberty, and especially to know if our non-resistant doctrine would be respected. Could we have our own schools? These brethren felt there was an open door to proceed and the results of the trip were reported to the 1968 Annual Meeting. Support was granted for a move.

November 16, 1968 – The Denton Burns family (with four of their children) and the Dick Toews family (eight children) arrived in Brasília with permanent visas. Homer & Hazel Unruh came with tourist visas. The first week was spent in a hotel and with the Otis Hostetler family (Old Mennonite missionaries) getting legal work taken care of.

The city of Anapólis, 80 miles from Brasília, was chosen as the ideal place to set up temporary quarters. An enormous two story farm house was rented a short distance out of town where the three families set up housekeeping.

December 9, 68 – The Harold Dirks family (6 children) arrived with tourist visas. They rented a house right in Anápolis. The following Sunday a service was held in Homer & Hazel's quarters.

These four families investigated different areas.

February of 69 – Daniel Kramer, Enos Miller, Dan Coblentz, John Penner, and Daniel Martin Sr. came for a visit. The group bought a VW bus and began looking for a place where land could be purchased to make a settlement.

It was while travelling in the Rio Verde area that an apparently insignificant happening developed into a determining factor as to where the American Colony would be located. It was time for a check up on the new VW bus and Rio Verde had a Volkswagen agency.

While the VW bus was being worked on, a lot of curiosity was shown in this group of Americanos. With their limited Portuguese they explained they were looking for land.

Brazil News

The owner of the establishment, who was in on the conversation, had an idea. He knew of a fellow who wanted to sell a large tract of land. So it was that Manoel Norberto Vilela came on the scene. He did have land for sale. The land was looked over. The price was good. Very good. A tentative deal was made. Manoel was told, however, that the group wanted to go to the neighboring state of Mato Grosso and look things over. On their way back they would look him up and give him a final yes or no.

Upon returning from Mato Grosso, camp was set up on Manoel's land. That night the issue was discussed and it was decided that everyone would remain in a prayerful attitude during the night. The next morning a vote would be taken. It was unanimously decided in the morning to purchase the tract.

February 16, 69 – After closing the deal, the group returned to Anápolis. An organizational meeting was held, in which deacon Dick Toews was chosen as the spiritual leader of the movement.

March of 69 – Eugene Unruh, Jake and Ike Loewen came to look for land. They went out beyond Rio Verde, on the other side of a little town called Montividiu, where they looked at a place so full of enormous termite mounds, that thereafter it was called the Anthill Farm.

During this time it was possible to drive miles and miles without seeing so much as a fence. It wasn't unusual for land owners to hold tracts of more than 50 thousand acres. Ironically, some of these very land owners were considered to be poor. And really they were. The land was worth only a couple of dollars an acre. It took between 10 and 15 acres of native grass per head of cattle on a year round basis. The herds many times remained small because of the high mortality rate of newborn calves.

It was the cowboy's responsibility to ride the range and bring cows that were about to come fresh to a pasture near the corral. A calf born out on the range had a slim chance for survival. The first problem was the fact that unless someone was around to "teach" the calf to suck, it would simply die of starvation (A new strain of Brahmas has been introduced since then in which this isn't necessary).

Secondly there were the natural enemies, which included vultures, dogs, panthers, and even anacondas.

Thirdly was the very tropical problem of an infected naval, which could in a short time turn into tetanus and kill the calf.

When some of these land owners had a chance to turn their land for three or four dollars an acre, they felt like it was a chance of a lifetime.

June 1, 69 – By now the Unruhs and Dirkses had returned to the US. On this date the Toews and Burns families moved to the fazenda (farm) purchased from Manoel Norberto.

Rio Verde at this time had but a few paved streets. It was a sleepy place of approximately 30 thousand inhabitants (Today it is over 130 thousand). To get to the fazenda, the road to Montividiu was followed for a little ways. Then the main road (if you could call it that) was left and a trail was followed that snaked through the woods.

Frequent stops had to be made to open gates, as well as to get out the shovel and hoe and fix the road to be able to get through. Finally there was no road at all. A very faint

Brazil 8 News

trail used by fishermen to go to the falls where Daniel Kramers now live, was the only evidence that man had ever placed foot on that soil.

The fazenda was an absolute work of art – divine art. The many rushing streams that emptied into the Monte Alegre were (are) lined with majestic palm trees. The water of the river itself was crystal clear (not any more). The place teemed with wildlife, ranging from 20 foot anacondas to huge panthers and five foot lizards.

Camp was first set up by the falls where the Kramers now live. A beautiful spot, below the falls where the river widened out and the water was fairly shallow, was the place that cattle herds used to come through. Also it was where we crossed on horseback when going to the neighbors.

The cookstove was made up of some stones gotten out of the river. As the fire blazed away and the stones became hot, there was suddenly a terrible explosion and pieces of hot stone flew in every direction. Unbeknown to the group, certain stones in this area cannot take heat. It was through God's providence that no one was seriously injured or even killed by the superheated projectiles.

Several years later we had a similar experience with our fireplace, when rocks used to make the bottom began exploding. Once again the consequences could have been tragic.

June 8, 69 – The first church services on the fazenda were held in the shade of a small woods where the Burnses set up camp (and where Emma lives to this day).

June 20, 69 – Progress has always been a mark of the American Colony. Today church was held under the stockracks of Dick Toews' truck, which had been placed on the ground and covered with a black plastic tarp.

July 20, 69 – The first Brazilian attended services. Pedro Pão (literally "Peter Bread," a nickname given to Pedro because of his light complexion), crossed the Monte Alegre River to visit his new neighbors. The entire service was held in Portuguese. I suspect that only the Lord understood everything that was said. Anyone else who didn't have a fairly good grasp of both Spanish and English probably got little out of the actual words.

July 26, 69 – John & Alma Penner and son Eldon arrived in Brasília. The following day John had the sermon in a service in the Otis Hostetler home. This was the first sermon ever preached in Brazil (maybe South America) by an ordained minister of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.

August 3, 69 – The Burnses put up a masonite shack, known as the Cracker Box. On this day services were held in it for the first time.

August 10, 69 – We arrived in Rio de Janeiro with our two children.

August 19, 69 – Down by the falls, a brick yard was set up. If I'm not mistaken, READER'S DIGEST even had an article on the Cinva-Ram block maker. It was supposed to be the solution to the housing crisis in underdeveloped nations.

It worked like this. Dirt had to be dug up and run through a fine screen. Then dry cement was added – 10 percent, I believe, and thoroughly mixed. Just enough water was added to where a ball could be made if pressed tightly by hand. Now it was ready for the Cinva-Ram press. A very simple, sturdy affair made of heavy iron plates welded together,

Brazil News

the exact amount of the dirt/cement mixture had to be placed into the chamber. A lid was placed over the chamber and the operator had to pull down on about an eight-foot long steel handle. If not enough of the mixture was placed in the chamber, the operator would come crashing down to the earth. And the brick would be no good. If too much was put in, he would find himself hanging in the air, trying to get the lever to come down. The brick would be no good. When just the right amount was put in, a good brick would result. Removed from the press, the brick would be placed in the sun to bake. The result was something like a reinforced miniature adobe.

Enough bricks were made to build a house and a shed. The house, the first permanent house on the Colony, is still in good shape. In fact, nearly 40 years later, it has less cracks than a lot of more recent houses made of commercial brick. It's the place Emma Burns calls home.

I have never found out if Cinva-Ram block machines really solved any large scale housing problems. What I do know is that if there would have been very many around, there would have been no unemployment in that particular country.

August 24, 69 – Dick Toews got a roof on his pole shed so we began having services there. Each Sunday as we gathered for services the walls would be higher as they built up the walls with Cinva-Ram bricks.

August 25, 69 – John Penners moved into a tiny little wooden house they built along the spring.

August 28, 69 – Jona & Doris Dyck and four of their children arrived in Brasília with permanent visas. Now we had two ministers and one deacon.

September 11, 69 – Denton Burns built them a house out of particle board. On this day they moved in.

September 28, 69 – We began having services in Jona's house.

September 30, 69 – João Souto, Manoel Norberto's tractor driver (now Charlene Loewen's husband), came to the Colony and broke up a little piece of ground to be farmed. Thus we became an agricultural colony.

October 5, 69 – We began having evening services, in addition to the normal Sunday morning services.

October 8, 69 – Harold & Emma Dirks, with their six children arrived. In a pickup. That's right. IN A PICKUP. They drove all the way from Idaho, except for when they loaded their pickup on the Queen Mary and later on a railroad flatcar in areas where there were no roads. They left the US the same day we did, but got here about two months later.

October 14, 69 – The Colony bought a tractor for all to use.

November 6, 69 – Enos & Clara Miller (7 children), Daniel & Anna Kramer (6 children plus 2 nephews), and Dan & Clara Coblentz (5 children) arrived with permanent visas. Enos Miller, a deacon, brought our staff up to four members. Homer & Hazel Unruh and John & Joan Unruh (2 children) came on tourist visas, staying until February 22, 70.

November 9, 69 – Because of the big crowd, we had to go back to having services in Dick Toews' shed again.

Brazil ¹⁰ News

November 21, 69 – Harold Dirks moved into a little brick house.

November 27, 69 – The Denton Burns family, Homer & Hazel, and we spent the first night in the Cinva-Ram brick house.

We had been living in a little tent. It was approximately 6 feet by 8 feet. Right at the peak one could almost stand upright. Our entire family and all our worldly goods fit in it.

One Sunday afternoon we had one of the awfulest rainstorms. Faith and I were inside trying to keep the wind from carrying it off. Every little bit we had to shove the sagging top up to dump the water that gathered in the dip. Strangely the water somehow managed to come into the tent, but it couldn't get out. Finally, to avoid having it turn into the world's first tent swimming pool, I had to get my hunting knife and cut a slit along one side to let the water out.

To this day, some 37 years later, one of my greatest pleasures is to lie in bed hearing the rain drumming on our tile roof. And not having to cut a slit in the wall.

November 29, 69 – Daniel Kramers moved their tent under a little pole shed with a tile roof. Maybe they didn't like to live in a swimming pool either.

December 14, 69 – Dick Toews and Jona Dyck left for the southern state of Paraná to look for land.

January of 70 – We had our first Sunday School election.

The Toews and Dyck families left the Colony, moving to a more settled location in southern Brazil.

Homer Unruh and I decided to build a wooden washing machine with paddles on the outside. The idea was to set it up in the spring and run it by water power. It was a fabulous little machine, with only one defect. It didn't work.

March 14, 70 – We had our first school enrollment.

March 15, 70 – We had our first contact with the Russians, who live in southern Brazil. They were out looking for crops to custom cut. Later they began a colony beyond Montividiu. We have excellent relations with them. This was true even during the time of the Cold War.

April 1, 70 – We had a school meeting. Denton Burns, John Penner, and Dan Coblenz were elected to the first schoolboard.

April 5, 70 – Two nuns and several Peace Corp workers were out from Rio Verde. They attended our services. Then we all had a basket dinner together.

During this period we planted tens of thousands of pineapple plants. Because the land had just been broken up and the tough native grass hadn't had a chance to decompose properly, a fungus developed and most of the plants died.

May 4, 70 – First day of school. I was the teacher. Classes were held in Dick Toews' shed. There were 21 students.

August 9, 70 – We all went up the hill, in the middle of the woods, and selected a site for our future church building.

October 15, 70 – Pete & Edna Loewen (8 children) and Reno & Marilyn Hibner (4 children) arrived in Brazil with permanent visas. After Jona Dyck and Dick Toews left, we were down to one minister and one deacon. Now, with Reno, we again had two ministers.

Brazil News

November 12, 70 – John Penners moved into their new house.

November 13, 70 – Dan & Clara Coblentz came home today with a tiny little girl they named Diana Faith. She was the first Brazilian child adopted on the Colony.

December 29, 70 – Pete Loewen and Reno Hibner bought a tract of land, that borders the first tract, from Aristote Mesquita.

January 17, 71 – The first 12 kilometers out of Goiânia toward Rio Verde have been paved. That means we now have only 208 kilometers (130 miles) of dirt road to Rio Verde and another 40 to the Colony. That can easily mean three of four hours of bouncing.

January 24, 71 – Mim Burns' monkey got loose and came to church this morning and tried to make friends with the preacher's wife. It turned out to be a very one-sided affair.

Another time a kitten sedately walked up the isle, it's little tail gently swaying, and right up to John Penner, who was sitting on what should have been a rostrum. Thank goodness this wasn't a one-sided affair. The preacher reached down, picked up the little feline visitor, placed it on his lap and slowly stroked its fur.

Other local guests to our services included dogs, chickens and a little froggie. Down in a little crack in the floor, where no one could be rude to it, the little fellow showed its pentecostal colors and made the rafters ring with powerful music.

To this day the regional fauna finds its way to church. In the Monte Alegre Congregation the men's Sunday School class is in the breezeway between the church and the social hall. Blackbirds, which incidentally are tremendous singers, love to serenade us. Also a pair of large green parrots likes to fly in occasionally and jabber in an unknown tongue.

March 5, 71 – A church building committee was elected: Denton Burns, Dan Coblentz, Enos Miller, Carman Loewen, and Eldon Penner.

March 7, 71 – Luis Duarte, the little boy who lived in the house by the old Rio Verdinho River bridge, came to live at Harold Dirkses and go to school.

March of 71 – Enos Miller bought a place from Geraldo Honório on the other side of the Monte Alegre river, across from Daniel Kramers.

We began our first revival meetings with our home staff as the evangelists. On Sunday, March 28 we had communion, the first ever in South America for the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.

March 24, 71 – The Jona Dyck family sold out and returned to the US.

Tony de Lima (now married to Juanita Loewen) began working for Harold Dirks. The Russians paid the Colony a visit. They have bought land beyond Montividiu.

April of 71 – The second rice harvest. Thirteen acres yielded 147 bags (132 lbs to a bag). Two and a half acres of soybeans yielded 18 bags. The beans had to finally be fed to the pigs as no one in Rio Verde would buy them. The freight to send them to Goiânia would have been more than what they would have paid for them.

The Pete Loewen family moved into their shed, which doubled as a house for a number of years.

Enos Miller and Pete Loewen went to Goiânia to get the valves ground on a tractor

Brazil ¹² News

head. Half way back to Rio Verde, they discovered that the head had bounced out of the truck in some particularly bad hole in the road. They turned around and drove all the way back, but never found it.

They took the partitions out of Dick Toews' shed to make more room for church services.

May of 71 – Jake Loewen, here on a visit, bought a tract of land beyond Montividiu, not too far from the Russian Colony.

Harold Dirks set up a small hog operation some time ago. Now he is selling pigs to the butcher shops in town. It isn't going over very well simply because Harold is raising meat type hogs and the people here are used to lard type animals. Virtually all the cooking is done with lard instead of cooking oil, so the value of a hog is based on how many liters of lard it will produce, and not by the meat it will yield. It took quite a few years for the people to adapt to this kind of hog.

Denton Burns made a sample church bench.

May 20, 71 – The Dick Toews family left Brazil permanently.

June 5, 71 – The new church benches were finished. They are being used to this day.

June 6, 71 – Our first wedding in Brazil. Glenn Hibner, Reno & Marilyn's son, and Elizabeth, Denton & Emma's daughter. The wedding was in the Monte Alegre church and the reception in Reno's unfinished house with approximately 200 attending.

June 7, 71 – Our second wedding in Brazil. Glenn Hibner, Reno & Marilyn's son, to Elizabeth, Denton & Emma's daughter. The wedding was in town with hardly anyone attending.

July of 71 – The Dan Coblentz family returned to the US.

Luis Duarte is staying at John Penners for this school term.

September 26, 71 – Our third wedding in Brazil. Eldon, son of John & Alma Penner, to Bonnie, Harold & Emma's daughter. The reception was in what is now Earl & Johanna Schmidt's house.

September 27, 71 – Our fourth wedding in Brazil. Eldon, son of John & Alma Penner, to Bonnie, Harold & Emma's daughter. The wedding was in town. Hardly anyone showed up.

(Just a little explanation on these "double weddings." Back then there had to be a civil wedding. The religious wedding was optional. For us the religious wedding wasn't optional, so on Sunday we would have the religious wedding in church, and on Monday morning the bride and groom would go to town to the courthouse for the civil marriage.)

October 13, 71 – Enos & Clara Miller's daughter, Rachel, has the dubious honor of being the first American on the Colony to get bit by a poisonous snake. A *jararacuçu* (from the bothrops family). She was taken to the hospital and given anti-venom. Her recovery was rapid.

November of 71 – Duane Holdeman bought a tract of land from several Brazilian neighbors.

Jake & Tina Loewen moved to Brazil. This old couple definitely enriched the Colony. They were a living link with the past. In one of our C.E. programs, J.G, as he was called, gave his personal recollections of John Holdeman.

Brazil ¹³ News

Glenn & Frieda Reimer (2 children) from Canada came to spend six months here with her folks, the Burnses.

December 4, 71 – Ura & Rosella Yoder (5 children) came on permanent visas and bought Enos Miller's first place.

January 5, 1972 – We had our first Wednesday evening meeting in church. The leaders are chosen alphabetically.

January 31, 72 – Ura & Rosella Yoder bought seven Holstein cows, starting the first dairy on the Colony.

February & March of 72 – The mayor of Rio Verde sent out a caterpillar and two graders to build roads.

April of 72 – Jonas Schultz, Dick Johnson and Eddie Schneider here for a visit.

June 8, 72 – The land was cleared and stakes were set for the new Monte Alegre church.

June 22, 72 – The footer was poured for the new church.

August of 72 – Work was begun on new church building.

November 18, 72 – The Peter Friesen family (3 children) from Canada arrived with permanent visas. Six days later they returned to Canada. A record.

March 19, 73 – Pete Loewen and Denton Burns killed in an accident. Chris Stoltzfus was critically injured.

March 21, 73 – The first funeral on the Colony.

Readers Contribute

Flying Blind

A woman was flying from Seattle to San Francisco. Unexpectedly, the plane was diverted to Sacramento along the way. The flight attendant explained that there would be a delay, and if the passengers wanted to get off the aircraft the plane would re-board in 50 minutes.

Everybody got off the plane except one lady who was blind. The man had noticed her as he walked by and could tell the lady was blind because her Seeing Eye dog lay quietly underneath the seats in front of her throughout the entire flight.

He could also tell she had flown this very flight before because the pilot approached her, and calling her by name, said, "Kathy, we are in Sacramento for almost an hour. Would you like to get off and stretch your legs?"

The blind lady replied, "No thanks, but maybe my dog would like to stretch his legs."

Cheerfully, the pilot led the dog out to the tarmac, and then...

...And then all the people in the gate area came to a complete standstill when they looked up and saw the pilot walk off the plane with a Seeing Eye dog! The pilot was even wearing dark sunglasses. People scattered. They not only tried to change planes, but they were trying to change airlines!

A Child Shall Lead Answer Them

I was testing the children in my Sunday school class to see if they understood the concept of getting to heaven. I asked them, "If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, would that get me into heaven?"

"NO!" the children answered.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would that get me into heaven?"

Again, the answer was, "NO!"

By now I was starting to smile. "Well, then, if I was kind to animals and gave candy to all the children, and loved my husband, would that get me into Heaven?" I asked them again.

Again, they all answered, "NO!"

I was just bursting with pride for them.

"Well," I continued, "then how can I get into Heaven?"

A five-year-old boy shouted out, "YOU GOTTA BE DEAD."