

# Brazil News



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Editorial

## **There Is a Cup, and the Wine Is Red**

[This can hardly be called an editorial. A book review would be better. Fareed Zakaria, the author of *The Post-American World*, is as familiar with the nations of the world, with their history, their culture, their governmental and economic structure, as a good surgeon is with the anatomy of the human body. Effortlessly he glides not only between the present and the past, but into the future as well.

Fareed Zakaria (pronounced fah-REED zah-CARE-ee-uh), born and raised in India, now the International Editor of *Newsweek*, is so impartial in his views that he could easily hold a debate with himself, first sitting in one chair and arguing one side of the issue, then taking the facing chair and arguing the other side—the result being an undisputed tie.

In all his detailed and lucid analyses, Zakaria factors in a wealth of data, but fails to include the most important: That *“promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.”*

This review will follow the sequence of the book and possibly seem disjointed. Hopefully, after finishing (if you do) you will head to your nearest bookstore and purchase a copy.]

### **Chapter 1. The Rise of the Rest**

To understand this chapter, imagine that you are living in a town that has 50 businesses. At the end of each fiscal year, a report is published listing the earnings of each business. For as long as anyone can remember, your local farm equipment agency has been at the top of the list. Sales increase by approximately 10 percent per year. Last year’s

## Brazil <sup>2</sup> News

sales came to 50 million dollars. This year sales were up the normal 10 percent, coming to \$55,000,000. But, this year the machinery agency is in third place.

What happened?

A building boom. News of a new industry coming to town that would be hiring a thousand plus workers meant there would be a tremendous housing shortage. Builders moved in from all over the state and the local building supply company did a roaring business. It was in first place.

Also, a major car manufacturer (foreign, of course) came out with a new pickup that everyone just had to have. Your local car agency made second place.

Ten eventful years go by, the machinery agency is in tenth place in the annual report, even with sales growing at 10 percent per year.

This is the exact situation that Zakaria describes in chapter 1. The United States will always be in first place in some sectors, but in others, including world economy, it will surely be superceded.

According to Antoine van Agtmael, of the 25 companies in the emerging market that are likely to be the world's next great multinationals, (and I list them as printed), four companies will be from Brazil, four from Mexico, four from South Korea, four from Taiwan, three from India, two from China and one each from Argentina, Chile, Malaysia and South Africa.

He gives some additional information:

The world's tallest building in the world is now in Taipei—until one being built in Dubai is finished (Remember when the Empire State Building held that distinction?).

The richest man in the world is Mexican (and remember this can change overnight and Bill Gates regain his throne—in fact, he probably has).

The largest publicly traded corporation is in China.

The world's biggest airplane is built in Russia and the Ukraine.

The soon-to-be largest refinery is under construction in India.

The largest factories are in China.

London is asserting itself as the principal financial center.

The largest casino is not in Las Vegas, but in Macao.

The biggest movie industry is not Hollywood, but Bollywood (never heard of it?) in India.

Of the top ten malls in the world, only one is in the United States, the biggest being in Beijing.

Ten years ago America was at the top of the list in most of these categories. This is the rise of the rest.

The Bible tells us that the poor we will always have with us, but as it turns out, every year there are less. The amount of people earning a dollar a day worldwide has dropped from 40 percent in 1981 to 18 percent in 2004. By 2015 that number should be down to 12 percent. China's "great leap forward" (not Mao's in 1958 that was supposed to put China on the road to prosperity, but did just the opposite) has lifted more than 400 million people out of poverty. (So, folks, when you buy Made in China products in your local stores, you are actually part of the greatest humanitarian project of all times, which should be a consolation.)

## Brazil <sup>3</sup> News

Fifty countries in which people living in abject poverty at this point are getting no benefits from globalization. In the other 142, we quote, “which include China, India, Brazil, Russian Indonesia, Turkey, Kenya and South Africa—the poor are slowly being absorbed into productive and growing economies.” This is visibly true in Brazil. Where bicycle shops used to be, today there are cycle agencies. In our local town of 130 thousand inhabitants, up to 600 cycles are sold monthly! People who a few years ago only dreamed of owning a car now are the proud owners of an old junker. But not for long, It will soon traded for a better car, than an even better used car, and finally for a new model.

Again we quote: “At the politico-military level, we remain in a single superpower world [the US]. But in every other dimension—industrial, financial, educational, social, cultural—the distribution of power is shifting, moving away from American dominance.” He goes on to say this does not mean we are entering an anti-American world, but rather a post-American world.

Zakaria ends chapter 1 with a question: “In short, what will it mean to live in a post-American world?”

### **Chapter 2. The Cup Runneth Over.**

If the governments and leaders of the countries cited as emerging powers were microscopically examined, we would probably shake our heads. Finally we would ask: Are these countries growing because of the leadership and government policies? Or in spite of them? In most cases the answer would be a weak “both” and a vigorous “in spite of.” Big business and industry today do quite well under do-nothing leaders and governments—even under Communist governments, like in China. Their unspoken message to governments is: Leave us alone; don’t tax the living daylight out of us, and we’ll guarantee growth.

Big business and industry are able to weather storms that set governments reeling. A case in point is a day in July, 2006 when Hezbollah launched a rocket attack on Israel. The bombs exploded much farther inland than the Israelis had believed possible. The population, the government and the military were shook up. Strangely, the stock market was higher the day after the attack than before.

This immunity does not hold true when the crisis is of economical origin, like the one that has everyone on edge. Then anything and everything can fly to pieces. An economic crisis can be much more serious than a military crisis.

Zakaria believes that “a series of backpack or truck bombings in the United States” would shock everyone, but in a couple of weeks things would be getting back to normal economically. Stop and think: Did the World Trade Center bombing in any way affect commerce in your local town?

In South and Central America we are faced with a buffoon in Venezuela who can hardly wait to pull on Castro’s fatigues. The only reason he is heard is that he can climb to the top of one his oil derricks and shout like an angry Goliath. Should the oil suddenly dry up, so would he. Is he dangerous? Maybe. But hardly. In spite of his petro-dollars, should he try something smart, the principal nations would quickly hit him with a trade embargo. In other words, in case of problems, it will be economic sanctions, and not military might, that will bring him to time.

## Brazil <sup>4</sup> News

The cup runneth over—with money. Currency traders swap approximately two trillion dollars daily. This money transits from one country to another at approximately the speed of light as investors try to decide where their money will bring them the best returns. One country laments, another rejoices. Not all is speculation. Just as mortals accumulate or lose wealth, nations climb and slip. Emerging markets today hold 75 percent of the world's foreign exchange reserves. China has over one and a half trillion dollars in its accounts. “Goldman Sachs has predicted that, by 2040, five emerging-market countries—China, India, Brazil, Russia, and Mexico—will together have a larger economic output than the G-7 countries, the seven Western nations that have dominated global affairs for decades.”

Not only does buying Made in China goods make you an involuntary humanitarian, it also gives you a key role in the fight against inflation. Presidential contenders campaigning for reelection like to point out the low inflation during their tenure in office. Really, they had little to do with it. Thank the Mings and the Chengs. There is nothing that kills inflation faster than abundance of cheap, quality goods. The Chinese, who can imitate almost anything invented by man and mass produce it cheaper than anyone else, are the unwitting paladins in the crusade against inflation.

And as an afterthought on what we have just said, when people rave and rant that China produces cheaper goods because of disrespect for human rights, slave labor—you know the story—remember the 400 million that have ascended several steps, important steps, on the economic ladder. And remember that millions will be following their footsteps.

As I read this book, I was amazed at the amount of times Zakaria listed Brazil as a major player on the future world scene. Suddenly it hit me.

Today farmers must produce three tons per hectare if there is to be enough food to go around. By 2025, this amount will have to rise to four tons to feed eight billion mouths. That means that countries like...well, like Brazil, that probably has the best climate in the world for producing crops and enormous amounts of land yet to be cleared and put in production, will be involved in the most sustainable segment of the world economic structure. (People don't have to drive new SUVs, or even a new car, but rich or poor, they do have to eat.) And added to this, huge offshore oil reserves recently discovered on Brazil's Atlantic seaboard should place it in eighth place, or better, among oil producing nations.

Relations between the United States and other countries, especially emerging countries, is undergoing a subtle change. Zakaria says that “China, India, Brazil, and other emerging powers will not follow along with a Western-led process in which they have not participated.” Put into very understandable language, the day comes when Dad can no longer impose his decision on teenage son or daughter by saying, “Because Daddy says so.” The right to be right is now challenged and the teenager wants an answer that makes sense to him or her. The fact that it obviously makes sense to Dad carries only minimal weight.

Understanding parents, wanting to develop the power of decision in their children by saying, “I don't think you ought to go, but I will leave it up to you,” know a new

## Brazil News

era has dawned when son or daughter replies for the first time, “Thanks Dad, but I think I’ll go.” After the car has left, Dad walks around in a daze for half an hour. Has something gone wrong?

Why are yesterday’s subservient nations quietly disregarding American wishes today?

Unipolarity. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States became the undisputed world power. Contrary to what we may believe, power concentrated in the hands of one powerful nation, no matter how just, breeds discontent. Adam accepted Eve as his wife before the fall. If they had fallen first, the marriage would very likely have been called off (Unless there would have been a choice. Then he probably would have proposed. To Eve.) The United States is no longer needed as a protector, as a mother, if you will.

Education. Without exception, emerging nations have a well-developed educational system. Yes, it is true that some of the institutions aren’t top-of-the-line (while some are very good), but they are still broadening the minds of a generation that no longer takes “because Daddy says so” as an answer. In the business world, English, the universal language, is as necessary as a coat and tie.

Increased buying power. Money generates both power and self-confidence. Men and women who take home a paycheck that permits them to climb mountains that before they could only view at a distance make up their own minds on issues. They ascend rapidly on the ladder of success. A country in which industry, business and agriculture flourish in spite of politicians, is on the launch pad for orbital flight.

Emancipation. To emancipate is...

1) to free from restraint, control, or the power of another; especially to free from bondage;

3) to free from any controlling influence (as traditional mores or beliefs). —Merriam-Webster’s 11th Collegiate Dictionary.

This is the real secret. Underdeveloped nations invariably have a miniscule upper-class and a negligible middle-class, with the majority of the population living in hopeless poverty. When such a people is emancipated from the control of the very rich and corrupt politicians, the countdown to success begins.

The law of gravity. Nations are just as subject to the force of gravity as a ball tossed upward. The greater the force that propels the ball upward, the longer it will stay aloft. But once its acme has been reached, it will descend. Zakaria tells us that “with 5 percent of the world’s population, the United States has generated between 20 and 30 percent of the world output for 125 years.” That ball has gone very, very high. Certainly much higher than any ball in civilized history. But to believe it is filled with helium and will not come back down is an exercise in self-deception. It is coming down. This does not mean it will come crashing down, although it could. In just a word, it means that instead of being *the* power, it will be *a* power. With a good dose of humility, this transition will be relatively painless and not all that much will change. With arrogance it could resemble an aircraft hitting the runway with landing gear retracted.

Zakaria ends this chapter by saying that “generations from now, when historians write about these times, they might note that, in the early decades of the twenty-first

century, the United States succeeded in its great and historic mission—it globalized the world. But along the way, they might write, it forgot to globalize itself.” These words were written by a man who highly respects the United States.

### **Chapter 3. A Non-Western World?**

*Promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

We find ourselves asking if there is another nation that could assume the place now held by the United States. We almost shudder as we ask if God could possibly be thinking about letting a non-Christian nation take up the reins of the world. China, for example.

If God had not stepped in, America would very likely have been settled by the Chinese. Or by the Spanish or Portuguese, with the blessings of the Pope. (Where do all the Spanish names in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and California come from?) God had other plans.

Did the Chinese have the power and expertise to settle and develop the North American continent?

Christopher Columbus’ flagship, the Santa Maria, was less than a hundred feet in length. His little flotilla of four ships was manned by 150 sailors. Eighty-seven years earlier, in 1405, Admiral Zheng, from the Chinese Navy, set sail with a fleet of 317 ships, some over 400 feet long, and a total of 28,000 men. With nine masts, these ships were so gargantuan that three hundred acres of forest had to be cut down to come up with enough wood—for just one ship.

“The Chinese ships were constructed with special woods, intricate joints, sophisticated waterproofing techniques, and an adjustable centerboard keel. The treasure ships had large, luxurious cabins, silk sails, and windowed halls. All were constructed on dry docks in Nanjing, the world’s largest and most advanced shipbuilding port. In the three years after 1405, 1,681 ships were built or refitted at Nanjing. Nothing remotely comparable could have happened in Europe at the time.”

We, of course, don’t understand the mind of God. What we do know is that in the 1430s a new emperor came to power with a strong aversion for maritime activities. Exploration and trade expeditions were prohibited. In 1500 the court determined that anyone building a ship with more than two masts would be executed. By 1551, when this dynasty came to a close, it was a crime to go to sea in any kind of ship, no matter how few masts it had. Except for this strange intervention, there is a very good chance the Chinese would have had a 500-year head start setting up shop in the United States.

### **Chapter 4. The Challenger**

Zakaria now turns his attention to China. He begins by saying that Americans are truly dazzled by bigness (while the Japanese revere minimalism). And China is big. With a population of 1.3 billion souls, it is very big.

China is powerful. We can only guess what China would be today if Mao Zedong hadn’t been head of the People’s Republic of China from 1949-76 when his economic

## Brazil News

and cultural revolution set the nation back a number of decades. A strict ideologist, he had no qualms about ordering the death of millions of his own countrymen, the cream of the land, to implant his own brand of communism. Tens of millions of peasants died of starvation because of his disastrous agricultural reforms.

When Deng Xiaoping picked up the reins he gave a speech “that turned out to be the most important in modern Chinese history. He urged that the regime focus on economic development and let facts—not ideology—guide its path. ‘It doesn’t matter if it is a black cat or a white cat,’ Deng said. ‘As long as it can catch mice, it’s a good cat.’” Since then, China has done just that, pursuing a path of modernization that is ruthlessly pragmatic.”

Notice the results:

- For the last 30 years China has grown over 9 percent a year. No other major country has ever had such a growth rate.
- During these same 30 years China has moved 400 million people out of poverty.
- China’s economy has doubled every eight years for the last 30 years.
- In 1978 China made 200 air conditioners a year. In 2005 it made 48 million.
- China today exports in a single day more than it exported in all of 1978.
- Pudong, which 15 years ago was undeveloped countryside, today is Shanghai’s financial district. It is eight times the size of London’s new financial district and only slightly smaller than the entire city of Chicago.
- The city of Chongqing is growing by 300 thousand people per year.
- The world’s 20 fastest-growing cities are all in China.
- China is the world’s largest producer of coal, steel and cement.
- It is the largest cell phone market in the world.
- In 2005 it had 28 billion square feet of space under construction, five times more than the United States.
- Exports to the United States have grown by 1,600 percent over the past 15 years.
- China manufactures two-thirds of the world’s photocopiers, microwave ovens, DVD players and shoes.
- Wal-Mart imports about 18 billion dollars worth of goods from China each year.
- China’s foreign-exchange reserves, the largest in the world, stand at 1.5 trillion dollars.
- After the United States, China is the world’s largest military spender.
- China has compressed the West’s two hundred years of industrialization into thirty.
- The number of cars on China’s roads is increasing at 26 percent a year (which means that wreckers, body shops and E.R. doctors will do a thriving business).

China isn’t merely taking orders for its cheap merchandise. It is playing the role of the modern Absalom, sitting at the gate and unobtrusively striking up a conversation with individuals or nations that feel a grudge toward the United States.

An explanation is in order. When in the US, I have found myself not included on some people’s most-loved list when I say that US charity and foreign aid programs seldom are really that. There are subtle strings attached. When an impoverished Asian nation is hit by a earthquake, a 50 million loan is quickly arranged. Uncle Sam

## Brazil News

is applauded. But when that same Asian nation, several years later decides to build a much-needed hydroelectric dam, who gets the contract? You guessed it. And China knows it.

China knows it and China is stealing the hearts of nations that before relied on the United States for “help.” A case in point: The Foreign Policy magazine tells the story of the Nigerian government negotiating a five million loan with the World Bank. One of the requirements for approval was the cleaning up of their corrupt railroad system. When the contract was about ready to be signed, China sidled up to a Nigerian official and whispered a few words. It offered a whopping 9 billion dollar loan to completely redo the railroad system, with no strings attached. China knew that most of the 9 billion will go to corrupt officials, but so what? Nigeria was theirs! And so were future dams, railways, airports...

Never get the idea that Chinese diplomats and businessmen, somewhat smaller and apparently more timid than their American counterparts, are a bit naïve. They’re not.

The Sino-American relationship appears to be a two-way street. Zakaria sums it up best: “The Chinese-American economic relationship is one of mutual dependence. China needs the American market to sell its good; the United States needs China to finance its debt—it’s globalization’s equivalent of the nuclear age’s Mutual Assured Destruction.” Frankly, I believe Americans would sleep just a bit better if the roles were inverted. But on second thought, maybe not.

Americans find security in missiles. Today China has a mere 20 nuclear missiles capable of reaching the US mainland (although the chances of getting shot down first are great), while the United States has approximately nine thousand nuclear warheads and five thousand strategic warheads. In a nuclear war the United States will win. Joshua Cooper Ramo sums this up by saying, “*The goal for China is not conflict but the avoidance of conflict. True success in strategic issues involves manipulating a situation so effectively that the outcome is inevitably in favor of Chinese interests.*” (Italics are mine.)

### **Chapters 5-7: The Ally, American Power, American Purpose**

We will only briefly touch these chapters and venture a few general observations:

China and India, with nearly a third of the world’s population, will be big-league players in the years ahead. How can India, a nation with approximately one third (300 million) of its inhabitants living on less than a dollar day possibly play an important role on the international scene? Zakaria tells us that “if they cannot export large goods because of bad highways and ports, they export software and services, things you can send over wires rather than roads... India’s GDP is 50 percent services, 25 percent industry and 25 percent agriculture.”

Zakaria does not suggest that the United States will become a non-entity, that it will cease to be a world power, or that an economic crumple will drastically change the American way of life. He does believe, however, that “the rise of the rest” will forever change America’s present status. This is not an unprecedented situation. Actually, it has happened many times during the last millennia. Great Britain used to rule the world. As the handwriting began to appear on the wall, Great Britain gracefully slipped into



a secondary—albeit very important—role on the world scene. Like the Queen, Great Britain ages very well. And also like the Queen, is loved and respected by most nations.

For America it will be a challenge to age as gracefully as the British.

If God permits human events to take their course, the next generation will probably live in a world not dominated by a single power, but by tacit agreement among possibly three or four nations, most, maybe all of them without a Christian past, present or future.

If you find that a bit scary, so do I. Orientals—Chinese, Japanese—have a quality most Westerners don't possess in abundance. Patience. They will wait an hour, a day, a month, a year, ten years, or twenty or thirty years, to reach their goal. All the while they will be bowing and smiling graciously. We enjoy this oriental courtesy...

Will interaction with the West make a dent in the basic oriental culture? Will they—in a heartfelt way, not only because it is good business—gravitate toward the values we cherish?

It's a question we can't answer. What we do know is that Christian nations are not growing more Christian. So we can hardly expect nations with a millennial non-Christian history to begin championing morality and creating a safe world for our children and grandchildren.

The facts that Zakaria presents, as well as his long-range predictions, make sense. Remember, however, that “in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red.”

[*The Post-American World*, by Fareed Zakaria, is published by W.W. Norton & Company, New York and London. Recommended reading.] ▲

## Readers Contribute

### **News from Darfur**

*by Natalie Jeffery*

I have just finished six days of rest in Khartoum which were very needed and appreciated! I came out from Darfur just over two weeks ago to work one week in the office in Khartoum, supporting the Khartoum team that are short of staff at the moment, and then six days of rest. The last 10 days or so before leaving Darfur were quite stressful and tiring, so it has been very good to be able to rest a little. I was able to go to a nearby coffee shop and buy nice bread and pastries and good coffee! I also visited a small island on the Nile called Tuti Island, I went there together with one of the team from Khartoum. We went by taxi to the rivers edge and then got on a very old boat which they packed as full as possible and then we went the short distance through the strong current to the island. Neither of us had visited the island before so after walking a while we decided to catch a rickshaw and with our minimal Arabic ask if the driver would take us for a tour of the island. We had left the house at 6:30 a.m., hoping to see most of the small island before the heat of the day and it was a lovely cool ride through the island. We then went back to the mainland and visited the national museum which had items in there from ancient times. It was an interesting day! I also

## Brazil News

visited the local market in the center of town. This was nearer the end of my stay here when things looked more stable. It was fun to wonder in and out of the stalls with the market traders shouting out their wares. We even did some buying, haggling over the prices. The best bit for me though, of these six days, was just being able to be still and read and sleep.

I arrived back in Darfur yesterday; it felt good to be back with the team and getting on with the work. I realized how quickly I have settled in here and will miss people when I leave.

I only have five weeks remaining of my contract and I expect them to be very busy. The health coordinator who is overall responsible for the health programs will be away for most of the month of August so I will be covering for her. This will involve doing my work, which means doing trips out to visit the clinics, and also cover her role which involves meetings with officials and other organizations.

Just before I left Darfur I had done several day trips visiting clinics, although physically, and often emotionally, tiring days, I enjoy being out seeing the health staff, hearing about the health situation, and watching the clinic staff at work. On one of my day trips we had been dropped by the helicopter and then walked 30 minutes through fairly deep sand, then across a river, not yet full of water and arrived at the clinic. It is made of dried grass with plastic sheeting as a roof. It was my first time to visit this clinic and we had a good visit, meeting with the staff, observing and supervising the running of the clinic. Just as we were about to leave there was a small commotion outside and a man was brought into the clinic, he was in obvious pain, holding on to his hand. One of the clinic assistants, who have minimal training, stepped forward and sat the man down, he then began to unwind a tattered rag which was wrapped around the man's finger. To my shock as the last of the rag unwound, it revealed the finger just about held on by skin, a cut right through the finger. It seemed the finger was just about to fall off. Observing the clinic assistant as he swabbed gently to clean and get a better look, then as the health worker brought pain killers, the clinic assistant calmly administered local anesthetic to the finger and called out for sutures to sew the finger back on. I thought of this occurring back home, where even as a registered nurse I would never be allowed to do such a procedure. Here a clinic assistant with minimal training, and very little schooling was confidently putting this finger together. He looked at me as he worked, and I tried to say he was doing well. Then my project assistant translated for me. "Yes I know I shouldn't be doing this procedure, but there is no one else."

It again brought to me the realization of how a large part of the population of this world has little or no access to health care. How people just like you and me, yet living in poor conditions, with perhaps little food, leading to malnutrition and poor health, people living in areas with minimal or no vaccine coverage to prevent certain diseases, and who may experience more ill health than many of us, do not have access to nurses, doctors, medicine and hospitals.

Again another field trip, we had a window of opportunity to visit an area where we wanted to establish oral rehydration treatment (ORT). The rainy season has begun and every year this brings outbreaks of diarrheal diseases. In southern Sudan cholera is already being

## Brazil 11 News

seen. Setting up oral rehydration treatment points in villages that don't have a clinic could save the lives of people until they are able to reach a clinic. In one day myself and a project assistant needed to find some local men who in the past have been used as clinic assistants, go over the treatment protocols, show them the items and simple equipment we had brought and how to use them. We also needed to go through the reporting procedures, so we could try and keep in touch and monitor any possible outbreaks. We sat in the shade of a building going over again and again (we found three clinic assistants and only one was able to read and write proficiently) how to treat with the simple rehydration sachets, and how to fill in the simple reporting forms. Again I was struck by how little it felt, how inadequate. Yet I know this is the most we could do at this stage. Since that day we haven't returned to that small village and I think of those clinic assistants often, sitting there with their jugs, cups and spoons offering the life saving rehydration solution. Very sick patients will be referred to the nearest clinic. Will all the referred patients be able to reach the clinic? No.

I am amazed again and again by the courage and strength of these people, by the willingness of men and women such as these clinic assistants who work in their communities, doing their best with limited knowledge and equipment. One of my favorite sayings from southern Sudan is "I tried my level best", (meaning I have tried my hardest) I have always liked this saying and often used to hear it from health workers I worked with there. I get the same feeling here. I know there are sometimes troubles and the clinic assistants aren't always reliable, but when I see the situation, the struggle to survive, I get the feeling that they are "doing their level best."

It makes me think of my spiritual life, am I doing my level best for God? Am I searching out His will for my life and then doing it with all I have as unto Him? Am I using the time He has given to me here on earth in the best way possible? When I look at the life of Jesus in the Bible it leaves me inspired, He touched so many lives in so many ways, often going out of His way to be with the untouchables, the rejected of society, the poor and the sick, the grieving and the lonely. Bringing hope and healing. I want to be more like Jesus, and to do my utmost, even if at times it does feel so small and I so failing.

Over the coming weeks I will continue to supervise these clinics, I am also trying to reorganize the village health committees program before I leave. The village health committees (VHC) are made up of village leaders and representatives who work together with the clinic staff. They are the link between the community, the clinic and Medair. We always try and meet with the VHCs when we visit the clinics. They tell us about the health situation and any problems the clinic may have or issues the community has with the clinic. The project assistant running this program is called Adam and he is an amazing person who has trained and supports around 18 of these committees, some of them having up to 40 members each. Adam and I have been trying to organize and structure the program better and I hope to finish that before I leave.

So it looks like a busy time ahead! I would continue to ask for your prayers regarding the team safety and for good health. Please pray that my replacement will arrive on time for me to be able to give a good handover. Please also pray for the people of Darfur.

Thank you for your prayers, thank you for all your e-mails. Hopefully I have managed to answer them all!



*[I have translated this story into Portuguese sent to me by Danielle Guerra, using Brazilian style punctuation, which includes using the em dash “—” instead of quotation marks. An em dash opens and closes a quote, except when the quote goes to the end of the paragraph, then the period signals the end.]*

## **I Was Hungry**

*(A true story)*

The smell of baking bread was more than Ricardinho (little Richard) could take.

— Dad, I’m hungry.

Agenor, his dad, had walked the streets since early that morning looking for work. He didn’t have a cent in his pocket and his eyes filled with tears as he looked at the little boy at his side.

— Dad, we haven’t eaten since yesterday. I’m terribly hungry.

Overwhelmed by a sense of sadness and shame, Agenor asked his son to wait for him while he entered the bakery. With heavy steps he walked to the counter and spoke to the attendant:

— Sir, my six year-old son is just outside the door and is hungry. I have walked the streets all day looking for work, but I’m just as broke now as when I started out. I ask you, in the name of Jesus, to give my son a piece of bread. I will sweep, wash dishes, or do whatever work there is to pay you.

Amaro, the owner of the bakery, thought it strange that this man, obviously not a beggar, should find himself in this kind of a situation. He asked Agenor to have his son come in.

Agenor came in holding his son’s hand. They both sat down on stools at the high counter and in a matter of minutes there was set before each a plate heaped with rice, beans, a steak and fried eggs. Ricardinho suddenly felt he was in dreamland.

Agenor watched his son eat, but tears began to trickle down his cheeks. He was unable to eat. At home were his wife and two small children. Without a thing to eat. It had been two years since he had a steady job, two years of suffering, of doing without, surviving on the odd jobs he could find.

Amaro saw something was amiss, but awkward in his attempts to help, called his wife:

— Maria! There must be something the matter with this food you fixed. My friend is crying, unable to eat this steak. It must be really tough...

Jolted, as if out of a bad dream, Agenor quickly took a bite and smiled. Looking at the couple behind the counter he said:

— Never have I had a better meal in my life. I thank the good Lord for this.

Amaro told his new friend to enjoy his meal and then they would talk. Wiping his tears, he ate his meal. When he finished, Amaro invited Agenor to his small office at the back of the bakery. They both sat down and Amaro listened to his new friend’s

story, how that he had been unemployed for the last two years and now for two months couldn't even find odd jobs. Illiterate and with no specific skills, work was hard to come by.

Amaro decided to hire Agenor to help with whatever needed to be done in his bakery. He sent him home with a two-week supply of groceries. With tears in his eyes, Agenor took leave, promising to report for work the next morning.

Agenor came home a new man, a man with hope. God was good and there would be better days.

The following day Agenor showed up at work at 5:00 o'clock in the morning. Amaro wasn't even sure why he had hired the man. They were both 32 years old with very different pasts, but something told him this was the thing to do.

Never did he regret hiring this hungry man. After a year Agenor was his most reliable worker. He worked hard, was always on time and absolutely trustworthy.

One day Amaro called Agenor into his office and told him about a new school in the neighborhood specialized in teaching adults how to read and write. He insisted that Amaro enroll.

Agenor never forgot that first day in school. Trembling with emotion, he realized new doors were opening for him.

Twelve years went by.

We now see Dr. Agenor Baptista de Medeiros opening the doors for the first time to his new law office. He sees his first client, then another, and then another...

[We inject here that especially in the past lawyers were addressed as Dr. Even today this sometimes occurs.]

At noon Dr. Agenor Baptista walked down the street to the bakery to talk to his old boss, who was impressed by this gentlemen dressed in his first suit and tie.

Ten more years go by.

Dr. Agenor Baptista was a busy men. His clients were made up of both the rich and the poor. No one was turned away because of not having money. Always aware of his own past, he set up a soup kitchen and soon over 200 meals were served at lunch each day. The nutritionist was Ricardo Baptista—Ricardinho.

Even though Agenor and Amaro no longer worked together, their friendship was closer than ever. And not only in life. When they were 82 they both died on the same day, at almost exactly the same time.

Ricardinho had a plaque engraved and placed at the entrance to the "Wayside House," founded by his dad and where over 200 hungry men and women found a warm meal each day.

These words were:

*One day I was hungry and you fed me.*

*One day when I lost hope, you showed me the way.*

*One day when I was lonely, you introduced me to God.*

*May God abide in each heart that enters this place.*

*May He grant the bread of mercy to each hungry soul.*



## **An Explanation of Death**

A sick man turned to his doctor as he was preparing to leave the examination room and said, “Doctor, I am afraid to die. Tell me what lies on the other side.”

Very quietly, the doctor said, “I don’t know.”

“You don’t know? You, a Christian man, do not know what is on the other side?”

The doctor was holding the handle of the door. On the other side came a sound of scratching and whining. As he opened the door, a dog sprang into the room and leaped on him with an eager show of gladness.

Turning to the patient, the doctor said, “Did you notice my dog? He’s never been in this room before. He didn’t know what was inside. He knew nothing except that his master was here, And when the door opened, he sprang in without fear. I know little of what is on the other side of death, but I do know one thing... I know my Master is there and that is enough.” ☒

## **Two Different Doctors’ Offices**

Two patients limp into two different medical clinics, with the same complaint. Both have trouble walking, and appear to require a hip replacement.

The first patient is examined within the hour, is X-rayed the same day, and has a time booked for surgery the following week.

The second sees his family doctor, after waiting three weeks for an appointment, then waits 8 weeks to see a specialist, then gets an x-ray, which isn’t reviewed for another week, and finally has his surgery scheduled, for a month from then.

Why the different treatment for the two patients?

The first is a Golden Retriever.

The second is a Senior Citizen.

Next time take me to a vet!

