

# Brazil News



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Editorial

## Miriam's Story

*[The story of Moses has been told—literally—millions of times in the past three thousand and some years. Children are delighted by his little boat ride on the Nile River that attracted the attention of a princess, the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt. The Bible supplies us with only a few details of what really happened. These facts—bricks, we will call them—are then “laid up” by the storyteller using generous doses of imagination for mortar. In literary circles this is called “historical fiction.”*

*In today's modern world almost anything important is videotaped, not only by professionals, but often by common citizens carrying a cell phone. Because of this, after a major news occurrence, it isn't unusual for a highly informative two- or three-hundred page book to be published within several weeks or months after the happening. Until approximately 20 years ago, this was impossible. Current and historical events had to be carefully researched, a process often taking months or years, before a reliable record could be published.*

*Paradoxically, a well written work of historical fiction can, on occasion, come closer to telling the story of what actually happened than a work of non-fiction. The reason for this is simple. History is almost always like a jigsaw puzzle with some pieces missing. By studying the adjacent pieces, a good historian can usually figure out what was on the missing pieces. But, for a work to truly be non-fiction, the author must limit his story to existing pieces. The historical fiction writer, on the other hand, can describe what he believes was on the missing pieces. Interestingly, even though his work is listed as fiction, he exhaustively researches his subject to come as close as possible to telling the true story. And maybe comes closer to reaching this objective than the non-fiction writer.*

*In the story that follows, found in Exodus, we have relied heavily on the Jewish historian Flavio Josephus, commentators Adam Clark and Matthew Henry, as well as other sources for our information. And now, Miriam's story...]*

My brother Aaron and I grew up on the banks of the Nile River. It was a beautiful spot, but hardly a beautiful time in the history of my people. We were slaves.

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Actually, I suppose it would be more correct to say my dad was a slave. At home we had fairly normal lives. We had a nice house and abundance of food. Living near a river, we had plenty of fish, plus an abundance of cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.

Yet there was a problem that covered our lives like a shroud. Our dad would get up before sunrise, have breakfast, and then hurry out in the dark to go to work. We wouldn't see him all day and when he finally got home at night, it was usually dark again. I can still see him almost stumbling through the door. He would be dead tired. Sometimes his shirt would be in shreds and his back would be covered with blood and welts. Nights like that he wouldn't eat supper. We knew he was hungry—he had to be hungry—but he simply didn't have the strength to eat. Nights like this mom would quietly ask Aaron and me to go to bed and then she would wash and dress his back.

The worst would be the following morning. He would be so stiff and sore that mom would say, “Amram, you can't go to work like this. You can't even walk.”

Between clenched teeth he would say, “Jochebed, I've got to go. You know what will happen if I don't. They'll soon be here to get me and...” Here his voice would trail off. But we knew what he didn't say, “...and you'll never see me again.” And so, with a stout stick as a cane, he would head into the darkness. I think the pain mom felt was just as great as that which dad felt. She would sit down on a corner stool and weep, sometimes for hours.

Sometimes things got a little better. Depending on who the taskmaster was, the beatings would stop and dad would come through the door at night with a smile on his face. Nights like that we loved having supper together. Dad would be starved and we would be amazed at how much he could eat. He would tell us what kind of work he was doing and describe the magnificent buildings that Pharaoh was constructing.

I began noticing a slight change in the routine when dad would come home at night. He would walk straight up to mom, put his hands on her shoulders, look her in the eye and gently ask, “How are you feeling, dear?”

She would smile, a tired smile, and say, “So far so good.”

Then one day something happened in Pharaoh's court that would hit our people like a tsunami—especially, as I found out later, couples like my parents. Here's what happened:

Let's backtrack a bit. It had been nearly 400 years since my people moved to Egypt because of a severe drought in Canaan. Because of Joseph's role in saving the Egyptians from starvation, Pharaoh gave the children of Israel, as they were called, the land of Goshen for settlement, the most fertile land in the entire country. Needless to say, this created resentment among the Egyptians, but knowing full well what would happen if they voiced their discontentment, no one said anything, at least not openly.

Joseph was a legend in Egypt and as each new Pharaoh rose to power, his fame as a national savior was transmitted to the new ruler. But then, after many generations, there came a ruler who knew not Joseph. What the new Pharaoh did know was that this was a people in Egypt who spoke a strange language, who had strange costumes, who worshipped a strange God and who was much more prosperous than his own

countrymen. Thus, through hard work and good management, these foreigners were constantly buying up the properties of their Egyptian neighbors, covering more and more of the countryside and becoming increasingly powerful.

Pharaoh made no effort to hide his feelings. Soon it was common knowledge that the ruler of Egypt was unhappy with what he considered to be a cancerous takeover of his kingdom. This in turn opened the valve for the common Egyptian to give vent to his envy and frustration. This was especially true in the case of those who had sold their farms to my countymen. The upstart of all this was that Pharaoh enacted some laws that turned us into virtual slaves. That is why my dad worked from dark to dark every day.

This brings us to what I was saying. Pharaoh's court was overrun with sacred scribes, or as others preferred to call them, soothsayers. There was especially one who seemed to have great influence with Pharaoh who prophesied that there was about to be born in Egypt a baby, who if permitted to reach adulthood, would hand the nation over to the children of Israel.

Pharaoh was really shook up. On the spot he made a decree that all male Hebrew children who were born in Egypt should be thrown into the Nile River. Now it was time for the Israelites to be shook up. One of the reasons our people were increasing so fast was that in most families babies were born on a regular basis. The thought of throwing all the little boys born in Goshen into the river was unthinkable.

But that wasn't all; Pharaoh also decreed that any parents who refused to drown their little boys in the river would be summarily executed together with the entire family.

There was great wailing throughout the land. What devout Israelite would toss a newborn baby into the alligator infested waters of the Nile River! As it turned out, it wasn't only all male babies that were being sentenced to death, but entire families. That meant that if parents took a firm stand and refused to drown their little boys, our numbers would drop dramatically in less than a year. This, of course, was exactly what Pharaoh wanted.

When the seriousness of our situation really hit me is when I noticed the change in my mom's shape. Even though young, I understood that she was with child. That meant that if the baby would be a girl, our lives would be spared. But, if it were a boy, none of us would survive, for I was absolutely positive that my folks would never consent to the murder of their own son, of my little brother.

All this brought on a new awareness of God in the land of Goshen. It was a true revival in which His name was constantly on everyone's lips. The comment I heard repeatedly as my mom spoke to neighbor women was, "Only Jehovah can save us."

Israelite women were much healthier and stronger than Egyptian women. This can undoubtedly be attributed to a stern religious code that required healthy eating habits and condemned riotous living. Thus they carried and delivered their young with much greater vigor than Egyptian women.

The two Egyptian midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, who delivered the Israelite women's babies, had orders to kill all male babies at the moment of birth. In a sign that Jehovah was with His people, these two women refused to do so. Upon being called

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into Pharaoh's presence to explain why his decree was not being followed, they gave a truthful answer, that the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. This was a divine blessing, but it placed upon the parents the full responsibility of killing their own sons.

As the time for my mom to give birth drew near, the unease at home became palpable. I believe my parents spent many of their waking hours in silent supplication to God. Then one night—I found this out later—Jehovah sent an angel to my dad while he slept, who told him that his supplications had been heard and that he should not despair. He reviewed how God led Abram from Mesopotamia into Canaan, how the son of promise was born and when the little family increased to 70 souls God led them to Egypt. He then made a promise: “Know therefore that I shall provide for you all in common what is for your good, and particularly for thyself what shall make thee famous; for that child, out of dread of whose nativity the Egyptians have doomed the Israelite children to destruction, shall be this child of thine, and shall be concealed from those who watch to destroy him; and when he is brought up in a surprise way, he shall deliver the Hebrew nation from the distress they are under from the Egyptians. His memory shall be famous while the world lasts, and this not only among the Hebrews, but foreigners also: – all which shall be the effect of my favor to thee, and to thy posterity. He shall also have such a brother, that he shall himself obtain my priesthood, and his posterity shall have after him to the end of the world.”

After the angel left, dad woke my mom and told her everything the angel had told him. They were relieved to know that God was with them, but at the same time they were overwhelmed by the enormity of what was about to happen.

My mom had a very easy delivery and for three months my little brother was kept in the house so that roving soldiers would not detect him. But, being a healthy baby, by the time he was three months old his cries could be heard at quite a distance and my folks knew something had to be done. The solution was to make a small ark of bulrushes, permeate it with slime and pitch, and make a little bed inside for my brother.

Some will of course believe that the whole objective was to hide my brother from the soldiers. Naturally, that was part of it, but now, years later as I tell this story, I am confident that my folks were acting on a divine unction. To begin with, if placing the ark in the river was merely to hide it from the soldiers, they would have tethered it to the reeds that grew in abundance near the shore. But they didn't. It was placed where the current would carry it downstream.

And that isn't all. The angel told my dad that his son would be “brought up in a surprise way.” I don't know if he received a vision of just how that would happen, but I suspect he had a good idea. When the ark was placed in the river's current, he knew it would be carried downstream. He also knew that the Pharaoh's palace was downstream on the opposite side of the river. Quite often I would follow a path downstream on our side of the river to get a glimpse of Pharaoh's daughter when she and her maids would come to the river to bathe.

My parents knew the current would take the ark right past the princess's private

beach. I'm quite sure that is why they asked me to go down the path and see what would happen to the ark.

I will never forget the day we placed my little brother in the ark. Knowing he would have to leave before dawn, my dad held my little brother for a long time the night before and when he finally put him back into my mom's arms, there were tears in his eyes. The following day we waited until nearly noon, when the sun had warmed the air enough to where my little brother wouldn't be cold. We wrapped him in blankets and when we placed him in the ark, he hardly stirred. My mom placed the ark in the river and I waded in, pushing it far enough from shore to where the current started to move it downriver. Then I followed down the path as the ark slowly floated away from home.

Looking ahead, I saw that the princess and her maids were already on the beach. For some reason my little brother had begun to cry. It was Thermuthis herself, Pharaoh's daughter, who first heard the cries of my little brother as he slowly floated down the river. Then she saw the ark. She exclaimed, "Now what could that be!" Then she ordered one of her maids, "Swim out there and bring that little boat to shore."

When the maid returned with the ark and the princess looked in...well, not only did I see utter amazement, but also a most tender look. I think that the look on her face was the same as the look on a mother's face when she sees her newborn for the first time. She said, "Oh! I want to hold the little dearie."

I think the princess knew right from the beginning that my little brother was one of the Hebrew children. But it didn't seem to make any difference to her. All she could see right now was that my little brother was hungry. She ordered one of her maids to run to the castle and return with a mother who could feed my brother. A woman soon returned with the maid, but my brother would have nothing of her. A number of other women were called, but with the same result. That's when I felt like a little voice told me what I should do. I waded into the river and swam to the other side. I said to the princess: "It is in vain that thou, o queen, callest for these women for the nourishing of the child, who are no way of kin to it; but still, if thou wilt order of the Hebrew women to be brought, perhaps it may admit the breast of one of its own nation."

Thermuthis liked the idea and asked me to go after a Hebrew woman who would give suck. I ran as fast as I could and when I got home I found my mom praying. I said, "Mom, come quick, the princess wants you to feed my little brother."

When we got opposite the river from where the princess was, I waved to show that I had brought the Hebrew woman, my mom, of course, to feed the baby. They found a little boat tied nearby and the princess, my little brother and several of her maids rowed to our side. Upon stepping ashore, the princess handed my little brother to my mom. Just that quick he started sucking and quit crying.

I thought the princess was going to cry. She looked at my mom in admiration and asked, "Would you take care of this baby for me until he is old enough to be weaned?"

By the look on my mom's face I could see she was absolutely sure Jehovah was answering her prayers, and my dad's. The princess said she wanted to see where we lived, so we took her home with us. Our home was small, but very neat. I could see the princess was impressed. She asked mom—asked, which is strange for a princess who

is used to giving orders—if she could come visit her little baby. My mom told her of course she could.

From then on the princess rowed across the river almost every afternoon to see her “son.” I’m quite sure she knew that my mom was the real mom, but she never let on, nor did we.

Since my little brother was now the son of the princess, she named him. She called him Mouses, because in the Egyptian language *mo* means water and those who are saved from the water are called *uses*. So by putting the two words together his name was Mouses, or Moses, as we say in our language.

Moses was a precocious little fellow and the most beautiful baby I have ever seen in my life. Everyone exclaimed over him. He began talking way before most babies talk and by the time he was a year and a half old he understood almost everything we told him. By the time he was three, when the princess took him to the palace, he knew all of the well-known stories of Jehovah by heart. He knew how to pray.

Moses also knew what he wanted. And one thing he wanted was his real mom. So a routine soon was established that seemed to make everyone happy. Almost every afternoon, when the princess would come down to the river, she would bring Moses over to spend several hours with us. He and my mom would talk together like two adults. He would tell her about life in the palace and she would listen carefully. I can still hear her telling him, “Now that, Moses, is something you shouldn’t do. Jehovah tells us we shouldn’t do that sort of thing.”

One day Thermuthis took Moses to see her dad, the Pharaoh of Egypt. She told him that she had adopted Moises and that since she had no children of her own, she wanted him to be the successor to his throne. Pharaoh was so pleased with the idea that he took the royal diadem off his head and placed it on Moses’ small head. The young boy immediately tore it from his head, threw it to the floor and stomped on it astonishing everyone.

It happens that the same soothsayer who had predicted that a Hebrew child would be born and grow up to overthrow Pharaoh’s throne was present. He was incensed and immediately attempted to kill Moses, shouting in a frightful manner, “This, O king! this child is he of whom God foretold, that if we kill him we shall be in no danger; he himself affords an attestation to the prediction of the same thing, by his trampling upon thy government, and treading upon thy diadem. Take him, therefore, out of the way, and deliver the Egyptians from the fear they are in about him; and deprive the Hebrews of the hope they have of being encouraged by him.”

Thermuthis snatched my brother and thus prevented his being killed. Also Pharaoh, surely by divine intervention, was not inclined to have him killed. Word got around about what had happened, which caused the Egyptians to regard him with suspicion. Nevertheless, Pharaoh ordered that Moses be given the best education available, which included military instruction.

As he grew older, my brother often came home by himself, frequently at night so he could talk to dad. Mom would always listen in and when she noticed that her son was becoming impatient, wanting to take the deliverance of the Hebrew slaves in his own

hands, she would gently caution him to wait until such a time when the Lord would reveal His hand.

When my brother was approximately 40 years old, Egypt was invaded by the Ethiopians. Their army was powerful and before long Egypt was facing the possibility of having to surrender. Then someone remembered “General” Moses and it was suggested he be given command of the Egyptian army. For both palatial and army officials, this was a most unpalatable option, but faced with the certainty of defeat, Even the soothsayer who had demanded my brother’s death agreed that this should be done.

And so the princess, who protected Moses by not letting him appear in public, was asked to bring him forth to lead the Egyptian army against Ethiopia.

Understanding that such an attack might come, Ethiopia concentrated its troops along the coastline, expecting the Egyptian army would attempt an invasion by sea. Moses, however, had other ideas. He decided to attack by land, which would give him the advantage of surprise on a vulnerable front. This strategy made sense, except for one apparently insurmountable problem. The Egyptian army would have to cross a terrain that was infested by poisonous snakes. So vicious were these snakes that it was reported they would fly through the air to strike their prey.

This is where my brother demonstrated his superior military skill. In Egypt we have an abundance of birds called *ibes*. These birds are quite tame and easy to capture. Their distinguishing characteristic is their way of killing and devouring the species of snakes the Egyptian army would have to face. Moses ordered that an enormous amount of baskets be woven to be used as cages for these birds. This was done and the captured birds placed in the cages. Thus, when the area inhabited by snakes was reached, the birds were released, which in short order eliminated the threat of snakes.

Taken by surprise, the Ethiopians were defeated and Egypt was again safe. Needless to say, Moses emerged as a great hero, venerated by the masses—but not by the powerful. If this Hebrew could thus defeat a powerful enemy, he could do the same with the Egyptians. Even the king agreed that Moses would have to die.

Then something took place that probably ended up saving his life. One afternoon when he was coming down the path by the river, he saw an Egyptian beating up on a Hebrew. Indignant, he killed the Egyptian. And then, realizing the consequences if this became known in Pharaoh’s court, he dug a shallow grave in the sand and buried the Egyptian. He swore the Hebrew to secrecy.

Either the Hebrew broke his promise or someone saw what happened from a distance, for the following day he came upon two Hebrews in a desperate fight. He tried to break up the fight, when one of them, the aggressor, said, “Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?”

Aware of a plot to kill him, Moses realized that his days, maybe his hours, were numbered if he remained in Egypt. He ran to our house and out of breath explained he would have to flee. Without so much as a change of clothes or food to sustain him, he gave us a quick hug and left at a run.

Forty years passed before I saw my brother again. ▲

## Education

### McGuffy's Readers

In the years 1836-1837, William McGuffy compiled the first four books of the McGuffy's Readers series. In 1840 his brother Alexander compiled the last two books. In the next 100 years approximately a hundred million of these books were sold to be used in public schools in much of America.

William himself was a teacher, having begun his career in a one-room schoolhouse in Calcutta, Ohio at 14 years of age. A religious man, most of the stories selected were meant to build character, rather than to entertain. In fact, a surprising number of the stories could be used in our children's Sunday School or Bible Study classes.

When these readers were first used, there were still veterans of the Revolutionary War alive whose children and grandchildren studied from the McGuffy's Readers. It was used at the time of the Civil War and American soldiers who fought in World War I were educated by the same reader.

What made the McGuffy's Readers such a success during approximately one hundred years when so many fine citizens were produced?

1. During that period America had a large rural population. Money wasn't plentiful and most schools were constructed on a shoestring budget. We can safely say that the cost per student for constructing many of these schools wasn't one tenth of one percent of what is spent today per student. Yet the McGuffy's Readers were superbly suited to classrooms equipped with a teacher's desk and chair, a chalkboard, and of course, desks for the students. Oh yes, and a potbelly stove to keep the room warm during winter.

2. Basic education at that time consisted of six grades. Each student had only one book—the McGuffy's Reader for the grade he was studying. We have mentioned that over a hundred million were sold. When we remember that these books were handed down and used for many years, we can only guess how many students were thus educated. The fact that each student used only one book in each grade made it possible for most families to afford these readers for their children.

3. In a time in which each grade requires a teacher, and often a helper, it is inconceivable how one teacher, (master or marm), could handle six grades alone, often a total of 30–50 students whose ages ranged from six to 18 or 19 years.

4. Contrary to what we might believe, the academic level of these readers is very high. A sixth grade graduate a hundred and fifty years ago was better prepared to face life than many high school graduates today. No exaggeration.

5. And this is what is most amazing. These readers teach the story of creation as related in Gênesis, the importance of prayer and good Christian principles. The 19th Century produced some mighty fine citizens and statesmen. It would be naive to attribute all this to McGuffy's Readers. And it would be unjust to affirm that these readers did not have some influence.

Everyone should have a set of McGuffy's Readers on the living room bookshelf. They cannot, however, be used in public schools. Such literature has been banned



by the United States Supreme Court. And behold! the great men the nation is now producing.

Following is a story found in the fourth grade McGuffey's Reader (Notice that the title is preceded by a Roman numeral and each paragraph by Arabic numerals):

## XLVI. THE CREATOR.

The poetry at the close of this selection is by John Keble, a celebrated English clergyman, born in 1792. He held for some years the professorship of Poetry at Oxford University. He died in 1866.

1. Come, and I will show you what is beautiful. It is a rose fully blown. See how she sits upon her mossy stem, the queen of flowers. Her leaves glow like fire. The air is filled with her sweet odor. She is the delight of every eye.
2. But there is one fairer than the rose. He that made the rose is more beautiful than the rose. He is altogether lovely. He is the delight of every heart.
3. I will show you what is strong. The lion is strong. When he raiseth himself up from his lair, when he shaketh his mane, when the voice of his roaring is heard, the cattle of the field fly, and the wild beasts of the desert hide themselves; for he is terrible.
4. But He who made the lion is stronger than the lion. He can do all things. He gave us life, and in a moment can take it away, and no one can save us from his hand.
5. I will show you what is glorious. The sun is glorious. When he shineth in the clear sky, when he sitteth on his throne in the heavens, and looketh abroad ver the earth, he is the most glorious and excellent object the eye can behold.
6. But He who made the sun is more glorious than the sun. The eye cannot look on his dazzling brightness. He seeth all dark places, by night as well as by day. The light of his countenance is over all the world.
7. This great Being is God. He made all things, but He is more excellent than all that He has made. He is the Creator, they are the creatures. They may be beautiful, but He is Beauty. They may be strong, but He is Strength. They may be perfect, but He is Perfection.
8. There is a book, who runs may read, Which heavenly truth imparts, And all the lore its scholars need—Pure eyes and loving hearts.
9. The works of God, above, below, Within us, and around, Are pages in that book, to show How God himself is found.
10. The glorious sky, embracing all, Is like the Father's love; Wherewith encompassed, great and small In peace and order move.
11. Thou who hast given me eyes to see And love this sight so fair, Give me a heart to find out Thee And read Thee everywhere. ▲

Biscuits and sermons are better when made with shortening.

Q: What is someone called who speaks two languages?

A: Bilingual

Q: What is someone called who speaks more than two languages?

A: Polyglot.

Q: What is someone called who speaks only one language?

A: American.

## Readers Contribute

### The Ticket

Jack took a long look at his speedometer before slowing down: 73 in a 55 zone. Fourth time in as many months. How could a guy get caught so often?

When his car had slowed to 10 miles an hour, Jack pulled over, but only partially. Let the cop worry about the potential traffic hazard. Maybe some other car will tweak his backside with a mirror. The cop was stepping out of his car, the big pad in hand.

Bob... Bob from Church! Jack sank farther into his trench coat. This was worse than the coming ticket. A cop catching a guy from his own church. A guy who happened to be a little eager to get home after a long day at the office. A guy he was about to play golf with tomorrow.

Jumping out of the car, he approached a man he saw every Sunday, a man he'd never seen in uniform.

"Hi, Bob. Fancy meeting you like this."

"Hello, Jack." No smile.

"Guess you caught me red-handed in a rush to see my wife and kids."

"Yeah, I guess." Bob seemed uncertain. Good.

"I've seen some long days at the office lately. I'm afraid I bent the rules a bit —just this once."

Jack toed at a pebble on the pavement.

"Diane said something about roast beef and potatoes tonight. Know what I mean?"

"I know what you mean. I also know that you have a reputation in our precinct."

Ouch. This was not going in the right direction. Time to change tactics.

"What'd you clock me at?"

"Seventy. Would you sit back in your car please?"

"Now wait a minute here, Bob. I checked as soon as I saw you. I was barely nudging 65." The lie seemed to come easier with every ticket.

"Please, Jack, in the car."

Flustered, Jack hunched himself through the still-open door. Slamming it shut, he stared at the dashboard. He was in no rush to open the window. The minutes ticked by. Bob scribbled away on the pad. Why hadn't he asked for a driver's license?

Whatever the reason, it would be a month of Sundays before Jack ever sat near this cop again. A tap on the door jerked his head to the left. There was Bob, a folded paper in hand. Jack rolled down the window a mere two inches, just enough room for Bob to pass him the slip.

“Thanks.” Jack could not quite keep the sneer out of his voice.

Bob returned to his police car without a word. Jack watched his retreat in the mirror. Jack unfolded the sheet of paper. How much was this one going to cost?

Wait a minute. What was this...? Some kind of joke! Certainly not a ticket. Jack began to read:

*Dear Jack, Once upon a time I had a daughter. She was six when killed by a car. You guessed it—a speeding driver. A fine and three months in jail, and the man was free. Free to hug his daughters, all three of them. I only had one, and I'm going to have to wait until Heaven before I can ever hug her again.*

*A thousand times I've tried to forgive that man. A thousand times I thought I had. Maybe I did, but I need to do it again. Even now. Pray for me. And be careful, Jack, my son is all I have left.*

*Bob*

Jack turned around in time to see Bob's car pull away and head down the road. Jack watched until it disappeared. A full 15 minutes later, he too, pulled away and drove slowly home, praying for forgiveness and hugging a surprised wife and kids when he arrived. Life is precious. Handle with care. Drive safely and carefully. Remember, cars are not the only things recalled by their maker. ▲

## Meditation

Prayer is not a “spare wheel” that you pull out when in trouble; it is a “steering wheel” that directs us in the right path throughout life.

Do you know why a car's windshield is so large and the rear view mirror is so small? Because our past is not as important as our future. So, look ahead and move on.

Friendship is like a book. It takes few seconds to burn, but it takes years to write.

Often when we lose hope and think this is the end, God smiles from above and says, “Relax, it's just a bend, not the end!”

When God solves your problems, you have faith in his abilities; when God doesn't solve your problems He has faith in your abilities.

A blind person asked St. Anthony: “Can there be anything worse than losing eye sight?” He replied: “Yes, losing your vision.”

When you pray for others, God listens to you and blesses them; and sometimes, when you are safe and happy, remember that someone has prayed for you..

Worrying does not take away tomorrow's troubles; it takes away today's peace.

Taps

## Harold Dirks

Harold Dirks was one of the original Colony land holders and settlers. Interestingly, the day we left for Brazil, by plane, August 8, 1969, Harold & Emma and children also left—in a Chevy pickup and camper. Two months after we arrived on the Colony, so did they, with lots and lots of stories to tell.

What I remember off the top of my head is that for one stretch they drove their pickup aboard the Queen Mary and sailed for some distance. In, Bolivia I think, they placed their pickup on a railroad flatcar (after waiting for a week or two for the train to arrive) and bounced over another stretch. During this time the pickup came loose from its moorings and Harold managed to stop the train just in time to keep from seeing their pickup go overboard—“overflatcar” would be more accurate. Their trip took place during a time of intense guerrilla warfare in one of the Central American countries.

Harold was a Idaho woodsman and superbly suited to pioneering. Roads had to be made, houses built, land cleared, crops planted, among many other things. Today, almost 42 years later, we continue to reap the benefits of his labor.

I believe that Harold was the first one to plant soybeans in this part of the country. The field was small and yields were slim. To his dismay he found there were no buyers for his crop. The nearest buyer was in Goiânia, 250 km. from the Colony, and what the buyer would pay would not cover hauling the beans to market. So Harold roasted the beans and fed them to his hogs.

Emma, his wife, was not a born pioneer. She didn't enjoy pioneering—and said so. But by no means was she the only wife on the Colony who felt that way. And this is what I have found interesting. Some of these ladies who were not born pioneers applied themselves to the task and did an outstanding job of supporting their husbands and taking care of the children. Emma was one of these. I have a lot of good memories of Harold & Emma. We who remain owe them a debt.

Emma died less than a year ago and Harold just recently. ▲

## Manoel Norberto Vilela

To most of you readers this name will mean nothing. It means a lot to those of us who moved here in the beginning.

The first tract of Colony land was purchased from Manoel, over 8,000 acres, taken from some 50,000 acres that he owned.

I rather suspect that the Lord picked out Manoel as the person from whom we should make our first purchase. In all of our dealing with him, he proved to be honest, reliable and enjoyable to deal with. When the dollars sent from the US to pay for the land disappeared in the maze of international currency exchange, effectively voiding the contract made between the seller and the buyers for

non-compliance of payment, Manoel never once showed impatience or any desire to call the deal off.

Through the years we had a very close relationship with Manoel, often going to his ranch headquarters to pick fruit from his enormous orchard, and usually be invited for a meal.

Manoel was one of those interesting souls who believe that when speaking with a foreigner who doesn't understand everything said, the solution is to turn up the volume. He would shout, gesticulate and often refer to himself as "Manoel," rather than use the personal pronoun "Eu."

Manoel was short, maybe 5 foot 3, stocky with a permanent smile on his face. Alas, he was not a manager, and over the years he kept selling off pieces of his ranch, several thousand acres at a time, until he was reduced to a 2,500 acre ranch he purchased on the other side of town where he set up a dairy and sold milk until his death, less than a year ago. The Colony is indebted to Manoel Norberto Vilela, a true gentleman. ▲

## **This & That**

**HARVEST IS OVER.** Constant rains toward the end of harvest reduced yields up to 50 percent. Those who harvested early and planted a second crop now have corn that is tasseling.

**PRESIDENT OBAMA** make a quick visit to Brasil. It was a courtesy visit with little actual substance. He was duly impressed with Brazil's ethanol program and with the possibility of within a decade or two from now its being the world's third largest petroleum producer. It doesn't take a genius to figure out why the US would prefer to buy petroleum from Brazil rather than from the Middle East.

**EARTH MOVING** has become a noticeable activity on the Colony. Since not everyone has land to farm, building roads, dams, trench silos, as well as pads for large construction sites, this alternate activity is most welcome as it gives work to a number of young men.

**MORE PEOPLE TRAVEL** by air than by bus in Brazil on longer trips according to recent statistics. My wife and I plan on going to São Paulo the beginning of May for a Latin America literature meeting. We were able to purchase round-trip tickets, including boarding fees, for the equivalent of approximately \$150 USD each. Airlines have modern planes and very good service.

**ALL FILLING STATIONS** in Brazil have both gasoline and ethanol pumps. Almost all new cars being built are "flex," that is, they will run on either of the fuels, or a mixture of both. Most of the ethanol is produced from sugar cane. Brazil has huge eucalyptus plantations. Now it has been found that one metric ton of eucalyptus bark will produce one hundred liters of ethanol.

**LAND PURCHASES** in Brazil by foreigners are becoming extremely difficult, if not impossible. Enormous tracts of land were being bought by foreigners, often in partnership with Brazilians. The idea is "Brazil for Brazilians." It seems that making laws controlling foreigners is somewhat easier in Brazil than in the US. It sounds like a good time for Americans to think anew about naturalization. ▲

# Brazil News