

Brazil News



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Editorial

That He Should Not Die In the Pit

Few situations create a greater sensation or evoke more public sympathy, than someone trapped in a pit *. This is especially true when the victim is a child.

Job, David, Solomon, the prophets, and other Bible writers refer to the pit as a place of death or extreme distress. The book of Revelation represents a pit as the place of everlasting torment.

It is exactly the element of the pit that gives the narrative of Joseph a special poignancy. As we read or hear the story told, we see the murderous glint in the eyes of the ten brothers. We hear their harsh voices as they coldly discuss their younger brother's fate—a fate which they themselves mean to impose on him.

Unsuspecting, Joseph approaches his brothers. He is tired, thirsty and hungry after a long walk. Yet he manages a smile. But the cheery "Hi, fellows" freezes in his throat when he sees the steely glint in his brothers' eyes. Something is desperately wrong.

There has never been any camaraderie between the ten brothers and their younger sibling. Joseph is hurt by their constant rebuffs, but in his childish innocence has not given up hope of one day nudging into their tight circle. In fact as he trudges up to where they are, he hopes that maybe this will be the day. Maybe the effort he has gone through will cause them to see their little brother in a new light.

When he is pinioned by several of his brothers, Joseph senses there will be more than verbal abuse this time. He tries to cry out, but his parched throat not only cuts off his words, but his very breath. When several daggers are produced, he understands that he has been sentenced to death.

Once again he opens his mouth to protest, to plead for mercy, but he is cut off by Reuben. He steps between the daggers and the youth. "Look, fellows, I don't have any

***Pit: a natural or artificial hole in the ground, a dungeon, an abandoned well, a shaft or mine.*

sympathy for this dreamer, but neither will I go along with something like this. He is, like it or not, our own flesh and blood. Instead of staining our hands with his blood, let's turn him over to nature..."

"Turn him over to nature?" one brother asks derisively. "Just what do you mean?"

"I mean that we're just a little ways from that old abandoned well. Let's lower him into that pit and let nature take care of him."

"A good idea!" a number of voices agree. "I'm for it."

Joseph is lowered into the pit.

To appreciate the difficulty of Jeremiah's mission, we must look at the period of Judah's history in which he lived.

The ten tribes had already gone into captivity. Judah, too weak to rout her enemies, was able to maintain a limited autonomy only by paying heavy tribute. Even more humiliating was having these foreign powers appoint their kings. This was the case of King Zedekiah, appointed by the king of Babylon.

As can well be imagined, this created a delicate situation in which loyalties were divided between the conquering power and nationalistic interests. Any prophecies made by either false or true prophets were immediately analyzed to determinate their political orientation. A politically incorrect prophecy could mean prison or death.

The 21 year appointee, King Zedekiah, was a spineless young man, a puppet in the hands of the Babylonian king. To assume the throne, he had to take an oath promising to make no allegiance with the Egyptians.

King Zedekiah appreciated the prophet Jeremiah and, generally speaking, believed his prophecies. Had it not been for his friends, who spoke against the prophet, he would probably have followed his advice. Then something took place that spelled problems for Jeremiah.

The prophet Ezekiel was in Babylon at this time with the captives from the ten tribes. He sent a parchment to Zedekiah containing his prophecies concerning Judah. Everything he said agreed with Jeremiah, except for one detail. Ezekiel said that Zedekiah would be taken captive, but would not see Babylon. Jeremiah affirmed that he would be taken captive and carried to Babylon in bonds. This discrepancy, the king thought, was evidence that Jeremiah was not a reliable prophet *.

During the eighth year of his reign, Zedekiah broke the promise made to the king of Babylon and aligned himself with the king of Egypt. The Babylonian army immediately laid siege on Jerusalem. Hearing about this, the king of Egypt sent his army to rescue his new ally.

As soon as he became aware of what was taking place, the Babylonian generals suspended the siege on Jerusalem and marched toward the approaching Egyptian army.

Jeremiah prophesied that the Babylonians would be soon be back, but since Zedekiah no longer believed in him, he preferred to listen to the false prophets who

**Too late, Zedekiah discovered both prophets were right. Captured by the Babylonian army, he was forced to watch as his wife and children were put to the sword, after which his eyes were put out and he was carried to Babylon a captive. Thus in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy he was carried to Babylon, and in fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy, he didn't see Babylon.*

said that the Babylonians would not return. They declared that they were now free of their enemies. Obviously this was a pleasant prophecy and preferable to what Jeremiah had to say. Because of this his enemies had him imprisoned. Zedekiah was against this imprisonment, but for political reasons went along with it.

The Egyptians proved to be no match for the Babylonians. This left Zedekiah in an extremely difficult situation. Beyond not being able to count on Egypt, he had to reckon with the wrath of the king of Egypt for having broken the promise made when appointed king.

From within the prison, Jeremiah's voice was heard louder than ever, advising the people to open the gates to the Babylonian army. He declared that only so would they save their lives and be able to remain together as families. True, they would go into exile, but God would be with them.

Jeremiah's words were pure dynamite. They clashed head-on with the false prophecies being propagated outside the prison and with a strong nationalistic sentiment. Contrary to all common sense, the rulers of Jerusalem believed they could overcome this formidable enemy.

Since having Jeremiah in prison didn't silence him, it was decided he should die. But possibly because of a certain fear of outright killing a prophet, it was decided, as happened with Joseph, to place Jeremiah in nature's hands. He would be placed in a dungeon, in a pit of mire, and left to die.

This pit, a virtual death chamber, was far more terrible than what we can imagine. Let's notice:

Deep. The pit was deep. Ropes had to be used to lower the prophet.

Dark. Being inside the prison, there obviously was no light in this pit.

Dank. Because of the slimy bottom and no ventilation, the place was not only humid, but putrid as well. Used as an execution chamber, it's likely there were human carcasses in the slime in advanced stages of decomposition. Few smells are more nauseous than a putrefying human body.

It was in this deep, dark, dank pit that Jeremiah sank to his neck in slime. To begin with, he must have clasped his hands over his head to keep them out of the muck. But this is tiring. And being in total darkness, he loses his sense of balance. Suddenly Jeremiah realizes he is no longer in an upright position. He is leaning backward and unless he can straighten out, he will soon be swallowed by the mire. He panics. Even as he tries to lean forward, he feels the tug of gravity. There is only one solution. His hands. Reaching ahead he sinks them into the guck and goes through a rowing motion. Slowly, with great effort, he is able to right himself.

His hands are now filthy. When insects land on his ears and get into his beard, he stifles the urge to brush them off as long as possible. Then as they begin biting him, he no longer resists. Soon his head is covered with slime.

Needless to say, there are no restroom facilities in the pit.

We don't know how long Jeremiah remained in this pit. One hour would have been sixty minutes too long.

Enter Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, the king's servant. And he is what this article is all about.

Jeremiah was sentenced to a terrible death. His time was short. Overcome by exhaustion, he would drowse off and slowly begin settling in the muck. Just to return to an erect position demanded all of his strength. How many more times could he doze off...?

Ebedmelech was aware of the dire straits his friend Jeremiah was in. He knew too that because of the sentiment of the court, any attempt to defend or help him could easily result in a similar sentence for himself. So why not just leave him?

That's not the kind of a man Ebedmelech was. No, he went boldly to the king and openly denounced those who condemned the prophet to such a cruel death. The king was touched by his word and assigned him 30 soldiers and whatever other support he might need to rescue Jeremiah from the pit.

We admire Ebedmelech for his courage in rescuing Jeremiah. We possibly don't appreciate sufficiently Reuben's good intentions to save Joseph's life. After all, he planned to return to the pit and rescue his brother.

We find it increasingly difficult to have a proper vision of the two kingdoms, to understand that the true child of God is free and that the servant of sin is in bondage—in prison. We fail to realize that there are people right in our midst who are stuck fast in the muck in the bottom of a sunless pit. Yes, we know they are going through a struggle, but we sort of shrug it off.

We feel a deep sympathy for Joseph as he heard his brothers' receding footsteps. Then the absolute silence. As darkness settles, we see him slumped down, sobbing. This shakes us up.

We prefer to not even think about what Jeremiah went through in the pit. The space between life and death for him was approximately six inches—the distance between the muck and his nostrils. How long could he resist the inexorable downward tug of gravity?

Not very long.

We sing: "Lord give us a vision of souls gone astray." Where is the poet who will pen: "Lord give us a vision of souls in the pit"?

Where are the Ebedmelechs? Men and women who care enough to do something, who are willing to risk their own security to help someone out of the pit, who will call on thirty prayerful soldiers to march with them to the pit and cast down a rope and old rags of mercy?

Where are the Ebedmelechs? Brothers and sisters who are willing to boldly walk down the dark corridors of the prison house of the doomed, right up to the pit, and call down, "Here's a rope. Put these rags under your arms and we'll pull you up"?

Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged . . . Where is the fury of the oppressor? . . . The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit. —Isaiah chapter 51



This Month on the Colony

What Do Farmers in Brazil Do When it Rains?

They let it rain.

But that isn't all they do. They go out and check their terraces. Or what's left of them.

Our annual rainfall ranges from 80 to a hundred inches, most of which we get between October and April. Two and three inch rains aren't unusual and don't usually do any damage, unless they come in cloudburst form. Four and five inch rains are often a different story. Only the best of terraces stand up under that much water.

I won't lecture on the idiosyncrasies of the Holdeman farmer. We all know what they're like. For now, suffice it to say that they are both progressive and conservative. In other words, they are receptive to new technology, but cautious about anything that would involve a radical change in their operations.

I suppose this is one of the reasons the Colony farmers have shied away from no-till farming. The other probably is that it looks plain sloppy.

But folks, the talk of the town here on the Colony right now is no-till farming. If I understand what is being said, there is going to be a bunch of Holdeman farmers going no-till next year.

What happened?

We had a Noachian rain (or so it seemed) several weeks ago. Up near the Montividiu highway where João Souto, John Unruh, and Bert and Jonathon Colbentz live, they had five inches in less than an hour, and then several hours later, another three and a half inches, with a total of over 30 inches for the month of November. Quite a few farmers got from five to six and a half inches that day. As they looked over their wrecked terraces and wide stretches sans top soil, they sincerely wished they had gone no-till this year.

But that's not the end of the story.

About a week later we had another soaker that filled five inch rain gauges in a little over an hour. This rain was actually much more destructive than the first one. One farmer whose terraces held quite well in the first rain, said the second one did ten times more damage. The problem was that the soil was saturated and so most of the water headed downhill taking with it tons of topsoil. Now no-till didn't only look good for the past, but for the future too.

A subtropical climate can obviously handle a lot more rain than the Temperate Zone. For one thing, our soil is very porous. It isn't unusual to have an inch of rain one day and the following day farmers be out working in the field. It is this exact porousness that also makes the soil very susceptible to erosion.

The heavy rains have done a lot of damage to fields on the Colony. After the first big rain, farmers were out repairing the terraces. In most cases, the second rain tore out everything that had been done, and then some.

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Several years ago during a 40 day rainy stretch, in some places on the Colony they averaged an inch of rain a day.

It is said that near town, during these last heavy rains, they got 30 inches during a four day period. People who have seen the area say they can believe it. The topsoil has simply disappeared.

Our roads are bad. Streets in town, and some of our highways, are full of potholes. But most of the crops are really looking beautiful. Corn will soon be tasseling. Most of the soybeans are planted. ▲

The School Mailbox

A New Section

Several days ago I received a fax from S. Dakota. Several of the students from the church school in Aceola sent me letters. A little bell in the belfry began ringing. Why not have a section in BN for students who would like to ask questions about Brazil—or simply write a letter?

So here it is: The School Mailbox. Students, when you write tell us the name of your school, your age and grade. Teachers, this is for you too. We'd like to know where you are teaching and what grades—but not your age.

Our first two students to write are Kari Jo Penner and Rayanne Dirks.
DeSmet and Iroquois

42831 203rd St.
DeSmet, SD
November 22, 96

Dear Mr. Becker,

I would like information on Brazil. If you would send it to me I would very much appreciate it. I would also like if you would send me information on how Brazilians live. I would like if you would send me a copy of the Brazilian News.

If you would turn the paper over you will see an essay on Winter in South Dakota.

Thank you!
Kari Jo Penner

What do you eat?
How hot does it get?
Is it hot or mild in winter?
Do you have toucans?
Can you go swimming in winter?
What kind of crops do you grow?
What kind of people live there?
How do they dress?
Is there some parts that get snow?

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(essay)

Winters in South Dakota

Winters in SD are cold with inches of snow. Sometimes we get freezing rain during the night, then every thing is very icy.

One night we had freezing rain, so the next day we could not have school!

We have a skating rink, so for recess we skate! We dig tunnels in the big piles of snow.

Some days the snow blows in your face. One of those days I went on a walk, my glasses were covered with frozen snow! Some days we get snowed in, too!

104 4th Ave.

Iroquois SD

November 26, 96

Dear Mr. Becker,

I would appreciate it if you could please send me some information about Brazil.

How is the weather over there? Here it is snowy and cold. There is ice on the ground from a cold rain. It is about 10° below zero. In California it is sunny and warm. It is about 70° or 80° over there. I wish I could be there!

How is everyone down there?

From,

Rayanne Dirks

BN answers:

Dear Kari Jo and Rayanne,

You both talk about the weather in S Dakota, so let's begin with the weather here in Brazil.

The four seasons—spring, summer, fall and winter—aren't nearly as distinct here as in N America. In fact, if you were to ask, "In what season are we?" very few Brazilians would be able to answer you. Over here everyone talks about the "rainy season" and the "dry season." Our dry season is sort of like your fall and the rainy season like your summer, but let's notice some differences.

The dry season. This includes the months of May, June, July and August. It's during the dry season that we have our cold weather. By cold weather we mean getting down to freezing a time or two, possibly every two or three years.

That may not sound very cold, but it sure does feel cold. When the thermometer dips to 40°F here, it feels like it does when it hits zero in N America. People are miserable. Except for here on the Colony where some of the homes have fireplaces, none of the houses, stores, hospitals, etc., have any kind of heating system, nor are they insulated. Sometimes it feels colder inside than out, especially when the sun is shining. In the morning people stand on the east side of the house to try and warm up a little bit.

What about snow? In southern Brazil they get light snows. Brazilians who want to go skiing must go to resorts in Argentina.

You ask, "Can you go swimming during the dry season?" You can, but it's hard to

imagine why anyone would want to swim in such cold water. I think there are people who in the past have done that kind of stuff. (Ask your teacher's wife what she knows about it.)

How hot does it get? The hottest it has ever gotten here where we live is 98,6°F “– 37°C. It's a different kind of heat than you have over there. Usually it is cool in the shade and nights are always cool. So when it gets cold, we feel very cold, but when it gets hot, we don't notice it so much.

Now remember, I'm talking about the weather in the part of Brazil where we live. In the Northeast it gets muito quente (very hot). And naturally, in the big cities it is hotter than in the country. But that's probably true anyplace in the world.

Do we have toucans? Yes, we do. They're interesting birds. Their beak is approximately the same size as the rest of their body. When flying, they flap their wings for a few seconds and then glide for a few seconds. They make a funny, swishing sound as they fly.

Toucans aren't a well liked bird, neither by people nor by other birds. People don't like them because they love to eat papaya when they begin to ripen on the trees. Birds detest them because they raid other birds' nests and eat the eggs.

We'll save the rest of your questions for the next issue of BN. Thanks for writing and have a nice Christmas. ▲

A Brazilian Story

by Mário de Moraes

Tamanho Não É Documento

[A direct translation would be: Size is not a document. That really doesn't make any sense (unless you know Portuguese), so we'll give it a looser translation: Don't judge someone by his size. This is a frequently used expression here in Brazil.]

Delfino wasn't exactly a midget, but he was mighty short. Twenty-eight years old, he was less than five feet tall and weighed a little of nothing.

Being short didn't bother Delfino. Happy-go-lucky, extroverted and a nice chap to be around, he was well liked by all. That doesn't mean that he didn't have to take a lot of ribbing about his size. But even that didn't bother him. Some of his nicknames were of his own creation.

Delfino lived in a town in the state of Minas Gerais. Even the children loved this little man. His boss and co-workers thought the world of him.

An only child, he lived with his mother. The only thing that kept him from being totally happy was the fact that he wished he could get married. When his friends would try to encourage him, he would say:

“Have you ever tried to imagine how a little fellow my size would go about finding a wife? No, it just wouldn't work...”

When everyone had given up hope of Delfino ever getting married, things took an unexpected turn. One of the girls he worked with became interested in him.

The interesting part of it was that she was six feet tall and weighed well over two hundred pounds. And so, on their wedding day, the guests had a hard time keeping sober as they beheld this tremendous contrast.

The reception was in the factory warehouse where they worked. Finally everyone went home.

During the night the neighbors to this new couple were awakened by a hideous racket. Unable to sleep, they finally called the police.

Officers rapped loudly on the door several times. When no one answered and the din continued, they kicked the door in. There they discovered what all the yelling was about. Delfino was beating the tar out of his new wife.

Hauled to the delegacia (police headquarters), he explained to the delegado (chief of police) what was going on:

“It was no big deal, Chief. Rosária is a mighty fine wife and I have a real crush on her. But have you ever stopped to think, Chief, what could come out of all this—tiny little me and enormous she? She could just decide that I wasn’t much account and decide to rule the roost. You know what I mean, don’t you? That’s why I decided to set things straight the very first night. That way Rosária will understand that tamanho não é documento . . .”

And it worked. Delfino and Rosária raised a number of children and lived together happily ever after. ▲

Updating the Past

By Joe Baize
(Conclusion)

Our Life’s Story

After this I moved to Carthage, Missouri. This was during the depression years and times were hard. I worked for different people during this time and traveled to Dalhart, Texas to help my brother Henry in the harvest. When this was done, I drove to Stonington, Colorado, where the A. T. Koehn family lived. The parents were gone on revival work. They had asked some older ladies to stay with the family. Elsie’s younger brothers did the chores and one night forgot to turn the windmill off. It was a very cold night and the gear box froze, thereby putting everything out of water. I crawled clear to the top of the windmill and took the gearbox down. After getting it repaired, I put it back in place. Evidently this impressed Elsie.

In Carthage an old Frenchman by the name of Andrew Vonier had some ground to rent. I could also live with him and cook and clean house for him. I was warned to not

move in with him, because even his own children couldn't get along with him. But I moved in. He had a nice house and I had the upstairs to myself. I farmed wheat, corn and oats. I raised hogs also. We only got two cents a pound at market, so a 200 pound hog would bring about four dollars. I lived with Vonier for two years.

During the fall of 1933 I wrote to Elsie and asked her if she didn't feel sorry for an old Missouri bachelor. We had no ministers in Rich Hill at this time that I could take my proposal for Elsie to. She answered that there was nothing she could do, even if she did.

However she showed the letter to her parents. Then her Dad wrote me saying that Elsie was too young, being only 17 at the time.

Later A. T. Koehn wrote to me again and said that if I could wait until spring, then Elsie could marry me and go with me to Missouri. This satisfied me and I was willing to wait.

In the spring of 1934, I headed west in my Model T Ford roadster, taking Elsie's dad to California with me, as he had been in Kansas. It took us four days to get to Winton, California. I arrived four days before the wedding and Elsie's parents did not have money for Elsie's wedding clothes, so I gave her money and she went and bought her wedding dress material and new shoes. The material was a navy blue. I had purchased a suit from Sears, costing 30 dollars. A couple of years later, these clothes were stolen.

The wedding day was a nice day. A. T. Koehn married us and we had a reception, in which the congregation brought the food together. Winton was a small congregation and in the depression years there weren't many gifts. We got everything into the Model T trunk. We were married on a Sunday, March 18, 1934. We left for Missouri on Wednesday. No honeymoons were practiced at that time. It was hard for Elsie to leave home.

Elsie was pleased with the home in Carthage that I took her to, even though we lived in the same house with Mr. Vonier. We stayed on the Vonier place for one more year, then moved to Rich Hill to be closer to one of our church congregations.

We rented a place at Rich Hill, 60 acres called the Marquette place. Our first child, Howard, was born here. We paid Dr. Smith a total of 25 dollars. This we paid in installments, finally sending the rest to England. Dr. Smith was drafted to England because of army duties.

In Rich Hill we had six cows and some pigs and chickens. We sold milk to our neighbors for 10 cents a quart and sold some cream. We fed the rest of the milk to the chickens and pigs. On this place I grew some corn and oats. During this time our corn sold for 30 cents a bushel. Gas for the car was 14 cents a gallon. It went down to nine cents at one place. Bread was five cents a loaf. Cold cereal was as cheap as 10 cents a box or as high as 30 cents. I got two tablets of paper and some ink for 10 cents. Gloves were 15 cents a pair. Watermelons were 15 cents each. License plates for our Ford were \$5.75 for one year. I could have my shoes repaired for 10 cents.

The year of 1936 the corn and oats were a complete failure, since we had no rain. In July when I saw we would have no crop, I gave up farming in Missouri. We sold the few belongings. Our car we sold for 25 dollars and got enough money to take the train to California. Elsie had prepared food for us and bottles of milk for Howard. Since there was no air conditioning or refrigeration, the milk soured and Howard had no choice but

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to drink it. This was a rough trip, like as if we were on a freight train. We got into the Winton, California depot at 3 a.m. and we walked to Elsie's parent's home. I carried the suitcases and Elsie carried the baby. We got there around 4:30 a.m.

We lived with Elsie's family for about two months and worked wherever there was an opportunity. At peach harvest time, Elsie and I both worked for Dave Wedel. I picked up peaches from the ground for 20 cents an hour and Elsie cut peaches for the dry yard.

We were able to buy a Model A with a rumble seat, which we bought on payments.

We rented our first place in California about a half mile from Elsie's parents, just a shack with no electricity at first. In the evenings I would go out and gather peach pits for Elsie to burn in the stove to keep warm during the winter.

In 1937 we moved to Livingston and rented a small house for 15 dollars a month. This house still stands (now remodeled) by the car wash.

Our second child, Norman, was born in November. I was out working nights and the baby was born just before I got home from work. I had a steady job working for Arakelian's for 30 cents an hour.

In the spring of 1938 we found a place in Delhi, on Oak Road, a ten acre farm with a nice house, three bedrooms, a bathroom, kitchen, large living room and screened porch. A man by the name of Jack Charlie was selling this for a thousand dollars. My father had saved \$300, which he gave us as a down payment on the place.

When we bought this place I changed jobs and began working for Batterman's, driving a caterpillar. Soon Batterman gave us a raise to 40 cents an hour and financially it got much easier. We were happy. In 1938 Warren was born. Betty was born in 1940.

In Delhi we had a few cows and chickens for our fresh milk and eggs. We were very busy with four small children and me earning a living working 10 hours a day, six days a week. We were happy here and went to church at Winton on Sundays. I worked steady at Batterman's for four years.

In March of 1943 another baby was born and we named him Weldon Ray. He seemed fairly normal until he was five weeks old. He became ill and went into convulsions during the night while I was working. We had a single lady staying with us, so Elsie left the baby and quickly came to find me (I was working nights). We took the baby to the hospital immediately and they kept him and gave him oxygen. We stayed with him and the next evening another lady came to stay with Weldon. We went home to rest and had barely gotten home when the hospital called to Batterman's (we had no phone) and said that our baby had died. Mr. Batterman came over and told us. He died from double pneumonia. This was a real shock to us and we went to Elsie's parents and spent the night with them. The funeral was three days later. He is buried in the Winton cemetery.

In 1945 we heard of a place in Livingston, 20 acres for \$2,400. We had an offer for our place in Delhi for a thousand dollars, so we used this for a down payment. This had a four room house, a big barn, 10 acres of Thompson grapes and four acres of Alacanti grapes. The remaining six acres was pasture. We bought eight cows and I quit Batterman's. We began farming for ourselves. After the first crop, I was able to buy a new Oliver tractor for \$1,600. With this I did custom work and Elsie often drove

tractor for me. With the dairy, the vineyard and the custom work, we were able to make a living. In 1950 we bought a new Packard car and made a trip to Kansas. Eventually we paid for the place on White Crane. We lived here for about 14 years, raised our family and had many good times that made many memories for us and our children. We had good neighbors.

Elsie was a big support to our home. She worked hard, irrigating with the boys, raising a big garden, having time to help others, cooking for harvest men in the summer, which meant making much bread and many pies. She was always there, keeping the home, ready to help and encourage, and give of herself in many ways.

In the summertime the children had many good times, spending lots of afternoons in the Oklahoma bathtub—the drain ditch that went through our property.

We all went to church at the Livingston congregation, which had a strong influence on us and gave us direction for our lives.

In about 1959, when the children were grown and beginning to leave home Elsie and I decided to sell the farm and move to a ranch in Ballico, where I was working on the Rogers ranch. There was a big house and we could rent it for ten dollars a month.

In 1969 Elsie's mother was diagnosed with cancer. We took both Elsie's mother and dad into our home and Elsie cared for them. Elsie's mother lived for about six months.

We were still the legal owners of the place on White Crane in Livingston. The people who were trying to buy it didn't keep up the payments to us nor to the bank. They didn't pay the taxes and didn't know how to farm, we brought all the payments up to date and put the place up for sale again.

In 1972 we were able to trade the White Crane place for a farm on F Street, about ¼ mile west of Livingston. This place had a nice house and seven acres of Thompson grapes. We planted 8½ acres of almonds. I was still working at the Rogers ranch during this time. I later retired and when Vin Rogers entered the Grace Nursing Home, I spent many hours sitting with him. Elsie and I were able to make several trips visiting relatives and friends during these years.

In 1981, Elsie and I bought a mobile home and Norman & Judy purchased our place.

When I was 82 I decided it was time to quit active farming and in October of 92 we sold our mobile home and moved into an apartment by Grace Nursing Home. Elsie and I felt this was a good move for us. We have enjoyed the activities there and I have a large space for gardening.

Elsie and I feel the Lord has been very good to us and we have enjoyed our life together—60 years of married life. We appreciate all the love and fellowship of family and friends throughout the years, and the fellowship of the brothers and sisters in the church. ▲

[I appreciate very much the story of Joe & Elsie's life. It tells us in what kind of mold the character of the older generation was formed. To them hardships were a part of life. To us they are a curse to be avoided at all costs. Thank you, Joe & Elsie, for sharing with us. cb]

Zigzagging Around

The Soybean King

Who Was Olacyr de Moraes is a household name in Brazil. Until not too long ago he held the title of Soybean King. Not only was he the purported largest soybean raiser in the world, but he also was heavily involved in civil construction. When the first subway was built in São Paulo in 68 by a consortium of construction companies, his firm, Constran, did a landslide business.

You may remember that some time ago we mentioned the possibility of a railroad coming through Rio Verde. This was to have been Olacyr's project, by which he hoped to send the soybeans produced on his farm in Mato Grosso do Sul to the port of Santos for export.

At the height of his glory, Olacyr was raking in a billion dollars a year, had 25,000 employees and a debt load of 150 million dollars. Today he is taking in 600 million annually, has eight thousand employees and a billion dollar debt. No matter how the figures are shuffled, he is insolvent.

What went wrong? Especially two things. His entire operation was geared up to high inflation. He wasn't able to handle low inflation. Also he succumbed to the enticements of the god of pleasure. He acquired the title of Rei da noite—King of the night[life]. He divorced his wife after 26 years of marriage and began appearing in social circles with young models in tow, including at least one ex-Miss Brazil. For these short-term "friendships" he would pay lavishly—up to a million dollars. If this hardly made a dent in his bank account, it must have dented his good judgment.

At any rate, Olacyr probably won't be having presidents as guests anymore on his farm in Mato Grosso do Sul. There is no doubt about it: the road down is harder to travel than the road up. ▲

Brazilian Orange Juice

Brazil's mild climate and immense areas are suitable for raising citrus fruit. Until the last couple of years, the citrus industry would buy oranges from small "backyard" producers. A surplus began to develop, but rather than bringing the price down, an ingenious solution was found to process the oranges locally.

This solution is visible everywhere one goes. Small insulated carts resembling an orange some 30 inches in diameter. They are parked at stoplights, alongside "sleeping policemen" (see BN no. 44), you name it. As one comes to a stop, the vendor steps up to the car window and offers a small plastic bottle of fresh, cold, natural orange juice. It's good. In fact, it's delicious.

This, together with other marketing schemes, since 1993 have tripled the amount of citrus fruits consumed nationally. In the last three years, the consumption of orange

juice has increased 22 times. At an annual average of 16 liters per capita, Brazil is getting close to the American average of 20 liters.

Not only is Brazil getting rid of its excess oranges, but thousands of people are finding employment, and maybe best of all, the population will probably be more healthy with all the vitamin C that is being consumed. ▲

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Hurlbut's

Why is this issue of BN late?

Because of *Hurlbut's Story of the Bible*.

Some time ago we mentioned that the translation of Hurlbut's had been completed and was being proofread. This also was finished, the type was set and the pictures scanned in (with the scanner the Leo Dirks family brought back for us when returning from N. America). We decided to make an initial run of 200 books and have them out for Christmas. That took some loooooong days. By the time we would finally get home from work and have supper, there was neither time nor gumption to do much writing.

Through all this there has been an interesting development. Clinton Unruh, who works for Gospel Tract part-time, has decided to get into bookbinding in his other part-time. Because of this, Hurlbut's will be sold with a hard cover, instead of paperback, as we had originally planned. To say the least, this will result in a much nicer and more durable book. ▲

More on this next month.

Perdigão

Perdigão has acquired a 500 acre tract of land where it will be setting up operations. For the benefit of those who are familiar with this area, it is just beyond the Polícia Rodoviária Federal station, on the right side of the BR060 Highway, heading out toward Jataí.

At present, negotiations are under way to see who will build their industrial complex. Three companies (Austrian, German and American) submitted bids. One has been eliminated and by now the winner has possibly been selected. Construction is to begin in July of 97.

In one of their monthly papers, they tell the story of a lady who bought a fancy hand fan (the kind funeral homes like to donate to churches) imported from Paraguay. She paid 20 dollars for the fan, but when she tried to use it, the thing went to pieces. She went after the person who sold her the piece of junk.

Solicitous, the seller explained the problem: "Lady, the 20 dollar fan you purchased really is quite weak. If you wanted a stronger one, you should have purchased the 50 dollar model. The one you bought cannot be swished back and forth. You must hold it still and swish your head back and forth . . ."

We may need the 50 dollar model—or even a 75 dollar model, if available—when we get our hog and chicken barns set up.

By the way, it looks like there are going to be some real opportunities for construction work here in Brazil in a year or so. If any of you folks in N America are interested, I think something can be worked out for visas. Let us know if you're interested and we'll do some checking around. ▲

Squatters

There are two kinds of squatters: the one who moves onto the corner of some large tract of land and through hard work begins making a living. While we don't condone this type of thing, at least it has the merit of a certain sincerity. There are few of these. The other kind is the professional squatter—or better said—squatters, plural. They are organized by professional agitators of leftist orientation who induce them to quit working at their jobs and invade other people's property.

We read about this kind of thing happening way out somewhere else. But now it is coming closer home. Recently 120 squatter families invaded a fazenda 105 km. from Rio Verde, out in the direction of the Russian colony.

The question of course is: Are we in danger of having our fazendas invaded? Not really. Very seldom do they invade fazendas that are in production. They prefer large properties that are only partially in production, or not at all. And yet it's not an impossibility that something could happen. With just a little bit of faith we don't have to lose any sleep over this remote possibility. ▲

This & That

The Dean Mininger family spent the October 27 weekend in Mato Grosso, at the Boa Esperança Congregation.

On November 2, a group helped Milton & Cindy Loewen clean up the mess made by the torrential rains during the night. They live on the John Penner home place, which as some of you know, is down toward the bottom of the hill. The terraces broke out and funneled the water and silt right down onto their car garage—and into the house.

Tim & Deanna Burns and family have moved to their own house at the headwaters of the stream where Emma Burns lives. They had been living on the Harold Dirks home place, but when it was sold to Divino Cândido, a brother from Goiânia, they needed to vacate the house. A group helped them paint their house before they moved in.

Bonnie Penner is spending some time in Western Kansas with her daughter Monica, Mrs. Craig Redger.

On Nov. 9 the Monte Alegre youth planted grass at Leonardo & Cláudia's place.

On Nov. 12 Elias Stoltzfus returned from Ohio where he was holding meetings. His parents, Chris & Edna Stoltzfus returned with him and plan on spending some time

here. They spent a number of years here when the Colony was in its infancy. It feels like the good old times to have them back.

Errol Redger and his nephew Shane spent approximately a week on the Colony. Errol was looking after some business on his farm.

The Monte Alegre youth have begun having Bible Study.

Daniel & Anna Kramer's children repainted their parent's house. Daniels are presently stationed at the Acaraú mission in the Northeast. They will be spending a couple months here.

Some of you are acquainted with the hydroelectric plant that furnishes electricity for a number of families down by the falls on the Monte Alegre River. The generator burned out recently and had to be replaced with a new one.

A housewife in S Dakota decided to have company, but the windows of her house needed washing. Since the mercury in the thermometer was sagging way down, her rag kept freezing to the glass. The solution: warm up the window panes with the hair dryer and then proceed with the cleaning.

On Nov. 22 we had another big rain. This time Emma Burns' house was flooded. Fortunately, a workday had been appointed for the following day, so when people got there, they found they had more to do than they had bargained for. But they did a tremendous job of getting things back to normal.

Rosella Yoder spent a few days here together with two of her nieces, Verba and Mary Miller of Holmes County, Ohio. They left for the US by way of Iguazú Falls and Paraguay.

The Leo Dirks family returned from their pilgrimage in N America. As mentioned, they brought back a scanner for use in the publication work here.

The Arlo Hibner family spent the Nov. 24 weekend at the Mirassol, São Paulo mission.

Dan & Marlene Kramer and family were out from Mato Grosso for a few days in order to be together with her mother, Rosella Yoder.

On Nov. 27 Freda Kramer and Paul Koepl left for Oregon to attend their dad, Leonard Koepl's, funeral.

The worst of it is that that housewife is our own daughter. Obviously she didn't learn that kind of stuff in a tropical climate.

There was a cleanup day at the Monte Alegre church on Nov. 29. The youth and others did the work.

The evening of Nov. 29 there was a grocery shower at the M.A. social hall for Chris and Edna Stoltzfus.

Two youth boys, Carl and Earl Giesbrecht from Glenn, CA are visiting the area.