

# Brazil News

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Editorial

## **Enthusiasm**

The word enthusiasm can be traced to the Greek adjective entheos—en-, “in, within,” and theos, “god.” In other words: “possessed by a god” or “having a god within.” Through the centuries the meaning has metamorphosed into: “excitement for or interest in a subject or cause.”

We of course feel more at ease with the present definition. Yet we don’t want to totally disregard the original sense. Who knows, maybe the Greek language still has something to teach us.

If it is true that our enthusiasm is brought about by the god—shall we say spirit?—within us, then that which stirs us is symptomatic of who and what we are. Enthusiasm tells a story. It does to us what a turbine does to a diesel engine—it gives us the added horsepower to do what ordinarily we wouldn’t be able or have the will to do. Enthusiasm is the booster station on a power line by which our ideas and convictions are transmitted to others.

We tend to associate enthusiasm with an exuberant personality, believing that some people by nature are enthusiastic and others aren’t. There is a certain amount of truth to that, but it’s not the whole story. Most people will show enthusiasm when the right area in their life is touched.

This enthusiasm may not be the effervescent type, but if you notice closely, there will be a gleam in the eye, an increased tempo in the voice. Usually there will be an eagerness to exchange information on the subject.

We are enthusiastic about that which interests us. In an informal group conversation, it’s interesting to notice how that someone who has been listening in silence becomes loquacious when the conversation drifts into his particular field of interest. This same change of subject may cause someone else who has been actively engaged in the conversation to show signs of drowsiness.

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Returning to the original significance of the word, if that which captures our interest is a god (spirit) within us, then we have the explanation for some of our behavior.

We are changed by that which interests us. A young man gets a job in a body shop. Acquaintances soon notice a change in him. As he walks through a parking lot, he points out perfectly normal looking cars and comments, “See that car over there? It’s had the front end bashed in.” He then proceeds to point out the telltale signs his “new eye” can now pick out. When he sees another car with a crumpled back fender, he becomes excited. “Man, I’d like to get my hands on that car!”

Our interests create a spirit within us that others notice and feel. This is necessary for success—so long as it’s kept in a proper balance. Apathy, on the other hand, is one of the greatest disasters that can befall a human being. Someone who has worked in a body shop for ten years and can still walk through a parking lot without “seeing” cars, is truly a walking tragedy. And that’s what this article is all about.

On our recent trip to the Perdigão installations in the state of Santa Catarina, our tour of their facilities was conducted by the one responsible for each area visited. What set these men apart wasn’t any spectacular personality or eloquence. They seemed to be quite ordinary people. But as each one spoke of his particular area, one sensed a deep dedication to their job, a true interest in what they were doing. So well did they explain their particular part of the operation, that we had few questions to ask. I felt as if we weren’t being a burden on them. They enjoyed telling us about their job. We left with a good impression of the company.

But folks, why is it that we can be such poor tour guides when it comes to the hope that lieth within us? We tremble when someone asks us even a simple question and all too often don’t even consider spontaneously giving someone a “tour” of our religion. There seems to be no enthusiasm.

Yet when we get onto other subjects, we have much to say. People say we are interesting to be around. Our eyes light up when certain subjects are brought up. Or when we bring them up.

According to the Greek, our lack of enthusiasm would be lack of a god (spirit) within. Much worse, could it be lack of “the Spirit” within?

In the conversion experiences we hear from “outsiders,” quite often they tell of someone who became their “tour guide,” who showed them the way. This someone many times is just an ordinary brother or sister. But it’s someone who becomes enthusiastic when the subject is the hope of eternal life.

This malady is probably more widespread and more serious among us than we imagine. Simple lack of enthusiasm in spiritual things.

The solution isn’t to decide that we must become enthusiastic. In fact, we dare not see this as a solution, as many religious groups have. The solution is the spirit within. Like the young man who has taken his job in the body shop so seriously that his eyes have been opened, we must take our spiritual life so seriously that our eyes are also opened.

The Bible tells the story of ten young girls who were invited to a wedding. We

assume they were all close friends of either the bride or the groom—maybe both. Five of them were going to the wedding because of this friendship. They wanted to rejoice with their loved ones.

The other five were apparently going with other interests. Probably for social reasons. When the other girls were filling their vessels with oil, these five were probably discussing which boys would be at the wedding. Down deep, that was their main reason for going. That is where their enthusiasm was.

Enthusiasm doesn't need to be cultivated. It is the natural result of something which has been cultivated. If we find it difficult to become enthusiastic about spiritual things, we need to find out why we're going to the wedding. ▲

## Brazilian Members Write

by Isabel Aniceto Souza Barbosa

### **God Sent a Quail**

Today I feel to relate an experience that I had several years ago. I always had a job to help support the family. Even after I got converted, I continued working out, because when the wife must assume part of the husband's responsibilities, it's hard to quit working. It's like being backed up against a wall and one sees no other way out but to keep on working. Even when I was sick, I had to get up early in the morning to catch the bus to go to work.

One day my husband asked me to quit working. But since I was hoping to buy material to make several new dresses, I wasn't very happy with his request. I rebelled at the idea of having an empty purse. But my refusal to quit working didn't bring God's blessings. Even my children had to suffer because of my decision. Several times when I got home from work they had been hurt during the day. This helped me make up my mind that I really should quit working.

That's what I decided to do. I had discussed this with the missionary and he agreed this would be best. He encouraged me to trust in God's promises.

It wasn't easy. We had some extremely difficult times. It wasn't easy to see my children suffering for lack of food.

The day came when we didn't have anything in the house to eat and I didn't have a cent to be able to buy anything. My husband was working away from home. In the store where I could get something on time, the rice was more expensive than at other places, so I decided to get some cornmeal which we would eat until he got back.

When I got back with the cornmeal, I put some on the stove to make a kind of mush. Then I went and prayed, asking God that he would send a quail for us to eat.

The mush was still cooking on the stove when someone knocked on the door. It was the missionaries. There they were with a dressed chicken and a few other groceries. He

said they had come to have dinner with us. I didn't know what to do. Finally I told him that we didn't have any rice in the house. He went and bought a five kilo bag of rice.

But in my heart I wasn't thankful. I didn't think that God was answering my prayer, but rather that the missionary had somehow found out about our dilemma and decided to help us out.

Later the missionary's wife and I were sitting on the back porch when a quail crossed our backyard. [They live right on the edge of town, which explains why a quail would find its way to their backyard.] Right then I didn't remember my prayer, but that night, when I was lying in bed, I remembered and wept with thankfulness. God sent the quail because He saw my unbelief.

I want to encourage those of my sisters who also must take upon themselves part of the their husband's responsibility to not be afraid to trust in God. I have received many blessings after this, but no longer do I feel that heavy weight on my shoulders. When we must carry our own burden and someone else's, the weight is very heavy.

Pray for me. My greatest desire is to have a Christian home. I feel so alone in my home, but when I remember how God has promised to take care of me, then I take new courage. My brethren also are a source of encouragement to me.

I would like to add that someone gave me some material for several dresses and I found out that having an empty purse wasn't nearly as bad as I had thought it would be. I'm not lonesome for the days when I worked out. ▲

## The School Mailbox

### More Answers

Before we begin answering some of the questions that were left over from last month, we want to remind both teachers and students that this column is for you. Send us your questions or anything you feel that might be of interest to the readers.

#### What do you eat?

I understand the question to mean: What do Brazilians eat?

Eating habits here are very different from those in N America. Let's begin with breakfast.

A typical American breakfast is a pretty hefty meal. Most Brazilians have a light breakfast. They call it café da manhã (morning coffee.) People who live in town usually get up early and go to a nearby bakery to buy some small loaves of freshly baked French bread. Often they bring it home while it is still warm. A glass of chocolate milk or café com leite (milk with coffee mixed in), together with the pão com manteiga (bread with butter) make up their breakfast. Adults usually drink their coffee straight.

And please, don't feel sorry for anyone who has this kind of breakfast. Freshly baked French bread spread with butter, especially if the bread is still warm, is really delicious.

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Do people eat breakfast cereal here? Very little. Cereals are quite expensive and many people can't afford them.

Because of being a light breakfast, lunch is usually at 11:00 o'clock here, an hour earlier than in N America.

What do Brazilians eat for dinner and supper? This varies somewhat between regions. But there is a general pattern over most of Brazil.

Mexicans eat beans and rice, that is, more beans than rice. Brazilians eat rice and beans—more rice than beans. They eat a lot of meat: beef, chicken, pork and some fish. Since Brazil is a tropical country, they eat a lot of fresh vegetables and fruit.

There are several big differences between Brazilian and American cooking. One is that Brazilian meals are usually prepared from scratch, that is, they don't have the habit of buying canned or frozen food. The other is that they don't have nearly the variety of dishes that you have in N America. Very seldom do they prepare something that requires a cookbook. In fact, cookbooks aren't real popular in this country.

But do you know what? The best food in this world is food that is prepared by taste-as-they-go cooks.

Do Americans like Brazilian food? Most of them do. In fact, some American families eat mainly Brazilian food. Others eat a mixture of American and Brazilian food. And others eat mainly American food. But Brazil is a free country, so people can eat what they like best.

Something that both Brazilians and Americans like is churrasco. This is meat prepared over a bed of coals. Almost all restaurants offer churrasco. If you ever visit Brazil, be sure and go to a restaurant where they serve rodízio, which is when the waiters keep bringing different kinds of meat on spits and slicing it into your plate. They keep bringing you meat until you tell them to stop.

## **What kind of people live in Brazil?**

It varies a lot from one region to another, just like it does in N America. Southern Brazil has a lot of Italians, Germans and Japanese. There are Dutch, Ukrainians and many other nationalities represented.

Most Brazilians have at least some Portuguese blood. This is because it was the Portuguese who colonized Brazil. Because of a period of slavery, many Brazilians, especially from the Northeast, have some Negro blood.

Brazilians are a very friendly, likable people. Their language, as you surely know, is Portuguese, which is a first cousin to Spanish. In fact, Brazilians say that Spanish is poorly spoken Portuguese.

## **How do Brazilians dress?**

Since this is a tropical climate, they dress a lot like N Americans do in summertime.

Brazilians are a very clean people. They wouldn't dream of going to bed without a shower. In fact, they don't even like to eat supper without first taking a shower. When we tell them how in N America people used to take a bath only once a week, they can hardly believe their ears. ▲

Zigzagging Around

## When English Invades

Preocupada com o atual estado outdate no qual a minha empresa se encontra, estive pensando seriamente em melhorar a performance dos meus funcionários com advanced courses promovidos on the job. Antes de mais nada, precisarei estabelecer um set de condições para o desenvolvimento das atividades de training e learning.

Pensei em promover um group development para elevar minha empresa à categoria de learning organization. São muitas as idéias que tenho estudado para colocar a companhia no ranking das top line, tais como: estruturar um processo de empowerment, criar um just-in-time office ou um virtual office, instituir o casual day e incorporar a mentalidade de entrepreneurship.

Vou contratar os melhores coaches existentes no establishment acadêmico, solicitando que façam um instruction on the job e permaneçam full-time em nossas instalações. Para isso devo ter como meta desenvolver uma equipe que atue one-for-all-and-all-for-one. Sei quanto será difícil distinguir o first best do second best nesse processo de reformulação, mas meu staff precisa estar preparado para atuar como um team work. Tenho dúvidas ainda quanto à metodologia — se deve ser top-down ou working groups. O importante sem sombra de dúvida, é ter em mente a necessidade de obter um upgrade o mais rápido possível.

So begins an article written by Andréa Marta Fanzeres Cordoniz, a psychologist, and published in EXAME Magazine. She halfheartedly laments this overdose of foreign words that have become part of the Portuguese language. The mild objections she makes to this trend are diluted even more when she ends her article with the words bye-bye.

After the xenophobic years of the military government, in which not only foreign products, but foreign terms too, were seen as a threat to Brazilian sovereignty, Andréa's article is proof that things have changed. ▲

## Hurlbut's Story of the Bible

The festive spirit felt in the Literature Center the last several weeks hasn't been due to Yuletide. It has been brought about by seeing Hurlbut's Story of the Bible coming off the press, being collated, and then bound.

Finally, after many hundreds of man and woman hours were consumed in translation and proofreading, the Riso digital printer (the one we bought from Wagner, the man with the earring. See BN no. 60.) began transforming a dream into reality. Two hundred copies of Hurlbut's were churned out.

That was a total of 31,000 sheets of paper that Faith collated by hand. As the first

books were assembled, Clinton Unruh snatched them up and took them to his end of the building, where he has his bookbinding equipment set up. Hurlbut's is a book for children and it was amazing how effortlessly we adults involved in the project became as children as we handled the first books brought forth in a hard cover with gold engraving.

This initial run of 200 books is being our training ground. We have learned a lot and are already looking forward to the next edition—an improved edition, obviously.

Why are we so excited about this project? Because to many people this will be a quasi-Bible. A college professor in town who helped proofread the book, kept asking if we hadn't printed the Bíblia yet. To her it was a de facto Bible. Another proofreader openly speaks about the change Hurlbut's wrought in her life. May this be the testimony of many people.

Hurlbut's is the only complete story of the Bible in one volume that exists in the Portuguese language. Our next step will be to get it on the national market. This first edition has been earmarked for members and the local market.

Beginning the first of the year, the next book to be translated is The Pilgrim's Progress. Our translation, which will be neither archaic nor modern, will use a simple language, similar to that which we used in Hurlbut's, that all will be able to understand. This grand book is found in very few Brazilian homes. We hope that O Peregrino can become a household word here, just like Pilgrim's Progress is in N America.

It's true that there are a number of translations of Pilgrim's Progress in print. One, a scholarly translation in archaic Portuguese, requires a college education to be understood. Other translations in modern Portuguese have been so severely mutilated as to render them practically useless. We believe there will be a market for the book we hope to produce. ▲

## Would You Do it Again?

Those of us who have lived in Brazil from the beginning will soon have been here three decades. It's not surprising that you good folks in N America like to ask, "Would you do it again?" (Once in a while even we ask ourselves that question.)

I suppose we could turn around and ask you folks if you think we did the right thing by moving to Brazil. We could spend a whole evening going back and forth on that one. But let's do something more productive. Let's visit the Rio Verde Congregation and then you make up your own mind.

Don't mix up Rio Verde with Rio Verdinho. The congregation in town is Rio Verde and the one on the fazenda is Rio Verdinho.

The Rio Verde Congregation has a rather turbulent history. One of our first members, some 20 years ago, was a very talented young man—a genius. His knowledge of the Bible was phenomenal. He was instrumental in bringing a number of people to the church. Things were really looking good for a while.

But when this same young man became discouraged and left the faith, he took with him many of those whom he brought to the church.

The little group in town staggered under this blow for quite some time. As the years went by, there were both victories and defeats, but growth was slow.

Then the tide began to change. It's one of those things that we can try and explain, but the fact remains that we don't control the tide. No matter how hard we work, if the tide is going out, we're not going to accomplish very much.

Several Sunday evenings back we went to town to hear five converts tell their conversion experiences. The first thing one notices is the pleasant atmosphere, beginning outside the church where the members greet each other and visitors.

Among those seated in the pews when the service started were a number of CMM's (Chronic Meeting Missers). I understand they have been cured of their sickness. Then came another enjoyable surprise. One of the song leaders was a brother who had been on the outside for a number of years. Approximately a year ago he returned to the church. I had no idea what a beautiful voice he had, a voice which lent a special beauty to the service.

The first one to tell his experience was Rogério Moraes, a 34 year old man. As a youth, he and Paulo David knew each other in Goiânia. They were converted at the same time and both went to the same church for a while. Then their paths parted and for many years they had no contact with each other.

Both Rogério and his wife worked in banks in Goiânia. They realized the environment in the banks in which they worked wasn't conducive to Christian living. Then the bank in which Rogério worked, in an effort to cut down on its personnel, offered a substantial bonus to any worker who would offer to quit. Rogério and his wife, Regina, felt this was an answer to prayer. Both quit their jobs.

Now followed a time of many uncertainties and false leads as they tried to find God's people, which they believed existed someplace. When they had almost given up hope of ever finding this people, a telephone call changed the entire course of their lives.

Rogério & Regina plan to tell their experiences in writing. Hopefully in the next issue of BN you can read their story.

After Rogério and Regina had told their experiences, next was Alice Ferreira David's turn. Alice is a petite lady in her latter fifties. Acquaintances shake their heads and say that if Alice could get converted, then anyone can. She told a beautiful experience.

Next was Juliana, a 16 year old girl, the daughter of Altitude Gomes Araújo, a psychologist. About a year ago Altitude decided to get converted. Following his example, she too went to work—with an advantage. Her past was less complicated than his. Her experience left no doubt in anyone's mind. Hopefully before too long her dad will be able to tell an experience too.

The last one to tell his experience was a young man 28 years old. When the Literature Center was built, he cooked for the crew. Valdemir is not an articulate person. Even so his experience rang true. But what he was unable to express, when time was given for questions, his brother and mother supplemented.



First his brother spoke. He told of how Valdemir used to be unmanageable at home. In fits of rage he would become violent, attacking even his own parents. He told what a change Valdemir's conversion had wrought in their home.

Next his mother spoke, confirming how her son had changed. What he was unable to say, his family said for him.

A week later all five were baptized.

Paulo David's dad is part Arab. Pragmatic, he has never shown any interest in religion, but neither has he opposed his wife and children in their religious interests. Several days after the baptism, Paulo and his wife took his parents to Pirenópolis for a visit. There they found a lot for sale right next to the church. He and his wife decided to buy it, build a house and move to Pirenópolis. When looking over the lot he made a remark that would appear quite insignificant, but for those who know him well, it was meaningful. He said, "When we live here, I'll go to church too." So be it.

Paulo David's brother, an architect, and his wife, who live in Anápolis, a city near Goiânia, want to move to Pirenópolis. They too have had a conversion experience and are very interested in the church.

Right now we have some visitors from Curitiba, a city of a million and a half inhabitants, the capital of the southern state of Paraná. The visitor, Roberto Amorim, his wife Lúcia, with their three children, came to Goiás specifically to become better acquainted with the church.

For a number of years there has been a feeling that we ought to try and reach the people in southern Brazil. But we didn't know how to go about it. Really, to say it just like it is, I think one of the problems has been the fact that the people in the southern states are more culturally advanced than in some other areas. We just sort of assumed that they wouldn't be looking for anything. Increasingly our vision of this is changing. Just as it is wrong to seek out only the rich or culturally privileged, it is also wrong to ignore them thinking they aren't interested in salvation.

We must not forget the Mennonites who live in southern Brazil. Most of them are indistinguishable from the world. Yet we can't help but believe that there are still some seeking souls.

We are amazed at the doors for spreading the gospel that are opening in this country. We have a tremendous challenge staring us in the face.

Now for a few statistics: There are 313 members in the church in Brazil, of which 138 are Brazilians. Here is the breakdown, first of all by congregations and then by mission posts:

15	Boa Esperança (1 leader)
124	Monte Alegre (2 min, 3 dea)
14	Pirenópolis (2 leaders)
77	Rio Verdinho (2 min, 1 dea)
49	Rio Verde (1 min)

Now for the missions:

9

Acaraú

8	Goiânia
7	Mirassol
10	Patos

And so we ask: Would we do it again? Yes, I think many would. For those who came to Brazil as children, the situation is somewhat different. They may ask themselves: Why did my folks decide to make the move? Depending on their vision, they can almost see themselves as victims, as having been drug into something they didn't ask for. But not necessarily. We have young men and women here with a real vision and zeal for the work. We need every one of them. Since we moved to Brazil, never has there been an open door like today. ▲

## A Brazilian Story

by Adriana Cavalcante

### **The Road of Sin . . . .**

Everything began when someone whom we knew real well got put in jail. Daniel Kramer went to pay him a visit and decided it would be a good idea to have a service in jail. So he talked to the jailer and got his OK. We decided to go at 4:00 o'clock the next Sunday afternoon.

We began our little service with some songs. Then Daniel had a short message. It was during this service that I met a prisoner who went by the nickname of Coelho [Little Rabbit]. He is a light-complected young man with dark hair, a striking figure. But if you looked at him closely, you noticed a cold, evil glint in his eyes. After that first look, I avoided looking into his eyes.

The following Sunday we returned to jail for another service. I noticed that the young man listened to the songs and everything that was said with rapt attention. He even sang along on one of the hymns we sang.

I decided to look the young man in the eye again. This time I saw something different. Instead of the cold stare, I noticed a calmness, a peaceful look. I wondered how it was possible that he could change so much in just one week. The only thing I could figure out was that something in the first service must have touched him.

After we left the jail, Anna, Mrs. Daniel Kramer, said she had noticed the same thing, that that young man had a different look on his face.

We didn't return to have any more services in jail.

A friend of mine showed me a photo that had been taken of the girl this young man killed. I was horrified by what I saw and wondered how a human being could do such a thing.

I work in a clinic as nurse. Because of this I am often asked to go to the local jail and vaccinate the prisoners. I detest that job and often try and find someone to go in my place.

Once again I was asked to go to the jail, but this time I didn't want to go because I was scared. All I could remember was the photo I had seen. I knew that I would have to actually touch these men who had committed the most awful crimes.

I discussed this with Anna and she encouraged me to be strong and trust in the Lord. That is what I did.

Then the day came to vaccinate the prisoners. Since some of them were scared, I stood in the corridor and gave them a little talk, explaining why they should all be vaccinated. Then I asked the jailer to bring them to me one by one. The first one to volunteer was Coelhinho, the one who killed the girl. Even now, after not having seen him for a number of months, he still had that calm look on his face.

Soon after this the young man was released from jail on a very rigid parole. One day as I was walking to work, I met him on the street. He looked at me as if he had something to say. I acted like I hadn't seen him. This happened quite often on the way to work, but I always ignored him. To tell the truth, I was very scared of him.

I have a cousin named Joviano. We were raised together and today he works in a furniture store near the clinic where I work. One night he came over to visit us. He said that Coelhinho was on parole because of good behavior and now worked in the same store where he worked. He went on to tell how this young man was trying hard to live differently and would like to become a Christian. I asked Joviano to tell him that if he would like to have some of our tracts, he should stop at work and I would give him some.

That same night I prayed to the Lord and told Him that if it was His will that I speak to this young man, that he should take away the fear I felt for him. Also I asked Him to show me how to conduct myself if I should happen to meet him again on my way to work.

The next day when walking to work I looked up and there was the young man right in front of me. I told him, "Bom dia," and kept right on walking. But I noticed that the old fear was gone. This to me was an answer to my prayer.

That same day he went to the clinic where I work and asked to talk to me. He said that while in jail someone had taught him how to read. He said that if I would give him some tracts, he thought he could read them.

I felt in that young man a real hunger, not for natural food, but for a helping hand, for friendship, and above all, for the Word of God. He began to ask questions about many things. He said that people are scared of him, which is understandable. He told me that he is very confused, that he doesn't know which church he should go to.

I asked him if he knew how to pray. He said he knew how to say the rosary and repeat Hail Marys. So I told him: "Everyday you need to find a secret place to pray, a place where you can converse with God. He is never far away and will listen to what you have to say. You can tell Him what you are feeling, your doubts and fears, your problems. Make a full surrender to Him and you will see how He is waiting to help you—and not only you, but anyone who makes a full surrender."

I told him not to worry about which church to attend, but rather to try to be

obedient in everything. Also I told him to not get discouraged because of what someone might do or say to him. After all, we are all human and subject to error. There is only one who is perfect and holy. Even though we were totally undeserving, God sent His Son to die for our sins. I asked him if he knew of any human being who would be willing to let his son die to save someone. He replied that he didn't know of anyone. Then I said, "That shows you how great the love of God is."

He then said that his sin was so great, but I told him that the love of God and His pardon were even greater.

As we talked together, the tears rolled down the young man's cheeks. He needs our prayers.

One day he told me briefly the story of his life, which I have written down:

My name is José Flávio dos Santos. I was born March 5, 1968. I lived with my parents until I was 12 years old, when they separated. My mother moved to São Paulo and I stayed with my dad. We moved to Fortaleza, the capitol of the state of Ceará, where we lived for a year. Then we returned to Cruz, which is my hometown. I went to live with one of my sisters (I have five sisters and four brothers).

When I was 17 years old I went to São Paulo to see my mother. I ended up staying there for eight years. I took part in everything the world had to offer, which included drugs and immorality. I was scared that something awful would happen to me, so I moved back to my hometown—but kept right on with my ungodly life. The worst thing that happened to me was learning to know a 14 year old girl. Before long we were living together. This was the beginning of a life of quarrels and jealousy. Things got worse and worse. God was totally absent in our life and it seemed we were already in hell. Instead of the love that I had hope would be present in our lives, there seemed to be some dreadful sickness. It got to the place where I couldn't take it anymore, so I decided to go back to São Paulo.

I didn't tell the girl I was living with anything about my plans. I didn't want her to follow me. I caught a ride to a nearby town where my sister lived. From there I was going to catch a ride to São Paulo with a friend who was a trucker. But there I found out that the girl had found out what I was up to and was coming after me.

I didn't leave my sister's house for some time for fear of what might happen. But when my sister needed some medicine from the drugstore, I told her I would go and get it. On the way I met a man who invited me to have a drink with him. I refused, but he kept insisting, until finally I agreed to just one drink, but after that one drink I lost my self-control. Soon I was drunk...

[At this point we will tell the story in our own words and make a few observations.]

*The road of sin, the road of hate,  
I'd like to turn back, but it's getting late.  
The road is wide and the lights are dim,  
As I travel on down the road of sin.*

It was in this drunken stupor that the young man met his girl on the street. He asked her to take a walk out to a deserted beach where he asked her about some rumors that were floating around concerning her. When she spitefully confirmed everything he had heard, he lost all self-control. But to his chagrin, he didn't have the nerve to do what he felt must be done to avenge himself of her unfaithfulness. So he prayed to the devil and told him that if he really existed, he should give him strength to carry out his terrible design.

The devil heard his prayer and suddenly he was overtaken by a strange power. And the crime was barbarously consummated.

Moments later this strange power left him. Now, as his eyes were opened to behold what he had done, a deep remorse flooded his soul.

He was sentenced to 19 years in prison, but as often happens in our overcrowded penal institutions, he was released after serving only several years of his time.

He is now an outcast. A constant shadow hangs over his life, for he has no idea when the girl's family will seek revenge.

Because of the savagery of his crime, we tend to write him off. But it appears God hasn't. He says that after that first service in the jail, something changed in his life. Just what that was we don't know. But who knows, with our prayers, a true turnabout could take place. Don't forget him. ▲

## Remembering Out Loud

### **Leonard Koepl**

Leonard Koepl was a logger. I insert here that logging isn't a profession. It's a virus. A virus that has no known cure. Once a logger, always a logger at heart.

But let's back up. People didn't always understand Leonard Koepl. Getting the good will of others by oozing into their particular social mold was never one of his high priorities. This made it easy to overlook his qualities. Lamentably, all too often when we set stakes for our fellowmen, we fail to look down the mountain to see where they are from.

Leonard's mother was a nun in her youth. His dad would have liked to have been a priest. Devout Catholics, both maintained their faith by ignoring facts which they blindly hoped weren't true.

However when the dam broke, when Leonard's dad became willing to recognize that he was attached to a irremediably corrupt body, the flood waters didn't only sweep away his faith in the Catholic church, but in all religions, indeed in God himself. He became an embittered man.

It was in this environment that Leonard was raised. He was taught to not trust.

Already in his thirties, something took place that brought about a profound change in his life. He and some of his friends decided to camp out in the Oregon mountains.

But they weren't alone in the mountains. On the other side of the river was another group of campers. The Jake G. Loewen family. In the evening this family did what they enjoyed most. They sang.

Carried by the breeze, the notes of these songs were wafted over the river to their campsite. These songs, messengers of love and hope, were the antithesis of what he had been taught through his childhood.

In just a few words, Leonard and his brother Abe learned to know the Loewen family. They learned to know the church. They learned to know the Savior. The day came that they were baptized. And the day also came in which they married Loewen girls.

This brings us back to where we started. Leonard, as well as his brother Abe, were loggers. A logger must have a strong body, agility, good eyesight, and a willingness to hit the road at three o'clock in the morning and work all day.

Leonard had all of these qualifications. Minus one. He was rapidly losing his eyesight. More and more he began to depend on his brother Abe to be his seeing-eye-brother. It forged a strong bond between these two brothers.

Then tragedy struck. Abe was killed in a logging accident, leaving Leonard without a brother, and severely impaired eyesight. The final blow came when authorities failed to renew his driver's license because of his visual problem. Instead of hitting the road at three to make a living, once a month he received a logger's compensation check in the mail.

We have said that logging is a virus. Truly it is. In his mind, Leonard never retired as a logger. Nor did he ever stop planning for the future. His problem was the present.

Leonard & Moselly and their children moved to Brazil not too long after the Colony came into existence. They lived here for some 20 years. Many times he was frustrated. Contrary to someone who is blind and accepts this as an unalterable fact, Leonard could see just enough to where he drifted between two worlds—the world of the seeing and the world of the blind.

Leonard went through a period of struggle here in Brazil, in which it appeared he would be devoured by unpleasant memories of the past and thwarted hopes for the future. But he pulled through. A strengthened man whose spiritual eyesight was better than his natural vision.

Today Leonard needn't listen to the singing from the other side of the river. ▲

## **This & That**

On Sunday, December 1, a busload of grade school students from one of the private schools in Rio Verde came to our morning worship service at the Monte Alegre Congregation. I think everyone was impressed by their very good behavior and the respect they showed. We hope they took some small seed home with them.

Jake & Liz Renno from Wisconsin spent a short time on the Colony. They also visited the groups in Mato Grosso and Pirenópolis.

On Dec. 3 Leonard Koepf's funeral was phoned into the Monte Alegre Congregation from Scio, Oregon.

Frank Coblenz has moved to the Boa Esperança Congregation in Mato Grosso.

On Dec. 4, Daniel & Anna Kramer and daughter Fyanna arrived from the Acaraú mission. They will be spending several months here on the Colony.

On Dec. 6, a freak windstorm took some tile off some of the roofs down by the falls where the Kramers live. There was no major damage. At Emma Burns' place a large eucalyptus tree fell on her power line.

Earl and Carl Giesbrecht from Glenn, CA spent some time visiting the Colony, Boa Esperança and Pirenópolis.

Tom & Ruth Ann Loewen from Glenn, CA, are visiting her folks, Ike & Rosalie Loewen, at the Rio Verdinho Congregation.

The sewing circles from the three local congregations and the Boa Esperança Cong. made comforters for each of the 60 plus residents at the rest home in Rio Verde. On Dec. 14, different ones from the Colony delivered the comforters and had a little service. It was sort of a disappointment. The majority of the residents didn't comprehend what was going on. One of the blessings of Christian life is the privilege of growing old gracefully—a privilege that many of these folks apparently didn't have.

Kendra, daughter of Stanley & Mary Schultz, returned from the US after spending some time working at Bethel Home.

Some of our visitors who are spending Christmas in Brazil are: Paul & Carol Schultz and family from Michigan, which includes daughter Paula who is teaching school on the Mirassol, São Paulo mission (The Schultz family lived in Brazil for a number of years); Laverne & Donnalee Schmidt from Michigan (She is Richard Mininger's sister); Richard & Carolyn Dirks and family from Wisconsin, which includes daughter KayAnn, who is teaching school on the Goiânia mission; Brian & Grace Unruh from Georgia; Lawrnie & Patty Seamans and family, from Iowa. Mark Loewen worked for them during the time spent in the US.

Two girls from the mission at Acaraú came out on the bus—Adrianna Cavalcante (yes, the one who wrote the article "The Road of Sin") and Renata Sampaio. They plan on taking part in the revival meetings at the Monte Alegre Congregation and staying until the end of January.

Jake & Betty Loewen and Rayburn spent Christmas with their children and grandchildren, the Errol Redger family, in Western Kansas.

On Dec. 16 Cristiane e Raquel Garcia moved from the house on Emma Burns' yard to the house that Leonard & Moselly Koepf used to live in.

Edinei & Janete Alves moved into the house the Garcia girls vacated. Janete helps Emma with her housework.

On Dec. 19 the Monte Alegre School had its Christmas program. On the 20th the Rio Verdinho School had theirs.

## Brazil News

Several times we wrote about Leonardo Pareja, a flamboyant criminal whose hobby was taunting the police and trying to make headlines. Those days are past. He was planning on staging a spectacular prison break-out on January 1, which would include first eliminating 15 prisoners from a rival gang. Word leaked out and he and two other members of his gang were eliminated. A movie is being made of his life and death.