

Brazil News



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Editorial

Gideon's Three Hundred

Most armies and security forces have an elite unit which is called upon in especially complex or dangerous situations. To belong to such a unit is a distinction.

Gideon's Three Hundred were such a unit. And more.

Israel's situation was desperate. Numerically inferior to the enemy and morally depleted, it was a nation in its death throes. Nothing short of a miracle could save Israel.

That is why God called Gideon to lead His army, or at least the shambles that remained. Armies are usually run by men who can think big, but this time the Lord wanted someone who could think small and trust big.

A professional general wouldn't have put out fleeces. He would have carefully analyzed the situation and planned accordingly. Gideon put out fleeces. It wasn't that he was scared. The courage he showed in destroying his dad's idols proves that. Putting out the fleeces doesn't indicate an unwillingness or lack of faith. Rather it shows his faith in God's ability to give a clear answer. Someone looking for a position would have grabbed at the chance without any thought of taking a chance with a fleece.

As these two opposing armies positioned themselves for combat, Gideon first demonstrated his advantage over a conventional general. When God said, "Don't attack yet. You're just too many," a professional would have probably thrown up his arms in despair.

God had the perfect solution for reducing the size of the army. He said to Gideon, "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead." Approximately two thirds of the men tucked their tails between their legs and returned.

Militarily this was a positive move. Those 22 thousand men who pulled out would have been in the way of the 10 thousand who were inclined to fight.

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But God wasn't satisfied yet. There were still too many soldiers. All he needed to win the battle was a small elite unit. We want to pay special attention to how Gideon came up with his three hundred men.

Usually when a select group is needed to perform a special task, a notice is posted requesting those interested to appear for evaluation, which includes interviews and a battery of tests. Signing up for such a program can be a sign of courage. It also indicates confidence in one's own potential.

The Lord wanted His servant to have an elite unit made up of men just like their commander. With the enemy almost within shouting distance, there was no time for administering elaborate tests to see who was qualified. And if there would have been time, it's very doubtful that God would have chosen such a method.

The method used to select 300 men out of a universe of 10 thousand is truly remarkable, because: a) no one except Gideon (and maybe a few of his helpers) even knew a selection was in progress, b) the men were chosen exclusively on their readiness to wage war, without regard for physique, I.Q., personality, special training or aptitudes, (c) it probably didn't take more than several hours to compose this elite unit, and (d), which is most amazing, these 300 men needed no training. They were chosen because they were already trained for the task at hand!

When the men finished drinking water, Gideon did a headcount on his new downsized army, and then looked down the valley at the enemy. It must have been a real shocker. Even after the two fleeces. "The Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude." He probably got a funny look on his face.

God didn't hold it against him. He said, "Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host."

God saw Gideon needed this third fleece. His men probably needed it too. Once word got around about the dream the enemy soldier had the night before, any doubt there might have been was dissipated. Gideon and his Three Hundred were ready to go to work.

A lot of things have changed since Gideon's day. Hand-to-hand combat has given way to air-to-air missiles. Seldom do the combatants actually see each other. Warfare has become very impersonal. One button pressed hundreds of miles from the scene of battle can do more damage than tens of thousands of infantrymen.

Warfare has changed, but not human nature, nor the work of God's kingdom, which is still done by foot soldiers. And that's what this article is all about.

Anyone who has observed the overall operation of the church knows that a tremendous lot of work is being done. Someone who hasn't paid attention to what is going on gets the impression that the bulk of the work is being done by people elected or appointed to special positions. There is some truth to this, but it doesn't give a true

picture of how things really function. The majority of the work of the church today is done by Gideon's Three Hundred.

These Three Hundred—needless to say, a symbolical number—are a special kind of worker. Some are ordained men. Some aren't. If they were to have a motto, it would probably be a saying attributed to President Truman: "It's amazing how much one can do if he doesn't care who gets the credit." Or: "Men who do things that count don't stop to count them."

On a typical project, let's just say a workday at church or school that involves the entire community, it isn't unusual for two thirds of the work force to not show up. That leaves one third to do the work. The one third that shows up works hard that day. Maybe several days. Then they go home with a contented feeling. That's good.

But what many don't realize is that some of Gideon's Three Hundred have already put in possibly days of work ahead of time to prepare for the work day, and may well put in a lot of time afterwards to wind the project up. No one serves them dinner or break.

Gideon's Three Hundred are men (and women) who lap water like a dog. To remain standing, holding a spear in one hand, and merely stoop over enough to snatch up a handful of water with the other hand, bring it to the mouth and lap it up, was a cumbersome way of drinking. To kneel down, place the spear on the ground, and drink directly out of the stream, was more natural. But should the enemy have been hiding in the bushes on the other side of the stream, these men would have been caught defenseless. The Three Hundred, on the other hand, weren't only prepared to defend themselves, but also to lead an attack. In a split second.

The Three Hundred don't operate on someone else's starter. They don't have to be cranked or pulled or pushed. They don't need jumper cables. The only reward they ask is the satisfaction of seeing a job done. These men are found in the benches, on the rostrum, in committees and on boards, you name it. They are the men who grease the wheels, who fix broken bearings, who smooth the road. While others are sleeping.

Operation Sea Lion was the code name German military planners gave to the proposed invasion of Great Britain. Hitler, a secret admirer of the British, was hesitant about invading this invincible island nation, but his Navy, which until then had done nothing of special brilliance in the war, saw this as an opportunity to shine, and so persuaded Hitler to give his blessing on the project.

In preparation for the actual invasion, it was decided that daily bombing raids would be made across the Channel, zeroing in on military targets and the city of London. On September 7 the Germans launched their first massive raid on London with 625 bombers, protected by 648 fighters. Soon the entire dockside area was a mass of flames. Thereafter, day after day, night after night, hundreds of bombers crossed the Channel with the express intent of bringing England to her knees.

In numbers, the Royal Air Force was no match for the mighty Luftwaffe. But it had in its favor a powerful ally, an ally which the Germans failed to appreciate—radar.

Enemy squadrons were detected while yet many miles away. R.A.F. pilots took to the

air, and guided by latest intelligence gleaned from radar, intercepted the enemy before he reached his target.

It doesn't take much of an imagination to appreciate the courage of the R.A.F. pilots, many in their late teens or early twenties, who on a moment's notice strapped themselves into flimsy planes (at least by today's standards) and took to the air in the dead of the night. In total darkness, in rain, in snow, in fog, guided by their compass, radio and common sense, they intercepted the enemy. This they did knowing full well that very seldom did all the planes involved in these sorties return to base.

These brave men, proportionally considerably less in number in the British armed forces than Gideon's Three Hundred in Israel's army, saved Britons from a terrible fate, had the invasion taken place. An order had already been issued by the German Commander in Chief of the Army, directing that 'the able-bodied male population between the ages of seventeen and forty-five [in Britain] will, unless the local situation calls for an exceptional ruling, be interned and dispatched to the Continent,'—or in other words, to Nazi controlled soil.

On August 20, in a speech to the House of Commons, while the battle in the skies continued at its height, Churchill declared: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." He could also have said, "We are still alive and free today because of Gideon's Three Hundred."

The work of God's kingdom depends on a lot of people. But without Gideon's Three Hundred, things would bog down. They are the ones who do the thankless work, who, like the R.A.F. pilots, go up at night and then get flak for doing it, who shun the limelight, who quietly pay a discouraged brother a visit and don't tell a soul.

God never puts up a sign saying he needs recruits for Gideon's elite unit. People who make a conscious effort to belong to this elite unit don't belong. Gideon's Three Hundred are men and women who see work to be done and do it. And period.

The original title to this article was, "A Tribute To the Few." Maybe it shouldn't have been changed. But since it was, we'll end by saying, this is A TRIBUTE TO THE FEW. ▲

Perdigão

by Myron Kramer

Trip to Videiras, Santa Catarina

From the very beginning of our contact with Perdigão personnel, they have offered to pay a trip to their headquarters for anyone interested in going for a first hand look at the way they work. To begin with the idea was to take a whole bus load of people, but with one thing and another, at no one time did it suit enough people to fill a bus up. Still there were a few of us that really wanted to get a closer look at things and thus plans were made to go in a smaller group. So it was that a group of seven men left

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early Monday morning, June 30, in a rented van for a week long trip to Videiras, Santa Catarina in the southern part of Brazil where the Perdigão Company was founded and still has its most important operations.

The van, rented from Hertz Rent-a-Car, was an imported Ford Club Wagon with seating for 14 people. As we were a total of 10 people (7 men from the colony, our guide, Mauro, and his wife from Rio Verde and the driver of the van), there was plenty of room for all. It didn't take long to get to town, find our way out the other side and on to the road to Caçu. The road was good and all was very comfortable until someone looked at the speedometer and realized that the 80 it was showing was miles per hour and not kilometers per hour. The driver obviously knew his vehicle and the road was open, so after the first consternation, we soon settled back and let the miles go by.

That first evening found us in Guarapuava, Paraná, approximately 1000 km. nearer our destination than in the morning. It had been a pleasant day of visiting, singing, playing games on a game board brought along and watching the road fly by. Reservations had been made in a very nice hotel and so before long we were ready for some supper and then bed. The weather had been cool all day and during the night it turned quite cold. The next morning they said at the hotel desk that it was 25°F (-4°C) and as we left town, we saw frost in the low spots along the road.

The first day's driving turned out to be nothing compared to the second's. Within an hour after starting out we got into hilly country. The hills kept getting higher and the curves sharper as we went along and our Jehu showed no desire to let up on his pace. Remembering the pleasant day before spent playing games, several of us started out playing, only to find ourselves car sick in short order. From then on everyone concentrated on keeping his insides in order. We even had to stop once to get things settled back down. After getting back on the road all went well and we arrived in Videiras in time for dinner.

After checking into and having dinner at a nice hotel right down the street from the Perdigão factory, we went to visit a 500 sow farrowing operation owned by an elderly farmer and his two sons. This was a new setup and very well organized. One of the sons showed us around the farrowing barns. All looked very well kept and clean, with none of that bad pig smell that so often goes with hogs. The owners said they were well pleased with the results of their investment. They talked of having invested R\$ 300,000.00 and plan to have it paid off in 5 years, but it looked like far more work than what I'm interested in taking on, even for the kind of money they are making.

Evening found us back at the hotel for a good supper and night. We asked about the temperature that morning as we had heard comments about the heavy frost of the night before. At the hotel they said it had been down to 16°F (-9°C) that morning. It sure felt good to have heaters in the hotel rooms.

Wednesday morning, July 2, found three of the group not feeling well. Jair Costa and Bill Miller doctored themselves up and were soon ready to start out, but Calvin Hibner preferred to stay behind. Later after dinner we talked him into going to see a doctor and the doctor put him in the hospital where he ended up staying until the following evening.

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That forenoon we toured a chick hatchery and feed mill. The hatchery was very interesting, especially the place where they sort and vaccinate the chicks. We tend to think of day old chicks as being quite fragile, but to see those people toss them around the way they do, it becomes evident that they can take more than we think.

After dinner we visited several chicken farms. The first place had a nice house and well kept grounds with 4 big broiler houses equipped with automated feeders, waterers and heaters. The owner drove a new pickup truck and later we met his wife coming home in a good car also. They live on the place and he said what we saw was all earned with the chicken houses. Although he does own a store in town, he said the chicken houses are what earn him his living. The next place had quite a few chicken barns, but the owners weren't home so we didn't get in to see them. We had told Mauro that we wanted to also visit someone that wasn't doing well, to get the other side of the picture as well. The third place he took us to was this kind of a place. The whole place looked poor and they just had a new batch of chicks in the barn. The owner wasn't around, so we talked with the hired man. In spite of the run down conditions, this man still talked like it wasn't too bad of a deal.

Thursday morning found us on our way to see the factory. First we saw where the chickens are unloaded and head into the plant hung by their feet on overhead conveyers. Then our guide took us through the rest of the place backwards, from the processing and packaging plants to the meat cutting and then last of all, the hog slaughtering. Whether this was for sanitary reasons, or not, I'm not sure. It was all very interesting, but what impressed me the most was the pace. Everywhere we went people were working fast to keep up with the pace set by the disassembly line. It made us wish we could have better access to some of the sausages and packaged meats we saw. Last on the tour was the waste processing plant. All the refuse is treated. The bones, feathers, entrails and blood all get reduced to meal and sent back to the feed mill. The waste water is treated until it is cleaner than the river water before being released back into it. In the laboratory a technician showed us a slide under a microscope in which we saw some of the bacteria used to clean the water. Even the air exhausted from the pressure caldrons used to make bone meal is treated before being released again.

The afternoon visits were to hog farms. At the first place we again met a father and two sons who owned several chicken and hog finishing barns. One of their setups had a computerized liquid feeding system which was very interesting. They had just received a new batch of piglets the day before and it was interesting to see how they already recognized the sound of the machinery bringing feed at feeding time. At the second visit we met three brothers that run a big farrow to finish hog operation. It didn't take long to perceive that these fellows are doing very well. It was dark by the time we got away from that place, so from there it was back to the hotel to get ready for supper and night. It was good to see Calvin up and out of the hospital when we got back.

Friday morning Mauro took Calvin out to see one chicken farm before leaving for home. Our furious driver made good time and got us into Andrandina, São Paulo for night. Again the hotel was very nice.

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Saturday morning we were on the road again in good time and by now, as everyone was anxious to get home, we let the driver set his pace without comment. Noon saw us pulling into the church yard where wives and families were gathered to meet us.

When we left several questions weighed heavily in our minds: What kind of a living can be made working for Perdigão? What are the working conditions? Do these chicken and hog barns stink? Will it work to use the manure from them on our farms? I'll try to summarize my impressions about these questions.

It soon became apparent that the people we met working for Perdigão in the Videira area had a different work ethic than what we find among our neighbors here in Goiás. Only one wasn't in work clothes. The rest were either doing the work themselves or then side by side with the hired help. With one possible exception, all lived on the farm and in good houses. All the cars that I saw driven by these people were good cars or pickups. In general, the impression I got was that we were seeing a hard working but prosperous bunch of farmers and if I can make as good a living as they have, I'm ready to try it.

The working conditions in the chicken barns were good. Especially where they had equipment to automate the feeding. The weather was cold during our visit so these people had to stay with it to keep a balance between not letting the air in the barns get too stale or too cold. The way I understood, most of them hire the bird catching out to others that come in and load them. As I said before, the farrowing operation looked like far more work than any of us wanted to tackle. In the hog finishing barns, it wasn't long before we, Mennonites, were trying to figure out a way to mechanize the feeding. None of us liked the idea of spending days, including Sundays and holidays, hand feeding pigs three, four and five times a day the way the company wants it done, but with mechanized feeding, these finishing operations looked very attractive. Here again the different work ethic showed up. Around there, they told us, it's not hard at all to find dependable families willing to live and work on these farms for around US\$ 500.00 a month per couple, something I fear might be hard to come by in our area.

Due to the cold weather most of the barns were pretty well closed up. In both the chicken and the pig barns we smelled an accumulation of ammonia from the animal residue. Outside the smell was very mild. Even the smell of the liquid manure that a neighbor was hauling out of a pit at the one place was not near as strong as I had imagined it might be. We questioned different ones about how it is in warm weather and they all said it makes very little difference because then the curtains are down (open) and the wind keeps it ventilated. When I got home, I commented to Martha (my wife) that those barns didn't smell as bad as my uncle's house did in Pennsylvania that had a hog operation. To say it in a word, what I smelt in and around those barns was not bad at all.

Yes, the manure will definitely be a big plus on our fields and the chicken litter, if properly cared for, can be used in cattle feed. At the one farm we visited we saw corn stubble and questioned the owners about their yields. According to the information they gave us, with using their own manure, their yields are very nearly the same as ours with about one fourth as much commercial fertilizer as we use.

On the way home we discussed at length what we had seen and all of us felt that it looked good. On the other side of the coin, different ones we visited there questioned us about what the company is offering here and said that if they can make it in their setting, we surely should be able to with what we are being offered. So we will see how it turns out. ▲

Life in Brazil

Names

Until recently, the Catholic church had a strong influence on the Brazilian culture. This influence was especially noticeable in the names parents gave their children. The more Biblical names represented in a family, the greater the “faith” (and usually the lower the education and social level of the parents).

Bible names may have secured the benevolence of the clergy, but not of financial institutions. Because of long, complicated last names, banks alphabetize their customers by their first name. Since most families had either a João (John), a José (Joseph) or a Pedro the letters “J” and “P” became veritable nightmares. The name João was especially complicated because of all the João Batistas (John the Baptists).

We can't forget about Maria (Mary), or rather the Marias, scads and scads of them. There are even the very orthodox Maria José and Maria Jesus. The masculine counterparts are José Maria and Jesus Maria.

Jeová (Jehova) used to be a popular first name, as were Divino and Divina (Divine, masculine and feminine, respectively), Evangelino (roughly Gospel), Santos and Trindade (Saints and Trinity), just to cite a few.

Legislation now prohibits using names related to the Deity, as well as strange or offensive names. The senator who sponsored the bill made a list of some of the crazy names parents gave their children. Mário de Moraes published some of these names, as well as some he himself came up with. Some are so far out they don't even qualify as a joke.

Um Dois Três de Oliveira Quatro (One Two Three of Oliveira Four)

Eu Nasci Num Dia de Tempestade (I Was Born On a Stormy Day)

José Casou de Calças Curtas (Joseph Got Married in Short Pants)

Nacional Futuro da Pátria Brasileira (National Future of the Brazilian Homeland)

Inocencio Coitadinho Sossegado de Oliveira (literally, Inocencio Poor Thing At Ease of Oliveira)

Restos Mortais de Catarina e Silva (Mortal Remains of Catarina and Silva—Mário says the mother died in childbirth and hence the name)

João Cara de José (literally João Face of José. A looser translation would be: João Looks like José—José being the father)

Juana Mula (Juana the Mule)

João Pensa Bem (João Thinks Well)

Atonio Treze de Junho de Mil Novecentos e Dezessete (Atonio Thirteenth of June of Ninteen Hundred and Seventeen).

Maria Panela (Mary Kettle)

Último Vaqueiro (Last Cowboy)

Danilo de Cadê Negócio (Danilo of Where's the Deal)

Napoleão Estado de Pernambuco (Napoleon State of Pernambuco)

Remédio Amargo (Bitter Medicine)

Marimbondo de Andrade (Hornet Andrade)

Rolando Pela Escada Abaixo de Andrade (Rolling Down the Steps Andrade)

José Maria Guardanapo (Joseph Mary Napkin)

Rolando Caio da Rocha (Rolling I Fall Off the Rock)

Fortunately this kind of thing is history. Anyone hung with an unpleasant moniker can make a petition in court and the judge will authorize a change with a minimum of red tape. Strangely, many prefer to leave their name as is. ▲

Cattle Auctions

The other night we decided to go to a cattle auction just for curiosity sake. It was worth it.

I have written on cattle auctions in the past, but for the sake of new readers, here's a bit of a review.

Cattle auctions are relatively new in this area. It's been in the last five years that they have really come in. They are really quite primitive compared to N American cattle auctions, but even so a lot of progress has been made. Everything is computerized, which includes the lots of cattle and all transactions made.

In compliance with Latin culture, a sale takes on a holiday air. Rather than sitting on bleachers, folding chairs are placed around small tables. A waiter goes around taking orders and serving drinks. All the while the odor of grilled meat drifts through the barn. Pretty soon the waiter comes in with a tray heaped up with paper plates filled with grilled meat and cooked manioc. Everyone gets a serving—free. That, of course, generates more sales of drinks.

But a cattle sale is more than just a social event. They sell cattle there too. I must confess that if it hadn't been for my brother-in-law (the same one who was in cahoots with big Pete at the Colony auction), who is an old pro at cattle auctions, I wouldn't have understood much of what was happening. He explained what was going on. And even bought us cokes. (So I guess I won't be having him auctioned off after all at the next Colony sale.)

The auctioneer was a white haired gentleman, probably in his late fifties. I say "gentleman," because he really appeared to be. My brother-in-law tells me that each sale, before he goes up the steps to his post above the ring, he crosses himself and then, before beginning to auction, makes a short speech expressing his hope that the

Lord will be present and bless the activities of the evening. I guess I'm naïve enough to appreciate this sort of reverence.

The auctioneer doesn't actually take bids. That is up to the *pisteiras*—the name given to the girls (usually two or three) who watch the crowd with hawk eyes. Every time someone gives a bid, they open their mouth wide open and give a yell that would send chills down the spine of a Comanche warrior. Yeooooooooow!

Now folks, that may sound sort of retarded. But it isn't. When a real pretty lot of cattle comes into the ring and just about that quick one of the girls lets out a yeooooooooow, and before she's done, the other one yeooooooooows, and then they yeooooooooow together, it plain makes people feel like they're missing their plane if they don't bid.

But not all the yeooooooooows are the kind that make your scalp tingle. When some lots come in, the yeooooooooow lacks fervor. My brother-in-law explained to me that these lukewarm yeooooooooows are when the seller is bidding up his own cattle. These girls know everyone and immediately recognize what is happening. It's really disgusting because they bid up so high that they end up having to buy their own cattle back and then, toward the end of the sale, run them through again.

Not only do these girls yeooooooooow. Even while facing the crowd, looking for and taking bids, with one hand they may be signing to the auctioneer what is happening down below. They have enough signs to make the US Navy Signal Corps feel a twinge of jealousy. My brother-in-law understands part of what they are saying. I don't.

One of the things they signal is how many days time the seller will give on his critters. This is a very important part of the sale. The seller bids his animals up to where there are no takers. The girls know he's gotten himself into a jam, so they ask how many days he will give on that price. He'll give ten days. She signals ten to the auctioneer and he announces there will be ten days time. A bidder says he will pay the price if the seller will give 20 days. Now the girl heads for the seller's table. Will he give 20 days? Yeooooooooow! Now the auctioneer tries for another five dollars a head. With 25 days time another bidder will pay the price. More signs. More negotiations. Yeooooooooow! That's the last bid. "Dou-lhe uma, dou-lhe duas, dou-lhe três," the auctioneer says. His raised hammer comes down and the lot is sold.

While all this was going on, I noticed that between sales the girls would sometimes head out to a table and have a real serious conversation with some buyer. Then they would head to another table and talk to someone else. It was obvious that it was more than a social conversation.

Once again my brother-in-law bailed me out. When a dumb seller bids his animals up too high and gets stuck, the girls remember who gave the last bid and how much it was. They ask the seller if he will sell for that price. by now realizing he has done a dumb thing, he agrees to sell. Then they head to the bidder and ask if he would like to have the lot for his last bid. He would. The marriage is made. The girl heads to the intercom and informs the office about this behind-the-scenes sale.

Since these sales don't start until approximately 8:00 p.m., they can easily go until one o'clock in the morning.

If any of you good readers from N America decide to visit Brazil, I insist that you go to a cattle sale.

Yeooooooooow! ▲

More on Zé Arigó

This is just a little follow-up on the recent article on spiritist surgeons. Dr. Fritz, the long-deceased German doctor, is to have served notice that after having incorporated himself in Zé Arigó and other famous mediums, he is now going to retire.

According to VEJA Magazine, his retirement plans aren't working out. Rubens Faria Júnior, who is Zé Arigó's self-proclaimed successor, is now doing surgery, supposedly guided by Dr. Fritz's hand.

Rubens was projected into the national limelight recently after performing a surgery on João Figueiredo, a retired general and former president of Brazil.

Figueiredo has had back problems for years and undergone conventional surgery for this. Nothing seemed to help and the pain was getting worse and worse, so finally he decided to seek out a medium. Rubens, who had no medical training, made a small incision and supposedly repaired the slipped disk that is causing him so much grief.

Why would a man who once was president submit to such a procedure? Indirectly, he himself may answer that question. Remember that the spirit world is controlled by the ruler of darkness. When asked what it was that gave him the greatest satisfaction, Figueiredo replied, "To hate. Every day I open a drawer and pull out photos of Aureliano (a former vice-president) and Sarney (also a former president). Through clenched teeth I mutter, '[expletive].' This makes me extremely happy—for a few moments."

That may just be the explanation. ▲

Missions

Mozambique

The official language in Mozambique is Portuguese, which creates a natural bridge between this African country and Brazil. It also creates a bridge between the two countries in the church's mission and literature programs.

For a number of years the tract office in Brazil has been responsible for tract distribution in Mozambique. Several investigation trips were made by brethren from here to check out mission possibilities. Favorable reports were made to the mission

board in N America and it was decided to start a mission there. Several couples are now stationed there.

This brings us to an interesting involvement that Brazil will be having in this program. The language teacher for these couples will be a brother from the mission in Patos, Paraíba—Eduardo Vieira da Silva.

The state of Paraíba, in northeastern Brazil, is one of the less privileged states of the union. Because of this one gets the impression that the inhabitants of that region might not be quite up to snuff. It's an erroneous impression.

Eduardo is a versatile young man who could effortlessly slip into any culture, in Africa, in N America, or any other place. He is employed in a government office in João Pessoa, the capital of the state of Paraíba. They have agreed to give him a six month leave of absence.

One of Eduardo's joys in life is singing. His knowledge of the rudiments of music would be just one more reason why he would fit into any N American youth group.

Eduardo has promised to write some articles from Mozambique for BN, so keep tuned in. ▲

Zigzagging Around

Japan

Have you ever wondered why we don't have a mission in Japan? Why so few, if any, tracts are being sent to Japan? Isn't it true that unconsciously we regard the Japanese as a distant, impenetrable people? As a people whose god is work and who wouldn't possibly be interested in religion?

There may be some truth to that, but probably not as much as we think. The Japanese living here in Brazil certainly wouldn't fit into that stereotype. Who knows, maybe behind those small eyes there can be a larger heart.

Our literature program here in Brazil was given a big boost by a Japanese lady—Marilsa Akemi Nakayama da Silveira. She has proofread quite a few of our books, including Hurlbut's *Story of the Bible*, a mammoth job.

Marilsa is a born proofreader. She has a clinical eye for errors and is a master at improving readability. But she never bluffs. If she is unsure about something, she frankly says so in a short note, recommending that a bit of research be done to discover what is correct.

On July 25, Marilsa, together with João, her husband, and two children, left for Japan, where they will be living for an indefinite period of time. We will miss her as both a friend and proofreader.

And she will miss being able to proofread. At different times she would mention the effect the message of the books being proofread had on her life. It was through

Hurlbut's that she gained a good knowledge of the Bible. Conversion, Consecration, Christlike Service showed her how life can, and should, be. Worth Dying For had a profound influence on her (as it has on most of our Brazilian readers). She especially enjoyed Tip Lewis and His Lamp and took a copy along to Japan for her brothers to read over there.

Marilsa has spent hundreds of hours proofreading for the church and never asked a cent in return. She felt that what she got out of the books was her pay. So when the Brazil Publication Board decided to give her a small gift of money to be able to buy a fax machine in Japan, she was deeply moved. Following is a letter she wrote to the Colony:

July 18, 1977

Dear friends on the American Colony,

I prefer to write you a letter rather than to try and express myself in front of you all and forget what I wanted to say.

On the 25th of this month I will be leaving for Japan. I don't know how long I'll be there. Before leaving I want to ask that you all pray for me, for my husband, and for our two little children. I ask for your prayers because I feel like I need them very much.

My main reason for writing this letter is to let you know how much I have appreciated learning to know the people from the American Colony. Thank you for your friendship and for all the good things you have taught me—especially for having shown me that there is a better way in this life.

I want you all to know that I leave with very good memories of you and that I feel a special love for each one. You all have a special place in my heart.

A big hug for each one and may God bless you.

Your little Japanese friend forever,

Marilsa

I mentioned in a previous article that many Brazilians of Japanese descent are going to Japan to work, where they make fabulous wages. Several of Marilsa's brothers have already bought a farm in this area with the money they made in Japan.

Marilsa has agreed to write an occasional article for BN about life in Japan. I'm sure they will be interesting.

Do remember her in your prayers. And while you're at it, ask God if there are any seeking souls in Japan. ▲

TAM

Some time ago I wrote an article, The Three Warnings, on an airplane that crashed near the São Paulo international airport. You will probably remember that it was a Fokker 100 belonging to TAM Airlines.

Once a year Exame Magazine lists the top 500 companies in Brazil, and out of them chooses the Company of the Year.

TAM was chosen the top business for 1997. For an airline to be chosen is in itself a distinction. Some of the contributing factors were:

A 21.1% growth in sales over the last 12 months, for a total of 511.5 million dollars, of which 113 million dollars were profit.

Outstanding service. The pilot and a stewardess stand at the door welcoming passengers aboard.

Their management of the crash. The owner personally went to the home of the relatives of most of the victims and conveyed his condolences. (He was outraged when arriving at one home and found the family had a lawyer there waiting for him.)

There is no doubt but what Exame made a good choice.

Several days after Exame hit the newsstands, tragedy struck again. Another Fokker 100, on a short hop, was shaken by an explosion while flying at approximately 6 thousand feet, which left a gaping floor level hole toward the middle of the plane. One passenger was sucked out and fell to death in a field below. A half dozen passengers were injured, none seriously.

There was panic aboard, especially as the hole kept getting bigger and flying pieces landed in the turbine. The stewardesses were so busy trying to calm the passengers that no one went up front to tell the cockpit crew what had really happened. One of the stewardesses finally resorted to reciting the Lord's Prayer over the P.A. system.

The pilot, of course knew there was an emergency and that it was serious, but he didn't know that the plane he was flying was slowly disintegrating. He communicated the tower of the nearby airport that he was coming in for an emergency landing. The landing was uneventful.

The Federal Police were immediately called in to investigate. Traces of explosive chemicals were found which indicated a bomb had been planted.

The first suspect, exactly the man who was sucked out of the plane, was the owner of a large mining operation that worked with explosives. However there was absolutely nothing in the man's profile that would raise suspicion.

In routine questioning of the passengers, a school teacher, one of those injured in the explosion, told a confused story. Shortly after being released from the hospital, he simply walked out in front of a bus and once again landed in the hospital, this time in critical condition. This aroused more suspicion and the police investigated his apartment and began talking with acquaintances. Everything indicates, at this point, that he planned on committing suicide in grand style, which would account why he didn't have a coherent explanation for why he was on that flight. His apparent second attempt to commit suicide by walking out in front of the bus gives credence to this theory.

If adversity is part of growth, then TAM should do well this coming year again. ▲

Cemeteries

The story of the true success of a congregation is found in it's cemetery. That is where the warriors lie who can no longer be defeated in battle.

When the Monte Alegre Congregation cemetery was opened some 25 years ago, it looked like a big place. The first two graves, occupied by Pete Loewen and Denton Burns, took up just a little bit of space. But one after another the plots were filled.

Today the cemetery isn't full, but full enough to where a need was felt to enlarge it. The size has been doubled and enclosed by a new wire mesh fence with steel posts.

Both the Monte Alegre and Rio Verdinho Congregations have authorized the Rio Verde Congregation to bury their dead on the Colony. It is interesting how repugnant the municipal cemetery becomes to Brazilians once they become converted. Without exception, they want their dead to be buried in a Christian setting. This is a wholesome desire and we on the Colony should feel it is a privilege to grant them this final favor.

It's not only our members who see the beauty of our cemetery. Visitors also comment on the serene setting where our loved ones rest. If the place of death can be a witness, how much more shouldn't our lives witness to the power of the resurrection. ▲

Culture

A Bad Reputation

We have at different times mentioned that nations, like people, have a collective personality. And as happens with people, nations sometimes suddenly wake up to the fact that there needs to be a change of personality. That is what is happening in Brazil.

Ever since Brazil became a pinprick on the map, it's personality, on the negative side, has been marked by two undeniable characteristics: dishonesty and sensuality. Let's take them individually.

Dishonesty. There might be a more sophisticated word for this, but in the end it boils down to plain dishonesty. There is nothing wrong with cheating the government, because the government is dishonest. There is nothing wrong with dealing dishonestly with the bank, because banks are rich. There is nothing wrong with being dishonest with a stranger because he's probably dishonest too. And so on and so on and so on.

Internally it's a system that works simply because everyone assumes that everyone is dishonest and so it becomes a matter of survival of the slickest. But for nearly 500 years this attitude has kept Brazil, a nation rich in natural resources and with one of the best climates in the world, hobbled with a third world status.

Now with inflation under control, Brazil is awakening to its enormous potential. But to rise on the economic ladder, it must become part of the world market. And to become part of the world market foreign capital must come in. And for foreign capital

to come in, investors must have confidence in Brazil. That's where the dark side of the Brazilian personality becomes a hindrance.

But it's also a challenge. It's a proven fact that Brazilians can be honest. It's also a fact that they are being honest in their partnerships with foreign investors. Since an honest businessman is obviously more efficient than a dishonest one, the tendency is being for the dishonest ones to go broke or sell out. The effects of economic globalization in Brazil are being very positive.

Sensuality. This is even worse than the dishonesty. Recently in a world trade fair, Brazil's delegation invited a girl by the name of Carla Perez to help represent Brazil. This has brought a strong negative reaction from within Brazil.

Who is Carla Perez? A contest was held to determine who has the most outstanding derriere in Brazil and she was the winner. Overnight she became a celebrity. So in the world trade fair in France, where other nations were putting their best foot forward, Brazil was exposing its lack of seriousness.

But let's face it, if Brazil can manage to become a serious nation, it will go places. ▲

This & That

Mervin & Norma Jean Loewen and Regina Miller made a visit to the missions in the northeast.

Ben & Laura Kohen had a girl on July 5, Stella Ranae.

Stephen & Dete Kramer (Stephen is the chairman of the tract board), Clinton & Marie Unruh (Clinton is the superintendent in the tract office), Raquel Garcia and Marion Unruh (they both work in the tract office one day a week) and Edinei & Janete Alves, went on a three day tract tour to some towns northeast of Rio Verde. I asked Clinton about the cost factor of sending tracts by mail or distributing them personally. He said that if the ones involved pay their own meals and lodging, it is cheaper to do it personally than by mail. So, that should be an encouragement to make more of this kind of trips.

Robert Goossen from the Altona Congregation in Manitoba and Mark Loewen from the Monte Alegre Congregation were the revival ministers in Rio Verde.

Dean Mininger and Staven Schmidt were the revival ministers at the Mirassol, São Paulo Mission. Edinei & Janete Alves were there for the meetings too. The Daniel Martin family made a short visit.