

# Brazil News

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## Editorial

### **His Feet**

I am the woman, the sinner, who washed Jesus' feet. This is my story.

I grew up in a strange society. One was either a Jew, or one wasn't. And I wasn't. And yet I saw them every day.

The difference between being a Jew or someone else was enormous. Jews consider themselves to be rightful and deserving title holders of the plenitude of the earth. Others are seen as intruders, as unclean and inferior – a rank obviously detested.

We "others" are avoided by the Jews. It's true that by their law, they aren't to intermingle with other peoples. This is understandable if they are to remain a pure race. We others understand that. That isn't what we resent. What we can't stand is the cold, contemptuous way in which they deliberately ignore us, and yet, when they think no one is looking, the quick, lustful glances they give us out of the corner of their eyes.

My early life wasn't happy. As a child I used to dream of the day when I would have a home of my own. But things went wrong. As I got older, with each day that passed I realized more and more the enormous gulf that separated me from the title holders to the land. My destiny was to be a nobody, to be poor, illiterate and rejected.

I refused to accept this. I wanted money and I wanted acceptance. I became what I was. I thought I had nothing to lose.

But I did. I lost everything.

My smiles, my gaze were no longer real. They were a mask I used to cover a terrible bitterness. I was branded for life. It would be useless to try and return to a normal life, because I was now the "sinner woman."

When by myself I would remove my mask and pour out my heart. I detested what I was. I detested the looks I got when walking down the street. I detested laughing when inside I was crying. Worst of all, I detested the knowledge that I was now a double outcast.

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The years passed. Then one day people began talking about a man who could cure people. Some said he was a preacher. All kinds of stories floated around. People criticized him. They called him an impostor, a charlatan, a false prophet . . .

But then one day I heard something that struck me like a bolt of lightning. Someone said this man was the Son of God and could forgive sins. It sounded preposterous. And to complicate things even more, they said he was a Jew.

The Son of God who could forgive sins. I thought and thought about that. Sometimes I wondered if I was losing my mind. The people I asked about the man from Galilee seemed to hate him. I thought that strange. Why, I wondered, wouldn't the Jews feel honored to know the Son of God claimed their nationality?

Every now and then I would overhear someone talking about what this man had said. One day when he was preaching he is to have said, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." I guess that is where I got my first hope. Whenever I went out on the street I would wear a mask of smiles and giggles. I would try and look like the most carefree person in the world. But when I was by myself, when I would take my mask off and be the real me, I was a picture of despair. It was as though I had died and was mourning my own death. That was the real me.

Then I thought about the people I knew, the people who came to see me. They too wore a mask. On the street, in the daytime, they wore a long face. They would go into the temple. Some would lift their hand high as they dropped heavy coins into the treasury. They would pray on the street corners. But when they were in their own little circle, off the streets and out of the temple, the mask of piety would slide off of their face like snow off a tin roof in the warm afternoon sun. That is where you would see the real Pharisee.

I could see why they detested the man who was supposed to be the Son of God. They said he had a piercing gaze and he probably could look right through people's masks.

Something in my dead soul stirred. I had to see this man. I didn't have to worry about what others would think of me, because, after all, I already was the "sinner woman." You can't get any lower than that.

"Have you heard?" someone asked, "That fellow who says he's the Son of God is in town. He's going to be having lunch at Simon's place."

I knew Simon.

I knew Simon, the pious Jew, would be furious if I went to his house, but right now that was of no importance to me. I had to see this man and see if he really was the Son of God. I had to know.

I was leaving the house when a thought struck me. Was I going to look up this man, ask a favor of him, and give him nothing in return?

I had over the years saved my earnings. My idea was to put away as much as possible for old age.

I went back to where I had my money stashed away. I opened the sack where I kept my coins. Maybe I could take just a few coins and offer to pay him. But then I thought, if he really is the Son of God, does he need my money?

And that's when the idea hit me. Why not buy a gift? But what? If he was really the Son of God, the best wouldn't be good enough. I remembered an alabaster box filled with expensive perfume. Very expensive.

I didn't know what the perfume would cost, and I didn't have any time to lose. So I just picked up the bag that had all the earnings from my life of sin. I took everything. Not a single coin did I leave behind.

When I got to the store I said, "I'll take that alabaster box of perfume." Before the store keeper had a chance to tell me he didn't sell to people like me, I upended the bag on the counter. Seeing the pile of money, he quickly glanced around. Seeing no one, he began counting the coins.

"Well that's something," he said, somewhat awestricken, as he handed me the alabaster box. "How did you know how much this perfume costs?"

I didn't even answer him. Clutching the precious perfume, I hurried out. Glancing back at the next corner, I saw the man, wide-eyed, still staring at me.

When I got to Simon's place, I knew I would have to be careful or I would be thrown out. I was fortunate. Simon and his guests were already reclining on their couches. The meal was in progress. So I got up all the way to where Jesus was before Simon saw me. He turned crimson. He choked on his food and began coughing. He couldn't have said anything, even if he would have tried. Everyone saw me and a hush came over the room. Only Jesus acted totally normal. In fact, he acted like he didn't even notice me. He just kept on talking.

I had intended to give the alabaster box of perfume to Jesus as a gift. I knew it would be impolite to interrupt the meal, so I just sat down at his feet to wait. Since, as they reclined on the couches, their feet were extended away from the table, this was easy to do.

Jesus kept on talking, and as I listened to his beautiful words, I had absolutely no doubt. I thought: Jesus, He is the Son of God.

It was more than I could take. He, the Son of God, and I, a sinner woman, together in the same room.

Something welled up from deep within me. My hard, hard heart, that for so many years sinned not only against my own self and against others, but above all, against God, now broke.

I began to weep. It was as if the fountains of the deep had opened up. My tears fell on Jesus feet.

And it was then that I noticed. His feet were soiled. Contrary to custom, Simon, the host, had not washed Jesus feet when he came into his house. This breach of etiquette was an open offense which Jesus had chosen to ignore.

As my tears fell on his stained feet, rivulets of muddy water dropped on the floor. I had no cloth with which to dry his feet. My hair were loose, for as a sinner woman, I had no obligation to cover them. So I began wiping his feet with my hair until they were totally clean and dry.

Jesus was still talking. Since he was a Jew, I wondered if maybe He, in keeping with their custom, wouldn't talk to me. How would I give him my gift?

I noticed that with every minute that went by, things were more strained. Jesus was doing all the talking.

As I looked at Jesus' feet, I felt a deep love. He might not look at me. He might not shake hands with me. He might not say a word to me. And why should He? After all, I was a sinner woman. The whole town knew it. Simon knew it.

Even if I couldn't ask Jesus for the favor I wanted, He must have my gift. I would pour my perfume on His sacred feet.

An alabaster box is made of a rock that has been meticulously shaped and hollowed out. Now I tried to remove the cork, but it simply wouldn't come out. I dared not ask for a cork screw, so I simply took the hard but fragile box in my hands and crushed it above his feet.

The delicate scent of the costly perfume immediately filled the room. It was now impossible to ignore my presence. I quickly glanced up and saw the terrible scowl on Simon's face. His guest knew exactly what He was thinking: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner."

The room was in total silence. Something had to give.

After Simon's rudeness of not washing Jesus' feet, I really don't know what kept him from saying that out loud what he was thinking.

Looking directly at Simon, Jesus said, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee."

Almost defiantly, Simon said, "Master, say on."

Jesus began to tell a little story:

"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they couldn't pay, he frankly forgave them both." Still without taking his piercing eyes off of Simon, he said, "Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?"

Realizing there was only one logical answer, Simon replied, "I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most."

"Thou hast rightly judged," Jesus told him.

And now, looking at me for the first time, Jesus asked Simon, "Seest thou this woman?" Of course he had seen me. Once again looking straight into Simon's face, Jesus continued, "I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Now Jesus looked back to me. He didn't look at me like he did at Simon. Softly he said, "Thy sins are forgiven."

That was the favor I had wanted to ask of the Son of God. But I didn't even have to ask. That hard, stone alabaster box, filled with all my sins, was all I had to offer to the Savior. Unable to open this box, it was crushed on his feet.

Hearing some of the guests murmur, “Who is this that forgiveth sins also?” Jesus turned to me again and said, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

Suddenly I was no longer a sinner woman. I knew it. I could feel it. Inside I was totally clean. Just as clean as Jesus’ feet, which I had anointed with tears of repentance, and then with all of my sins, poured out of a broken heart.

Jesus said, “Thy sins are forgiven thee.” And then he said, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

When I left Simon’s house, I was no longer the sinner woman. I knew it. I could feel it. Even so, I figured my reputation had been ruined for life. But I soon noticed that as I walked down the street, people – especially men – no longer looked at me like they used to. I couldn’t figure it out, until one day I understood what had happened. My mask was gone.

I loved Jesus when He forgave me. But I had no idea what the price of my pardon was until, a few short months later, those very same feet I had washed with my tears and kissed, and then anointed with my sins, were pierced by huge spikes, when His heart, a pure heart, was pierced so that mine could be broken and my sins poured out and forgiven.

It was these same feet that had to tread the winepress alone, that were pierced. And because of this, I am no longer a sinner woman. ▲

## Remembering Out Loud

### **The Book that Traveled**

I don’t know how many of you readers caught a laconic note in the This & That column of BN num. 22. It said, “Linwood, was your mother’s maiden name Luella May Johnson?” That’s all.

Several weeks ago this question was answered. Linwood Koehn was here at the Monte Alegre Congregation for revival meetings. One day he came into my office and asked, “Say, what was the deal on that note in BN about my Mom?”

Linwood and I grew up together as neighbors on the same section northeast of Galva, KS. We went to school together and spent time in Mexico together. Then, for over 25 years, our paths parted. It was amazing how many of our conversations began with, “Do you remember that time... ?”

Back to Luella Mae Johnson. Before we moved to Brazil, Faith went shopping in a dime store in Hutchinson. Among the books she bought on their used book table, was an old 1926 reader, which we brought with us. Every now and then I would read in it.

Not too long ago I noticed the name written on the front inside cover – actually written three times – Luella Mae Johnson. I knew Linwood’s mother’s name was Luella and that her maiden name was Johnson. But I wasn’t sure on the middle name.

If, when Luella was a girl in school in central Kansas, someone would have told her that sixty some years later, her son would travel to central Brazil and there be given her old reader, would she have believed it?

## Do You Remember...?

As we discussed old times, Linwood and I had to conclude it was a miracle either of us survived our early years of life. Our guardian angels must have worked overtime.

Since our dads farmed together, we spent a lot of time doing field work together. When plowing together, he on his dad's 720 John Deere and I on my dad's, we came up with what is indisputably the most brilliant tractor-to-tractor communications system ever developed.

Without a doubt the 720 was John Deere's finest hour. I remember the gloom we aficionados felt when told that six little cylinders that went rrrrrrrrr were better than two big ones that went pop-pop-pop. Baloney. It was exactly this pop-pop-pop that set John Deere aside from all other tractor manufacturers. The least they could have done is change the company's name to, say, John Deerrrrrrrrre.

I think that my grandpa felt about his D John Deere like I feel about the 720. Even though he was plowing out behind the hedge row a half mile away, we could follow his progress by just keeping our ears open. As he ran onto a stretch of gumbo, the pops would go pop, pop . . . pop . . . pop . . . . pop . . . . . pop . . . . . pop and the silence. Yep, this time he lost it. But wait. POP! With split second timing grandpa would yank back on the long hand clutch and the old D would return to life. Pop, pop, pop . pop . . . pop . . . and the ritual would repeat itself until grandpa managed to get through the patch of gumbo.

Under ideal conditions, when the plow cut a deep, clean furrow (and the power steering was adjusted to gently nudge into the furrow), the old 720s needed little or no steering. Except at the ends, of course. So it took very little common sense – possibly none – for Linwood and me to see the social opportunities in this. Without our 720s ever missing a pop, one of us would bail off of our tractor, hop onto the three-point plow of the other, climb aboard, and then, each sitting on a fender, discuss anything and everything that needed discussing. The best place for this was in a mile-long field our dads custom farmed at Lindsburg. As we neared the end of the furrow, the guest rider would return to his own tractor. They would both be turned and the operation repeated. Again and again.

But that wasn't all. There were times we felt more like sleeping than talking. It was a simple matter to sit down on the floor, knees jammed against one fender and the back against the other. Those were some mighty good naps. And please, folks, don't ask me how we always managed to awaken just before getting to the end of the furrow.

I mentioned the common sense factor, or lack of it. Linwood remembered the time he decided to make me believe his tractor was driverless. When I wasn't looking he crawled down and squatted on the little step in front of the rear wheel. Suddenly he lost his grip. Had he not managed, with a supreme effort, to regain his grip, he would most certainly never have come to Brazil and picked up his mom's grade school reader.

“You're the First One...”

We of course discussed our school

days, our teachers, our schoolmates. I told Linwood how much I wished I could go back and thank especially two of my teachers, Mr. & Mrs. Williams, for what they did for me. It was through their efforts I learned to type, take shorthand, enjoy English grammar, appreciate literature, see writing as a tool and not a drudgery. Unfortunately they are both gone.

Linwood told me that some time before Mr. Williams died (Mrs. Williams I believe was already gone), he went back and thanked him for what he had done for him. This dear man told him that in all his years of teaching, this was the first time a student ever came back to express his thankfulness.

Shame on us.

Why do we wait until those to whom we owe the most are gone to remember to thank them? ▲

## Shotgun Traps

When we moved to Rio Verde, nature was largely undisturbed. As one approached a river, splashes could be heard as different animals took their refuge in the water.

Some of these animals, like the capybara (which I will describe in a future article) are a delicacy. However, because of their habit of never straying very far from the river, it was extremely difficult to hunt them by traditional methods. As a result, most of them were killed either in an *espera* or by shotgun traps.

The principal in both cases was the same. The hunter would go out to the river during the day and find their trail. He might even put corn or some other bait out to attract the animals. In the case of the *espera* – which means to wait – the hunter also selects a low branch in a tree where he can sit and wait for his prey to appear. So far so good.

The shotgun trap, however, is a different story. The hunter, no, the slayer, instead of looking for a place to wait, stretches a string over the trail and ties it to the trigger of a shotgun he has rigged up off to one side, aimed at where he believes the prey will come through. The amount of animals condemned to a lingering death, or that were maimed for life, must have been high.

Shotgun traps were dangerous for more reason than one.

One of our local merchants, Lázaro Moraes, is a very fine man. Different ones from the Colony buy building supplies from him. He walks with an accented limp.

As I remember the story, he owned a little farm with a river running through it. Unbeknown to him, either a neighbor or hired man set up a shotgun trap. The first indication he had that it existed was when the blast took away part of his leg.

He must have spent several years with his leg in a cast, and even more on crutches. It's a miracle he didn't lose his leg.

We feel a certain outrage upon hearing a story like this. But let's calm our emotions as we take this story one step further.

No one likes to have a prowler around. We who are non-resistant may feel especially vulnerable in this kind of a situation. Now a question that may seem quite ridiculous: If a prowler has been lurking in the vicinity, would there be anything wrong with setting up a shotgun trap in our back yard at shin level? Our reasoning would be that no one has any business in our backyard at night. If someone is out prowling and gets hurt, it's something he has brought upon himself.

It's really a dumb question because there is only one possible answer for a Mennonite. Right?

Then answer one more question. Is there anything wrong with deliberately keeping a vicious dog on your premises to do to a prowler what your non-resistance stance won't permit you to do with your own hands? ▲

## Mission

### **My Experience**

Eduardo Vieira is a member in the Patos, Paraíba mission, in the Northeast, where Sam & Erma Coblentz and son Frank are stationed. The other Brazilian members, whom he mentions in this experience, are Rosimere, a teenager who is confined to a wheelchair, and Paulo, a young doctor who was recently baptized.

I was born in 1976 in a Catholic home. From childhood I received religious training and this created in me a certain fear of God. Nevertheless, I was strongly attracted by the things of this world.

One day I found a Bible Story book in our backyard. Since I had already learned to read, I began to read the book. One of my favorite stories was that of Samuel, who served God from his childhood. His beautiful example was so different from my life, marked by disobediences, evil deeds, and above all, fears. I lived in fear: fear of the dark, fear of death, fear of the unknown . . .

Once I actually got to the place where I decided to do what was right. I would obey the Ten Commandments, thinking that would save me. I found I wasn't strong enough to carry this out for even one day.

It was shortly before this that we moved to another house. One of the neighbors had a girl called Rosimere. And in 1987, Paulo, a friend of theirs came to live with them. Paulo and Rosimere began to study the Bible together. They were anxious to know the truth. I spent a lot of time at their place and always enjoyed listening when they talked about the Bible..

Paulo and Rosimere decided to begin attending a Protestant church. I wanted to go with them, but my folks wouldn't hear of it.

This brings me to a time of great confusion in my life. By now I had learned a lot about right and wrong, but I mainly did what was wrong. I was self willed and worldly,



very attached to television and amusements. That wasn't all. Because of my fears, superstitions and strange attitudes, I became psychologically unbalanced to the point where others thought I was losing my mind. I admit they had every reason to think this. Even though I knew all this was wrong, I was helpless.

The following year I told one of my classmates that I wanted to search for God during my next school vacation. He told me that I ought to live it up and think about these things after I was old. I didn't take his advice. Rather I kept on talking to him about the Bible, heaven, hell and the end of the world. Finally he decided to join me in my search for the truth. We decided to live according to the Bible the best we knew how. At this time I still wasn't sure of my salvation. I didn't feel as lost as I used to, but I knew there were still a lot of things in my heart that needed to change. During this time of searching I repeatedly asked God to forgive me.

I began to understand how weak my love for the Lord really was. I saw that I loved my folks more than I loved God. I thought that if I had been born when Jesus was on the earth it would have been easier to love Him. My faith was really weak. Even so I didn't give up. I asked God to give me strength to love Him as I should and to do His will. I confessed my sins, because I wanted so much to be saved. God was merciful to me and placed His love in my heart. This opened the door to serve Him faithfully.

My decision to be a Christian upset my parents. Instead of letting me go to Protestant church services, they forced me to go to mass. I was now 13, which they felt was too young for me to be making my own decisions, and beside that, they felt others were filling my head with ideas. I didn't do anything to resist them.

The year of 1989 was filled with struggles and confusion. Unfortunately I didn't let the Holy Spirit direct my life and I got into a lot of things that were wrong. Even so, I kept on reading the Bible and other Christian literature and kept in contact with other believers.

I knew that a Christian cannot live in sin and I wanted to have a clear conscience. But because of my weakness I began to see almost everything as being sinful, which left me in a state of continual condemnation. I constantly prayed. In school there were a lot of temptations. My friends got me to do things I shouldn't do and my classroom behavior left a lot to be desired. Some of my classmates did stupid things just to get a rise out of me. And a lot of the times they got what they wanted. I would become desperate and say, "Get out of here, Satan!" Then, on the verge of tears, I would feel condemned and look for a place to pray. It wasn't unusual for someone to find me praying in some back corner of the school.

There were times in which I would approach God like a sinner who had never been converted. But God would then tell me I couldn't be born again for the second time.

Some believers who knew me gave me good advice and through God's help I was able to overcome some of my problems. I still felt a sincere desire to be faithful and live according to the gospel.

In 1990 things got better in my home. I was able to attend Protestant church services and didn't have to go to mass any longer. I began to go to a Pentecostal church. At this time Rosimere was going to this same church.

I think it was in 88 that I had first come in contact with the Church of God in Christ's literature. Rosimere had been in contact through correspondence. It was through this I learned to know some of the doctrines. I wanted to know more about this religion. In 89 some brethren from Goiás came to the Northeast to pay Rosimere and Paulo a visit. At this time Paulo was living in Campina Grande [where he was going to medical school]. Unfortunately, when the brethren were here, I was traveling. I wanted so much to have learned to know the brethren.

I became more and more interested in the Church of God. Once in a while I would write a letter to the church in Goiás. I noticed something different in the literature they sent out. As I would read their literature, my soul was nourished. That impressed me deeply.

When I first began to know the doctrines of the church, I believed they were right, but I wasn't interested yet in observing all that Jesus taught. I had come to the conclusion that there was no church that kept all the doctrines of the Bible. I believe it was for this reason that I didn't take things serious enough.

It was after I had gone to another church for a while that I began to understand the enormity of the doctrinal errors, the lack of love, the disunity and insincerity of these groups. During this period I was looking for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gift of tongues, so that I could be endued with power from on high. It was exactly this desire that showed me how far off these groups were. I saw people who claimed to have been baptized by the Holy Spirit and who talked in tongues, whose lives showed no fruit whatsoever of the Spirit. I knew unconverted people who lived in sin that claimed the gift of the Holy Spirit and talked in tongues. I found this very strange.

By 1991 I and some of my friends were totally down on Protestantism. We began to see the Church of God in Christ as an alternative to all this confusion. By now Paulo was convinced this was the right church. Rosimere was doing a thorough study of the doctrines and came to the same conclusion. The fact that the church didn't exist here in Patos complicated things for us. It was one more barrier we would have to overcome. Very frankly, at this point I was still fearful about wholeheartedly accepting this doctrine.

Then one of my friends told me he had decided to become a member of this church. I told him that if he became a member, so would I. Obviously this wasn't a good basis for a decision, and yet it helped me to become more open to the church. This friend of mine began to carefully study all the doctrines. I did the same, overcoming the doubts I had felt before. Paulo helped me a lot in this. I prayed a lot, asking God to direct me.

It was during this period that the missionaries from the state of Ceará began to visit us. We asked them a lot of questions about the doctrines of the church. These visits helped us to learn to know the church better. We were highly impressed by the witness of these brethren and by the love and humility we could feel in them.

When Min. Ben Giesbrecht came here in December of 91, the time had come to decide if we really wanted to become part of this church. This decision would have an influence on whether missionaries would be stationed here.

We were very much aware that the Protestants would misunderstand and scorn us for this decision. Our surrender to God would have to be complete. One by one we made this decision.

In 92 the Coblenz family came to Patos as missionaries.

The spiritual confusion that for so long had been part of my life now began to dissipate. Through the help of the brethren, I was spiritually restored.

On March 28, 1993 Rosimere and I were baptized into the Church of God. And on December 9, 1994, Paulo was baptized.

I am happy to belong to the people of God and have His church as my refuge. It is such a help on the journey to our heavenly home.

Of those who initially showed interest, some have become discouraged and no longer serve the Lord. Others are still interested in keeping the faith once delivered to the saints. ▲

## A Brazilian Story

by Mários de Moraes

### **The Wrong Diagnosis**

It has been said, and I can confirm it, that all Brazilians are born with a medical degree.

I have done a lot of traveling in this old world, to Africa, to the Middle East, to Europe a number of times, and I've been around in the States. But I don't believe that anywhere in the world can a people be found with more of a natural tendency than the Brazilian to hand out free prescriptions for every ailment under creation – without ever having set foot in a medical school, or so much as even walked in front of one.

In some countries things are so tight that about the only thing one can buy without a prescription is an aspirin. Everything has to be bought with the doctor's John Henry on a piece of paper. During the 1966 World Soccer Cup in England, I got really sick in Manchester, something I hate to even remember. I spent 10 days in bed with a high fever on the verge of pneumonia. A government doctor (We foreign journalists were given free medical care) prescribed different medications, which included some injections. I immediately looked for the bulas [a bula is a piece of paper included, by law, with practically all medications purchased, giving its formula, dosage, etc.], but there was no such a thing. There was nothing written on the bottles, except my name and the room of the hotel where I was staying. Obviously they didn't want me to go off prescribing the same thing to some friend of mine later on.

Unfortunately, here in Brazil things are different. I'm not reflecting on anyone, because I myself have the habit of telling others what to take for this or for that.

It's because of this habit that we Brazilians have, that Mendonça got himself into a tight.

He has liver problems, or at least he thinks he does. According to a doctor friend of mine, most liver cases are quite serious and a lot of what people chalk up to the liver is really a problem in the gall bladder.

But folks blame the liver and that's that. Anyway, Mendonça had invited me attend a lecture he was to give at an important meeting. He's a lawyer and his specialty is separation and divorce cases. I might mention that Mendonça and I graduated together from law school in 1949.

I went to the meeting and sat right in the front row so that my presence could cheer him. The place soon filled up, mainly with women who apparently were wanting to find out how to shuck their better half. In fact, I suspect that the only men present were old cronies of his.

When Mendonça walked on stage, amid a general applause, I immediately sensed something was amiss. He was pale and his face was dripping sweat. I knew it wasn't because of stage fright, because he was totally in his element when making a speech.

While the chairman of the meeting was going through the ritual of introducing the speaker, reading off his pedigree, poor Mendonça was wiping the sweat off of his face. When he got up and headed for the lectern, he gave me a desperate glance, as though he wanted to tell me something.

Unsteadily Mendonça began, "Minhas senhoras... meus senhores..." (Ladies and gentlemen...)

That's as far as he got. Clutching his midriff, Mendonça made a fast exit, disappearing behind the heavy curtain. A low murmur of concern swept the crowd. The chairman followed Mendonça and soon returned. He informed the audience that the speaker wasn't feeling well and that the meeting on divorce would be adjourned.

As a faithful friend, I decided to find out what had happened to Mendonça. Being a reporter, it wasn't hard to get back to where he was. He was cloistered in a rest room, the most appropriate place to be for what he was feeling at that exact moment. Later he told me what had happened. Suspecting his liver was acting up, he related his symptoms to a friend, who prescribed some medicine that was an absolute cure for such problems.

Wanting to be in top shape for making his speech, Mendonça went to a drugstore and bought the medicine his friend had prescribed. For good measure, he took two capsules.

It wasn't until he later read the bula that came with the medication that he understood what went wrong. The capsules he took were a laxative... ▲

## Life in Brazil

### **Doctor or Druggist?**

In N America people go see the doctor first and then the druggist. Here it's the opposite. People go see the druggist first, and then, if necessary, the doctor. Not everyone here has a family doctor, but almost everyone has a family druggist.

The family druggist, like the practical dentist (see BN num. 40), were both born of necessity. Back in the days before there were enough doctors to go around, a good druggist was many times a god-send. Except for obstetrical cases (handled by midwives), and surgical or more serious orthopedic cases, these dedicated men would tackle most anything.

The diagnosis was often more intuitive than scientific. After a few well placed questions, the farmacéutico – druggist – would nod his head knowingly and announce his diagnosis, usually a folk term that would pin the sickness on one particular offending organ, e.g., liver, intestine, kidneys . . . The only charge for this “office call” would be the medications sold to the patient.

The druggist, beyond not being a doctor, in most cases wasn't even a druggist, in the most strict sense of the word. More than likely he began his career as an errand/cleaning boy in the drugstore. Just by keeping his ears and eyes open, he soon picked up the basics of being a farmacéutico.

Today all drugstores must have at least one licensed pharmacist on the books – but seldom on duty. The actual selling, and yes, prescribing, is done by workers who “grew up” in drugstores.

Mário de Moraes deplores this situation in his article. And yet things are a lot better than they used to be. The old-time druggist that pretended to know everything is a species in extinction. The present day druggist knows his limitations and usually is fairly conscientious about what he sells his customer without a prescription.

Even so, I suspect most middle and poorer class folk still have a “special” drugstore they go to when the ailment doesn't seem to be too serious.

Curiously the medical profession takes quite a benign attitude toward all this. Except for drugs which can be habit forming, most everything else can still be bought over the counter without a prescription.

Mário de Moraes laments this laxity. Doubtlessly he is looking at some of the undesirable side effects of this situation. But on the other hand, it would take a real adjustment to suddenly switch to the rigid system used in N America and Europe. To tell you the truth, I believe that not only most of the Brazilians, but also the folks from the American Colony secretly hope things will keep on sort of as they are. ▲

## Justice

### **A Day in Court**

The adage which says that everyone is entitled to his day in court embodies a profound truth. A truth that is often maliciously disregarded.

The N American judicial system is light years ahead of Brazil's, and yet as I accompany your “trial of the decade,” in our Goiânia paper and in VEJA magazine, it becomes evident that being light years ahead isn't synonymous with enlightenment.

Very much to the contrary, as the (in)famous trial now in progress drags out for possibly six months, 99% (and I believe I'm being generous with this figure) of the arguments and witnesses presented by the defense will be tailored to confuse both the jurors and public opinion, to create a "reasonable doubt." And since the benefit of the doubt goes to the defendant, this means acquittal.

To compound the injustice of long trials, a prosecutor who makes possibly \$40,000 a year, must stand up against a trial lawyer making several hundred thousand dollars, or maybe even a million or more, on just that one case.

Here in Brazil the one day in court concept is literal. Notice how it works:

Court is called to order at 1:00 P.M. Of the twenty-one jurors, randomly chosen from the list of eligible voters in that county, seven will be selected to hear the case. The prosecution and the defense can each reject three names without giving any reason, and more, if they have a reason why they shouldn't serve. Normally it takes from 15 minutes to a half hour to impanel the jury.

Now the judge calls the defendant to the stand and has him tell his version of the crime. This can take from 15 minutes to up to several hours.

The judge then orders that some of the testimony previously taken by both the prosecution and defense be read to the jurors. This again, can take a few minutes, or several hours, depending on the complexity of the case.

At this point time is given for calling in witnesses, which rarely is done, because, as one lawyer says, "It usually makes things worse instead of better."

The prosecution now is given a maximum of two hours to argue its case, after which the defense is also given two hours. Should either have assistants, the allotted time must be shared by however many lawyers are represented.

After these initial arguments, another 30 minutes are given to each side for final arguments.

The jury doesn't go out to deliberate (although the spectators are asked to leave the courtroom). The judge asks different questions, which the jurors answer individually by flashing a "yes" or "no" card. Once the verdict is in, the judge gives the sentence.

In some cases everything can be over with by 6:00 P.M.. In very rare cases it can go to 10:00 P.M., or later.

That is having your day in court. ▲

## **This & That**

The Dan Kramer family from Sorriso, Mato Grosso were out to attend the Monte Alegre Meetings.

The Leo Dirks family from Planalto da Serra, Mato Grosso were out for part of the meetings.

Staven & Adeline Schmidt, from the Pirenópolis mission, were out for a few meetings. Zezé, a young sister from there, came too.

Karl & Laverna Schartner from Canada spent several weeks visiting the Colony. From here they went to Paraguay to look up some Schartner relatives. We're going to be expecting a report of their trip, including Karl's flying trip to Mato Grosso, to publish in BN.

Eldon & Geraldine Warkentin returned to their home in Canada after spending some time here with his brother Clifford and other relatives.

Richard & Edith Mininger are in the US, where Richard is helping in the revival effort at Lone Tree.

Dennis & Vera Loewen left for Canada to attend her sister's wedding.

On January 25 the Monte Alegre Congregation observed communion.

On January 26 Mark & Glenda Loewen and Faith and I took the revival ministers to Goiânia to catch their plane back to the US.

Dan & Clara Coblenz made a quick trip to the Mirassol, São Paulo mission to visit their children, William & Miriam and children, who are stationed there. On January 7 Stephen & Dete Kramer took them and their grandson Vance to Goiânia to catch a plane back to the US. Dans plan on returning shortly with a permanent visa which the Brazilian government has granted them. They have been temporarily living in Eldon & Bonnie Penner's old house near the Monte Alegre River. Interestingly this is the exact spot they set up their tents when they moved to Brazil over 25 years ago. Paul, Brian and James Yoder and Lindomar & Monica Yoder went to Mato Grosso with a surveyor to get Paul's land surveyed.

The Luiz Fernandes & Divino Cândido families from Goiânia spent several days visiting on the Colony.

Daniel & Anna Kramer took several hired men to Sorriso, Mato Grosso to pick up sticks and roots in their fields.

The Monte Alegre youth girls had a picnic at the dam one day after school. I asked my daughter Sylvia what it was all about. She couldn't get her nose out of her book long enough to give me a civilized answer. Even after I ominously warned her of the consequences, her nose remained glued to the book. If she thinks that being a distant relative of the editor of BN gives her some kind of diplomatic immunity, she may conclude one of these days it's a good idea to communicate with her mouth and not her nose. Keep tuned in on This & That. End of chapter one.

Bert & Ada Coblenz and Jon are spending a few days in Mato Grosso.

Dean Mininger is holding meetings in Ohio.

The Rio Verdinho youth went to Pirenópolis to help plant grass around the new mission church.

Frank & Darlene Giesbrecht from Georgia, and Bob & Evelyn Unruh from Texas, have been visiting the Colony. They also plan on visiting the Mennonite Colony in Paraguay.

Verle & Ruby Schneider are here to visit their children, Lowell & Sharon Warkentin.

John & Sheila Kramer, Fyanna Kramer and Janete Duarte spent a weekend at the Mirassol, SP mission.

## Brazil News

The Rio Verdinho school children invited their grandparents to Frances Schultz's house one afternoon so that they could sing for them.

João & Charlene Souto spent several days in Uberaba, state of Minas Gerais, to be with his mother who has suffered a stroke. Their school age children stayed with their grandmother, Edna Loewen.

On February 4 there was a fertilizer meeting at the Monte Alegre social hall.

Refreshments were served. The youth played softball. If you can play softball in a soft drizzle, surely you can play hardball in a hard rain. The youth apparently didn't know about this and quit when it began to rain hard.

Several Colony men and Karl Schartner hired a little plane on February 7 to take them to Mato Grosso to look around. Hopefully we'll have some interesting information for the Colonization column next month.

On February 19 we go off of daylight saving time here. At present we are four hours ahead of Central Standard time. As of the 19th, it will be three hours. Once you go on, it will be only two hours.