

Brazil News



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Editorial

World War II – Some Observations

Fifty years ago Hitler's celebrated Thousand Year Reich was in its death throes, 987 years and eight months ahead of schedule. This brief reign of terror that resulted in the most destructive war of all human history, leaves us some important lessons.

Wars don't just happen. Sometimes it is said that just a small incident triggered a war. Even that statement has very little truth in it. Most wars, like marriages that have gone sour, are the result of a succession of mismanaged events, frequently over a period of years or decades.

Nations have personalities just as surely as individuals do. A schoolteacher who knows her students well can often "smell" a fight. Possibly over a period of days, weeks, or even months, tension begins to build between several students, or groups of students. She must, through her personal influence and authority, either defuse the bomb or see it detonate.

Similarly, alert leaders can usually "smell" a war well in advance. This acuity, together with the diplomatic skill and courage to defuse the bomb, separate the truly great leaders from all the rest. Needless to say, not all wars can be avoided.

The terms of the Versailles Treaty, ending World War I, were especially harsh. Fully aware of the Germanic propensity for grandeur and power, negotiators mercilessly annihilated whatever hopes the bombs and bullets hadn't shattered, of one day resurrecting militarily. Only a skeleton army was permitted to maintain internal order. Industry was put under strict scrutiny to make sure no effort would be made to rearm. Germany was guaranteed the right to exist (minus part of her territory) and that was about it.

To put it mildly, the Germans chafed under the severe terms of the Versailles Treaty. Especially galling was the fact that they were totally hamstrung. As they brooded over their ignominious defeat, instead of looking inward to discover what national ill could

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have induced them to behave as they did, they began looking for scapegoats, which they soon found: the November Criminals, the name given to the generals who capitulated when they saw the war was irremediably lost.

To the masses the November Criminals were a convenient wailing wall. But to a lowly Austrian soldier, promoted to corporal during the war, these “criminals” became a Judas whose betrayal must be revenged at all costs.

This brave, but largely undistinguished and unknown corporal was Adolf Hitler, whose life’s story is one of the strangest ever told.

Deeply disappointed in his youth because of not gaining entrance into a prestigious school of art in Vienna, Hitler became morose. Without a profession, or so much as a high school diploma, he did do a few odd jobs, like shoveling snow, beating carpets and carrying bags in a railroad station. However, feeling this was below his dignity, he spent four years living in flophouses and avoiding starvation by eating in charity soup kitchens. While his hands may have been idle, his active mind was working overtime. During this period, the “Tramp from Vienna,” as he was later known, formed his basic philosophies of life, to which he clung to the end.

It was after the war that Hitler, now in his early thirties, began to dabble in politics. On November 8, 1923, in the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich, Hitler made his first serious attempt to seize power. Unsuccessful, he was arrested. Far from being the end of his career, so brilliantly did he defend himself in court, not only admitting his guilt, but unabashedly and audaciously exposing his grandiose plans for himself and for Germany, that he was given but a short prison sentence, a slap on the wrist, instead of life imprisonment, as the law demanded.

And it was during the months spent in prison that his fertile mind spewed out page after page of *Mein Kampf*, a monumental work that left absolutely no doubt as to what he planned to do – not if – but when he would get into power. His rabid hatred for the Jews and plans for their destruction, his plans to annex enormous territories, including Russia, his belief that man’s mission in life is to serve his government in whatever way he is called upon, were all clearly enunciated in his book.

By now not only Germans, but foreigners as well, had taken note of the strange Charlie Chaplain looking character who could hold crowds spellbound for hours. The question was: Could he be dismissed as a clown?

At noon on January 30, 1933, President Hindenburg declared Hitler the chancellor of Germany.

While Hitler can be labeled a paranoid liar and deceiver, he must be given credit for one thing: Never did he waver from the basic guidelines set forth in *Mein Kampf*. Right under the nose of the nations responsible for the enforcement of the Versailles Treaty, Hitler began mobilizing an army. Industry once again began producing armaments.

World War II, with its tens of millions of fatalities, needed never have occurred. All it would have taken was the action of one man in power, just one, to avoid this dreadful war.

In spite of mutual defense pacts signed with neighboring nations, the French arrogantly looked away as panzers roared into Czechoslovakia, and then into Poland, believing these “crumbs” would satiate the hungry beast. Little did they realize that not too many “crumbs” later their turn would come, when they would pay a grievous, far greater price, for their presumptuousness.

The heaviest guilt seems to fall on England. With such a noble past, with such a valiant people, England proved herself weak when so little would have done so much.

Lord Chamberlain, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, was a fine gentleman. Well intentioned, he flew to Germany on different occasions to negotiate with Hitler. Though subjected to verbal abuse and threats, Lord Chamberlain chose to ignore all this and put stock in the silky lies he heard. Hitler’s actions were ignored so that his words could be believed. Back home, before the House of Commons, the Prime Minister’s emotional speech, praising Hitler to high heaven, brought the members to their feet in wild ovation.

Stalin, the wily, ruthless dictator, was taken in by Hitler. Not only was a non-aggression pact signed between Russia and Germany, but also a mutual trade agreement. Even after Germany defaulted on the delivery of the goods owed to Russia, Stalin kept his end of the deal, delivering manufactured goods, especially armaments. Armaments that would soon be used against him.

In the US the famed aviator and folk hero, Charles Lindberg, carried on an America First campaign, stirring up public sentiment against becoming involved in the war.

What went wrong?

Men in power, men of influence, lost their sense of smell. They were unable to smell World War II and its dire consequences. It wasn’t until the Luftwaffe began raining bombs on their own cities, that their eyes and ears told them what they should have learned with their nose.

Among the many statesmen who were deceived, there was one who wasn’t. There was one who from the onset recognized Adolf Hitler for what he was, who wasn’t swayed by his lies. He alone smelled war. Winston Churchill.

Churchill at this time was a Member of Parliament. Virtually alone, his lispng voice was occasionally heard over the crowd as he decried the course his government was taking. When he arose in Parliament to denounce the Munich Agreement, signed by Hitler, Lord Chamberlain and Daladier, the Premier of France, he was forced to silence until his fellow Members of Parliament quit protesting.

Had Churchill not been elected Prime Minister, the outcome of the war would most likely have been different.

Almost 50 years have gone by since the toppling of the Third Reich. All of the principal actors have made their final exit. Most of those who still have vivid memories of World War II are now in their seventies or eighties. The majority of today’s leaders are considerably younger, unaccustomed to the rigors of a world war.

Unconsciously we are tempted to believe that we are so close to the end that not too much will happen anymore. This could be true. But not necessarily.

The global situation today is not pleasant. The implosion of communism has not made this earth a safer place. Even so, statesmen breathe easier. The possibilities of World War III seem more remote.

But where are the Churchills with a nose for war?

Today the stage is being set for something far more terrible than the First or Second World War. Fervid preparations are being made for the Last World War.

During previous wars, the powers of darkness were obligated to identify themselves and function in the form of visible armies. When a Hitler arose, sooner or later there arose also a Churchill.

Everything indicates that the powers of evil have been sufficiently loosed to where in the next World War there will be no need for a visible Hitler. And consequently there will be no Churchill.

The objective of war is to destroy. The enemy isn't picky as to the method. Bows, bullets, or bombs, all are equal so long as they destroy.

The Last World War will not be a destruction of men and property, but of principle and morality. While this terrible battle is raging, men will relax in their pleasures and speak of peace and safety.

Only the ten virgins will know that the world is at war. Five will grow weary and lay down their arms. Five will fight to the end.

No, there will be no Churchill in the Last World War. Woe unto him who seeks a Churchill, who pays attention when men run about shouting: Lo, this is Churchill, or Lo, that is Churchill.

This is the final battle of right and wrong, of justice and injustice, of good and evil. Some will say the battle is yet to come. Only the elect, with their lamps aglow, will understand the times and the seasons. ▲

Religion

Evangelicals and Believers

Protestants here in Brazil are usually called *Evangélicos* or *Crentes*. Mainline Protestants are referred to as *Evangelicals*. Those belonging to charismatic groups, as a rule from the poorer classes, are called *Crentes – Believers*. They feel it is an honor to be called by this name. Most everyone else feels it is an honor not to be.

Moderate Pentecostal groups frequently go by either name. At times the distinction between *Evangélico* and *Crente* is quite fuzzy, with the names being used interchangeably.

Highly organized, the *Evangelicals*, which include Baptists, Presbyterians, etc., are a dominant force in Congress. In fact, because of their common cause, they wield considerably more clout than the Catholic block.

The *Crentes* are spreading like weeds in Brazil. They're every place. We sometimes debate

if it's easier to convert a Catholic or a Crente. I may change my mind on this in the next day or two, but as of now I am inclined to believe it's easier to win a Catholic than a Crente.

Few Catholics take their religion seriously. Most Crentes do. One of the contributing factors is the difference between going to mass or to a Crente service. Mass is highly organized with the priest being the center of action. In Crente services, on the other hand, the action centers around the worshiper. The pastor's job is to fan the flame until the power of the spirit (Notice the lower case) can take over.

People are attracted to these Pentecostal meetings in droves. Many of these churches have several meetings a day, every day of the week. It is impossible to be a member in good standing without tithing.

What is it that attracts people to Pentecostalism? Why do people become “addicted” to this religion?

The following article, *Liberation Services*, was written by a sister who got converted in Goiânia and now lives in Pirenópolis, together with her husband who is also a member. It answers some of the questions we just asked.

I doubt if sister Selionir has a grade school diploma. She and her husband aren't wealthy. Socially they aren't very high up the ladder. And yet, in this article which she wrote for *O Mensageiro*, she shows deep spiritual vision.

Liberation services, a direct translation of *culto de libertação*, describes what goes on in the services of many of the Pentecostal churches. In a few words, people go to church loaded down with evil spirits, infirmities, and problems. They make their petitions during the service and are liberated – thus liberation services. Selionir tells us her own experience of what really happens. ▲

Liberation Services

by Selionir Silvânia Miranda

A lot of people ask why we don't have liberation services in our church.

Before I learned to know the Church of God in Christ, I went to liberation services in quite a few different churches. During the time that I was inside the church I felt good. It seemed I didn't have any problems or physical ailments. It didn't bother me to see people rolling around on the floor. Some were hollering because they were possessed by an evil spirit. But when I left the church, everything came back again – my disappointments, physical ailments, fears, distress and insecurity.

The next day I would go to church again. There I would see the same people with the same problems. It would be a repeat of the day before. Some would be singing, some rolling around on the floor, and others shouting. Things went on like this for seven days... seven weeks... seven months. I only found relief when I was inside the church building. I figured that was the way it was supposed to work, but I was deceived. I was misled. I never saw anyone, including my husband and myself, being liberated from anything. It was only while in church that we felt a false security.

Yes, I call it a false security because I never felt any freedom when I was at home, at work, or any other place. What should I do? Move into the church house? Was the problem that Jesus only saw me when I was in church? Once I was on the outside He didn't see me any more?

With each passing day I was more depressed. My husband got sicker and sicker. We decided to not go to any more church services. From now on we would serve God without a church. We asked Him to help us and begged his mercy. Our aim was to be faithful without any liberation services, without demon possessed people around us.

That was all it took for God to begin working in our lives. He showed us His people and His church. By the powerful arm of the Heavenly Father and through the help of His people, we were liberated from Satan's clutches. We found the freedom for which our soul longed.

But how did all this come about? It wasn't necessary to be surrounded by people possessed by demons. No one had to vomit, shout or roll around on the floor. [May I insert here that in the liberation services, one of the ways in which unclean spirits are supposedly expelled is through the digestive tract, which explains her comment on no one needing to vomit.] Do you know where we were liberated? It was when we accepted Christ as our Savior and Liberator. We gave Him our heart and life, recognizing what God did for us when He sent His Son to die on the cross for sinners. We accepted the fact that we were sinners.

Before I felt that if I should die, I would go to hell. I came to the Lord and asked His forgiveness and was obedient in all that His Holy Spirit asked of me. That was the end of my distress, fears and depression. I had a different heart.

What about the physical ailments? Today we see a lot of people walking around with a Bible under their arm. We see them in the morning, at noon and at night. They are trying to find relief for a physical ailment. They are looking for the liberation of their flesh. They resort to prayer chains and all kinds of other things. The end result is confusion.

When one of us becomes ill, we should first of all ask Christ Jesus to intercede for us before the Heavenly Father. Only after that should we go see the doctor. We must have faith that God sees all things and everything will take place within His will.

I want to tell you what happened to me some months back. I began to have some health problems, so I went to the doctor and told him how I was feeling. After he had given me an examination, he said, "It may not be anything serious, but I have seen cases like yours turn into cancer." He referred me to another doctor.

I left the doctor's office in a daze. I went to where my husband works and told him what I had found out. I was really down in the dumps. That evening the missionary who is stationed in Pirenópolis came to our house and told us that on the fazenda where he was working, the owner had just died. He said, "I came here to invite you to come along and sing for the family."

[As some of you readers know, the present missionaries in Pirenópolis, Staven &

Adeline Schmidt, are partially self supporting. Staven does custom field work for local farmers. Oh yes, fazenda means farm.]

This put my husband into a bind. He looked at me and I knew I would have to decide if we went along to help sing. He didn't know if I was feeling up to going, so I would have to make the decision. So I went to my room and asked God to give me strength to go, even though the last thing I wanted to see just then was a wake.

As we were going there, I told the others what I was going through. After we got there, we shook hands with the widow and then went into the living room where the body was. We sang three songs and the missionary began to speak. His words, together with the hymns, were exactly what I needed. I felt strengthened.

When we returned home, I had good courage. I realized that I had placed more value on my flesh than on my soul. For a number of days everything seemed to go real well. Then I went to see another doctor, who did another test. I had to wait three months to get the results. In the meantime I began to have a lot of pain and run a fever.

One day I got up really feeling down. It seemed that the only thing I could think about was that if I really had cancer, I probably didn't have more than two years to live. I almost lost control of myself.

I went to my room and knelt to pray. I asked God to be merciful to me. I had my face down on the bed. I felt so weak I couldn't even get up. After some time had gone by, I noticed I wasn't alone in the room. I was afraid to look around, but I felt the presence of God.

He began by asking me some questions: "So you don't want to die of cancer?" I told him I didn't, and that I didn't want to die in an accident either. He asked, "Would you like to be in the living room of your house, together with your family, and suddenly die? Would that suit you better?" I was going to answer no, but I became so ashamed of myself that I didn't say anything. He asked me some more questions: "Why are you a Christian? It's so that you can live with Jesus Christ and the Almighty God in heaven, isn't it?" I told Him that was right. "Then why are you so fearful?" He asked. "You have already died once. You died to Christ. The second death is much better. In this death you will meet Jesus Christ and the Almighty God."

I felt strong again. I left the room feeling like I was floating on air. With renewed courage, I felt like once again I could face life. The Holy Spirit was so close to me.

Sometimes I am ashamed of my weaknesses. Especially when I think about the book, *Worth Dying For*, as well as other stories. I remember the woman who remained unmoved, even though she saw her seven sons being put to death for the faith. She didn't betray Christ, but was faithful until the end, when she too gave her life.

I know that someone who doesn't feel the joy of freedom, who doesn't have faith and peace in his soul, will think it's a terrible thing to die like that. But the person who has Jesus Christ in his heart and knows the joy of salvation, understands that death isn't sad.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 6:24). Let's notice where He says, take up his cross, and follow me. What does that mean? What Jesus did for my husband and me and for our children, He can – and will – do for you. Let Him into your heart. He wants to free us. ▲

A Brazilian Story

by Mário de Moraes

A Haunted Church

I have told dozens of stories of supernatural happenings, some of which I personally witnessed. Even so I recognize that a lot of things that apparently have no explication are really the fruit of an active imagination. Others can be explained by someone who doesn't believe in such things and goes to the bother of doing a little investigating.

The story I'm going to tell today was sent to me by Ruy Zeni, who lives in São Paulo. It would certainly have ended up as a ghost story if someone hadn't done a little investigating. But let me tell you the story before explaining how the mystery was solved.

In the city of Amparo, in the state of São Paulo there was an old Catholic church called, Igreja de São Benedito [Church of Saint Benedict], which was located next to a cemetery.

Back in those days when the priest wanted to call his flock to mass, he would ring the bell up in the belfry by standing on the front steps of the church and pulling a heavy rope. Anyone could reach the rope.

The evening mass was at six o'clock, after which everyone would go home. One night, in the wee hours of the morning, the church bell began to ring. It wasn't the normal cadence of when the priest would pull the rope. Now it was a disorganized ringing, giving it a strange, supernatural air.

The first night it happened, people didn't think too much about it. But after it had happened a number of times, some of the more fearful citizens of Amparo began spreading word that the church was haunted. The spirits, they said, had taken up residence in the church. Creatures of the night, they got a kick out of pulling the rope and making the bell in the belfry mysteriously ring.

Seeing the effect that this was having on his flock, especially on the evening mass when hardly anyone would show up anymore, the parish priest decided it was time to do some investigating. The brave man he hired for this job hid behind a tree and waited to see what would happen.

Around midnight, when everyone was in bed, the man behind the tree saw someone furtively make his way up to the front of the church. Quickly he tied a large bone that still had some meat on it, to the bell rope. Retreating to a safe distance, the mysterious figure waited for the show to begin. It didn't take long until a pack of dogs showed up, drawn by the smell of fresh meat.

What followed was an Olympic jumping match, until one dog would finally manage to catch hold of the bone. As he struggled in mid air, trying to carry the bone off, the bell would begin its erratic ringing.

The ringing of the bell would send the dogs a packing with their tail between their legs. Their hunger being greater than their fear, the dogs would soon be back for a new

try. From his hiding place, the perpetrator of the joke seemed to be having the time of his life. After this had gone on for a while, he cut the bone down and let the dogs fight it out.

About this time the man hired by the priest rushed out and caught the practical joker – for that is exactly what he was. Word soon spread and the “ghost” got the nickname of João Badalo – John the Ringer. He carried this name with him to the day of his death, which occurred quite a few years ago. ▲

Paraguay

A Small Country With Lots of Mennonites

Call it coincidence if you like, but it's really strange that in the last month we have had three different groups of visitors from N America showing a strong interest in the Mennonites in Paraguay. So strong, in fact, that they all included the Paraguayan Mennonite Colonies in their itineraries.

Over the years different ones from the Colony here in Rio Verde have shown interest in the Mennonites in Paraguay. Especially the Martin families.

My first recollection of this settlement goes back over 40 years, when my grandma (Nettie, Mrs. Dave Becker) would invite children home to be with her relatives, the Schartners, who were out from Paraguay. I remember my folks discussing the difference between their Plattdeutsch and ours.

I was just getting ready to work up an article on Paraguay, when – would you believe it? – VEJA magazine came out with a three page report on the Mennonites in Paraguay. Even though containing some inaccuracies, especially on the part of how the Mennonite faith came into existence, it does give some history of the colonies and how they operate.

The first ones to visit Paraguay were Carl & Laverna Schartner from Crooked Creek, Alberta. They were hoping to look up their Schartner relatives. I'm hoping there will be a report in the mail any day that I can publish in BN, telling how their trip went. (Just a little sideline on Carl. He's about to turn 81. If, when writing or telling his age, you transpose the digits and come up with 18 instead of 81, it's perfectly OK. That's his age, if measured by the zest he shows for life.)

The next ones to visit Paraguay were Bob & Evelyn Unruh from Texas and Frank & Darlene Giebrecht, from Georgia. Daniel & Linda Holdeman took them to Paraguay in their van, so they returned to the Colony before heading back to the US. Frank gave us a short report in church on their trip and later a more detailed one in my office. What impressed them most was the spiritual needs of the Mennonites there and the possibility of doing something to help them. Frank has promised to send me a report on their trip to be used in BN.

At present Gordon & Betty Unruh from Greensburg and Ervy & Elizabeth Koehn

from Macon are visiting the colonies. Carman & Celma Loewen took them in their van. They too will be expected to write up a report for BN.

Next month we hope to give a more detailed report on the country itself, as well as on how Brazil gets along with its little sister nation.

Following is a rough translation of what VEJA has to say about the Mennonites in Paraguay, with some added explanations for clarity:

Less than one hundred kilometers from the Paraguayan border town of Ciudad del Este, the radio is banned and perfumes are an abomination. Beside Route 2, the chaotic stretch of highway that connects Asuncion with the Brazilian border, there are several thousand Christian fundamentalists of the Mennonite sect, who are engaged in a task that can be accomplished only by those who believe that faith can move mountains – that is to keep the modern world outside of their gates.

With their strange clothes and Puritan beliefs, both totally out of style, the small communities established along Route 2 by the Amish – a branch of Mennonites opposed to modern equipment – are the most recent and least known chapter of a saga that began 70 years ago with the immigration of this religious people to the Chaco, a vast hostile area that the Paraguayans called, the “Green Hell.” The first batch of immigrants (ethnic Germans who were living in the Ukraine and fled from Communism), arrived in 1926, attracted by a law which was negotiated to fit their religious eccentricities. Law num. 514, signed in 1921, gave exemption from military services, from the swearing of oaths, and the right to educate their children in the language and in the way they chose.

The area that the Mennonites chose to settle could well fit into the Biblical plagues: clouds of grasshoppers, 43°C heat (109°F) and sand storms. But it did fit the bill so far as isolating them from the rest of the world so they could attempt to imitate the Biblical life style.

This sect originated from among the Swiss Protestants in the 16th Century, spreading through northern Europe. Many in these groups are against modern technology, which includes automobiles and telephones. The name itself came from Menno Simons, a Dutchman, who organized the group. The main pillars of their faith are opposition to infant baptism and the taking up of arms, as well as the observation of a strict separation between church and state – ideas which have brought them severe persecution. As they were dispersed among the nations, they proliferated and subdivided, the Amish being an example of this. Today there are approximately a million Mennonites, half of which live in the United States and Canada. Paraguay, with its 27 thousand Mennonites spread out over 17 agricultural colonies, has the largest concentration in South America.

The Chaco, which is the size of the state of São Paulo, is home to only 3% of the four and a half million Paraguayans – most of which are Mennonites and Indians. Even though the soil in the Chaco was some of the worst imaginable, the colonies prospered and today produce almost half of the milk consumed in the country. Philadelphia,

the largest Mennonite community with three thousand inhabitants, is located 500 kilometers from Asuncion. The computers used in the co-op are proof of their acceptance of the modern world. The language spoken on the colony is Plattdeutsch, although almost everyone also speaks Spanish. They have adopted the national school system and the last generation has had access to universities. In the post-Stroessner democratic tide, they have elected a congressman and a governor.

The Chaco has an area of 10 thousand square kilometers, the size of the country of Lebanon. The population is composed of 12,500 colonists and 20,000 Indians. They can tune in on only one radio station: The Voice of the Paraguayan Chaco, from Philadelphia. They pride themselves for broadcasting in nine languages: German, Plattdeutsch, Spanish, different Indian languages, and for 30 minutes each day, Portuguese.

Religious zeal and traditionalism create three subdivisions in the Paraguayan Mennonites. The first and largest, which includes the six wealthiest colonies made up of Russian refugees, has no dress restrictions. They consider themselves to be “open” to the Paraguayan society. The second group in terms of size is not open to outsiders. They are 10 thousand ultra-conservative immigrants who came from Mexico and Canada and are now settled in seven prosperous colonies where the use of the automobile is banned. The third group is made up of Amish who left the United States with the intention of converting the Indians. They are rigid in their doctrines, dress and traditionalism, but aren’t opposed to modern equipment.

In the little Florida settlement, in spite of the large wooden houses painted white and the advance agricultural technology, the Amish retain their traditionalism: black trousers and suspenders for the men, long dresses and head coverings for the women. “Our clothes portray our non-conformity to worldly dress,” is the explanation that bishop John Myers gives.

Florida and Luz y Esperanza are two of the six missionary colonies that have been established in the last 20 years. In the little school on the Luz y Esperanza Colony classes are given in English. Different grades are taught in one classroom by the same teacher. Their children go through the 12th grade, with a strong emphasis on religion. “We want to live a Biblical life, that is, a simple life,” is how Minister Philip Eichorn, the spiritual leader of the Luz y Esperanza Colony, puts it. “That which seems so important to man is nothing before God. TV, for example, destroys morality.” These colonies are poor, but they have a rich harvest of souls. One third of the 130 colonists on the Florida Colony are Paraguayans who got converted.

On the Rio Verde Colony, 300 kilometers from Asuncion, the car is considered to be a modern abomination. On the Durango Colony, 150 kilometers from there, the problem is tires, so they put steel wheels on their tractors and trailers. Unhappy with certain modern trends in their former homes, these colonists came to Paraguay during the seventies, bringing along in their baggage their sacred traditions. Their schooling is precarious – seven years for boys and six for girls. The men wear overalls and the women wear dresses with large, flowered prints and enormous hats. The almost three

thousand colonists on the Rio Verde Colony are sufficiently pragmatic to adapt a VW Kombi body on their larger buggies. But they get bogged down on other issues. They have no doctor nor medical service on the colony. They resort to a “rub doctor” who will even set a broken arm. “We follow our faith according to our traditions,” is how Jakob Klassen, a soybean farmer and father of 10 children (the oldest 21 years and the youngest one month) puts it. Naturally, Klassen doesn’t know how to drive, but he has sat in the driver’s seat of his Mexican cousin’s car. “It has an automatic transmission,” he says laughing. “Anyone can drive that kind of a car.”

Living in a violent country, the non-resistant Mennonites are easy prey for local thieves. Alarmed with the increase of crime, one hundred Amish families on the Rio Corrientes Colony are returning to the United States. The Luz e Esperanza Colony at one time was invaded by squatters. The Indians demanded one hundred thousand hectares of land, part of it from the Chaco colonies. Politicians want to repeal Law num. 514, which gives the Mennonites military exemption. Not even the Rio Verde Colony is without problems. “Some of our youth secretly listen to the radio,” Klassen admits with a defeated look. Even in Paraguay it’s hard to keep the modern world on the outside of the gate. ▲

When Inflation Was Bad . . .

“Joaquim, here’s a kilo of coffee to replace the one you loaned me some time ago.”

“It’s a pleasure to be able to help a neighbor in need.”

“I appreciate that Joaquim. Thanks a lot . . . but what about my change?”

“What change?”

“You paid 20 cruzeiros for the kilo of coffee you loaned me. But I paid 35 cruzeiros for the kilo of coffee I am returning. So where’s my 15 cruzeiros change?” ▲

Colonization

by Glenn Hibner

The Back Door

Most houses have a front door and a back door. We usually bring company through the front door, and the back door is the one the family uses most of the time.

Let’s go on a little trip, going through the back door, to visit the Dan Kramer family on the new settlement in Mato Grosso.

Leaving Rio Verde for Sorriso, Mato Grosso, in a northwest direction, we come to the town of Primavera do Leste, some 620 km. from home, which is the last town before the dirt road. It’s a nice small town, laid out on flat ground in a corn and soybean area. Going north from here the road has been built up. Of these 140 kilometers, only

30 were paved years ago. Since the road didn't get paved, it is fortunate that every few months the road gets graded, although if a big rain comes just afterwards, a large effect of the work is lost.

For the first 70 km. we go through quite flat farm country. Then for the next 70 km the land changes to hilly, sandy ground, mostly used for raising cattle.

From a number of hills back you can see Paranatinga which is an old sleepy town, more suited for setting on the front porch enjoying the day. Mostly natives of the region are found here.

Leaving town for the next 45 km. is also a winding built-up road. One minute the town is beside you, then behind, then to the side again, until you start to wonder if you are going to leave the place behind, but after a half hour you shouldn't see it any more. It seems they don't grade this road as often. For some reason it gets really washboardy. That's okay though, for within one hour we have gotten to our 45 km. turn-off. We have been going between two water-sheds since Paranatinga.

Now! Get braced! These last 135 kilometers, are the most interesting, exhausting and scenic part of the trip. The road is lower than the surrounding area and was graded last year, for the first time in 3 years.

Ready? Here we go!

For the next 30 km. the clay type soil easily forms large, deep mud holes that get bad, creating a good possibility we will get stuck in the rainy season. Oh! thanks to the last three days of no rain, it has dried some, so the going is good today, but lets be careful. If the little detour shows fresh tracks, and not the main road, lets play it safe and take the detour.

On down the road, over some hills, around some curves, we come to an area where it rained lately. Another water puddle in the road! So what? We'll get well used to them yet. Some times it gets hard to know when one stops and another starts. But wait! There is a small branch to one side of the road, or perhaps a can, or maybe just a rock. So lets stay on the other side of the road as we go through the puddle to miss the hole someone else fell into and got stuck.

Now we come to a grove of eucalyptus trees that stretch for 20 km on both sides of the road, go up a STEEP hill (that most loaded trucks have to detour). The sun is shining so lets go straight up! and soon into 20 kilometers of SANDY ground.

If the sand is wet the going is good, but if it has dried out for several days it's hard to get through, and its even worse with a tandem truck. If it has been dry for several weeks, the tracks of others have helped smash out the sand so with the truck it becomes easier, but woe to the little car which can't stay in the ruts nor get out of them! Oh well, we're in a diesel pickup today. The weather is nice, the day is far spent, we've been on the road 15 hours and we have only one more hour to go.

Now the road improves, the going gets better, the driver speeds up with anticipation of getting there soon. The sandy area is left behind and we again come onto a plateau where farming is going on. Soon we see Dan Kramers field of soybeans and we know our journey is ended with a very good prospect of eating one of Marlene's good meals.

Now we have made it through the back door. I have thought to myself that if a person can make it through the back door into this area and still be interested, the front door should not give them any problem!

We have hopes that the back door will get some sprucing up within the next few years. ▲

This & That

Carman Loewen and Paul Yoder took Rosella, James, Lindomar and Monica Yoder to Brasília to catch a bus to Patos, Paraíba, where Sam & Erma Coblentz and boys are stationed as missionaries.

On February 11 the people interested in or involved with the Mato Grosso settlement had a big powwow at the Monte Alegre social hall.

On the 12th a group of 13 men left for Mato Grosso after Sunday evening services. We were out for supper the other night. Someone asked me if I was going to work on BN when I got home. I said no. One of the guests gazed at me intently and in a here's-my-chance-to-find-out tone of voice asked, "Do you make that paper at night?" I said yes. With a look of triumph smeared all over his face, he muttered, loud enough for everyone to hear, "No wonder."

On the 16th, Emma Burns, Ada Coblentz, Glauciene Gold and Ann Miller visited some of the sisters in town and then went to their sewing in the afternoon.

With Frank & Darlene Giesbrecht from Georgia out for a visit, all the ex-Georgians had a big shindig at the Rio Verdinho social hall on the evening of the 16th.

Richard and Dean Mininger are back from the US after holding meetings at the Lone Tree and Kidron Congregations, respectively.

That same guest mentioned that he likes to go to bed between 8:00 and 8:30. No wonder.

Now we get into the really thrilling news. Three new babies on the Colony. Yep. Baby #1 – Miro Allen; parents: Wagner & Aletha Machado; born February 17. Baby #2 – Karla Jo; Parents: Lowell & Sharon Warkentin; Born February 21 (just a matter of hours before Sharon's folks, Verle & Ruby Schneider returned to the US). Baby #3 – Rodolfo Elam; Parents: Dave & Marta Kramer; Born March 5. In order that none of the parents or grandparents of numbers One, Two and Three accuse me of being impartial in the nice little things I customarily say about babies that showed up, I inform my readers that they are all tiny, they are all cute, they are all the very best and sweetest little babies in the whole world.

Abe & Clarabelle Penner and Bob & Naomi Wiggers from South Dakota were here for a short visit, the Penners to visit John & Alma Penner – John is his uncle; the Wiggers to visit Chris & Anita Stoltzfus and family. Anita is their daughter.

The Gospel Tract fax/modem is now working in our literature center. The setup is a bit precarious right now and it's almost necessary to make a short call advising you

Brazil ¹⁵ News

are wanting to send a fax. Five minutes later the fax can be sent. The number is 011 55 62 613 9008. Sending faxes out is quite straight forward.

Bill & Gracie Miller, Robson & Glauciene Gold and Sheila Rosa paid the Leo Dirks family a visit in Mato Grosso.

Chris Stoltzfus and family were supper guests at Elias & Coleen Stoltzfus' on February 22. Also there were Bob & Naomi Wiggers and the C. Becker family.

On February 22 John & Sheila Kramer and children moved to Mato Grosso.

Ervy & Elizabeth Koehn from Macon and Gordon & Betty Unruh from Greensburg are out for a visit (See Paraguay).

Dennis & Vera Loewen are back from Canada, where they went to her sister's wedding. Tamara Toews came back to spend several months with her cousin, Alfrieda, Mrs. Phil Martin.

Sylvia Becker, who lives with us, likes to snootily remark that she doesn't read BN. She doesn't need to. Others gladly keep her informed. End of chapter 2.

The Luiz Fernandes and Divino Cândido families from Goiânia spent Carnival weekend here on the Colony.

On March 1 the youth girls had a picnic at the dam in honor of Tamara Toews.

Mumps are making their rounds here on the Colony.

On March 3 we had baptismal services here at Monte Alegre. Six were baptized.

On March 5 the youth from both congregations had a carry-in dinner at Phil Martins, to practice singing for the first Sunday of the month joint meeting. The youth sing for 30 minutes instead of having introduction.

Errol Redger and Elias Stoltzfus left for Canada to attend Annual Meeting.

On March 7 the Monte Alegre School children went on a field trip to Rio Verde, where they visited the milk processing plant, feed factory, etc.