

Brazil News



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Editorial

Excess Baggage

We have just returned home after spending some time in the US. Some lessons can be learned.

Traveling should be enjoyable. It shouldn't be seen as a necessary evil to get us where we want to go. Yet, if we're not careful, we can inadvertently take some of the joy out of our travel. We will discuss one way in which this can be done: excess baggage.

Due to a policy of commercial protectionism which was in effect in Brazil for many years, few foreign goods were imported. Instead of taking advantage of this period and expanding to meet the demand, national industry stagnated, producing the bare essentials at exaggerated prices. Because of this, Brazilians (and Americans living in Brazil) who visit the US become ecstatic when entering stores bursting with every imaginable kind of quality goods, at unimaginably cheap prices.

We're not talking about far-out or extravagant items. Mainly we're thinking about things that you folks in N America possess and are so much a part of your daily lives that you don't even think about them. We're human enough that we'd like to have them too.

Then there are different kinds of sales, including garage sales, where things are frequently sold practically for nothing.

And we must not forget the fine people who give us gifts to take back to Brazil. And those who ask us to take something back for their friends or relatives.

Often we believe that our pocketbook is the determining factor as to what we can acquire. But finally the day comes when we must pack our suitcases to return to Brazil. We glance back and forth between the pile of goods we acquired and the suitcases into which they must go. There is an obvious discrepancy. Our plans to travel light are shattered.

We scrounge for more suitcases, aware that the limit is two to a passenger in which

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the total weight is approximately 130 pounds, plus one piece of hand luggage that shouldn't weigh more than 11 pounds (on international flights).

We pack. We unpack. We weigh the suitcases. We unpack again. Both in weight and in volume we exceed the limits established by the airlines. Someone finally gets up the nerve to suggest: Maybe we'll have to leave some things. But what? Everything has been hand-picked. No, nothing can stay.

The solution is to buy another suitcase, which is filled almost to the bursting point. The zipper is closed. And yet there is a fairly good sized pile of stuff that needs to go—that must go.

Several additional pieces of carry on luggage are purchased. When the last bag is zipped shut, it is evident that between suitcases and carry on cases, each passenger will be flying with a total of five pieces of baggage.

This makes for a miserable trip. There is the fear of having to pay overweight baggage, not to mention the problem of making it extremely difficult to get around in the airports. Then there is the problem of customs, the duty that will have to be paid in the case of an inspection.

This life is often compared to a journey. We carry passports issued by the Celestial Consulate. The visa which has been stamped in gives us the right to pass through this world but once—as pilgrims and strangers.

We do well to consider what the pilgrim and stranger status means.

A pilgrim is a “religious devotee who journeys to a . . . sacred place” (American Heritage Dictionary) and a stranger is “one who is neither a friend nor an acquaintance” (AHD), we could add, “to this world.”

What does it really mean to have a Pilgrim & Stranger visa stamped in one's passport? Basically it means: “In Transit.” It means “here have we no continuing city.” For our Consul there was no room in the inn. Neither is there for us in the inns and hotels of the cities of this world. We bypass the cities. We can't linger. Our visa gives us the right to travel, but not to stop, not to make friends.

The Pilgrim & Stranger visa implies traveling light. When the Consul General sent some of His followers out on a trial journey, He made this annotation in their passports: “Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.” He didn't give them the right to take a single piece of baggage!

These men traveled light. They were mobile. Agile. Never was it heard, “Wait. I can't find my suitcase.” Very likely no one ever said, “I'm so tired I just can't take another step.” They could ford rivers, even swim if necessary. They could scale mountains. They could run.

Can you imagine these men trying to travel, each carrying three 60 pound suitcases and two pieces of hand luggage?

Ridiculous, you say, they wouldn't get anyplace like that.

You're right.

Then why do we try it? Where did we get the idea that we can carry five pieces of baggage through life? True, we have been careful to not purchase anything that

is wrong in itself. There is nothing that condemns us. Nothing that we wouldn't be willing to show at customs.

Abraham traveled light. He was mobile. Lot settled down in a city. When the enemy captured him, in the wink of an eye Abraham was on their trail. Soon Lot was a free man again. Well, not really. He returned to the city where he felt at home. When he was forced to travel without his baggage, most of his family abandoned him. His wife tried taking a suitcase along and turned into a pillar of salt.

At revival time we open our suitcases, dump the contents on the bed, and then carefully examine each item. We ask: Is there anything wrong with this? We can honestly answer there isn't, so we place it back in the suitcase. One by one we close our suitcases, smile, and say we are ready for communion.

But we stay in the city.

When the Lord asks us to make a visit, we look at our five suitcases. Rather than making haste, we ask for a sign. After all, why lug those heavy suitcases around if it's not necessary?

When the pillar of fire seems to be moving toward a mission field, we look at our baggage. We say we would be willing to go if there was an open door. But the doorway is full of baggage, so we remain in the city.

Overweight luggage. Our Pilgrim & Stranger visa gives us the right to pass through this world. Not to stop.

One day a rich young man came to the Consul and asked, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"

The Consul told him, "Get rid of your excess baggage. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had five pieces of baggage." ▲

Updating the Past

The Journey's End

By Lloyd Koehn

Moundridge, KS

(Continuation of Stranded in the Desert Without Water)

The time finally came when we arrived in Reno. RENO: THE BIGGEST LITTLE CITY IN THE WORLD, declared the sign at the city limits. The state of Nevada had shortly before this come into the national limelight as the only state in the Union to legalize gambling. Another issue that created national attention was that Nevada had liberalized its divorce laws. Reno was the place where couples with marriage problems went to get a quick divorce. No doubt, these were topics for conversation as we drove through the city.

Leaving Reno and the state of Nevada behind us, we soon entered the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The Model T again labored and smoked and the water in the radiator boiled

as we slowly climbed the grade to Donner Pass. The day had ended and darkness had fallen and here we were, five young men in a strange country, far from home, traveling in a Model T Ford, heading for the summit. I don't remember that the Ford needing pushing as it did in the Rockies. Evidently some of us were tired. As I remember it, Gus, Ben and I occupied the back seat. Ed was driving and Ted sat beside him. I think the three of us in the back seat were sleeping most of the time as we slowly made our way to the summit. I don't recollect going down the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. I was no doubt asleep. Ted later revealed to me the dangers that were involved in our descending from the summit that dark night. He told me that Ed had an awful time keeping the Model T on the road, keeping it from plunging down the mountain side. Again I am thankful that the prayers of our parents and the Guardian Angel kept us from an untimely death.

We spent the night, as we did the past several nights, pulling over to the side of the road and rolling up in our blankets and sleeping on the ground. The next morning found us traveling toward Sacramento. We were out of the mountains, driving on level ground in the Central Valley of California. I don't remember much of the remainder of the trip. One episode, however, stands out in my mind. We stopped for a short while in the city of Sacramento. A fruit vender with his small cart filled with fresh fruit was parked on the street. We bought some bananas from the vender, which we consumed with relish. I suppose that at this point most of our money was spent, so we were forced to skimp on food, eating only enough to keep us going.

Leaving Sacramento, we drove south on Highway 99. At Livingston we turned east on Walnut Avenue, heading toward Winton. It was dark when we rolled into Winton. If I recall rightly, we parked on the corner of Walnut and Winton Way. A young man met us there and introduced himself as Neil Jantz. He had attended church services that evening and was now on his way to Noah & Lena Koehn's place, his boarding place. After spending a short time on the street corner, we drove about a mile south to the Heppner residence. Here we met Ed Heppner, who lived there with his mother. We spent the night in the Heppner's orchard, rolling up in our blankets and sleeping on the sand. Sand, sand, sand, the terrain around Winton is made up of almost pure sand.

We went to Jake Ratzlaffs the next day. They lived on Winton Way, a block or two south of the railroad crossing. The Ratzlaffs served us a delicious noon meal, the best meal we had had since the breakfast at the Koehns near Walsh, Colorado.

On a certain day in March, 1931, Mr. Koehn was conversing with a businessman in Winton. It was late afternoon and Mr. Koehn remarked that he needed to be on his way home. Koehn's friend urged him to stay and visit with him a while longer, but Mr. Koehn insisted he must be going. So he left his friend, got into his car and started for home. He was driving on Santa Fe Drive, northwest of Winton, with the Santa Fe railroad track to his left. A strong wind was blowing dust and sand, causing poor visibility. About a mile northwest of Winton a road takes off to the left, crossing the railroad track. Unknown to Koehn, a fast passenger train was speeding to the northwest. Coming to the turnoff, Koehn turned left, directly into the path of the speeding train. The locomotive crashed into the car, killing Koehn instantly.

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It was difficult to find a job in California. It was the beginning of the Great Depression of the 1930's. We spent our nights sleeping on the sand in the peach orchard west of the Ratzlaff barn. Our food was mostly peaches and grapes. After spending a number of days looking for work, all five of us got a job picking grapes in a vineyard northeast of Winton. But it did not last long. A raisin dehydrator had been built on Walnut Street, four miles west of Winton. It was being readied to begin operation. We Kansans applied for a job. Ed, Gus and Ben were hired. I don't remember if Ted was hired. I, however, got to work part time.

What happened to the Model T Ford? As I remember it, the Model T was a candidate for the scrap heap. It had traveled its last mile. I don't remember how cousin Ed disposed of the remains. It was driven very little, if any, after we arrived at Winton.

One day Gus and I drove into the Sierra Nevada mountains. The road we followed was not very good. It got rougher and narrower as we drove up higher and higher. Finally it was no more than a deer path. The motor started overheating, so we turned around and coasted back down.

One morning after Ed and I got off work and we were riding the cycle back to Winton (we worked the night shift), Ed said, "Let's go to Frisco." We each got someone to take our place at the dehydrator the next night. We arrived in San Francisco later in the day. We took in a few sights at the Cliff House on the Pacific Shore. We spent the night in a hotel that was probably close to the Fisherman's Wharf. I woke several times during the night and heard fog horns blowing. From San Francisco, we took Highway 99 north to somewhere around Modesto, and then west, going through Oakland. Coming home, we chose to go south of San Francisco. We followed the Santa Clara Valley through Gilroy, then east over Pacheco Pass, and back into the San Joaquin Valley. It was quite an adventure and I enjoyed it.

Some of us lived a sort of nomad life for a while. I don't know who was in the group, but for a short time a number of us camped in the river bottom, north of Livingston, and west of the Merced River bridge. We cooked our food over an open fire. I remember that the first thing we did after we got up in the morning was to run to the river for a plunge in the cold water.

Ted and Ben went back to Kansas when the grape picking season was over and the dehydrator shut down. That left Ed, Gus and me to face whatever the future held for us. We lived in a small house that was situated a short distance southwest of Jake Ratzlaff's house. Gus, however, spent most of his nights in a tree house. One of the Ratzlaff boys had built a house in a tree, about 25 feet from the ground. It had screen on two or three sides to keep out flies and mosquitoes. A makeshift bed was the only piece of furniture. It provided cool sleeping in summer, but in winter when the fog rolled in, Gus moved in with Ed and me.

One day Jake Ratzlaff met me on the yard and asked if I would like to move in with them and work for my board. I gladly accepted his offer and stayed with them until May, 1932. They were good to me and I enjoyed the time I spent with the Ratzlaff family.

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I won't forget Gus & Esther Koehn. They lived in a tiny house, and tiny it was. As I think back and try to visualize how it looked, I remember it as kitchen, living room and bedroom, all contained in one room. One thing that is still impressed on my mind is the unique method that Gus used to start a fire in their heating stove on cold winter mornings. He put scrap paper and kindling into the small heating stove in the evening before going to bed. Then he tied a match to the end of a stick, the stick being long enough to reach from their bed to the stove. So the next morning when it was time to get up, and while still in bed, he would grasp the stick, light the match and hold it to the kindling in the stove. Presto! And he would have a fire going.

When living with the Ratzlaff family, one thing that impressed me at that time, and is still vivid in my mind, is the method they used to dispose of the branches and twigs that we cut off the vines and trees. They used what I will call a fire wagon. The body of the wagon was made of steel. It was mounted on a wagon chassis. One side of the contraption was open. The other side was closed. The top was also open. A fire was started on the floor of the wagon. Then, as the wagon was pulled by two horses, between the rows of either grape vines or peach or almond trees, we pitched the brush into the open side of the wagon. The brush burned up as we drove along. The fire got pretty hot, but it felt good on a damp, foggy day.

One day in the early spring of 1932, Jeff, Frank and I were working in a field north of Winton. As I recall, we irrigated oats. The field was higher than the ditch that supplied the water. A portable pump was placed on the ditch bank. The water was pumped through a pipe leading to the higher elevation. I was working in a certain area with a shovel, trying to distribute the water evenly, so as to cover the whole area.

Ed Ratzlaff had stored his bee hives close to this field during the winter. He had moved the hives to a different location a day or two previous to our working there. Now there were angry bees flying around that had been left behind. I was working in a certain area, when I heard a bee buzzing around my head. I didn't want to get stung, so I started running (I was foolish enough to think I could outrun a bee). I was running on solid ground that had not been covered with water. I threw down my shovel and ran for all I was worth, with the bee buzzing around me. All at once I hit a spot that was water soaked. My feet sank halfway to my knees into the mud. I went down and fell flat on my stomach into the mud. The bee hit me with its stinger as I was falling. Well, so much for that. I guess Jeff and Frank got a good laugh out of the show I put on.

My mother had been writing letters to me, encouraging me to come home. So I began to make plans to go back to Kansas and home! My good friend Jeff Ratzlaff had a desire to accompany me on my homeward journey, so around the first of May, 1932, we took the train for Kansas. My Mom and Dad, brothers and sisters, cousins and friends, were glad to see me back home after an absence of about nine months.

Now, many years later, when I think back to the many trips we have taken to California and back to Kansas, I thank God from the depth of my heart. God has been so good to us. We have made every trip without accident. We thank God for the mercy and kindness He extended to us.

Nevada

Nevada, my Nevada,
A desert and a sky,
A thousand miles of sagebrush,
To greet the weary eye.
A thousand miles of sagebrush
Upon a field of gold,
A thousand miles of silence,
A charm that's never old.
Nevada, my Nevada,
An endless inland sea
Of alkali and sagebrush,
And winds forever free.
Out of thy desert vastness,
Out of thy deathly dust,
There comes a lure that grips the heart
And kills the wanderlust.
A lure of length'ning shadows,
Of sunsets in the west,
Of winds forever sighing,
That soothe the soul to rest. ▲

(Copied from a post card bought in Eureka, Nevada, August 31, 1963)

A Story for the Children

By Mim Dirks

A Little Brown Jug

A little brown jug sat on a shelf in a nice house far away in Jerico. It felt rather lonely there on the shelf all alone. The little jug sighed, and then it started to talk. This is what it said:

“Oh! I'm so lonesome here. I'm the only one left. I remember when my shelf was crowded with lots of jars coming and going. That was before the master took sick.

“Yes, when the master got sick, poor mistress had to part with one thing after the other to pay the bills. Then master died and things got really rough.

“Now here I am, just a little jug with some oil in me. How can I ever help poor mistress?

“This morning there was a man at the door yelling that the mistress owed him money and that if she didn't pay, he would sell her sons. Oh! If only I could help! I will do my best, but I'm only a little brown jug made of clay. Maybe if I was made of silver or gold, then I could do something. About all I'm worth is the oil that is in me—and that is such a little bit.

“I heard the mistress say she was going to go see the prophet . . . and now I hear her coming back. I hope, oh I hope, he can help her.

“Listen! She is telling the boys to go to the neighbors and borrow containers. Now what could that be all about? Containers for what?

“Now she’s telling the boys to shut the doors. Every place you look there are containers—on the floor, on the table, on the benches . . . This really is mysterious . . .

“She’s talking to the boys: ‘Now I’ll get the oil out of the little brown jug and start filling these containers.’ What can she mean? I know that my oil is the only oil in the house. If I’m not even full, how can I fill other jugs? Oh, how I would like to be useful just now! But, if my mistress wants all of my oil, she’s welcome to it. I’ll do my best . . .

“What do you know? Here I am back on my shelf. I just can’t believe what I did. Only I didn’t do it. I never, never could have done it.

“Here’s what happened. The dear mistress picked me up and started to pour my oil into a big jug. The oil poured and poured out of me until the jug was full. Then she filled another jug, and another, and another . . .

“You know, I’m glad I’m not made of silver or gold, because then the creditors would have taken me in payment for the debt. But now my mistress and her sons keep saying, ‘Just think! God used our littlest earthenware jug to save us. What a miracle!’

The mistress sold all that oil and paid her debts. “And I,” said the little jug, “will keep right on being a little brown jug, just what God intended for me to be.” ▲

A Brazilian Story

by Mário de Moraes

The Leper Doctor

Cabreúva is a small town in the state of São Paulo, in which, back in the 40s, practically everyone knew each other. And who didn’t know João, the town nitwit, or the local physician, whom we shall call Dr. José.

Dr. José had a little plot of ground outside of Cabreúva where he would spend his weekends. An excellent physician, compassionate and understanding, Dr. José had a special place in his heart for João. Anyone seeing them talking together could easily mistake them for father and son because of the age difference. When the doctor would go on his frequent walks, João would join him and they would talk together. Well, not really. It was more of a monologue in which the doctor did all the talking, telling the lad all about the city of São Paulo, the skyscrapers, the theaters, the many cars and streetcars

João would listen enraptured with indecipherable thoughts circulating in his head. At the end of each of these sessions, Dr. José would promise to some day take João to São Paulo for a visit. But time went by and that day never came.

Dr. José was a dermatologist, specialized in leprosy. It’s because of this that he was

known as the “Leper Doctor.” In his simplicity, that is what João would always call the kind doctor.

It happened once that Dr. José decided to spend some time in the city of São Paulo. Not understanding why his great friend didn’t come back, João decided to hitch a ride to the capital.

The truck driver who picked him up must have repented of having done so. During the entire trip, every little bit João would ask him if he knew the “Leper Doctor.” With each new negative answer, João would act all surprised. How could it be that this driver didn’t know his great friend.

When they finally got to Largo do Pinheiro, a suburb of São Paulo, the driver, almost losing his wits by now, stopped his truck near a policeman and told his strange passenger to ask him for directions on how to get to the Leper Doctor.

The policeman soon saw that João had mental problems. Seeing the possibility of a little fun, he sent him on to the policeman on the next corner.

This was the beginning of an incredible series of coincidences. That policeman sent him on to another, which took him to the entrance of São Paulo Medical School. Seeing a group of students, he walked up to them and asked if they knew the Leper Doctor. They thought it was a big joke, until one of the students walked up to João, and taking him by the arm, kindly said, “Come with me João. I’ll take you to my dad.”

The medical student was none other than Dr. José’s son. He took João to where his dad was and the two spent some happy days together in the capital. ▲

Another Coincidence

I got a strange feeling when reading Mário’s story. In Rio Verde we have a doctor, a dermatologist, also a specialist in leprosy, whose name is Dr. José. He too has the reputation of being a man who will speak to anyone on the street. His son, Marcelo, is the lawyer who handled Bruce Koehn’s adoption case in court (See BN no. 62). ▲

For When You Need a Lift

By Eldo Wiggers
Hesston, KS

I Heard a Song

Once when burdens of life carried me away captive into a strange land, I hung my harp on a willow and the melody of my life died away like a tired breeze. The hymns of Zion lost their meaning. I wandered in dry places—a wilderness of care in a world without a song.

But one evening the Lord showed me the value of a song. In spirit He took me to a quiet place and said: "Listen!" In my mind I heard singing. Softly it began like the awakening of a nearly-forgotten-dream. It came from very far away, and many years ago. My heart leaped as the notes grew clearer, the message plain. It was the song of a nameless martyr somewhere in Europe in the middle of the 16th century.

Just 18 years old, this young man eagerly searched Holy Scripture to learn to live for Christ. He travailed in prayer, became bold in sharing the Faith. One day authorities bringing chains, bound him and bore him away from his pleading parents. They led him up winding stone stairs, through dark halls, finally casting him into a castle prison.

A slender shaft of light streaming through cracked mortar provided the only way to distinguish night from day. Meager meals were shoved through a grate near the barred door. His only visitors were the sneering guards and authorities urging him to recant. Valiantly he prayed. Bravely he quoted Scripture. But demons of darkness hounded his mind. Doubt plagued his thoughts.

One night a muffled sound coming from the grate aroused him. Pressing his ear close, he heard singing. Somewhere in that cold castle another believer was offering encouragement and praise. Then another voice joined the chorus. Then in all the adjoining cells, ever so softly, another. The song spoke of keeping the faith, being true to the Lord, of not giving up, of the glorious crown of victory awaiting the faithful. Tears of joy glistened in the youth's eyes and then he too began to sing. The demons of doubt and darkness fled. Each night thereafter the song was sung. And by day the cold stone walls could not quench the power felt by fellow believers united in common goal and praise.

When repeated cruelty could not deter the youth from a life in Christ, he received the sentence of death. Bound, and pale, and broken, the young believer was led from his cell. Yet irrepressible strength shone from his eyes. Joy transfigured his countenance amazing those who saw him. The crowd and the curious parted as he passed to the stake. A final time authorities urged him to reconsider because of his youth. Then to the astonishment of the crowd he began to sing. A hush fell over the multitude. Each note of the song rang crystal clear in the morning air. Words of faith, of love, of praise, and dedication, flowed over the crowd with Heavenly power. It was the song sung during the lonely nights in prison. When he came to the phrase of the golden crown of victory awaiting the faithful, the enraged leaders ordered the fire to be lit.

At last the melody died on the air, leaving only the sound of crackling flames. Without a word, the crowd slowly moved away.

A few remaining spoke in hushed tones: "It surely is too bad. Such a youth in the bloom of life. Such a shame he was deceived."

Another answered, "Such a voice, he would have gone far in the king's court."

Little did they know of the Great King in whose court the young martyr could now sing. And little did they know the bud they crushed beneath their cruel feet would yield blossoms of believers from among the crowd.

Not many nights hence, a stranger slipped into a dimly lit cave hidden in the

mountains. The huddled group of believers looked questioningly. At last the stranger spoke. “I was in the marketplace the other day.” He paused long . . . “There I heard a song. It pierced my soul. I want what that young man had.”

Later another entered the cave. Quietly, with emotion he spoke, “Not long ago at an execution, I heard a song. I heard such compelling power, such courage, such love, that I left a different man. I want what that youth had.”

A woman and her daughter came next. “We passed near a crowd and hearing a clear, lovely song rise in the morning air, we paused thinking a traveling minstrel sang. We edged close enough to see, and to our horror a mere lad was burned at the stake. That song rings in our ears—it will not be quieted. We want to be able to sing that song too...”

I opened my eyes, my reverie ended.

But the song of the Martyr rang in my heart. I witnessed the power of a message clothed in music.

True enough, this world may be a wilderness of woe, we may occasionally hang our harps on the willow, but may we never fully lose our song. Think of the reward of some child saying, “In Sunday school I heard a song . . .

*One door and only one,
And yet it's sides are two.
...I want to be on the inside of that door?”*

Or some troubled youth, drawn by the glitter and glamour of the world, hounded by Satan, tempted to give up Christian living, say, “I heard a song..

*Give me thy heart,
Says the Savior of men,
Calling in mercy
again and again.
...It drew me back home.”*

Or some busy soul bearing the multiple yoke of family responsibility, work in the Kingdom, and duties of life saying, “I heard a song...

*The cross that He gave may be heavy,
But it ne'er outweighs His grace.
...It gave me courage to press on.”*

Or some old one for whom this world holds so little, say, “I heard a song...

*The angels so sweetly are singing,
Up there by the beautiful sea.
...It was so clear and real. I'm longing for that day.”*

Or each one of us, when crossing Jordan's River to our Eternal Reward say, “I heard a song... It was the song of the martyr, it was the song of God's children. It taught me to choose the right door, it urged me to give my heart to God, it gave me strength and determination when the way grew dark and long. It kept me in tune with heaven.”

Then as we enter Eternal Bliss, the strains of angelic song will sound familiar—But it's so perfect, so new, so glorious—It's the song of the Redeemed...

*No mortal ear hath heard such song,
Of everlasting love,
When the redeemed and happy throng,
Praise God in heav'n above.
The sweetest melodies resound
When all the saved shall sing;
Eternal bliss and joys abound
In praises to our King!*



Education

The Cost

*Good teachers are costly,
but bad teachers cost more.*
—Bob Talbert

While in the US, we spent the evening in a home where one of the guests was a schoolteacher. A sincere young married man, with a child, I was impressed by the sense of dedication and responsibility he showed for his job. Or maybe I should say, for his mission.

This young man was obviously keenly interested in the academic development of his students. But I sensed in him an even greater interest in their spiritual well-being. He told of how all but one of his students got converted during a school term.

I was seeing material for a career teacher, but as we discussed this, a shadow crossed his face. Could he afford to follow a teaching career?

He told of another brother, older than he, who had a conviction to teach, but as his family grew, he began feeling guilty for not being able to provide a better living. Reluctantly he quit.

This is no reflection on our sisters who teach school. They're doing a tremendous job and will always do the bulk of the teaching. But I suspect that they would be the first to admit that sometimes a man teacher has an edge over them, when it comes to teaching, let's say, the seventh and eighth grades.

Why are the seventh and eighth grades so important? Because frequently during this period the children begin hearing the call of the Lord—and they become rebellious. Yes, at this point a spiritual brother is sometimes more suited to the task than a sister.

But a brother, married with three or four children, obviously needs a larger paycheck than a single sister who has only herself to take care of. Even with additional pay, he won't have a higher standard of living than the sister.

Is it right that a young brother with a conviction to teach must begin feeling guilty as the family grows, feel like he is being a poor steward if he keeps on teaching?

A qualified teacher is costly, but someone who teaches for less may cost even more. ▲

In the News

Perdigão

Pronounce that pear-gee-gon (rhymes with 'lone'). From now on you'll be seeing this word a lot in BN, so you just as well pronounce it right.

For some time now we have been mentioning the possibility of a large poultry/hog business coming to Rio Verde. Now it's official. They're coming.

The significance of this is so great for the region—and who knows, for the Colony—that local history may well be divided into BP and AP (Before Perdigão and After Perdigão). Several days ago some of their men stopped by the Literature Center. One of them admitted that the American Colony had a strong influence on their choice. Let's notice what the press has to say about it:

VEJA Magazine, under the title of "Goiás."

Perdigão has opted for the state of Goiás, where it chose the progressive municipality of Rio Verde for its most modern complex. The total investment will be approximately 500 million dollars. It will take nearly one thousand local producers to come up with the 280 thousand broilers and 3,500 hogs that will be slaughtered daily. The feed produced for this project will require 600 thousand metric tons of corn and soybeans annually. Secondary industries will be moving into the area to supply Perdigão with wrappers, containers and other related items. Three thousand direct job openings will be created and six thousand indirect openings. This is an investment that will fit in perfectly with what Goiás has to offer in grain production, infrastructure and other benefits, and especially since Brazil's progress is closely tied to the frontier of new industries.

Comigo, the regional cooperative, under the title of "Perdigão says YES to Rio Verde."

The people from Rio Verde will never forget June 26, 1996. It was on this day that Perdigão officially announced that Rio Verde had been chosen as the recipient for their 500 million dollar investment. After eight months of great expectations, finally we got a favorable reply. The streets were crammed with people who came out to witness the arrival of industry officials and Governor Maguito Vilela. The president of Perdigão, Nildemar Secches, was interviewed by COMIGO. [Following are some excerpts:]

Q. Other than for the fact that Rio Verde is an agricultural center, what reasons can you give that made Perdigão decide to come to Rio Verde?

A. I would say that the high grain production in this area was a decisive factor. For a project of this size, we after all need a lot of grain, since that is our principal raw material. Also, the climate and topography of the area are ideal for poultry and hog projects.

Q. Where will the production from the Rio Verde facility be sold?

A. Today our annual sales are one billion dollars, of which 200 million are exported. Right at the beginning what we produce will be for the internal market, which includes the North, Northeast and Central West regions. In the future we want to export too.

Q. How much will the complex to be built in Rio Verde increase your overall sales?

A. There will be a 50% increase. ▲

A Shopping Center Explodes in Rio

On June 11, the day before Dia dos Namorados, the equivalent of St. Valentine's Day in N America, one of the large shopping centers in Rio was doing a brisk business. There were approximately two thousand people in the lunch area. Suddenly there was heard what was later described as a short clap of thunder. The floor trembled and then sections began buckling upward. A violent updraft sent those nearest flying upward or down the halls.

After rescue workers had removed the last victim from the Osasco Plaza Shopping, the tally stood at: 39 dead and 472 injured, 79 seriously enough to require hospitalization.

What happened?

For some time there had been a strong smell of gas in the kitchens. Different technicians were called in to find the leak, but each seemed more interested in going home than discovering the problem. Now, when it's too late, the problem has been found. The gas lines going to the kitchens in the lunch area were run underground. Consequently it was obviously difficult to find a leak. Instead of shutting the lunch area down for a day or two and tear up 150 meters of floor, they chose to ignore the problem. But the problem didn't ignore them. ▲

It Really Happened

Mississippi to Goiás by Van

While in the US, we heard about a family from Mississippi who was planning on driving to Goiás by van. It sounded mighty far-fetched. But would you believe that one dark winter night—we're in winter here—that family from Mississippi showed up here on the Colony. In a van.

Please meet the Rufus Schrock family from West Point, Mississippi.

That was on July 17. Then on the 26th we had a carry-in supper for them at the Rio Verdinho social hall and then a report.

The report began at 8:30 and it was 10:30 by the time all the questions were answered. That meant that Rufus had to move along at 5,500 miles per hour in his report to cover in two hours the entire 11,000 miles they traveled.

I think I have Rufus persuaded to write up a complete trip report for BN. You folks who know him in the US, keep after him. Just to give you an idea of what the Schrock family has to tell, here are a few items of interest.

>Rufus lived in Paraguay for 17 years. It was there he met Maria, his wife. At least part of their 11 children were born there. Their married daughter didn't come along.

>The countries they traveled through were: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil.

>There is an approximately 500 mile stretch where there is no road, so from Panama to Colombia they had to travel by ship.

>Crossing the Andes mountains they reached an elevation of 19,000 feet. For 100 miles they traveled at 5 m.p.h. Some of their greatest trials were flat tires, border crossings, sandy and rocky roads, lack of road signs, poor restroom facilities.

>The trip from Mississippi to Paraguay was made in 28 days. Three days were spent waiting for the ship in Panama. It would have been over a month if they wouldn't have driven day and night part of the time.

>They spent some time in Paraguay with his sister before coming to Brazil. His niece joined them for this part of the trip.

>They hope to sell their van and fly back to the US.

Asked if he recommended that others make a similar trip, he unhesitatingly answered in the affirmative. He feels it was a real character builder. I don't doubt it. But folks, let me tell you something. You'd better have some special character before starting the trip, otherwise, no matter what bro. Schrock says, you won't make it. Before you decide to make a trip like this, spend a long evening with the Schrocks, listen carefully as they tell their story, and then do what the Bible teaches in Luke 14:28. "For which of you, intending to [go on a trip], sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient [character] to finish it?"

Personally, I tip my hat to the Schrock family. I admire their courage. The witness they left on this trip, and the tracts distributed, will surely bring forth fruit. ▲

This & That

First of all, a sincere apology to all of you good folks in Mississippi for not making it over there. It was in our plans, but plans don't always work out. Next time

A boy's preparatory class was held at the Rio Verdinho Congregation, with Greg Dyck as the instructor. Eight boys from the US attended the classes. We'll report on this in the next issue of BN.

John & Dorothy Burns and daughters Anita and Della, spent a month in Brazil on their way home from the mission in Kenya. John gave us an interesting report at the Rio Verdinho Congregation on the work in Kenya.

Sidney & Irene Schmidt have moved to Rio Verde where they are now stationed as missionaries. They have a wide open field in which to work.

The Leo Dirks family has moved back to Rio Verde after living in Mato Grosso for over three years.

Nelson & Ruth Unruh, who had been living in Leo's house, moved into Sidney's house.

The Abe Troyer and Emmanuel Schrock families were out for Clara Miller's funeral. Schrocks spent some time in the Mirassol, São Paulo mission with their children, William & Miriam Coblentz, and with their grandchildren.

Dean & Esther Lou Mininger and children from the Rio Verdinho Congregation are spending several months in Mozambique checking out mission possibilities.

Revival meetings were held at the Acaraú and Patos missions in the Northeast. Elias Stoltzfus and Arlo Hibner were the evangelists. Several families from here went along to help. More on this next month.

Ben Giesbrecht and Elias Stoltzfus held meetings at the Pirenópolis mission. However, when they left, it was no longer a mission, but a congregation. The missionaries, Staven & Adeline Schmidt will be returning to the Monte Alegre Congregation, where they are members. A three-man committee was elected in Pirenópolis to be responsible for the leadership.

Richard Mininger and Arlo Hibner are presently holding meetings at the Mirassol, São Paulo mission. The meetings are being held in a new chapel that was just finished. Sérgio & Katrina Alves, Edinei & Janete Alves, and Daniel Martin spent several days there helping finish the chapel.

A number of new phones have been installed here on the Colony. We'll try and get you an update on the numbers right directly.

The Daniel Holdeman and Carman Loewen families made a trip to Paraguay, where they visited a Mennonite Colony, and to the Iguaçu Falls.

Dennis & Vera Loewen had sale on May 28 and have moved to North Dakota. Anthony & Wynelle Koehn are living in their house.

Meetings were held at the Rio Verde Congregation. Glenn Smith and Richard Mininger were the evangelists. The work in Rio Verde is looking encouraging. It seems quite a few people are interested in getting converted.

Sunday evening, July 28, Rufus Schrock told us his conversion experience and how he found the church, at the Monte Alegre Congregation. This is something he needs to write down so that others can read it. Their daughter Milcah will be staying and teaching at the Rio Verdinho School.

If a tour group would be organized to visit Brazil, how many of you folks from N America would be interested? This would, of course, include the Colony, some of the missions, Brasília, Iguaçu Falls, possibly the Mennonite Colonies in Paraguay, among other places. It would probably take 2-3 weeks. The cost? This is a wild guess, but maybe in the neighborhood of \$2,000 per person. If interested, get in contact with Quality Printing or with me here in Brazil. If there is enough interest, we'll check things out and give you more definite information. Would it be an interesting trip? Yes, I think so.