Brazil News

No. 14
July 1992

Editorial

Nationalism

Folks living in a foreign culture are often bewildered by what appears to be erratic behavior on the part of the citizens of that country.

It goes something like this:

National – "The reason we´re so poor here is that we´re lazy. We don't like to work like you Americans do."

American (several days later in another conversation) – "You know, there is a solution for your poverty. If everyone would get out and work, like Americans do, your standard of living would soon come up."

It's "The shot heard round the world!" Within a half hour there is an angry buzzing heard from all quarters as Paul Reveres dash about spreading the news that the ugly American has attacked.

When the now vilified American finally finds out what is happening, he is shocked. Yes, yes, he really said that. But so what? It wasn't his idea. With the best of intentions he merely repeated what Pedro told him, that people in his country are lazy.

This inexplicable behavior is called nationalism. In an individual we call it pride.

You can't get away from nationalism. Americans are nationalists. So are Brazilians, Englishmen, Iraqis, and Holdeman Mennonites. To a point this is good. Nationalism includes the thought of patriotism, loyalty to ones country. Nothing wrong with that.

To understand better why we N Americans frequently are at a loss as to why foreigners act as they do, we want to discuss the difference between first world and third world nationalism.

A normal first world citizen is self assured. He has confidence in his ability to produce and to manage. Even though he merely works on an assembly line, his take home pay – with reasonable management – gives him a decent living. He knows that in his country a premium is placed on his sweat. He also knows that by working more

than a 40-hour week – overtime or moonlighting – he can come up with extra cash for some special project. He works hard at both his full-time and part-time job, because he is reaching for a goal.

Tell a man like this that he is lazy and you may offend his dignity, but not his nationalistic pride.

The truth of the matter is that there are a lot of third-world foreigners who work harder than the typical American. But if you want to upset the apple cart, tell them they are lazy. It immediately becomes an international problem, in which the Americano accused the Brasileiro of being lazy.

Why the difference?

A nation has a personality, the same as a person does. It develops its personality over a longer period of time. Think in terms of one generation in the life of a nation being equivalent to one year in the life of a child. What happens if parents mistreat a child during it's childhood? Usually it's a case of a ruined life. Only with a superhuman effort can such a child, upon reaching adulthood, erase enough of the scars to have a reasonably normal life.

Now think of a nation in which, for the last 200 years, the rich have trodden the poor underfoot. Assuming that a generation is 30 years, we have a child almost seven years old – a child with a bad inferiority complex.

Let's get one thing straight. I am talking about the real kind of inferiority complex. Not the kind where someone was raised under normal circumstances, but later goes bullying his way through life, and when called on the carpet, says his problem is an inferiority complex. That's baloney.

Now back to nationalism. Many, if not all, third world nations have an inferiority complex. It's very, very important to remember this. Their extreme sensitivity in some areas isn't because they are lazy or dumb. It's because they are unsure of themselves. When they call themselves lazy, it's because they have for years been called told they are lazy. Knowing how hard they work to make a living, they become frustrated. When they say, "We're lazy. We need to work like Americans," down deep they are asking, "We aren't lazy are we? Look at how hard we work. Please recognize in us this virtue that society don't recognize."

The nationalism problem isn't limited to the example of laziness. It shows up in almost all areas of life. This is something we face with our Brazilian brethren who live on the Colony. When we have an organization meeting in school or in church, their tendency is to stay home. It isn't because they aren't interested in what is going on. It isn't because they don't have good ideas. But since some of their ideas are different than ours, they know they are outvoted. So why bother to go to the meeting, where portions of the discussion frequently are not interpreted, thus leaving them at loose ends. They have the saying, "Vocês que são brancos, que se entendam." Literally, "You who are white [the smart ones], do it your way." Or placed in nationalistic terms, "You Americans, do it your way. After all, you don't need us."

This is unfortunate. I haven't felt that this happens because the Americans don't appreciate the Brazilians – even though this is the impression they frequently get.

What can we as Americans do to solve this? We need to have a greater awareness of the nationalism problem. We need to remember that we are dealing with nationals who have not grown up with the same privileges we grew up with. To put it in plain words, we need to act like parents who adopt a seven year old child who has been through a lot and now needs an extra amount of understanding.

This doesn't mean we'll give them the "Oh, you poor thing" treatment. Rather, we will try and make an extra effort to put a little more value on their ideas.

The congregation in town was run by Americans for years. Finally, after prodding from different revival ministers, we became willing to turn it over to the Brazilians.

The result? Even though they haven't done everything the way we would have, the congregation is doing well. In a recent visit I was amazed at the lack of an inferiority complex I sensed in the group.

Third world nationalism. It's a problem. But it has a solution. ▲

Religion

More on Spiritism

To be able to understand this article, a few explanations are in order.

Paulo David is the brother who was a minister in a church in Pirenópolis before coming to our church.

Dr. Otávio is a medical doctor who showed some interest in the church for a time, but decided it wasn't what he wanted. His wife is still very interested.

About a month ago we went to Sunday evening services in town, which is Bible Study. After services Paulo told me that the Sunday before he was the teacher. Dr. Otávio was present in the services with a stranger.

The topic was on the separation between church and state. Paulo explained how that we maintain a separation in everything, which includes the military.

About that time Dr. Otávio had enough of such radicalism. He spoke up and in no uncertain terms let everyone know that the stranger was his dad-in-law, who was a retired army colonel. It was supposed to scare the willies out of Paulo David to know he was teaching non-resistance to a military man.

Paulo admits that he was wondering just what might come out of it all, when the colonel, a man by the name of Wadir Augusto, asked to speak. He said, "In all my years I have never been in a meeting like this. I never knew that there was a doctrine like this. All I can say is that I regret that my son-in-law and my daughter don't belong to this church."

Several weeks later we had a wedding here at the Monte Alegre church. Col. Wadir was invited. During the reception I met him. He began telling me some of his

experiences, but time didn't permit, so he and Paulo David decided to come to our place for dinner two weeks later.

Just a word on Col. Wadir. He certainly seems to be a real tribute to the Brazilian military. He speaks in a quiet, modulated voice. His words are carefully selected. His speaking is so precise it almost appears he is reading a prepared script. From head to foot, he epitomizes the perfect gentleman.

I had hoped to have Wadir tell his story and then rewrite it for Brazil News. However, as the story progressed (punctuated by brief pauses when he would look at me and ask, "Are you tired of what I am saying?"), for about three hours, I realized that my plan wouldn't work. When he finished I asked him if he would be willing to put his story into writing and permit me to translate and publish it. He agreed. Hopefully in a month or two it will be ready.

What does all this have to do with religion, or more specifically, spiritism?

A lot. And I am very anxious to print his story. I have in different occasions touched on the issue of spiritism here in Brazil. What he says is a first hand testimony of the tremendous power of spiritism.

Col. Wadir ended his story saying, "I have come to the conclusion that Rio Verde is a stronghold of spiritism."

When we moved to Brazil, Rio Verde was still pretty much in the boondocks. There were but a few vets in town, so people used a lot of home remedies for their cattle. Spiritism was one of these home remedies.

I don't know how many of my readers know what warbles are. Flies lay eggs on cattle. The egg hatches under the skin and a larva begins to grow. Soon lumps appear as the larva grow. Unless taken care, anemia sets in and can end up killing the animal. There were men who specialized in going through a juju rigamarole to rid the cattle of their warbles. Within half an hour warbles of every size – up to an inch long – would be wriggling their way out of their little cubicles and falling to the ground.

Our neighbor, Acácio Teles, had a man working for him who dealt in macumbaria (juju practices). Because of some misunderstanding, Acácio sent him a packing. Shortly after he left, something strange happened. Acácio had a corn field that suddenly and inexplicably dried up. Suspecting the cause, he went out and carefully checked the cornfield out. There it was! A horse skull buried upside down in the field.

Another neighbor had a daughter who fell in love with a Negro. He didn't approve of the marriage, so he had someone cast a spell on the young man. It worked. The man got sick, and sicker, and sicker. It appeared he would die. So a witch doctor was consulted. He immediately caught on to what was happening. He was able to remove the spell from the young man and place it on the girl's dad. From that time on he talked in a very hoarse voice. That is the way we learned to know him.

These are local incidents. Just recently spiritism has been given some hard blows. In the little town of Guapó (the little place around 15 miles out of Goiânia where a restaurant is built on stilts in a small lake) spiritists sacrificed a 12 year old girl in order

to get her blood to be used in a ceremony. This has made national headlines. Down south several little boys disappeared. It is believed that both were sacrificed.

The reaction to these crimes is very negative. In fact, Brazilians are abhorred to know that such crimes are being committed.

I have mentioned in previous articles how Catholicism is on the wane here in Brazil. It appears that these incidents will put a damper on spiritism. Unfortunately, the Pentecostals are all geared up to absorb this vacuum.

This is off the subject of spiritism, but some time ago, several Mormons were in church. Later they came to pay us a visit. They looked over both our computer and publication rooms. Especially one of them, seemed quite sincere. He asked if we would send him the Mensageiro. Naturally, we agreed and put him on the mailing list. Now I just got another letter from him saying that he is an ex-Mormon missionary and would like to keep on getting the Mensageiro at a new address. I am hoping someone can pay him a visit in the near future. ▲

Publicity

VEJA

We Holdeman Mennonites are allergic to reporters. Unfortunately, reporters aren't allergic to us.

Some take the simplistic view that when they come we should tell them to head back out. They forget that Brazil is a free country and that journalists have a constitutional right to roam the Colony – snapping pictures of people fleeing their cameras – and then write up an article telling what a queer bunch of people we are.

We have had different magazine and newspaper reporters out doing articles on us. The first ones, from the Manchete magazine (similar to Life) did a reasonably good job. The next article done for the agricultural supplement of our Goiânia paper was quite good. The last one done by VEJA magazine (circulation 900 thousand copies), which simply included us as a part of a coverage on foreigners in Brazil, was by far the worst – at least from our point of view.

Actually, the entire article was an effort to prove that foreigners are better farmers than Brazilians. Different nationalities were interviewed, always in an effort to show their superiority.

Following are excerpts from the article, published in VEJA num. 1237, from the 3d of June:

The saga of the immigrants who colonized Brazil hasn't ended yet. In more than a dozen agricultural colonies scattered throughout the country, there are Japanese, Dutch, German and American descendants, who live on and work the soil the same as they did in their homeland. These colonies are many times treated as anthropological curiosities, because their inhabitants speak Portuguese with a grudge (speaking mainly

the language of their parents and grandparents), and practice religions practically unknown here in Brazil. But these details are the least interesting concerning these communities. A closer examination shows that the big difference is the success of these colonies, especially the agricultural colonies, when compared with their Brazilian neighbors, who are never able to reach the same level. The descendants of these immigrants are record holders for agricultural yields. They are able to reap riches in the most arid soils by following a unique work ethic, arduous labor, careful spending, but with a high standard of living.

The most astonishing of all are the yields obtained. Take for example the agricultural colony in São Gotardo, Minas Gerais. The Japanese plant soybeans, wheat, corn, vegetables and coffee, with yields that average three times more than the national average. They came to this area only 16 years ago, but they have changed the agricultural panorama...

"The soil in this part of the country is weak in nutrients and the solution is to fertilize the soil. You have to spend money," is the explanation that Hiroshi Takigami, age 50, gives. He plants one hundred hectares of carrots in São Gotardo. "I don't want to criticize my neighbors, but the Mineiros (people who live in Minas Gerais) are scared to invest money in their crops. They don't spend money to improve the soil and that's the reason they get such poor results," he explains...

Examples like São Gotardo can be seen in other states, even though with different accents. The city of Holambra, in the interior of the state of São Paulo, is the number one producer of flowers in Brazil, and one of the largest in the world. Of the 7000 inhabitants, 1200 are Dutch or descendants of Dutchmen who moved to Brazil after the II World War. They take in 100 million dollars a year, mainly through the sale of flowers, raised in enormous aluminum greenhouses. "Outside of Holambra, no one can produce even two thirds of what we produce," according to Dick Schoenmaker, owner of the Fazenda Terra Viva. He hopes to take in 1.4 million dollars with the sale of chrysanthenmums.

As can be seen, Brazilians can learn a lesson on the immigrant colonies, and especially now when low yields are being pointed out as one of the contributing factors to the slump the nation is in. When this kind of a community is examined, immediately it is easy to pick out a number of Brazilian fallacies, the first being the tendency to blame everything that goes wrong on the farm to lack of government support. What is the secret of success on these colonies? Professor Jacques Marcovitch, who teaches economics and administration at the University of São Paulo, dug into this subject and came up with some conclusions. The first is that the immigrant is a true entrepreneur. "The decision to leave their homeland and venture out to an unknown land is extremely difficult. These immigrants are more courageous than their countrymen that remain at home and it is this that gives them strength to work and produce," Marcovitch explains. There is no doubt but what that economic factors are behind the great migrations. When Europe was in an economic crisis, hoards of adventurers crossed the Atlantic. Many didn't want to take

the risk. "Only the boldest decided to try making a go of things in America," says Marcovitch...

This analysis unfortunately doesn't give Brazilians much hopes of ever improving. If Marcovitch is right, then it must be concluded that Brazilians do not have an entrepreneurial spirit, because they only like to work under favorable conditions. It's a paradox, but it makes sense – and not only in the agricultural sector. As everyone knows, Brazilians are slow at everything, except in Formula 1 races...

The dairy farmer, Daniel Vriesmann, a Dutchman with five children, upon coming of age, received a farm from his dad. He wants to do the same thing for his children when they come of age... "I made out the best I could," Daniel remembers. He came up with a loan to be able to raise cattle. Today he has 400 hectares, where he plants soybeans, corn, wheat and oats. He is one of the main cattlemen in that area. He has 36 cows that produce 25 liters each per day. The national average per cow is 2.5 liters a day. In other words, this young man has cows that produce ten times more than the national average per cow...

Farmers have a comfortable life. They make money, but they work for it. Manfred Dück, a farmer and father of three sons, from the Witmarsun [Mennonite] Colony in the state of Paraná, has 66 Holstein cows on his 57 hectare farm. He also has good production, 20 liters a day, thanks to electronic milking equipment and a pasteurizing plant, where he processes the milk. Not too long ago he planned to buy a parabolic antenna to come up with better TV programs. But at the last minute he backed out. "I like comfort, but it's always better to invest in the farm," he declares, so he went ahead and bought another 55 hectares of ground. "Nothing fattens cattle like the presence of the owner."...

In spite of being of German descent, the Witmarsun colonists do not drink beer, which is prohibited. They follow the severe regulations of the Mennonite Church. With rare exception, marriages take place within their ethnic group. "If one of our youth decides to marry an outsider, we don't prohibit it, but since the children grow up together, they end up marrying," explains Leovaner Dieter Rischper."...

In these times of extreme laxity with children, one is shocked by the rigidity shown toward children on these colonies. In the Linha Schmidt German Colony, near the city of Teotônia, the parents send their children to school even when they are sick. "It is the teacher's responsibility to send them back home if they are too sick to study. The students feel they are obligated to come to school, even if they have a fever," according to Glaci Sieben, director of Escola de 1º Grau Evangélica Linha Schmidt. "I only missed school one time, and that was when my grandmother died," says Núbia, a 13 year old eighth grader. The children on the German Colonies in the state of Rio Grande do Sul grow up speaking German at home, but when they go to school, they are forced to speak Portuguese. Whoever breaks this rule is subject to a painful punishment. In the Linha Berlim Colony School, the student who speaks German in the classroom has to walk on his knees on the cement floor for a number of meters. Both teachers and parents support this punishment. "They are lazy when it comes

to using their head in Portuguese. The punishment is for their welfare," says Suzane Birkheuer, who lives on the Colony and at home also speaks German with her children.

In northern Goiás there is an agricultural colony made up of sixteen Russian Orthodox families, which is even more rigid than the Colony just described. They don't watch TV, don't listen to music and don't play musical instruments. "All this comes from the devil," according to Sidor Ivanoff, 65. The colonists are old fashioned so far as religion is concerned, but they like new technology when it comes to their farms. Fifty kilometers from the Russian Orthodox Colony there is one of the most exotic and rigid colonies of immigrants. There ninety families of Americans, because of their religious belief, live according to medieval values. They belong to an even more radical branch of the Mennonite Church. They came to Goiás em 1968 after loosing their land in the United States. The women use long dresses and hide their hair under a black cap. They choose who their husband will be and are virgins when they get married, because all courting must be done at a distance. Children who disobey parents are punished with a whipping. No one watches TV or listens to the radio.

The backwardness (or exoticism) ends here. Every year the families travel to the United States by plane to see their relatives. Almost all of the families have new cars, live in spacious houses and have highly mechanized farms. Each farmer has a complete line of late model equipment. The yields on this colony are fabulous and put the Brazilian neighbors to shame. These Americans are able to get 30% higher yields of soybeans and 40% higher of corn on each hectare planted, in comparison with other farmers in the Rio Verde area. The Mennonites keep a distance from their Brazilian neighbors, but receive those who are converted to their faith. The religious books they get from the US are translated into Portuguese with the help of two computers and a laser printer. "We accept progress and technology to spread the Word of God and to aid us in our work," is how Charles Becker, 48, a sort of public relations man on the Colony, sums it all up.

The fact that the descendants of immigrants are much better farmers than their Brazilian neighbors is so obvious that the only thing to be discussed is the reason for this superiority. In one case the contrast is so great that it is a source of real embarrassment for the Brazilians. This is on the Tomé-Açu Colony, in the state of Pará, where hundreds of Japanese families plant passion fruit, Acerola and cupuaçu, which are industrialized right on the colony and exported to the orange juice industry in the United States. The three different crops are compatible and don't deplete the soil. These Japanese came to Pará in the 20's. They cleared out the underbrush, but didn't cut down the big trees. They are working on the same soil to this day. First they planted turnips, but now they are the top pepper producers...

It would be good if the Brazilian farmers learned a few lessons from their Japanese neighbors. They prefer to make their money in an easier, but more destructive way. They survive by cutting lumber on neighboring plots of land. After depleting one area, they find a new plot of virgin timber and repeat the operation. The Japanese descendants never went for this easy and destructive way of life. ▲

A Few Comments

Obviously, we as a Colony didn't appreciate some of the comments made about us. I faxed VEJA a letter, which they published in a slightly reduced form:

VEJA
Managing Editor

Dear Sir,
The article, Jardim do Vizinho [The Neighbor's Garden], contains lamentable distortions about the Mennonite Colony in Rio Verde – Goiás:
1. The first colonists came to Brazil in 1968, but not "after loosing their farms in the United States," as you affirm. The farms were sold.
2. "The women...choose their husband." The truth is that the young men propose to the young ladies and they have the right to accept or to reject the proposal.
3. "When children disobey their parents, they get a whipping." Corporal punishment is infrequent and is used in moderation. Other lighter forms of punishment are preferred.
4. "The yields on the Colony are fabulous and put the Brazilian neighbors to shame." It may be true that we have good yields, but we put no one to shame. We owe a lot to our good Brazilian neighbors.
5. "The Mennonites maintain a distance from their Brazilian neighbors." Just the opposite is true. We have very good relations with our neighbors. We keep our distance from their parties and other activities that clash with our religious principals.
Cordially,
Charles Becker

The objective of VEJA magazine was not to down any of the colonies because of their different ways, but rather to prove that foreigners are different and that their techniques are superior – because they are different. As can be seen, they went heavy on the spices to get their point across. That's journalism.

Like it or not, there will be more in the future. And who knows, maybe there's a reason for it. ▲

Politics

Collorgate

The chances of President Collor finishing his term are slim. In spite of all the good he has done for Brazil, the evidence of his involvement is piling up so fast that even his supporters are becoming uneasy.

His main source of embarrassment continues to be PC Farias, his ex-campaign director. To say that the man is crooked is enough of an understatement to where it can be taken as a compliment. The man is so absolutely corrupt it's pitiful. Collor claims he hasn't talked to him for the last two years, but no one believes it. There is an abundance of evidence that proves there is still a strong attachment between the two.

To make matters worse, US officials are very suspicious that PC Farias is a drug trafficker. His planes have a false floor in them – that most certainly isn't used for transporting French bread.

A Congressional Committee is finishing an investigation on PC Farias. When finished, possibly sometime this week, impeachment procedures will likely be started.

Both the Congress and the Military are sidling up to the vice-president, letting him know he has their support to assume the presidency in case Collor is forced out of office.

So far it appears that if worst comes to worst, the transition to a new president will not bring undue stress upon the nation. In other words, democracy is here to stay. Ten years ago the Military would have already stepped in. Today everything is calm. ▲

Life in Brazil

Prateada

Have you ever stopped to notice the mental image that different animals are capable of creating? A snake brings – to women, at least – the thought of the deceiver. A cat, especially the larger feline breeds, bring thoughts of sleekness or speed. An eagle represents majesty and power. A jackal is a thief, a scavenger. An elephant represents memory. And on and on and on...

What does a newly hatched chick represent to you? I see creation. I see God, as possibly in no other animal.

Quite a few years ago, when I still had my store, Richard Mininger ordered a few chicks to raise as fryers. I delivered them to his place. We took them out of the box and placed them in the little enclosure prepared for them. When Richard saw how the tiny little creatures went straight for the waterer and took a long, first drink, he became all excited. I still hear him exclaiming, "Just look at that! Who taught them how to drink water?"

The chicks I sold in my store were fluffy little yellow creatures – like thousands of identical twins. Though I never tired of opening a new box of little chicks, they were a pale comparison to jungle fowl chicks, each one with its own distinct markings. Each one a separate personality.

When we first moved to Brazil, everyone raised galinha caipira.

I can't give you a history on them. However, I assume that way back, maybe several centuries, someone must have captured some authentic jungle fowl and crossed them

with some domestic strain of chickens. The result is what we now call galinha caipira here in Brazil.

The galinha caipira must have some Indian blood. They are meant to be free. Pen them up like an ordinary chicken and just about that quick they quit laying. Soon they get sick and die.

We used to raise galinhas caipiras, but to give you a better idea of what it's like, we'll tell in a composite story how Elídia, Roberto's wife (See A Day in Roberto's Life in the last edition) raises jungle fowl:

Roberto has been milking for an hour and a half – it's now 4:30 in the morning – when the old rooster, o rei dos galos (king of the roosters), that roosts on the top corral log flaps its wings, stretches its long neck, and emits a drawn-out cock-a-doodle-do. As king of the roost, this is his sovereign privilege. Now his subordinates may take their turns. Which they do. Their voices echo from nearby trees, from on top of the granary, and from the woods.

As the first rays of dawn begin leaping from the eastern horizon, the king again flaps his wings, stretches his neck and loudly proclaims a new day. With a few flaps of his wings, he hops to the ground and begins strutting around.

There is a rustling in nearby trees as both roosters and hens begin fluttering to the earth. Their day has begun. They must scratch for a living.

Roberto finishes turning out the cows and calves, when suddenly Elídia hears him calling. He sounds excited. "Elídia! Vem cá Elídia! Depressa!" (Come Elídia! Quick!)

Suspecting what it's all about, Elídia drops what she is doing and runs to the corral. She looks where Roberto is raptly looking. Even though they have witnessed this scene many times in their life, it never ceases to thrill them. There, coming up from the spring, is Prateada (Silver), the hen that has been missing for almost a month. She is surrounded by a dozen little chicks.

Prateada is in no hurry. Her contented clucking tells us she hasn't joined the women's lib movement. She's glad to be a mother.

As she slowly walks, Prateada stops every little bit to scratch along side the path. Each time a morsel is found – ever the unselfish mother – she clucks rapidly and the chicks converge on the spot. Just like a chick is born knowing water is for drinking, they also know that insects are for eating.

Arm in arm, Roberto and Elídia watch entranced. Suddenly Prateada calls her chicks with a low urgent clucking. Even though it is the first time these 12 little chicks have ever heard that voice, they understand. Prateada, partly hidden by tall grass, has her wings extended. In the twinkling of an eye, the chicks are under her wings, which drop as two canopies. And all is silent. Not one peep. Not one cluck. Just the gliding shadow of a hawk looking for a meal – which has mysteriously disappeared.

The hawk also disappears, not mysteriously, when Roberto raises his arms and shouts. He has met more than his match.

When Prateada senses there is no longer any danger, she relaxes her wings somewhat. Her children notice the change and one by one, little heads begin peeping out. A black head. A brown head. A spotted head.

As Prateada arises, her brood begins scurrying about. That was fun.

Elídia now does what she has done many times before. She goes to the kitchen and get's a kettle of leftover rice. She returns to where Roberto continues with his eyes glued on Prateada and her brood. Now Elídia tosses out a small handful of cooked rice.

Again that quick clucking that says, "Look what mom has found." In a moment the little chicks are stuffing themselves. Even Prateada eats this time. She knows there is enough.

Close up, Roberto and Elídia are able to observe each chick individually. Two of them are pitch black. Three of them have chipmunk markings down the back. Two are fluffy gray. Two are yellow. Three are spotted black and white.

Even though some of them have similar markings, none are identical. Even the black ones have different markings on their legs.

Roberto and Elídia head for the house. It's past 7 o'clock, past almoço (dinner) time.

After almoço, Elídia quickly does the dishes. Then, while Roberto is out checking the fences, she goes out to check her chickens. This is a job. Counting everything, from the oldest to the youngest, there are over 200.

First of all she goes to the palm hut where they store their corn. Hanging under the long drooping palm leaf eaves, is a hollowed out palm tree trunk, split in half. Spaced at regular intervals are a half a dozen hens setting on eggs. Gently she pushes the hens aside enough to check the eggs. In the last nest the hen seems to be especially feisty. The reason is soon apparent. A faint cheeping can be heard. Three of the eggs have hatched. Another eight are in the hatching stage. As she watches, little beaks can be seen tapping away at the hard shell. Several eggs are obviously rotten. These she tosses out. By this evening they will all be hatched.

Elídia spots something of interest. Eating corn near the granary is a hen that she hasn't seen for nearly two weeks. She is sure the chicken has a nest out in the bush. After hungrily eating for several minutes, the hen heads back to the bush. Elídia follows. They go through a swampy area. Suddenly the hen makes a 90 degree turn to the left and heads toward dry ground. Elídia follows. Now the hen turns again, once again to the left. And then again.

Elídia laughs softly to herself, "OK, OK," she says, "You win. You're going in circles to confuse me. I'll leave you alone." Once Elídia is out of sight, the hen makes a bee-line to her nest.

Now Elídia begins gathering eggs. This is no easy task. There are nests under bushes, in the marsh, under clumps of grass, along side fallen logs.

The eggs are shades of brown, blue, green. Some are speckled and others almost pink. Everything except white.

As Elídia walks back to the house, her apron heavy with eggs, she counts seven hens with chicks of varying sizes.

After dropping off the eggs in the house, she goes to the granary and with a stick bangs on an old rim hanging from the eaves. The chickens recognize the signal and come running. Taking ears of corn from the crib, she husks and shells them, throwing the corn to the chickens. It doesn't take a lot to satisfy them. They weren't very hungry to start with. Slowly the chickens begin wandering back to the woods. ▲

Remembering Out Loud

Homer Unruh

I don't know how many of my readers know Homer and Hazel Unruh from Versailles, Missouri. If you don't know them, you ought to.

You may wonder why I am remembering Homer and Hazel. There are several reasons: 1. They were pioneers in the Brazil move. Even though they didn't spend a lot of time here, it was during the time the fazenda was being divided up. He did a lot to keep everything going smoothly. 2. Homer just turned 80 and when I saw him several months ago he was still acting just about like he did twenty some years ago, which means that either he is acting 60 now or was acting 80 then. 3. The other day I felt like I was Homer Unruh. I guess I better explain that one.

Homer is a man who needs only about 15 seconds to come up with a theory for most any problem under the sun.

Anyway, when we first came to Brazil, the months of June, July and August got quite cold. Most every year we would have several good frosts. It would get plain cold.

Now for a number of years we are having no frosts and very little cold weather. And this is where Homer Unruh comes in. All of a sudden one day, in about 15 seconds, I had it all figured out. Just like Homer.

Listen.

When we first moved to Brazil, there was practically no farming in this part of the country. Consequently, there were almost no tame grasses planted. For the native grass to have any value at all, it had to be burned at least once a year, which was obviously done during the dry season. That meant that for the months of July, August, and September, smoke from the grass fires created a haze that during three months greatly reduced the intensity of the sun's rays in this part of the country.

Whenever a volcano errupts, blocking sun rays with its cloud of ashes, the temperature in these areas begins to drop. Why then wouldn't having a thick haze over our area for three months out of the year not drop our temperatures? So now, without a haze, we are having warmer weather.

That's the theory. Now tell me, don't I sound like Homer Unruh? ▲

Romeiros

Romeiros is derived from Roma (Rome) and applies to people who make a pilgrimage on foot to some shrine with the expectation of receiving a divine favor.

I had almost forgotten that romeiros exist, until we went to Goiânia not too long ago. The highway was full of them. That brought back memories from when we lived on the Jataí highway, near Clifford Warkentins.

The destination of these romeiros, who walk up to three hundred kilometers or more, is the little town of Trindade (Trinity), near Goiânia. The place is famous for its Santuário do nosso Divino Pai Eterno, a Catholic church where miracles supposedly are wrought.

Actually, these pilgrimages are an effort to bargain with God. In exchange for some self-inflicted suffering, He is to grant a special petition.

When I had my store, one of my customers, a good friend of mine, told me one day that he had recently made the pilgrimage to Trindade. I didn't ask him why, but I found out his dad had cancer. Very likely this was why he walked several hundred kilometers.

It used to be that these pilgrimages did involve some suffering. That seems to have changed. Going to Goiânia the other day I noticed that they were traveling in groups of maybe 10 or 12, accompanied by someone in a pickup with their bedrolls, cooking utensils, etc. Apparently he would drive ahead several kilometers and wait for them to be able to supply their needs.

By the looks of the mixed groups, they may have accumulated a few extra sins on the road

Fortunately Faith had taken a bunch of tracts along, so tried to supply them with literature that tells how to receive a blessing without walking to Trindade. ▲

Pedro's Funeral

Pedro was the founder of a veterinary supply store in Rio Verde, some 25 years ago. Many of us knew him.

When he died, I went to his funeral in the Catholic church. The priest got there late. He looked high and low for his robe, but couldn't find it. Finally seu João, the founder of the supermarket got into the act, trying to find the robe, but it was nowhere.

All he could find was his stole (silk band worn around the neck that drapes to the floor). So there stood the priest in sandals, his shirt unbuttoned about a third of the way down – but with a priestly stole – saying requiem mass. ▲

This & That

Walt & Alberta Redger are back in Brazil after spending a number of months in the US.

The Glenn Hibner family took a trip to São Paulo. Roger, the Colony snake catcher, took a number of his trophies to the Instituto Butantã, where most of the anti-venom used in Brazil is produced.

Ever since we moved to Brazil, there have been American nuns in Rio Verde. Faith met them on the street the other day and they said they are now leaving Brazil for good. We had good relations with them. They would even ocasionally come to our services.

Mary Schultz & daughters and Aleltha Mininger had a bridal shower for Sheila Hibner.

John, son of Daniel & Anna Kramer, and Sheila, daughter of Glenn & Elizabeth Hibner, were married on July 19, which explains the bridal shower just mentioned.

The Samuel Coblentz family arrived with missionary visas. Sam, who grew up in Brazil and speaks Portuguese (mixed with Spanish, I fear, after spending time in the Mexican mission) is stationed in Patos, in the northeastern state of Paraiba.

Also here with missionary visas is the Cameron Goertzen family. They are stationed in our capital, Goiânia. At present they are studying Portuguese under Jair da Costa's tutorship.

Jair & Connie da Costa are spending several months in Goiânia helping the Goertzen family get settled and learn the language. This has the additional advantage of eliminating the need of help from Pirenópolis and Rio Verde in this mission.

Lynn & Kathy Schultz and family are back after spending a month in the US.

The Arlo Hibner family was out from the mission in Acarú, Ceará, for the wedding. Arlo had surgery on his knee.

The Elias Stoltzfus family, who are filling in at the Mirassol, São Paulo mission during Dean Penner's absence, were out for the wedding.

The Myron Kramer family, their children's teacher, Denise Litwiller, and Zezé, a teenage sister, were out for the wedding.

Will & Ann Miller are spending a short time in the US.

Doug Ferrell and his children have returned after spending some time in the US. Doug brought the monitor for the Gospel Tract computer.

Every Wednesday evening services are being held on Doug's farm for his workers and their children. It seems to be going quite well.

It's strawberry season here. Roberto Gold – Valéria's dad – garden farms on Daniel Kramer's place. He supplies the Colony with strawberries, greenbeans, etc.

Tim Burns purchased the portable sawmill that used to belong to Ike Loewen. He got the motor overhauled and is now sawing lumber for others.

Monte Alegre sewing was held on July 30, with an afternoon baby shower for Mrs. Sid (Irene) Schmidt. They expect to adopt a baby next month. Sewing was also done for the Arlo Hibner family.

Nine adults and five children came out from Pirenópolis to spend the weekend on the Colony. They stayed in Myron Kramer's house. Even though they are still going to the Comunidade church, one senses that something is drawing them in this direction.

Phil & Alfred Martin are taking care of two foster children. Dan & Marlene Kramer are taking of a foster girl.

One day toward evening we got a call from the Conselho Tutelar (sort of like a

children's welfare department) saying a mother was there with three hungry children. She simply was unable to take care of them anymore. Would we please come and get them. We agreed to help them out temporarily. Glenn & Elizabeth Hibner took two of them and José & Lucy Cardoso (the printer and his wife) took another. The Conselho Tutelar has found prospective adoptive parents for two of the children. When we got the children home that night and gave them their first meal, they ate as though they feared this would be their last meal. To say the least, they are loveable children who desperately need a good home.

The Mensageiro (Messenger), published bi-weekly, reached it's 200th edition.

The book Conversion, Consecration, Christlike Service is now ready to be published in Portuguese.

We are giving all our tracts a face-lifting with a new supply of fonts selected for us by Dale Koehn at Gospel Publishers. Together with this we are changing all the scriptures to the Contemporânea version of the Bible, which we are now using. Since the zip code has changed, the address is being updated. We have over 40 tracts in print.

Marjorie Unruh's book Hear Their Cry is now being proofread. Hopefully within six weeks it too will be in print.

My next project is to finish translating Ben Giesbrecht's book, Keeping the Faith. After that I will begin work on Hulbert's Story of the Bible, a book we need desperately, as we have no really good Bible story book in Brazil. One that is fairly good was put out by the Adventists and obviously slants things in their direction.

Manga trees are in bloom, which means that in December we should be eating the delicious fruit.

Stephen Kramer, the Gospel Tract worker, is going through the growing pains of switching all of his work from the old vintage PC to the new 386. Small problems that in the US would be solved with a simple 800 phone call, can become big problems here.

The Publication Board has loaned the old PC to Myron Kramer. He plans to do some work on The Mirror of Truth. Even though few will read this book, it will be of inestimable value for those who do – present and future Brazilian leaders in the church.

This is kite season. Normally we don't have enough wind to keep a kite aloft. Kites made here are ultra-light, made of slivers of bambu and covered with light wight paper. The line is sewing machine thread..

It's easier to defend good principles than it is to live by them.
—Alfred Adler (1870-1937)