

# Brazil News

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Editorial

## **Through a Glass Darkly (2)**

To communicate with peoples of other countries, there are two essentials: First, we must speak their language. Second, we must be able to tune in on their cultural wave length.

To learn their language well is difficult. To think as they do, even harder.

For us to produce tracts and other religious literature that these peoples will understand, we must be able to think as they do. At least up to a point.

Let's take a few examples out of the Messenger of Truth and our Sunday School material.

>An often used term is "In our affluent society..." Translate that into Portuguese and I will have stumped 90% of my readers. Why? Because they are surviving on fifty to a hundred dollars a month. Do you call that affluence? For them to read someone's dissertation on the evils of easy money, makes as much sense as for you to read about what a thrill it is to go to a rock concert. Different wave lengths.

>Inormally translate Gladwin Koehn's editorials. Not only are they well written, but they very accurately evaluate the situation of the church in N America. Yet I doubt if more than 10% of the readers get anything out of his articles. Ninety percent of the readers are unable to understand his in-depth explanations.

>A possible question in our Youth & Adult SS book: If my present vehicle is in good running order, should I purchase a new one if the money is available? To make any sense at all here, the question would have to be: If my bike is in good shape, is it wrong to think of buying a cycle?

>In our Portuguese Sunday School class here at the Monte Alegre congregation, I have noticed that on Sundays when our Brazilian brethren take the lead, our discussion definitely takes a different direction than when the Americans take the lead.

>When I write an article or essay in English, I very seldom translate it to Portuguese. And vice-versa.

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What does all this tell us? It tells us that when we speak or write, we formulate our thoughts to fit our listeners or readers. Nothing wrong with that, except that when you go international, a lot of people have a problem tuning in.

The solution?

First of all we must recognize that we are no longer a regional church. Isaiah says, “Enlarge the place of thy tent.” Secondly, we must remember that we are now ministering to peoples of many different languages and cultures. And yet the majority of our literature is prepared for the N American culture.

To simplify what we’re saying, let’s not talk about N America, Mexico, Philippines, Brazil, etc. Let’s talk about first and third world nations or peoples.

We are desperately needing literature produced especially for third world readers, literature they can relate to, literature that deals with their problems, many of which are totally different from first world problems.

What kind of literature should be produced for third world readers?

When you see Brazilians picking up their new Mensageiro and reading the back pages first (just like Americans do), they aren’t reading the obituaries. That is where the children’s section is. They immensely enjoy experiences. Why are special mission editions of our Mensageiro made up of reports and letters from the Christian Mission Voice and the Gospel Tract Newsletter such a success here?

I can’t help but believe that reader interest in other third world countries would be similar. What do we as a church have to offer them?

Just one word here. I positively am not criticizing the content of the English Messenger or our Sunday School material. The problem is that this material was written by Americans for Americans in America. Period.

Now for the suggestions:

>Missionaries with the gift of writing must be encouraged to use this gift. Articles should be written on the level of the people they are serving. They should encourage the members from the national church they are serving to write articles.

>A central information bank should be set up to which all of these articles could be sent. Copies would be made and sent to the different literature centers, where they would be translated into the appropriate tongue.

>The Messenger already exists for Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries. An effort should be made to come up with a bi-weekly or monthly publication for other languages where the church is actively engaged. The size and quality would be determined to a certain extent by the circulation.

>An intensive course should be set up to train those who would be involved in this publishing work. Emphasis would be laid on alternate methods that can be used for reduced circulation when a full-fledged printing setup isn’t practical. (More on this in another issue.)

>A curriculum committee must be carefully selected that would set up a two-, three-, or four-year lesson outline for youth & adult Sunday School material. They would be responsible to find qualified brethren to write these lessons. The brethren

in Mexico have come up with a four-year outline for children's lessons, which we are already using here in Brazil.

>Tracts should be written specifically for third world distribution. We have some tracts that are very suitable. Some leave a lot to be desired. Also, flexibility should be given for writing tracts that would be suitable in a specific area of a specific country. By flexibility, I mean something that wouldn't turn into a bureaucratic nightmare that would drag out for six months. Possibly Gospel Tract could designate some doctrinal proofreaders living in the same area that could have bi-weekly meetings, if necessary, to handle these cases.

What follows should actually be a separate article, and yet because it is so closely related to what I have been talking about, we'll continue. ▲

## What is a tract?

A tract is a seed. Some fall by the way side, some on stony places, some among thorns, and a few on good ground.

We will concentrate our thoughts on the seeds that fall on good ground.

What happens if a tract falls on good ground way out in the middle of the Ukraine? You, my good reader, have been paying your quota. You have sent donations to Gospel Tract. You pray often for the work. Keep it up.

For a little while now, cease to live in N America. You, yes you, are a 57 year old gentleman (or lady) out in the middle of the Ukraine.

For as long as you can remember, there has been a void in your soul. You have never seen a Bible. In school you learned that God is a fable. You were born to serve your country. Everything else is secondary.

And yet you remember your grandmother, who died when you were seven years old. She used to lock the doors and the shutters, take you on her lap, and talk about Jesus. Almost in a whisper, she would say that Jesus loves everyone. That He lives way up there – pointing toward the ceiling. That He is the Savior. But grandma died. And so did her stories.

Life wasn't easy for you. Many nights you have laid awake thinking about life. Yet you knew it wasn't smart to ask questions about such a delicate subject. Jesus. Did Jesus really exist? What did grandma mean when she said He was the Savior. Whose Savior?

Now in the last few years things have loosened up. One day as you walk along the road, you see a scrap of paper. Out of curiosity you stoop and pick it up. On top it says, God's Wonderful Plan of Salvation. Instinctively you look around to see if anyone saw you pick up the paper. Quickly you stuff it into your pocket and walk along like nothing happened.

When you get home you lock the door and the shutters and with trembling hands get out the soiled tract. You read, The Bible is the Word of God, the everlasting truth. It contains...

Memories begin to come back. Yes, grandma used to talk about the Bible she used to have before soldiers carried it off.

Long, long ago there was no world at all. But God has always been. God, the Creator... That isn't what you learned in school. And yes, grandma used to say how God made this world. Is this by any chance the same God?

God loved Adam and Eve. He made a beautiful garden. Grandma used to say something about Adam and Eve. So she took some fruit and gave also to Adam...Fear came into their hearts. That is exactly what you feel in your heart. He told them that both must be punished according to their evil deeds...

Many hundreds of years later...an angel told Mary that the Baby's name was to be called Jesus... Jesus! There it was! You read on. Your hands feel clammy.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Jesus did many miracles, proving to the people that He was the promised Savior sent from God...

Jesus. The Savior. He that believeth on me.

"When they were come to...Calvary, there they crucified him." Jesus was put to death just as the innocent lamb that Abel offered...

"He is not here: for he is risen, as he said..."

Do not delay. Come to Jesus today.

What wonderful news! Exactly what grandma used to talk about. Her face seemed to shine when she talked about this.

You reread the tract. And again and again and again...

The weight on your heart is heavier than ever. Now you remember how Grandma used to pray when the doors and shutters were locked. Kneeling, as you did some 50 years ago, you try praying. But there are no words. Pray what? How? Finally you manage to say, "Jesus, if you exist, please hear me. I'm scared. My heart is heavy."

That's all you can think to say. Your heart continues heavy. Suddenly words come to you, "Dear Jesus, I believe that you exist. I love you. Please help me."

The room becomes light. You look to see who opened the door and the shutters. But they are tightly closed. Once again Jesus has walked through closed doors.

Now, my good reader, return to N America. But leave your soul out in the middle of the Ukraine. The Lord saved you. And now what? What would you be willing to do for your soul out in the middle of the Ukraine?

That's what this article is all about. When that tract reached your soul in the middle of the Ukraine and you became converted, did the church reach her goal? Can she say, "Mission completed"?

How long will your soul remain saved without additional food? Yes, Gospel tract received your letter and sent you some more tracts – and eventually a Bible. But not being a studious person by nature, there are so many things you don't understand.

Your soul needs communion. You desperately need a missionary in your town. But no missionary is available.

Will you survive. Would you survive in N America with only tracts, your Bible, and wickedness on every hand?

Now we will let our imagination run wild for a few minutes. Your letter and hundreds of others from all Ukraine are discussed in a joint Mission-Tract Board meeting. It is decided that two couples should be stationed in the Ukraine. Their headquarters will be a literature center. They will learn to know the people, their language and their customs. They will translate the tracts they feel are most needed. They will begin publishing a Ukrainian Messenger. Every two weeks you will get your copy. When you have questions, you send your letter to the address on the tracts or on the Messenger. Within several weeks at the most you get an answer. As you read the Messenger, the day comes you begin to understand Gladwin Koehn's editorials. Who knows, maybe you even read them before the children's section.

One day you hear a knock on your door. As you open it, your heart jumps. For the first time in your life, you are seeing the sower of the seed, the waiter who takes the loaves and fishes and distributes them.

After that visit, you are more determined than ever to be faithful.

That is my vision. Is it yours?

Would you be willing to do this for your soul? ▲

## Collorgate

### **Impeachment**

The September 30 issue of the Folha de São Paulo, a daily with a circulation of over half a million, informed its readers:

Fernando Affonso Collor de Mello, 43, was removed from the presidency of the Republic. In an unprecedented decision in Latin America, the House of Representatives authorized opening of impeachment procedures, by a vote of 441 against 38. There was one abstention and 23 absentees. Collor will probably leave office today yet, 821 days before he was to complete his term of office, after being officially notified that he is to be judged in the Senate for crime de responsabilidade. The vice-president Itamar Augusto Cautiero Franco, 62, automatically assumes the presidency. He will be the 37th president of Brazil.

The voting process began at 5:15 p.m. At 6:50 p.m. the 336th [two thirds plus one] vote was cast [in an oral vote], by Paulo Romano. At this point the voting was interrupted while the National Anthem was sung.

The new president is divorced and has two daughters. Born in [the state of] Bahia, aboard a ship that was taking his mother to Rio de Janeiro, he was later raised in Juiz de Fora [a city in the state of Minas Gerais]. He served two terms as mayor of his city and two terms as a federal senator. As a member of the PMDB party, he was opposed

to the military governments. Even so, today he maintains good relations with the Armed Forces. Yesterday he stated that he wants to get together with the presidents of the different political parties as quickly as possible to reach a consensus on how the government should be run. He announced that his first priority will be a transition to parliamentary rule. He is even thinking about having an unofficial prime-minister to work with Congress. The gaúcho [native of the state of Rio Grande do Sul], Pedro Simon will be the leader in the Senate.

Speaking for the Planalto [the Brazilian White House], the Minister of Justice, Célio Borja, announced that Collor will accept the decision of the House, prepare to defend himself in the Senate, and cooperate in transferring the presidency to the new president.

[Just a word here. According to the Brazilian Constitution, the House of Representatives must approve the impeachment procedure by a two thirds plus one vote. At this point the president is removed from office for a 180 day period, during which he has the opportunity to defend himself against charges in the Senate. If acquitted, he returns to the presidency. If condemned, he loses his political rights for a period of eight years. It is virtually certain that the Senate will vote against Collor.]

On the morning of his trial, Collor refused the advice of Ricardo Fiuza, his political coordinator, who, foreseeing how the vote would turn out, suggested he resign [thus not losing his political rights]. After the vote, Collor told one of his subordinates that he is going to bet on “Itamar Franco’s lack of brains” coming to his rescue....

This impeachment procedure is interrupting the first freely elected government in the last 29 years. During his political campaign, the caçador de marajás [hunter of corrupt government officials] announced that he would “cause indignation among the rightists and perplexity among the leftists.” Taking office as the youngest president in the history of Brazil, he promised to eradicate inflation in a single blow and modernize the economy. He relied heavily on marketing techniques to promote his ideas. He was referred to as an “Indiana Jones”, he flew in a supersonic jet fighter, popularized the jet-ski, and had his ideas printed on t-shirts, which he wore on his Sunday jogging outings. But he also set in order new ideas that today are accepted by the country, which include privatization of state owned industry and opening the economy to foreign investment... ▲

## VITÓRIA DA DEMOCRACIA

This headline expresses the general sentiment of the nation. To ride through a storm of this type without a military coup, strictly within the limits of the Constitution, is a tremendous victory for democracy here in Brazil.

What can we expect from here on out?

So far as our economy, with inflation on the rise – nearing 30% per month – some drastic steps will need to be taken. It is anybody’s guess whether President Franco will be successful.

It appears foreign investors will not be scared off by all this. In fact, in the long run, this vitória da democracia will probably do a lot to strengthen Brazil's image in the global community.

Politically, this is probably one of the best things that has ever happened to Brazil. Until recently, power and immunity were synonyms. The old English adage that "It's better to owe your banker a million pounds than a thousand pounds, because if you owe a thousand, you are at his mercy. But if you owe a million, he is at yours," could be brazilianized by saying, "It's better to steal a million pounds than a thousand, because if you steal a million you go scot-free. If you steal a thousand, you go to jail." This somber fact is very frustrating to Brazilians. They say, Não é bom roubar pouco (It's not a good idea to steal just a little).

A political cartoon shows Collor sitting on the lower bunk in a jail cell. From the top bunk, PC Farias, his corrupt campaign manager, says, "Collor, you took yourself too seriously when you said you would put all the marajás (corrupt officials) in jail."

If I were to summarize Brazil's problems in one word, it would be corruption. Brazil is a tremendous nation with all kinds of potential. It is corruption on high levels that corrupts the rest of the people.

Even many of Collor's political adversaries admit that he has had a positive effect on Brazil. He will go down in history as the president who modernized Brazil. By being removed from office for his corruption, he may also go down in history as the president who moralized Brazil.

Hopefully, this is the beginning of a story and not the end. It is past time that those who steal a lot also have their day in court – and who knows, their years in jail. A half dozen marajás in jail would do wonders for this country.

One very positive sign is a list of possible presidential candidates for the next election, some two years from now. They include some very respectable names.

As the article from the Folha de São Paulo mentioned, Brazil is considering going to a parliamentary government. At this point I would say there is a fairly good chance of it happening. Would it be better than the presidential system? If corruption can be brought to a tolerable level, either system will work. ▲

## Life in Brazil

### **Formiga Correição**

This is a most exciting experience. Unforgettable.

Formiga means ant. Correição means correction. Correction ant, in other words.

Correction ants are tiny little creatures, maybe a sixteenth of an inch long. They must not have existed in Egypt, because if they had, they would have made a mighty fine plague for Pharaoh.

Here's what makes correction ants so exciting. Once in a while during the night, the

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whole bunch – jillions of them – get it in their head to go on a hike. I haven't ever heard some learned scientist give his idea of how they decide which direction to hike. But that doesn't keep me from drawing my own conclusions. It appears – and if you ever happen to go through one of these exciting experiences, you'll maybe agree with me – that they are attracted to bedrooms. Ya.

They hike fairly slowly, since their legs are relatively short in relation to ours. Less than twelve miles an hour. They hike through the dark moonless night, silently advancing. When they get to a log, they go under, or over, if they can't go under. Rocks aren't obstacles to correction ants.

The way they advance, so highly organized, one must conclude they have a mighty good committee standing behind them (or none at all, huh?). Anyway, finally they get to the outside bedroom wall of the house where you are resting from your day's labors.

Correction ants don't have to march around the house seven times to make things exciting. They calmly walk up the wall like it was the most natural thing in the world to do. They don't darken the wall, because if you paid attention, it is already dark outside.

Up they go on the outside of the bedroom wall.

On the inside of the bedroom wall, in bed, you slumber.

Now a word on tropical architecture. It's common in rural Brazilian houses to have a small opening between the top of the wall and the roof. This lets fresh air in. And correction ants.

When the first one gets to the top of the wall, to the space I just got done describing, he doesn't stop to plant a flag like some big shot mountaineer would. No celebrations. No stopping to rest. In the dark of the night, they walk over the top of the wall. And then they begin to descend.

You continue sleeping.

It would be interesting to know if, due to gravity, ants descend bedroom walls faster than they ascend.

You still sleep.

The correction ants descend until they reach the floor. Now they again march forward on level terrain.

Yet you sleep.

They traverse the rug that occupies the space between the wall and your bed.

You sleep.

The one edge of the bedspread to your bed rests on the rug between the bed and the wall. Again the correction ants begin to ascend.

The night is silent. Dark. And you sleep.

Correction ants aren't choosy. They would just as soon climb a bedspread as anything else. Up, up they go.

Still you sleep.

Biologists tell us that animals communicate. I believe it. Some nights my dog communicates with the neighbor's dog. Correction ants must have some other system. At least they never make a noise as they near the summit of their latest quest. Yet it's obvious they have their act together.



Sleep on.

If you can.

It's amazing how invigorating it can be to have correction ants in your beard. And in your hair. And in your nose. And in your ears.

Yes you, who usually punch the slumber button on your alarm clock a half dozen times before reluctantly arising in the morning, have undergone a total transformation. Even though it's 1:57 a.m., it's pitch dark, you had a hard day yesterday, yet you arise with a rapidity that should reserve you a place in the Guinness Book of World Records for the world's fastest riser and shiner.

I should have mentioned, you no longer sleep.

As you stumble toward the light switch, violently swatting at the poor innocent little creatures, you look like a movie being shown in fast forward.

When you finally manage to get the light switched on, there they are. Everywhere. Even where you are standing. The only solution is a rain dance that keeps you in the air 99% of the time (which, if it worked, should result in a 12–14 inch downpour).

There are several solutions to this problem, but the most practical is to evacuate the bedroom for an hour or so. Suddenly they do an about-face and leave the same way they came.

Exciting? Yes, yes. ▲

## Chapter 1 (continuation)

### Two Little Girls

When Tereza, the social worker, said the judge has a way with children, she was absolutely right. Diane went in first to see her. She was in almost an hour.

Then came Danila's turn. If she didn't prove anything else, she proved that the expression "sober as a judge" isn't always the case.

One day our son Otávio got a long bambu splinter in his foot. I removed it, but took him in for a tetanus booster, which the nurse administered in his derrière. Several days later Danila hurt her leg and Otávio put a band-aid on the almost invisible wound.

Absolutely thrilled with the band-aid she had on her leg, she pulled up one end to show me her ouchie. I looked at it and told her that maybe we should take her to town and get her a tetanus shot. Like a flash she answered, "You can't."

I said, "And why can't I?"

Smugly she replied, "Because I have got to keep my dress down."

I told Dr. Tereza the story and she repeated it to the judge.

During the time Danila was with the judge, she managed to come up with some kind of a hypothetical situation that would require her getting a shot. She ended up getting the same smug answer I got. The judge simply roared with laughter. The promotor (county attorney) didn't catch what was going on, so the judge told him what the joke was all about. The whole court roared.

Next the judge called in the mother to the two little girls.

In the different visits this mother made here on the Colony, she told related snatches of her life to different ones. One of them was about a baby she had in Goiânia and for how much she sold it. She even mentioned in which maternity hospital she had had the baby.

As the trial date drew near, it became apparent that the mother would very likely get the two little girls back. Even though the judge knew that things weren't right, the truth – the kind of truth that can be proven on paper or by witnesses – simply wasn't showing up.

Dr. Tereza happened to be spending a few days in Goiânia. I got in contact with her by phone and gave her the name of the maternity hospital where the mother was to have had the other baby.

In her questioning, the judge asked the mother how many children she had.

“Three.”

“Only three?”

“Yes.”

[The two little girls, plus the little girl Tim & Deanna Burns are adopting.]

The judge now looked at a photocopy of a document she had on her desk and said, “I have here a medical record from Maternidade Dona Iris proving that on such and such a day you had a baby. How do you explain this?”

Dr. Tereza's sleuthing paid off.

Later I asked our lawyer, who sat in on all this, what the mother's reaction was when confronted by the judge with proof that she was lying. He answered, “She showed no reaction. She is cold and calculating.”

When the trial was over, the judge didn't hand down a sentence. The explanation several people gave was, “She still is in doubt about something.”

One day I stopped to see the lawyer. He said the man the mother is living with was in to see him. He told them that it was simple to get the two little girls back. In the first place, he said, we didn't even want them, that they were a nuisance (lawyers don't always tell the truth) and that the only reason we had them yet was because the judge refused to take them back. Real confidentially he told the man, “The problem is that the judge is in doubt about the baby that is supposed to have been sold in Goiânia. Go to Goiânia, get a statement from the lady who has the child, saying she didn't buy it, and everything will be OK.”

All encouraged, the couple beat it to Goiânia. I don't know what happened there. But people who know them say they came back all down in the dumps. Their story was they couldn't find the lady who supposedly has her baby.

The trial was several months ago and still no sentence. The new developments in the case show that it most certainly was divine providence that the judge didn't hand down a sentence yet. Without our having to do anything, the stone wall is beginning to crack. That is material for chapter 2, which unfortunately can't be published yet.

I would like to say this. I believe a lot of people have been praying. The happenings

of the last week have come about in such a totally unexpected way and are of such importance, that at this point there is hope. The battle isn't won, but God's hand can be seen.

Keep on praying. Much is at stake. Surely it is God's will that these two little girls be taken out of an unspeakably vile environment and placed in a Christian home. ▲

## Water

### **Water Towers & Wells**

I just took them for granted until recently, when a N American visitor asked me why everyone has a pole or a tower in the yard with a tank on top.

In a tropical country water towers are the perfect solution to create water pressure.

What are these caixas d'água like, as they are called here?

When we first came, they were all made of timbers cut down in the woods, 25 to 30 feet long. Before placing them in the ground, some two-by-sixes would be fastened to the top so as to make a platform for the water tank to sit on.

Back in those days we didn't have any front end loaders with extended booms to place the poles in the ground. After blocking the top end up as high as possible with the aid of bars, a tractor or two would be used to pull it up the rest of the way. To say the least, this was a difficult and dangerous operation.

Next the tank had to be placed on top. But just a word first on what kind of tanks we're talking about. To this day, possibly 95% of the water tanks used in this country are rectangular asbestos affairs that hold between 250 – 1000 liters of water. Since a thousand liters exactly fit in a cubic meter, a rectangular tank will end up being approximately 4" long, 3" wide, and 2.5" high.

To get this tank up, some kind of a scaffold had to be rigged up, sometimes a precarious affair made out of long slender poles cut in the woods. An occasional tank would come crashing down. Once in place, the pipes would be attached, and frequently, an automatic switch on the lid of the tank. That setup was usually good until the pole began rotting off, which could easily happen in four or five years.

In the last five years or so, metal tanks that hold between three to thirty thousand liters have come into style. The base is concrete and the tower a metal cylinder a couple of feet in diameter, which also hold water. The manufacturer sets them up.

Do they work? Just as well as your city water supplies, which work on the same principle.

Where does the water come from?

When we first came here, different ones installed a hydraulic ram or water wheel in a stream or spring. Everyone knows what a water wheel is, but what is a hydraulic ram?

Unfortunately I can't give you a scientific explanation on what makes them work. But I can tell you what they look like and what they do. Made of cast metal, they look

sort of like a light bulb about a foot and a half tall with the slender end facing down. Underneath is a small valve that slowly opens and closes when under pressure.

A two or three inch pipe comes from the stream to the base of the metal bulb. If I'm not mistaken, for every meter of drop, this hydraulic ram would produce seven of rise. In other words, if it was 20 meters down to the stream, plus another eight meters for a water tower, a total of 28 meters, it would take four meters of drop at the ram to be able to fill the tank.

When well installed so that no sand, leaves, etc. could get in, they would run for days and weeks without ever stopping. Under these conditions, maintenance was almost zero. They sure could be a pill though, if impurities would get into the water. About the time you wanted to take a bath, there would be no water because the ram had stopped.

Harold Dirks, who now lives in Idaho had one for years. If I thought it would do any good, I would ask him to write up a little article to be published on his ram memory (computer operators, that was a neat little pun, wasn't it?). Come on, Harold.

The other solution was a hand dug well. We still have some of the original ones around.

Generally speaking, hand dug wells weren't very successful. To begin with, our soil is very sandy. That means that caving in is always a possibility. Furthermore, once the well digger hits water, he soon has to quit digging, at around 30 feet. That means there usually isn't very much water in the well. Furthermore, since these wells are shallow, the supply is replenished slowly.

Jake G. Loewen (Jake and Ike's dad) loved well drilling. So did his son Pete. Grandson Carman also enjoys the profession and as a result has built an efficient little drilling rig. Many of the Americans, as well as some of the Brazilian neighbors, have wells dug by Carman. Since he is able to go down to rock, there is a never ending supply of the most delicious water in the world.

Our first hand dug well was 45 feet deep. During about six months out of the year, we had almost no water. The well Carman dug is 160 feet deep. There is no such a thing as running it dry, even though we irrigate our lawn all during the dry season. Johanna Schmidt says people should have a good enough well to be able to waste water. Amen. ▲

## Emma Burns' Diary

### **Clearing Land**

**Sat – Sept 27, 69**

The chickens want to scratch in the garden, so I moved the pen closer to the woods and tied one end of a long string around the rooster's leg and the other end to a tree. I got the idea from our Brazilian neighbors. They tie their chickens to chairs or whatever is handy. Denton and Charlie are grubbing out trees. Dick pulls them with his truck. John Penner has been clearing land for a while already – by hand. Manoel said he would

come Tuesday and disk for us where we cleared land. The stove bricks fell out on one side this morning. I hope it holds together until they find time to build a good stove. We are still cooking out in the open.

### **Sun – Sept 28**

We were about ready for church this morning when a Brazilian couple with their little child stopped by. We invited them to church, which we are having in Jona's house. John Penner preached. Denton interpreted.

### **Mon – Sept 29**

Elizabeth and Mary started washing clothes. It got so windy and dusty that they had to quit. Denton, Charlie, Faith, and Timothy were clearing land. In the afternoon Faith and the girls made piles of the small trees that the men grubbed out. Charlie and the girls went hunting. Timothy and I watered the garden. The men had a meeting here this evening. Alma Penner brought some Messengers, so we women spent the evening reading.

### **Tue – Sept 30**

We were out of flour, so didn't have pancakes for breakfast. We warmed up rice and beans, fried a duck egg for each of us, plus sliced raw onion. Manoel's tractor driver, João Souto [who later got converted and married Edna Loewen's daughter, Charlene] came today to disk for us. In the evening it lightened, thundered and rained. We had to put things in the tent and cover them with plastic. We built a fire in the barrel stove in the cracker box. I cooked rice and parched corn for supper. Charlies had to sleep in our house on the dirt floor.

### **Wed – Oct 1**

It rained in the night. Jona, Denton and João Souto went to Manoels to get tractor fuel. Denton shot a small ostrich. Miriam cleaned it. Denton got his fish trap done and put in the river. We are practically living outside. Tonight the flying termites were attracted to the lantern light. They were thick. We made a bonfire and got rid of some of them that way.

[These flying termites come out at the beginning of each rainy season. They really come out in swarms. Now with so much ground broken up, there are less than there used to be. Right now is the time of the year they show up.]

### **Thu – Oct 2**

Denton worked some in the garden. They got a 5 foot snake and dressed it, also a small duck. João disked over seven acres of land. The flies were sure bad today. The bees are so bad in the toilet. Someone occasionally gets stung. We caught one small fish in the fish trap.

## Remembering Out Loud

### **No Brakes**

If Brazil ever impeaches all of its wild drivers, the car industry will go broke.

Back in the days when I had my store, feed was trucked in from São Paulo. I remember the time the fellow who hauled my feed told me, with satisfaction, that he lost his brakes back in Uberlândia and came on home that way.

Uberlândia is a town in the state of Minas Gerais, some 400 km. from Rio Verde. Anyone who is acquainted with that road will recognize that Pedro had every right to feel he was a real hero. That road has some pretty good grades at least several kilometers long.

There is a certain amount of religious fervor involved in this kind of driving. The idea is that God takes care of His children and that He won't call them home before it is time.

It wasn't Pedro's day. So let'er roll, brakes or no brakes! ▲

### **Telephones**

One hears a lot of complaining about the rural phone system that a number of us have here. Really they do have their defects.

But I remember how it was in Rio Verde back when we first moved to Brazil. For all practical purposes our phone service was strictly local. Occasional calls could be made to neighboring towns. Goiânia was out. Our telegraph service was still the old Morse Code system. Other than for letters, this was our only communication between South and North America.

Finally things began to improve. We could call to Goiânia and to the rest of Brazil. Then we were told it was possible to make international calls. A two, three, or even four hour wait was nothing unusual. I kind of think I am the record holder on that one. I spent eight hours one time waiting for a call to go through.

I guess maybe that's why I kind of like these phones we have now, in spite of their obvious defects.

Just a word to you folks who call to Brazil, after dialing our number, a Portuguese speaking operator will come on the line. Slowly and distinctly repeat only the extension of the party you want to call and his name. For zero don't say "oh". To call me, for example, you would say, "one zero four zero – Charles Becker." Repeat several times if necessary. It can take a minute or two for operator to get us on the line. ▲

## Passeata

A passeata is a concentration of people who support a certain candidate, or party, who slowly walk or drive up and down the streets. The more people or cars involved, the better the chances the candidate supposedly has to win. This show of strength doubtlessly has a strong influence on undecided voters.

Several days ago Faith and I were in Rio Verde. Nelci's party was having a passeata. It was enormous. In fact, we had to go home without getting to the shopping center at the other end of town. No matter how we tried to get there, the streets were jammed.

These passeatas are noisy affairs. They have a lot of the firecrackers that send up three balls of fire that explode way up in the air. I remember one passeata a number of years ago when I still had the store. A pickup was slowly driving along. A young fellow in the back was lighting these bombas and making the most unearthly racket. Likely through carelessness, a spark must have dropped into his box of bombas and they began to explode right around his feet. In one great leap he was on top of the pickup cab and sliding down the windshield. If the candidate was as on the ball as his supporter, surely he won the election. ▲

## Equine Transportation

There were a number of horses and carts in the passeata. That brought back more memories of how things were when we moved to Rio Verde. Back those days horses played a very important role in the transportation system. Most of the taxis were little one-seater buggies. There might be 15 or 20 lined up in the back of the old bus station. Being a cheap mode of transportation, even the poorer folks could use it. Little carts, maybe four feet by six feet, transported everything from firewood to new furniture. Building projects got their supplies hauled in by this little fleet of carts. Today there are still a few. But no longer are they lined up in front of building supply stores waiting for business. Even on the Colony there were horses and carts for a number of years. Some children would come to school in them. Dan Coblentz and his family would come to church acting like they were in a Rolls Royce. s

## This & That

The road that crosses the dam at Schmidts and Loewens has been reopened to traffic.

A spillway with flood gates has been installed that should handle even the worst gully washers. When we learned to know that place, it was a swamp that only horses, cattle and Aristote's ox cart could get across. Now large trucks with 30 or 40 ton loads cross at the same spot, serving not only the American Colony, but many Brazilian neighbors who live beyond. This project was funded by the Colony. All

## Brazil <sup>16</sup> News

farmers paid in according to their production. Besides help hired for this project, a number of work days were necessary.

Wayland & Rita Loewen moved to the former Stuart Mininger place.

In a recent meeting, Mark Loewens, Harold Holdemans, and Errol Redgers were made responsible for the Wednesday evening Sunday School and services at Doug Ferrell's fazenda.

Dean & Esther Mininger and son returned from the mission in Fortaleza, where they filled in for several months.

Elias and Colleen Stoltzfus and children returned from the Mirassol – São Paulo mission, after filling in several months for the Dean & DeeDee Penner family, who were on furlough for several months.

Daniel & Linda Holdeman and family returned from the US, after spending over a year there. At present they are in cultural shock.

The Junior Sewing girls spiffed up Elias Stoltzfus' and Daniel Holdeman's houses for their return. Another group did the same at Dean Miningers.

On September 6 we had a carry-in dinner at the Monte Alegre social hall to welcome Daniel Holdemans and Elias Stoltzfus' back.

Jair & Connie and children returned from the Goiânia mission where they helped the new missionaries get established and learn the Portuguese language.

Ruth Kramer went to Goiânia to take over the language instruction for the missionaries.

September 13 was an important day for the little church here in Rio Verde. There were four baptisms in this little church: Meuzilma, Paulo David's wife; Zelinda Sperb, Dete Kramer's sister; Lucélia, Luis & Maria Duarte's (who worked for Walt Redger for years) daughter; Marlene, a 15 year old girl from town.

September 13 was also an important day in the mission in Goiânia. There were three baptisms, bringing total membership to 7. Luís Fernandes, a dentista who became interested in the church at the same time Paulo David did; Divino Cândido, an accountant; and Isabel Barbosa, a young married woman.

The Rio Verdinho and Monte Alegre Schools began on September 8.

The teachers in the Rio Verdinho school are: Valéria Gold, Maxine Loewen, with Doreen Koehn as aide.

The teachers at the Monte Alegre School are: Velda Loewen, Lynnette Penner, Corinne Isaac, Cláudia Neves, with Cristiane Garcia and Aletha Mininger as aides.

September 7 was a national holiday – Independence Day.

An 8 year old foster girl, Sueyllen, is staying with Leo and Mim Dirks until a home can be found for her.

Jesse & Delores Loewen had a little girl, Lisa Joy, after a string of boys, on September 10. Cute – the baby.

Dennis & Vera Loewen moved into their new house on September 11.

Ken Wesenberg returned to the States. Dindy is remaining until the adoption is completed, which should be right shortly.



## Brazil 17 News

Ike & Rosalie returned to Brazil for their daughter's wedding. Do Ikes plan on staying in Brazil now? I don't believe even Ike knows.

Alfred & Rosa Koehn from Wisconsin were here for their grandson's wedding.

Tony, Veril & Ileen's son, and Wynelle, Ike & Rosalie's daughter were married on September 20. This was the first reception in the new Rio Verdinho social hall. They served pie. A nice wedding.

Milton, Edna Loewen's son, and Cindy, Daniel Martin Jr's daughter were married in the Rio Verdinho church on September 27. They didn't serve pie. A nice couple.

Weddings, weddings, weddings. Since it's highly uncommendable to marry during planting season, maybe we'll have a bit of rest.

Some children are coming down with chicken pox.

A new spiraling machine was purchased by the Brazilian Publication Board for the literature work here. The first book to be spiraled was Hear Their Cry, by Marjorie Unruh. We have literally piles of books stacked up waiting to be spiraled.

We had a joint meeting concerning the new Literature Center to be built here, where the publishing and tract work will be housed. A really beautiful plan was decided on. The location will be near the pine trees by the Monte Alegre church grounds. A building committee should be elected soon so that construction can begin after harvest.

Harold & Irene Holdeman had a boy, Clark Anthony, on September 17. Resembles other babies.

Craig & Monica Redger are back in Brazil after spending some time in the US.

Walt & Alberta Redger have returned to the US.

Luis & Maria Duarte have left Walt's fazenda and are living in Rio Verde. Luis is opening a small general store in one of the bairros on the outskirts of town.

Doug Ferrell is spending several weeks in the US with a Brazilian farm equipment manufacturer.

The rainy season is easing in on us. Normally the first few rains come with a lot of wind and lightening. This year we're getting gentle showers, usually a half an inch or so.

On October 3, mayors and city councilmen will be elected over all of Brazil. This race for mayor between Nelci, Dr. Benjamin's wife, and Osório Santa Cruz, is considered to be the closest in the history of Rio Verde. Osório is from a traditional family of politicians, and conducts himself as politicians traditionally do. Nelci, a newcomer in politics, has the advantage of not being traditional.