

Brazil News



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Editorial

When Life Is No Longer a Challenge

A challenge is a task bigger than we are. To meet it we must increase our strength or our knowledge. Sometimes both.

Both spiritually and naturally, life is made up of challenges. Normal men and women enjoy challenges.

In the professional world, it isn't uncommon for someone to look for a new job, "because where I am now, I'm as high as I can go." There is no longer a challenge.

Men and women born back in the Dirty Thirties, or before, didn't have to go around looking for challenges. Basic survival was a challenge. The weather was a challenge. The economy was a challenge. Raising a large family was a challenge.

The old wooden houses these sturdy folks lived in got mighty cold in winter and unbearably hot in summer. Their machinery was stone age compared with what we have today. They knew what it was to start a D John Deere by spinning the flywheel by hand.

They dreamed. They hoped to slowly come up with some better machinery. They looked forward to the day they would be able to add an indoor bathroom to the house. And looking even farther ahead, they hoped to accumulate enough to build a retirement house and have a little saved up for old age.

Many of these folks didn't really get on "easy street," if we even dare use that term, until they hit their early sixties. During this time they didn't accumulate any degrees, but they certainly did come up with some valuable down-to-earth experience. Experience that, unfortunately, they couldn't sell to the next generation.

We have been talking about people who were born 60, 70, and 80 years ago. Now let's talk about "youngsters" who were born 25, 30, or 35 years ago.

These young folks didn't go through any Dirty Thirties. In fact, some of them don't even know for sure what we're talking about. They grew up with better machinery, with

a better house, and possibly without ever seeing dad sit staring into space, wondering if he would manage to hold on to the farm – not because of mismanagement, but because times were rough.

By the time these young men hit 30 they are probably set up better than granddad ever was, and possibly better than dad was at 60.

That's a problem. Especially for young men who are good financiers. By now they possibly have no more debts, have a new house, good machinery and a little put aside for an emergency. Nothing wrong with that. They are conscientious and down deep they feel that to try and expand more would not really be the right thing to do. No problem, except for one little item. Is there still a challenge?

By no means is this problem confined to young farmers. In fact, I hasten to add here that I don't know if your young men in N America are faced with this problem. But I believe that a young man or woman with a good job can have a similar problem.

What happens when the challenge is gone?

Unless something is done to correct the situation, discontentment sets in. That isn't good, because the ones who will really be hard hit are the children growing up with "everything." It's going to be mighty hard to teach them the true value of things when everything is easy.

Surely there must be a solution for this problem. There is.

Obviously the solution will vary from place to place. And by no means do I assume to have all the answers. But several simple suggestions can be made.

The benefits of mission work through colonization are becoming more and more evident. Not only here in Brazil, but from what I have gathered in N America, it is a positive thing there too. Someone who "has it made" by 30 should contemplate the possibility of a move.

A second alternative, also very worthwhile, is to take on a second activity. I'm not talking about a hobby, but rather something useful, of benefit to the Kingdom. A tract route, occasionally, filling in on a mission post, helping out overburdened staff members with their farming. This list can be as long as your imagination.

We must not lose the challenge in life. Especially with so much to do. If God has blessed you with abundance, it probably isn't because he sees you as a special character. It's probably because he has something for you to do.

Will you do it? ▲

Politics

President Collor Resigns

The Collor episode has obviously been painful to the Brazilians. And at the same time it has sparked a new confidence in the government. After a long history of instability, dictatorships, military interventions, which includes the revolution of 69 that

resulted in 20 years of military dictatorship, a major crisis was resolved by strictly legal channels. People refer to what happened as a vitória da democracia.

In a rare display of unity, partisanship was laid aside and the two houses of congress, together with the Supreme Court, made every effort to assure the legality of the entire procedure.

Collor's entire defense consisted of declaring his innocency without providing any proof or showing up for hearings. His lawyers, knowing that the Brazilians are a very forgiving people (once the initial hot anger has abated), stalled for time. When none of this worked, in a last desperate attempt to gain time, Collor fired his lawyers. The court immediately appointed another lawyer to take his case, which he didn't accept. Even that didn't work. The wheels of justice slowly ground forward and his case came up in the Senate for the final hearing.

The trial was actually in progress when Collor suddenly resigned. The reason was simple. If declared guilty by the Senate, he would lose his political rights for eight years. This means that during this period he would be ineligible for any public office.

Even though he resigned, the trial continued and in an almost unanimous vote he was formally impeached. Collor has appealed to the Supreme Court, saying that once he resigned he could no longer be impeached. It is felt that the Court will agree with him on at least this one count. It really won't matter much if it does or doesn't. Except for in his own dinky little state, I doubt if even forgiving Brazilians would vote for him in the next eight years.

President Itamar

Until this point, Itamar has kept a low profile. For all practical purposes, he dropped anchor on the ship during the period the Collor trial was under way. Now he will have to lift anchor and show the nation what direction he plans on moving.

The Brazilians are giving him a vote of confidence, even though many have serious doubts about his ability to lead the nation. But just as a man who seems to have everything going for him – Collor, for example – can turn out to be a failure, there certainly is the possibility that the opposite also happen. The next few months will tell us a lot.

Too Many Parties

It is generally felt that the Collor episode has brought about a certain political awakening in Brazil. However, it by no means has settled some of the basic problems. One of them is an excess of political parties. Right now we must have between 20 and 30. The greater part of power is concentrated in only four or five of them.

On April 21 there will be a national referendum to decide if Brazil goes to a parliamentary form of government. Personally I doubt that this type of government can possibly work with so many weak political parties.

One very positive sign that can be seen is a loosening up on import restrictions. In a typically latin solution, it isn't necessarily a change in laws as much as a new

interpretation, or even a looking aside. This obviously will make our own industry and commerce more competitive to have cheaper and better commodities coming in.

One thing must be said for Itamar. He seems to have a sincere concern for the poor. If he can help them, he will be famous in my books. ▲

Colonization

Who Will Move?

Since returning from the US, I have been trying to come up with some new information on the area being investigated in the state of Mato Grosso. So far as something concrete, I have nothing to report on. So far as continued interest, yes, there seems to be a lot. Trips have and are being made by individuals. Also, I understand a trip is to be made to the state of Tocantins (which until recently was the northern part of the state of Goiás).

A questionnaire was sent out to the congregations here. I understand 12 families showed definite interest in moving and a number of others are interested in investing.

People keep asking me, "Would anyone in the States be interested in moving?"

Obviously I don't have the answer to this question. Just in case anyone might be interested, here are a few questions and answers:

Q. What would it take to move to Brazil as a farmer?

A. Very frankly, I don't know. I suspect that to come in as a farmer is difficult. That isn't necessarily a closed door. I really believe that if someone, or especially a group, would want to migrate, a concession could be worked out with the government.

Q. What kind of people in N America should think about moving to Brazil?

B. People who have a pioneering spirit. To move to an area like Mato Grosso would definitely involve some primitive circumstances. Even so, progress would come quickly. If this move works out, it will be a real opportunity for anyone who would like to do some pioneering.

Q. What would the possibilities be in Mato Grosso?

A. Farming and ranching would be the two outstanding ones. If enough families move, there would be the possibility of setting up a mechanic shop, maybe even a small general store. This, of course, would depend on the distance of the settlement from town.

Q. Would this be a dangerous venture?

A. Any move away from mainstream civilization involves certain dangers. No one will be dialing 911 when an emergency arises. Before considering this a closed door, remember there would be no Mennonites in America if danger would have been the deciding point. Nor would there be a Mennonite settlement in Brazil.

Q. How would this move compare to the first move to Brazil, to the Rio Verde area?

A. While there would certainly be some real pioneering yet, we can mention some basic differences:

1. In the first move no one spoke Portuguese (Spanish yes, which did serve as a crutch). This created a lot of problems and misunderstandings. Obviously, this problem won't exist in this movement.

2. In the first move in 68, everyone hit Brazil as raw foreigners. Those moving to Mato Grosso from Rio Verde will be doing so with a good knowledge of Brazilian culture and customs. They understand the financial system. This will be a tremendous help. This, more than anything else, will remove a lot of stones out of the path that the first group stumbled over.

3. Brazil has developed a lot in the last 25 years. This includes roads, vehicles, farming equipment, availability of seeds, fertilizers, lime. We now have a reliable grain market. The first soybeans produced on the Colony had to be fed to livestock since the freight to Goiânia was more than the soybeans were worth.

4. The first American Colony was very much isolated from the Church in N America. This was bad and created a lot of problems. Now, with a good solid base here, from which very close relations are maintained with the N American Church, this problem shouldn't exist. Fortunately.

Q. What is the feeling of the folks on the Colony concerning this move?

A. Obviously there are differences of opinion so far as details are concerned. So far as a move, there is a very positive attitude. There is good support. Of extreme importance, I have felt absolutely no sentiment that anyone is wanting to move to Mato Grosso "to get out" because of not appreciating the present Colony or church. If this element existed, I would be one hundred percent against the move.

Q. What would be an open door for someone in N America to make a move like this?

A. The first step, naturally, would be to discern if this is the Lord's will. Actually, it is sort of like getting married. When a spiritual young man feels a special love for a young lady, it probably is the Lord's will. If you are spiritual and feel a strong desire to be in on a move of this kind, if you have the necessary means to make things work, there's a good chance the Lord is in it.

Q. Do we here in Brazil welcome N American immigrants?

A. Absolutely.

Q. What are the chances of this move materializing?

A I would say they are better than any previous attempt at resettlement. Another group is heading out again this week to do some more investigating.

Q. What is the biggest problem?

A. At this point it appears to be the size of the tracts that are up for sale. They are too large for the finances that are available. Some more investigation may come up with something within our limitations. ▲

More on this next month.

Traveling

Our Trip to the US

Traveling is usually interesting. Sometimes too interesting.

To understand what got our trip off on such an interesting start, I have to go back to six years ago, when we spent Christmas in the US.

At that time we went to the American consulate in Brasília to get visas for our children, all of whom had Brazilian passports. We requested that Sylvia be granted a US passport. The other two being adopted, this wasn't possible.

For some reason the vice-consul at that time felt it would be better to grant Sylvia a visa on her Brazilian passport instead of an American passport, which would give her dual citizenship. It was a hassle, but in the end it all worked out.

Now this time, we sent in our papers to the consulate approximately three weeks before our departure date requesting visas for Sylvia and Otávio. We finally got a letter back saying they couldn't send the visas by mail, but they could send them out with someone who would come in to pick them up. Our travel agent had a friend in Brasília who worked with this kind of thing, so she asked him to pick up the visas. He spent a whole day in the consulate, but nothing happened.

I called the consulate and talked to the Consul General. It was here I first got an inkling that something was amiss. She made it plain we would have to go in personally. Also, we would have to bring documents proving Sylvia wasn't adopted and that Otávio was. This all sounded strange.

This was on a Thursday and we were to fly on Saturday. I beat it to town and got all the documents needed. Faith's family came and helped us pack. A little after midnight we set out for Brasília, which is approximately 250 miles from Rio Verde.

Since we were very heavily loaded and the road at places resembled the cratered lunar surface, the trip to Goiânia was a nightmare. When we did finally make it and were almost all the way through town, the transmission to my little Fiat began growling. This was around 5:30 in the morning.

To make matters worse, different ones were sending cash back to the US. There we sat on a deserted street with all that cash. Needless to say, everyone prayed.

We managed to get the car turned around and coast downhill for several kilometers. Suddenly we saw a Fiat agency. It was a well lit area and we felt quite safe in spending the rest of the night there.

At 7:30 when the agency opened, they immediately began working on the car. They pulled the transmission. Fortunately it wasn't anything serious and by noon we were on our way to Brasília.

The bad thing was that we got to the consulate at 3:00 in the afternoon instead of 7:00 in the morning as we had planned.

Things didn't go well with the Consul General. She flat refused to do anything Friday, which meant we would lose our flight the next day.

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Some months before this, the vice-consul from the American consulate in Brasília, Mr. Bill Wilkin from Augusta, Georgia, paid the American Colony a visit. To say the least, it was a very beneficial visit. At that time I discussed our trip to the US with him. He sent us the necessary forms for our children's visas. We had hoped he was still in the consular section, but he had been transferred. If he would have still been the vice-consul, I am sure there would have been no problem.

We left the consular section. I asked one of the guards if Bill Wilkin worked someplace in the Embassy. He said yes and told us where to go. When we got to talk to Mr. Wilkin, he just shook his head. He was totally baffled by what was going on. He consulted the Deputy Ambassador. He explained that because of a law made quite a few years back, the Embassy and the Consulate are separate entities. The maximum the Embassy could do was ask a favor of the consular section. He felt the best we could do was wait until Monday and try again. We called our travel agent and asked her to book us for a Tuesday flight.

We got a hotel in the satellite city of Taguatinga where we spent the weekend.

Satellite cities were included in the original plan of Brasília. Rather than concentrate everyone in the capitol, it was decided to construct a number of cities 10 or 15 miles out where many of the workers could live. They would commute to work each day.

We got rooms in the hotel we have known for around 20 years. There were several highlights to our stay. We spent some time at the zoo in Brasília. It happened they were having the 50th birthday celebration for an elephant. They made a real big affair out of it. The Marine Band furnished the music.

The second highlight was a little restaurant on the street behind the hotel. I asked in the hotel if there was an inexpensive restaurant nearby. One of the guests overheard me and began explaining where the restaurant was. He said the food was home cooked, inexpensive, but there was one catch, we would probably have to stand in line.

It was certainly no place for looks. Eleven flimsy tables were crammed into the small room. True to what we had been told, every table was full and we had to wait our turn.

The tables were waited on by the owner and his daughter. This in itself was an art. With the tables so close together, much of the time they had to scoot sideways. The only time they stopped for even a moment, was to take an order or after the last plate of food was placed on the table. At this time, they would pause for just a second, smile, bow slightly, and say, "Bom apetite," which literally means "Good apetite." In other words, "Enjoy your meal." It was done in such a graceful, natural way, that it was impossible to not enjoy the meal.

I was so impressed by the setup that the next time we went early before the place got crowded. I was able to spend some time conversing with the owner. He was Portuguese, born in the Madeira Islands, an archipelago lying 340 miles off the northwest coast of Africa, which is a Portuguese territory. He came to Brazil 30 years ago, when he was 17.

They open at 7:30 in the morning and close at 10:30 in the evening, with only Sunday off. The only help they had was several ladies to help his wife in the kitchen. His philosophy was to produce quality food at a price that would keep the house

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packed. This he did. A delicious meal, with drinks runs around a dollar forty. To eat half that much at McDonalds, that doesn't even come close to comparing in taste, costs over twice as much. Long live the Sassaricana restaurant in Taguatinga!

Bright and early Monday morning we were waiting at the front gate of the American Embassy. The lady was peeved that we had talked to Bill Wilkin. Things went so badly that I began preparing myself to give up the trip and losing our tickets. Finally we were told we should go have lunch and get Sylvia's photos – just in case things might work out.

In the afternoon things went a little better. But then we hit two more snags. One was our marriage certificate. The copy we had was issued over twenty years ago and she couldn't read the signatures at the bottom. So she didn't know if Faith and I were married, even though our names and the dates at the top were perfectly legible. She called to Washington about this one.

The next item she herself admitted seemed trivial, “but with so many suspicions that I have about you,” she said, this was another strike against us. When I filled out Sylvia's papers for her American passport, on the blank that asked for her profession, I asked the girl what to put in. Sylvia was no longer studying so she couldn't be a student. She does our housework so that Faith doesn't have to take time off from the publication work. Also, she has several house jobs. The girl said she would ask the lady what we should put in.

Anyway, that set everything off again. Why, she wanted to know, wasn't Sylvia studying? I explained that on the Colony we studied only until the eighth grade, as Bill Wilkin himself had verified when he visited our school. And besides, I told her, in our religion we considered eighth grade to be sufficient in most situations. What was our religion, she demanded. Mennonite. There she had me. “I know the Mennonites and I know they have colleges.” Yep, that was true, but we were a different branch of Mennonites....

Finally she came up with a solution. I had to write up a statement explaining why we hadn't registered Sylvia as a child in the American Consulate (which according to Bill Wilkin is totally optional), declaring that Faith and I were married on May 3, 1964, and that Sylvia was our natural child. We had to raise our right hand and declare that all that was true.

Then came the truly Brazilian part of this whole drama. The consular waiting room was packed with Brazilians trying to get visas to the US. While all this was going on, Faith was chatting with different ones and soon people knew all about our predicament. When things were finally settled and we gave the people a thumbs up, pandemonium broke loose. They cheered, laughed, congratulated and made our happiness their happiness. I don't know what the folks on the other side of the glass window thought about all this.

In all fairness to the Consul General, she ended up being extremely nice to us. She gave Sylvia her American citizenship, which we hadn't even asked for, and offered to give Otávio a green card (the official immigration document to the US), if we get the

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proper documents around. This would eliminate the visa problem on future trips. So, after everything is said and done, I have no hard feelings toward her. In fact, we sent her a Christmas card with heartfelt greetings. At a future opportunity I want to write an article on something I learned through all this.

We spent that night in Taguatinga and early the next day left for Goiânia to catch our plane. We traveled Varig. Just a word on Varig Airlines. If you want a really good trip, that is the way to go. All the way around, their service is superior.

Now, just a few impressions from the time spent in the States.

I had a hard time getting over feeling uneasy in church. Every time someone got up to speak I looked to see where the interpreter was. Then I would realize that there was none. Now that I'm back in Brazil, I find it especially lamentable that we still need interpreters. It certainly does detract from our services.

Once again your traffic impressed me. One day I was in front of the People's State Bank in McPherson. The car was on the other side of the street, so I did like we do here in Brazil. I looked to the left and saw a car coming a little ways down the street. But I knew if I poured on the coal I would be able to make it to the middle of the street. There I could skid to a stop, look to the right, and if everything was clear, finish crossing. The driver of the approaching car must have seen I wasn't one hundred percent by States standards. With all the grace of a diplomat, he came to a stop and motioned for me to cross. In my experience of dodging oncoming vehicles, this was a new twist. I motioned for the driver to proceed, that I would wait. He wouldn't have any of it, so I picked up what I could of my lost dignity and crossed over. That was unnerving. There's no challenge to crossing that kind of a street.

This one is even worse. Archie Glenn Holdeman invited us over for supper. We were to be there 6:30 sharp so that his children and Sylvia could go out Christmas caroling with the Hesston youth.

Faith wasn't sure how to get there, so I asked my dad. He looked in the telephone directory and gave us exact directions. We were to go to the "jog" on the Moundridge road, turn right, etc. etc.

That was fine, except that the telephone directory didn't say anything about the interstate that ran between the jog and Archie's place.

We drove a mile. When we hit the second mile, we saw a little sign that said, Closed When Wet. Really, it seemed like sort of a dumb sign. In the first place, by Brazilian standards it wasn't wet. Secondly, it was obvious that the road wasn't closed. When a road is closed in Brazil it's because a bridge is out, or something similar. A bunch of big rocks are placed all across the road, or maybe a log. Then you believe it when it says road closed. None of this "when" stuff.

We had driven less than a hundred meters when we saw tracks of a less valiant driver than I who had turned around and retreated. After traveling another several hundred meters I suddenly wished I had been less valiant. The car began to fishtail and I realized that there was only one way to go and that was ahead.

Ahead I went. As we got nearer the interstate, the road began to curve to the right. The phone directory hadn't said anything about this curve.

Bravely I battled forward. Actually, not even so bravely. I had no option but to go forward. We ran parallel to the interstate for a little while, then the road began to curve to the right again. Now I saw we were in deep trouble. Where would this spiral road ever end. And worse, slowly I was losing cruising speed.

Finally the moment came when the car shuttered to a stop. There we sat on Spiral Avenue, who knows how far from civilization, in the dark of the night, right when we should be sitting down to Archie's well spread table.

I got out to evaluate the situation. And what wouldn't I have given to be back in Brazil where phone directories don't tell you how not to get places. Anyway, I got out of the car and everything became clear as mud – literally. Very literally. As I stepped onto the road, my shoes immediately changed appearance. They became heavy.

The car wasn't stuck. It was balled up. The tires looked like my shoes. Or my shoes like the tires, if you wish. Mud was squashing out beyond the fenders.

We held a quick war counsel. It was decided that I would set out on foot for help. We didn't know how long Spiral Avenue was, but just in case some car should approach within a reasonable distance, she would blink the lights to try and get their attention.

There I went. I didn't have a flashlight. The night was dark. The headlights helped for a little ways. It's amazing what a fellow can think about when trudging along a dark country road all alone at night.

Then was when it happened. I noticed someone was following me. I could hear him plain as day. Clump, clump, clump. This really wasn't in my plans to be followed. Bravely I refused to look back. I noticed that when I walked faster, so did my visitor. When I slowed up so did he.

I was not intimidated (at least not to the point of fainting). But by putting two and two (clump, clump plus clump, clump) together, I was able to identify my follower. Gravity permits only so much mud to stick to a human being's shoes on a muddy road. As one picks up his feet, the excess must go somewhere. So as a shoe is lifted out of the mud, a certain amount detaches itself, becomes airborne for a short distance, and lands with a clump sound.

I don't know how far I walked. I do know that in the distance some car lights showed up. Faith began blinking the car lights like mad. At this point I was approximately two hundred yards from an intersection. The car stopped. The occupant yelled something to me that I couldn't understand. I waved. And the car took off.

So much for that one. So I walked on to the next farm house. A dog began barking, but by advancing cautiously, I discovered he was more scared of me than I was of him. No one at home.

So I returned to the corner and began walking another direction. Way out in the distance I could see the lights of a farm site. I hadn't walked very far when I noticed lights slowly approaching down the road I had just left. So I went back to the corner and waited.

Now this is the best part of the story. The fellow that yelled at me hadn't abandoned me the way I figured. Actually he was on the way to a school Christmas program and saw my predicament. Not having a tractor, he went and found another neighbor who owned one and the two of them came to rescue us.

In case the two brothers who missed at least part of the Christmas program to help us out are Brazil News readers, I would like to again say, thank you. I believe you did exactly what the Good Samaritan would have done.

We got to Archies an hour late. Linford Holdemans were there too. We made up for lost time by talking until about midnight.

One of my greatest disappointments was trying to show the children some of my old landmarks, where I went to school (one school is a house, the other a church and the other no longer exists), Howard and Jennies grocery store where I used to work (it was torn down and replaced by another), the old farmhouse where I grew up (it's been torn down), and so on.

But one thing I was able to show them. Back in the days when my cousins and I would spend a lot of time at Grandpa Unruhs, we had a rather novel activity of our own making. We cousins, Caroline, Tootsie, Gordon, Gerald, Marlys, and I would split into two groups. The one group, known as "the police," had to arrest and incarcerate the other group for petty offenses. It worked like this: The law and order bunch would round up the infractors and take them to Grandpa's old car shed. On the wall, pounded into the studs, were nails which we placed there for this purpose. With ample amounts of binder twine, the lawless were securely tied to these nails. Then the law and order bunch had to slowly walk down the lane to the mailbox and back. If, upon returning, the offenders remained tied to the nails, it was a police victory. On the other hand if they got loose, the chase was on. Anyway, to cut my rambling short, some 40 years after all this happened, I was able to take my children into the old car shed and show them the nails in the wall, and even some binder twine still attached to one of them.

Americans remind me of gophers. You don't see a solitary soul walking on the streets in the residential districts. People get in their car, open the garage door, back out, drive where they want to go, come back, press the button on the opener, drive in, close the door, and that's that.

One of the absolute highlights of the trip was talking with Brazil News readers. I met quite a number personally and different ones called me on the phone. Some suggestions were made, which I appreciated.

The day came to return. Our plane was about an hour late because of fog. The lady at the American Airlines desk in Wichita said I should check our bags straight through to São Paulo, since there wouldn't be time to pick up our baggage in Miami and catch our international flight. That is what we did.

Our plane out of Dallas Fortworth was also an hour late because of fog. That gave us only a little over a half hour to catch our Varig flight in Miami. When I got to the desk, the fellow informed me that since we didn't show up an hour ahead of time, we technically had lost our flight. He asked to see our tickets and saw our luggage had been

checked through. He asked if we had children and I said yes. So, since our luggage was checked through and we had children, the man relented and decided to give us seats. His partner protested. No way. Our man simply ignored him and gave us seats.

When we got to São Paulo, we went to pick up our luggage. We waited and waited, but no sign of anything. Finally we had to admit it hadn't come. I went to talk to the man at the Varig desk. He was going to begin filling out the necessary claim papers, when I asked him if another Varig flight wouldn't soon be coming in from Miami. Yes, he said, in about 15 minutes. He suggested we wait and see if maybe they might not have come on that flight. While we waited in another part of the baggage area, I suddenly saw a familiarly taped box. It was the monitor to my computer! Next I saw the suitcase with my computer. They were coming around on the carousel. Then I saw the rest of our suitcases that a worker had just taken off the belt.

What happened? Apparently American Airlines wasn't able to get our luggage to the Varig flight, so they took it on their own flight which left about the same time as ours. We placed everything on carts, went to customs, got the green light, and caught our flight to Goiânia – also an hour late.

Was it a good vacation? It certainly was. But one thing the whole family agrees on is that the best part was coming home. Coming home and drinking our delicious Goiás water. We have a saying, Quem bebe água de Goiás, não sai daqui mais. Translated, this little rhyme means, he who drinks the water from Goiás will never leave this place again. Really. ▲

Emma Burns' Diary

The Anaconda

Tue – Nov 4, 1969

We sort of relaxed now that the blocks for the house are all laid. We worked on the rafters. While eating dinner in the cracker box, a cowboy riding a mule rode up to the door, which was actually only a large wool sack hung over the opening.

The man wondered if we had a gun. He said there was a big anaconda down by the river. He thought we might want to shoot it. So Denton and Charlie got their guns and left with the man.

The cowboy was part of a large cattle drive that was coming through the ford below Daniel Kramer's falls. They had stopped to fix their dinner and saw the big snake. It was across the river in a little woods. Miriam and Timothy stayed with Carlos and Yolanda. We women went to the river to see it. We heard nine shots.

Pretty soon we saw the cowboy on the mule coming down to the river on his mule. He was dragging the snake with his lasso. That is how he crossed the river. My it looked huge! It seemed it was about as long as the river was wide. When he got to the bank the mule really had to pull to get it out. On land it couldn't drag it any farther, we got

the kombi. It took three of Dick Toews' boys and Charlie to load it in the kombi. They estimated it to weigh 200 pounds. It was 17 feet long and 27 inches around.

Nearly the whole Colony came to see it stretched out beside the house, which was 20 feet long. It was so big it hardly even looked like a snake. It seemed more like something one reads about in a story book.

Charlie fastened two boards together in a V and put the snake in it. He and Mary skinned it. The meat looked so white and nice that we decided to fry some. Fried to a golden brown, it was tender. It tasted real good. Then we women decided we would can some of the meat. Alma Penner offered to help. We ended up getting approximately 78 pounds of meat and 25 pounds of fat. It had 75 young that weighed 30 pounds. We dried a lot of the meat over a smoldering fire. Pedro Pão wanted to buy the fat. We just gave it to him. Brazilians render snake fat and use it as a liniment, good for rheumatism.

Newcomers

Denton and I rested a bit. I packed our suitcase and we left for Brasília to go meet the Daniel Kramer, Dan Colbentz, and Enos Miller families, who were coming in on permanent visas. Also coming for a visit were Homer & Hazel Unruh, John & Joan Unruh and children, Clinton and Sharon.

Wed – Nov 5

It was 1:30 a.m. when we finally got around to leave for Brasília. It was raining so it took us till 3:00 to get to Rio Verde. The road to Goiânia was terrible. They are working on it and eventually it should be blacktopped. It was muddy and full of chuckholes. We had to detour for about 10 miles. We got to Anápolis at 2:30 p.m. and picked up some things we can't get in Rio Verde. We decided to go out and visit the people where we used to live before we moved to Rio Verde. Paul Lewis drove up behind us, so we stopped and talked. He invited us to come for supper. There was prayer meeting in a home so we went along with Pauls. They asked Denton to speak. The house was so full many had to stand. I was one of them. I was so very tired that I actually went to sleep standing up.

Thu – Nov 6

We left Anápolis at 7:00 a.m. and got to Brasília at 9:00. It sure was nice to drive on asphalt. We went to the airport at 11:30. It was interesting to see the big group get off the plane: Daniel & Anna Kramer and six children, their two nephews Curtis and Dennis, Dan & Clara Coblentz and five children, Enos & Clara Miller and seven children, Homer & Hazel Unruh, John & Joan Unruh and two children. Thirty one in all.

It took two hours for them to get through customs. We chartered a bus. Denton looked after everything, changing money etc., which took a big share of the afternoon. We drove to Otis & Betty Hostetlers, Mennonite missionaries in Brasília. Betty and I went to the store and bought food. Then we fixed sandwiches and drink to take along and eat on the bus.

Dennis Kramer and Joe May, the man who helped organize things, went with Denton in the kombi. I went with the others on the bus. We got to Goiânia and spent the night in a hotel. The luggage filled about one fourth of the lobby. The people sure did watch. They watched us more than the TV that they were watching before. There were 22 children, but we heard very little of them, they were so well behaved.

Fri – Nov 7

Denton and the three couples went after breakfast to get their I.D. cards started. The big market was across the street, so I went with some of the women to buy plastic sandals. It is always so wet from rain and dew in the morning that plastic sandals are best. Denton bought food. We chartered another bus and started out for Rio Verde. Dennis and Homer rode with Denton. We got to Rio Verde around 7:00 p.m. We spent the night at the Aurora Hotel. We were so many that they had to fix old beds that were coming apart. Even so the hotel was so full that Denton and I had to go to another hotel.

They fixed supper for us before we went to bed. They put all the tables together. After we were all seated, we bowed our heads for prayers. People were looking on, even through the windows. I guess they never saw the likes before. Pierre, a young man who spoke English, took all the boys and went to get them some ice-cream.

Sat – Nov 8

Denton got up early and went to the park across the street to figure out everything. Of all the money he handled, he was only 16 cents off. The road to the fazenda was really bad, so Dan Coblentz went with me to drive our kombi. We loaded up most of the children and made the first trip. We met Manoel Norberto, the man we bought the fazenda from, and told him that the people had arrived.

When we got to the fazenda, we stopped at John Penners. Alma kept Enos's children. When we got to our house, people started coming. Dan went back to town to get another load. John Penner went with his pickup for the luggage. Dicks and Harolds said the people should come to their places to eat. It was quite a day!

The Dan Coblentz family was here for supper. We had soup with snake meat. Clara didn't want to eat it. They put their luggage in Dick's tent and all three families set up their tents by Dicks. All the men helped them get set up. We rounded up mattresses and air mattresses and they spent their first night on the fazenda. It was midnight when we all got to bed.

Sunday – Nov 9

We had church at Dicks. John Penner preached from Genesis 17:1 and Matthew 7:7-11. Homers and Johns were here for dinner. In the evening Daniel Kramer told how they had to prepare themselves to come to Brazil. Sure seemed like quite a congregation already. With their arrival, we almost doubled in size. ▲

Remembering Out Loud

They Also Came

Since the Colony was established 24 years ago, some interesting people have showed up here. I'm talking about people who heard about the Colony, who have nothing to do with our group or religion, and decided to move out.

One of them was a fellow by the name of John Nichols. That was over twenty years ago when I was teaching English in town. I wrote Macmillan Publishers in New York, I believe, to get some information on a language course they published.

John answered my letter and added a personal note of interest concerning the Colony. We corresponded for some time and the day came he decided to move to Rio Verde. He obtained a permanent visa, which was extremely easy back those days, and showed up here one cold day.

He was a nice fellow, but really a fish out of water. With his education, Rio Verde at that time had no opportunities for a man of his caliber. After a number of months, he returned to the US. We have good memories of John.

Another family from Idaho learned to know the Harold Dirks family. They came down on a tourist visa, but with the thought in mind of possibly staying on a permanent basis. They rented a house in Rio Verde. We had good relations with this family, although at times the man acted rather strangely. He seemed to really be down on some aspects of the American government.

They returned to the US. Some years later we heard the man was serving a life term in prison for homicide.

The one that takes the cake is Buel Johnson. I doubt if anyone who learned to know Buel ever forgot him.

Buel read a little piece that Ann Miller sent to the Grit magazine. The first thing we knew he was here in Rio Verde – on a tourist visa.

Buel was an imposing character, over six feet tall, a born entertainer. I believe he was acquainted with all the states of the Union and had lived in approximately half of them. There were very few things he hadn't done in life, including working in Hollywood as John Wayne's stunt man, whom he resembled a lot.

One might have been tempted to believe that he was just pulling our leg, except that everything he said hung together. Time and again I was amazed when he would strike up a conversation with someone who would be visiting from the States and within minutes he would discover something they had in common. It might be a place or a person they both knew. They were conversations that couldn't possibly be faked.

Where Buel really came on his own was with horses. I can still see him slowly walking up to a rearing horse, speaking in a low but firm tone. He would grasp the bridle and the horse would settle down.

He lived with us for a while. One day a Brazilian neighbor showed up on horseback. Buel looked the horse over and said, "Ask the man if he wants to sell the horse." Yes, he

would sell. In just a short time Buel was the proud owner of a horse that to me was just about as common as they come.

It didn't take very long for that horse to be anything but common. Buel trained it to be a choice cart horse. When he sold it on auction some time later, it brought a good price.

Why was Buel constantly on the move? Why did he move to Brazil? He was searching for a place to live where the people would live up to his rigorous standards. His ability to handle horses didn't extend to people. As misunderstandings began to accumulate, so did his urge to move on.

After a year or so in Brazil, Buel headed back to the US. The last news we received about him, he was thinking Paraguay might be the elusive place he has been searching for all his life.

One day word began circulating on the Colony about a Dutchman who was around town. About the only thing people knew for certain about him was that he was the tallest person they had ever seen in their life.

Unfortunately, I don't have the exact details of what happened at this point. I know that he and Ike Loewen met. Ike invited him to spend a few days at his house. During this stay Ike asked Sipke a question that would change his life: "Have you had an experience of the new birth?"

Since Sipke had no idea what that was, he didn't know what to answer. But it was a question that wouldn't go away. Being fluent in English, he began reading our church literature. He came to understand what the new birth was – and to know he wasn't born again.

This resulted in a real searching and the day came he was able to answer Ike's question in the affirmative. He was baptized in the Rio Verdinho congregation. He moved to the States and is married. I had the pleasure on this trip of talking to him at Kropf Lumber Company, where he now works. ▲

This & That

Crops are looking good. This has been a year of too much and too little rain. In other words, the rains haven't been uniform. Even so, if things continue as they are, we should have another good crop. Corn harvest will probably begin toward the end of January.

The building site for the new literature center has been chosen and some landscaping done. Actual construction is scheduled to begin after harvest.

Dorothy Bates, Mary Ann Koehn, Anna Koehn, Gladys Unruh, Lois Schmidt, and Sadie Frank from Moundridge are paying us a visit here on the Colony.

Nelson Unruh, David Kramer, David Miller, and Ben Koehn are in the States attending the youth preparatory class.

Harold & Emma Dirks and Greta are spending some time here. After the many years they lived on the Colony, it always feels good when they pay us a visit.

Brazil 17 News

Regina Miller is back after spending a year working in the children's home in Winnipeg.

Tony & Juanita Lima had a girl on the 1st. Vivian Rose. Another Lima.

Calvin & Donna Hibner had a girl on the 22nd. Lavonne. Another Hibner.

It's pretty certain that three zeros will be chopped off our currency on March 1. The cruzeiro will temporarily be renamed "novo (new) cruzeiro." Different ones in the States asked me about how all that works when zeros are eliminated. I'll try and explain that next month.

Dennis & Vera Loewen visited the missions in the Northeast.

Vanessa Williams from Mississippi is teaching the Dean Penner girls in the Mirassol, São Paulo mission.

Daniel Holdemans and Carman Loewens went down south for a load of peaches to be sold here.

A group of young married men have been doing volunteer yard work for different ones. Our place, that was badly in need of a haircut when we left, looked downright civilized when we came back. Thanks.

Different ones went to Paraguay for shopping. Since there are few, if any, import restrictions, Paraguay has a good variety of foreign products. A lot of Brazilians set up sidewalk booths with goods purchased there.