

# Brazil News



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Editorial

## **Needed: LH Writers**

To write for adults requires a talent. To write for children is an art. To create literature that will captivate both children and adults, that folks, is a Gift with a capital G.

I tip my hat to many great writers and poets – men and women who have done with words what a painter does with paints, a sculptor with a chisel and a mason with a trowel. Many have won their niche in the earthly halls of fame. But on a pedestal, in a place of special prominence, I see Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of the Little House (LH) books.

Why the pedestal for Laura?

Imagine a hundred people, ages six to eighty six, seated in a room. Someone gets up and begins reading Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. Ten older adults appear to be interested. Next comes Charles Dickens' Great Expectations. Over half show interest. Next, John Greenleaf Whittier's Snow-Bound. Less than half listen.

Now someone begins reading from The Little House in the Big Woods. One hundred people, from six to eighty six, listen. They smile. They weep.

Why? Because of Laura's Gift to write simply enough for a child to understand and informative enough to get through to adults.

Let's run that formula through again: Simple enough for a child to understand and informative enough to get through to adults. The LH formula.

Gifts are seeds. All normal human beings are born with a variety of seeds. Some seem to sprout and grow spontaneously. Others must be planted and cultivated in a deliberate manner. The gift of writing seldom, if ever, is spontaneous. The seed must be planted. A slowly growing tree, it must be carefully tended. The more useful the gift, the more it needs to be nurtured.

It's a fact that that which we do in weakness, God crowns with strength. This is also true in literature that the church produces. But, what we do in weakness must still be

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our very best if we hope for the Lord to crown it. Really, after we have done our very best, we are still unprofitable servants.

The Church of God has not placed enough emphasis on the gift of writing. This is unfortunate, as these gifts don't develop overnight.

Our greatest problem isn't in adult literature (Sunday School books, Bible study material, etc.) for the N American church. The need is felt in especially two areas: children's literature and global literature, that is, literature that is sent to non-Holdemans.

Children's literature. It is assumed by most writers that children relate best to stories about other children. As a result our children's SS books are overloaded with stories that have the following plot: Mother makes cupcakes to take to a meeting that evening. Mother has to take lunch to daddy, who is working in the field. Mother tells nine year old Susie, who is staying home with baby, to stay away from the cupcakes. Once mother is out of sight, Satan talks to Susie. She decides that no one would ever find out if she ate just one cupcake. She yields to temptation. Mother comes home from the field. Susie is acting strange. Mother decides to count the cupcakes. One is missing. She calls Susie to the bedroom for a talk. Susie bursts out in tears and confesses her sin. Mother sorrowfully tells her she will have to have a spanking. After the punishment has been administered, Susie is her cheerful self and never, never again does she ever take a cupcake without permission.

What's wrong with this plot? First of all, it is overused. An occasional story of this kind would be fine. Secondly, because of similar painful memories, the child will probably not feel it is something worth remembering. Thirdly, the greatest part of the story is dedicated to the sin and just a paragraph or two at the end to the solution.

Why not tell the children a LH story? An actual happening told in simple language? Children love stories from other lands, which, of course, include missionary stories. They love biographies, that is, stories of how children grew up to be useful men and women in God's kingdom.

But where do we get such stories? Ah yes, that's the point. Remember, we said that a writer must grow. The gift to do what we have just talked about must be cultivated. God rained manna from heaven, but the Israelites had to pick it up. God also provides stories, but we must pick them up and put them on paper.

People ask me if I'm not going to run out of things to write about in Brazil News. I tell them that so long as there are people on this earth, there will be interesting things to write about. The same thing is true about children's stories. A good writer develops a new set of eyes and ears. An artist sees a beautiful sunset and stores it in his memory to later be put on canvas. So the experienced writer "sees" and "hears" things that can be put on paper, things that "will make a story."

Global literature. Our literature is incredibly unsuitable for global use. Do you know why? First of all, because a lot of our literature was produced for the American culture. There is nothing wrong with this. Americans need good literature. (Size seven shoes are good for people with size seven feet. But they're a disaster for folks with size eight feet. That's why size eight shoes are also sold.) Secondly, knowing that global readers

have a limited understanding of spiritual matters, an effort is made to simplify existing material. The results leave a lot to be desired.

Much of our global literature is sprinkled with religious clichés. Listen to this imaginary excerpt on child training:

“Our children are very precious [So far so good]. We need to bring them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord [Bring them up to be scared? What does ‘admonition of the Lord’ mean?]. These youngsters we hold on our lap are the future church [Future church? Is there no church today?]. If we love them we won’t spare the rod of correction [Where can we get ahold of one of these rods?]

Get it? It’s written simply. The thoughts are good. But we have resorted to a religious vocabulary that makes sense only to people who have a good Bible or church knowledge.

What do global readers need? They need spiritual LH material. Remember the definition? Simple enough for a child to understand and informative enough to get through to adults.

I have absolutely no doubt but that we have brothers and sisters in the church with spiritual LH Gifts. Ministers should speak of this need to their congregations. They should encourage those with a conviction to write, to do so. The only way to get something written is to write it.

A brother recently told me he was interested in translating songs. He wanted to know what he needed. I told him the first thing was a large wastebasket. A tree sheds a lot of leaves before it produces fruit. We have writers who never developed their talent for want of a wastebasket. They wanted their work published from day one. So they ended up producing a lot of leaves and little fruit. That became their style.

Humility. A writer must have the humility to realize that not everything he produces is as good as he thinks it is. Great secular writers have had their works turned down by publishers. At that point they had the option of turning sour on the world – or of trying harder. The ones who didn’t try harder never became great writers.

For those of my good readers who feel something stirring, just a bit of advice on how to go about becoming a LH writer:

- 1) Buy a big wastebasket.
- 2) Buy a typewriter (if you don’t have one), or better, a cheap computer, and learn to type – to type well.
- 3) Develop your literary eyes and ears.
- 4) Write, write, write. Write enough so that if even only ten percent of what you produce is used, you are still contributing to the progress of the church.
- 5) Write for children of all ages, from six to eighty six. Move into their world when you sit down to write.
- 6) Write for the Lord, not for men. Song writers may at times find extra strength in the fact that if their song gets published, so will their name. Prepare to be an anonymous writer. Many times your article will not bear your name. Really, that’s the test of whether you are doing it for the Lord, isn’t it?

One more time: We need literature that is simple enough for a child to understand and informative enough to get through to adults. ▲

## Politics

### **Collor & Itamar – What Have They Done?**

Through the magnifying glass of time, we frequently get a more realistic view of things as they really are – or were. While it is yet too early to give any definite conclusions on what the Collor/Itamar presidency have done and will do for Brazil, some pleasant and unexpected surprises are emerging.

In spite of all of Collor's peccadillos, in his two short years of office, he did more to modernize Brazil than any other president in the last forty years or so. He didn't plug the leaks in the boat, but he certainly did get it pointed in the right direction.

Enter President Itamar Franco. He didn't necessarily like the direction the ship was pointed, but he began plugging up some leaks. Now that the boat is riding just a wee bit higher in the water, even he seems to be enthusiastic about the direction it is pointed.

Just a few examples:

It was said, and I think with good reason, that Itamar was against privatizing state owned industry. He has done an about-face on this and is now an enthusiastic supporter of the privatization program, an absolute must for Brazil to pull out of its tailspin.

The government no longer gives the impression that it must play big daddy on the dollar. Today it is possible to get an international Visa card, which means that purchases can be made in the US, for example, and the tab picked up in our local bank in Cruzeiros. Several years ago we wouldn't have even dreamed about something like this.

A wide assortment of foreign cars can be purchased in any major Brazilian city. The price is high due to stiff import taxes. But it is a clear signal to the automotive industry that unless it becomes competitive, there are other options.

Collor showed no special concern for the poor, except possibly for their votes. President Itamar, on the other hand, shows a sincere concern for the poor and lower middle class. One of his dreams is a carro popular, that is, a car that the lower middle class can afford. To bring this closer to reality, he has practically eliminated the taxes (up to 40%) on small cars with a one liter motor.

I saw one of these cars in town the other day. I could hardly believe my eyes. Until recently there was no such thing as fuel injection in this country. Then it came in on the thirty thousand dollar plus cars. But now, once all of the bureaucratic tape has been cut, the Fiat Mille, with fuel injection, should sell for US\$6,800. Obviously VW, Ford and GM will come out with economy models too. In the case of VW, in another several months the Bug should be rolling off the assembly line.

The stone-age government pension plan is going through a transformation. If the road to be traveled to overhaul the system is a hundred miles, it has so far come only five miles at the most. But that's better than nothing.

If things go according to schedule – which they probably won't – Brazilians will go to the polls next month in a national referendum to decide if we will continue with the presidential system, or if we will go to a parliamentary type of government, or even a monarchy. ▲

## A Brazilian Story

### A Esmola

[Just a little Portuguese lesson before we let Mário de Moraes tell us another story. A is the article “the.” Esmola is money given to a beggar.]

This happened in a little town called Costa Machado, in the state of São Paulo.

In 1964 this little place had only fifty houses. In one of them there lived a fine fellow, respected by all, called Raimundo Antônio da Silva, originally from the state of Paraíba. It was for this reason that the lieutenant on the police force appointed him as “block inspector,” a title which gave him the right to use a thirty-eight and the obligation of maintaining the peace in the town of Costa Machado.

During most of the day, delegado [roughly the equivalent of “sheriff”] Raimundo could be seen sitting at a rough hewn table in the delegacia [sheriff’s office], which was actually no more than an old board shack. And it was one afternoon that an old lady showed up. She must have been around eighty years old and was all shook up.

“What may I do for you, Madam?” asked the authority.

“The reason I’m here, seu delegado [seu is roughly equivalent to don in Spanish, a term of respect. Seu can also be a pronoun], is that Melquíades, from Sítio do Cavalo Morto [a sítio is a small farm, in this case strangely called, Dead Horse Farm], killed my goat. I have no relatives or anyone who helps me, seu doutor [to call someone doutor (doctor) is – especially so in the past – a way of showing great respect to a superior. Here she doubles the dose with seu doutor]. My entire livelihood depends on the milk I get from this goat. Now I don’t have anything to sell...”

Overcome by compassion, Raimundo decided to settle this problem. “Leave it to me, Madam. You may come back tomorrow morning at nine o’clock and I’ll see to it that justice is done.”

When the old lady left, he called his only policeman, who was also his brother-in-law, and gave him an order:

“Head out to the Sítio do Cavalo Morto and tell this Melquíades fellow to be here tomorrow morning at nine o’clock.”

So that my good listeners will understand better the setting of this story, I add here that this delegado was 5’ 6” tall, at that time had studied only until the second grade.

On the following day, at eight o’clock, Raimundo was on the job. His sweetheart, a pretty baiana [a native of the state of Bahia] called Isaura, showed up to see him. They were in the middle of a conversation, when the old lady showed up. After asking her to be seated on a crate, which served as a chair, they waited for Melquíades to show up.

At exactly nine o’clock Melquíades showed up. He was a tall man, more or less 6’ 3”. He wore bombachas [baggy trousers typical of the gaúchos from the state of Rio Grande do Sul. It would also indicate he wasn’t someone to be meddled with], he had a bandanna tied around his neck and on his head he wore a huge cowboy hat.

“You are senhor Melquíades?”

“That’s right.”

“Why did you kill this lady’s goat?”

“The pesky thing started eating my crops, so I got my double barreled 16 gauge shotgun and plugged it twice. That’s how the crazy thing died...”

“Didn’t you know that this lady is all alone in this world and that her livelihood depended on the milk she got from this goat?”

The man didn’t answer his question, so the delegado turned to the old lady:

“How much was your goat worth?”

“Around 350 Cruzeiros, seu doutor.”

“OK, seu Melquíades, give this lady Cr\$350.00,” was the sentence given by “judge” Raimundo.

The man who shot the goat began reaching for his own revolver, but when he saw the glint in the delegado’s eyes, as well as the thirty-eight tucked behind his belt, he changed his mind.

“Here! Take this esmola of three hundred and fifty Cruzeiros! It’s yours!”

Melquíades turned around and was leaving when Raimundo called him back: “Just a moment! You haven’t paid this lady the three hundred and fifty Cruzeiros for her goat that you killed!”

“I haven’t paid?” asked an incredulous Melquíades. “Look at that money on top of the table!”

“You gave the lady an esmola. Come on now, get with it! Pay for the goat. Or do you want to be thrown in the jug for disrespecting an authority?”

That’s how this poor old lady got seven hundred Cruzeiros for a goat that was worth three hundred and fifty at the most. If you want to check this story out, look up Raimundo Antônio da Silva, today in his fifties, now a baker on Major Sertório Street, number 450, in the center of São Paulo. That is, if he still works there. ▲

## Emma Burns’ Diary

### **Lots of Work**

**Sat – Nov 29, 69**

Someone needed to take Pierre back to town, so the children thought Denton and I should and then spend the night in the Aurora Hotel so that we could rest up. With so many people around all the time and so much going on, we finally get tired. Daniel Kramers moved their tent under a pole shed they built. It was raining.

**Tue – Dec 2**

Curtis Kramer, 15, and his brother Dennis, 13, started laying bricks for Charlie’s house. Homer Unruh mixed the mortar and Myron Kramer pointed the bricks. We butchered our pig.

### **Wed – Dec 3**

We got the first egg plant from our garden. I planted more vegetables. The mayor sent a road grader out to build our Colony roads. Each family takes turns cooking for the men. [Few, if any, of these first roads built by the mayor are still being used. Even so, they were a big step forward in bringing the Colony just a bit closer to civilization.]

### **Thu – Dec 4**

John Unruh went to the woods and cut lots of firewood. Myron and Danny Kramer hauled it home with our cart and their horse. Dick Toews' girls came over this evening to sing. The grader driver says he sure enjoys our singing. We have beautiful sunsets. Tonight the sky was so full of stars and Carlos, 4, said, "Mommy, just look at all that herd of stars."

### **Mon – Dec 8**

A number of us womenfolks and children went to Manoel's fazenda. We picked mangos. Dona Ana, his wife, gave us two setting hens. We went to visit the cowboy's wife. Coming back, Manoel's big bull was in the little pasture near the house. Timothy and Clinton Unruh were already in the pasture when they saw it. Timothy managed to climb a tree. We kept telling Clinton what to do. Finally they both were able to make a dash and get away from the bull. What a scare! A horse trader showed up today to sell horses to the Americanos. We bought one.

### **Sat – Dec 13**

Geraldo Honório, the owner of the fazenda across the river, came over and invited todo mundo [literally: the whole world] over for dinner on the 21st, so that we could get acquainted. Daniel Kramer is plowing the black marsh ground near his house. One of the wheels broke on their tractor.

### **Sun – Dec 14**

Pedro Pão came this morning and stayed for church. He brought lots of mandioca. We dug a big hole and buried it. That way it keeps for a long time. He didn't want to walk on our clean floor. Elizabeth told him floors are made to be walked on. I was swatting flies. He had never seen a fly swatter in his life. He watched for a while and then said, "She hits everyone!" Jona Dycks and Dick Toews left right after dinner. They are going to southern Brazil to look for a place to move to.

### **Mon – Dec 15**

Some men are clearing land for Enos Miller. Clara has to fix three meals a day and take them to the field. Dan Coblentz got the blocks for their house laid up to the windows.

### **Tue – Dec 16**

Dans went to Manoel's fazenda in their jeep to get their horse that ran away. Miriam

and Jona's girls went swimming. Miriam got a stick poked into her foot. Dan Coblenz brought her home in his jeep and carried her in so Charlie could take care of it. Daniel Kramer got the wheel fixed on his tractor, so he is plowing again.

### **Sat – Dec 20**

Homer Unruh worked our little field today. John Unruh planted the rice seed he got at Manoels yesterday.

### **Sun – Dec 21**

João Carlos came this morning to show us the way to his folks' place. Except for a few families, everyone went in Enos Miller's truck. As the crow flies, it's around five miles to Geraldo's place. But by road we end up driving 20 miles. We arrived there at 11:45. They invited us womenfolks to the enormous back porch, which is also their outdoor kitchen. There were eight other women helping get dinner for over 60 people. They had killed two hogs for dinner. Geraldo took us to the shed where he makes sugar, molasses and home-brew from cane he raises on his fazenda. Then it was time to eat. We had pork fixed four ways, fresh sausage, fresh cheese made on the fazenda, two kinds of beans, rice, mandioca, cucumber and onion salad. For dessert we had cafezinho, which is strong coffee served in little cups. It was all real good. ▲

## Colonization

### **More Families Buy Land in Mato Grosso**

The Mennonite Colony in Rio Verde is an American cake with Brazilian frosting. It appears that the new Colony in Mato Grosso is going to be a Brazilian cake with American frosting.

A new and unexpected element has come into the picture on the move to Mato Grosso. Three Brazilian families have purchased land in the Sorriso area (where the Kramers bought). Luís & Maria Duarte and Jorge & Dalva Silva, have each bought 120 acres. Pedro & Vanderlúcia Maia bought 360 acres.

I have no desire to move to Mato Grosso, but I do regret not being able to observe firsthand the cultural development of this settlement. I think that many of the problems that are plaguing us here after nearly 25 years will never become an issue there.

What has been especially encouraging to me is the fact that the three Brazilian couples who purchased land did it exactly like the Americans did. They went on their own, came up with their own cash, and financially are not umbilically attached to the Americans. Spiritually yes.

To top it off, everything indicates that Jorge & Dalva will be the first couple to move.

Different Americans have been to Mato Grosso in the last several weeks. Paul & Rachel Yoder purchased 1,440 acres in the Sorriso area.



Obviously not everyone who is buying plans on moving down. That's perfectly OK. Very likely they will be wanting to rent it out. Somebody is going to get the benefit of the land – very likely their own children as they go on their own.

When Luís Duarte got back from Mato Grosso, he gave me a magazine on the Sorriso area. following are a few excerpts:

“Optimism is the word among the 20 thousand people who live in Sorriso. In this essentially agricultural municipality, the predictions for the next crop go well beyond all the records that have been set in the past by the sorriseses [people who live in Sorriso], with soybeans in the lead.

“According to reliable estimates, the gross internal product of this municipality should increase 30% during the year of 1993. In taxes paid to the state, we are in 7th place. The municipality of Sorriso should harvest around 400 thousand metric tons of soybeans this year on approximately 420 thousand acres that have been planted, 42 thousand metric tons of rice on a hundred thousand acres planted and 26 thousand metric tons of corn...”

“At present only 20% of its arable land is in production, out of a total of two million, one hundred thousand acres...”

The photographs indicate that there is a lot of flat farm land in the Sorriso area. An aerial photo of the town is most impressive. The streets are wide and laid out in an organized manner. Those who have visited the place tell us it is a clean, attractive town. Since many of the sorriseses are from southern Brazil, one can expect rapid growth.

I must repeat: Have you ever wished you could pioneer? Those chances are getting less and less. But here's a chance – maybe of a lifetime. ▲

By Jorge José da Silva

## Uma Longa História

[A Long Story. A number of months ago I asked Jorge to tell the story of his life on paper.

We learned to know Jorge's family over 15 years ago – but not Jorge. When asked about, he was the one that made people shake their head. He was the bum, the good-for-nothing, the black sheep.

He will tell his story.

Today Jorge is a pillar in the church, a hard worker, a pleasant man to be around, gentle and courteous. In fact, those who know him, but not his story, may find it hard to believe.

This is what conversion is all about. It's more than believing. It's changing.

I'm doing very little editing to this story. I want you to get it like he gave it to me. As you read all that he went through, remember, he's not a number, not just another name. He is your brother. (He's the one who bought land in Mato Grosso.)]

For some time I have felt to tell this story, but today, by the grace of God, I am inspired to begin [dated: 11/28/92].

As I remember, it was a rainy day. We (my mother, my brothers and sisters and I – all of us still children), were traveling in a F.N.M. [a now defunct truck, but much in vogue decades back], possibly in 1961. We were hitching a ride, because my mom had managed to find us places in an orphanage.

We were four of us – two boys and two girls. Soon we found ourselves institutionalized in the I.A.M. (Instituto de Assistência a Menores), a Spiritist organization that helped poor mothers who weren't able to take care of their children. My mom had a lot of children and my dad was a drunk. That's why mom wasn't able to take care of all of us by herself. She prayed to the Lord and asked for His help in this situation. Today she feels that this was her answer to prayer.

So far so good. Time went by and I enjoyed myself at the Instituto [Orphanage], because there we got a lot of things we couldn't have at home, like good food, better clothes, shoes, we could go to school, to the club, to the soccer stadium, etc. Do you know something? I didn't even think about my mom. But my younger brother cried a lot. It seemed that it hit him a lot harder to be separated from the family.

On Sundays we went to Sunday School in the Spiritist church. We would sing little children's songs like, Com Cristo no barco tudo vai muito bem, etc. [May I inject here that some of these songs they learned, his sister taught to us later. They are now included in our children's Cento e Três Corinhos songbook.] So far as the Spiritist religion is concerned, they didn't teach us very much.

We were seventy boys and twelve girls in the Instituto. Then one day one of the boys – number 17 – ran away. His name was Milton. Then another one ran away. Soon that was the in thing to do and one day I decided to run away together with another boy, my inseparable friend. We liked to play like we were Indians. We even made ourselves a spear out of a piece of reinforcement rod. We managed to kill a cat with it.

We escaped by crawling over the barb wire fence that surrounded the Instituto, since that was the easiest place. The other three sides had a high wall that was too high for us children to get over. I also had a slingshot, but the rubber was no good on it.

Soon I was a long ways from the Instituto, and also, very hungry. I found out that being an Indian wasn't all that much fun. So I decided to suggest to my buddy that we return, but we knew that we were in for a good licking if we went back. But my buddy was all for it, so late in the afternoon, hungry and dirty, we made it back.

It ended up being a good lesson. We found out that running away wasn't what we had thought it would be, and also, when Tia Amanda [Aunt Amanda. In Brazil children many times call their superiors uncle or aunt. Tia Amanda is the sister of the director of the Instituto] got a hold of us, she punished us severely. Even so others ended up trying the same thing.

The day came when my younger brother decided to run away. He didn't tell me anything. Knowing that I had decided to never run away again, he didn't tell me about his plans. The only thing he did was to ask me to go with him to see our mom on

Saturday. He lied to me, saying that first we would go to the movies, and then to mom's place.

When we got there, mom exclaimed, "What's the deal! Didn't you bring your clothes?"

I answered, "What clothes?"

My mother looked at Salmo de Davi [Literally, Psalm of David. A most strange name for a person], my brother, and he said, "Mom, I didn't tell Jorge anything, because if I would have, he wouldn't have come."

I was worried. I said, "At ten o'clock we have to be back in the Instituto, Mom. This is going to end up being one big mess. We'll have to quit studying, and maybe even go hungry again." I told her different things.

But mom was tremendously lonesome for us. She said, "My child, things are different now. There will be no lack of anything anymore. This I promise you."

"But," I argued, "tio Paulo [Uncle Paul, tia Amanda's brother, the director of the Instituto], is going to come after us. We're going to have to get out of here."

That same night we walked around 20 kilometers on foot. We hid every time a car came near us, always thinking it was tio Paulo. We would hide in the woods until the danger was past, and then we would keep on walking. We walked until we got to our brother-in-law's fazenda. We asked him to loan mom some money so we could go to Mato Grosso and stay there for 30 days. The reason was that for 30 days tio Paulo could legally force us to return to the orphanage.

Once we got back to Rio Verde, after spending the 30 days in Mato Grosso, we had to appear in juvenile court and explain to the judge what we wanted. It went something like this:

Judge: Salmo de Davi da Silva.

Salmo: (standing up) Present.

Judge: Do you want to return to the Instituto, or stay with your mother?

Salmo: With my mother.

Judge: Jorge José da Silva.

Jorge: (Standing up, scared, looking at the floor) Present.

Judge: Do you want to return to the Instituto or stay with your mother?

This really put me into a fix. Off to one side I saw my mom. She was crying, making it clear she wanted me to stay with her. But on the other side, I saw tio Paulo, his head lowered. I saw two tears roll down his face. I could tell that he loved us and was interested in our welfare. The judge gave me some counsel, but left the decision up to me. Right then I felt that I should help my mom take care of Salmo de Davi, so I made a decision. I said, "Seu juiz [notice the seu. Juiz is judge], I'll stay with my mother!"

I felt a relief with this answer. Even though we might not have enough to eat, it was good to be with mom. From then on, I would spend mornings in the bus station shining shoes and in the afternoon I went to school [remember that school is only half a day here, with morning, afternoon and evening shifts].

A year later I quit studying to work on a pau de arara [literally, parrot stick. In reality

a truck that goes around picking up both men and women before daybreak and takes them out to spend the day hoeing, picking cotton, etc. A harsh life that pays better wages than most day labor], picking cotton. So I ended up working out. Mom had just a little piece of ground she inherited from her dad. She took out some financing in the Banco do Brasil and tried to develop the place.

My dad had already died. But I considered my stepdad the same as being my dad. At this time he was 70 years old. He asked me to help him work on mom's place. We worked for one year. The second year he let someone else farm it for half of what was produced. Then the third year, the year we needed to settle with the bank, he asked me to help him again so that we could pay the bank off. Thanks to God, mom didn't lose her place.

During this time one of my older sisters who was living in São Paulo showed up. She wanted to know if I would like to live in São Paulo. I had a ready answer. I wanted to study some more. But mom didn't want me leave home. I must confess that my desire to study was so great that I ended up going with her, without mom knowing what was going on. When she found out that I had left, she tried to go after us, but because she didn't have enough money, she had to turn back.

I found myself in the enormous capitol of the state of São Paulo. I was 15 years old – almost 16. I had great expectations: I am going to study. I am going to be a success. I am going to become a lawyer.

I had only been there about three months when I returned to reality. I won't go into details on what all happened. The truth of the matter is that I ended up living in a república [a very cheap communal boarding house]. The money I made on my job wasn't enough to pay my expenses. So one day I would have lunch, but not supper, or supper and not lunch. For a while I would eat only a small French bread, together with a glass of water.

It's rough to be hungry, but I didn't quit school. My classmates called me Crânio (here used as brain), but the truth of the matter is that I didn't have time to study, other than in class.

I had to be at work at seven in the morning. I worked in a factory where they made metal window frames. The work was very dirty. I would get off work at six in the afternoon. At seven I had to be in school, where I studied until eleven o'clock.

This life wore me down and I became desperate. Then I got to the age that I was supposed to enlist in the army. [Just a little explanation. Here in Brazil everyone must enlist at 18 and sometime later serve for approximately six months, unless an exemption is granted. The certificate given at the end of this time is required to get a job and for many legal documents.] I lost my job and wasn't able to get other work because of not having my military certificate.

It looked like the only thing that was left for me to do was to join the army and keep on studying until I could get my diploma. But when I went to enlist, because of going hungry so much, I didn't pass the physical. This put me into a real bind. I was weak from lack of food and I figured that if I got into the army, at least I would have enough

to eat. Worse, to be rejected in the army because I didn't have the body of a man was the last straw for me.

I feel to quote a verse, that is found in Luke 9:62, "And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

From here on out I have forgotten a lot of what happened. I will have to really think to remember details, but by looking back I can see how the Lord has loved me and delivered me from Satan's claws.

If you, my reader, are going through what I went through, please be reassured that there is deliverance if you will seek for Christ with all your heart.

But let's get on with my story. I was at my wits end. I was hungry and without a job. I ran across some hippies who were drug addicts. By taking drugs, they lost their appetite. Slowly I began taking drugs to not be hungry. I learned to know the effects of the different drugs. When I took marijuana, I felt proud of myself and was full of self-confidence. It didn't take long until I had quit studying and turned into a long-haired hippie. To keep going in this life, I began to steal. I got together with a couple from Goiânia that were spending some time in São Paulo. After a number of thefts, we left for Goiânia. They not only taught me a lot about drugs, but also about stealing. This was during a time when I couldn't control myself. I wasn't afraid of anything. They called me Jorjão [augmentative in Portuguese that means big Jorge]. They didn't call me Jorjão because I was big. Remember they wouldn't have me in the army because I was too small. They called me this because there wasn't anything I wouldn't do.

One day when we were stealing a car, there was an accident and someone got killed. We all got stuck in jail, but because I was still a minor, they released me almost immediately for lack of evidence. I kept right on in the same life, but now I considered myself a professional.

The only things I did was steal and take drugs. I decided not to work with a gang anymore, because when it came time to divide up what we had stolen, I ended up with so little.

At this point I was such a slave to Satan, that if someone had asked me what I did for a living, I would have told them that my profession was stealing.

I was arrested again, but was released. This happened again and again and again. ▲  
(To be continued)

## Remembering Out Loud

### **I Give a Cop a Ride**

Back in the days when we lived on the Jataí highway, behind Clifford Warkentin's place, and had the store in town, I had to drive to work every day. Several kilometers out of town the Polícia Federal – similar to the Highway Patrol in the US, had their station. It wasn't uncommon for the cops to catch a ride to work instead of going in their own vehicle. I quite often gave them rides, both to and from work.

They were a courteous lot. When stopping to give them a ride, they would always wait for an invitation to get into the car, even though they knew perfectly well why I had stopped.

One day as I was leaving town, I saw a cop along side of the road. This time something was different. As I slowed to a stop, he came running, opened the door, dived in and said, “Charles, you like to drive fast, now do it!” I might mention that back those days I did drive fast. Not anymore.

So that’s what I did. And he told me his story as we raced along:

“I was standing here trying to catch a ride to the station. Here comes this fellow in an old VW bug without lights [by now it was dusk]. He stopped, but instead of giving me a ride, he picked up a \_\_\_\_\_ [a lady from the red light district] who was wanting a ride. Now, we have to beat them to the police station.”

Up ahead we could see the tail-lightless bug, but to beat it to the station I would have to pass several vehicles, plus the bug, of course, and there was considerable oncoming traffic.

I made it around the vehicles, but had the bug left. Not too far ahead a car was approaching. I told the cop, “That car’s pretty close.”

“Step on it, man! You can make it.”

I did make it, but by that time my speedometer needle had a pretty good tilt to the right – and I was only a couple of hundred meters from the station. So, in a scene worthy of the best cops and robbers movies, I hit the brakes and went sliding up to the station. The men inside came running to see what was breaking loose anyway.

By now the cop had his window rolled down and was leaning out. “Stop that bug for me!”

His buddy sprinted across the highway and got the tail-lightless bug stopped.

The cop hopped out of the car and as I left, I heard him telling one of his buddies, “And she was a \_\_\_\_\_ at that...!”

I can guarantee you that the driver of the bug and his new lady friend didn’t make it to Jataí without a mighty stiff fine and first going back to Rio Verde and spending some money in an electrical shop. ▲

## **This & That**

A new high-tension transmission line is being built through the Colony, right along side the present one. I believe it goes to someplace in Mato Grosso.

Bert & Ada Coblentz were here for several weeks. To keep up a permanent visa, it’s necessary to return every two years. In a way, it’s sort of a nice law. At least we get to see these people every two years.

Lee Koepl, with his wife Lana, was here for the same purpose. She doesn’t have a permanent visa – yet.

The Monte Alegre Congregation finished its revival meetings. The evangelists were Wayne Amoth and Roger Unruh.

## Brazil <sup>15</sup> News

Roy & Judy Toews spent ten days on the Colony. Roy is a member of the Conference Tract Board and responsible for the Brazil field. Together with our local Tract Board and office superintendent, he was able to get a bird's eye view of the work here, as well as give many good suggestions.

On March 16, a tract/literature meeting was held at the Monte Alegre social hall. Those present were Roy Toews, Roger Unruh, Wayne Amoth, the staff members from Brazil, the tract and publication boards, the tract office superintendent, the translators and several others. Ostensibly the meeting was to organize for a general tract/literature meeting, but in reality it turned out to be much more than that. It was an exchange of ideas and information on how the work is being conducted here in Brazil. Different decisions were reached that will have a positive effect on our overall program. Hopefully there will be more meetings of this kind in the future.

The general tract/literature meeting, which included all three congregations, was held at the Rio Verdinho church on March 19. Following is the agenda of the meeting:

Opening song      Brasil

Opening & prayer    Richard Mininger

Part 1 – Publication work

Talk: «Windows» – A presentation of our church literature      Charles Becker

Talk: The importance of studying our doctrine    Enos Miller

Talk: The importance of literature for children    Paulo David

Song: Jesse Loewen resp.

Part 2 – Tract work

Talk by representative of Conference

Tract Board    Roy Toews

Summary of tract work by office worker    Stephen Kramer

Talk and closing prayer      Mark Loewen

Ileen Koehn left for the US to see her dad-in-law, Alfred Koehn, from Wisconsin. He passed away before she arrived.

Myron & Martha Kramer and family, the missionaries in Pirenópolis, were here for the tract/literature meeting and to get Denise Litwiller, their school teacher, and Zezé Godinho, a young sister from Pirenópolis, both of whom spent some time here to attend part of our revival meetings.

Laura da Costa moved into the teacher's house on Doug Ferrell's fazenda, where she is teaching school for his hired men's children.

Daniel Martin and Clifford Warkentin have shut down the printery on the fazenda where part of the tracts used in Brazil were being printed. Anyone interested in buying and operating a printery in Brazil?

Things have changed here on the Colony in the last 24 years. Now, once a month, a fellow in town with an ice-cream store, comes out and goes from house to house selling 20 liter containers of ice-cream. Beside selling a quality product, he is the type of fellow a person always enjoys seeing drive up. There is always something to talk about.

Richard Mininger paid a visit to the missions in the Northeast. There were two baptisms in Patos, Paraíba, where Sam & Erma Coblentz are stationed. Reports coming back from this post are very favorable.

Lester & Sharon Holdeman also made a trip to the Northeast. I understand they were with Richard part or all of the time.

I mentioned sometime ago that our voltage fluctuates a lot during harvest when all the dryers in the area are running. It got so bad that we could only run our Xerox copier after 11:00 p.m. After consulting the Xerox technical department, we purchased a large voltage stabilizer, which they installed. Does it work? Faith ran off over ten thousand copies in one day – during the day.

When mechanical skills were being handed out, I wasn't around. Even so, I have developed to the point where I can change a flat tire and do other similar tasks fairly well. An incident this morning indicates that I am not as unskilled as it would appear. Here's what happened: Sylvia said our automatic washer wasn't spinning. After pulling it back from the wall and examining it's innards, with the help of a four cell flashlight, I concluded the belt was loose. To tighten it involved loosening a bolt, which I managed. To retighten the bolt and at the same time keep the belt tight, was more than I could do, so I called on Faith to help. Together we managed. After inserting the plug in the receptacle, I had Faith test the machine. It spun, but made a horrid noise. And here is where my mechanical genius comes into the picture. I pontificated: "The belt is dry." I went to the publication room and got an aerosol can of oil (something like WD-40). With the machine running, I expertly directed a stream of oil on the belt. Shhhhhh. Shhhhhh. Shhhhhh. And lo! the horrid noise was replaced by the most beautiful "swish-swish, swish-swish, swish-swish," like belts make when they're happy. It's hard to know who felt happier, the belt or I. And then it happened. I smelled a smell that didn't smell like oil smells. I glanced at the oil can in my hand. Indeed, I had just anointed my automatic washer spinner belt with cockroach spray. My good wife supportively suggested, "Maybe the problem was cockroaches." Ya.

Linwood, was your mother's maiden name Luella Mae Johnson?

The other day we were leaning out of our living room window, looking at the cows in the pasture. Faith asked our son Otávio if Grandma's brown Swiss was about to have a calf. He said she was getting to be mighty heavy, and added, "After she has her calf, can Grandma make us some Swiss cheese?"

Did anyone catch it, the words to the song quoted last month? One road leads to London, one road leads to Rome. One day I realized that "Rome" doesn't rhyme with "sails." It should be, One road leads to London, one road leads to Wales. One road leads to seaward and the bright dipping sails. Or something like that.

Corn harvest is over, at least on the Colony. A few soybeans have been cut. Here lately we've been having rains about every day. By the violence of some of the rains, it appears the rainy season may be coming to an end. Once it does, talking about low voltage...