

# Brazil News

---



No. 23  
April 1993

Editorial

## **Predictability**

Enormous sums of money are spent in an attempt to predict when volcanoes will erupt, when earthquakes will occur, which presidential candidate will win, if it will rain or snow, what the stock market will do, what we can expect out of Yeltsin.

The desire for accurate predictions is as old as mankind. In Old Testament times, prophets were widely sought after by both the God-fearing and the heathen. The incident of Saul seeking out the prophet Samuel for information on his father's lost donkeys, would indicate that even the Godly prophets used their gifts for mundane chores, unrelated to their ecclesiastical duties.

In modern society, scientists have assumed the role of the prophet, in a frightening manner. Frightening, because of the unconscious dependency we are developing on their predictions.

Here in Rio Verde, local soybean buyers look up farmers before their crops are even planted, with offers to buy their grain. The price they are offering is based on predictions made in Chicago, which were based on (among other things) long-range weather forecasts based on information gleaned from invisible satellites circling high above the earth. Weather patterns in Brazil are closely analyzed. Chicago takes into consideration government agency predictions on how many acres of soybeans will be planted. Many other countries are included in these studies. When it's all said and done, farmer Rodrigues in Central Brazil gets X Cruzeiros a sack for his soybeans because of how a computer in Chicago analyzed a long list of predictions.

We know that the ozone belt is being depleted and that our chances of getting skin cancer are increasing. We know that we have a much better chance of reaching our destination traveling by air than by car. We have at our disposal statistics on anything and everything.

Science has indeed become a powerful prophet.

## Brazil <sup>2</sup> News

And the problem isn't that science is off most of the time, but rather the opposite. It's becoming entirely too easy to believe what we read and hear.

What's the problem?

The problem is that we're being seduced by predictability. We know the dangers (and how many chances in a million of something happening). We understand the risks and know what the chances of survival are. The threat of a nuclear war seems to be blowing over. Epidemics are a thing of the past. The danger of dying on the operating table during a routine surgery are extremely low. The same is true of childbirth.

This creates self confidence, a feeling of mastery. Our future is predictable and we are in charge.

We dread the unknown, that which isn't in our predictions. No one predicted that the ferryboat Neptune would sink on the Haitian coast. But it did sink. Our prediction that God won't let such a thing happen to brethren who are engaged in religious activities was shattered, or at least shaken.

The church in Haiti has not been destroyed by this tragedy. Rather, according to reports, it has been strengthened. Heaven today is a step nearer to the Haitian brethren.

The question isn't how we would react if a similar tragedy befell us. Rather we should ask ourselves what will happen if things go according to predictions for the next 20 years.

Since man fell into sin, God has kept him in check with the unpredictable: epidemics, wars, natural disasters, famines. Humanity didn't look at scientists for survival, for a solution to every imaginable problem, including – and this defies imagination – detection, interception, and destruction of errant meteorites that threaten to zero in on the earth and create havoc (I recently received a letter from a society with a lot of big name charter members, inviting me contribute to this cause).

Life today is increasingly predictable. Statistics prophesy, tell us what to expect, including how long we can expect to live if we don't smoke, drink, have no family history of...

We remember Job because of how he reacted in an extreme situation. Maybe we should remember him even more for the fact that he was faithful in prosperity. That's where the test is. That's what determines how we will react when things are suddenly turned upside down.

I subscribe to the Nigerian Messenger (The Voice of Christian's Fellowship). I encourage others to subscribe. In Vol. 92/93, No. 2, Patrick & Justina Enike tell an experience of how their last child was born. I'm hoping this article will make its way into the N American Messenger.

It's easy to see that there is much less predictability in the Nigerian's life than in ours. Reading the article gave me an almost eerie feeling. I felt something in his article that I believe we are rapidly losing.

I understand some folks were annoyed by an article I wrote some time ago for the Christian Mission Voice where I suggested what might happen if we called in foreign ministers for our revivals. Please, subscribe to The Voice of Christian's Fellowship and decide what would happen if Min. Enike came to your congregation for meetings.

How long can we survive where life is predictable? ▲

## Politics

### **Hoisting Anchor**

Because of the unusual circumstances under which Itamar Franco assumed the presidency, until now he has concentrated on making sure the anchor held. At this point he is hoisting the anchor and getting the propellers to turning. In other words, he is taking over as captain.

In spite of his irascibility, his lack of diplomacy, and habit of shooting from the hip, his transparência (transparency – used in Portuguese to mean he doesn't hide anything, not even his defects) is standing him in good stead. The country is beginning to believe that maybe honesty is more important than brains. True. But it still takes brains.

Contrary to most presidents, Itamar is politically indebted to very few. People voted for Collor and not for his spare tire. At this point this is a positive factor. As the president well realizes, one of Brazil's biggest problems is exactly the buddy system. Campaign contributions are given with the tacit understanding that the giver will not be investigated or prosecuted for tax evasion.

Itamar apparently made no promises to get into office and cannot run for a second term. That means he has a glorious opportunity to lay the ax to the root of the tree.

In the national referendum held on the 21st of this month, Brazilians decided to continue as a Republic, as opposed to a monarchy, and to maintain the presidential system instead of going to a parliamentary type of government. This has given Itamar an added boost. ▲

## Colonization

### **Curt V. Otto Baumgart**

Dr. Curt, as he is known to the Brazilians, is a rich industrialist from São Paulo. Born of German parents in Brazil, Baumgart – that's what the Americans call him – leaves no doubt as to his ethnic background. Tall, solidly built, blond, self-assured, aggressive, blunt (which sounds better than rude), Dr. Curt is an imposing figure.

With a diploma in chemical engineering, Baumgart has successfully carried on his dad's chemical industry in São Paulo. His diversification projects include an enormous ranch that borders the American Colony and a shopping mall in the heart of São Paulo.

A number of years ago Baumgart had his eye on a choice piece of municipal property in the city of São Paulo, next to the bus station, which, in a city of this size, carries a tremendous flux of people. Because of zoning laws or some kind of regulation, the mayor of São Paulo refused to give him a permit for the mall he wanted to build.

As the story goes, Baumgart gave into the mayor's wishes and drew up a new set

of plans that would fit into his specifications. He took the plans to the mayor and had him look them over. This time everything was fine, so Baumgart asked him to sign. Since there were three or four copies, after he signed the first one, Baumgart lifted up the corner of the first copy and had him sign the next one, and the next, until all were signed.

At this point I'm using a little imagination, but there is a good chance this is what happened. Baumgart began his construction project. It soon became evident he wasn't building at all what the mayor had approved, but rather the original mall that conflicted with zoning laws. Inspectors realized something was haywire and called him on the carpet. He was not abiding by the specifications of the plan signed by the mayor.

Yes he was! How dared they argue with the mighty Kaiser? And to prove his point, Baumgart produced his copy of the building plan signed by the mayor. There it was, plain as day, the signature of the mayor on the exact plan he was executing.

A forged signature? No, no. Baumgart is no crook. Remember, the mayor looked over the first copy of the plan and signed the rest without reading them.

Yep, I don't believe that that mayor of São Paulo ever again in his life signed a paper without knowing what was on it.

The mall is there to this day. And it's a nice one.

What does all that have to do with colonization. Nothing. I just wanted you to meet our neighbor.

The different pieces of land that Baumgart bought in our area he calls Fazendas Reunidas. I don't know how many acres he owns, but it must be between 40 and 50 thousand.

At present his main activity is raising cattle. Since pastures here do much better if they are occasionally farmed for several years, Baumgart made contact with Daniel Martin Jr. and offered to rent six to seven thousand acres to the Americans.

A number of Colony meetings have been held – with good representation. Some negotiating has been done with Baumgart. It would appear there is a fairly good chance something may come of this.

Assuming that it does, it certainly will open up new opportunities in this area – especially for the Rio Verdinho Congregation.

Just one bit of advise to you Americanos who are dealing with Baumgart, carefully read each copy of the contract you sign – before you sign. ▲

## **Mato Grosso**

If the Baumgart deal goes through, the repercussions will be felt in Mato Grosso. Some, who might have thought of moving in that direction, may decide to stick closer to home. Be that as it is.

The Leo Dirks family plans on moving shortly after school is out. (Our school term is the same as yours in N America.)

The Dan Kramer family hopes to get moved to the place they bought in the Sorriso area before the next school term begins. Jorge and Dalva and their little boy plan on moving to the same area. Since temporary buildings will probably be made of lumber – which is cheap there, Jorge, a carpenter, should find plenty of work.

What kind of people should move to Mato Grosso? Especially two kinds: People like Jorge who have a skill, but almost no money, and thus, in a sense, nothing to lose. People who have enough to where they can afford to lose something and still survive, if worst comes to worst. Do I think Mato Grosso will be a flop? No. But it is something to think about. ▲

## A Brazilian Story

### **A Batida do Turco**

Mário de Moraes tells us another story today. A batida is a traffic accident. Turco means Turk. Most Arabs in Brazil are generically referred to as Turcos. So we have: The Arab's Accident.

We have a lot of Arabs in Brazil, most of them merchants. Rio Verde is no exception. They are known as shrewd businessmen. However, once they accept someone as a friend, many of them are extremely loyal and trustworthy. More on Turcos in Remembering Out Loud.

Interestingly, each nationality has its own peculiar way of mispronouncing a foreign language. The Turcos pronounce the «p» sound as though it were a «b». The one in this story speaks an especially terrible Portuguese. Mário tells his story:

Edson Aires, from Vila Nhocuné, in the city of São Paulo, says this story is absolutely true. In fact, he declares that this incident ended up in court. He never found out what the outcome was.

Crash! Two carts hit on an intersection. Passers-by stopped to watch what would happen next. Getting out of their wrecked vehicles, the two drivers began the customary argument that takes place in this kind of a situation. There was no doubt as to who was in the wrong: the Turco, a salesman whose car was full of clothes he hoped to sell. Carelessly trying to make a left turn on a busy thoroughfare, the Turco hit the oncoming car, which had the right-of-way. Totally defenseless, he had to listen to the vociferations of the irate driver of the other car, who demanded he pay the repair bill on his car.

“What ails you to make a turn like this without even checking if someone is coming?”

So began the dialogue between the two, with the Turco answering in his broken Portuguese.

“It habben. Never you make mistake?”

“Well,” the other driver began, happy to see that Salim (that’s the name we’ll give him) recognized he was to blame. “I suppose I’ve made mistakes too – but never anything this serious. Just look at all the damage you have done to my car. Think about the time my car will have to be in the body shop. If you don’t know how to drive, don’t get behind the wheel!”

“You not need be mad. I bay everything. Need not holler. Tings like this habben.”

“Ya, but if everyone drove like you do, our roads would be a calamity.”

“Take easy. Not sweat. I is merchant. I has money. I bay damage. We be friend. Take car to chop. Fix. All OK. Send bill. I bay all. I give address my store.”

Seeing Salim’s good will, the other driver began to calm down – especially with his promise to pay for all the damages. And to sweeten things up more, he was already making plans to have a number of other items fixed on his car, at the Turco’s expense, naturally. So obviously the best thing to do was accept the man’s offer to pay everything.

“OK. I’ll take my car to the shop and then we’ll settle up when we know what the bill is. Let me see your car papers.”

“Here. Write on baber. Write I bay all. Money not imbortant. Imbortant you is my friend. Come. We take drink for nerves.”

Placing his hand on the other driver’s shoulder, the Turco invites him to a drink in a little bar across the street. They sit down at a table and while the other driver copies pertinent information from his car papers, the Turco continues talking:

“Tings like this habben. First time for me. But I bay damage. You not worry.”

When the proprietor came near their table, the Turco said to the other driver, “You like drink? I take drink for nerves.”

“Make it two,” the other added.

The bartender placed two glasses on the table and poured the drinks. The Turco talked nonstop while the other downed the pinga [strong home-brew, similar to the tequila consumed in Mexico] in rapid gulps. Salim stops talking long enough to smell his pinga.

“Ugh. Terrible binga. Salim stomach ubset... Hey! Bring coffee for Salim.”

The bartender picked up Salim’s glass and served him a cup of cafezinho [a small cup of strong coffee]. The conversation continued.

“You can ask garantia [surety]. I give garantia.”

“Just sign a statement promising to pay. You have a store, don’t you?”

“On Xila Carrão Street. I give you my card. I need know brice of rebar for bay you. You get fix car.”

Seeing his new friend was still somewhat nervous, Salim offered:

“Drink more binga. You nervous. You get better.”

After downing another glass of pinga, the Turco insisted on picking up the tab. As they left the bar, he made a suggestion:

“We call bolice to see wreck. Better garantia for you.”

[Just an explanation. Here in Brazil when an accident has no victims, if the parties involved can come to an agreement, it isn’t necessary to call the police.]

“Ya...but I really don’t think it’s necessary. After all, you have promised to pay the damages.”

“But you not trust me. Good call bolice. He write all on baber.”

The other driver didn’t want the police involved in the case, but since the Turco insisted, they called in a cop who was directing traffic near the scene of the accident. After examining the vehicles, he requested, “Your car papers, please.”

The cop examined the papers and seeing everything was in order, asked, “Now, tell me what happened.”

The Turco lost no time. “I drive this way. I but on blinker for turn left. He drive fast. Stobligh turn red. He not can stob. Hit my car.”

“Hold everything!” yelled the other driver. “That’s not what happened at all...”

Salim sidles up to the cop and whispers in his ear:

“He drink binga. Not know what habben. You smell breath.”

The cop got next to the other driver and sure enough. No mistaking on that one.

“I’ve got the picture,” was all the cop said. That smell told the whole story.

And so Salim, the culprit, turned into Salim, the victim. ▲

## Uma Longa História (2)

By Jorge José da Silva

While in jail, I would remember God, but as soon as they let me go, I would think, “What’s the big deal! I’m a smooth operator, a heavy-weight.”

The truth of the matter is that inside I was shaking with fear. But the first thing I knew, I was stealing again. Stealing became a habit. There were times I wasn’t even in need. I stole for the sheer pleasure of stealing.

But then one day I got caught right in the act of committing a burglary. When the cops tried to arrest me, I took out running. I got shot in the leg and they took me to the hospital. Early the next day they threw me into a collective cell. This was something else. To drink water we had to flush the stool and dip out water with a split plastic cup the other prisoners somehow got ahold of [Many Brazilian stools don’t have an attached tank, but rather work with a valve].

They shoved our food under the door. It had some kind of a chemical spread over the top. The other prisoners said it was to tame us down, but they ate it anyway.

After six days in jail with my leg the way it was from the gunshot, I finally came to myself. I realized that God was absolutely my only hope this time. For one thing I was caught bare-handed [considered a much more serious crime], I had a gunshot wound in my leg, and worse, absolutely no one came by to see how we were getting along. I was afraid that tetanus was setting in, because to get around I had to hop and that made things all the worse.

I remember the Lord’s Prayer that I had learned at the Instituto:

## Brazil 8 News

Pai nosso que estás nos céus, santificado seja o teu nome, venha o teu reino, seja feita a tua vontade, assim na terra como no céu. O pão nosso de cada dia nos dá hoje. Perdoa-nos as nossas dívidas, assim como nós perdoamos aos nossos devedores. Não nos deixes cair em tentação, mas livra-nos do mal. Porque teu é o reino e o poder, e a glória, para sempre. Amém.

For three days in a row I meditated on this heavenly Father. When they would bring us food, I didn't eat. All I did was repeat the Lord's Prayer.

There I was. I didn't eat. I didn't drink. I was getting tetanus in my wounded leg. So it was that they finally put me back into the hospital. Then something unbelievable happened. They turned me loose with orders to get out of town.

Before I came to São Paulo I had been living with a woman from the red light section. She was eight months along with our first child. This weighed on me too. I decided never to steal again. I would find myself a job and do honest labor. I had no skills at this time, but it happened that in my home town they were trying to get men to enlist for a military career. They offered a good wage.

Even though the woman I lived with didn't like it, I took my physical and waited to see what the outcome would be. If approved, I would join the state Military Police.

During this time our first son was born. We called him Bruno. In just a short time I was called to the capitol [Goiânia] to finish up the enlistment. That is when I had to face a mad woman – the woman I lived with. She yelled at me, “I prefer to live with a man who is a thief than to have a soldier [as policemen many times are called here] as a husband!”

But I wasn't about to back down on my decision to not steal anymore. I was going to work honestly and I was attracted to this type of job at that time. Even though my woman threatened to leave me, I decided to go to the capitol and go through the nine months of training so that I could come back to my hometown as a soldier.

I went to the capitol and began training. What I hadn't expected was to go six months without any salary. And then when they did begin to pay me, it wasn't at all what they had promised. Until now I hadn't gone back to drugs or to stealing. I was set in my decision to regenerate. But that woman of mine gave me absolutely no peace. She said she was going to leave me if I kept on being a soldier, that she would much sooner live with a thief than a soldadinho [the diminutive suffix inho attached to soldado (little soldier) scornfully berates him as a no good].

Today I can see how Satan was plotting to get me back to using drugs. Shortly after this I went back to stealing.

I feel to go into some detail as to how I returned to my old life of drugs and stealing.

In the barracks we got up at six o'clock in the morning. We would shower and dress and be ready to have breakfast at seven o'clock sharp. At eight o'clock we would get into formation for inspection. This happened every day except for Saturday and Sunday, which were our days off. However, on the weekends that we were on guard duty, we came up for inspection every day of the week.

After inspection, we had classes and physical education. After lunch we had



more classes. Then after six o'clock, if we weren't on guard duty, we were free to leave the barracks until eight o'clock, when we had our evening meal. Ten o'clock was taps.

Then everyone was to go to bed and the place was to be totally quiet. One day after our evening meal, my buddy and I went to a plaza near our barracks. We always went there when we had nothing better to do. We would sit around until it was time to return to the barracks. One night as we sat there, I saw a small package wrapped in newspaper lying on the grass. By the looks of the package, I came to the conclusion that it must be marijuana.

Without my buddy seeing what I was doing, I picked up the package and opened it. It was marijuana! Just exactly what I was craving. I knew I had to hatch up an excuse to get rid of my buddy so I could be alone. I wanted to use the drug and be back in the barracks by ten o'clock. That is how I broke down and began using drugs again.

That very day some of the soldiers in my barracks were caught using drugs and expelled. But I, da Silva (my nom de guerre), was praised by everyone as a model student. I was supposed to be the best student in my class, with the right to take special classes to be promoted to corporal. Even that didn't satisfy my egoism. I wanted to make this my career and rise in the ranks until I was an official.

But drugs didn't let that take place. I was expelled from the Military Police and sent to the «DEIC», where my past was checked out. They came up with such a long criminal record that I was hauled from one police station to another for questioning.

Once again I remembered the Lord, but I no longer had the power to be faithful. The first time the Lord got me out of an extremely difficult situation and I promised never to get into that kind of problem again. But here I was again, being shuffled between police stations to be questioned. As I went from place to place, I was always handcuffed. A cop would be right behind me with the barrel of his gun pressed against my back. I would be placed in a line up for different ones to try and identify me.

In some police stations they would beat me up. In others I would be questioned by detectives. This went on for 26 days. I got to thinking I would be better off if I landed up in the penitentiary so that I could pay for my crimes and be free of all this.

Once again the Lord was merciful to me. I was pardoned and set free. But they didn't give me my personal documents back, which were being held back in police headquarters. I would have to wait two years to get them back. [Here in Brazil it is extremely difficult to get a job or accomplish anything without these documents, so this in itself was a punishment.]

It's hard for me to run all this through my memory again. Even so, I felt it would be good if I told a little bit about how I lived in those days.

Normally I would do my stealing in the town in which I lived. But on weekends I would go to neighboring towns to steal, even to some to which I had never gone

before. I got more of a charge out of this. I found it more exciting. The idea was to steal in houses where the occupants were away from home. In fact, we thieves even had a special name for this kind of theft.

Usually on Saturday I would roam the streets looking over the houses in the rich section of town. I would look for signs that the people were out of town. Then during the night I would check again to see if everything was the same as during the day. For example, if the porch light was on all the time, if the padlock on the front gate was in the same position, if there was no car in the garage.

If everything seemed to be in order and no one was in sight on the street, I would scale the wall [frequently eight to ten feet high] and run and hide behind the house. I had some master keys that in some cases made it possible to open the door, go in, steal what I wanted, go out, lock the door again and leave. These thefts were very successful, as I didn't leave any clues. I left no fingerprints. When I didn't have gloves, I would put socks on my hands. I was very careful about this.

But there were locks that couldn't be opened with master keys. In that case I would try and get in through a window. With a hard object, I would break the pane. Then I would reach inside to see if the window was padlocked. If it was, I would try another window. I was always careful to do this so that people on the street couldn't see me. I worked quietly so as not to arouse the neighbors, who would obviously call the police.

Sometimes it would take me most of the night to get in. Other times it was a matter of five minutes and I would be inside.

I'm thinking about a time when I really had a scare. It was late at night, possibly between eleven and midnight. I hadn't managed to get into a single house, even though I had a number of addresses written down in my little notebook. At one place I couldn't climb over the wall because there were neighbors watching. I went to another place and once again there were people on the street. But finally I got to a house where the coast was clear. Just that quick I was on the other side of the wall.

Before I tell what happened, I want to quote Psalms 139:7-12.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

Except for God, no one was seeing me when I jumped that wall. I tried to find a way to break in. I couldn't get the door open, nor the window. I tried to take tile off of the roof, but that didn't work either. I began chipping away at a window pane. It was extremely difficult, but I managed to get into the house. I found myself in the master bedroom, but the door was locked, so I couldn't get into the rest of the house. ▲

Conclusion next month

Emma Burn' Diary

## **Surveying Fazenda, Shipping Crates, etc.**

**Mon – Dec 22, 69**

Dan Coblentz's children here for dinner. We had smoked dried snake with mandioca. Everyone liked it. When Dans got home they had an armadillo they killed. Mary dressed it. It rained and rained.

**Wed – Dec 24**

Denton, Homer Unruh and Daniel Kramer rode horses to the neighbor's to look at some land he wants to sell. While crossing the river below the falls at Daniels, Homer's horse went down. Just its head was out of water. It finally got up. Homer's hat went sailing down the river. John got a stick and fished it out. Later in the day Manoel Noberto [the man from whom the first place was bought] came and showed the men how to poison cutter ants. They get into the rice field. We really have problems with ants.

**Thu – Dec 25**

Christmas day. Was raining in the morning. Faith baked bread and rolls. In the evening John Penners came and brought cookies and peanut clusters. Homer & Hazel and John & Joan came over too. They brought peanut brittle. Mary made candy with mint tea. We sang Christmas songs.

**Thu – Jan 1, 70**

Daniel Kramer, Dan Coblentz and some boys poured the floor in Charlie's house. Dennis Kramer chopped his toe with an ax and Charlie stitched it up.

**Fri – Jan 2**

Mary and Elizabeth spent all morning poisoning ants in the rice. Some of the men went to work on the road. John & Joan, Hazel and I planted 500 pineapple plants.

**Sat – Jan 3**

Timothy went to fish in the stream, where we catch only small fish. He made a deal to go over the top of the stove pipe. He hangs his fish in there. They come out smoked, ready to eat.

**Mon – Jan 5**

Rained over 2 inches. I helped the children fly kites. Charlie went to Pedro Pãos to take care of his foot. He sent a big watermelon back. A real treat.

**Wed – Jan 7**

The men are busy surveying, dividing up our fazenda. The owners are: Homer Unruh, Harold Dirks, Daniel Kramer, Dan Coblantz, John Penner, Dick Toews and Denton Burns. A girl we learned to know in Anápolis came to visit us. She gave us some Portuguese lessons. Fred Dirks ran a stick into the heel of his foot. Charlie closed it up with eight stitches. Charlies spent the first night in their new house.

**Sat – Jan 10**

Homer, John and Denton got the generator working today. John and Denton sawed lumber to make us some beds. Homer & Hazel moved into one end of Charlie's house.

**Sun – Jan 11**

John Penner preached this morning. Denton interpreted. Enos Miller had the text in the evening.

**Tue – Jan 13**

It was raining, so got breakfast on the one burner propane stove. I went to visit Clara Miller. It started to rain when I was leaving, so Clara gave me her house coat to wear over my dress. I slipped down in the mud. A truck came out today bringing the Ohio folks' freight. Denton and Timothy went hunting, but didn't get anything.

**Wed – Jan 14**

The girls sang Spanish all afternoon. Hazel and Sharon came to listen. I sorted seeds to plant in the garden. Denton and some others went to a fazenda to look at some goats. The Daniel Kramer family went to town to celebrate Dennis Kramer's 14th birthday.

**Thu – Jan 15**

Daniel Kramer brought some of the tools he got in his shipment to show them to Denton. The children and I picked up roots in the field all forenoon. Denton helped survey, then walked home. He saw a deer, tried to track it down, but it went into the thick woods and he lost it.

**Sat – Jan 17**

Dan Coblantz, Daniel Kramer, Harold and Les Dirks went to Silvester's fazenda to go wild pig hunting. They came home at 6:00 p.m. with four wild hogs and two ostriches. Everyone got together and divided up the meat.

**Sun – Jan 18**

We all went to church this morning. Since we have no refrigerators, we women spent the afternoon canning the wild hog meat the men got yesterday on their hunt.

## Remembering Out Loud

### Parrots

When we settled here on the fazenda, nature was largely intact. Some of the wildlife (tapirs, panthers, capybaras...) were seldom seen, except by hunters, or on chance encounters.

Parrots, on the other hand, were highly visible.

We begin with the macaws. Large and colorful, either blue and red or yellow and blue. Invariably in pairs, these beautiful creatures would majestically fly over with slow, powerful wing strokes. Totally incongruous with their natural beauty was the raucous voice which at quite a distance would announce their arrival. Hearing them reminds me of my boyhood days when farmers in the US turned their chickens loose for the summer. They would roost in the trees and then once a year, when fall came around, just after dark we would scare the chickens out of the trees, catch them, and take them to the chicken house. The noise these chickens made as we carried them upside down is very similar to what the large macaws sound like when flying over.

We once had a macaw for a pet (My wife would become perturbed if I called it what it was, but if you're the curious type, put an «s» in the blank to know what I'm talking about). It's huge beak was a most destructive device. One would be led to believe that its destructivity was directly proportional to the value of the item it clamped onto.

I might mention that we raise our pet parrots loose. They are totally free to come and go. It is a crime in Brazil to raise native birds in a cage.

We used to raise Indian chickens free range when we lived on the other place. When we wanted to have fried chicken for supper, we would call our little dog, point out the bird we wanted caught, and it would go into action. It was something worth seeing. It would begin yipping as it dodged in and out of the other chickens, never losing track of its prey. Realizing it was being pursued, the chicken would squawk like all persecuted chickens do.

Overtaking its prey, the little dog would very carefully clasp the chicken's neck in its jaws, wrestle it down, and wait for someone to come and take it into custody.

This was never done for sport, nor did the dog ever chase chickens without a specific command. One day, however, Faith heard Lucas, five years old at that time, send the dog after a chicken: "Get'em Panther! Get'em!"

Panther began to yip and the selected chicken began to cry out as the chase was on.

Since Faith had no plans of having chicken for dinner, she went out to tell Lucas to call off the chase. She went out, but couldn't find Lucas, nor the dog, nor the chicken being persecuted.

Then she spied our pet parrot. It had been putting on the entire show, imitating Lucas, the dog and the chicken.

Another trick of this parrot was to imitate the mother hens when they

called their chicks. Hearing the low clucking that meant, “Come here, I’ve got something for you,” the chicks would run to where the noise was coming from a low tree branch, but seeing no hen, they would mill about in frustration and confusion.

So much for big macaws. Now let’s go to the little parakeets. These were not easily domesticated and could be labeled PESTS in the true sense of the word.

Back in the days when rice was the principal crop planted, they would come in enormous flocks, settle in on the ripening grain and wreak absolute havoc – especially in isolated small five to ten acre fields. They could do a pretty good job of imitating a hail storm.

Now we come to the best part. The mulatas. The word mulata is used to describe a dark skinned woman who is neither white nor Negro, but usually with Caucasian features. I really don’t know why these pigeon sized parrots are called by the same name.

Mulatas will rival many cats and dogs in the affection they show for human beings. They can feel when they are appreciated. Our mulata and Otávio get along famously. It rides on his shoulder while he rides bike, or sits on the handlebars. When he plays in his tree, it’s right there with him. In the evenings when he lies on the floor on his back, the mulata comes and sits on his stomach. If Otávio turns it on its back with its feet up in the air, it cheerfully remains in this position. As Otávio goes about doing his chores, it is common to see the mulata on his shoulder, gently nibbling his ear.

Diplomatic relations between the mulata and me are of a different nature. We are mutually suspicious of each other. When I occasionally try to be nice to it, I end up finding out how hard a mulata can bite. So, when it tries to use my head as an airport, it gets no clearance for landing. In fact, I help it on its way.

It enjoys spending evenings with us. One of its favorite pastimes is to do gymnastics on an electrical wire near the ceiling. It will hang upside down by both feet, then by one, then by the other, spreading and closing its wings. It’s best performance is when it hangs by its beak, wings slightly extended, and slowly gyrates to the left and to the right.

The other night we had a Burns gathering at Leo and Mims. One of the first things you notice upon arrival is a Pekingese dog with a mulata expertly riding on its back with all the stateliness of a queen. Children, or adults for that matter, soon find it is poor taste to try and molest the dog. The mulata becomes quite violent, using its powerful beak to its fullest capacity.

We got into an interesting discussion on mulatas during the evening. Ike & Rosalie Loewen were there. They have had a mulata or two. The same is true of Stan and Mary Schultz. Rather than try and repeat all the stories they told, I’ll pick out just a few highlights and hope they will each write an article for this little paper, telling firsthand some of the antics of their birds.

Both taught their bird to sing:

Read your Bible, read your Bible,  
Then you'll see, then you'll see,  
Jesus died for sinners,  
Jesus died for sinners,  
Died for you, died for...

At this point both birds would stop dead still. As birds, without a soul, they somehow sensed it would be inappropriate to sing, "died for me."

Being a singing family, Ike's bird learned a lot of snatches of song. In the evening their bird loved to hang from a ceiling fixture by one leg, pull the other one up tight, shut both eyes, and sing and sing and sing. Sometimes it would take a song and make up its own tune, but using the correct words. After singing it that way a few times, it would go back to the original melody.

Enough. Ike & Rosalie, Stan & Mary: Brazil News readers would like to hear more about parrots. Não se esqueçam, viu. Quero pelo menos um artigo para o mês que vem, tá. ▲

## Turcos

We have a lot of fine Arabs here in Rio Verde. At heart they are still very much Arab, definitely pro-Arab and anti-American.. But, and this I appreciate, it's easy to discuss the Middle East situation with them. I can't feel the slightest carry-over of their feelings to us personally.

Especially one of the Arab businessmen on our Avenida Presidente Vargas (our main street), looks and acts like Arafat. When agitated, his eyes bulge to where it appears they will pop out of their sockets.

One day quite a few years ago I was in the police station getting some documents. In came our Arab friend. It was obvious he was on most friendly terms with everyone. Thankfully. He and some of the policemen were carrying on about something. Suddenly Ramos pulled a revolver – a real one – out of his pocket and acted like he was going to shoot the cops. Everyone thought it was one royal joke. They roared.

One time Faith and I were shopping in Goiânia. Faith made some purchases in a store. When she went to pay, because of not having the proper identification at that moment, they didn't want to take her check. Ramos and his wife happened to be in the store and saw what happened. Immediately they came to her rescue. In his pocket he was carrying an enormous wad of cash. He told her to make out a check of any value she wished (within reason, of course) and he would cash it for her right there. Mighty fine people, these Arabs.

Another time someone sold a farm here on the Colony and wanted to buy dollars to take back to the US. He heard about an Arab who had dollars for sale, but we didn't know him personally. So we looked up another Arab friend and asked him about the

man who wanted to sell the dollars. He was very frank with us. “I don’t know him very well. I can’t guarantee that he will keep his word. But, talk to his dad. If he says it’s OK, then you can go ahead. I know his word is good.” The deal was made without any problems. ▲

## One Pinga Too Many

When I had my store, a fellow came in one day and made a small purchase. The next day he returned, looked at me real quizzical like, and asked, “Was I in this store yesterday?”

That struck me as strange. “Yes,” I said, “you were in here yesterday.”

“And,” he continued, “did I buy some chicken feed?”

“Yes,” I replied, sure he was about to jump me about selling him pig feed or something else instead.

Satisfied, the man smiled broadly and sort of embarrassedly said, “Good. I was drunk yesterday. I couldn’t remember if I bought feed. I’ll go home and look for it.” ▲

## This & That

Each year the church in Brazil sends a staff member to Annual Meeting. This year Mark Loewen went. For our report here, instead of having both Americans and Brazilians present and trying to interpret it, we had separate meetings. Asked afterwards if they liked it better that way, the Brazilians felt they got a lot more out of it.

Wayland & Rita Loewen had a little girl on April 12. Rosalyn Anne (named after both grandmothers). Chubby. Looks like mother.

Jake Loewen tells of an editor that got called on the carpet by a reader because of a mistake in the paper he published. The editor explained that he tried to please all of his readers – and that some weren’t happy until they saw a mistake in print. Amen.

In the last issue of Brazil News I thrilled some of my readers in Brazil by putting the city of Curitiba in the state of Santa Catarina, instead of Paraná, where it usually is. Big deal.

Another thriller. Troy and Sonya Schmidt were here last month for a visit and Brazil News didn’t say a word about it.

Waldete, Mrs. Nelson Barros had a kidney removed.

Wagner Machado injured his arm while harvesting. The doctors want to wait a few days before doing surgery.

Crist and Anita Stoltzfus are back in Brazil. They hope to work out their permanent visa from this end. One of these days I’ll tell you how they plan on doing it. They are attending the Rio Verdinho Congregation.



## Brazil 17 News

Paul & Agnes Toews from Canada spent a few days on the Colony, as part of a tour of South America.

Remember Lula? He's the presidential candidate that visited the Colony last month.

He was to the US recently to meet with government officials. He hoped to see Clinton, but didn't manage. Since he is highest in the polls right now for the next presidential election, they wanted to sound him out on different items. One very hot item is patent piracy. For years Brazil has been infringing on international patent laws by producing medications and other products without paying royalties. When questioned on this, Lula lamely excused the practice, "We're a poor nation..." The American cut him short, "And that's why you're poor."

Corn harvest has been over for some time. Soybean harvest on the Colony is well over half over. Another bumper crop.

According to an ad in VEJA magazine, we should soon be having regular air service in Rio Verde. I will believe it only after I have seen it for six months.

Ralph & Carol Regehr and family from Canada were here on a short visit.

Walt & Alberta Redger are here to help in the harvest.

Craig and Monica Redger have returned to the US, for a while at least.

There has been a lot of flu around here lately. This is normal when we make the transfer from the rainy to the dry season. The heavy truck traffic on the Colony creates a lot of dust, which makes things worse.