

Brazil News



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Editorial

A Hybrid Religion

A common statement here in Brazil, usually uttered with the fervency of a Franciscan friar, is: “Ninguém tem mais fé do que eu” (No one has more faith than I). If judged strictly by tone of voice and facial expression, one is inclined to believe it is true. “Se Deus quiser” (The Lord willing) is solemnly used for every imaginable circumstance, including, for example, “Se Deus quiser, vou dar uns tapas naquele cara” (The Lord willing, I am going to beat the tar out of that guy).

The worst of it, there is no intended mockery or disrespect in such expressions. Rather, it is proof that “Ninguém tem mais fé do que eu”.

By all statistics, Brazil is a Catholic nation. In actual practice, it is far less Catholic than what it is chalked up to be. Historically the Catholic church has worked with the age-old formula: Penitence + money = purity. Back in the days when Catholics still took their religion seriously, they would go to the priest and confess their sins. To be restored to purity, the priest would prescribe penitence. Penitence is not to be confused with repentance. Webster says: “Penitence implies sad and humble realization of and regret for one’s misdeeds. Repentance adds the implication of a resolve to change.” Since sin was the merchandise that kept the Catholic church afloat, penitence was required, which placated the guilty conscience, and money, which placated the greedy priest. Repentance was undesirable, as it would kill the goose that laid the golden eggs.

The Puritans who settled N America were an extremely rigid bunch of people, possibly somewhat fanatical in some things, yet most of what they did was based on a solid code of honesty and morality.

The Portuguese who settled Brazil were also extremely rigid in many of their actions, very fanatical, but with a most flimsy code of honesty and morality. Just as the Puritans preached protestantism and showed little tolerance for other religions, so the

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Portuguese preached catholicism and demanded that both the Indians, and later the Negroes brought in by slave ships, become Catholics.

The negroes brought in from Africa were, of course, juju worshipers. The last thing they wanted was to adhere to the religion of their captors. But a slave is a slave. He must do as told. And he was told to be Catholic.

What happened can best be described by a very devout Catholic in Salvador, the capital of the state of Bahia.

My wife and I won a free trip to Salvador when we were in the feed business in town. One of the tourist attractions is an old Catholic church which has its interior plated in pure gold. Nine hundred and eighty kilos were used. As we were looking around, a distinguished young man came up to us and politely asked if we would like to tour the church. We didn't realize it at the time that he was a professional guide and would expect a little pay for his time. It was worth every cent we paid him.

He showed us the chair that some pope sat in when visiting this particular church, the crypts in which deceased bishops and cardinals are filed away awaiting judgment, and a lot of other interesting things.

One novel little sideline was a devout worshiper going to mass with a pocket radio held firmly to the ear so as not to miss neither mass nor any goals in the soccer game apparently in progress at that time.

But what really made the tour worthwhile was the young man's explanations when we got to a partitioned off area at the rear of the church. This, he explained, was where the slaves worshiped. What he said was something like this:

"When the slaves came over from Africa, they were all juju worshipers. In the houses where they would get together to worship they would have all their idols. The Catholic church gave them an ultimatum. They would become Catholics or else. This or else wasn't a pleasant proposition for a slave. So they agreed to quit worshiping their idols. This qualified them for baptism and membership in the Roman Catholic church.

"But there was a problem. Most of the time they kept right on worshiping in the little houses where they kept their idols. Slave owners and church fathers demanded an explanation. 'Oh,' they said, 'we're not worshiping idols. See that first image over there? That's Saint Christopher,' for example. 'The next one is Saint Matthew,' or whoever. 'See that one up there? That's the virgin Mary.'"

It's a fact that sometimes we must compromise in life. That is what the Catholic church did. After all, if sprinkling a little water on a slave's head could transform him into a Christian, why couldn't he, with a little sleight of hand, transform his juju gods into saints and the virgin Mary?

By no means did this little trick of mixing the Catholic faith with the occult remain with the negroes. Through loose morals, there was constant mixing of the races between the negro and Portuguese. This also meant a religious fusion, that is, a combining of Catholicism and juju.

The result is what we here today call espiritismo, that is, spiritism spiritualism, if you prefer.

Today many Catholics especially of the middle and upper middle class are social Catholics and closet spiritists. Needless to say, in places like Salvador, a large portion of the poor class still clings to juju worship. The same tour guide told us that at the time there were approximately 900 terreiros, juju worship temples, in Salvador.

Exactly what is spiritism? Why is it so popular, especially within the middle class?

Spiritism embodies almost everything the carnal man would like to see in religion.

First of all, it accepts the Bible, and especially the four Gospels.

Secondly, it has no objections to playing second fiddle to another religion. Its followers are welcome to accept all or part of its teachings.

Thirdly, it pronounces no hard woes on transgressions. Since everything is based on reincarnation, a good moral life will result in a superior reincarnation. A shoddy life will result in a demotion in the next reincarnation possibly that of a begger. But by being a good moral begger, it is possible to recuperate lost ground and work ones way up again. In other words, the man who willfully transgresses will have to pay for his sins during a lifetime or two, but at least no hell is involved. It is a calculated risk.

Fourthly, good works are at the top of the list. Even during this life, good works can atone for a lot of sins.

Fifthly, there is the advantage of being able to communicate with the dead. A number of years ago our lawyer's son was killed under tragic circumstances. Several months later I met another lawyer who works with him. I asked how Dr. Jerônimo was taking his son's death. "Oh," he said, "real well. During a seance he was able to receive a message from his son. He told him that he is well and happy. He also asked his dad to not try and take revenge on the one responsible for his death."

For many, many years these two strange bedfellows Catholicism and juju (or spiritism) were the hybrid religion of the people.

Today that is rapidly changing. To understand why, we must go back approximately 30 years. At that time the Catholic clergy began undergoing a subtle infiltration of marxist thinking. One of the foremost promoters of this teologia da libertação was a bishop by the name of Dom Helder Câmara (whom I had the opportunity of learning to know on our flight to Salvador). In an amazingly short period of time, this new theology swept the rank and file of the clergy. Emphasis was taken off of the spiritual and placed on the social aspect. One of the big pushes was agrarian reform, in which land was supposed to be divided up among the poor class.

To give you an idea of how this worked, we will take the testimony of a doctor in town. He is (was?) from a very Catholic family. We are close friends and when I had my store, we would spend a lot of time talking. One day he came in and told me of his daughter's first communion:

"When my daughter got back from communion, she came to me and asked a strange question, 'Dad, you have a big fazenda, don't you?'"

"'Yes,' I said to her. 'It's part of the piece of land that your great-grandpa Martins bought and later divided up among his children. Grandpa got a big piece and then divided it between his children. The fazenda we have is what grandpa gave us.'"

“Dad,’ she wanted to know and this is where I began to get suspicious ‘why do you have such a big fazenda and seu João (the hired man) doesn’t have any?’

“I asked my daughter, ‘What does seu João do with his money when I pay him?’

“He goes to town and gets drunk.’

“OK,’ I reasoned with her, ‘and what do I do with the money I make?’ She knew perfectly well that I take care of my family and seu João drinks his money up. I asked, ‘Would it be right to give seu João part of the fazenda if he is going to drink it up?’”

To put it mildly, this father was upset at the Catholic church. Was this what first communion was all about?

In many cases, the role of the church has been reduced to a social level. A priest whom we as a family knew quite well, in a very frank discussion, described the situation of his church in a few words: “Our function with the people is to hatch, match, and dispatch (baptize, marry, bury).”

The saying of the Brazilian people, *Ninguém tem mais fé do que eu*, is more than mere rhetoric. The Brazilians feel the need of a spot in which to anchor their faith. With the feeling that they have been rejected by the Catholic church, they have begun looking around. And they haven’t had to look far. The pentecostals have shoveled coal into their boilers and are going full steam ahead. The pope himself is alarmed by what is happening. Part maybe most of his visit to Brazil in October is to try and stem the tide on the exodus from the Roman church. I believe he is too late.

To win the crowds, the pentecostals are depending mainly on faith healing, speaking in tongues and expelling of demons. This too gets old.

Really, what a lot of people are wanting down deep isn’t agrarian reform, marxism, faith healing, tongues or talking with the dead. They want the truth. They are searching. They are pleading. The door is wide open.

At present we have five missionary couples. It wouldn’t be hard to place another 15 or 20.

Brazilians have a lot of faith, but unfortunately, not a genuine faith.

If we don’t tell them, who will? ▲

Interview

Northeast Brazil

When we moved to Rio Verde in 69, Luiz Duarte was a little chap about eight years old. He and his parents lived in the house by the rickety old Rio Verdinho bridge on the road that we first used to get to the Colony.

A close friendship soon developed between Luiz’s family and the first settlers. Services were held in their house on different occasions. Luiz came to live at John and Alma Penners for a number of months while he made an attempt at studying in the Colony school. Unaccustomed to a more disciplined life, both in school and in the

home, Luiz exchanged academic achievement for a return to a more leisurely life in his parents home.

Luiz moved to Rio Verde with his folks after they sold their fazenda, where he managed to get some more studying in.

For the next number of years, Luiz's life is a blur he would like to forget. He married, but wasn't prepared to be a good husband. His dad died and he received an inheritance, but he wasn't prepared to handle financial activities and soon all that was down the drain. He moved from place to place, helping build hydroelectric dams.

Through all this, something stuck with Luiz. The time he spent at John Penners and in school on the Colony wasn't in vain. A seed had been planted.

Finally that seed sprouted. Luiz and his wife were converted and became members of the Church of God. They moved to the Walt Redger fazenda. It was there that Luiz learned many of the practical lessons in life that most Mennonite children pick up at home while growing up. When things didn't go according to his liking, he would confront his boss with a "If that's the way it is, then I'm leaving", hoping to get his way. Walt's laconic rejoinder, "Then get going," wasn't at all what he wanted to hear. The last thing he wanted to do was get going. So Luiz buckled down to being a man. And a man he became. Nor did he leave his job.

Several years ago the Church asked Luiz to be the first full time missionary in the Northeast. He has now returned and is at his old job with Walt. As soon as he got back, I asked him to come over for supper some evening. What follows is a reconstruction of parts of the conversation that went through supper until about midnight:

cb: I understand the Northeast is quite different from the rest of Brazil. Did you have to make some adaptations when you got there?

Luiz: The first eight months were really rough. I got to the place that I wondered if this is where I belonged. But after that I began to enjoy my work.

cb: If today you could choose between going to the mission in Mirassol, São Paulo, for example, or going back to Acaraú in the Northeast, which would you choose?

Luiz: Acaraú.

cb They tell me that in Acaraú the people talk Portuguese differently than here. Is that right?

Luiz: That's an interesting thing. Before I left, John Unruh [a mission board member] asked me if I thought I would have any problem communicating with the folks over there. I told him no, I expected no problem. I found out that there were a lot of things I couldn't understand.

cb: What percent could you understand?

Luiz: Maybe 70 percent.

cb: Between moving to Argentina, for example, or to Acaraú, which would have taken more of an adaptation.

Luiz: Acaraú, I believe.

cb: I understand the people in Acaraú are extremely poor. What is the problem?

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Luiz: Politics. For years there have been government programs to help these people. In exchange they vote for the politicians that supposedly help them. This has created a people that have no ambition.

I tried to help them change their view on work, but in general it didn't work. This last year, for example, they could have raised a bumper crop of eating beans. But since the rainfall is very unstable and sometimes it rains very little during the year, they end up not even attempting to plant. The fact that it rained well this year and they could have had good crops doesn't seem to give them any incentive to plant more next year.

cb: What do poor people like this eat?

Luiz: Their basic food is a gruel made out of the manioc root. This root is grated and toasted slightly. Then it is placed in the sun to dry. Once it is dry, they cook it in water with salt. Sometimes they eat only this for almost months at a stretch.

cb: Did you eat it.

Luiz: No. It is a tasteless food. I asked them why they didn't fix some rice to go with it, which isn't that expensive, but they showed no interest.

cb: What kind of houses do they live in?

Luiz: They're made of stick walls and plastered with clay.

cb: What about furniture?

Luiz: They have no furniture.

cb: How so?

Luiz: Absolutely none. They don't so much as have a bed. If they can afford it, they buy a hammock to sleep in, but as soon as they get up, they take it down, tie it into a bundle and put it in a corner.

cb: What about the kitchen? What kind of a stove do they use?

Luiz: The kitchen is totally bare. There is no table, no chairs, no stove, no cupboard, no nothing. They make a little fire in a can or something on the floor and that is where they cook their meal.

cb: To what do you attribute such total poverty?

Luiz: É pobreza de espírito. It is poverty of spirit. [May I inject here that the term "poor in spirit" has a dual meaning in Brazil. It can be used in the sense that we read of in the Sermon on the Mount. But more often is used to denote someone who shows no character or self-discipline. It is in this sense that Luiz uses the term here.] A working man can make around one and a half US dollars a day. That's not much, but instead of buying something useful, all too often he heads for the bar and gets drunk.

cb: From what you are telling me, it looks to me like the Northeast really isn't a very open door for mission work.

Luiz: This is something real interesting. I have gone so far as to predict that in the future we will have a more stable church in the Northeast than where we are now.

cb: How so?

Luiz: I'll give you an example. Take Manoel Marques and his wife who were recently baptized in Acaraú. Manoel gets out and works every day. He has a little capital built up so he can buy and sell. He buys in one village and sells in another. Even though he can't

read or write, he makes money. He is talking about buying a bed for his house. I expect him to go places. There are different ones like that. When they make up their mind, they are stable.

Let's remember that their disposition and gumption to work varies a lot from one village to another. Take the little town of Cruz, where Mark Dirks and his wife are stationed, around eight kilometers from Acaraú. Those people are hard workers especially the women. There is hardly a house that doesn't have a sewing machine. They make clothes to be sold in the larger towns which brings them in some extra money.

cb: What about starting a colonization project out in that area.

Luiz: I have heard a rumor out here that there is a lot of real cheap land over there. I know nothing about it.

cb: But even so, is there opportunity? Could oranges be raised, for example?

Luiz: I think so. The real opportunity would be to get land along the river and do garden farming under irrigation.

cb: Does the river run the year around?

Luiz: Yes, there is plenty of water. It doesn't dry up.

cb: If you did garden farming, the product would probably have to be sold in Fortaleza, the capitol [around 240 km from Acaraú], right?

Luiz: No. It could be sold locally.

cb: But how, if the people are so down and out?

Luiz: Not everyone is down and out. About 30% of the population is well to do. A lot of the families have three or four vehicles a Del Rey Ford car, a Chevrolet diesel pickup, and a dune buggy to go to the beach. They have a nice house and eat well.

cb: How do these people make their living?

Luiz: Most of them have fishing boats. They make a lot of money fishing in the ocean.

cb: What else can be done?

Luiz: I took several varieties of sorghum with me to the Northeast and did some experimenting. It does beautifully in that climate. I showed the results to an agronomist who is a friend of mine. He was impressed too with what he saw.

cb: Could any other kind of work be done?

Luiz: The upper class of people have a tremendous housing shortage. A small house made out of masonry rents for around 150 US dollars a month. I think there would be a real opportunity to get into building.

cb: So far as the mission work, you're encouraged?

Luiz: Yes. The people are interested in the Gospel. Right now I'm thinking of a fellow I met on the street one day. He started laying into the crentes [literally: "believers", a generic name given to all protestant groups], saying they didn't believe in saints and the virgin Mary. He wanted to know what I thought.

That really put me into a bind for just a few seconds, to know how to answer. All of a sudden it hit me. I said, "In no place in the Bible does it say that Mary was the mother of God, as the Catholics say. It says she was the mother of Jesus. Now, let's take our

president for example. Who is it that is more important: President Collor or his mother? Not only is President Collor more important than his mother on the national scene, but if she does something wrong, he can stick her in jail.”

“You know,” the man said, “I had never thought about it that way.” This is just an example, but it shows that these people are able to grasp the truth. ▲

History

Portugal

To understand the Brazilian culture, it is important to go back five to six hundred years and take a look at how things operated in Portugal. Remember, Portugal is to Brazil what England is to the US only a lot more so. Even the language spoken reflects this influence. You speak English. We speak Portuguese.

For didactic purposes, we repeat here that someone born in Brazil is Brazilian not Portuguese. In fact, when a Brazilian calls another Brazilian a Portuguese, he is pointedly placing his IQ in the lower 70s, and not referring to his nationality.

At the time Portugal became an independent kingdom in 1239, the greater part of the populace lived under the feudal system. For more than a century, this new kingdom, ruled by the Borgonha Dynasty, was involved in a bloody war against the Moors. Once they were driven out, Portugal, under the leadership of king Dom João I, began to transform its feudal economy into a commercial economy.

To understand the importance of this changeover, we must remember that under the feudal system, each landowner was the virtual king over a small self-contained territory. Commerce couldn't flourish under feudalism simply because each landowner produced his own crops, had his own carpenters, cobblers, blacksmiths, etc. Apparently no effort was made to come up with surpluses that could be traded or sold.

Portugal was rapidly becoming a world power in the 13th century. Since the ruling class in the large cities considered it undignified to plant crops, commerce was seen as the most viable way for Portugal to assert itself on the international scene.

It was exactly here that the Portuguese merchant marine and advanced navigating techniques would shine. The highly lucrative commerce of spices, porcelain, silk, etc. purchased in the Far East and sold in Europe had a serious bottle neck. To reach the ports on the Mediterranean Sea, goods had to be hauled overland by camel trains. These caravans were slow, greatly increased the price of the goods, and worse, were many times preyed upon by marauding bands of thieves. The obvious solution was to find a water route to India and China.

Bartolomeu Dias was the first to reach the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa. Next Vasco da Gama reached the Far East by continuing on this same route. Remember this is what Columbus was after when he stumbled upon North America.

As the Portuguese opened up this new trade route, they proved themselves to be shrewd businessmen.

To this day, the Portuguese who live in Brazil are usually businessmen. In our local town of Rio Verde, we have a number of them. The Brazilians too, most of whom have Portuguese blood in their veins, are far more adept at business than at farming. The agricultural boom in the state of Goiás is coming about because *peessoas de fora* (outsiders), which would include foreigners (Americans, Russians, Dutch...) and people who have moved in from the southern states of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Paraná, where many of the farmers are of German descent.

This venturing out by the Portuguese, as well as the Spanish, sets the stage for the discovery of Brazil. More on that next month. ▲

Emma Burns' diary

Moving To the Fazenda

[At this time the Denton Burns and Dick Toews families were living in temporary headquarters about six kilometers out of Anápolis, a city between Brasília and Goiânia. A fazenda had been purchased beyond Rio Verde and moving day was at hand.]

Sat May 31, 69

Shortly after midnight we heard footsteps and someone started playing a guitar and singing a chorus, "O Sião". Then they sang the Portuguese version of the Spanish song, "Mas Alla del Sol". Our neighbors were serenading us.

We said good-bye to our nice little home in Anápolis at 10:00 that morning and left for Rio Verde. We left in our VW Kombi and the Toews family in their Ford truck.

When we got to the traffic circle outside of Anápolis at 12:00, Dick stopped. The clutch on his truck was broken in five or six pieces. Dick, Denton and some of the boys went to town for parts, a mechanic and some food. We sat under the truck until 2:00 when the men got back. We crossed the highway and ate our dinner under a shade tree.

About 5:00 the mechanic finished fixing the clutch. Dicks continued on while we took the mechanic back to Anápolis in our Kombi.

We left Goiânia at 8:10 that evening and drove for a while. We stopped along the road and ate our supper. A man came along and talked to the men. He was drunk. He left but said he was soon coming back, so we quick got into our vehicles and left. It was full moon and was nice driving.

Second gear went out on Dick's truck. Frieda (his wife) was kind of glad because that way he couldn't do down the hills so fast. This happened around midnight.

Sun June 1

I drove for around 60 kilometers until we got to the Rio Verdinho bridge [the big

river approximately 50 kilometers from Rio Verde]. It was now 1:30. We stopped and tried to get some sleep. It was quite a job trying to keep warm.

In the morning we drove to Rio Verde. We went to the market to buy some groceries. The people sensed we were coming to live there.

At 11:30 we left Rio Verde for our fazenda. We drove a little ways and noticed that Dick's truck wasn't following us. We went back and found they had run out of fuel. They switched to the other tank, but by the time they had bled the engine, we lost more than an hour.

We went to Manoel Norberto's place first (the man from whom we bought our fazenda). We got there at 4:00. Everyone was real friendly. They fixed us some coffee.

Manoel told his men to take us to the orchard to eat fruit. They have a stream running through the orchard. The trees are loaded. We ate and ate oranges and tangerines. The men brought a sack that we filled half full with fruit.

Then we started out again. The log bridge below Manoel's just about broke when Dick's truck went over it. We came to a plowed field. Denton took a run at it, but got stuck with the Kombi. We all got out and pushed. There were several places like this and each time we had to push.

Now we were driving through high grass and trees. We couldn't tell where the trail was. We stopped and Denton walked around trying to find it. He decided we were still on it, although we could hardly see it. We got to the edge of our place at 5:00. Some of the children said they saw a deer.

Dick had quite a time getting through the trees with the big truck. He lost the trail and had to go back for a ways. We went ahead and finally found the trail that goes to the falls. We saw a big ant eater running and then some small ostriches.

We got to the falls at 8:00 and got a fire started. Dicks just didn't come. Finally he came walking. The U-bolts broke on the axle. We sorted beans and got them to cooking in the big square can we brought along. Denton and Dick went to the truck and got the tent and a few other things. Frieda had bought some hamburger in town. We dumped it in with the beans and ate supper at 10:00.

The men set up the tent. This is where we women slept. The little boys slept in the Kombi and the rest on air mattresses and in sleeping bags. Denton slept on a mattress and covered up with a sleeping bag. That is how we spent our first night on our fazenda. We thanked the Lord for getting us here safely, even if we did have some trouble. We were glad it was full moon.

Mon June 2

Denton and Carl Toews got up early and went hunting, but didn't get anything. We made some pancakes in my little skillet and another skillet. The boys and Mim tried to fish, but didn't have any luck. Dick and his older boys went to work on their truck. Denton and I took them in the car and then we went to look for a place to call home. Tim went with us. We went along one of the springs and around the top end, but didn't find anything that suited us.

Coming back we saw a number of small ostriches and four big ones, but Denton

didn't want to kill them. Then Tim saw an armadillo. Denton shot and wounded it. He got out and ran after it. Stepping on it, he cut its throat. When we got back at 2:00, he cleaned it and I got it to cooking. Frieda had made some saltless squash. We didn't have baking powder, salt or sugar because we hadn't found much of the stuff on the back of the truck yet. So we mixed up some kind of cornbread with yeast in it and tried to bake it in a square can over the coals. It didn't want to raise and started to burn, so we ate it that way with our vegetable/armadillo soup. The meat tasted just pretty good.

It started to rain, so we had to quickly get things under cover, but it didn't rain very long. We sat around the campfire. The moon came out, even though it was still pretty cloudy in the east.

That is how we spent our 2nd day here on the fazenda. ▲

Here & There

To the US during the month of August:

Richard & Edith Mininger and daughter Aletha

Enos & Clara Miller and daughter Regina

Maxine Loewen (to teach school in Mississippi)

Back from visiting in the USA

Caleb & Joan Holdeman and family

Lester & Sharon Holdeman

Stuart Mininger

Valéria Gold

Here for a short visit

Alfred Koehn from Wisconsin

Readers ask...

Is it possible for anyone to move to Brazil now? What are the requirements?

—Greg Dyck

When we as a family moved to Brazil 22 years ago, the only requirement made by the Brazilian Consulate, other than normal documents such as birth certificates, etc., was a letter from dad-in-law requesting we be granted a visa so I could teach school and stating we wouldn't be a public liability.

Requirements kept getting stiffer. For a farmer, a US\$30,000 deposit was required for a time. This money had to be wired to Brazil where it was converted into cruzeiros.

Upon arrival, this money could be withdrawn and spent any way seen fit. This deposit later was raised to US\$250,000.

At present I don't know what the requirements are for farmers, but I suspect they remain the same.

It isn't that Brazil doesn't want farmers to come in. I think they assume that a farmer able to come up with 250 grand cold cash must be a fairly good farmer. They don't need lousy farmers moving in. They have more of those than they know what to do with. What they don't stop to consider is that someone with enough money to make the deposit, probably won't want to move.

That's the negative side. Now the practical side.

Most Brazilian laws have a however to them. Should someone want to move down as a farmer, I don't doubt but what things could be arranged without any large deposit. In this country so many things are decided on a case basis. Each case is studied and decided on its own merits. The law is really intended to make it easy to say no if the government isn't interested. The however's make it fairly easy to say yes if things look favorable.

So far as missionaries or school teachers coming in, it isn't all that complicated. They come in on a temporary visa (no deposit) which can be renewed or turned into a permanent visa after two years. That is what Dean Penners, the missionaries in Mirassol, São Paulo are doing right now.

Let's make a deal. If you're interested in moving to Brazil, we'll do our best to get the papers through for you. ▲

This & That

The entrance into Rio Verde used by the Colony has changed looks. It has been changed into a wide four-lane street with palm trees planted in the median. It is especially pretty at night when the entire street is lit up. For those who are familiar with Rio Verde, this double street goes all the way to the florestal. This street was officially opened on August 5, Rio Verde's 143d anniversary.

On July 28, the Rio Verde congregation had its first wedding. Jorge José da Silva and Dalva Pereira Maia. The reception was held in a large empty rice warehouse a short distance from the church.

Clinton and Marie Unruh are the proud parents of a little girl, Kathlene Sue, born on August 9.

We're in the middle of strawberry season. Those who didn't plant their own are buying from seu Robert, Valéria Gold's dad. The price is approximately a dollar a pound. He does his garden farming on Daniel Kramer's fazenda.

Carman and Celma Loewen took orders for pecans and then made a trip to São Paulo state to get them. The shelled nuts were sold here for \$2.15 a pound.

It has been officially decided that the new railroad is to be built to Mato Grosso state.

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The first stretch, from Uberlândia (state of Minas Gerais) to Rio Verde should be completed in approximately two years. One day with the Lord is as a thousand years likewise with the Brazilian government. If two years from now nothing has happened, don't blame me.

Wayland & Rita Loewen are thrilled about an addition to their family: Chrysta Joy, born on August 28.

At the Monte Alegre sewing, the sisters had a baby shower for Vera, Mrs. Dennis Loewen, and sewed for Arlo Hibners. Junior sewing made some clothes for two little girls Laura Costa is taking care of and worked on tea towels. On the 23d the junior sewing girls went to Stanley Holdemans and helped clean up the mess the painters made in their new house.

Elias & Colleen Stoltzfus and Dean & Esther Mininger were to Pirenópolis for a few meetings, baptism and communion. Sylvia Becker went along to help babysit and be with her friend Zezé, who was baptized.

Different brethren have been helping Arlo Hibner get his new house under roof before he goes to the mission.

During the last several years, grain production was way down, partially because the Banks were so slow in making loans. This year is different. Loans are already being made, for those who need them. If climatic conditions are favorable, there should be a good crop.