

## Muito Prazer

March broke winter's spell in Michigan. The lakes gave up their icy shields, and the snows melted revealing mounds of dirt and debris yet the promise of spring's beauty had already come with the first red-winged blackbirds and robins. Mallards and Canadian geese dotted gray skies as harbingers of sunlight and blue skies, breaking the monotony of winter.

It was the end of winter quarter at Baker College. The flight to Brazil was March 15, 2001. I had switched classes with another instructor who needed to teach my time slot and that would cause me to miss the last session of Mth099. Most of the students had finished their work but a few remained incomplete. I tried to tie up loose ends, leaving a list of things the workstudies might do while I was gone and they requested that I bring back some rocks and perhaps, some polished stones.

It was hard to believe I would be going back to Brazil. The donations of linens and cotton clothing, that Ivolene asked for, started coming in 3 weeks before departure. Many boxes were sent ahead and some clothing and sheets were given to Angie and Carlos Rodriguez to pack around the tools Carlos would need to transport. I sent ahead the paper and pencil donations from the college. Preparations increased with the gathering of goods. It was then that I allowed myself the belief that the trip was real.

Jason went to GNC and bought saw palmetto and black walnut husks for Paula. Robin had listed some items the previous year that the Boleys could use.

"Which do you think Paula could use the most; a bread maker or a rice cooker?"

"It takes longer to make bread!" Breadmaker it was.

"Where can I get a cow bell?" asked Robin.

Paula had to call the workers from a great distance to come for meals. A cow bell wasn't just a joke.

"Try some place like Quality Farm and Fleet."

Barb, Paula's sister, brought over medications and chocolate. I tried to talk Barb into going to Brazil.

"I think I would like to go with a church group. Right now, I am still involved in the settling of my mother's estate."

Carlos left a message on the answering machine to say that he and Angie would be praying for our safe travel. They were scheduled to leave on deputation the same day but would not fly to Brazil until April. Our concerns were over spiritual opposition. All of us had experienced spiritual trials the two weeks before departure. Tensions in our work places were not normal and disorganization was prevalent. Chad and Robin were making numerous more trips to obtain the items we were to bring with us than good organization would have prevented.

The Boleys requested that Robin send copies of her diplomas but did not inform her that they needed to be certified. A notary had to be hired to come to Genesys Hospital to look at the diplomas and verify their legality. When that was all done, the Boleys requested original documents which Robin could not provide as they were too valuable and, by law, must remain visible in the place of practice. The federal university in Porto Velho wanted to verify that she had graduated from Stanford University and Cornell Medical College, that she had done her internship at University of Michigan, her ophthalmology residency at Iowa and her retina residency at Beaumont Hospital in Michigan. She was able to obtain verification of all her documents but not Kevin Sloan's. Kevin's papers were locked in the office manager's confidential personnel file and the office manager was away the day the notary verification was being done.

If Robin and Kevin were to treat the Amazonian Indians, they needed to be certified in Brazil. That would be the core of our mission for this year's trip. How could the retina surgeon and her surgical assistant legally minister in Rondonia? The morning we left, I felt that we did not know the immensity of the task that stretched out ahead of us. Our trust in God must begin at that moment. He must give us discernment.

The flight from Detroit appeared uneventful. Chad pointed out the statue of Liberty as the plane descended. And then we were in Newark.

"Robin! You're missing an earring!" I said. Robin reached up and touched her ears. One diamond earring was gone.

"Mom, did you notice if I had them both in."

"No."

Chad hurriedly returned to the plane to look.

“Chad was yelling about not taking the earrings when I was putting them on at home. I think it’s at home.”

“I think so too,” I agreed.

Chad did not find the earrings. We wouldn’t know the conclusion until we returned to their home in Linden, Michigan.

I used a phone card to call my husband, Larry.

“You’re in the armpit”, he said.

“The armpit?”

“Yeah, Newark has just got a dirty feel. Did you see the loading docks with all those chemicals and stuff?”

“Oh! A lot of tanks, tall cranes and fleets of cars waiting to be shipped.”

We checked our bags at Continental and Chad asked if there were exit row seats. None were available. The attendant said the bulkhead seats might have more legroom. Chad asked for the bulkhead seats.

“Chad, last time we were miserable in the bulkhead !” said Robin.

“Yeah, but that was a different plane. I’m willing to try one more time.”

While we waited for our flight, I managed to read all of chapter three of the Fundamentals of Accounting book. I needed to prepare for an independent study I was scheduled to teach in the spring and needed to familiarize myself with the Dupont model and other financial ratios. Kevin brought homework for a computer class saying he was taking his cue from the previous year when I had brought some work with me.

“It will make the time go faster,” he said.

It was a miserable nine hours to Sao Paulo. The armrests could not be raised and we could not stretch out our legs. The seats were stiff and narrow. We speculated on how long the Continental Research and Development team spent sitting in these chairs. Whatever it had been, it wasn’t long enough. We did have our choice of 5 movies and could have entertained ourselves over the nine hours had all the movies been worth watching. Robin and I watched Pay It Forward. Chad watched Billy Elliot and Kevin watched Unbreakable.

There was a young Japanese man sitting next to me.

“Do you speak English?” I asked. “Portuguese?”

The young man smiled and shrugged his shoulders to let me know he didn't understand. He surfed the channels and then began to play Tetris. There is a large population of Japanese in Sao Paulo so that my presence in Brazil wasn't unique. There were many Japanese people in the airports. Robin looks Brazilian. Kevin and Chad were a little more obviously tourists but Chad especially since he is a very tall Dutchman.

We filled out customs forms on board the plane before exiting. The airport appeared to be a long rectangle. We exited left off the ramp to a long walk for international check in. The ceiling is very high with no soundproofing. Visible above was a rather artistic mesh of steel girders.

"Mom," Robin said pointing to the bottom portion of my customs form. "You need to fill out the bottom portion for non-residents. They don't like you to leave out any information."

Security checked our passports. Chad went left and so I followed. Kevin and Robin went right, "SAIDA, EXIT". We placed our bags on the conveyor belt to be scanned. Some people were taken to another check point to have the contents of their bags examined. We were dismissed.

"You could have gone right because after they said something to you they didn't really pay attention to where you went," said Robin.

Robin was relieved. She had put Boracare, an organic insecticidal solution in the bag Chad had grabbed but she had the documents explaining what it was. If customs had checked the bag, Chad might not have been able to explain exactly what it was.

Chad and Kevin went upstairs to exchange dollars for Brazilian Reals. Chad bought McDonalds' fries for us. We washed in the bathrooms being careful to rinse our mouths with bottled water and disinfected our hands with Purell. Robin was super careful after having gotten Typhoid in India. It was a beautiful day in Sao Paulo; hot but not too humid. I looked for rocks but found nothing interesting.

As before, the Varig plane was more comfortable. I enjoyed the flight to Brasilia. The food was fairly good. We were careful to order Tonic without ice and avoid the fresh vegetables. We heard the attendant say, "Rio Branco". The plane neared Porto Velho but did not stop. That upset Chad.

"What! What kind of sense does that make?"

It didn't help that our seats were in the back and it smelled back there. But the real problem was the disappointment at bypassing the place and time we expected the long flight to end. We felt like hikers on a long climb reaching a mountain peak that left us exhausted only to find the target peak was on the next mountain we hadn't yet started to climb. To compound the matter, we were delayed in Rio Branco.

The passenger in the seat in front of us, who looked Indian, got upset at being treated rudely. The attendants had served him a number of alcoholic beverages. We were unsure about what was going to transpire. An hour later, two plain-clothed men came and escorted him off the plane. Chad knew enough Spanish to be able to discern what was going on and helped us to understand that he wanted more to drink and the attendants had decided he had more than enough.

Finally, the "aperto cinto" light flashed and the pilot informed us we would be lifting off.

In Porto Velho, Fred and Paula were able to have ice cream with the German missionaries while our flight was delayed. We loaded the baggage into the familiar combe. The ground was puddled and I knew the white Keds Larry had bought me for the trip would not be white much longer. Fred had washed the combe and I knew that wouldn't be white much longer. Fred told Chad to lift his feet because of the holes in the Combe's floor. The holes were new. This time, we made it all the way to their fazenda.

Paula changed the dogs names to Harley and Davidson. Spice was now Harley. Davidson was dead. Harley greeted us rather indifferently. The year had aged him. The ground around the house was now grassy. The entire patio area was screened in and being used as the living room, kitchen and dining area. There was now a heater head in the shower. I was staying in the room Kevin had stayed in the previous year. He would be staying with Fred and Paula in the servant's house.

"The cottage," Fred called it.

We unpacked four bags of goodie. Fred set up the CD player radio that Chad and Robin brought and Fred put on one of the CD's my son Jason had made for them. Emmanuel was my favorite with Handel's Messiah next and then some selections by Michael Card. Fred was really excited about his peanut butter. Paula got a kick out of the cowbell.

That night we discussed the licensing of Robin and Kevin; also Dr. George Hamilton Sequiero might want Robin to minister to his people on the Eastern coast.

The next day, March 17, I showered and dressed being careful to tuck in the legs of my khakis into my socks. It had been a hot and humid night and the day promised to be warmer still but the socks were my safeguard against chiggers. I helped Paula prepare breakfast. When we were all ready, she rang the cow bell for Kevin.

That morning we prepared for a churrasco, a barbecue. Paula taught us how to say “Good to meet you” in Portuguese, “Muito prazer de conhecelo.”

Paula hired some of the missionary helpers to cook and clean up. They served beef, chicken and stuffed tambaqui. We also had a punch Paula mixed from orange juice, pineapple juice, fresh squeezed lemons and limes, sugar and black tea.

“The Black tea is said to bring out the flavor.”

We ate “Romeo and Juliet” which is skewered cheese and jellied cranberry. Paula baked a chocolate cake with mocha icing. There were thirty-nine people in attendance that day. The numbers swelled slowly. Early on, Dr. George was embarrassed that only a few people he had invited were there.

“Did ya notice how he stood outside for awhile?” Paula asked.

Dr. George was stationed in Porto Velho as a lieutenant in the army. His wife Claudia was a speech therapist. They had one child, George, Jr. The previous January, the doctor had been instrumental in assisting the Boleys with a sick Indian that was brought to the Indian hospital. It was Dr. George who contacted other ophthalmologists and invited them to the churrasco. It was also Dr. George who set up a meeting with a lawyer. Dr. George had advised Robin not to minister to the street children that Robin and Kris Diggins had been trying to coordinate by email for the last year. If the government discovered she was practicing without Brazilian credentials, they could bar her from Brazil and bring charges against the Boleys as well.

Paula and Kris interpreted for the various groups that formed.

I spoke to Sharon Reece. Sharon was a retired missionary. Sharon’s son John had been in Kauai in December of 1999, a month after my son Jason had been there. Jason took pictures of the steep cliffs and waterfalls in the canyon. John, coincidentally,

decided to traverse that same canyon. He went in and never came out. Sharon and Rick Reece looked for their son for over 6 months.

“He was a knowledgeable hiker,” said Sharon. “I think he was distracted and stepped on some foliage - the trails were so narrow it could have been that he mistook the foliage for ground cover and tumbled into some crevasse.”

The loss of their son prompted them to fast and pray for 40 days. Sharon prayed that the life of her son would count for something. During that time, Rick had a vision. He saw a swelling wave sweep out from Hawaii, a wave of revival. They wanted to take some interested groups back to Hawaii to minister there.

I also spoke to Geraldo Magela de Oliveira Junior, a sergeant in the army. He was drafted into the military when he graduated and served in the military hospital in Porto Velho.

Magela told me about himself, “I wake at 4 and study to 6. I read books from Amazon.com. Then I go to work. I have Linux on my machine. You know cost is 50.”

“You speak English very well,” I said. From what Magela said, I thought LINUX was a step up from UNIX which is what the computer server at Baker college used. In fact, it is a freeware type system; easy to get but hard to implement.

“I studied, few months, English. I need to learn computer but no one to teach me. Books are English. I look up words in dictionary. That’s how I learn now.”

Magela was working toward networking the hospital’s computers. The computer he had was a 166 MHz Pentium machine.

I interrupted Kevin’s conversation with Krista Reece, Sharon’s daughter, and her friend Dhelio in order to introduce Kevin to Magela. Kevin was more knowledgeable about computers than I and I was hoping he might have some information for Magela.

There were many people present that I did not get around to personally meeting or conversing with; but from different conversations, I gathered that “jeito” was needed; a special way, in Robin’s case, of cutting red tape. Dr. Araujo, who was not present, came up often in conversation. He was on the eyebank committee, the food pantry, and assisted other people in setting up businesses. He knew how to start an “ONG”, an organization non-government. He had indicated to someone that he would be responsible for Robin seeing the street kids. No one knew exactly how.

We did determine that private practices could treat Indians. The problem was getting the Indians out of the tribe. Funazi, the Indian agency, had to grant permission to do that. The fastest route might be through the federal university which had some clout with the Funazi.

All retina surgery was done in Sao Paulo. There was none in Manaus, Brasilia or elsewhere as far as anyone there knew. A visiting retina surgeon would have much to do. Dr. Paola was among the other ophthalmologists present. She was the daughter of the mayor of Porto Velho. She didn't have a very good opinion about politicians. The group she was with made arrangements with Robin to discuss the situation further.

The churrasco lasted most of the day. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves greatly. I brought BJ some Bioprotein bars which I thought would be good for his flights out to the villages. Robin brought his wife, Chris, some medications for the ministry and we both brought candy for the children. Somehow, Chris and BJ left behind the package intended for SIL and some other things.

The next day, March 18, we met Dr. George and Claudia and George Jr. for a boat ride on the Rio Madeira. Thunderhead clouds hung low over the wide expanse of the sixth largest river in the world and they were headed our way. This was a white-water river, as opposed to yellow or black rivers. At the point we boarded the boat, Rio Madeira was 1000 meters across.

"I swear it's more than that," said Chad. "It's a mile."

"It's really hard to judge distances across the water," I said.

Latin music played loudly, "Ai, Ai, Ai; Yessime..."

I asked Paula what the words meant and she declined to explain exactly but did indicate that it had some sexy, worldly implications.

People sipped coconut milk and enjoyed the cool breezes of the river. Large tree limbs were floating past.

"Most of which are below the water line," Paula said.

It began to rain and rain fiercely for a short time. One of the ferry boat's deck hands lowered the tarps that were tied up below the second level.

We searched for the pink dolphin even though this wasn't the best time of year for viewing them. In Brazil they are called "boto". We didn't see any. Botos are not as

visible as other dolphins who like to jump out of the water. We did take note of some wooden structures with their long troughs extending down into the water.

Dr. George explained that they were used to mine for gold. Mercury is used in the process. It was a dangerous operation. The government had shut down the gold mining but some was still going on clandestinely. People had died and the Rio Madeira was polluted by the mercury.

The boat began to turn around for the trip back.

“In this area, you have to be careful. See how the water eddies? The water level is high right now and hiding rock formations in the river. The captain has to know the river.”

When the ride was ended, we made a dash for the cars in the rain. We checked out the “museum de geologica”, but it was closed. I, of course, was still hoping for rocks. We followed Dr. George to Churrasscaria Paloma for lunch.

Churrasscaria Paloma was a cafeteria adjacent to a Shell gas station. The food was excellent. After we got our plates full and sat down, waiters came with large skewers of meat to show us what was available. The men requested what they wanted and the waiter sliced it off the skewer. It was more expensive. The women just wanted the self-serve food so we sat together. I loved the Polenta or fried corn bread, and the salsa on rice. Chad and Kevin raved about the Filet Mignon that they chose. All of us had dessert, Sagu, tapioca with wine.

“Emphasis is on the last syllable when the word ends in i or u,” explained Paula.

By chance, a couple that spoke English was there. We were introduced to Dr. Andrei, his wife, Monica and their daughters, Manuela and Isabella. Dr. Andrei spent six months as an exchange student to Bismarck, North Dakota. He was going to attend an endoscopy conference in the States in April or May. Fred and Paula had met this couple once before but had lost touch.

Robin, Paula and I talked with Claudia. She had been a state champion gymnast. It surprised us that she knew how to ice skate. Paula said it was difficult to understand Claudia’s Portuguese.

“She runs words together and shortens off the ending and then her voice gets real soft at the end so that you can’t hear her. Some Brazilians do that.”

Dr. George spoke about the jafarabadi or murray, the buffalo. The herds had grown from 50 to over 10,000 and were now destroying the rainforest. There were no natural predators. Even the jaguar was afraid of the jafarabadi.

Even though we were there at Dr. George's invitation, the men insisted that they should offer to pay their share. It is sometimes difficult to ascertain what custom dictates. Later I found that custom dictates that you should be willing to spend time and money in establishing any relationship with Brazilians. The women left that to the men and went outside to enjoy the sun as the restaurant was air conditioned and extremely cold.

When we got back to the fazenda, a herd of vultures greeted us. Later the men found a dead mule that a man named Delgado was said to have dumped there. One of the neighbors came with a tractor and removed it.

Paula made macaxeira fries that afternoon. Macaxeira is a root crop a little sweeter than our white potatoes. We went through some Indian artifacts and I picked out some things for people back home. Each piece was tagged with the name of the Indian that made the item and what Paula thought the item was worth on the market. I took the slips off the items and put them into her jar to be recorded later.

4 Tuvinukari seed necklaces made by the Deni	2.50 Reals each
3 Clubs made by Deni men, Haku and Kazupanu	12.00 Reals each
2 Hot plates made by Deni men	3.00 Reals each
Bow and arrows	15.00 Reals per set

Paula gave us some baskets that were made by the Paumari Indians. The weaving was beautifully intricate with different contrasting colors of material.

Kevin and Chad spied a tarantula on the wall. Chad got out the blow gun and did some target shooting while Handel's Messiah played softly in the background. He took the arrow and tipped it into kapok, moistened the kapok and then slipped the arrow into the blow gun. We howled with laughter as the parabolic arc fell far short of the tarantula. Eventually, he did hit the tarantula but since there was no curare poison on the tip, the tarantula only moved to a safe haven.

“You better watch it now. That tarantula is likely to try getting back at you.” I said. It seemed to me that Chad was having too much fun at the arachnid’s inconvenience.

Kevin and I went out to see if we could get pictures of the green parrots that were flying in the high trees. Then while Robin and Chad napped, the rest of us went over to the old main house. Fred needed to turn the water pump on for a while. Fred had upgraded the gate that separated the two properties. Paula and I needn’t worry anymore about it springing back on us. The bridge across the river was still there and in good shape. It still gave me an uncomfortable feeling to walk across it over the water. The old plastic walled shower had a bright new plastic yellow exterior. The cast iron bucket still hung overhead.

We picked lemons, limes, caja and inga fruit. The limes and caja would be used to make a drink. The caja is one of the things that must first be soaked in iodine. Because Chad’s name is Cleveringa, Paula sometimes teased Chad about being a “clever inga.” The inga is a very long pod that I have seen as long as two feet.

The cashew tree was almost completely dead. The trails left by termites were many and fungus was on many of the trees. I brought Paula an antifungal solution from the States but we did not get around to using it.

We surveyed the new Amazon house being built. The foundation was done and one wall was up.

“What do you think of it,” asked Kevin.

“It doesn’t look very well done,” I answered.

“That’s what I thought,” concurred Kevin.

Paula called us over to see a tan and black beetle about 4 inches in length. It was a harmless type. Kevin and I took pictures. Paula showed me a coffee plant with red and green berries. I forgot that one of the workstudies back home had wanted some coffee beans from Brazil.

Kevin and I took pictures of the butterflies around the flower trough before we went back. They were some of the few shots the Pentax actually recorded. I showered on returning. I no longer had to brace myself for the shock of cold water but this time, after I was naked and lathered with shampoo, the water stopped flowing. Someone else was

running water somewhere. I waited and waited and finally the pressure came back up and I finished showering.

The tarantula was gone; most likely hidden away in the attic space above the wooden beams. *How many of them do you suppose there were up there?* Fred made fresh limeade. We had devotions from The One Year Bible. From Psalms, “Lead me to the towering rock of safety.” From Proverbs, “Your own soul is nourished when you are kind, but you destroy yourself when you are cruel.” From Luke we read about baptism and sharing what you had. Earlier, we had discussed tithing and how much to give.

In the middle of devotions, Pedro came with his son. Pedro was the contractor responsible for the building of the Amazon house. He brought picture albums of his work. He was very behind on this project and assured Chad that the next time we came, the house would be done. I wondered if he thought Chad was a “rich American engineer” who might want to put up additional buildings.

Pedro brought a gourd with him and explained it was part of “chimarrço”. Chimarrço was the Southern practice of passing around a drink served out of a gourd. One sipped it from a silver straw with a filter on the end. Everyone drank from the one gourd. The practice originated in Rio Grande do Sul.

“Wheel of conversation,” said Pedro referring to its use. He said he would be back some time and we would have a chimarrco. We never did. I loved the phrase, “wheel of conversation.”

That night, I was glad for the mosquito netting around the bed and made extra effort to make certain it was tucked in properly all around the mattress. I dreamt about people turning into insects.

March 19, 2001. In the morning, my legs were itchy. I rubbed in Lanacaine and borrowed Robin’s baby powder. It was only a heat rash. The vultures were poking around outside the kitchen door. Paula let Harley out who had a brief try at running them down. We wondered if they were still mysteriously drawn by the smell of the dead mule.

For devotions, we read from Numbers about the Festival of Trumpets which took days and in which time, no one was supposed to do any regular work. Robin and Chad shared how they attempted to set aside just one day to relax and what a challenge it was for both of them. Paula shared Psalm 55, “Cast your care upon the Lord for he cares for

you.” I sensed that both Paula and Fred spent the night in deep reflection. That particular verse from Psalms was the one Paula had emailed to her supporters. Chad had been reading that same Psalm when he received the email from Paula.

We passed Suco on our way into town. He was walking. It was about 3 miles from the fazenda. Fred apologized that we were headed the opposite way. Suco was on his way to work on the Amazon house. He was walking in the heat of the day and then planning on working when he got there!

“Pedro said he would feed his workers. But he hasn’t fed them in two days. Our workers will come and tell me that they shared their food with his workers,” Fred remarked disgustedly.

We went into town to meet Dr. George at the military hospital. It was not a modern facility but it was neat and clean. We met a man whose frock said CAP CID. This was Captain Cid, pronounced CG. CAP CID gave us a tour. Robin could understand much of what was said because the medical terms were the same. We learned that Brazil did not employ medical or surgical assistants. The nurses and doctors did everything.

We met up with Magela again. He was wearing his army fatigues. He elaborated that he had been elsewhere when someone at the hospital found out he could work with computers and brought him to the hospital. He had been at the hospital for 2 months. He was proud that he found a way of linking a Linux platform computer with a windows’ platform computer.

The lunch room had a magnificent view overlooking Rio Madeira. We were advised not to take pictures except of the view.

“I look at the landscape, and I think, I very small,” said Magela.

We went into town to a small air-conditioned mall and ate Batata frijo (French fries) and drank agua minerale. Fred ordered a hamburger whose beef was thinner than a slice of tomato. I looked for rocks but there was nothing interesting.

When we went back to meet Dr. George, it was pouring rain. A stream soon developed along the road’s edge and snaked its way through the gullies already present. Dr. George was to show us the way to the lawyer’s office. The windows of the combe fogged up and it was difficult to see. A man with a young boy looked like they were

signaling us and then they drove off. Paula thought for sure that was Dr. George. After a while when the man did not circle back around and get us, Paula took off her shoes and took the umbrella and went into the hospital to see if she could find Dr. George's number or where the lawyer might be. No one knew anything.

"I've only seen him in his red car. That car was blue," said Fred.

Eventually, late as he was often to be which seemed to be normal for Brazil, Dr. George came by in his red car and we followed him to Candida and Henrique. The number "2620" was on the wall by the mailboxes.

"That's the number of our office in the States," said Kevin.

The lawyer outlined the many options Robin had, but basically advised Robin to become affiliated with the federal university to establish credentials. Robin was advised not to see the street kids.

"Well what is he supposed to say," said Chad. "He has to officially say what he did."

When we left the office, the sun was out again. On the way home, I looked at the lowland flooded areas of town. The open market we had visited last year had to be moved because the entire area was under water. We stopped at the big hill on the way home and Chad and Kevin took pictures. Paula and I walked a distance down the road just enjoying the scenery and picking up cascalha rock for me to take home. The roads were very bumpy that year. Fred zigzagged the combe around potholes and gullies with us jostling one another inside. And still the combe relentlessly bounced us up and down.

That night we had beef vegetable soup, beans and rice cooked with coconut milk. I had shared with Paula that Kricher's book, The Neotropical Companion, mentioned rice cooked with coconut milk and so we decided to try it. We had macaxeira and guacamole with jalapeno peppers. Paula showed me how to soak the vegetables in iodine.

"Just put enough in the water to be kinda orangey. Let them soak for 30 minutes. Then rinse them real well and strain the water out."

We spent 2 hours cleaning up the kitchen after dinner. Fred still took the garbage out somewhere and the water from the sink still drained out onto the ground outside. And there were still ants on the counter and cobwebs hanging down. Some things hadn't changed.

It was another fitful night of sleep as Harley barked much of the time.

March 20, 2001. We drove to the federal university, Fundação de Universidade. Dr. George was late. He had a student show us to the laboratório. The student was studying geographica. We met Marie Angela whose degree was in synthetic organic chemistry. She was from Rio de Janeiro. Chad pointed behind her. Electron orbitals covered the chalkboard. She was working on a project to record medicinal plants of the Amazon. The project had originally been started by a Cuban professor who was working with one particular tribe but when he left, the funding stopped.

We met with Miguel who was the Vice Director. He was in charge of international relations. He once taught Brazilian literature and culture at a university in Texas. Though he knew some English, Paula still interpreted much of the conversation. As soon as we settled down around a large boardroom table, an assistant brought us cafezinhas, demitasse cups of sweet, strong coffee. Chad and Robin had given up caffeine and I usually abstained as well but sipped this one in courtesy.

Miguel said Robin might want to establish an exchange program with her affiliated university and the Fundação de Universidade. By teaching, the Fundação de Universidade could credential her and she could practice medicine.

“Maybe work in the language department teaching English.”

Robin was concerned that she would not be able to donate any equipment until she had a letter of invitation from someone in Brazil.

“Don’t worry about donations at first, “ said Miguel.

I asked Miguel about the university computers. I wanted to know if a language lab was operational or if one could be set up. It sounded as if they did not have a learning center.

Robin would write up the “convenue” but each university would have its own stipulations to address. The contract would cover professors and students and serve as a general intellectual window. It would be for a two-year renewable period. Miguel was a legal translator of documents and could translate the contract from English to Portuguese.

Robin gave Miguel her notarized documents. Paula asked if I had brought mine. I hadn’t thought to do so. Paula and Fred set a date to address students studying English. They would bring with them the Deni and explain what they were doing with the Deni.

Miguel said students were reading Huckleberry Finn. We spoke about the general misunderstandings people of one culture have for another. He mentioned John Updyke's book Brazil and Alexander Shumатов's book which were not entirely favorable to Brazilians. Shumатов revealed his own prejudice when he referred to some Brazilian drivers hitting pedestrians with their cars. Paula and Fred expressed shock. I brought up the fact that Magela was reluctant to come to the United States because he thought he would not be received well.

Miguel spoke of his time in Texas and how they speak of it as its own country. He was originally from southern Brazil where there were many gauchos, similar to Texan cowboys.

We discussed the second option. Robin could learn Portuguese and take the Portuguese medical exams. Paula explained that Robin was willing to learn Portuguese but meantime would like to find a way to offer immediate assistance.

Paula tried to explain that Robin's services would not be for remuneration but got stuck on the word remuneration.

"Oh, money!" said Miguel. "There are many words for that."

Paula translated two phrases as "skin of a rat and charcoal."

Miguel wanted to know if I wanted to see the computer lab but we, I thought, had made arrangements to see Marie Angela about the medicinal plants and the rocks; so, I declined. Later, I sent him a software program for learning English. It was my way of apologizing.

We returned home. The road becomes darkened by jungle foliage at a certain point. "This is where I got stopped by the monkeys," said Fred, "There must have been 30 or 40 of them crossing the road. This is a bad area for bandits too."

As we neared the fazenda, we saw that the vultures were still lingering. Four of them sat on the wooden beams above the gate. Paula fixed vitaminhas, fruit smoothies. We ate Pringles potato chips. Our discussion that night somehow developed around Genesis chapter three. Paula asked us if we wanted our tea strong or weak.

Robin said, "strong!" Chad said, "weak!"

Paula laughed, "Well, do you think if a woman wanted it sweet and the man wanted it sour, which would it be?"

“You mean here or in the States?” asked Chad.

Several questions arose from the discussion. Was Adam waiting to see if Eve would die when she ate the fruit? Did Adam assume God would make another woman if Eve died? Was Eve alone when the serpent spoke to her or was Adam simply not intruding on the conversation?

I finally excused myself to nap. It was around 2:30 p.m. Outside, the rumble of thunder and soon a gentle rain began to fall. It was very humid and not much wind could be felt. Fred had installed ceiling fans in all the rooms and that helped tremendously when the power was on. When I got up, I went to the front screened veranda. I was sitting one hundred feet from the jungle surrounded by woven baskets, miniature canoes made of Brasil wood, and full length bows and arrows. In the background, the fans whirred and the dryer tumbled and occasionally a bird twittered or chirped. Above the rain clouds the sky was blue. Back home, at 2:30, I would be in my office oblivious of the day outside. Here, I could linger on that dead tree across the way, the one covered by the leaves of a liana. On the topmost branch sat a vulture. Closer to home, the beautiful conical Jambu trees did not have yellow flowers this year and I wondered if Fred had cut away the liana growing up into them.

Kevin had said our trip had evolved. Our original goals were different and our path was new. I took my socks off for the first time - it was good protection from chiggers but I was too hot. I did rub Blocker on them. Just then, Pedro came by. Later Fred said Pedro wanted Fred to know he had brought food for his workers.

Paula gave me a linguistics lesson that afternoon.

“Kuhukhativehina, should it be broken up or where should it be broken up? To show possession the Deni use the word, kha.”

Paula went over phrases based on the liver:

“Patient” is translated as “slow liver.” “Anxious” then would be “fast liver.”

When a woman runs away from her husband, the Deni say, “a woman vomits up her husband’s hand.” If you want something, your “liver is moving.”

She also went over some phrases centered with the eye. But I failed to write them down.

We went back into town to meet the ophthalmologists; Dr. Aduino Borges, Dra. Paola Ragnini, Dr. Llano. It was about 6 p.m., closing time. They kissed us on both sides of our cheeks with a “Boa tarde.”

I touched Dra. Paola’s arm as she kissed my cheek and she whispered, “Don’t touch.”

Dra. Paola was a thin, blond Italian. She was wearing high heels. Paula later remarked that the professional women in Brazil “dress up” for work.

“I don’t think I can go with the high heels all day,” said Robin.

Dr. Aduino was a young, tall dark-haired man with an Asian look. His wife, Erica was a tall, attractive Japanese woman.

The labs were medicinally clean. The smell of bleach was somewhat overpowering in the surgery room and made Robin’s eyes water. Fred and I sat out the tour with Dr. Llano who questioned me briefly about my background. Dr. Llano spoke a little English but Fred did a lot of interpreting between us and did a good job despite some problems with his hearing.

It was always difficult for me to explain to others what my educational background was. “I have a Master’s degree in General Science. I split the classes between Physics and Environmental Studies like Contaminant Hydrogeology.”

I knew that could still be misleading as the Physics classes were not applied nor did they pertain to the environment. I didn’t feel like elaborating. Besides, I doubt if Fred would have been able to interpret Quantum Mechanics.

After the tour, we were offered soda drinks and salgaginas, small appetizers. The Brazilians seem to be gracious everywhere we went. And again reinforced the willingness of people to spend time and money to establish relationships. We sat down to discuss Robin and Kevin’s situation. Paula interpreted.

We learned that the University would have a medical hospital with a medical college and that when the medical college was established, there would be an eye unit. There was a question as to who would have ownership of equipment if Robin brought equipment in from the States.

“Does it become the possession of the University?”

Robin brought up a Hospital paid for by the Lions' club. They require that treatment be for everyone which is what we all wanted; however, their board members were not doctors. Dr. Adatao said it must be stipulated that the board be doctors or it could become a political tool.

Dr. George swayed the talk back to the University with the stipulation that the equipment be under the authority of those doctors using the equipment. Dr. Adatao had had one bad experience and said the University might usurp control. Dr. George felt that the powers at the University could loan equipment to another hospital but that Rondonia was too small to support two hospitals. Dr. Adatao brought up the fact that the directorship might change and with it policy. I said that Robin should specify in her contract that if the department was disbanded, the equipment would revert back to the doctors donating it.

It was decided that Robin write the contract but before submitting it, have all the doctors present review it. Erica went to get the firm's fax number. It was decided email would be efficient enough although we had been having some trouble getting through to the Boley's email.

I asked what selling points did the university have that University of Michigan might want to enter into an agreement.

"It's Michigan State!" Robin said correcting me for the third time. Genesys hospital was affiliated with Michigan State, Chad's alma mater. Chad was wearing his Michigan State tee-shirt. *How could I keep confusing the two?*

Dr. George referred to the studies being done on the Amazon. Clinical trials would begin soon he said. *But Marie Angela had indicated things had faltered with the departure of the Cuban professor.* I said nothing.

Robin learned that Dr. Llano did not do vitrectomies and responded, "You'll be really busy when you start doing vitrectomies." Robin also talked about computer telecommunication possibilities for diagnosis and treatment from a distance using web cameras.

Paula struggled to interpret some words and got stuck on what "omologado" might be. It was finally decided it was "legalize". At some point she lost track and

began speaking Portuguese to us and English to them. We all laughed. Occasionally she would make a “t” with her two hands and call “tiempo”, time out; time to interpret.

Dr. George said not to be too concerned about the exact wording of the contract since both universities would probably change things. Paula explained that we were all open to learning Portuguese to which Dra. Paolo chided that if Robin learned Portuguese, no one would believe Robin was not from Brazil as she looked more Brazilian than any of them (ophthalmologists).

We learned that Dr. Llano was treating the Paumari Indians that Robin had seen the previous year. He was the only Retina specialist in Rondonia.

It was about 9 p.m. when we left the office. I climbed in front between Fred and Kevin. Paula, Robin and Chad were in the back of the combe. We headed down the street when Paula remembered that she wanted to talk to Kris. Fred pulled over by some street lights so Paula could make a phone call on the cell phone.

Before we had a chance to go on, I heard Chad say, “Get out of the car, NOW.”

I felt the seat push forward as Robin and Paula began screaming,

“Get out now!”

I began to go out Fred’s side but he was strapped in by his seat belt. I turned to follow Kevin who was already out when Robin yelled, “No, Mom , the other way!”

I turned and followed Fred out. As I was turning this way and that, I saw nothing unusual. Once we were out on the sidewalk, we waited with, “What?” in our voices and our minds.

“Tarantula!” they chorused.

“Oh is that all!” No semitruck bearing down on us. No bandit with a shotgun.

It apparently had been unseen in the dark of the combe until it jumped onto the headrest by Kevin’s head. The size of it stunned Robin and all she could do was point to it. Paula said later that it was the largest one she had ever seen. Chad took a swing at it with my camera bag which is what made the seat push forward. They motioned with their hands that it was about the size of a hand. Fred removed the passenger seat and began poking around which worried us a bit. Paula went across the street to the store to get a flashlight. No one wanted to go anywhere until “that thing” was found. Finally, Fred took the spare tire out of its well and there it was.

“Get out of the way, “ yelled Kevin brandishing the fire extinguisher. “Let me kill that thing.”

“Not until I’ve got a picture,” I yelled back as I snapped a shot. I didn’t take any more shots as the tarantula could crawl under the driver’s seat and then we would be in real trouble. Kevin took a swipe at it. At first we couldn’t see it. It was caught in the seat belt.

“It doesn’t look very big,” I said.

“That’s because its legs are all shriveled under.”

Paula was laughing at all of our reactions. A Brazilian on the street said in Portuguese, “Another adventure for you in Amazonas.”

The young boys watching must have thought we were very silly to be making such a fuss over something they see all the time.

Back at the fazenda, I looked up tarantulas in Kricher’s book. They have urticulating hairs which irritate the skin and they do have poisonous bites but they are not deadly. Paula said they cause painful discomfort.

We ate curried lamb and coconut rice for dinner. While we ate, we watched a chameleon chasing moths upon the screening. He tried four times to snatch and grab but failed.

Paula talked about having to sleep in the open platform house in hammocks and mosquito nets. One night she and Fred were sleeping in the canoe. She heard the splash of water and the sound of a jaguar coming, with its heaving breathing, “Hunnng, hunnng, hunnng.” Quietly, she tried to wake Fred but couldn’t. The jaguar went past the canoe. After a while, she heard the squealing of pigs in the village.

That night, Kevin used a flashlight for the first time to cross the yard to the cottage. Harley checked out Robin and Chad. Chad shushed him away, “Back Harley!”

All of us were extra careful with our mosquito nets that night but all slept well. The dogs did not bark.

March 21, 2001. It was a cool morning. We woke early to folded laundry and the smell of bacon. There was papaya, eggs and pancakes for breakfast. Fred led devotions.

Today the “Israelites were wandering in the desert.”

“Complain and remain. Praise and be raised.”

Today's agenda was rocks, rocks, and more rocks; so we thought.

On the way out, Paula pointed out the little black bird called a grass twit and we stopped to take pictures of a flock of red breasted, black-winged birds. Paula thought they might be a migrating species because she had never seen them before. Robin was riding in front when Fred splashed through a puddle. She had wet red feet from the uprising of the cascalha laden monsoon waters through the holes in the Combe's floor. We had forgotten to remind Robin about the holes in the floor.

At the federal university, Marie Angela was unavailable. Instead, we met Dr. George's friend, Professor Wanderlay. He was dressed in western style blue jeans and a casual shirt. He was probably in his late 30's. The air-conditioned office was strewn with books. The window had bars on it. *Some time I'll have to ask him why there are bars.* One metal shelf held samples of granite rock.

I pointed to one polished slab and said, "This must be from Southern Brazil?"

Paula interpreted. He was not the rock person and really didn't know about the rocks. He was a researchist from Rio de Janeiro. He was there on an exchange program in collaboration with a European university. He was studying the effects of mercury in the Amazon basin and the rivers flowing into it. Mercury was used in the gold mining process to agglutinate the particles so they could be filtered and collected. He promised to email me the three papers he had published in English.

Chad and Robin went outside and walked and talked about the politics of the mission, SIL and the Boleys. Robin said Chad pulled out his WAVE, his leatherman, the multipurpose macho tool that Chad, Fred, Kevin and BJ all had. He pulled out Robin's gray hairs with it.

"The normal level is less than .5 ppb. In that area, it is between .5 and 1 ppb," said Wanderlay. He explained biomagnification. Paula started to explain, "One fish eats another fish and..."

"Biomagnification," I said. I had caught the word already. Mercury accumulated in the fatty tissues of the living and became magnified in each succeeding predator.

He talked about the various species of fish in the study; the piranha, the tucunera, the piraracu. We were glad to find out that tambaqui, our favorite fish, was fairly free of mercury because it was a fruit, seed eater. That much I knew from Kricher's book.

He spoke about the releasing of mercury into the air with the burning of the rainforest.

"We have the same thing in the States. The wetlands filter toxins from the water which is why our water is so pure. You burn the wetlands and that releases the toxins into the air," I said.

Paula had trouble interpreting wetlands. I could see Wanderlay's questioning look. I tried explaining that it was water soaked land that only had a certain amount of oxygen in it. I don't know if it translated.

Wanderlay also talked about being able to do research on the boto, the pink dolphin. They died when they were caught in the fishing nets and he gained access to them through the university's connection with the Environmental agency.

Outside, Chad and Robin continued to discuss the SIL situation. It seemed ridiculous that the missionaries only came out on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Kris had said they were too tired. The road to SIL had been flooded by the overflowing Rio Madeira. Only a Toyota could make it through.

Inside, Wanderlay talked about cutting the hair of Indian tribes and checking for mercury content. His vocabulary was awesome to Paula. Wanderlay's greatest concern was for the riverine people. The fish they consumed were the ones most heavily laden with mercury.

It was difficult to track the flow of mercury because the fish traveled to and fro in the river. Wanderlay also talked about the bacteria acting upon mercury and turning it into more toxic substances.

"Like taking gasoline that spills and treating it with Pseudomonas bacteria to break it down to harmless compounds," I said.

Paula tried to interpret but we were really stretching her capabilities. Then Wanderlay said, "benefiçico," and I knew he understood.

Later, Paula said Wanderlay apologized for not being at the churrasco. He explained that Dr. George had stopped at each person's place that he had invited and given them a map of instructions on how to find the Boley's fazenda.

He seemed interested in the Boleys' work with the Indians and I asked Paula to tell him about their research on the mamao (papaya) seeds as a curative against amoeba.

"Muito prazer," I said. I could tell Paula felt we had overstayed our time there. His phone was ringing and we were sure he had things to do, meetings to attend.

We left and went in search of cafezinha demitasse cups. No luck but Chad and Robin priced the Sony TV they had already purchased back in the States. The Sony was double what they spent. This one's tag price was 7000 Reals. We stopped for refreshments and discussed the SIL situation. Chad and Robin were dumbfounded at the request of the missionaries for Chad and Robin to bring out a computer keyboard that had been mailed to Chad and Robin for someone at SIL, one of the items BJ and Kris Diggins had failed to take back with them.

On the way home, Fred decided to stop at Marbras, a rock dealer. The first thing we saw was an eight foot granite table with granite legs. It was the most exquisite piece I have ever seen. The dealer wanted 4000 Reals for it. All Chad had to do was find a way of shipping to the States. Raimondo, the dealer, gave us a tour showing us the various slabs of marble from Italy and slabs of granite from Rondonia quarries. We all thought the white Italian marble didn't compare favorably to the beautiful granites. He let us pick up chunks of scrap rock. We ordered cutting boards. I wanted one for Ivolene McDaniels because of all the work she had done collecting clothing for the Indians. Raimundo gave me a free slate slab that had a beautiful dendrite pattern embedded in it.

Robin pointed to some cardboard the men were using as templates to cut the intricate pieces of granite that would create a patterned counter or floor. The shop was noisy with the saws cutting and giant polishers skimming the surface of the granite. Raimundo gave us free samples of 4 of the 5 different types of granite found in Rondonia. We were given Amazon Star, Amazon Lilas, Prata a Amazonia, and Cafe da Amazonia. One was very much like the polished rock I had seen in Wanderlay's office.

"You should keep these samples and show them to your contractor friend. See if he would be interested in ordering anything," I said to Chad.

We stopped in town at a street vendor where Chad bought hammocks.

“No hooks,” said Chad when he returned. “That would be too businesslike.”

The men went in search of hooks. Paula had tried several times during the day to talk to Kris and work out a time for the missionaries to come out. It didn't sound like the missionaries were that interested in coming. This was very disappointing on top of being denied access to the street kids. Paula said Robin could examine the workers.

“It took us months to sort through the equipment to determine what to bring,” Robin had told me. “I paid people extra to sort through it. I'm just glad I decided not to bring the laser. The only reason I didn't was the insurance would have cost \$1500.”

On the road to the fazenda, a white breasted hawk, or falcon sat poised upon a fence post. He sat long enough for a series of photo shoots. Mine failed to turn out. Later, I would find that the Pentax was not working properly. Sometimes it worked right and sometimes it didn't. Perhaps the altercation with the tarantula had caused something to become faulty.

Back home, the men made supper for a change while Robin and Paula went over medications that Robin had brought for the Indians. I worked on my journal entries. Outside, thunder rumbled. Someone got out the flashlights and candles. I tried using Fred's bird book to identify the ones we had seen that day. We really needed to get Fred The Birds of Venezuela.

After supper, Fred asked for our testimonies and updates for the year which was a prerequisite for the following day's baptism. Chad started us off with his update.

Chad's boss had been his professional mentor. He taught finance class for which Chad was a teacher's assistant. Later Chad went to work in the man's consulting firm. The man was very rich.

“Oh yeah,” Chad said to Paula. “Millions.”

When he didn't get paid for months, Chad and his friend went up north to Traverse City, to his boss' home to see how he was doing. The man was terribly obese “Maybe even 400 pounds.” He was not looking well.

Later Robin went to a conference in Traverse City. Chad went also.

“Maybe,” Robin had said, “There's something else God wants you to do.”

Chad visited his boss again and shared the gospel. His boss was jaundiced looking. He had been in the hospital. Two weeks later, at the age of 42, he died. He left half his money to missions.

Chad also spoke about his grandfather and his stepbrother dying that year. His stepbrother had been injured in a fight and remained in a coma for days.

Then Chad took us back to his testimony. He remembered talking to God when he was only three years old. He was confirmed at 13 years of age and for him, it was real.

“I meant it.”

His parents divorced and he became embittered and rebellious. He remained rebellious between 15 and 23 years of age. Then he made a decision to live for the Lord.

It was late, but Sharon and Krista Reece came by. We were testing the breadmaker and the sourdough bread was just finished baking. We were not sure of the quality as the high humidity seem to retard the yeast action, but it was hot and fresh and definitely sourdough. It was good served with tea. Kevin served the Reeces cupuacu ice cream he helped to make that afternoon.

“We’re giving testimony right now because Fred is baptizing us tomorrow morning. It’s Kevin’s turn to share.”

He went to church all his life. Kevin was “saved” when he was fourteen. He was convicted by the Holy Spirit at a church in Flint, Michigan. He worked on a dairy farm thirteen hours a day then switched to masonry which put him in the midst of unchurched men. That forced him to grow spiritually quickly. At seventeen, he graduated and went to Texas. At 19, he moved to Michigan. He spent 10 years in Missouri as a machinist.

“Missouri is a lot like Brazil. It’s hot and humid...chiggers and ticks.”

Kevin got some hands-on training in ophthalmology and became accredited as a lab technician. In St. Louis, he worked as an ophthalmology assistant. One Christmas, his friend’s dad asked him if he was ever going to return to Michigan. Two months later, he was back in Michigan. In 1996, he took a job with Dr. Mestrezat.

For his update, Kevin shared that the church he had been at did not respond to his trip to Brazil at all. He took 2 months off to work on his house and during that time tried a different church. They gave him the opportunity to teach. He was reluctant but agreed.

“The Holy Ghost just gave me boldness and I preached on repentance.”

Kevin spoke about the computer classes he was taking and the hope that he would be able to use those skills for the Lord.

I said that it sounded like he belonged at Westwinds, the church I, Robin and Chad attended.

Robin shared her experience in India when she had everything stolen and then contracted Typhoid Fever. Miles from the hospital, sick with vomiting, diarrhea and 105° fever, she was left to die. She promised the Lord she would serve him if she lived. Two medical students decided to care for her for two days until she was better. She was invited to work in the ophthalmology department and that was when she decided to go into that field.

I shared that I was saved in 1971. If you had asked me before if I believed that Jesus was the son of God and that he died for my sins, I would have said yes and very much believed, but I had never trusted God. I had never done anything by faith. It was as if God was on the other side of a door that had never been opened. I knew he was there, but I had never gone through that door.

One night I had a dream about the second coming of Jesus and then an outpouring of the Spirit. There was a temple and people from all the nations were worshipping together. But I wasn't ready to meet Jesus. I began wondering why I didn't believe I was going to heaven when I died.

One summer day the children were outside playing and I was inside crying. Michael had just been born and it was probably post-partum depression. I told the Lord I was tired of living my life the way it was. If my life didn't amount to anything, it would be His fault because he was now Lord of my life.

I shared that one day I had been frustrated over not understanding scriptures. I studied with Jehovah's Witnesses and at the Lutheran church where I met a “Charismatic” woman who disagreed with the pastor. Confusion over who was right made me angry at God because I knew His Word said that the Holy Spirit would bring us into truth. A few days later, I opened my Bible and understood everything I read.

“You had a gradual awakening of understanding,” Fred said.

“No. One day I didn’t understand it on my own and others had to explain it to me, and then the next day I could understand it. That is why I know revelation is given by God.”

Fred and Paula shared about the time they were in jungle training preparing to become missionaries. Fred got a call that Paula fell.

“ ‘ Well, she’ll be late,’ I thought. Then here she comes being carried on a stretcher.”

They flew Paula out to a hospital where she was placed in a girdle with weights hanging from her feet. The doctor poked her with needles. There was no feeling anywhere below her waist.

Paula continued, “‘God, I just can’t take this pain anymore,’ I said. God gave me wisdom to take the girdle off and the weights. I pulled my knee up to my chest and then I heard a loud pop. The bones were back in place and I was walking by the time Fred came with the kids.”

Paula developed an infection from the needles and had to take antibiotics for two days. That put them way behind in their jungle training.

“I spent the first night out in the jungle with no fire,” said Fred.

Paula and Sharon recounted how well SIL had trained them.

“Things like putting vegetables in iodine. All that stuff, we learned at SIL.”

I shared what I knew about Lehman and Carlson’s book, Unlocking the Secrets of Your childhood Memories, and told the story of how a young Donald Trump glued his brother’s building blocks together to make structures. I asked everyone to think about their very first childhood memory and to share that.

Chad led off recounting how competitive he was. Paula also revealed her competitiveness. Kevin remembered being in the basement of his house. I shared that I was in the bedroom with my mother and father and sister. Dad was carrying me and I remember watching my mother change the rubber sheet on the crib. I “knew” why she was changing the sheet. It reminded me very much of how God lifts us up so we can see and understand.

One of the points the authors made was how people carry things from the past into who they are in the present. I said we should all think about those memories and resolve any issues that those memories reveal.

It was after 11 p.m. Krista and Sharon went home but planned on returning the following day about noon.

We had one of those bad nights. The dogs barked. I looked outside. Ghostly apparitions glided slowly and silently by along the road undisturbed by the howling of the dogs. There was enough light to make out the forms of steers. Robin and I thought someone might be stealing them. We had no phone and were uncertain about what to do. We went back to bed.

That night Robin dreamed that Kevin had gray hair and lived on a big ranch. He did activities with kids. Two boys were coming to visit him.

We felt that the ranch was Krista's ranch and the boys were Kevin's sons.

In Brazil, you cannot own property unless you are a native of Brazil. Paula and Fred had their place in someone else's name. It was the Campbells who had legal right of ownership to the Boleys' property.

In the morning, the workers came and Fred had devotions with them. Paula cooked bacon and eggs. We had devotions and then Fred read the scriptures about baptism. The workers went down to the pond and cleared the littoral grass from the pond area we would be using for the baptism. At the pond, Fred read the words of baptism in Portuguese for the workers who came to assist. Robin, Chad and I got into the water. Chad was wearing thongs which got stuck in the muddy bottom. Mud oozed between my toes. Kevin took pictures.

Fred said, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." We submerged. The water was lukewarm. Afterward, Paula dived in for a swim to cool off. In case you are wondering, there were no leeches.

Back at the house, we showered, rinsed our shoes and began packing. Special containers had to be made for the bow and arrows and the fossil. Fred purchased a 4 inch pvc pipe and Chad cut the pipe to the right size and made ends for the pipe. Robin labeled it fishing equipment, "pesche". For the fossil, I used the cardboard egg cartons.

Fred found a wooden frame and cut some thin wood to cover both sides. I used the breadmaker's foam packing material to buffer the corners.

By one o'clock, Robin was preparing to do the eye examinations. Kevin made limeade and swept the ceramic tile floor. I was exhausted. I had a feeling I was going through what I had experienced the year before; psychological adjustment to the time of the end. I overheard Paula sharing with Robin about having to get the issue of competitiveness resolved.

Krista came and we had lunch. We went out and rode the horses. There was a white mare and a bay gelding, and an eight month old white colt. Their foreheads were pink encrusted where chiggers had been at work. Krista said she had once gotten chiggers in her scalp and explained what to do.

"I washed in bleach and then rinsed and then put on alcohol."

"Bleach!"

"It's not the bleach you find in the States. It's not that strong."

"What kind of horses are these, Krista?" I asked.

"Mangalarga. Most horses in Brazil are mangalarga but there are andalusian and lusitano also."

Krista did not know if the mangalarga were descended from anything I was familiar with. The horses were brushed down and bridled and saddled. It was the first time I had seen a bridle without chin straps. Kevin, Krista, Chad and I took turns riding. It was extremely hot and the horses were sweating before they were even saddled; so we didn't ride them for a long time. The colt whinnied and kicked up his hind legs as he cantered along. It would soon be time for him to be weaned from the mare and his training begun. We unsaddled the horses and put away the tack in the "cottage".

When the SIL missionaries arrived, the eye examinations began. By now, the sound of mixed languages was familiar. It was incredibly warmer in the house than outside. The asbestos roof reflected the heat back in. There was a lot of body heat.

I went to sit next to Chad and as I did, one of the women missionaries pulled the chair toward the small American group. If I sat down, I would have my back to Suco, the worker. I pushed the chair back and sat down being a bit surprised at the insensitivity of this woman.

“We are glad you came. Robin would have been so disappointed if you hadn’t made it.” I said to her.

The missionary reassured me that, “Oh! We had every intention of coming. We just wanted to make certain the time was right.”

I didn’t press her any further but it left me puzzled. There had been too much indecision and discussion earlier for it to be that simple.

I also felt a certain embarrassment watching the missionaries stay on one side of the long table and socializing with themselves and the workers on the other. Only Paula really intermingled. The workers wanted to know why everyone was so nice to them. Why would the doctor come all that way to see them? Paula was able to explain Christian love and how God had commanded that we go into all the world.

“Christ is the one reason why we do all this.”

“Well now,” said Jaberto in Portuguese, “if we do good things like this, we can go to heaven.”

“No,” Paula explained. “Nothing you do can take the place of the bad things you do like drinking too much. You must have faith in Jesus that he paid the price for the bad things.”

“What’s going on with your eyes,” Kevin said in English to one of the workers. Krista interpreted.

“Up close, he can’t see.”

Antonio was 42 years of age. I heard Kevin explaining presbyopia to Krista. “Have him read the smallest row he can.”

Antonio got reading glasses. Suco was next. He was 32 years old. Paula later told us he was Mormon. His eyes were fine but Robin gave him sunglasses anyway and explained to him as she did to each worker how important it was to wear them outside because the intense light of the equatorial sun causes a skin to grow over the eye surface. Jaberto had some pterygium which was the skin growing over the eyes. He got sunglasses as well.

“Arnold Schwarzenegger,” said Jaberto referring to the famous Austrian actor.

The workers were a little concerned about the stinging in their eyes from the eye drops used for dilation of the pupil but Robin explained it was normal.

Sebastião got sunglasses as well. Kevin said, “Arnold Schwarzenegger.”

Jaberto showed his movie expertise by referring to the American actor, “Eddie Murphy!”

“He says with the glasses, it looks like it’s going to turn night,” said Krista.

Robin turned off the flashlight she was holding up.

“He said it’s night.”

Kevin and Robin checked Fred and Krista’s eyes. Krista had some iritis at one time. They checked to make sure her eye pressure was fine.

Guicelino Badrojo do Lees was from Curitiba. He had worked for Pedro for two weeks. He was 43 years old. Robin explained to him that most people’s vision changes when they hit 40 years of age. It doesn’t matter where you live. He got reading glasses.

Manuel and Francisco were the last two workers to be examined. They basically had good eyes but Manuel had stinging in his eyes.

“Ask him if his eyes are itchy,” said Robin. “And does it happen after he’s been cutting grass all day.”

“Uhhuh! He’s got allergy! Give him some Patanol.”

Paula went to look through the medications Robin had brought the previous year. She found some Patanol.

The examinations had begun at 3:30 and were finished by 7 p.m. Suco took out his all purpose tool and the men got out their leatherman tools and compared the different models. Suco needed a ride back to town but Fred was not recovered from the eyedrops; so, Chad drove.

Paula shared with us that she met Fred on a blind date. Fred had asked his friend, Norm to set him up on a blind date. Norm dated Paula’s friend. Paula was on crutches from a kickball accident when her friend asked her to go out on this date. She was hesitant but agreed. Fred needed to hitchhike to get there so it was uncertain.

That night he called and said he was coming. Paula said, “I don’t care. I’m not going.”

“Yes, you are!” said Paula’s mom.

Her friend called and said Fred didn’t get there yet.

“Okay. I didn’t want to wash my hair anyway.”

They called and said, “He made it.”

“I’m not going. I didn’t wash my hair.”

“Yes, you are!” said Paula’s mom.

Fred didn’t learn that Paula was on crutches until he was a block away. They had a good time. She thought he was “kinda cute”.

Paula was a Christian but Fred was not; yet for graduation, he gave her a Bible.

“My brother gave his girlfriend a Bible and they wound up getting married,” Fred had said.

Fred dropped out of Michigan State. The two were married. They were 18 years old. Paula had a Baptist background and Fred had a Methodist one. Paula explained salvation and they agreed to visit different churches. When they went to the Methodist, they got fire and brimstone. When they went to the Baptist, they got a calm, quiet sermon which moved Fred. Fred made an appointment with the Cascades Baptist pastor. He prayed with the Pastor and trusted Christ. He went forward at the next church service to make a public confession of faith.

“We were very young and stupid and immature. We had no parental guidance.”

They wanted to get away from their families so they moved to California. Paula got sick in her pregnancy with their daughter, Autumn. They returned to Michigan. Paula’s parents loved Fred. They also wanted Paula to go to college. They both went to Laturno College. Fred studied engineering and they both took Bible classes.

The discussion changed to the decisions we sometimes have to make when the future path is uncertain. Chad was at a crossroads and unsure what God wanted him to do.

“Well, “ said Paula. “God can’t direct a parked car.”

Later, we tried but failed to remember all the great one-liners that Paula said.

“Are you ready to go home,” Chad asked me.

“Yes, I am, “ I said. “ I was having a hard time this afternoon but I’ve made the crossover already.”

“I thought so,” said Chad. “We all have to make that adjustment. You’re just doing it early.”

Krista said it was time for her to leave. Paula had insight that Krista shouldn't drive alone that night. Out there, there are no street lights. The one stretch of road with jungle on either side, was a favorite place for bandits. Paula and Krista had been stopped once by a man in a vehicle. If Krista had to walk the road alone, she would also be open to jaguar attacks. Paula kept asking her if she was certain she had enough gas. Fred and Kevin agreed to drive behind her until she got to a gas station.

After they left, the workers spied another tarantula on the wall. This was a black one. Guicelino tried to kill it several times but I think his vision was still blurry from the eyedrops. We laughed and chided him playfully.

"This tarantula doesn't have the stripes on the legs like the other one," said Paula.

It was a different tarantula than the one Chad had tried shooting with a blow gun. *Could there be a nest of them in the attic space?*

Paula shared about the time she forgot to shake out her bathing suit and wound up putting it on with a scorpion inside. She could feel it biting her rump and when she went to remove it, it bit her hand as well. Fred did not have a snake-bite zapper handy. He rigged wires to the sparkplug connection of the boat motor and made a closed circuit by having Paula sit on a wrench that he had wrapped with one wire and then touching the second wire to a spot on the other side of the bites. He didn't do her hand. She still got very ill but lived.

"That's why you stuff your socks in your shoes at night," said Robin.

"You need to shake out your clothes before you put them on."

A few minutes later, Krista came walking back in. Her car had died between the hills. She was staying the night. Fred determined that it was probably the alternator and if they didn't use the lights, the car might make it back. He and Kevin went back and tried to drive her car back in the dark, without lights. They got part of the way back and had to tow it the rest of the way.

Fred killed the tarantula. Paula and Robin discussed Chagas disease. Paula said she understood that it was caused by the bite of a black beetle. They knew someone who had suffered terribly from the disease. We tried looking it up in the books. Paula had an old weathered book about tropical disease. It called the insect an "assassin beetle". When I got back to the States, I did an internet search which said Chagas disease was an insect-

transmitted parasitic disease common in South America.<sup>1</sup> It was caused by Trypanosoma cruzi, a parasite related to the African trypanosome that causes sleeping sickness. Several families of blood-sucking insects (Rhodnius, Panstrongylus, and Triatoma) can spread it. It is one of the major health problems in South America.

As the parasite spreads from the bite site, the patient develops fever, malaise, and generalized swelling of the lymph nodes. Abnormal or rapid heart rhythms develop in half of the patients. The liver may become enlarged. About 1 out of 10 infected people die during the acute phase. When symptoms finally develop, they appear as cardiac disease (cardiomyopathy) and digestive abnormalities. Patients may develop congestive heart failure. Swallowing difficulties may be the first symptom of digestive disturbances and may lead to malnutrition. Death is usually from heart disease.

“No specific therapy was available. Experimental treatment may include nifurtimox.”<sup>2</sup>

I found a picture of Rhodnius which was not a black beetle but a patterned brown beetle. The photo on the internet was supplied by the University of Sao Paulo’s Veterinary Parasitology department.

We shared some prayer needs and went to bed. We all slept well.

We had a “Paula” breakfast the next morning with sausage, eggs, mangoes and pancakes with maple syrup and wild raw honey, green tea for some and coffee for others.

A mosquito flitted about.

“You can tell that’s not the malaria mosquito can’t you?” asked Paula.

“Yeah,” said Krista. “they stand on their heads.”

We had devotions and took time to pray over the mission and the contract Robin needed to write, the work at Baker college, Chad’s call from God, Robin and Kevin’s work place. Chad gave Krista his Leatherman tool. He seemed destined to be forever sharing those things. We all left behind what we could.

Fred had said that the dead tree in the front yard was for woodpeckers. There was one that morning, a red-headed pilated woodpecker, 50 feet up and pecking at the insects burrowed in the bark. It looked a lot like the old cartoon Woody the Woodpecker.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://webmd.lycos.com/content/asset/adam\\_disease\\_chagas\\_disease#prevention](http://webmd.lycos.com/content/asset/adam_disease_chagas_disease#prevention)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

We went to Marbras to pick up the granite. It was a little more crowded this time with all the baggage and Krista. I sat on one of the bags. Robin had a certain way she was going to pack the cutting boards but the one bag was too heavy and we had to redistribute the weight between all the bags. I was glad my backpack was on wheels. Chad was happy that Raimondo cut the price for us without being asked.

“You did bargain with him didn’t you,” I asked. After all, that was part of the fun of selling and buying.

“Yeah, I did.” said Chad.

At the airport, Chad paid the airport tax. 7.20 Reals per person.

There was a blue-tone moth with a 5 inch wing span that fluttered by.

“Oh look! It’s come to say goodbye,” said Paula.

It sat for the longest time on the wall.

“I can catch it for you and you could take it home.”

“I don’t want to kill it,” I said.

Paula finally picked it up and then let it fly.

We got ourselves seated on the plane when I heard Chad ask Kevin,

“Did you kiss her?”

“Chad!” said Robin. “Don’t mind him Kevin. He’s always after my brothers too.”

“I can tease them because I’m already married. There isn’t anything they can say,” said Chad laughing.

Kevin was smiling and looked like he might be blushing. He didn’t say anything.

The plane was airborne by 11:13 a.m. From the air, I could see the water burdened areas of the floodplain. One of the missionaries said it floods every four to seven years. People lose their crops but the soil is replenished. Perhaps that was why we couldn’t find fresh pineapple that year.

It struck me that the clouds looked like a flock of sheep. I thought there was a term for that kind of cloud but it escaped me. It had been over five years since Eastern Michigan University and the environmental study classes that I took there.

We could hear Kevin sharing his faith with the gentleman sitting next to him.

About the time the plane approached Brasilia, I looked out the window. Below lay the quilted earth, olive green, with stitching of cascalha orange. Sewn in were gentle slopes and patches of jungle and terraced fields; occasionally, pools of blue, black or green water and occasionally, a pool of civilization. As we approached the more urban Brasilia , one paved road snaked its way along.

On the ground, the blue SATA and green PETROBRAS trucks came to service the plane. On the side of the engine was written:

WARNING DEACTIVATED THRUST  
REVERSE HYDRAULIC  
SYSTEM BEFORE  
SERVICING

ATENÇÃO  
DESATIVE O SISTEMA  
HYDRAULICO DO REVERSIVEL  
ANTES DE TRABALHAR  
NO MESMO BLOQUEADO

The SATA crew came into the plane and replaced used pillows , blankets and head sheets. The steward came by with newspapers for interested passengers.

“Obrigado,” I mumbled shaking my head no.

Chad was not feeling well. Robin passed him some Pepto Bismol tablets. I was itchy and took some Benadryl. It was 2:35 p.m. before the plane taxied to the runway. The sun reflected off the engine and I closed the shutter. After a few moments I felt the shutter. It was incredibly warm from the hot sun.

At Sao Paulo, we left the plane, veered left off the ramp, up the elevator to the first floor to pick up our luggage. We went to the terminal B to Continental. It was closed.

I talked to Kevin while we waited.

“So what do you think of Krista?”

Kevin nodded. “She’s a nice person. I enjoyed talking to her.”

“You two seem to have a lot to talk about. I think she really likes you.”

“You do? What makes you say that?”

“Women know these things, Kevin. It doesn’t take special discernment. Are you going to keep in touch with her?”

“Yeah, I probably will.”

“Ask her if she can take some pictures of the street kids’ ministry and the dump kids; so we can show those to our churches.”

Krista was an amazing person. She had a mamao orchard and sold the fruit. She took her knowledge of animals, farming and ranching and was attempting to teach the children some skills whereby they could earn a living. She said there are families that lived in the dump and made their living by selling things that are dumped there. Her parents’ ranch or situ was in her name as she was Brazilian born and they were not.

Paula said Sharon and Rick would not be open to Krista and Kevin having a relationship because Kevin was divorced.

“But she divorced him,” I had said. “The unbelieving spouse can leave.”

Robin and I went souvenir hunting. We found all we wanted at a small corner shop: t-shirts, polished stones and sushi stones. From where we sat, we could keep an eye on the Continental line. When it began to fill, we took our place in line. There was less pomp this time. Chad went through first and said there was no airport tax. They wanted to charge me and I said, “No airport tax.” The woman checked with the next station over and did not charge me. I indicated to Kevin who was still in line waiting, “Don’t pay the airport tax.”

We went to McDonald’s and then on to the bookstore. I looked for John Updyke’s book but settled instead for Robert Browning. I was hoping Browning would relax me or enthrall me so I could have a pleasant 9 hour flight. Neither happened. I tried playing several games of Tetris and watched 30 minutes of Unbreakable. It wasn’t worth it. Kevin was the only one who slept all the way. The rest of us looked with envy at his blanketed, still body. I finally lay on the floor and slept for about an hour before the steward woke me. Kevin explained that he had his feet on the rod beneath the seat in front of him and two pillows behind his lower back which allowed him to stretch out.

“We’ll certainly try that next time.”

In Newark, we went quickly through immigration, picked up our luggage and rounded the corner and rechecked our bags. We were in terminal B.

“I think the baggage is supposed to go to Northwest,” Robin said.

“It’s all one now. It’s still Continental,” said Chad. We checked our bags.

Chad thought departure was in terminal C so we caught the monorail to C. We got a snack at Au Bon Pain. I called Larry with a phone card.

“I have to clean the kitchen,” he said. “You know, all the dirt the dogs bring in.”

“Dogs?” I asked. We had one dog, a bandogge; but he is very large.

“You know what I mean. Don’t forget I leave tomorrow.”

“One minute is up. Thank you for using phone card.”

We looked for our gate. No gate. We turned around and went back to B. Chad got the tickets taken care of. He got first class for me. By 9:25 a.m., the plane was airborne. Down below, a gray-brown ocean of granite and steel. Already my heart ached for Brazil. I had a good breakfast in first class and rested well though I didn’t sleep. The others didn’t eat well.

Detroit was 31° F. We lost two bags of luggage. Robin found the oversized pvc pipe. It had been slit open but nothing was missing. Robin said she wanted to go to the Continental terminal and look for the other bags. They were there. On the way home, we discussed the next trip.

“I think,” Robin said, “Next time it will be the boat ride to see the Deni.”

We talked about doing a lay over somewhere in South America before the final leg of flight. It was a shame to come all that distance and not see more of the country. Perhaps next year, we should try the Galapagos or Chile or Peru or even really see Sao Paulo.

Back home, Kevin emailed Krista. Robin found her diamond earring. I showered at Robin’s house and rested for a couple of hours while she sorted and separated our things and put everything in the wash. The cutting boards had an oily residue on them which made everything smell like gasoline

It took one and a half hours to drive home and so I left before dark. Larry was already asleep. I put the necklaces in alcohol and separated things I would take to school from souvenirs for the family. I had gotten my rocks after all - beautiful granite and

polished stones purchased in the airport. I did a load of wash. The family had let my tomato seedlings die. The vet said the dog had three kinds of worms. He had eaten a rubber football and threw up.

I thought about what Chad said while we sat in one of the airports waiting for our return flight. 'It doesn't seem like it's over.'

"No," I said. "It seems like were sitting here getting ready to go to Brazil."

"Yeah. Everything just went so fast."

The coming year would go fast as well. We talked about returning in September of 2002. Perhaps we could avoid the rainy season and also the bulk of the dry season when the air would be choked with the smoke of burning.

"It is so bad on some days that the government sometimes declares emergencies where burning is not allowed."

We needed to plan and begin preparing now, yet I prayed that God would help me just take it day by day and live life fully in the daily routine of things. Whatever new "doors" we would venture through, I wanted only God to open.

I replaced the batteries of the Olympus digital camera. The shots I took were still there. I lost many pictures due to the faulty old Pentax. I was reluctant to give it up as I felt it had a great zoom lens attachment which I found out later was the real culprit. I was glad the others had taken photo shots.

Later, I researched some language sites and then went out and bought the others the same language program I had bought a year earlier. I felt more comfortable with the language at that point and had more confidence that I would be more diligent in learning it. There were two things that the Lord knows I have questioned him about; communication and the environment. Scriptures say that Jesus broke down the dividing wall of hostility to restore oneness - communication. It also says that Christ came to restore all of creation - environment. I believed this was the direction that God was moving. I would continue to pray as I had been - restoration of communication and the environment.

In subsequent days, Magela returned my email test message. I received the language books ordered from Amazon.com. We all exchanged photos; and the Boleys emailed that the Indians came for a visit and looked very thin. Their gardens had been

destroyed by leaf cutter ants. The Boleys had gone to the Universidade and conducted a class with Miguel's language students. It had gone very well.

“Miguel is now the director and he asked about how the process was coming along. He spoke with the Chancellor of all the federal university and the Chancellor is anxious for the proposal. ” *What could I say?*

Some packages arrived in Porto Velho in record 2 ½ weeks after I posted them. The packages had been inspected. I expected that and only sent tee-shirts and sheets that were donated by Baker students and staff. It was good because the Indians were able to take them back to their village.

April 14, 2001 I did not hear from Brazil for two weeks; yet God kept it in the forefront of my mind. Jason called me to watch a program on TV. It was CNN Perspective. It was on Mercury poisoning of the Amazon.

Chad fasted for a week. There are issues at Genesys and Dr. Mestrezat's practice. We were worried about Kevin. The Reece's did not want Kevin email corresponding with Krista without their inclusion. Kevin's relationship with the other women at Dr. Mestrezat's practice came to a climax. Chad was still looking for another position. I struggled with what I should do concerning communication with the university. If there was any preparation work to be done, God would have to lay that on my heart.

April 21, 2001 Paula called. She and Fred had continued to work with the Deni Indians on translation. The tribe contracted some type of “cold” and secondary infections were possible with their low amount of immunity. I called Robin for advice and forwarded the information on to the Boleys. Robin's email was still not getting through. Paula mentioned being under spiritual attack and referred to “2 coats” which is the story about sharing what you have and if asked for a garment, “give the cloak as well.” The Indians may have asked for more than the Boleys could humanly afford. They were inclined, if it meant the salvation of the Indians, to give whatever was asked for. It turned out that the Indians wanted some type of river craft and it was believed that the traders were pressuring them to request it from the Boleys.

The struggle was ongoing. Where it would lead, only time would reveal.