

Central Brazil Mission

BULLETIN No. 3

Presbyterian Church U. S. A.

ON THE TRAIL TO PONTE NOVA



MR. AND MRS. H. C. ANDERSON—MR. S. I. GRAHAM—MRS. P. G. BAKER.

Reaping The Harvest

The work of the Central Brazil Mission has now reached a state in which the results of the years of labor expended in the evangelization of the States of Bahia, North Minas and Sergipe are beginning to be felt. The Presbytery is adding two ministers to its number making ten Brazilian ministers; and our two ministerial candidatures are showing great promise. Ponte Nova students are found in many places giving good testimony of their school and its influence in their lives. Perhaps the most interesting case now being the presence in the Bahia Church of four ex-Ponte Nova boys who are to the fore in all its activities and have withstood the temptations of a large city. Already we are receiving into our churches the second generation and in some cases the third of believers.

But the opportunities are vast and clamorous. The forces of the Roman Catholic Church are never still. After the recent revolt in the Lavras field, there has

been a noticeable recrudescence of Romansim in Lengóes, led by the chief who believes that the patron saint of the town helped him to gain his recent victory. But this is merely local. A most determined effort was made recently to bring about the union of Church and State, and to introduce the Roman Catholic Catechism in the public schools, alleging that as the Roman Catholic religion was that of the majority it was reasonable that it should be taught in the schools. Protests flowed in in the form of letters, manifestos, round robins, and telegrams from all sides, and the proposal fell through. This gives an interesting side-light on the increasing force of public opinion against the encroachments of the Church. If this body of people who represent this opinion are not to be spiritualistic and materialistic, we must be ready with men and literature to lead them to the One who alone can guide them in the paths of justice and righteousness.

1925 A Hard Year

The year 1925 has been a hard year for the workers of our interior station, Ponte Nova. Mrs. Reese writes of some of the conditions that made it so:

«The year 1925 may have been a holy year in the Roman Catholic Church, when multitudes of people visited Rome and the Pope, but here in Central Brazil, we have been tempted to imagine that the occurrence of a holy year for Roman Catholicism has brought anything but blessing in temporal conditions in at least one part of their domains. A great part of Brazil has passed through political disturbances, many of which appeared extremely minor when commented upon in tiny paragraphs in the home papers, and extremely major when they caused annoyances and perplexing problems to be one's daily meat.

The most noticeable disturbance here was when a powerful chief, whose center lies about 35 miles from Ponte Nova, was attacked by the State Government. In Ponte Nova and the whole Lavras field considerable inconvenience was felt, as the missionaries were almost completely isolated from the outside world, and were often puzzled as to how to observe a complete neutrality and yet succour and shelter the afflicted and panic-stricken.

Before this uncomfortable experience was fairly over a drought had set in affecting not only the State of Bahia but almost the whole of Brazil. It is not so rare for the thunder rains to fail, but it is very rare for a drought to prevail during the winter months, and prices of food stuffs rose to an unprecedented degree. This has been augmented by the rise in exchange which brought about a violent drop in the price of cotton and coffee and other products for export. This caused immense loss.

Still another item to our tale of woe has to be added. Ponte Nova has had an unprecedented run of sickness, pupil after pupil falling a victim to an impetuous form of malaria; some suffering more seriously than others, but probably none running a temperature for less than 21 days. After the school closed the most serious case of all remained and news came in from 60 miles away of the death of a most promising girl who had expected to enter the hospital next year to be trained as a nurse. Among the missionaries of the Station, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Graham and Mr. Bixler have been the victims,

Bubonic plague has also been present, causing considerable mortality at two points near Ponte Nova».

A NOVEL INTERPRETATION

Mr. F. E. Johnson is the evangelist in charge of the Lavras field. During the course of one of his evangelistic trips, Mr. Johnson met with the following experiences: «While traveling last year we met a very novel

interpretation of the Bible. A man bought a Gospel of Luke for two cents from a boy who probably received it free. Since he could not read he showed it to another who could. The book was opened to Luke 20:38 and they read «He is not God», giving the hearer the impression that the book taught that God is not God. The man immediately tore that page out of the book to show to his friends. In considering this event we must remember that people of some education use the same method of interpretation. That is, taking a part of a sentence to prove a dogma. By the same method we can prove anything from the Bible. My Brazilian associate on the trip happened on the scene, read the passage and made an explanation. All of this occurred in the public market place, being heard by a group who gathered to see what was happening.

On the second night of our stay in a certain village the priest convoked a meeting for the purpose of explaining the errors of our sect. The chief man of the town sent word asking that we postpone our meeting till after the conclusion of the meeting convoked by the opposition. We did so and after the meeting in the Roman Catholic Church, almost all the people came to our services».

Of One Fellowship

Mr. Peter G. Baker is the latest evangelist to be added to the rolls of the Central Brazil Mission. In the following article he describes a first year impression:

«Memory readily brings before my eyes a picture of a little church nestling among the mountains of western Montana in the U. S. A., where I preached my first sermon to a group of Holland pioneers, whose souls were filled with true Calvinistic zeal and piety, and whose faces shone with Christian love, as they sang gospel hymns to the slow tempo of Dutch psalms. And memory more readily brings before my eyes the picture of a house nestling between the banana trees of Abacaxi in the city of Bahia; the house of Dona Maria do Carmo, where I preached my first sermon in Portuguese to a group of Brazilian believers. Instead of white faces, I looked into black ones; instead of looking into the faces of men and women whose fathers and mothers and grandparents before them, had been trained in the knowledge of spiritual things as revealed in Christ Jesus, I looked into the faces of men and women whose ancestors had been voodoo worshipers in Africa, or who had been dominated by the idolatrous practices of Romanism. But in those black faces at Abacaxi I saw reflected the same Christian love that I had seen in Montana; tongues spoke of the same Redeemer and Saviour; voices sang the same old hymns to the same slow tempo. In that home I saw the results of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit which I had seen manifested some five years ago in Montana».

Dr. Wood Becomes a Military Surgeon

In making a report of the Medical work in the Central Brazil Mission for the past year, Dr. Wood describes the year as one of many problems and uncertainties. During the early part of last year the work of the clinic began to develop rapidly, averaging an operation a day for the first two weeks of January. But when a revolution broke out in the vicinity, the work of the clinic was very much interrupted as no people would travel in the zone of operations.

"However", says Dr. Wood, "there was quite a little military surgery to be done, as extracting bullets etc., the service for which, was expected to be contributed to cause. During the year the building on the hospital has gone ahead under the able direction of Mr. Johnson. While the revolution was in progress, many who were forced out of employment, found a chance to earn a living by working on the hospital. The work has gone steadily but slowly forward. The total number of patients attended during the year was 14,593; of this number 2,584 were new patients. The operations totaled 125; minor surgical procedures, 145; maternity cases, 18; hospital cases, 58; number of days of hospital care, 906; general anaesthetics given, 26; local anaesthetics given, 90. It is hoped that the new hospital will open its doors to patients in Feb. 1926".

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCES

As a new missionary, Mrs. Baker writes of some of her first year experiences on the field:

"As I look back upon our first year in Brazil, I find that our lives have been so bound up with those of our Portuguese teacher and her family, that I could hardly give a complete report without attributing to these kind friends, not only the credit of leading us into a love for the Brazilian language, but also for the Brazilians themselves. Perhaps the meeting with the family of Dr. Costa Leite on the steamer, João Alfredo, was the only compensation for our miserable five day trip from Rio in November of last year. From the time of our arrival in Bahia, these folks manifested a real desire to be friendly with us, and so, when in April, we were without a language teacher, we hesitatingly approached the son and daughter of this family, with the suggestion that they teach us in their home for a few months. I say hesitatingly, for already we had learned that these folks, and especially the mother and daughter, were very ardent Roman Catholics. However, the boy and girl were very enthusiastic about the idea and anxious to continue relations with Americans. Whereupon began not only a scholarly relation, but a friendship which has grown as the months have passed.

For two pleasant hours each afternoon we studied with Milton and Neith. I am sure that no one could have made Portuguese grammar quite as interesting as

did Neith; no one could have presented in such charming style the simple story book we studied, or have had always on hand a similar unending supply of interesting stories. Her father, a federal judge, many times spent an hour or two, explaining difficult grammatical constructions, while the mother did her part each day in furnishing coffee and other refreshments. It was during this coffee hour, that we learned their various views on religion. The father, who once studied for the priesthood, gave us an insight into the heart of a man who has cast off the Roman Church and its superstitions, and is endeavoring to find the truth in the Bible and in life. From the mother and daughter we learned something of the fear and superstition that grip the hearts of Catholic women. When I presented Neith with a Bible, and spoke of certain passages, I found that she could not even locate the Book of Genesis. The son has been quietly studying Protestantism. His contact with Protestant friends and his eagerness to know the truth, have brought him to the feet of the Master and he is about ready to profess his faith. Surely the hand of God is becoming evident in the life of that family, and we ask that these friends have the united prayers of our mission in their behalf.

FORD VERSUS MULE

Missionaries of the Central Brazil Mission report a great movement throughout the State of Bahia for the building of auto roads. In order to give enthusiasm to the movement, some of the interior towns are offering prizes of \$100.00 and \$200.00 to the first chauffeur to drive into the main square. Mr. Reese, who has just returned from an evangelistic trip in the States of Bahia and Minas Geraes, tells the story of one energetic chauffeur who is winning prize after prize by driving his car over seemingly impossible roads and trails in order to be the first to speed his car into towns and villages offering such rewards.

Our Ponte Nova Mission Station is also taking part in this movement. In January, Dr. Wood, as the Mission representative, met with fifty or sixty men from Ponte Nova and surrounding territory, to form an association or organization that would undertake to construct an automobile road from Ponte Nova to the railroad. Dr. Wood was elected President of a temporary organization which is going to undertake the work of constructing the first section, from Ponte Nova to Pega. It is hoped that this beginning will create enthusiasm in other communities along the proposed road so that a larger organization can be formed to meet the expenses of construction.

The building of roads and the coming of the automobile into the interior of Brazil, will be the means that will carry more swiftly the Gospel of Christ Jesus to the millions who adore the Mother of Jesus but do not know the Son as Lord and Saviour.



A CROWDED CLINIC

(Ponte Nova Hospital)

In The War Zone

In describing the circumstances which surrounded the opening of the school year at Ponte Nova last year, Mr. Reese writes as follows:

«Just as school was re-opening at the end of January, we were greatly concerned to learn that war had broken out in Lençóes. The government, which for long had supported a certain political chief in the interior and had in turn been supported by him, suddenly decided to exterminate him and his family. It was soon learned that three armed contingents were marching on Lençóes and Wagner, a township 10 miles from Ponte Nova. Needless to say both towns were soon devoid of inhabitants, a great exodus taking place to neighboring villages and even to the woods. Ponte Nova, being American and neutral, was greatly favoured as a city of refuge; crowds came begging for admittance to any sort of a corner. My colleagues and I decided to admit as many as we could, providing they had not taken up arms against the government or been implicated in the revolt. About 15 of the refugees were set to clearing some of our land; others worked on the farm. The main house for some days sheltered many women and children.

We were soon embarrassed, however, by our friends. One family, to whom I owed many kindnesses during an illness in Lençóes the previous year, gave us much annoyance and some hair-raising moments. An empty house on the estate I readily lent to the wife, but when the husband, who was deeply implicated, came over to stay, Mr. Graham and I counselled him to move on as his presence would tend to bring the war on to our estate

and also negated our claim to neutrality. After a short delay he left for Palmeiras. Two of his sons, one of whom had taken up arms, then came on the scene. Though they knew that their presence was not desired, they contrived to find refuge in one place after another; first one house after another, then the woods, the boys' dormitory, the banana grove, the sugar mill and the girls' bath-house. Finally we managed to get them to go to Palmeiras.

In Ponte Nova and the whole Lavras field considerable inconvenience was felt as the missionaries were almost completely isolated from the outside world, and often puzzled as to how to observe a complete neutrality and yet succour and shelter the afflicted and panic-stricken. They adopted the policy of sheltering women and children and non-partisan men who had been obliged to flee from their homes. Happily the whole estate was respected by the combatants of both sides of the question. Peace was declared in March much to the rejoicing of most of the countryside.

1400 MILES ON MULE BACK

In Sept. of last year Mr. Alexander Reese left Ponte Nova for a three months evangelistic trip in the States of Bahia and Minas Geraes. The following article gives a vivid account of his trip of 1400 miles on mule back:

«I first of all visited a part of the Lavras field, holding meetings in various places, until I reached Caeteté on September 30. Here I came down with an

attack of grippe and did not do as much preaching as I had wished.

From Caeté I proceeded on a big detour to Caculé whence had come an urgent invitation from the political boss to form a Presbyterian congregation. In São Sebastião I learned that this was but an effort to use us as a cat's paw against the opposition party, which is led by a degenerate priest, whom the others wish to expel by all means from their town. When the Bishop of Caeté was there the chief and his friends petitioned him to remove the priest, and promised, if he did so, to be faithful sons of the Church. As the Bishop did nothing they turned to us; but the aim was still the same—to get rid of the priest. I was not feeling very fit and had a justification for not falling into their trap. There may be some interest in the Gospel in Caculé, but there is more interest in getting rid of an adversary.

From Caculé I went on to Lençóes de Rio Verde, where I spent Sunday 18th. Here I was greatly befriended by the capitalist, Cel. Osorio Salgado, a bright young fellow from Montes Claros. He arranged me a lodging and invited me to have meals with him two or three times. Having failed to obtain the Council Chamber for a preaching service, he offered me his own large salon for the purpose. I gladly accepted the offer. He arranged benches and chairs and visited friends and invited them. I had an excellent audience in spite of a wintry night.

A DISCIPLE OF THE VIRGIN

I continued my journey next day to Tremedal where I held a service in a house belonging to Major Odilon. In Tremedal I met again my old friend, João Vermelho, a fanatical disciple of the Virgin and a convinced Romanist. Still, he enjoys a talk with a Protestant and he had one or two posers for me from the Bible. As I negotiated these safely he was good enough to tell a man standing by, that he honestly did not think the Pope could tackle me on the Bible.

Twenty miles further on I reached Matto Verde where Mrs. Reese and I have lived for two months in 1919. Politics had worked some changes in the place, but I held a well attended meeting in a big room loaned by a friend. My next point was Porteirinhas, 40 miles to the south. Here I met four or five disciples who took me into their hearts and homes. Though they have not yet professed their faith, they have continued steadfast all these years since 1919. I spent two days and three nights here and held several meetings. It was a delightful time in every way and one was cheered to see marks of the divine working. From Porteirinhas I journeyed to Riacho dos Machados, a place with a bad name, 30 miles to the south. The place has an unusually generous, clean and tolerant priest, who is much respected. I meant to visit him, but time failed me. The meeting at night was well attended.

In Rio Pardo, 76 miles distant, I was entertained for a few days by Dr. Cantidio, the judge. I held a meeting

in the Municipal Chamber and there was a large attendance. Still, nobody here seems to get nearer to Christ, though I noticed with much satisfaction that the Judge's wife, though she is a devout Catholic, attended for the first time.

A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT

I had expected to have a heartening time at Taiobeiras, 40 miles to the South East, for a most encouraging work had been going on for six years past, and it was reported that several families were waiting to profess their faith. Moreover, one of our best teachers, D. Antonia Rodriguez, had gone there earlier in the year to open a school. But severe disappointment was in store. The teacher had married a wealthy widower, without tact, and I found the church closed, the congregation split, the school reduced to half the attendance with which it opened, and members not on speaking terms with one another; all this because the believers resented the husband's untactful declaration that D. Antonia should not teach a single day after their marriage, and because they then began to lay against him most of the sins of the calendar. My visit was depressing yet I am still hopeful that time may heal the breach.

There was one circumstance in my visit there that gave me great satisfaction; this was the profession of faith of an elderly woman. Since girlhood she had desired to see the Divine Scriptures; she secured a copy but was unable to read. Though nearing 60 she set to work to learn and soon was able to read the gospels; she has learned whole chapters by heart and derives great consolation from them. The word of Christ is her meat day and night. When coming on a particularly precious passage she has been heard to exclaim, "Why did not my son tell me about this before?"

OPEN DOORS

After holding meetings in Fortaleza, Duas Barras and Vigia, where there are groups of believers and where three were received on profession of faith, I now turned my face homewards, having a straight run of 500 miles to Ponte Nova.

During the long trip of 1400 miles I enjoyed, on the whole, good health and we had not even the slightest mishap with the animals. This is certainly a matter to thank God for. Everywhere I found open doors and eager interest to hear the pure Gospel of Christ. Romanists may have a quarrel with Protestants, but when they read the New Testament or hear expositions of the love, the power and the Grace of God in Christ, most are constrained to admit that they do not get such teaching from the priests and the Church of Rome.



Mission Jottings

At the annual Mission meeting held at Ponte Nova in December, the following resolution was adopted by the Mission: «Mr. and Mrs. Henry Mc Call labored in Central Brazil from 1902 and 1899 respectively until 1924. During this time they worked unceasingly for the good of the Brazilian people and the advancement of the cause of Christ; through all the fields of the C. B. M. their name is a household word and their influence will be felt for many years. The Central Brazil Mission has sustained a severe loss by their retirement through ill-health and prays that they may be richly blest in their present sphere of labor».

Mr. and Mrs. Graham and Miss Hepperle passed the second year language examinations, while Mr. and Mrs. Baker and Mrs. Wood passed the first year language examinations.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson announce the arrival of a little daughter, Violet Esther, born Nov. 8, 1925. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson will complete their first term of service in June 1926, and will leave soon after for the States to take their regular furlough.

Miss Elizabeth Williamson completed 36 years of service in the Central Brazil Mission this year. She left for the States early in March to take her regular furlough.

Mrs. Alexander Reese and daughter, Annie, sailed for the States March 7. Mrs. Reese has been granted a health furlough and will undergo medical treatment in the United States.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold C. Anderson will leave the city of Bahia in March to take up work in Recife. For the past few years the Central Brazil Mission has been aiding the Evangelical Seminary of the North financially. This year the Mission will help the Seminary in quite another way by sending Mr. Anderson who will teach Greek and several other subjects. Mr. and Mrs. Peter G. Baker will take up the work in Bahia City.

Mr. and Mrs. Chester C. Carnahan will return to Brazil in May after completing their first furlough in the United States.

We are anxious to know how many of our readers are interested in the continuance of the Central Brazil Bulletin. The Mission decided to publish this little paper for a year to interest the Home Church in the needs of the work in Central Brazil and at the same time to cooperate with the movement to make 1925-26 a Latin American year in the field of Foreign Missions. Would you like to receive the Central Brazil Bulletin two or three times a year in the future? Has this paper been the means of giving you an interest in the work of the Kingdom in this part of the world? Address all communications to the editor: Rev. Peter G. Baker, Caixa 350, Bahia, Brazil.

WHAT WE NEED

As your representatives seek more adequately to strengthen and enlarge the Kingdom of Christ in this part of Brazil, we feel our deep need of divine aid and ask for your prayers.

The Property Committee of the Board submits the following approved property list for 1925-1926 for the Central Brazil Mission:

Southwest Bahia, Caeteté field—Land and buildings for School of the Ponte Nova type. (Item n. 7)	\$5000.00
Bahia City—American School. Total \$15,000. We ask this year. (Item n. 9) .	10000.00
Ponte Nova—School Equipment (maps, books, simple laboratory equipment, blackboards). Item n. 10	1000.00
Ponte Nova—Farm machinery (plow, disc harrow, corn planter, cultivator, wagon, ensilage cutter). Item n. 11	1000.00
Ponte Nova—Dynamo (15 KWK). Item n. 12	500.00

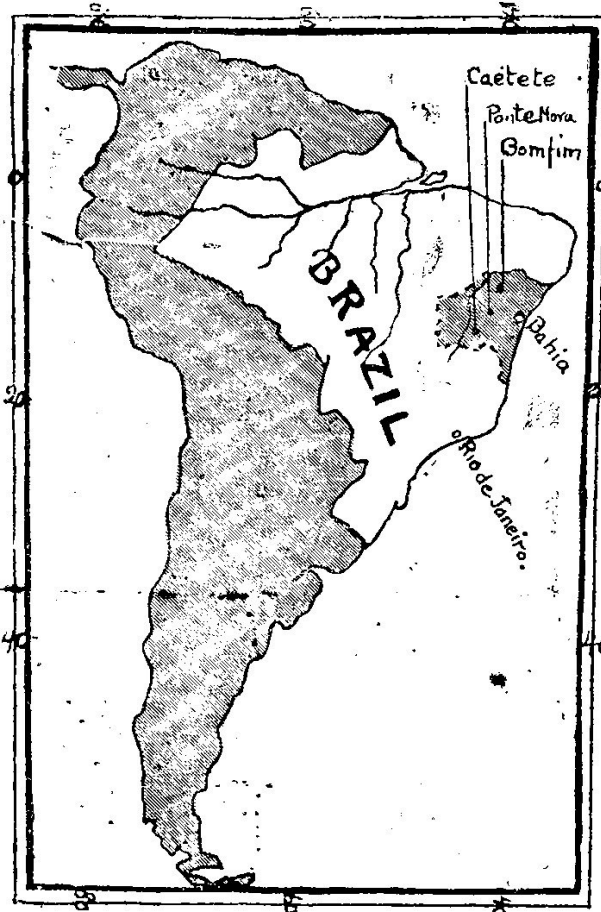
Ponte Nova—Accessories for electrical equipment. Item n. 13	500.00
Ponte Nova—Water system, Screens, etc., for School Dormitories. (Total \$2,500 of which \$1,500 has been apportioned to the Women's and Young People's Organizations). Item n. 14.	1000.00
The following items were approved by the Mission and the Brazil Council and are now awaiting Board approval:	
Ponte Nova—Silo and dipping tank for stock. Item n. 15	1000.00
Ponte Nova—Improved live stock. Work animals. Item n. 16	2000.00
Ponte Nova—Roads and bridge building. Item n. 17	2000.00
Northeast Bahia, Bomfim field. Land and buildings for School of Ponte Nova type. Item n. 18	5000.00
Ponte Nova—School building.	3000.00

Inasmuch as the estimates for property were made on the basis of 8\$000 to the dollar, and inasmuch as the value of the dollar is now under 7\$000, the Mission requests, and the Brazil Council has approved the request, that the total estimates for property be increased \$8000.00 to cover the drop in exchange.

Any one wishing further information will please write to the Board of Foreign Missions, 156 Fifth Ave., New York, or to missionaries on the field. Contributions should be sent to Mr. Russel Carter, Treasurer, 156 Fifth Ave., New York City, accompanied by a clear statement that the contribution is for New Property for the Central Brazil Mission.



WHERE WE ARE



Four stations, each one a center of a large field:

1. Bahia, city of 350,000. NEED. Good school and social service center.
2. Ponte Nova, Evangelistic, Medical and Educational work combined. NEED. More buildings and equipment.
3. Caeteté, large evangelistic field. NEED. Medical and Educational work to supplement the evangelistic.
4. Bomfim, large evangelistic field. NEED. Medical and Educational work to supplement the evangelistic.