

# The one-horse missionary lady of Brazil

"I will go to Two Brothers Swamp because no one else will"

By Bob Baird • BBFI Mission Director

One Monday morning, Gary Tomberlin, Jon Konnerup and I embarked on a difficult journey. We were on our way to meet BBFI missionary Marjorie Browning in Petrolina. The next leg was to drive another 10 hours over the next two days in order to film her ministry extensively.

It was called a road, but it was more like a trail — a one-lane path in deep sand with thick brush on both sides. Jon Konnerup and I rode in the back of a pickup truck, sitting on sacks of feed that cushioned the shock. The driver, Marjorie and Gary rode in the cab. Jon and I had to duck the branches overlapping into the pickup bed quite often.

We made several stops along the way to meet people in Marjorie's

ministry, which covers a wide area. We even stopped periodically to deflate the tires so we could keep moving in the sand. The alternator broke and had to be fixed on the road.

Our one-eyed driver was very capable. There would be no way it could be done without an experienced man behind the wheel. When we reached Marjorie's home in Two Brothers Swamp after dark, we were all praising God for a safe journey.

## Doing much with little

Visiting with this remarkable missionary lady and seeing her ministry firsthand will be a highlight of my ministry. She lives in a very modest home. In the front of the home there is a small auditorium where she teaches the children. A pastor will come once a month for a service.

A solar panel on the roof charges a 12-volt battery. This will give a few hours of light at night. Her refrigerator is powered by a small butane tank. The daily water supply is carried from a nearby river and drinking water is strained through a filter. The shower is a plastic one-gallon can with a



Marjorie Browning moved to Two Brothers Swamp in 1998. She has served in Brazil for 42 years.

self-adjusting showerhead hung from the rafter, and we learned how to take a quick, cold shower. We slept well at night with an occasional bat flying over our heads.

Marjorie was a gracious host. For the next three days, we witnessed her unique ministry with children and women. Some days, she will walk a long way in deep sand and ford river crossings in order to reach the people with the gospel. Other days, she will ride a horse eight or nine hours to carry out her ministry. There is no pasture for her horse and we had to find it before every journey.

God blessed Marjorie's ministry in Brejo da Serra, Nova, Holanda, where she lived for 23 years, Avelina Lopes, and Two Brothers Swamp since 1998, 42 years in all. Being a single missionary lady in this context, in my opinion, is extremely difficult, and that is putting it mildly.

Never once did I hear Marjorie complain. She will tell you it is the life God called her to. It was not a sacrifice, but a privilege and opportunity for her to serve the Lord. She is the most serene person I have been around. God is obviously in complete control of her life and ministry.

When God called her to Two Brothers Swamp in 1998, some said, "You should not go; it is too hard." Her reply, "I will go because no one else will." Marjorie Browning will be 70 in October of this year. She is truly a Spirit-directed, model missionary — a one-horse missionary lady in Two Brothers Swamp doing what God called her to do.



Traveling by horseback for eight hours is routine.

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**BAIRD:** The changes in the world will change our strategies for reaching the world. Our emphasis the last few years has been the unreached people groups. We're not going to forget the rest of the world, but we want people to get the burden for the restricted access nations. I was recently interviewed by a Christian magazine concerning the kidnapping and death of Martin Burnham. The reporter asked if our missionaries from the Philippines would come home. I told her they wouldn't, and that we would probably send

more. Then she asked if we were bitter toward the Muslims. I said, "We're not bitter. The only hope for the Muslims is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord loves them and we're going to do all we can to reach them, and the rest of the world." We've never had anything happen to us like what happened to the Burnhams, but it could happen. We just have to continue the work, being about the Father's business like Jesus said. The BBFI can still grow. "Decline" should not be in our vocabulary. We don't have to lose ground, if we'll keep our focus on reaching the world while we still have time.