

## Yesterday, I had one of my most beautiful experiences in Paraguay

Michael Roth  
January 1976



*Lake Ypacarai, Paraguay*

We are now in the midst of the blazing hot tropical Paraguayan summer-weather much hotter than we know in the United States. Being Canadian-born and having grown up by the California coast, I am more comfortable in cold weather. But we are experiencing rebirth among the blood, sweat (mucho), and cockroaches.

Yesterday I had one of my most beautiful experiences. My student, Mateo, was ready for conclusion so he and I decided to go to Lake Ypacarai (ee-pak-ah-rah-ee), the largest lake in Paraguay and only an hour by bus from the capital, Asuncion, to study together. We went for a swim, ate lunch, and then rented a canoe.

After rowing into the middle of the lake, we stopped and I began to teach. I went through a review of the historical, parallels and explained the significance of the world wars.

We then noticed that we had drifted several miles with the current and that it would be a major effort to row back against the current. So we had to stop; it took us an hour and a half to row back. By then it was time to go back to Asuncion. We were exhausted and absolutely roasted by the sun. (I could hardly sleep

last night and today I am limping, my legs are so burned. A little indemnity never hurt anyone.)

But I was determined to teach him conclusion. We boarded the bus, which was jam-packed and sat in a corner, with our legs all scrunched up, on hot metal which scorched our burned thighs. I decided it was as good a place as any to teach, and I began to teach the best conclusion I've ever taught in any language. He was deeply moved.

That night I gave a lecture at the center to two staunch Catholics. As I am in the process of learning the language in which I'm teaching (Spanish), my lectures fall somewhat short when it comes to rattling off Bible quotes and sometimes I don't fully understand the point the student is making or I know what I want to say but I lack the fluency to express myself clearly. Last night Mateo defended me and explained the Divine Principle to the guests, quoting the Bible with clarity and confidence.

So, we have a new brother now, a deep, sensitive young man of quiet strength, the son of a Paraguayan farmer. He's worth the heat, the cockroaches, the struggle of teaching and witnessing in a foreign language, and everything else. Working in a foreign country has been a daily revelation and rebirth for me, and I very much see why Paraguay is often called "the heart of South America"-for its location in the center of the continent, but also for the beautiful heart of its people.

I pray for our members in America. I pray that they will realize that each one of them owes something to the poor but good people of Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. You, me, and every one of us owes a debt to the people of the world and to God. Because, brothers and sisters, the majority of the world is dirt poor. Most of the people are shedding blood, sweat, and tears every day. Their life is poverty, hunger, and hell! If it weren't for God....

People are hungry: for bread, hungry for a chance, and hungry for love. Are we hungry to love them? Are we bleeding, sweating, and crying to love them as they are bleeding, sweating, crying, and dying to have one percent of what we have in the United States, free and easy. We've got to love them and give to them. I beg you, brothers and sisters, to love and pray for them and remember them. Let us, together, give something to the rest of the world.

I am only trying to hear the voice of God out here in the wilderness. And God is sending me the answer, "Love!" You are that, love in action.