



**Faith in His Step...**

# ...and a Song in His Heart

*A 40-kilometer walk was not enough to stop Brazilian member Paulo Tvuarde from faithfully attending church.*

BY DEIRDRE M. PAULSEN

**W**henever I hear or sing the words “We are sowing, daily sowing”<sup>1</sup> or “I’ll go where you want me to go, dear Lord,”<sup>2</sup> I can’t help but think of Paulo Tvuarde.

I met Paulo on a hot day in southern Brazil. Church meetings had ended, and the meetinghouse was almost empty except for a few members sitting in the hallway. My husband, then serving as president of the Brazil Curitiba Mission, was meeting with Edson Lustoza Araújo, the district president from Guarapuava, in Paraná.

“Sister Paulsen,” said Brother Jason Sousa, who was serving as a counselor to my husband, “did you notice the brother sitting in the hallway with mud on his boots?”

Many roads in southern Brazil are made of red dirt, so mud on shoes is common.

“You mean the thin, dark-haired man in his late 20s?” I asked.

“Yes, his name is Paulo Tvuarde. He walks to church almost every Sunday, except when the mud is so thick that he can’t make it. He’s been doing that for 14 years—since he was 15.”

“How far does he walk?” I asked, unprepared for Brother Sousa’s response.

“Oh, 40 kilometers,” he said matter-of-factly. “He leaves

at 3:00 a.m. to make it to church on time. It takes him eight hours.”

Quickly converting kilometers to miles, I realized that Brother Tvuarde walked 25 miles to attend church in Guarapuava!

“Why would he do that?” I asked incredulously.

“Because he believes that the Church is true.”



**While plowing his fields in southern Brazil, Paulo Tvuarde plants gospel seeds by singing Church hymns “at the top of my voice,” generating interest among his neighbors.**

“Well, of course,” I said, a little embarrassed at the obvious answer. “What I meant was, why does he have to walk that far?”

Brother Sousa explained that Paulo lived in the country, taking care of the family farm so that his 74-year-old mother, who had a heart condition, could live in Guarapuava, where

she received medical attention. President Lustoza was her cardiologist.

“Paulo lives by himself, plows the fields, and feeds the few animals that they have,” Brother Sousa said. “There is no electricity or running water. The farm is eight kilometers from the nearest bus stop. Worse than that, the bus doesn’t run on Saturdays or Sundays. So he walks to church.”

President Lustoza, who had entered the room with my husband, said Paulo usually attended three out of every four weeks. “He doesn’t miss unless the roads are impassible,” he said. “He stays overnight on Sundays so he can take the bus back on Monday.”

If Paulo attended church three out of every four Sundays, then he spent more than 300 hours walking nearly 1,600 kilometers (1,000 mi) each year just to attend church!



**Paulo and Rita Tvarde, with their son, Saulo.**

When he is at home on the farm, Paulo has found a way to share the gospel. “I decided that while I was plowing the fields with my plow behind my horse, I would sing hymns at the top of my voice,” he said, smiling. “My

neighbors who are also out in their fields hear me and ask me what I’m singing. That way I can teach the gospel.”

Walking to church wasn’t the only regular trek Paulo made in exercising his faith. Twice a year he traveled 530 kilometers (330 mi) to attend the São Paulo Brazil Temple. On one of those temple trips he was introduced to Rita de Cássia de Oliveira, who worked in the temple. Odete Lustoza, wife of President Lustoza, had previously met Rita at the temple and had encouraged Paulo to write to her.

Rita was accustomed to life in a big city, and she enjoyed her friends and the blessings of being a member of a ward with a nearby chapel. But after a long-distance courtship



**Paulo studies the gospel by lamplight on his farm, located 40 kilometers (25 mi) from the nearest Latter-day Saint meetinghouse.**

that resulted in her marriage to Paulo in the São Paulo temple in 2003, Rita joined him on the farm.

She has adjusted to farm life and is thankful for the blessing of a temple marriage. “The hardest part was finding a husband,” she said. “The rest I can adapt to.”

As he plows his farm today, Paulo still tries to plant gospel seeds by singing hymns for his neighbors, and he still travels 40 kilometers to church in Guarapuava. But now he travels with Rita and their son, Saulo, at his side, and rather than leave early Sunday morning, they take the last bus of the week late Friday night. After spending the weekend associating with the Saints and attending Sunday meetings, they return by bus to the farm on Monday morning—happy to have gone where the Lord would have them go. ■

#### NOTES

1. “We Are Sowing,” *Hymns*, no. 216.
2. “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go,” *Hymns*, no. 270.