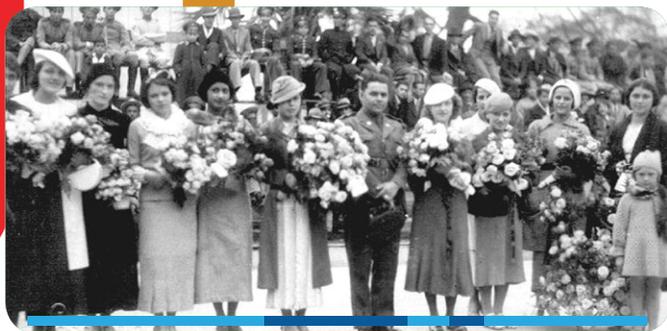


# THIS WONDERFUL ACM\*

A short story by  
José Luiz Pereira da Costa

\* ACM is the Portuguese version for YMCA



120 Y  
ACM-RS • 1901 • 2021

# PRESENTATION



The Young Men's Christian Association of Rio Grande do Sul, in celebrations of the 120th anniversary of its foundation, invited the YMCA members and authors Ana Pregardier and José Luiz Pereira da Costa to accept a challenge full of memories and affection: the construction of two books that tell a little about the history of the institution, and in particular, the way in which YMCA-RS contributed to their lives and to the lives of so many other people throughout this trajectory.

The invitation was accepted immediately, in the most beautiful voluntary spirit, and the literary works *Esta Maravilhosa ACM* (This Wonderful YMCA), by José Luiz Pereira da Costa, and *Algumas Histórias Acemistas* (Some YMCA Stories), by Ana Pregardier, were donated to the institution and will be widely disseminated among members, students, professionals, volunteers, clients, partners and the community in general.

They are beautiful accounts of a living history that has been with us until today, and with God's help, will make a contribution that will allow the YMCA-RS to face the challenges of the coming decades with the same love and commitment from the thousands of people who made this institution a place of welcome, fraternity, equality and lots of innovation.

All so we can continue to impact the lives of thousands of people, especially children and young people, in the search for a fairer and more egalitarian society.

Rio Grande do Sul, November 2021.

**Daniela Colussi**

President of ACM-RS

**José Ricardo Calza Caporal**

General Secretary for ACM-RS

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**José Luiz Pereira da Costa**



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Associação Cristã de Moços do Rio Grande do Sul

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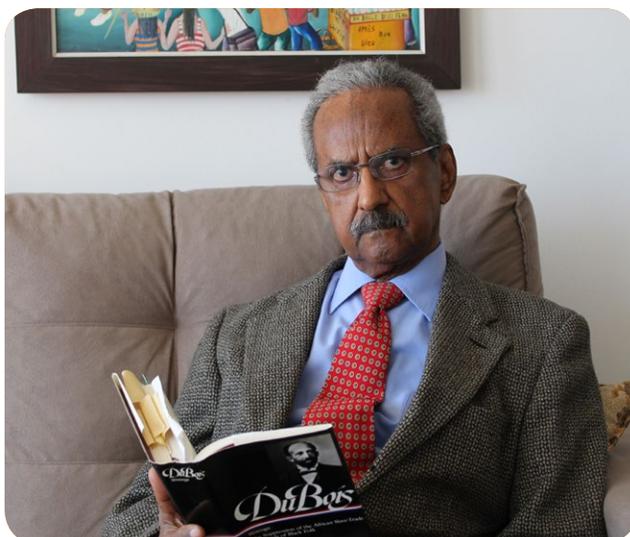
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# JOSÉ LUIZ PEREIRA DA COSTA



José Luiz Pereira da Costa, journalist, lawyer, writer and translator, joined the YMCA in 1951 in the basic course of commerce and graduated as a technician in accounting in 1958. He entered the Faculty of Law at the Federal University where he graduated in 1965. He retired from the public service as a Prosecutor and had a rich experience traveling and participating in the first years of independence of several African countries.

At ACM, he has been on numerous commissions, but highlights the incorporation of the Casemiro Bruno Kurtz Foundation, from Vila Cruzeiro, seed of the great project to support families at social risk; the creation of the Santana do Livramento Unit and, in particular, which earned him the worthy member title, a rare distinction in the YMCA, his participation in the definitive incorporation of the João XXIII Ecumenical Cemetery as YMCA's patrimony. Also, its work in this area earned it ownership by establishing a cemetery in Canela, Parque das Araucárias, a base for the local unit and the implementation of a cremation service for bodies.



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# FORWARD

Rua<sup>1</sup> Arlindo is a straight, flat-earth path for the carts that, with their traction animals, travel along the road. It is in a very scattered urban area, congested with shacks, chalets and old decaying masonry houses. There, the poor lived in the city of Porto Alegre, a few kilometers away from what would one day be called the Historic Center.

Rua Arlindo was bordered by wooden chalets, houses with gardens in front and with orchards of wild fruits in the back. Almost all of them with chicken coops, with their hens and eggs, essential in daily food, without the cost of buying in butchers or warehouses.

There was always an orange tree lavishly, in winter, offering its golden fruits, such as araçás(a small guava-like fruit), guavas and small yellow coconut. There was no lack of vineyards, with its summer grapes and also watermelon, the great summer fruit.

This was an Eden for boys in whose homes food was scarce, as a rule, in families of many children and only the husband to support, from modest jobs.

On the other side of the street was a wide floodplain that served as a soccer field, with improvised goalkeepers, for teams that played on Sundays, with t-shirts and almost always with bare feet, matches called varzeanas or peladas.

During the week the teams disappeared, their athletes went to work, and the boys invaded the space, with their sock balls - mothers, grandmothers or aunts' socks - which were stuffed with rags. The same rags that served as a tail for the kites that flew in the windy days.

Rua Arlindo started in a stream of clear water that was garnished by countless willow tree, from where more skilled boys could take branches of special resistance and flexibility, for their slings. Over the stream there was a pontoon, the way the boys called the bridge, looming over it, but in the eyes of adults it wasn't even that big. It was made of wood, built by the municipality and connected Rua Arlindo to Rua José do Patrocínio, a street that everyone still called Rua da Concórdia, the original name of the artery, and Rua Dr. Sebastião Leão.

<sup>1</sup> Rua, means Street.

– That street where you were born, Grandpa?

The grandfather does not seem to have heard the question, after all, that was something that was taken for granted by his grandchildren. And he continued:

– The bridge is accompanied by a thick iron pipe, a pipeline that carries water to the set of houses, floodplains and farms, with milk drums, the nucleus called Ilhota<sup>2</sup>.

– Grandfather! – He did not resist and asked one of the three grandchildren who heard the narrative.

– When was this? I mean, in what year, more or less?

– In the early years of the twentieth century. Maybe 1917, which was the end of a terrible war that was devastating countries in Europe and that would bring one of the plagues of humanity - are they cyclical, you know, pandemics? It was the so-called Spanish Flu, which would decimate people all over the world, without the vaccines that are common to you.

– But Grandpa - Another grandson hurried.

– You must be over 100 years now, much more! How can you?

– The answer comes in one of the stories I've been telling you for a long time.

Pondered the grandfather.

– Do you remember the one at the Well of Daura?

– No, Grandpa, you didn't tell me.

– Wouldn't it? I forgot?

–Yes! The three exclaimed in unison.

It was just a collusion between the three. Children like to hear the stories repeatedly, in this case in particular, because they are told by their grandfather.

– So... – began the grandfather, who also pretended, because he liked to retell:

–...there was a man who lived in a house that provided the funds for a leafy eucalyptus bush. He used to tell stories to the boys in his neighborhood. There were so many stories about him, linked to many places in the world, that he was named Professor.

However, he was not once a teacher; he was a retired sailor. He was admitted at a very young age to the Merchant Navy of Brazil, as a cabin boy, in Rio Grande, his hometown.

As a sailor, he rode the great Lloyd Brasileiro ocean ships around the world, where he collected culture that he brought, in his retirement, in his fantastic memory and a chest with newspapers and magazines from the cities he visited. Reading was his favorite pastime and he read in more than one language. So, he was a teacher!

Tadeu, his name was, liked to tell about the trip he considered the most unforgettable of his long walk from port to port. His ship made a stopover in Lagos, Nigeria's most important city, on the west coast of Africa. By a sequence of events, he was invited to go to the city of Kano, a traditional and historic stronghold of Muslims, and stay at the home of an Emir, a noble title among Mohammedans. On the eve of his departure, after a stay of a few days, there was a hearty banquet in his honor and he, in the sleep that followed, felt thirsty. He went out and went to a well. He bent down to pull the rope and have the water on hand.

Despite the darkness, Tadeu saw a rough face, it looked like Maria, many years older - the same smile, the same comforting placidity - who started to speak to him in the Hausa language. In fact, Tadeu was not aware of the language in use, but the old woman's words were understandable.

She said her name was Daura. That she was Kano's age and that his history was confused with the nations that gave rise to the Hausa people.

Similarly, my grandchildren, I am not old, like Daura, and the story I will continue to tell is timeless, that is, my age is a Porto Alegre that can be seen with eyes and ears that do not depend on chronology. They tell the vision of a traveler in space and time.

# THE ENCOUNTER

Paulinho was an ordinary boy in that universe of Ilhota, a typical Brasileirinho, mostly: son of a light mulatto mother and a father with very dark skin, with curly hair and a slightly flattened nose. Genetic remains of a Portuguese grandfather. He was dispatched and intelligent, somehow standing out among the other kids, his friends and companions of wanderings through the eucalyptus bush and the neighboring farms, where they exposed themselves to the ire of the small farm owners for harvesting ripe fruits of the season without permission.

Another occupation of Paulinho and his friends, his class, they said, was to fish for the fruits that the unpolluted brook offered them: lambaris, catfishes, frogs and, Paulinho could not, but there were those in the group who fished swamp eel by putting their index fingers in the hole where the fish lived, waiting for the animal to swallow the finger, which it would turn into a kind of hook and pull the fish out of its hole, taking it home for the mother to cook. The swamp eel is a fish very similar to a snake, its habitat is streams in whose mud they remain, with low oxygenation, commonly, from one rainy season to the next. When one of these fish was hooked, there was usually a rush, because although it was not a snake, due to its aspect of a snake, they intimidated most of the other boys. And there was the group's commercial enterprise, which consisted of frog hunting. Obtained a good amount in the swamps and on the banks of the stream, they lined up the animals on a ridge and took them to a famous confectionery in the city, specialized in the sale of these fried frogs and paddock - a noble dish, and some change for the boys.

It was a summer day, close to noon when Paulinho saw something unusual. He was on the sidewalk in front of his house; well, sidewalk is not exactly like now. There was the street bed, where carts, horses, donkeys, porters, and very rarely a car or small truck, and on the side a path, full of tufts of grass, small bushes and weeds, was the place where the people: the sidewalk, without pavements. The street was a long way that went to an indefinite end, cut here and there by small wooden bridges, giving way to people over several arms of streams, responsible for their overflows, by

pools where mosquitoes, flies and other harmful elements made the city, especially that area, very unhealthy, with fevers and diseases still difficult to cure, such as typhoid and tuberculosis. There was also, to disturb the nights, coming from these pools, the ubiquitous croak of frogs and paddock.

Paulinho stared, his eyes seeing two figures who, running, were approaching where he was. The figures shimmered by the heat of the sun on the ground, making the images as if out of focus or shaky. There were two men, a few steps ahead of each other. As they got closer, he noticed that they wore shorts like those of Internacional, Grêmio and Cruzeiro players, who, in future would have a fantastic encounter with ACM. Shorts he saw in photographs on the newspaper scraps that reached his hands. He had never been to the Eucalyptus fields, nor to the Baixada, nor to the Melancholic Hill. You can see, too, that they were both wearing shoes, but they were different from what he saw on the streets of wealthy people. He was used to seeing men, day by day, in that area where strangers ran, wearing clogs: a shoe made of wooden soles with rubber strips, car tire chambers, which fixed the foot to wood. But those shoes were completely different, giving the impression of being very malleable and beautiful despite the dust that the paths of their running covered them.

When they were much closer, he noticed that the one in front was a tall, very white man. He would see soon after, when he at last approached, which was almost pink, a pale white that burned, he could see in parts of the torso, like white flesh of fish on the fire. The other man was also white, but different, he had skin like that of white men who lived in the streets near Ilhota, like Rua Dr. Sebastião Leão or distant like the long Rua da Olaria, changed by the city hall to Rua Lima e Silva. This and everyone had the common complexion of white Brazilians, carrying some mix.

With the image of the men still at a distance, he thought: "Would the second be chasing what was ahead? He imagined horrible things, such as those that adults tell of men who run away from other men, because the persecuted man did something very wrong".

The first man, as he got closer to Paulinho, slowed down the race, doing the same, which followed him. You can then see that he was sweating a lot and that he looked tired, like the football team players who played on Sundays in the floodplain in front of Rua Arlindo.

Behold, the man stopped and spoke to Paulinho. The latter did not quite understand what the man was saying. The runner struggled and Paulinho understood that he would like to get a glass of water, maybe two, another for his “friend”. “Well,” thought Paulinho, “he speaks and I hardly understand, he now says another word without meaning”. The man made another effort to make the boy understand that he would like to get two glasses of water.

The two men, together now, were friendly and radiated a bit of confidence in the boy. So he left the spot on the street where they were standing, disappeared inside his cottage to reappear a few moments later with two aluminum mugs, with the water overflowing, and handed them over to the corridors.

They eagerly ingested the liquid and the first made a point of making conversation. Paulinho’s difficulty in understanding him was due to the fact that he was the first runner born in the United States and, consequently, the Portuguese he spoke was still precarious, at least in a heavy accent.

– We are playing sports. Street race. We left the distance and are running non-stop.

The information came from the mouth that had felt the salubrity of the water offered, certainly taken from an artesian well in the backyard, but had not generated any comment on this; went on:

– We, my friend Walnyr<sup>3</sup>, and I practice the sport of street racing.

Walnyr had lived in the pioneer inn of ACM, now an engineer, he was a volunteer and very close to the secretary general.

– My name is Frank, if it is difficult for you to reproduce the name Frank, you can call me Francisco, is it easier?

The Francisco that Paulinho repeated also came a little differently, because he imitated the American sound for the Portuguese word, but it was fine. Paulinho was going to say “mister” Francisco, but the American cut off saying:

– I’m just Francisco, you don’t need “mister”.

And more at ease, Paulinho asked, anticipating what the American was going to say:

– Where are you from?

<sup>3</sup> With a fictitious insertion, the name Walnyr hides the socio-meritorious Walnyr Jacques, who is not an engineer and that his inclusion is a tribute to all the basic associates who donated themselves for the greatness of the Institution, in these 120 years, especially those that Basic Associates registered them as ACM Benefactors.

– I'm from ACM, it's the Christian Youth Association, have you heard?

In the fraction of time between Paulinho's question and answer, Frank Long thought of the time he lived in London, in the original YMCA. It was a time when Europe was in turmoil, on the way to the First World War. There was a dispute over the colonies in Africa, there were constant movements of independence in India and Egypt, where the British had taken over these countries and with iron and fire kept those great nationalities under their command. The French, who had already disputed colonial power with the English, and lost a lot, clung to what was left: ancient Indochina, South Pacific Islands and large geographical areas of Africa.

Germany, which would lose the War, also lost its immense colonial empire, which dominated African countries, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanganyika, Namibia, Togo and Cameroon.

During Frank's stay, conflict was imminent, harboring the interests of the powers of then: France, England, Germany, Portugal and the United Dutch Provinces, and the War in 1914 would bring out the imperial desires of these countries.

But the England that Frank Long was thinking at that moment predated the twentieth century, came from the previous one, when with the use of coal and water, the English started to dominate the steam, and gave rise to the appearance of the Industrial Revolution, when large factories of fabrics, metallurgical utensils and new consumer goods, demanded enormous amounts of labor, in large factories in London, Manchester and Liverpool.

Young people in the countryside began to be enticed by unscrupulous entrepreneurs, with promises of a better life in the expanding metropolises. The reality, however, showed the crowd that being in big cities and having a job meant working until up to fifteen hours a day, all week, without having to sleep more than cubicles ennobled by the new industrialists and traders.

So George Williams, also a young man, likewise coming from the countryside to try to occupy commerce in London experienced in his own skin the inhuman regime that reigned throughout the country. It was practically slave labor. Not only in commerce, where he finally got a job, but also, and mainly, in large industries, such as weaving. Young George already had the seed of solidarity within him, which would spread throughout the organization he would organize. Bible reading societies were common in

other European countries. People came together to listen and discuss the sacred content.

George Williams started a campaign for the humanization of work in London trade. In addition to their long hours, they slept in tiny nooks in the back, basements or attics in stores. Thus, he began catechesis with storeowners to shorten the hours. In parallel, with a group of friends, he devised a way of providing support for homeless young people, creating an entity that would give them a home and reason for living, in a Christian movement. Many who arrived in London and had nowhere to stay learned that there was a place where, besides sleeping, they could have a social life, talk to other young people and entertain games and fun, but also enjoy reading the Testaments together. He created, mister George Williams, an association for young Christians and gave the English name of Young Men's Christian Association, abbreviating YMCA, which translated, and transposed, in 1901 gave our ACM, Associação Cristã de Moços de Porto Alegre. The second thought he had, Frank Long, was about the visits he made to relatives and friends of poor young people from the YMCA, knowing the slums of London, which differed from that point where he was at Rua Arlindo, Ilhota, just because the houses glued together, with two or more masonry floors, congested by families of many children and households – were as destitute as those that along Rua Arlindo he was observing. Here, they were mostly wooden; those in London were made of cement and bricks, but they had to be different in view of the freezing cold in Europe. He thought at that moment: poverty was the same.

Frank Long immersed himself, thus, in the Brazilian universe, intensely, in the world of Porto Alegre, with a very clear notion of what ACM, through the means that he knew well, such as sport, could help to raise the underprivileged.

But the ACM that was starting to structure would go further, far beyond sport, in education and, without the usual resources of philanthropy in his country, he would find an unusual and magnificent way of helping poor communities that, with the increase in population, would expand through the growing city. Mister Long perhaps dreamed, but he could never imagine that those shantytowns, in the near future would be removed to a settlement called Restinga<sup>4</sup> and that, in the future, yes, more distant, would social

4 Junk of the plowed land, where poor people used to mine.

protection of ACM in the large group that would become Restingas, Old, of those coming from Ilhota, to New, of those assisted from new times.

The rambling took place and the three, Paulinho, Walnyr and a newly baptized Francisco, found themselves surrounded by other people. That meeting, the time to fetch water, drink from the mugs and start a small conversation with Paulinho, became an event and the circle was formed.

The American, with his accent accentuated, said that they were running a street race. He explained that it was a sport widely practiced in his country and easy to organize. Certain streets or avenues were chosen and no marking was made, except departure and arrival. Sometimes it covers several streets within the city. This model was what they were fighting: not just on a street, but after a certain point, they would run for something like 20 kilometers, returning to the starting point.

One of the surrounding ones was especially interested in the shoes of the two athletes, which he explained to be... and did not find the word in Portuguese. Half-flushed, he said in English: plimsolls, and charged saying that they were made of soft rubber on the sole and that the upper part was also rubber, but much more flexible and comfortable. He dared more, Frank, and gestured to the person who asked to examine the rubber shoe, bending his knee making the object at the height of the curious person's hand. And everyone laughed.

Walnyr's shoe was also the same, a gift from the American.

The young interlocutor would be about 17 or 18 years old, he was, like Paulinho's mother, a mulatto. He was tall, six feet tall, and well built.

Frank asked him if he played any sports. He replied that he sometimes played football there, and pointed to the floodplain ahead, and added that in the summer he swam in the stream a little ahead, to which he also pointed.

Frank asked:

— Do you know Rua Pantaleão Teles?

And the group of onlookers who had become a gathering, with boys and many grown men, not a woman or a girl, burst out laughing loudly. Frank did not understand the reaction. He became a vermilion. And everyone was still laughing. Until the laughter died and the interlocutor answered:

—The red-light street!

And everyone started laughing again.

Frank took over the situation, with a body position and a look that indicated disregarding the information. And he went on.

– There we have an association, a society, you know?, where we practice some types of sport. Do you — now he was speaking directly to the person who called your attention — do you know volleyball? It is an interesting sport. Knows?

The young man, whose name was João, said he did not know the sport. And Frank was quick to explain how volleyball worked. The explanation caught the attention of the listeners, who, in silence, appreciated the description given in a very strange way by the American. At the end he invited:

– The society is called ACM and, as it seems that all of you know, it is not far from here. You can go on foot, just follow Rua da Concórdia, turn into Rua da República, which is still called Rua do Imperador, and take Rua da Margem, with its current and unused name Rua João Alfredo and you will arrive at Rua Pantaleão Teles, there you will see our symbol, which is a red triangle. If you can, go on a Saturday or Sunday, as we still don't have sports at night and during the day you may work. You will like it, you will meet other young people like yourself and you will learn to play volleyball easily. There are other sports, you will see and choose.

The invitation had two moments for João. The first was instant happiness. "Sports, new friends, good!", He thought. The second, a shadow crossed his head: "It must be something rich, and white people". But this second thought dissipated with the following speech by the American:

– Next Saturday. Will not miss. I expect you very early, around eight in the morning. Will even. And he reached out to João, then touched Paulinho's head lightly with his palm and, together with Walnyr, resumed the race.

## THE SEEDING<sup>5</sup>

A group of men were gathered in front of the ACM headquarters, posing for a photo. There were about twenty-four, all wearing three-piece suits: trousers, jacket and vest and covered themselves with elegant hats. There were men of commerce, business owners or managers like these, there was a journalist<sup>6</sup>, he worked for the newspaper *Diário de Notícias*, a doctor, who spent his time in a consulting room at Santa Casa de Misericórdia<sup>7</sup>, where, on the *raison d'être* of that institution, he assisted free to the poor. He was a Catholic. There was an engineer, a Methodist pastor, a famous lawyer, specialized in criminal cases, for the posterity photo, and he gave his assistance, partly to the wealthy, who made him a rich man, and partly to the underprivileged, who attended free of charge. Many in the group were Freemasons.

The photo was closed by the ACM's secretary general, mister Frank M. Long, the only professional of the institution, coming from the United States to structure the local ACM.

With the end of the photograph, after the portraitist asked everyone to stay still and look at the bird, a jargon of photography at the time, the group disbanded and some talked with others and some sought something with mister Long. Those were formal times, that liberality that the American granted to Paulinho, bringing his native name to a local Francisco, and without the reverent "mister", it was something special, in the eagerness to open the door to that world that was ahead of him and that he would, in one way or another, be part of.

But there, among those gentlemen in hats, those in higher education were strictly called doctor, the others were sir.

These were the first directors of ACM, Messrs Virgílio Boeira, Cristóvão Teixeira da Silva, Aníbal Silva, Osvaldo Canut, Ataliba José Luiz . . .

— Hi, were you already there?

Grandpa smiled and commented:

— No, I think whoever wrote the minutes forgot the surname of Mr.

<sup>5</sup> Corintos 9:6 - And this I say: he who sows sparingly will also reap; and he who sows in abundance will also reap.

<sup>6</sup> The journalist Luiz Palhares de Mello pays tribute to all the journalists who were associated or who used their vehicles to spread the message of the party and his daughter, Ivanosca, a name in front of all the young women of yesterday who shone on the volleyball courts with Inca t-shirt, among them one that became the first Lady governor of the state, Yeda Crusius.

<sup>7</sup> Notorious originally Portuguese hospitals of charity all over the Country.

Ataliba José Luiz for history. What a shame!

And he continued with the names:

—José Kokot and João Wolmer, all voluntary members of ACM, the body apart from the professionals, who form the operational unit of the institution in the many countries where it is already present. Volunteers contribute financially to make ACM work and lend their knowledge, coming from their professional activities, for the proper functioning in close collaboration with the professional secretary general or other employees.

The first group of basic associates, from which directors, Dr. João Helmer and Mr. Américo N. Cabral, K. Roth, Alderman Cabral, Aníbal Silva, Ataliba José Luis, Leite Júnior, Armando Boehr, Osvaldo Carnut, left, Osvaldo Silveira, Silverio de Jesus, José Hermes and Guilherme Buttler.

Olmerindo Rui Caporal<sup>8</sup> was also a member of the photographed group.

Olmerindo Rui was a man of commerce. He had a hardware firm and a vision for the future. He called mister Frank Long to a corner, when they were already inside the building<sup>9</sup>, and said:

— Trade is the booming business and will be an activity of the future. The number of companies that need young people prepared for commercial activities grows. I was in a large office in a public office and saw girls and boys working on typewriters. Increasingly, in various activities, young job seekers will need to be able to use modern typewriters.

And he continued, while the American listened.

— I thought about creating a typewriting course here at our ACM. What's more, I am willing to buy about ten of these Remington or Underwood machines and donate them to our ACM.

In his enthusiasm he continued:

— Hear that at Pão dos Pobres there is a training course for typing teachers. We would speak to the Lasallian brothers and bring a teacher to teach here.

Mister Long was delighted with the idea. But, within the mechanics of the ACM, as they were going to a meeting of the volunteer associates, he said that he would propose the idea of the basic associate Rui.

<sup>8</sup> Outstanding city politician.

<sup>9</sup> In 1925, the first major donation to ACM takes place, which continues today. The land at Washington Luiz headquarters was a donation from Comendador Maia so that the youth of ACM had a good area for the practice of sports.

The meeting started. ACM president, a voluntary member, Mr. Virgílio dos Reis Boeira<sup>10</sup>, previously chosen from among the associates, opened the meeting by reading a passage from the Gospel; it was the devotional moment that marked and would always mark the beginning of any ACM meeting.

After the devotional, mister Frank Long presented the proposal of the basic associate Olmerindo Rui Caporal for the formation of a typewriting school. He repeated to those present everything he had said to the Secretary-General and emphasized the fact that there will be an increasing demand for people qualified to use typewriters. They are doomed to replace handwriting.

One of those present, the journalist at Diário de Notícias came forward and informed him that he had already abandoned writing in the newspaper's office using a pencil. The newspaper had arranged two of these typewriters in a space in the large newsroom, and he used one of them.

– I pick corn on the keyboard.

He said causing a restrained laugh from those present. Among these was a member of the Bertaso family, owners of bookshop and print house do Globo, with their famous book publisher, and a body of intellectuals from the city, who produced novels, poetry and even relevant translations of classic works from Europe. The company already used linotype machines, which used keyboards similar to those of typewriters, and transformed the authors' handwritten texts into lead bricks that contained the typed line in the big machine that also fused lead.

– When you have the school up and running — Bertaso said taking the new idea for granted — I will transform a wide sector of the publishing house and have girls typing the writers' originals. It will facilitate the work of linotypists and proofreaders dealing with the writers' scribbles.

The matter was unanimously approved and it was up to the secretary-general to find a space in the building where to place ten desks that would receive the machines offered by the director.

Yes, the secretary-general arranged another room, attached to the one where the Book Guard course, a predecessor of the future Basic Business Course and the Accounting Technician course, which would be the origin of

<sup>10</sup> First ACM's President.

the ACM School like you, was already operating. know her now.

A short time passed and, in another meeting of the Board, Bertaso said euphorically:

– I hired five girls trained here, in typing. They are working hard on the writers' manuscripts. There is a young woman, Dinah, who now works exclusively on the manuscript, translation from French, by the poet Mário Quintana, from the book *In search of lost time*, by the French writer Marcel Proust. It will be a classic in Brazil as it is in Europe.

\* \* \*

Paulinho was a boy walking with friends through the streets near Ilhota, where he lived. To go from Rua Arlindo . . .

– Hey Grandpa!

– Exclaimed one of the grandchildren, in an intrusion into the story that was already far away without pause or interruption. He said:

– After all, what Rua Arlindo is this?

– Well, as I said at the beginning, my story is timeless, that's why I get confused and I don't know if I'm in the distant past, in the closest past tense, but almost always in my future and your historical past. Confusion? They are gaps in time. Well, Rua Arlindo is Avenida<sup>11</sup> Érico Veríssimo, which is at least a large part of the old Rua Arlindo.

Well, going back to where I left off, I said that Paulinho, who was walking with his friends on the streets that surround the Ilhota or are neighbors to it, left to meet two friends who lived on Rua Dr. Sebastião Leão. To get there under normal circumstances, as adults did, crossing the bridge that connected, as I said, Rua Arlindo to two arteries: Rua da Concórdia, renamed Rua José do Patrocínio and Rua Dr. Sebastião Leão.

This under normal circumstances. It happens that in parallel to the pontoon there was a pipeline of drinking water that supplied many houses in Ilhota and along Rua Arlindo. The barrel was made of thick black caliber iron and passed about 2 meters over the stream.

Paulinho and his friends, as other generations of kids there did, used the pipe for a kind of extreme sport. Instead of using the wooden bridge,

they mounted the pipe and dragged themselves, the most timid. The most daring ones, balanced, standing on the pipeline. Paulinho, at this moment, was crossing, standing up, the famous and old “iron pipe”, as it was called.

The stream had a certain depth and was going around a dense bush of eucalyptus. In the summer, the boys engaged in swimming disputes. Thus, even without the proximity of the Guaíba River or unimaginable pools, they learned to swim. It was an arm of the long stream Arroio Cascatinha, which came from beyond district Bairro Glória.

Paulinho was successful as always in crossing the pipe, without falling into the stream bed, and went to the home of two friends of Rua Dr. Sebastião Leão.

This was where the journalist for the *Diário de Notícias*, a basic associate of ACM, lived, who had a large family. There were four girls and two boys, like Paulinho, in their 10s. The girls, they were already studying or had graduated from the General Flores da Cunha Institute of Education and, thus, the oldest were teachers. Paulinho entered the house, with a corridor that led to a yard with fruit trees and there he met the two. Nobody cared about the kids, nor did they care about the adult world of the house.

One time, however, he heard the journalist, who wrote about sports in his newspaper, talking to one of his daughters. The subject was the performance of Inca in the city volleyball championship. If you're going to ask me what team this was, Inca, I'll explain that at that time there was a trend, different from what would be in the future: So intellectual people, newspapers and books, tended to make words from French, mainly, and English in Portuguese words. Thus, the ACM team, the YMCA of the original, changed Y to I, and became the Inca team, even abandoning M, replaced by N, to conform to the grammatical rule. Thus, all the references in the sports world, in the newspapers, were the Inca, a sonorous name, which won championships.

The girl who played for the Inca team had a Russian name, although she was Brazilian, as was the whole family; the journalist had a very Portuguese name. She was one of the big stars of the team.

Paulinho then talked with one of the brothers, the one who was his age and tried to find out more about his sister. He knew little, only that she would go out to play with many friends, because the street where the play area was

it was very dangerous and badly spoken. Several times the journalist had to accompany his daughter to the location of training or matches.

One day, however, for an inexplicable reason, part of the family was put in a square car, as taxis called it, and headed for ACM headquarters. Paulinho was the attached traveler — there was no invitation, he just went with the two friends in the back seat piled with two younger sisters.

In the game area, in the open field, the wooden stadium had not yet been built, they saw an electrifying one, at least for Paulinho, a volleyball game. And his friend's young sister shone like a star among all the others. He was delighted with the pitching movements of the ball — not his sock ball full of rags — of leather, white, as if it had been painted before the game.

During one of the breaks in the game, the secretary general saw the boy from the day of the street race. He went to meet him and asked, "Do you remember? It's me, Francisco". The boy smiled broadly and said yes, he would never forget that man who asked him for a glass of water. Mister Long dragged the boy close to one of the basic associates and narrated his adventure in Ilhota, where the boy and João, "that fantastic basketball player" had come from, he informed.

Another character who was ahead of Paulinho, while Frank talked about his street race, with Walnyr, waited a moment and when the sports narrative stopped he asked Paulinho where he was studying and what school year he was in. The boy said he attended a school group a little distant from his home, it was on Rua da Azenha, it was the Grupo Escolar Idelfonso Gomes. He then informed that he was in the third year and that, due to his parents' conversations, he was going to work on something, as his family was unable to pay for a high school when he finished the fifth year. The acemista<sup>12</sup> who asked, in thought, had a hint of sadness, the boy would interrupt his studies and possibly not have a good job. It occurred to him to ask, further on to the secretary general, if anything could be done for the boy from the Islet.

The game continued. Inca won and everyone rejoiced with the victory over the female team of the Catholic school Colégio Sévigné.

It was the mid-1930s, mister Long had been with ACM for over ten years. In this period, of fruitful activity, he was introducing unusual or

<sup>12</sup> Acemista is a nickname for ACM members'.

nonexistent sports practices in the city. One of them was basketball, which was created in one of the YMCA's in the United States. He was essentially a cultist of the physicist. He became known for running on streets without stone or cement pavement, such as Arlindo and Baronesa do Gravataí streets, but also already paved with polygonal stones: the streets of Margem or Concórdia, introducing street races, which were a rustic way of preparing future marathoners. Mr, Frank Long remained in shape, despite being far from its original YMCA.

At that time, the Guaíba river practically knocked on the door of ACM's headquarters. Crossing the sidewalk of Rua Pantaleão Teles there was a stone wall that contained an arm of the river, on the other side were houses of employees of railroad Viação Férrea, of the trains, and on the arm that passed under a bridge Frank Long instituted the practice of rowing that it was practiced in some types of boats, as in the traditional clubs that had nautical headquarters in the Rio Guaíba's islands.

On the issue of water sports, the ACM's journalist, from Diário de Notícias, would be involved in a crusade against the association that congregated the rowing clubs - Rowing Federation. It was the end of the 1940s. Then, a club had been founded in Porto Alegre that, among other sports, like basketball, practiced rowing in the waters of the river. In a gesture of solidarity, not compatible with their joint work, some clubs donated some boats to the new club, essentially from poor people. But there was a deal between donors. The club receiving the donation could not compete in the nautical events. The journalist, in his space in the Diário de Notícias, which disputed the leadership in sales with the traditional Correio do Povo, constantly criticized the politics of powerful clubs. The new club, barred from competitions, was a black people club. And this was the reason for the barrier, which, in short, was never overcome.

The position of the journalist was coherent: living in a medium like ACM, where the colors of Brazilians mixed naturally in the most popular sports such as volleyball and basketball, how to accept that senseless discrimination.

Thus, the journalist of Diário de Notícias, in conversation with the directors of the club barred from the rowers, learned, during a visit to their headquarters, on Praia de Belas Avenue, that they were competing in the championship of the second division, of the Basketball Federation, where

Inca also participated.

In one of the board meetings he proposed that a match be held between the Clube Náutico Marcílio Dias, the discriminated one, and the ACM, which would be a beautiful dispute because the visiting club had just become champion of the Beginning Tournament, of the Second Division, of the Basketball Federation.

All those present were in favor of the initiative, but the director who was a lawyer but also a member of the Basketball Federation offered a better idea:

– Why don't we do a tournament here, in our court?

And he added enthusiastically.

– I can invite some teams and we offer the winner a cup at the end?

Then another volunteer spoke:

– As you know, I'm from Casa Cauduro. Our specialty is sports equipment and awards, such as medals and cups.

There was a new wave of satisfaction in the environment and he concluded:

– I will donate a nice cup and a set of medals to the runner-up.

And there was the tournament. ACM was already a highlight in the city's sporting and cultural life, and on its staff were three important journalists. Thus, the tournament was the subject of wide spaces in the two main newspapers, and with more graphic movement, many photographs, in the newest one Folha da Tarde, also of the company that edited the Correio do Povo. Other newspapers also took care of the event, since those were times when the only means of mass information were newspapers and magazines, so people read a lot of newspapers. Everyone broke the news, in addition to the Jornal do Dia, an organ of the Catholic Church and A Hora.

The tournament was a success.

One of the newspapers of the time, thus, in part, described the event:

*"Initially, under a strong expectation, the contestants were called to the tournament, who were supposed to form for the inaugural parade, and which was organized in the order they paraded: Inca, Marcílio, Gaúcho, Piratas, São João and Israelita. After the parade, the National Anthem was sung by all present. Next, the Amateur Athlete's Pledge proceeded, and a player from the Marcílio Dias Club was chosen to give it, a fact that was*

*briefly highlighted by the present director of the Basketball Federation”.*

The tournament ended with the victory of the home team, the Inca, who received the Cup and passed it on to the President of ACM who was together, as was the fashion then, with the young godmother of the team. Then, medals were placed on the chest of the runners-up, the athletes from Clube Náutico Marcílio Dias.

There was another event that linked Marcílio Dias to the basketball team, Inca, from ACM. In a championship match between the two clubs, there was a magnificent Inca player who was an ardent Marcílio Dias regular. Calunga was his nickname, and he played magnificently with the ACM shirt and, winner, went to socialize with his friends from Marcílio Dias.

But there were sports that could be considered elite, fencing, for example. And in a broad democracy, there were camps and excursions, a tradition especially in the YMCA of the United States. A way that make young people detach themselves from their parents and face, under strict control, the challenges of living on their own, sometimes in unfriendly environments. This one, in the Rincão do Coelho in Canela, is from the seeds that mister Long left and that took root over time in the history of ACM, but that he did not get to know.

Going back in time: Crowds of young people in the various spaces of ACM playing sports, interacting with their peers in their lifetime, opening the door for those who wished to be in communion with acts of Christianity, however without imposition, it was a pioneer ecumenical house — thus it was, more and more, the ACM of Porto Alegre. A reference point regarding the composition of its institutional triangle: Alma, Corpo e Mente<sup>13</sup>. The ACM took care of these maximum values of life.

Likewise, new schools were created, within the same building on Rua Pantaleão Teles, aimed at training less favored people in technical schools; there were many students and some volunteer teachers, in a process of common nationality. But this came from the early days, when courses in Portuguese, French, German, arithmetic, history, astronomy was already being taught and, as a sign of the times, English was still not important, but there were still other courses that people demanded and ACM was looking for means of implementing them. In everything there was intention to

teach, so callisthenic gymnastics practices were called “class”.

For example, a young lawyer<sup>14</sup>, a postal and telegraph employee, set up a course to prepare candidates for public tenders, with an emphasis on the Portuguese language and a focus on postal contests. This lawyer, who did voluntary work, without pay, would in the future become mayor of Porto Alegre and governor of the state.

Thus, the ACM worked for many years, which tried to do everything, but did not have the resources of rich and upper middle class clubs, nor the upholstery to keep paid teachers up to their knowledge. But they were devoted to Teaching. Thus, as a rule, the teachers of the various courses that were being implemented by the ACM were volunteers, people who donated their time and their knowledge in favor of a cause that they considered as an ideal of life.

But Secretary General Frank Long was a native of the United States, raised in a society where giving is a solid and ingrained institution. They believe in the biblical principle<sup>15</sup>, in their interpretation, that being rich does not offend the right to have one’s soul, in short, with the Lord. It is dogma between them: it does not matter to be rich, what matters is what the rich man does with his possession. Hence the YMCAs of their origin are similar to universities, churches, hospitals and recreation centers, whose resources come from the rich who make good use of their possessions, even if it is to have, on the material plane, their name registered on a plaque, and in the spiritual, do not offend the evangelical principle.

The Secretary-General did not find much of that spirit here, possibly due to different interpretations between Catholic principles and Protestants. Thus, in one of the board meetings he proposed the creation of a system for collecting aid, which was called the Golden Book.

It was accepted by the board, but with a suspicious unanimity. Some of the directors did not believe, before the final vote, that people would sign the book, giving donations and that these, possibly, would be of little importance.

But the director-acemista, the same one who donated and instituted the typing course, putting ten brand new machines in the school, said:

—We must, when presenting the Golden Book, show something that

14 Dr. Alceu de Deus Collares. In his name are revered all the teachers who, freely and voluntarily taught at the School and the professionals of yesterday and today.

15 Luke 18: 24-25 - How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! Because it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

the Institution wants to accomplish and that sensitizes the donor.

There was a long moment of silence and crossed looks, expressions of doubt, admiration and, finally, inquiry. The journalist asked:

– I think it's brilliant, but does anyone have an idea?

That brilliant finds of the journalist carried a load of agreement and challenge. He made it explicit that the idea was good, very good indeed, but he hoped that someone, perhaps the secretary general who has YMCA under control, would offer a suggestion. And mister Frank said:

– It would be for the construction of a covered gym, here at the back of the building. Our brother Walnyr, who is an engineer, would design the gym and along with the Golden Book it would be clear what we were going to do with the money raised. A drawing, really, like a model. After all – the journalist concluded – we are in this field because someone, see!, a Comendador, found the practice of the sport relevant and donated the land. A gym for ACM will undoubtedly be a beautiful motto.

Another voice was raised, he was a grand master of a Grand Masonic Lodge.

– I will take the matter for debate and see how much we will collect.

The typewriter man was a commercial leader, so he was not intimidated by the strength of Freemasonry and went on to enumerate:

– When Mr. Frank gives us the Book, I already have in mind some friends that I will talk to, for example, almost all of them attend either the Clube do Comércio or the Caixeiral, like the people at hardware Bromberg, Casa Masson, at the Scarpini Jewellery, who he will want to give more than Masson, the Foernges, Mr. AJ Renner, those from the Dabdab fabrics, people from Casa Krahe, and Brother Célia, ah! And the Gerdau, who are very fond of sports - there will be a lot of people subscribing to the Book.

In view of the repertoire of possible rich contributors, the Grand Master just spoke:

– Our rites do not allow us to reveal who will contribute, but I know that a substantial amount will come.

Once ready, it was a large gymnasium where a basketball court, all made of wood, could be fitted, with coverage for the harsh winter gaucho and lighting for night practice, especially for callisthenic gym classes.

The gym was ready and the gym classes were regurgitating. There

were bathrooms with hot showers and wardrobes; annexes that were built with the resources of the Golden Book. Gymnastics classes and basketball and volleyball games were an attraction for the end of the day, after 6 pm or in the midday break. There were always full classes for the separate sexes, male and female.

However, the gym would be home to the best sport in the city, with the brilliant women's volleyball teams. Even before its inauguration and for the following years, generations of girls, with their shorts with elastic at the hem closing the thigh and with the victorious T-shirt of the Inca, faced, especially, teams of female schools such as the Catholic Sévigné and Bom Conselho or the Protestant American, this one with his male college brother, IPA, who was a powerful opponent of the Inca basketball team. In basketball, the public high school Júlio de Castilhos was also consecrated.

The teams belonged to the Basketball and Volleyball federations, so they had intense athletic activity throughout the year. In old photographs generations and generations of young people are seen posing with the different T-shirts that marked each one at a certain time, using the Triangle, in different designs.

When mister Frank Long left the ACM of Porto Alegre, in the late 1930s, going to his homeland, the gym was not ready yet, despite the strength of the contacts of the entrepreneur and other acemista who went out in the field in search of resources; the works dragged on. He was the Brazilian secretary general, Mr. Otto Reif, who had the pleasure, along with a new president, Mr. Alcides Gonzaga, of inaugurating the modeling of his installation in due time.

The fact that this is, Mr. Gonzaga, the president of ACM gave great prominence to the event. It turns out that Mr. Gonzaga was the general manager of the important Correio do Povo, the trusted man of the widow who had inherited the newspaper and of his son who would run it, journalist Breno Caldas.

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In 1930 Brazil was going through one of its cyclical revolutions. The states of Rio Grande do Sul, Minas Gerais and Paraíba joined in a movement that resulted in a coup d'état that overthrew the president, born in São Paulo, Washington Luiz, and prevented the inauguration of Júlio Prestes, also born in São Paulo, constitutionally elected. The revolutionary movement was led by the gaucho, lawyer and politician Getúlio Vargas. This set up an armed contingent that went up Brazil towards the Southeast, using the railway system of the time, arriving at the municipality of Marcelino Ramos, border with the state of Santa Catarina, where they changed trains, because of the difference in the railroad gauges and , after overthrowing the government of the neighboring state, they went to São Paulo, which saw both Washington Luiz defeated, whose name, in the future, would replace the badly spoken Pantaleão Teles<sup>16</sup>, and Júlio Prestes. Getúlio and his revolutionaries, from the dominated São Paulo, also left by train to Rio de Janeiro, then capital of the country and seat of the government.

It was a legion of gauchos who were in Rio de Janeiro and on the fringes of the Revolution two legends were created: The Federal Senate building, called Palacio Monroe, had in front of it, in Praça Paris<sup>17</sup>, at the end of Avenida Central, which changed the name for Rio Branco Avenue, the Obelisk. It was the story that the victorious gauchos of Getúlio Vargas tied their horses in the Obelisk. A second legend is the dispute in the taste of the gauchos for two beers of the time: The Brahma Chope and the Blue Belt, from Antarctica. The first with headquarters in Rio de Janeiro and the second in São Paulo. With the victory and the winners in Rio de Janeiro, Brahma would have offered at Quinta da Boa Vista, a large and magnificent terrace, a gigantic barbecue watered, free of charge, its beer. It is easy to understand that, for many years, in Rio Grande do Sul and, later in Brazil, the word brama, according to Aurélio<sup>18</sup>, became synonymous with beer, of any brand.

Because ACM entered this story by forming a group of volunteers

16 It was an accident of the times, which became Rua Pantaleão Teles, which bordered Guaíba, in a tribute to an important figure in Brazilian history. Joaquim Pantaleão Teles de Queirós (Porto Alegre, 1836 - 1868) was a Brazilian military man and was one of the first to set foot on Paraguayan soil, in the invasion of April 16, 1866. He lost his life, in the rank of major and ahead of his Regiment , in the attack on the fortifications of Passo Real do Tebicuary.

17 Paris square.

18 Aurelio is the most well know dictionary of Portuguese language in Brazil.

called the Correspondent Corps who wrote letters from family members who stayed in Porto Alegre to the revolutionary relatives and those who accompanied the rebel troops, as “war correspondents” as the name of the famous sports journalist Amaro Júnior was registered. It was the ACM in the march of victory and placement of Getúlio Vargas as president - let's say dictator - of the Republic, from the Palácio do Catete, where he stayed for fifteen years and, he returned again, to end a term in which he was popularly elected, with his suicide.

In the military field, the ACM was also present with exercises of the so-called “War Shots”. Created at the beginning of the century in Rio Grande do Sul, they became target shooting centers in military preparation centers, which, with the course, in uniform as Army military personnel, were regarded as reservists and as such were released from compulsory military service. The parents of the middle class at that time were delighted with this option, which was less rigid than serving in a barracks.

So far you have already seen the importance that volunteers have in ACM. They bring ideas, present solutions to problems and make the institution evolve. But they all have their own activities: doctors, lawyers, engineers, traders, industrialists and people from society. This functional group, meeting with certain periodicity, could not take the ACM in an orderly direction and destination. Then the other half enters, the professionals, since the beginning were the professional secretaries, who donate full time for the execution of the projects and the organization and operation of the association.

In this set of stories without hierarchy in time or values, I have highlighted ideas that volunteers brought and that became beautiful projects. But each of them had to be professionally guided. So, ACM works.

In another meeting of the board of directors, another director commented on the intense and rewarding activity of a very close institution, the Instituto Pão dos Pobres<sup>19</sup>, guided by brothers of the Lasallian order. The institution shelters underprivileged young people and turns them into professional craftsmen at the end of the day: carpenters, mechanics, electricians, typists, linotypists and much more. Pão dos Pobres supplies the most diverse enterprises with qualified labor and introducing young

people into professions generates income for their own maintenance.

The director wanted to talk about something that could be done in conjunction with the Pão dos Pobres, and it was already a seed of a larger philanthropy project that, in the future, would give ACM a big dimension.

Pão dos Pobres maintains a group of small boys and gives them shelter, food and education - still very young, in their 10s - and they are known as the city's newsboys. As has been said, in the early years and for a long time to come, newspapers were consumed with great voracity, as they were the sources of daily information available. Many newspapers were sold on the corners of the city center, in the public market, in the shelters and tram stops, and even inside, anywhere that the little ones could enter offering their product; also in the most affluent neighborhoods where the name of the newspapers and the most striking headlines of the day were shouted, loud but childish voices.

The board decided that an approach should be made to the Pão dos Pobres and that a form of joint action be found. The result was positive and the newspaper truck dropped bales at ACM and Pão dos Pobres and the two entities managed the work of the little ones newsboys, taking care of the resources they drew from sales, paying the newspapers and retaining the commission they granted, all returning to an assistance plan. They also helped the boys with the modest remuneration they took to their homes. Furthermore, with resources from the gold books, donations from volunteers, the boys received food: breakfast, when they arrived; lunch when they came back from the morning sale and a reinforced coffee in the middle of the afternoon; they stayed in some activity, waiting for the afternoon newspapers, the so-called evening calls, as opposed to the morning ones.

## THE HARVEST<sup>20</sup>

It was a Saturday and Paulinho had played normally with his friends. At the journalist and his friends' house, he knew that Ivanosca had won another trophy at the Inca volleyball game and that she was celebrating, in the back of the house, with a teammate, Yeda, another championship. There was another reason for the player's euphoria, expressed in the way that young people, especially girls, do, with a certain fuss. She was going to be engaged to a player from the Inca basketball team. The house was full of people, especially friends who enjoyed the taste of victory or just being friends with a champion. The boys, standing in a corner, watched the show with simple curiosity. That was not his world yet. Although possibly in their 17s, the girls were too mature for them.

They got tired of the show and sneaked through the gathering and went for a walk through the eucalyptus bush. They crossed the stream, Paulinho and one of the two brothers, climbed the iron structure that passed beside the bridge. The youngest ran away the risky adventure of his brother and friend, walking at a slow pace, like walking on the iron, over the bridge. They joined at the end, and went for a walk through the woods, which crossed and arrived at the soccer field where two teams, with shirts, but barefoot, ran after a leather ball, very large, in proportion to the socks with which they played. The adults spoke in number 5, as the ideal standard of the professional ball, of the fields of Cruzeiro, Grêmio and Internacional.

The field had no markings and the goalkeepers, without a net, were just three sticks forming a rectangle. There was a judge who whistled the players' numerous faults, but there were no flags, or side judges.

The three watched the match with little interest and went ahead, looking for something to do. They left the field and crossed a half-fenced plot, with the barbed wires broken here and there. They entered and passed through an orchard with ripe fruits that, some were lying on the ground and others, it was enough that they shook branches a little higher than them, for the fruits to fall to the ground. It was a mere act of kidding,

20 2 Corinthians 9:10: He who supplies the seed to the sower and the bread to the eater will also supply and multiply the seed and increase the fruits of his righteousness.

because they didn't aim to eat the fruits. Until they heard the sound of a firearm, they broke into a frantic rush. The story that ran among other older boys was that the owner of that land had a shotgun that used salt bullets to scare away invaders. And they said: whoever was hit would suffer, for a long time, the wound that would be caused by the impact of the salt. But they left unharmed and ran to Rua da Olaria, which died in the invaded small farm. They climbed a mound of earth and observed gigantic works in the distance that gave the impression that a canal would be built. They played until they tired on the materials as if abandoned. They came back, and crossed a terrain wasteland, which started at Rua da Olaria and ended in the eucalyptus bush. Again, now there, they found backyard fruit, like a mulberry tree, from which they decided to pick blackberries and taste them leaving a purple trail on the shirts that their mothers would not like to see and have to wash.

Rua Dr. Sebastião Leão, it was on the three of them finally went; it was dotted with cinnamons. There was a leafy one that was in front of the boys' house and the three decided to stay in its branches, in a simulacrum of hiding. They collected green marbles from the tree and one of the boys, the youngest, went to look for a sling that he hid inside the house, in his room. He came back and shouted at the two, showing, from the bottom up, the artifact they called a sling. They went down and the eldest took the sling and lodged the green marble in the breech and started to shoot at random, until he hit a pane and they started running wildly. It was just the noise, the glass didn't break, but for safety they disappeared, in a frantic rush.

The afternoon was falling, the sun was setting on the horizon and the shadows spread on the ground or against walls and walls, making the image of the boys become that of giants. The journey was ending. They didn't say goodbye; they just went to their homes. This time Paulinho, because it was getting dark, did not cross mounted on the iron pipe of the water mains, but ran towards Rua Arlindo over the bridge.

He entered his modest home and saw that something was wrong. He went to his parents' room and saw that, as never before, the mother was lying down and sweating a lot, a sweat that was wiped by her husband with a piece of cloth.

That night was very busy. Although the weariness of his wanderings

pushed him to sleep, he ate something that his father gave him, walked around his mother's bed and went to sleep, but restless sleep. Early in the morning, he woke up and saw that his mother was as he was and the father was doing nothing but wiping sweat that did not stop. He said he had prepared a mixture of water with quinine, as his grandmother had taught him, but it was not working. The fever was still very high.

In the morning, while drinking coffee with milk and a piece of bread and butter, Paulinho remembered a name: Francisco.

He managed as he could, he was now one of the newsboys and had been given shoes and a kind of uniform. He set off towards Rua Pantaleão Teles, following the path from Rua da Concórdia, turning on Rua da República, still called Rua do Imperador, reaching Rua da Margem to a bridge, to reach ACM's street.

He looked for and easily found Mister Frank, who welcomed him with candor. He said:

—You know, Paulinho?, today, Sunday, is Mother's Day, it's a celebration that we are implementing here in Brazil, in Porto Alegre.

A single tear fell from one of Paulinho's eyes and it caught the attention of Mister Frank.

— What is happening?

The secretary general of the ACM expressed his concern. This caused other tears to flow, wetting the boy's face.

Mister Frank anguished asked what was going on.

Still, with tears running, he said sobbing that his mother was very sick and that the father did not know what to do and they had no way to call a doctor.

Mister Long pulled the boy against him, as a father does, and rubbing his head, he said, "let's do something Paulinho. And let's do it now".

It was really the first Mother's Day in Brazil.

ACM's headquarters were all dressed up. There were flowers in the corners and tables, the ladies in well-dressed clothes mostly wore hats decorated with dried flowers. The gentlemen, the absolute majority, husbands of these ladies, were dressed with great aplomb. It was a big celebration. The American brought from his homeland the event that would become a memorable day now in Brazil, but also many countries in the world.

– Stay here, Paulinho, eat something. There are lots of patties and pieces of chicken. I'll be right back.

Mister Frank moved away and went towards a wheel of veteran acemista. One of them, a doctor who attended at Santa Casa de Misericórdia, doing philanthropic work of wide recognition in the city. He heard what the secretary said, looked at the direction of the boy, who was crestfallen and had not touched any of the cold plates that were there in front of him and at his disposal if he wanted to. The doctor then spoke to his friend, standing next to him, the famous criminal lawyer, but who devoted part of the time, in pro bono action, in favor of prisoners in the city jail. He had a car. The lawyer accepted the doctor's invitation to go to Ilhota and assist Paulinho's mother.

They said goodbye in a "we are back" to the secretary-general, with the doctor before taking his companion, a clinical suitcase, on a table, where in addition to the necessary stethoscope, there was a thermometer, some glasses with potions and aspirins.

The boy boarded the car, which he did for the second time in his life, surrounded by the doctor and the lawyer.

They arrived at Ilhota by complicated paths for the car, still a strange element in the arteries of the young city. Then, when they beat Rua da Concórdia, they found that the bridge that connected this street to Rua Arlindo was not wide enough for a car to pass. Thus, the lawyer parked the vehicle on Rua Dr. Sebastião Leão, and went with his friend on foot until the three of them reached Paulinho's house.

They jumped the ditch that separated the land from the house and served to drain both the rain and waste that the lack of a culture of sanitation enabled people to discard. They entered the house, the lawyer behind the doctor. The outer frame, the islet, and the interior, the house, did not cause any discomfort for the two high-ranking men. Assistance to poor people, in the days of family doctors, who usually attended homes; those in the doctor's office, even so, made their name and their clientele by going, with that clinical bag, to people's homes. The other visiting, by choice, was not what was called a chess door lawyer, but a successful professional who lived with the depressive environment of the public Gasometer.

The doctor arrived at the room where Paulinho's father and his

prostrate mother were waiting for him. A look, nothing more than a look, before the thermometer and the stethoscope, years of profession gave him the diagnosis. While the thermometer felt the woman's body heat, he gently placed the heartbeat on his chest and heard a strong, well-paced beat.

He talked to the woman, she had a slightly shaky voice, and the husband, frightened, saw himself in her wide eyes.

After his conclusions, which he did not fully disclose to the couple, he said that they should not worry, but that they should follow what he would determine. He gave some pills from his briefcase, which she ingested in front of him and, before leaving, he sent Paulinho, the other day, to go to the ACM, which would receive more medication for the complete treatment of his mother. He insisted that he never let go and that he saw to it that she took the medication properly.

The two visitors said goodbye to Paulinho's father, patting him on the shoulder, saying that everything would be back to normal. Accompanied by the boy, the masters crossed the bridge. Then he saw them leave on Rua Dr. Sebastião Leão towards Rua da Olaria and head back to ACM, on that very important day for the new acemista community; a landmark of incalculable extension, throughout Brazil, like many of the initiatives that the home of young Christians has done and would do over the years. Yes, that Sunday, a day of rejoicing in the remembrance of the most relevant element in the life of a human being, the entity that gave it life, was also the day when ACM opened the doors of the most outstanding participation in the life of the state capital and, in the future, from other places: The benevolence.

Doctor and lawyer went back to ACM, it was close to noon. They returned to fraternize, in a cheerful and flowery environment, with sweets and snacks on the tables, with other associates and their wives and daughters.

Paulinho, back at home, was hanging around his mother. He ate better than the lunch his father prepared for him. The presence of the doctor, who had not caused any immediate miracles, was enough for the hunger to return. He didn't even see it, but the secretary-general had time to put it in a small bundle of cloth and give it to the doctor, patties and pieces of chicken, which the doctor left when he left on the eating table at Paulinho's

house. After lunch he went to play with friends, always thinking about his mother, until he returned, around 6 pm; it was May and the days were still long, and he found his mother now leaning back in bed and already eating chicken soup, from the hens in his chicken coop, as the doctor had recommended. She no longer had that aspect that the resulting fever and sweat had given her. He looked at his mother and smiled and then stretched out on the bed beside her. Then the name Francisco came to his head again and his morning stay at the ACM, with all those flowers, and the ladies well dressed; he kissed his mother and went out the door. He went in the floodplain ahead and collected a bunch of daisies from the field. He ran back with the little yellow and white flowers in the center and, without any comment, handed them over to his mother.

The Islet, poor and forgotten by the municipality, in its own way, also entered Mother's Day.

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The doctor<sup>21</sup> later participated in another board meeting. It entertained like the other debates on the agenda of that meeting. Nothing beyond that proposed by the Secretary-General was envisaged. But in due course, the doctor said:

— After that visit we made to the boy Paulinho's house, I wondered how many people in that community, Ilhota, are in need of medical assistance. And there is a gap that is the root of all evil. The lack of care in childhood. Mothers are unprepared to face even small child health problems that, if left untreated, lead to irreversible damage and sequelae. Paulinho's mother was in a feverish process that, had it not been for the antipyretic I administered, with a temperature at that time of 40 degrees Celsius, she would be heading for convulsions. In this case, there was no lack of knowledge, but to have free medical help available, because there and elsewhere in the city, people simply cannot call a doctor at home.

— I thought, colleagues and secretary-general, that we should start setting up a small child hygiene clinic, where mothers would bring their

<sup>21</sup> Many medical doctors went through these 120, and worked in different ways in the ACM staff, volunteers or professionals in our social works in needy communities, but fiction, here, hides and honors one of them, Dr. Antônio Moreno Morales.

children for clinical examinations and, in addition to seeing their children examined, they would receive basic instructions for routine care. They would learn to identify dysfunctions and quickly seek preliminary assistance – if necessary, use the Santa Casa or Hospital de Pronto Socorro.

– I've been looking around the new spaces of the building, I think we can find a corner for the clinic.

The approval was unanimous. The secretary-general, very enthusiastic, said that he already envisioned the place that would be easily accessible to mothers with their children.

And, effectively, the ACM moved in an expressive social universe, as soon as the associates and basic associates spread that facility that the entity offered. However, the doctor's greatest objective was achieved as the small newsboys, all coming from needy communities, such as Ilhota, informed their mothers of the need to go to the ACM, to be attended by a doctor, without paying anything. Ladies of the Institution organized meetings, where they divulged the need for mothers to learn about infant hygiene and to give their children better health. Closer to the ACM, many mothers came from the set of streets known as the Areal da Baronesa, densely populated by soldiers from the Military Brigade, with soldiers, corporal and sergeants forming poor families or, as they said, remedied.

It was lovely to see the medical room with rows of mothers and their children, waiting to be seen. The doctor's venture was a magnificent success.

The new building was complete, there was space for a grand project by an acemista who would be noted in the history of the house as the only President of Honor<sup>22</sup>.

At a board meeting he said of the need to expand the educational field. There was space in the new headquarters and the Guard Books course had become outdated. In the methods of accounting control of companies, new equipment that appeared and that demanded qualified knowledge, demanded that the Basic Course of Commerce be created. It was the new times pushing the past into place. A modern company, at the time, needed more than a bookkeeper, a highly respected employee, when company movements were handled in heavy books that these professionals knew how to operate and were requested. But the public administration itself,

22 Dr. Mário Cardoso Jarros, in honor of all those who have been President of ACM since its foundation.

with new legal requirements, began to want more than books the way they were until those years. A market was opened for trade professionals. As was new, ACM had to apply to the Ministry of Education for registration, which was checked.

Then Grandpa, who had been linearly telling the story of the ACM, asked his grandchildren a question and had a negative answer. The question:

– Do you know who was enrolled in the course?

So he, himself replied:

– Paulinho. He was now employed by a renowned firm in the city, owned by the *acemista* Mr. Adel Carvalho, where he was a courier, or, young man of messages. He worked at the firm during the day and at 7 pm he was at ACM to attend classes.

The course was a success. Commerce employers encouraged their employees to attend the course, so classes were always full. And there was a curious detail, but normal at that time, in each classroom he had pasted the portrait of President Getúlio Vargas.

The young director and founder of the School of Commerce, seed of the Accounting Technician course, which matched the Classic and Scientific courses, capable of giving access to university entrance exams – the young man was preparing to present a “bomb”, something very difficult to be understood at that time by the directors and basic associates of ACM.

It started like that.

– In my relationship circle there is an acquaintance who talked to me about a project that he has in mind and that he imagines will be something very grand.

Those present listened with moderate attention to what their colleague was saying. He continued:

– He is a builder, has several works around the city. In most of them, he builds precast houses. He has land in some areas of the city, where he plans to develop new projects. We talked a lot about his plans and he is very bold and innovative. He has ideas that to some may seem crazy, but that, in truth, in the not too distant future may be great sources of return for what he invests. Is there anyone among you who has already gone to where Avenida Protásio Alves ends? There, the neighborhood gets confused, separated by a big hill, from the Agronomia neighborhood,

where the Veterinary Faculty is located.

– For there in that distant area of the city center, next to what will be the expansion of Protásio Avenue – continued the director enthusiastically –, he designs a revolutionary enterprise. Something unique in Porto Alegre.

One of the members of the meeting asked:

– Are you thinking about the possibility of ACM to associate with this friend of yours?

Another said:

– I do not understand your enthusiasm, dear fellow.

And a third:

– Perhaps the colleague is bringing here only the story of a person who is a friend who is having success in life.

The director who brought the idea, then, left everyone instantly stunned by what he said:

– He wants to build a cemetery, a necropolis like Santa Casa's one, or that of the Brotherhood São Miguel e Almas or even the Evangelical.

There was a stir in the room, the meeting became a meeting of cross-talk, with almost unanimity:

– It is not one of our principles!

Exclaimed a more excited one.

The proponent of the idea seemed the most calm of all, it seems that he had in his soul the certainty that with his idea – a visionary – the very salvation of the institution in the future. As soon as the meeting was reordered by the president, he spoke calmly:

– The entrepreneur owns a large area of land in Caminho do Meio. . .

And it was interrupted.

– Caminho do Meio, where is it?

He didactically replied:

– Everyone here thinks that Caminho do Meio, today called Avenida Protásio Alves, ends at the end of the long straight that starts at Rua Osvaldo Aranha, and ends with the houses and the streets that start at the top of the so-called Bairro Petrópolis. But Caminho do Meio goes to the border between Porto Alegre and Viamão. Are there immense areas of a few owners, some heirs still of sesmarias<sup>23</sup>. For my friend bought from

<sup>23</sup> Land concessions in depopulated Brazil, still a colony of Portugal, for Portuguese who migrated to this possession.

a lot of these heirs, a large area of land that stands on both sides of the Caminho do Meio, thus having the avenue as a divider and promising path in the very near future.

They insisted again:

– Yes, your friend as an entrepreneur seems praiseworthy, but what will he do with so much land?

– He has a concept of construction that he learned abroad or in another part of Brazil. It is something new. And he will have a factory of this new thing.

– And what is this something new and what factory is this?

Another member of the board asked, as everyone was now puzzled, and the misunderstanding of the proposed idea remained: a cemetery.

The owner of the idea continued:

– He has a factory that produces precast cement slabs. With these signs he intends to build a set of popular houses in those lands that belong to him. Such houses can be erected very quickly, as there is no manual task of placing bricks, mortar and even covering the bricks with thin mass.

– Beautiful, everything very modern – said another director – but, and the cemetery.

– Well, he already has a negotiation with Sport Club Cruzeiro. They would make an exchange: The entrepreneur would keep the area of the football team in Azenha neighborhood, where the stadium is, on a hill that gives the popular name to the team of “Colina Melancólica<sup>24</sup>”, this due to the proximity to cemeteries that are surroundings.

– You know I’m sometimes too insistent.

Another director spoke.

– I’ve been quiet so far, but I’ll talk. Everything is beautiful, but in any enterprise there must be financial participation. Admitting that we come to the conclusion that we should get into this business . . .

He took an artistic pause with reticence, and continued:

– We live on the basis of the Golden Book, the modest collection of monthly fees from members who practice sports and from our schools, which we can barely pay some teachers, how are we going to get into such a business? Look at the other cemeteries, they are great works.

<sup>24</sup> Melancholy Hill.

The director who brought the question asked the floor to try to go ahead with his project, which was, yes, to make ACM associate with the entrepreneur and together make a new cemetery in Porto Alegre. He reported:

– I imagine it is difficult to associate our sports, educational and philanthropic work – mind you, the philanthropic – with death. Cemetery is death and, in our culture, something very traumatic. But I am bringing a business proposal – perhaps, I would like you to kindly hear me at this point – I will repeat myself, business! The cemetery would be a business unit that would provide financial support for all the projects that we have and those that we would start to create. And, as for resources, the entrepreneur’s proposal does not involve money from ACM. By the law of our municipality, only religious entities can have a cemetery. He is a businessman and is nowhere near being or having a religious entity. ACM by its nature is a religious, Christian entity, although not directly linked to one of the religions. It has an ecumenical profile, which is home to people who profess any of the established religions. The entrepreneur would build the cemetery, using the technology he dominates, investing in materials and we would open the only possible way for him to build and operate a new cemetery, which would carry in his name the word ecumenical, which we are: “an entity that expresses willingness to coexist and dialogue with all religious denominations”, as defined by Aurélio.

There were countless barriers to be overcome by the young director of ACM, but the cemetery, which in addition to being ecumenical paid tribute to a prominent Pope, John XXIII, won the Melancholic Hill and became known in the city as the Ecumenical Cemetery John XXIII.

This barrier between life and death, acceptance of business units, such as a camping area in Canela<sup>25</sup>, and a summer inn in Tramandaí<sup>26</sup>, prove to be the only way for entities like ACM to survive. Resistance to business appeared again when one of the executive secretaries presented the proposal to purchase, with the resources of João XXIII, a necropolis in the municipality of Canela, in a highly developed tourist region, where bodies’ cremation equipment would be installed – generating another of the points of difficult acceptance in the past: making cremations – and today it constitutes an operation of broad consensus and even need in the

<sup>25</sup> Municipality in the distant mountain range 103 kilometers from Porto Alegre and area of intense tourist activity.

<sup>26</sup> Ocean beach 100 kilometers from Porto Alegre.

year 2020 of the coronavirus pandemic.

– Grandpa, You talked about Tramandaí. The Summer Camp. We were there one summer with our parents. We stayed in a two-story house, it had a recreation area, soccer fields, volleyball, swimming pool, bocce ball court and in the old building was the restaurant and on the top floor accommodation for monitors and singles, very cool.

– Yes!

Exclaimed Grandfather with enthusiasm, but made a point of remembering that in the beginning, in the 1960s, it was just a wooden house, a large bungalow. Now, it is a quality hostel, which can independently house several families and have their children safely. And it's not far from the ocean, a walk with chairs and parasols. He laughed at the accountant grandfather and continued:

- It was another important project, when moved from a house to an inn, in the pioneer spirit of always seeking resources for the execution of the Mission.

## THE ENJOY<sup>27</sup>

– Grandpa, where are we going?

– Not long ago I told you about the story that involved the discussion about ACM having a cemetery. Today you, like practically all inhabitants of Porto Alegre and the surrounding area, know the large building on top of a hill, which was once called “Melancholic Hill”, is the popularly called João 23.

– Perhaps when I told the story, you, because of your age, had the same incomprehension that relatively young and mature directors of ACM of that time experienced in the face of two apparently incongruous things in an association in principle focused on sport and subsidiarily for teaching. The double incongruity was: cemetery and business unit. They thought, why have a cemetery? How to have a trade?

– It happens that the young director who brought the idea and the other directors who gradually understood the extension of the project, were very clear that death is an unavoidable reality and that, thus, charities institutions that own cemeteries had under their domain an undertaking commercial whose profitability was used to maintain themselves, but, in particular, their meritorious work, as was the specific case of the Santa Casa de Misericórdia Cemetery that cooperated with the charity hospital and a Holy Field, where the deprived of the city are buried.

– This is the concept of a business unit that would make ACM structurally strong and it would increasingly occupy itself with improving that image lost in time, which the American Frank Long saw at Ilhota.

– We are going to Vila Cruzeiro now. Do you know where it is? It stays in itself, so big that it stayed.

Grandfather always went on enthusiastically:

– It consists of the neighborhoods Medianeira, Santa Tereza and surroundings. It represents 4.64% of the municipality’s population, making a total of 65,408 people, of which 25,967 are between zero and 19 years old. In this region, the average income is up to three minimum wages as shown in the 2010 Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics census.

27 Ecclesiaste 8:15:17 “I realized everything that God has done. No one is able to understand what is done under the sun. No matter how much he tries to discover the meaning of things, man will not find it. The sage may even claim that he understands, but in reality, he cannot find it”.

– Hey Grandpa, how do you know all this, this data?

– Well, I will not lie to you, as I never do... I tell some stories and fantasies, but a lot of truth, too. I already know the computer, you know, right? Because there is a beautiful ACM website that has a lot. I took it out. And he continued:

– Considering the above items and the average per capita income per family of the region's residents, it is concluded that almost half of the families in the region are in a situation of poverty or even extreme poverty. It is also added the quality of life of this population that faces serious problems with housing, basic sanitation, as well as basic social rights, aligned with the high levels of violence and the difficulty of insertion in the labor market, contributing to the social exclusion process, assuming dimensions that enhance these vulnerabilities.

– Grandpa and how did this start?

– It was 1976, the Casemiro Bruno Kurtz Foundation was linked to the Rotary Club that took care of giving some kind of assistance to the residents of Vila Cruzeiro, which was expanding rapidly. His management, however, understood that, given the relationship of the directors of the ACM, it would be better to pass the management, which would be more professional, to that institution.

– What we are going to see – continued Grandpa – can be summed up this way: ACM Cruzeiro do Sul acts, taking opportunities for children, young people and their families. It offers early childhood education, a youth center with a shift back to school for children and adolescents between 6 and 17 years of age in a vulnerable situation, in addition to training projects for young people and adults, senior citizens and psychosocial guidance for families.

– All this, Grandpa?

– And there's more, my grandchildren.

– The Vila Cruzeiro project seeks to ensure that everyone, without distinction, has the necessary opportunities to develop their potential and thereby change their realities and perspectives.

– Just as it was with Paulinho from the beginning of the story, who ended up being trained in Accounting, right?

– That's right!

And Grandpa continued:

– From this transformation, having this great and beautiful universe a future, the best possible, and these people become agents of change also in their families and communities.

– Ah, Grandpa. I remember that Mother's Day story when the doctor, inspired by what he saw, similar to what you are talking about, saw that the right way was to teach mothers children's hygiene. Now Vila Cruzeiro does this, but in a way that the American mister couldn't imagine!

– But somehow it did.

He won Grandpa. And he continued:

– The activities are accompanied by a multidisciplinary team composed of professionals in the areas of sports, nutrition, pedagogy, psychology and social work, among others, in one of the regions of greatest social exclusion in Porto Alegre.

– And where does the money come from for all this, Grandpa.

– Ah, do you remember that director of ACM in the past convincing his colleagues about business unit? Well, it comes from there and from international institutions that grant aid and good administrative management both from the ACM and from the Cemetery Council, which makes the resources that come to be carefully applied.

– And now Grandpa, where are we going?

– The story is very long and I will tell it in another opportunity, but I will give an important fraction of it. With the participation in the assembly of the cemetery, the entrepreneur contractually had to build a new stadium for Sport Club Cruzeiro, and donate an area to the ACM in the same location. The deal was fulfilled. But in view of the demographic expansion of the city and the impoverishment and migration of families from the interior of the state, a cluster was formed that, as I said, I will not expand much, but which started to have deficiencies and among these, health. A post was then installed free medical assistance managed by the ACM social project. It is described as follows on the ACM internet:

"ACM Morro Santana has been working, since 1989, in assisting children and young people in situations of social vulnerability, with the objective of making them agents in the transformation of the community itself. The public is served in the opposite shift from the school, through sports,

artistic, recreational, pedagogical and computer activities, in addition to environmental education activities and social service with individual and family service.

“It seeks to ensure that everyone, without distinction, has the necessary opportunities to develop their potential and, with that, change their realities and perspectives. From this transformation, a better future is possible, and these people also become agents of change in their families and communities.

“The activities are accompanied by a multidisciplinary team composed of professionals in the areas of sports, nutrition, pedagogy, psychology and social work, among others, in a region of high social exclusion”.

- There Grandpa, same as in Vila Cruzeiro!
  - Let’s go where, now? - Asked another grandchildren.
  - In another magnificent project. The Olympic Restinga.
- Here we have another historical connection.

I’ll tell you like this:

– In the 1960s, Porto Alegre, while showing a rapid urbanization process, through the opening of avenues and the construction of modern buildings, had serious infrastructure problems in the housing area. To reorganize the space, DEMHAB - Municipal Department of Housing, in 1965, whose priority was to seek alternatives for swampy areas of the city, of great unhealthiness for the populations residing there. Thus, residents of Vilas Theodora, Maritimos, Ilhota and Santa Luzia were moved, from 1966, to Vila Restinga, which with the emergence of a new project in the same area, separated by an avenue not yet paved. But due to the lack of infrastructure – open sewers, lack of pavements, precarious housing –, what happened was the reproduction of an old space in a new place: lack of minimum conditions, as well as the occupation of risky areas together to the slope of Morro São Pedro.

– Simultaneously to this context – continued the Grandfather –, in 1969, a large housing project was elaborated, started in 1970 and concluded in its first stage in 1971, called New Restinga, at the time the largest housing project in Brazil. The city was going through a major urbanization process, including the “Projeto Renascença”, which created major changes in the districts Menino Deus and Cidade Baixa with landfills,

opening of avenues, such as the end of Arlindo Street and the emergence of Érico Veríssimo Avenue, the creation of cultural spaces, such as the Gymnasium Tesourinha and its cultural attachments. Parallel to the houses, there was the project to implement the Restinga Industrial District, which would welcome industries and, consequently, create a space for the absorption of the large labor force that moved there. However, the project never came off the ground completely: in part, housing was guaranteed to workers from different areas of the city, enrolled in DEMHAB, and with an income of at least five minimum wages, but industries did not settle there.

– Well then – continued Grandpa – ACM-RS created in 2001 a unit to assist in the transformation of the community: ACM Vila Restinga Olímpica that seeks social insertion through sport, attend young people in a situation of vulnerability in the opposite shift from school, with recreational activities, cognitive and motor development, to integrate those who attend the institution, bring the community closer and strengthen ties with families.

– As in Vila Cruzeiro, in Vila das Laranjeiras, he sought from this transformation, a future as best as possible, and these people become agents of change also in their families and communities. The activities are accompanied by a multidisciplinary team composed of professionals in the areas of sports, nutrition, pedagogy, psychology and social work, among others, in one of the regions of greatest social exclusion in Porto Alegre.

– What else, Grandpa?

– Everything here is a summary.

– Grandpa, in this long story, have you not forgotten anything?

– Yes, I forgot a universe of difficulties and achievements in 120 years. My memory brought only a few, but, without a doubt, determinants of a moment and solid pillars of a ACM of the future, which is the present today. For example, who saw the difficulties of getting money and then building a wooden gym with 60 watt lamps? But then he was present when the wooden gym was overthrown and in its place appeared a magnificent one, with a metallic structure and adequate lighting for any night sport. And the school? Training year after year in accounting technicians who, many, went to university courses in economics, actuarial, law and other branches of science? How to forget Mr. Sadi's difficulty in running a school with paid teachers and volunteers, poor students who could not regularly pay for

monthly payment? How to forget the secretary generals , so many and each, over relatively long periods, implemented new projects.

– What about the pool, Grandpa?

– The pool was a great thing. I had seen, enchanted, years ago, the indoor and thermal pool, to be used even on cold days, by ACM São Paulo. When the powerful beams that would support a semi-Olympic pool, 25 meters long, by 21 meters wide, began to appear, I was amazed. Gradually it was being built and a small and beautiful blue lagoon served as a space for swimmers and apprentices. Little children too. It was not covered, but it was extremely beautiful.

– But I said I had a story to tell. For I will have to do well in the past until I reach your parents. Another thing: from time to time I remind you that the story here is timeless, it has no chronology. For the story begins with a time, the time of Paulinho, of Ilhota, when the kids learned to swim in the stream that passed around a eucalyptus bush and on which, next to his house, there was a bridge. In the summer, they swam from the bridge to more or less where Azenha's bridge is, even now in that place. The boys swam well. There was even the story of a place they called perau, the deepest part of the stream, where the chronicle of the area narrated that there had been drowning deaths there. But there was work to correct the swamps and ponds of that region, a sanitation policy in the city, and the stream died, because they cut their sequence with the work of the Dilúvio stream. In the same period, the workers who worked on the works at Arroio Dilúvio and Avenida Ipiranga, in most of them coming from the interior, built their huts in the middle of the eucalyptus bush, and the stream, now dead, turned into a sewer. No more possibility of using it as a swimming place. The generation of those born in that period, residents of that area, lost the river to learn to swim, and those who were black and poor did not have access to clubs in the city that had swimming pools. Then came the generation of your parents, they didn't know how to swim, but who, with the ACM pool, got excited and saw, scared, you, still in diapers, being put in that immense blue lake, where they taught you how to swim. And they too. This is the example of a family, but, as always, it was an immense open democratic door that ACM opened wide with its blue lake, which was covered and thermal, like that pool in São Paulo.

– ACM has Canela, with the Rincão do Coelho, for camps... with trails in the middle of the woods, tree climbing, zip lines, soccer pitch and the camp itself with its huts . . .

The grandfather interrupted:

– ... here we have another record of the entity ACM and its members. Mr. João Kessler Coelho de Souza owned a large portion of land in the rough terrain of the municipality of Canela. In the world of acemista, an ideal area for a camping trip. For he did not hesitate to donate a beautiful portion of this land, a forest, with different trees, so that the ACM, like its counterparts in the world, had its camping area.

One of the grandchildren spoke:

– So, Grandpa, it seems that the ACM ceased to be the well-intentioned congregation of young Christians on the “street of sin” - Jesus forgave Mary Magdalene and joined her - and became the ACM of the entire state of Rio Grande do Sul. Beautiful huh, Grandpa!?

Grandfather resumed:

– But an important piece is missing, children, the so-called “ACM da Fronteira” is missing in the extreme south of the state, on the border with Uruguay. It is located in the municipality of Santana do Livramento, and shelters young people both from that part of Brazil and from the neighboring Uruguayan city of Rivera, in an international communion of the triangles ACM - Associação Cristã de Moços, with ACJ, Asociación Cristiana de Jóvenes.

– What else, Grandpa?

– It has a set of interesting stories in motion, here and outside. ACM here participates in all the international representation bodies of the YMCA, based in Europe, in Geneva. He is represented in the organization that represents the YMCAs in South America and the Caribbean and in the Federation of ACMs in Brazil.

– This web of relationships, where the participation of our entity is marked by the presence of members here in senior management positions, has led to another type of connection, for example, directly with YMCA from different countries or regions.

– In recent years we have had important ties with the YMCA of Houston, in the state of Texas, United States. New young acemista

leaders from here have already been in a cultural exchange program, via stay in summer camps or in several homes of acemista families that welcome young people for periods that go to three months. This Houston YMCA, in addition to financially collaborating with our programs in Vilas Cruzeiro, Laranjeiras and Restingas, donated a very modern park of fitness equipment, rarely found in Brazil, such its modernity. Specifically, in 2020, it donated the sum of ten thousand dollars to these social projects. Are you sure that the future will not be different, since Houston's YMCA intends to maintain and strengthen, with the arrival of young Americans here, and to continue to progressively increase the number of those going to Houston. The 2020 pandemic interrupted this cycle of exchange of experiences for young people, but it will be resumed as soon as things return to normal. And in that normal, there will be the completion of other joint programs with distant YMCAs like Europe and Asia.

— What a beautiful story, Grandpa. We saw the three of them together, that a good part of the story you told is based on a beautiful booklet, with a cover that shows two facades of the ACM on streets Pantaleão Teles and Washington Luiz. A masterpiece, Grandpa, the old and the new. It was a Centenary 1901- 2001 album.

— Exactly one hundred and ten pages, what a beauty!

Another grandchild spoke, followed by the third. But first, Grandpa wanted to explain:

— As at the beginning of this story, a grandchild here is a generic boy or girl; it is more or less like homo sapiens, you know, it is the transformation after millennia of the primate in being intelligent. And it is clear that, because they are the majority today, the references are to both genders. Majority here too, two granddaughters and a grandson!

So, resuming, he gave the floor to another grandson:

— Grandpa explains something to me: The Centenary album, 2001, this beautiful album that you used in part for the story you are telling, has hundreds of old and new photos. The material about sports is noteworthy, as it is good and natural, as this was one of the reasons for the creation of our YMCA. But it also has photos of different activities, teaching, material about social works that, like other ACM works, were and are funded by the João XXIII Cemetery — “the Golden Pot, which only deserves a small

photo of its interior, right at the end of the illustrations.

The Grandfather then compromised:

– This is true, there has always been a hidden feeling in many ACM managing members of difficulty in accepting that the entity owns a cemetery – in fact, two – and this presents itself in the lack of due, commercial exploitation of that entity that gives, to a large extent, It supports ACM and, more than that, the monumental set of social action that the entity maintains.

– But there are no other photos – again Grandfather, an old acemista contemporary - nevertheless, examine in my story the word that appears most often: cemetery!

Grandpa ended:

– That's life. If you liked the story, one day, tell to my great-grandchildren and them to those who will come, because the ACM/YMCA, which is now 120 years old, goes beyond 200; I won't see it, but I'm sure!

– But Grandpa, our wanderings didn't end here. Now the three of us are going to invite you to a place and we're going to give you a surprise.

Already near the cemetery, their grandfather's car stopped in a safe place, an open field where one day a very friendly Polish Pope, he said friendly he was from the state of Rio Grande do Sul. There they went down, looked for a space and opened the trunk of the car. They removed a small computer screen and a strange machine.

– It's a drone, Grandpa. We brought a beach chair. Sit down.

The machine took off, and the neighborhood houses began to appear bright on the screen. As a flying artifact moved away, he then showed João 23's new facade, and, amazed, his grandfather asked:

– What is that about the Cemetery, a new roof? How it shines!

He then learned that the cemetery, as a pioneer, was covered with a photovoltaic plant that would generate the necessary electricity for the entire institution. And grandpa couldn't resist:

– And it all started with the challenge of a young acemista! The Christian Youth Association, ACM and its youth.

THE END

# TESTIMONIALS ABOUT THE BOOK

## **Daniela Colussi, President of ACM-RS**

José Luiz. Congratulations on the tale of 120 years of YMCA-RS. It is very well written in an objective manner with a light and easy to understand historical account. It was very creative to put the grandfather as the interlocutor in this story that he and his family played a part in. Congratulations one more time. Warm regards.

## **Maria Inês Schultz**

I read your book. Exciting from start to finish. The part about the first Mother's Day in Porto Alegre, I cried... I cried. It's very beautiful. It's a book that people who want to continue helping the YMCA have to read. Mainly for the new ones that are arriving, it is a lesson. I didn't experience that time period, I joined the YMCA in 1986, so I only know vague details from before that. And your book is fantastic, fantastic. For example: Alceu Collares!, I was unaware that he had been a YMCA member. I didn't know this detail. I even have an idea: During "Black History" week, in November, we should do something in honor of Alceu Collares. We must honor people while they are alive. It's no use to name streets or squares after them when they have passed. I will propose a tribute to the Commission; he is already over ninety years old.

## **Nelson Magdalena**

Dear Comrade Zé. I got emotional while reading Esta Maravilhosa ACM. The narrative by the grandfather to his grandchildren reminds me fondly of my grandmother recounting her laborious family trajectory in Caxias.

Your historical narrative of our YMCA provides focused and absorbing content which, in addition to being exciting, highlights the importance of

the association to our city and also to our State.

I am sure that professionals and volunteers, when reading this beautiful story, will feel proud of having participated, in some way, in the development and grandeur achieved today by the YMCA-RS.

I was particularly moved (coming to tears) when remembering projects in which I had more direct participation, such as Cruzeiro, Fronteira, Morro Santana and Canela.

I believe that all of us, professionals and volunteers, when reading your story, will feel participative and proud of this journey and the great results achieved by all.

Thank you Zé for providing me with these moments of emotion, remembrance, as well as a re-encounter with the history of our YMCA.

### **Giulia da Costa Reinbrecht**

Reading the story Esta Maravilhosa ACM was a journey through time in all its aspects. At the beginning, the brief interchange between the grandchildren and the grandfather, who ends up being responsible for telling the incredible stories of our institution. They remind me of my childhood, with my cousins by my side. I always heard the stories about the YMCA, as well as other adventures, from my grandfather. These are stories that go back to a time when I was not alive to witness them, but they are part of the essence that we carry in our hearts as YMCA members. They are a reason for pride and admiration.

These narratives keep the soul that nourishes the YMCA as we know it alive, made by people, for people. They remind us why we are here, and to lovingly play our roles within the YMCA.

I thank my grandfather for this incredible book, for recording and sharing the stories that I've been listening to with appreciation since I was a child.



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