

Brazil News



No. 122
July 2001

Editorial

No Jails in Canaan

Justice consists in giving every man what he deserves.

—Francis Bacon
(Approximately 1500 A.D.)

If there be found among you...man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness...and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain... Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates...and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death... The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you. According to the sentence of the law...thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. And the man that will do presumptuously...unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

—The Law of Moses
(Approximately 1500 B.C.)

Litany which police must recite
to criminals being arrested

1. *You have the continuing right to remain silent and to stop questioning at any time;*
2. *Anything you say can be used as evidence against you;*
3. *You have the continuing right to consult with and have the presence of an attorney; and*
4. *If you cannot afford an attorney, an attorney will be appointed for you.*
5. *Do you understand these rights?*
6. *Do you wish to waive these rights and talk to us at this time?*

—Miranda Warning
(Today)

When Israel crossed the Jordan into Canaan, in their baggage they carried the most comprehensive code of justice ever seen on earth. It began by clearly delineating man's relations with God, which included moral purity and personal rectitude; it included home and social obligations, as well as detailed civil regulations which provided direction on how to deal with every conceivable type of crime and transgression. Finally, it was a virtual surgeon general to the people, establishing and enforcing proper hygienic practices.

Islamic nations today attempt to duplicate Old Testament justice, often with barbarous results.

As we begin reading in the 20th chapter of Exodus, where the Ten Commandments are given, and then on into the following chapters, we notice that:

- Most offenses carried a precise sentence. Rarely were judges permitted to place their own imprint on their judgments (as is common practice in modern justice).
- Trial by jury didn't exist. Guilt was established by two or three witnesses.
- There were no legal maneuvers, no stays, no technicalities, no retrials, no appeals.
- Sentences were carried out immediately.
- There was no legal counsel.
- Strangest of all, not a single infraction carried a jail sentence. What could even remotely resemble a jail sentence, was being condemned to remain outside the camp for a prescribed—usually short—period of time.

The first test in Canaan of the Law given to Moses at Mount Sinai, occurred at Jericho. After giving instructions on how the city would be destroyed (but Rahab and her family saved), Joshua added, "And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."

The battle came off exactly as planned. The people were exuberant, confident that God was with them. It was decided that only a small contingent of troops would march on the village of Ai. That was when everything went haywire. Jericho was forgotten and the shameful defeat and retreat of their soldiers weighed on them as so much lead.

In desperation, Joshua fell on his face and called upon the Lord, who replied, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned." The Lord went on to tell His servant what had taken place and how to pinpoint the culprit.

By an eliminatory process, Achan became the prime suspect—without a shred of evidence or a single witness to testify against him. With fatherly consideration, Joshua said, "Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me."

Today, many centuries later, he would have been told, "Achan, you are under arrest. You have the continuing right to remain silent and to stop questioning at any time; anything you say can be used as evidence against you; you have the continuing right to

consult with and have the presence of an attorney; and if you cannot afford an attorney, an attorney will be appointed for you. Do you understand these rights?”

“Yes.”

“Do you wish to waive these rights and talk to us at this time?”

“No sir. I want to see a lawyer.”

Achan would have been hauled off to jail and the following morning papers would have screamed:

ACHAN CHARGED WITH AI DEBACLE

Israeli religious fanatics have charged Achan with the humiliating military defeat in Ai. A federal judge has signed a warrant, authorizing police to search his tent... Achan claims innocence and his attorney is pressing charges against Joshua, the commanding officer.

Day 2.

ACHAN'S TENT SEARCHED INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE FOUND

BABYLONISH GARMENT, TWO HUNDRED SHEKELS OF SILVER, AND A WEDGE OF GOLD OF FIFTY SHEKELS WEIGHT FOUND BY OFFICERS

Achan's lawyer declares the Babylonish garment, the silver and gold were planted in Achan's tent by Joshua's undercover agents to divert attention from his ineffectual campaign. FBI agents are analyzing the evidence for fingerprints...

Day 15.

FBI FINDS EVIDENCE THAT LINKS ACHAN TO AI CRIME

DNA tests conducted by the FBI laboratory confirm that several strands of hair found on the Babylonish garment belong to Achan, as well as fingerprints found on the bars of gold and silver... A grand jury hearing is scheduled for next month... Achan's lawyer vows to prove his client's innocence.

Day 47.

POLICE CALLED ON TO QUELL PRO-ACHAN PROTEST

Police using tear gas and riot gear dispersed several hundred protesters in front off the federal prison where Achan is being held...

Day 51.

GRAND JURY FINDS ACHAN GUILTY

Grand jury finds Achan guilty of illegal possession of Babylonian garment and gold and silver bars... Judge to set date of trial.

Day 106.

ACHAN TRIAL BEGINS TODAY

Achan pleads guilty to having taken the Babylonian garment and the gold and silver bars during the battle of Jericho, however he declares he was unaware of Joshua's prohibition to remove any articles from the scene of battle... The session was interrupted several times as police removed protesters from courtroom.

Day 120.

JURY FINDS ACHAN GUILTY OF DISREGARD FOR AUTHORITY

After a brief deliberation, the jury found Achan guilty of disregard for authority. In his sentence, the judge called Achan a model citizen who risked his life in battle, but failed to take note of the orders for that day. He was given a 30 day suspended jail sentence... Achan's lawyer has appealed.

The real story is different.

Achan confessed his crime and told Joshua where the stolen goods were hidden in the sand under his tent. They were brought to the assembly as evidence. Achan, his wife, his children, his oxen and all his belongings were taken without the camp. All life was snuffed out by stoning and then everyone and everything were piled in a heap and burned.

The severity and finality of the Achan case cause us some discomfort. We agree that “justice consists in giving every man what he deserves,” but did Achan’s wife deserve to die? Did his children do anything worthy of death? Why kill the oxen that some poor family could have used? Why not distribute his tent and possessions among the needy?

And with Achan himself, wouldn’t a little bit of mercy have been in place? Sure, what he did was wrong, no doubt about it, but had he known the end result of his actions, he certainly would have been more careful. Wouldn’t some time in jail—say 10 years—have been a bit more humane?

In most governments, jails and prisons, as a form of punishment for crimes committed, have existed only a relatively short time—approximately 300 years. Before that, their principal function was to hold suspects until their case could be brought to trial. Even in the time of the martyr brethren, we do not read of anyone receiving a specified jail sentence as punishment for their “heresy.” Rather, time spent in prison was meant to be an inducement to recant. An open admission of error and desire to return to the “mother church” would have secured the release of most martyrs.

While jails didn’t exist in Israel, history indicates that dungeons, usually located in castles, were commonplace. These, it appears, were often slow-motion execution chambers, where prisoners were left to die and decompose. Needless to say, they were unimaginably horrible places. The prisoners cast into these pitch dark, dank pits must have felt they were truly in the vestibule to Hades. Jeremiah was well acquainted with the horrors of the dungeon and would have died in the mire, had there not been one who took pity on him.

Jails and prisons in industrialized nations are light years ahead of the old dungeon. In third world countries, the distance is considerably less. There are few amenities and limited security. To be interned in one of these institutions is decidedly not a pleasant experience.

People today are jailed to: 1) punish them for wrongdoings, 2) to rehabilitate them, and 3) to protect society from dangerous individuals. While the system isn’t perfect, it does play an important role in modern society.

So, how did the world mete out justice during approximately 5,700 years, before jails and prisons came into existence as penal institutions?

Capital punishment – It would be interesting to know how many Old Testament transgressions were punished with death. In heathen governments, the number would have been much higher, often administered indiscriminately.

Floggings – This was a painful type of punishment, especially when the whips used had metal-studded thongs, which could be fatal. The apostle Paul was flogged on different occasions. Pilot ordered our Lord flogged.

Eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth punishment – A gruesome punishment that drove home in a singular way the seriousness of the crime committed.

Restitution – This could be monetary or in kind.

Banishment – The apostle John was banished to the isle of Patmos; considered a severe form of punishment.

And many others.

Why was justice so sure, so swift, so severe in Old Testament times? Why is modern justice so much more tolerant, so much more “humane?”

The purpose of this article is not to decide if Old Testament justice would work today. It wouldn't. We are interested in justice on a more personal level.

Each of us is a judge. Throughout the day and on into the night, we preside over the most complicated courtroom that has ever existed. As we sit in justice, we are constantly required to hand down verdicts and sentences. We must judge:

The thoughts and intents of our hearts.

Our actions and reactions.

The words we hear (which at times includes deliberately turning a deaf ear).

The sights we see (and at times turning our face or closing our eyes).

What we buy and what we sell.

Where we go, or don't go.

What we read, or don't read.

How we spend our minutes and hours.

All this, and much more, we are called upon to judge in our lives. As judges, our authority is absolute.

We can despotically ignore facts and follow our base instincts to make snap decisions, cruel decisions, foolish decisions. We can make a mockery of our judgeship.

Some of Hitler's older generals were true aristocrats of Prussian stock. As they became aware that their leader was a personification of evil itself, they became reluctant to follow the suicide course he was charting. This, of course, didn't go unnoticed; soon they were arrested and brought to a farcical trial, in which their death was decided upon before they ever stood in the dock. Stripped of their uniforms and given tattered civilian clothes, a number of sizes too big, without belt or suspenders, the old gentlemen had to constantly be tugging at their trousers to keep them from slipping down. The judges would verbally abuse them. “What's the problem, old man? Can't you keep your pants up?” After berating them as cowards and enemies of the fatherland, they were led out to their death. The same happened with Jesus.

In the world today, we see many who seem to be direct descendents of Hitler's

judges. They openly scoff at the age-old standards of morality. They condemn to death the principals of honesty and dedication that provided an honest living for their forefathers. There doesn't seem to be so much as a twinge of conscience left to disturb their sleep.

We sincerely believe—indeed, are certain—that this is not the case with the people of God. Nevertheless, our judgment can also become perverted in a lesser degree, albeit with drastic consequences.

There was a time, when life was simpler and temptations were recognized as such. Sin was sin. And when sin was committed, it was a deliberate act that troubled the soul until correction was made or the conscience finally seared.

Temptations today jump up at us with the speed of the white stripes on the highway as we speed on our way. We almost grow dizzy—and certainly weary—as we try to sort them out. And yet, each one demands a decision, a sentence.

This is exactly where the problem arises. Temptations seem to have come up with their own version of Miranda rights. When the apostle Paul said that he died daily, he meant to say that over and over during the day he had to crucify—apply the death sentence—to temptations so that they would not stain his life with sin.

Now we find ourselves withholding judgment on temptation, because, it seems, temptation now has the right to demand the presence of a legal counsel. So, instead of summarily sentencing to death that which the law condemns to death, we cave in to sin's Miranda rights and place temptation in jail. With right to legal counsel.

A number of years ago on a busy highway in the state of São Paulo, a young man carried a large rock up on a passenger walk. As a car approached, he dropped the rock and fled. The rock struck the windshield of the car and smashed into the chest of the driver, killing her immediately.

The criminal was later arrested and taken to jail, where he confessed his guilt. A reporter covering the case was present during his first interview with a lawyer. Not many words had been spoken when the lawyer, giving his client a significant look, asked, “Now, are you sure you really are the one who dropped the rock that killed the lady?”

The criminal, catching the lawyer's unspoken message, replied, “Well, now that I think about it, no, I'm not at all sure I did that...”

“Oh,” the lawyer exclaimed with a gleam in his eyes, “that changes everything. We can enter a not guilty plea...”

That is exactly what happens when we jail our temptations. When they come up for trial, they plead not guilty. By this time our flesh has hid all the nails, so that we have no way of crucifying it.

As we look about in Canaan, it seems there are too many jails. Instead of passing the death sentence on our temptations, we are sending them to jail. Then when we finally get them into the dock, their defense is so good we end up letting them go. Or rather, we end up letting them *stay* in our life.

Even the death sentence has almost become a farce. After spending years on death

row, while hundreds of thousands of dollars of legal fees pile up, the criminal is taken to a spotless chamber on a gurney and given a lethal injection. A painless death. Alas, we too, when seeing there is no other way out, that our game is up, administer our worst sins a lethal injection, instead of nailing them to the cross. Death row remains crowded with many other sins that according to the law should long before have been crucified.

We talk about a drift. We lament the complexities of modern life. We make decisions; we resolve to get back to the basics. All this is good, but so long as there are jails in Canaan, we slowly slide backwards.

Jails must be demolished and the death sentence reinstated. No, not the painless lethal injection. The nails, the hammer, the tree, the pain... That is where sin becomes exceedingly sinful, so painful that we praise the Lord for the marvelous deliverance that the cross offers.

Folks, if we want to have victory, we'll have to go back to Canaan where there were no jails. We are going to have to abolish the Miranda rights for sin, all legal counsel and all appeals, and invest in nails, hammers and crosses. Then it will be said that justice consists in giving every temptation and sin what it deserves: Immediate and certain death on the cross. And then there will be no need for jails in Canaan. ▲

My Life in Japan

By Marilsa Akemi Nakayama

How it Came About

[Just a little introduction before Marilsa gets started. She's the little Japanese girl who used to work in my store nearly 20 years ago. In the next issues she will be sharing her experiences in Japan with you readers. Her column will be called "My Life in Japan.]

Dear Mennonite friends,

Eight months ago, I returned to Brazil after spending three years and three months in Japan. Today, after having readapted to my country, I can say that I'm glad to be back. From here on out, whenever possible, I want to contribute to Brazil News by writing about my experiences in Japan.

First of all, I would like to say that there is no better country than our homeland. I was born in Brazil, but am of Japanese descent. This has created a certain conflict in my thinking. It isn't that I love Japan more than Brazil, but I have to fit them both into my life. I can truthfully say that they are equal to me. Maybe you will understand better this conflict as you read my articles in which I will describe my feelings toward Japan, which to me is a wonderful place.

I am of humble origin, so when the opportunity came up to move to Japan, my head swam with ideas and dreams. All of a sudden I saw the possibility of living in an

industrialized nation, of learning new customs, a new language, among many other things. I had faced many challenges in life up to this point, but moving to Japan was by far the greatest. I took this challenge very seriously because through it I would be able to broaden my horizons. Now, in retrospect, I can say it was a very worthwhile venture.

There are a number of reasons why I feel a great respect and affection for the Japanese people. During the time I lived there, I tried to absorb the best of their country and culture. When I talk about the best, I don't refer to all the modern electronic devices that filled their shelves and the thousand and one other things that someone of humble origin could covet. What I desired was something else. I wanted to feel the soul of the Japanese people.

I have fond memories of the courtesy that those people constantly show for each other. This is something I observed very closely. One incident that stands out clearly in my mind is the time my brother and I went to the service station. Before we had even stopped, an attendant shouted, "Welcome here!" While he was filling our tank, another worker washed all the windows on the car.

When we were ready to leave, one of the workers went out to the street and made sure we wouldn't get hit by another car as we left the station. It was apparent these men take their job very seriously. What impressed me was that each time we left a service station, they would tell us, "*Kyotsukete Kudasai*," which means, "Please be careful."

Maybe you readers are so used to this kind of treatment that you think nothing of it, but each time we went to the service station, I realized how seriously the Japanese take their responsibility of always giving their customers the best possible service.

When I decided to move to Japan, most of my brothers already were living there. I mentioned only one of my brothers, but we are a large family. I have seven brothers and one sister. Approximately ten years ago my brothers left for Japan. So when I got there, I felt like I was home again, under my brothers' wings. Some of my brothers have adapted so well to the Japanese culture that they don't plan to come back to Brazil, other than for visits. Others are sending their earnings back to Brazil, where they are investing in houses, and even a farm. When they return, they hope to have something set up for making a living for themselves and their families. Some of my brothers married Brazilian girls they met in Japan.

Just during the last month my sister, Mary, together with her husband and six children, moved to Japan. Now all my brothers and sisters live there.

More next month. ▲

The Tobias A. Unruh Diary

Deputation Journey (IV)

If a man places himself before this Judge, then that heart of stone melts away and becomes soft and tender, and the more tender the heart, the deeper we can look into this Deity, that everything that exists, heaven, earth and the sea and everything that

is therein, only exists by and through His Word. This ship upon which we are sailing is not only carried by the water, but the eternal Word of God also carries it or else it would sink in the twinkling of an eye.

If a man studies the creation and the wonders of how God has created everything then he will not find much time to spend with unnecessary earthly things. That is indeed the most pitiful condition of man; man who has been created after the image of God and should desire nothing but His Wisdom and Goodness. and wholly seek to live and walk in the love and image of his Creator daily; that man is so easily beset with the things of this world. But like the dove that found no rest and returned and landed in Noah's hand, so our spirit again finds shelter in the arms of God if we return to Him, when it finds no rest in this world as we sail the ship of time. Oh, that man might at all times set his whole trust and confidence upon God and rely upon His mercy. Although our ship might sink, but if it sails with Jesus as the Captain, then the sinking would be blessed and peaceful. Too often the soul is assailed day and night and remains as though it is sunk in the depths of the sea, it appears as though God is gone and has forgotten the burdened soul, but if we earnestly seek His face and come to Him in confidence, then He stretches forth His hand and receives us like Noah did the dove.

August 17 – Weather mild all day.

August 18 – Somewhat foggy. We met three English ships.

August 19 – Mild and calm all day.

August 20 – Nice day. I felt somewhat sick.

August 22 – I became sea sick.

August 23 – A great storm arose in the early morning hours. The waves swayed the ship back and forth. I sat on the upper deck and tried to write, but the ship rocked to and fro and I had to hold myself that I was not thrown overboard. The waves often splashed above the ship. The storm continued all night.

August 24 – About 10 a.m. the storm abated somewhat, but it remained stormy all day. Large waves came rolling and dashed against the ship.

Oh, Son of Man, Thou dost not fear the waves of the sea. We people often think we are at the portals of death when we see the huge waves come rolling. We cry with Peter: "Lord help, we perish." But if Jesus, the eternal Word, watches over us, then there is no danger and we are far from death's portals. But nevertheless it is good for man to be placed at the threshold of death. The heart is then moved to realize how easy life could be snuffed out, although man's life is secure when the goodness of God hovers over us. But how unthankful is man often found with this goodness hovering over us.

August 25 – The storm is abating and although the waves are still boisterous, the ship does not rock back and forth so much. We are sailing against wind and are traveling slow. At 3 p.m. we met "Frisia," the ship upon which we sailed to America in April. A little later we met four more ships.

(The last page of the diary is gone and consequently the report of their arrival back home is missing. However, according to Paul Tschetter's report they arrived home on August 28, 1873).

PART II

The Immigration

July 28, 1874 – Twenty-five families immigrated from Hemrichsdort to America.

October 24, 1874 – Forty families Immigrated from Karlswalde to America.

November 3, 1874 – Twenty-seven families immigrated from Karlswalde to America.

November 11, 1874 – Ben Buller and I (Tobias Unruh) from Karlswalde, and Peter Unruh from Antonofka, immigrated to America. We went as far as Brody and waited for the rest of our party, 325 souls, to arrive. My wife and grandchildren were also included in this number.

November 15 – We left Brady and arrived at Krakau, a distance of 52 miles.

November 17 – We arrived In Berlin towards evening and at Koln the next day.

November 19 – We left Koln and went through 24 tunnels. The first one was 3 1/2 versts long, the rest were from 1 to 2 1/2 versts long. It was an unusual experience for my congregation. Fear came upon them and many a sigh went up to God that He might protect us on our journey. We arrived safely at Antwerpe towards evening where we received a friendly reception from Lord Streich. We remained here till the 22nd, all the necessary arrangements for the trip were made. It was quite a chore to look alter all the affairs and set everything in order to enter the ship. Towards evening we entered the ship, many sighs and groans went to the Throne of Grace, that the Almighty God, who has control over all the elements, might protect us on our journey and guide the ship safely across the ocean.

The beautiful city of Antwerpe attracted the attention of the whole party; magnificent stone and brick buildings, from two to seven stories high. Signs of prosperity were seen on every hand. The whole congregation had not seen or heard of such. After we had entered the ship, it sailed about 2000 yards off the shore and remained all night.

November 23 – At 8 a.m., the anchors were loosed and the ship set sail. Weather was fairly nice and everything went along good till midnight, when our ship collided with another steamer (the Indus). The impact slightly damaged our ship. The jolt caused a great commotion among the passengers. People all awoke from their sleep. It was an unusual happening, and those on board were not familiar with the nature of ships; cries and moans were heard in every direction. People thought the ship was damaged to the extent that it would sink. The ship crew inspected the damage at once after it was anchored. The damage was not considered serious, but it was decided to return to London and repair the ship. Here in London we waited from the 24th till the 30th of November while the ship was being repaired. The ship stood dry docked and we all had our sleeping quarters on it.

November 28 – Grandmother Buller died. Also an 8 years old daughter of Henry Dirks died the same night. They were both buried in a cemetery in London

November 30. – What made matters worse for the whole party, small pox broke out among the children. Orders were given at once that the ship should leave the harbor or the passengers of the ship leave at once. As soon as possible we were rushed away; it was nearly dark and raining very hard; it was indeed miserable and a dreary night for us. Eight families, who were affected by the epidemic, could remain on the ship.

December 1 – Towards noon four of the patients were taken to the hospital. In the p.m. four more were taken to the hospital. Henry, son of Tobias Dirks, passed away from this number.

December 4 – These eight families were taken to another ship. It was a special hospital ship for such occasions. While being transferred to this ship, Tobias, infant son of Tobias Jantz, passed away. He had been sick three years. The body was buried December 5. This ship sailed 5 miles out of the harbor and remained there. We were on this ship from December 4, till January 10, 1875. We had a good ship with good accommodations. We did not have anything to do, only sit and marvel at the mighty works of God. We considered this kind deed as a wonderful grace of God. We are all fed well, and although we are afloat on the water between heaven and earth, it seems to teach and tell us that God can provide for us and we shall not be attached to earthly things. May the divine wisdom of God teach us to abstain from all earthly cares and put our whole trust In Him.

December 15 – Had a headache all day.

December 18 – We received word from the doctor and inspector that all well persons on the ship were released and could continue with the journey. But I did not go since I had agreed to remain with the sick ones till they were well and could follow the rest of the party. Our grandson was also among the number who were in the hospital.

December 20 – We received notice that all who wanted to join the rest of the party, which was just ready to leave, should be ready to board the ship by 12 o'clock, but it took till 3 o'clock p.m. before the ship was ready to leave. All those who were on this hospital ship joined the rest of the party to sail to America except three of us and those with the small pox in the hospital. Benjamin L. Unruh, John Becker and I remained on the hospital ship. It was a sad parting and many tears were shed, as we did not know what the outcome of it all would be. We three agreed to remain, on this hospital ship till those who were sick in the hospital would be restored to their health so that we altogether could follow those who went before on the journey.

This was indeed a kind act from the ship company. We were kept free of charge. Also the 396 souls on the ship were fed free of charge during the time that the ship was being repaired. It must have cost the ship company a large amount of money.

December 21. While we were eating breakfast one of the men in charge called us out and showed us the ship in which our loved ones were sailing for America. It was just leaving the harbor. The ship was bound for Philadelphia.

December 22 – Cloudy all day

December 23 – Foggy all morning. In the afternoon the sky cleared and bright sunshine, calm.

December 24 – Foggy and cloudy, very windy, rather dangerous to sail on the large ocean. May God keep our loved ones from all harm on their journey.

December 25 – It is a nice day, hardly any wind and no frost last night; this is also Christmas Day. A bountiful dinner was served today, over which the doctor rejoiced greatly. He repeatedly said: “good dinner, good dinner.” And indeed it was a good dinner; It was something that we were not used to.

December 26. Cooler and foggy. We can hardly see the water from the ship. When it is clear we can count from 40 to 70 ships sailing back and forth. There is a ship association on the water about which the people on the land have no idea. People carry on trade just like they do on the land. There is a great harmony at sea with ships passing back and forth.

December 27 – It is cold and foggy and a little snow at times. Towards evening the skies cleared, No frost at night.

December 28 – Nice and clear till towards evening. Rain and snow fell in small quantities.

▲
To be continued

Zigzagging Around

Is it a Miracle?

One of the calling cards in charismatic churches is the performing of “miracles,” usually in the form of healings. These occasions are punctuated by shouting and the flailing of arms—and maybe even feet—and much rejoicing (read as: shouting). Who knows, maybe some of these experiences are more legitimate than we suspect...

We want to tell about another kind of miracle—a miracle that might not be recognized as such in the above mentioned groups.

Some of you readers who are more acquainted with the church in Brazil may remember brother Moacir Rosa. We’ll begin our story with him.

Moacir and his wife Sebastiana came to the Colony to work for Harold Dirks back in the latter 70’s. After some years he got converted and in 1981 he became a member of the church. Three years later Sebastiana also became a member. In the following years he worked on different fazendas, at times some distance from the Colony. In the course of time, six children were born into their home.

Moacir is not a rich man. They both have a get-by education. This couple has a large, large heart...

Enter Augusto, Moacir’s brother. Augusto lost his wife many years ago. Taking care of five small children was no small matter, so he sent his son Edinei to live with Moacir. Next came Evandre. And finally Sérgio and Marta.

Moacir & Sebastiana raised these four children, just like their own. All of their own children got converted.

Euglenis, the oldest, is married to Andréia. They have two adopted children and work for Tony Lima.

Glauciene taught school on the Colony for a number of years and is now married to Robson Gold. They have three children and work for Bill Miller.

Luciene is single and has taught school on the Colony for a number of years.

Sheila is married to Jon Coblentz. They have one child of their own, an adopted child, and Jon's three children from his first marriage.

Silvana and Élia live at home. The latter is a teacher in the Rio Verde church school.

Now for Augusto's children.

Mercês, the oldest, never lived at Moacirs, but through their influence got converted and is married to Antônio Carlos, who is also a member. They have three children and live on the Boa Esperança colony in Mato Grosso.

Sérgio is married to Katrina Schultz. They have two little boys and live in the Rio Verdinho congregation.

Marta is married to Dave Kramer. They have four children and also live on the Boa Esperança colony.

Edinei is married to Janete Duarte and they have two children. Edinei is carrying on the pest control business that Roberto Amorim got started in Rio Verde.

Evandre is single and isn't a member. He is helping put up chicken barns in the Rio Verde area.

What about Augusto? Ah, that's what brought this article on. He moved to the Boa Esperança colony, got converted and was just baptized.

Some people think we are too timid when it comes to miracles. Maybe we are. But folks, when a man with maybe a second grade education, who less than 30 years ago was penniless, can have the pleasure of seeing his own six children, and the spouses of those who are married, safe within the fold, and his grandchildren being raised in the way of the Lord, and be able to look at three married nephews and one niece, and their spouses, who also are within the fold, and raising their children to be Christians, isn't that a miracle? (We must remember Evandre in our prayers, so that the circle can be complete.)

The Energy Crisis

We mentioned last month that Brazil is in a serious energy crisis. Reduced rainfall in the last three or four years has brought the water level in reservoirs dangerously low. The solution has been nationwide rationing.

After initial talk of brownouts—maybe up to four hours a day—officials decided on a more palatable solution: a general 20% reduction in consumption by all users. Those who don't meet this quota will pay a surtax on the excess kilowatts used, plus face possible cuts for a period of two or three days.

The quota for each consumer is established by taking an average of kilowatts used during the same period a year ago. This, of course, creates certain problems. In our case, someone who happened to be spending several months in N America during that period would have an unrealistic quota. Electric companies have been good about listening to complaints. In our case, by taking in passports and airline tickets, the quota will be reevaluated.

This isn't all bad. I was amazed at home by the amount of lights that would be on during the day without the slightest necessity. The same was true at night. Now we try and have lights on *only* where we happen to be. In our case, by retiring our dish washer and clothes dryer, plus turning out lights, we should have no trouble remaining within our quota.

The hardest hit in this whole story are the maxi-users: industry and commerce. In some cases this means cutbacks in both production and employees, which will have negative repercussions on the economy.

Should our rainfall continue below average this coming year, our situation could become critical. On the positive side, the construction of new dams for hydroelectric installations has been given top priority. An unfinished nuclear power plant in Angra dos Reis, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, is being completed. In two years, at the most, things should be back to normal in Brazil, even if rains continue to slack. Should we have a good year, it could be in a matter of months.

Telephone Rates

Several years ago when telephone service in Brazil was privatized and opened to competition, including foreign competition, things changed dramatically. International rates dropped to a low of 36 US cents a minute (even so most of used the Maxtel service, at 20 US cents a minute).

About a week ago Intelig, a major Brazilian carrier, suddenly dropped rates to an astounding 3.6 US cents a minute. Embratel, which is the carrier we use, responded several days later by dropping international rates to 2.8 US cents a minute. Not bad.

Now, several minutes ago, I received a call from Embratel asking me if I want to get in on their new plan for 2.4 (two point four) US cents a minute. That means it is now possible to call the US and talk for an hour for one dollar and 44 cents.

There is one little catch to this. On our rural cellular phone system, we are given 150 free minutes of air time. After that we pay a progressively higher fee. Even so, our calls will be very, very cheap compared to what they were before the phone company was privatized. So folks, if the phone rings and someone from Brazil chats with you for an hour, do not feel sorry for the caller. And don't feel too envious either.

Fax Received

July 14, 01

Hello to the editor of Brazil News,

In your last May issue, #120, you had in there an article in “This & That” that caught my attention. It states that a certain Wesley Holdeman is in the V.S. unit in Los Angeles. I am hereby informing you that this certain young man, is at the present, in the Southern California Mennonite Mission, located in the city of Anaheim. Which is in fact, about 33 miles from downtown Los Angeles. We, here at the Mission, felt a need to set the facts straight. There are those around us that are quite displeased when it is mentioned that we live in L.A. Anaheim is in Orange County, which is quite removed from the atmosphere connected with L.A. So I will close, resting assured that the issue has been clarified.

Sincerely,
Mr. Holdeman, Wesley

Thank you, Mr. Holdeman. You came through loud and...well, louder than clear. I fail to understand your reluctance to be associated with the atmosphere in L.A.

Perdigão

A year from now, if everything goes according to plans, we should be able to furnish you with an aerial map of the Colony showing the position of the chicken barns. Then, when you come to visit us—if you take the Miami/São Paulo route, and fly during the day, and the day isn't cloudy—you should be able to locate the area.

Of course, we're not putting up chicken barns as aerial markers. Our motives are much more mundane (and “moneydane”) than that. At any rate, the transformation has begun. Eight barns on Divino Cândido's place (which he purchased from Harold Dirks) are now up. The first four barns are housing 25 thousand birds each.

The Seriema earthmovers, which belongs to Arlo Hiber, has finished the dirt work at the Kramers for another 12 barns: four for Daniel, four for son Myron, and four for son-in-law Cláudio. Actual construction of the barns should begin in the next several days.

At present the earth movers are working on Joedson Bessa's place, who is putting in four barns. From there they will be going to Bill Miller's farm, who will put in four chicken barns and a hog barn. And from there they will probably go to Luiz Fernandes's place (which he bought from Stacy Schmidt). In addition to these, by the end of the year at least another 12 barns should be built or under construction.

Other than for Divino's barns, the rest will have Big Dutchman equipment.

Perdigão requires that the wells be at least 100 meters (325 feet) deep, with a flow of at least five thousand liters an hour. Since approximately half of the drilling is usually in rock, the wells are being dug by a “stomp” rig. It takes around two weeks to drill a well. They seem to be doing a good job. ▲

This & That

Myron & Martha Kramer and their children, together with James Yoder, took advantage of cheap airline tickets on the Varig mileage plan and made a trip to the Northeast to visit the missions in Patos, Paraíba and Acaraú, Ceará. They had hoped to go to the US this summer, but it didn't work out. The visit to these missions was so inspirational that they believe they enjoyed themselves more than if their plans had worked out.

Teresa, Arlo & Priscilla Hibner's daughter, returned from the Curitiba mission, where she was teaching the missionary's child. Rosa, daughter of Leo & Mim Dirks, will be replacing her for the next term.

Colleen, Mrs. Elias Stoltzfus, spent several weeks in Moundridge with her mother, Mrs. Richard Mininger, who is having health problems.

On the 24th of June there was a carry-in supper at the Rio Verdinho social hall for a group of 24 Americans who were in Brazil on voluntary service, helping build a Presbyterian church in Rio Verde, as well in other places.

Clinton & Marie Unruh and children visited the mission in São José do Rio Preto, São Paulo, where (Clinton's brother) Nelson & Ruth are stationed.

A busload of engineering students from the university in Uberlândia, Minas Gerais, made a quick visit to the Colony. They asked that I give them a little history of the Colony. What struck me most was how that most of the students, from somewhere, produced notebooks and pens, as I began to talk. It wasn't that what I had to say was so impressive, but rather their natural reaction when faced with the possibility of gaining new information. I told my youth doctrine class I wished they could have been there.

Glenn & Elizabeth Hibner and family from Boa Esperança are spending several months here with Marilyn, his mother.

Luella, Mrs. Clarence Palmer, had sale and returned to be with her children in the US. As reported earlier, Clarence died several months ago.

Luiz Fernandes, the dentist from Pirenópolis, has begun construction on his dental office here on the farm.

Minister Arlo Hibner and Deacon Jesse Loewen were to the Boa Esperança Congregation for meetings.

Facts & Figures

Exchange Rate — The exchange rate has fluctuated a lot, hanging in at approximately 250:1. There is a good possibility that it won't come down much below that anymore.

Rainfall – Zero.

Temperatures: We're having a warm dry season with cool nights. We have had no frosts this year.