

Brazil News



No. 134
July 2002

Editorial

El Capitan

El Capitan, which is a gigantic mass of unbroken granite, rises vertically about 3,600 feet (1,100 meters) above the canyon. —World Book Encyclopedia

Some years ago while visiting Yosemite National Park, we pulled off the road at a vantage point to get a good look at El Capitan. I scanned the forbidding face of what is arguably the largest chunk of solid granite in the world, thinking maybe I would catch sight of some mountain climbers on their way up. I remarked to those near me that it looked like no climbers were out. A young lady overheard and informed me, “Oh yes, they’re climbing. They’re all over. See that speck over there...? That’s my boyfriend...”

With the aid of a pair of binoculars, the tiny “specks” turned into human spiders, laboriously inching their way up the vertical face of the mountain.

Our historical pragmatism causes us to place a question mark on activities—especially high risk activities—that have little or no redeeming value. Mountain climbing is a prime example of such activity. The mountaineer, usually in the prime of life, has been generously endowed by nature with a robust frame and an agile mind. Both body and mind have been sculpted by endless hours of self-discipline, developing the necessary stamina and skills to overcome the disproportionate odds of surviving the cold, unforgiving face of the mountain.

We, like anyone else, are captivated by acts of courage—even when they could better be classified as foolhardiness. We find it difficult to tear our eyes from one who challenged Death to a duel...

Yet, as we lift our eyes to where the mountain meets the sky, where the climber will finally raise his arms in triumph, we gaze even higher and feel a sudden sadness, for he, who has conquered the mountain, must now return to earth.

One can learn a great deal about an individual by knowing how he conducts his

Brazil News

business or vocational affairs. Even more—actually, a lot more—can be learned by knowing what he does with his free time.

Anyone who has ever held a job knows that many modern employees live for weekends, holidays and vacations (and more mundanely, for the buzzer that signals break, lunch and quitting time). This doesn't necessarily mean they dislike their job, but in most cases it is seen as a means to an end (*weekend*, if you will). In this setting, there undoubtedly is virtue in this type of stimulus. After all, production and efficiency do depend on motivation. And this motivation, at times, is a virtual El Capitan.

There is the executive who for five long, grueling days reads reports, chairs meetings, makes momentous decisions that involve millions of dollars and the livelihood of hundreds or thousands of wage earners. When fatigue begins to outweigh his courage, he thinks about the golf course where he will be spending the weekend, and the load becomes lighter.

There is the doctor whose days are a blur of activity, seeing patients, prescribing, scrubbing up, making the rounds, having the unpleasant task of facing patients, or their relatives, and saying, "I'm sorry, but..." He keeps going, remembering that shortly he will be able to spend several days on his personal yacht or go skiing at Aspen.

And then there is the assembly line worker who tightens bolts eight hours a day, five days a week. He knows he'll probably never be promoted, and really doesn't care, so long as he can spend at least some of his Saturdays at his favorite fishing hole.

In the case of the "speck" pointed out to us on the face of El Capitan by the young lady, the only thing we know about him is that he has a girlfriend. We don't know his name, his age, his profession, his race or color. He may be a teacher, or a biologist. We have every reason to believe that he takes mountain climbing seriously. Very seriously. He probably lives for climbing, believing that not only will he defy the mountain, but also the statistics which indicate that mountain climbers often end their careers in an abrupt manner.

That is El Capitan.

In the spiritual kingdom, a great deal can also be learned by observing what a Christian does with his free time, which brings us to two important considerations: Our concept of free time and of eternity, which, when analyzed microscopically, are umbilically attached.

How long is eternity? Our chronometrical minds fail to disengage from time mode as we try to grasp the intricacy of a place in which sundials, hourglasses and clocks have been abolished, as well as calendars. Indeed, even poets, the masters of verbal subtleties, resort to "years" and "ages" as they attempt to place exclamation marks on eternity. *I will sing you a song of that beautiful land, / The far away home of the soul; / Where no storms ever beat on that glittering strand, / While the years of eternity roll.* Our mental processors feed on numbers, the more zeros the better. They quickly bog down on "never ending," "forever and ever"...

In their efforts to explain the origin of the Universe and of life, scientists excitedly announce ever larger numbers as they dig up bone fragments and uncover fossils.

When they proclaim that the Universe is a billion and a half years old, people are impressed. That is easier to understand than the zero figure attached to eternity.

Yet the sincere Christian is more impressed by the single zero attached to eternity than by the nine zeros that the “wise” have assigned to the origin of the Universe. It is exactly this concept that lays the foundation for a proper evaluation of free time and gives us courage to ask: How does God look at free time?

He knows much better than we do that it is in our spare time that we show most clearly what He means to us, what position He occupies in our lives. Children know dad must make a living. They don’t expect him to leave the job several times a day and come home to play with them. But they can keenly sense when his work day is over and his time is his. That is when they try to make it theirs. Their concept of dad is strongly influenced by how much of “his” time he gives to them.

Mothers are busy creatures. Even so, most mothers come up with some free time. Few things bring a child closer to heaven than to have mother give some of “her” time.

The same can be said for older brothers and sisters who give some of “their” time to their siblings.

In the brotherhood, what is more precious than a having a brother or sister freely give us some of “his” or “her” time? After all, what is more precious than time? Silver and gold can be acquired by hard work, but time can never be earned: only spent, wasted or given away.

And so we return to El Capitan.

El Capitan, our personal El Capitan, is a pursuit that *dominates* our free time and *predominates* our mind. Deprivation of this stimulant can bring on depression, indeed, withdrawal symptoms. Let’s notice:

Books. When asked why we as a church are doctrinally opposed to radio and television, we cite their negative influence on Christian life, which we believe is ample reason for our position. There is, however, another aspect which shouldn’t be ignored. Assiduous TV viewers, especially children, tend to let others do their thinking. Creativity suffers as the brain goes on welfare. Unable to feed itself, it survives on handouts.

A compulsive reader has much in common with the assiduous TV viewer. Not only does the brain go on welfare, but it becomes indiscriminate in what it reads. To such a one, reading becomes an opiate—a means to escape reality.

Parents must be alert to the compulsive reader syndrome. Children who immerse themselves in books to the point of rather reading than playing, working, having or making friends, have a serious problem. If not corrected, they will become unstable youth, and then unstable adults with a warped concept of life.

In children, the compulsive reader is not to be confused with the curious reader. Whereas the compulsive reader must constantly be reading to feed its starving brain, the curious reader transfers the knowledge acquired to daily life. He enthusiastically tells his parents, his siblings and friends about his new discoveries. This is a healthy situation.

Adults, youth too, who read voraciously every free moment (and possibly even during working hours) should stop and take inventory. While climbing El Capitan, the chores aren't being done right, maybe not at all, the breakfast (and maybe dinner and supper) dishes aren't being washed, the children are being neglected, and last but not least, the soul is probably starving.

Burning gasoline. Admittedly, that's not a real sophisticated subtitle, but it says it so well. Burning gasoline, that is what we do when we're running around in our car or pickup. The intensity of this malady—for it certainly isn't a virtue—is directly proportional to the prosperity of the nation, or community, in which it occurs. In the majority of the world economies, “burning gasoline” is a prerogative of the rich.

We as a people place a high value on family togetherness. We feel that this togetherness has a strong influence on the preservation of the faith. Or do we...?

Traditionally, evening is the most sentimental time of the day, the most precious time. It's a special time of togetherness. Why is it then, that this special time is being dedicated to El Capitan? Why is it that when the family should be enjoying several precious hours together, that one car goes this way, and another that way...?

Mountain climbing is a high risk sport. We don't know how many have perished while attempting to scale El Capitan. If we could know the number of fatalities that we as a church have suffered in the evening, El Capitan would probably look like a very low risk sport.

This “evening sickness” is taking a high toll in our midst, not only because of the negative influence of this “running around,” but especially because of what it is stifling, or extinguishing, which is good, solid family togetherness. We can further ask: When someone gets home late after having spent the evening on El Capitan, is there an urge to read the Word? To Pray? To Study the Sunday School lesson?

Pathologically, “evening sickness” is a very serious disease. When the pleasures of an evening of fun are held up against an endless eternity, are they worth it?

Hobbies. “An activity or interest pursued outside one's regular occupation and engaged in primarily for pleasure” (AHD).

Most hobbies have three things in common: they are time-consuming, costly and fascinating. We are fully aware that some hobbies, when practiced in moderation, can be both educational and useful. We are not talking about that kind of hobbies, but rather those that become an El Capitan in the person's life, a consuming passion.

We said they are:

Time consuming. They consume the time that should be spent with the family, visiting the brethren, studying the Word... Lost time, lost soul. Is it worth it?

Costly. Is it right to throw money away on something that has no redeeming value? Will such a hobby pass the rigid test of good stewardship? Will eternity smile on such an activity?

Fascinating. There is nothing wrong with becoming fascinated by something. However, a now obsolete definition of this word is bewitching. This is where the danger comes in. When a hobby causes us to lose our vision of a better Land, we will eventually lose both our hobby and the Land.

Brazil News

We won't attempt to list all the El Capitanes in these few pages, which obviously would be an impossibility. Rather, we hope to help our good readers to see more clearly that he who scales El Capitan must return to earth, but he who dedicates his free time to the Lord, will find time to walk with Him on earth, and then one day rise far above El Capitan.

On a hot summer day in 1985, an arsonist set a brush fire in the mountains near San Francisco. Fire fighters believed they would soon control the blaze. This wasn't to be the case. Strong winds the following day whipped the flames into a major wildfire. That afternoon as area residents attempted to return home, they were stopped by police officers. No one was allowed to enter the fire zone.

As the crowd at the roadblock grew larger and larger, an animal rescue team arrived and requested permission to enter the fire zone and attempt to rescue people's pets. The rest of that day they worked feverishly and the following day at daybreak they were back again, working all day.

Late that afternoon a woman in her mid-thirties ran up to one of the rescue vans and requested that they go to her home and search for her eight-week old kitten. She was aware that many of the homes in the neighborhood had been destroyed by fire, but believed that possibly hers and several others had been spared.

As the rescue worker neared the address given by the kitten's owner, she found that not a single house had escaped the ravages of the fire. Even though convinced that the kitten had perished, the rescue worker decided to look around. As she was returning to her van, she thought she heard a faint meow.

"Kitty, kitty, here kitty," she began calling. Zeroing in on the forlorn *meooooon*, she came to a dry creek bed, and on the other side, she found the kitten, covered with soot and almost buried in ashes. Her whiskers were singed and her paws burned, but she definitely was alive.

As the rescue worker was returning with the kitten, she was rehearsing how she would break the news to the woman that her house had been totally destroyed. She settled on: "I'm so glad I found your kitten... I just wish there would have been some way I could have saved your home."

"It's gone?"

"Yes, it's gone. There is nothing left."

Seeing there were tears in the rescuer's eyes, the kitten's owner hugged her and told her not to worry. "You saved what was important," she said. "You saved what was important."

It strikes us as strange that someone would so lightly brush off the loss of a home and rejoice in the survival of an eight-week old kitten. It is even stranger when someone forgets about a never ending eternity and finds his fulfillment on El Capitan. ▲

Life in Brazil

Standing in Line in the Bank

Several days ago I spent 30 minutes in line in the bank. At such times, one has the option of becoming bored, or of striking up a conversation with someone, which can often make standing in line an enjoyable experience.

I began the conversation with an upbeat remark. “If we were in the Bank of Brazil with this long a line, we’d be there three or four hours...” It was hardly an overstatement. Some time ago, standing in line in the Bank of Brazil, a girl told me she had once stood in line for six hours.

The government is concerned about the situation. Banks are showing astronomical profits and there is no reason why they can’t give better service. They have made a law that if anyone has to stand in line more than 20 minutes, the bank is supposed to pay an enormous fine. So far authorities are being quite lenient, but according to the papers, one of these days they are going to crack down. Then we’ll see what happens.

Anyway, I asked the fellow if he was farming. Taking the cue, he launched into a diatribe about the woes of farming, quickly pointing out that the big problem was having hired men. He explained the problem quite well. At least his version of it. Suddenly he brightened up and told another story:

A hired man who felt his boss had treated him unfairly, took the matter to law. The judge asked the hired man how much he felt his boss was owing him. He replied, “Your honor, he’s owing me four thousand reals.”

The boss came totally unglued. Standing to his feet, he shouted, “I’m not owing this worthless character one red cent. AND I DON’T INTEND TO PAY HIM ONE RED CENT EITHER!”

Seeing that the plaintiff and the defendant were hardly on the same wave length, the judge ordered them into a little room to see if they couldn’t come to some kind of an agreement. Finally, after a lengthy discussion, the two antagonists returned to the courtroom.

“Well, have you two come up with anything?”

“Yes sir, your honor,” was the plaintiff’s answer.

“And what is it?”

“We will settle for two thousand reals.”

Turning to the defendant, the judge asked, “Are you in agreement?”

“Yes sir, your honor.”

“Please pay your hired man and the case will be closed.”

With a vicious gleam in his eye, the boss wrote out a check for two thousand reals and handed it to the hired man, shouting, “Here, you scoundrel, take this *esmola!*” Here we explain that an *esmola* is a handout given to a beggar.

The hired man meekly took the money; after all the man’s words didn’t alter the value of the money.

“Your honor am I dismissed?” the defendant asked the judge.

“You are not dismissed; you still haven’t paid your hired man.”

“What?! I haven’t paid him? You saw me pay him just now...”

“You have NOT paid your hired man. Of your own free will you gave him an *esmola*, but you have not paid him the two thousand reals you agreed upon. Now, pay him or I’ll have you hauled off to jail...”

This reminds me of a story printed in BN no. 22. Since many of you readers weren’t subscribers back then, we will reprint the story. ▲

A Brazilian Story

by Mário de Moraes

The Esmola

This happened in a little town called Costa Machado, in the state of São Paulo.

In 1964 this little place had only fifty houses. In one of them there lived a fine fellow, respected by all, called Raimundo Antônio da Silva, originally from the state of Paraíba. It was for this reason that the lieutenant on the police force appointed him as “block inspector,” a title which gave him the right to use a thirty-eight and the obligation of maintaining the peace in the town of Costa Machado.

During most of the day, *delegado* [roughly the equivalent of “sheriff”] Raimundo could be seen sitting at a rough hewn table in the *delegacia* [sheriff’s office], which was actually no more than an old board shack. And it was one afternoon that an old lady showed up. She must have been around eighty years old and was all shook up.

“What may I do for you, Madam?” asked the authority.

“The reason I’m here, *seu delegado* [*seu* is roughly equivalent to *don* in Spanish, a term of respect. *Seu* can also be a pronoun], is that Melquíades, from *Sítio do Cavalo Morto* [a *sítio* is a small farm, in this case strangely called, Dead Horse Farm], killed my goat. I have no relatives or anyone who helps me, *seu doutor* [to call someone *doutor* (doctor) is a way of showing great respect to a superior. Here she doubles the dose with *seu doutor*]. My entire livelihood depends on the milk I get from this goat. Now I don’t have anything to sell...”

Overcome by compassion, Raimundo decided to settle this problem. “Leave it to me, Madam. You may come back tomorrow morning at nine o’clock and I’ll see to it that justice is done.”

When the old lady left, he called his only policeman, who was also his brother-in-law, and gave him an order:

“Head out to the *Sítio do Cavalo Morto* and tell this Melquíades fellow to be here tomorrow morning at nine o’clock.”

So that my good listeners will understand better the setting of this story, I add here that this *delegado*, who was 5’ 6” tall, had studied only until the second grade.

On the following day, at eight o’clock, Raimundo was on the job. His sweetheart, a

pretty *baiana* [a native of the state of Bahia] called *Isaura*, showed up to see him. They were in the middle of a conversation, when the old lady showed up. After asking her to be seated on a crate, which served as a chair, they waited for Melquíades to show up.

At exactly nine o'clock Melquíades showed up. He was a tall man, more or less 6' 3". He wore *bombachas* [baggy trousers typical of the *gaúchos* from the state of Rio Grande do Sul. It would also indicate he wasn't someone to be meddled with], he had a bandanna tied around his neck and on his head he wore a huge cowboy hat.

"You are *senhor Melquíades*?"

"That's right."

"Why did you kill this lady's goat?"

"The pesky thing started eating my crops, so I got my double barreled 16 gauge shotgun and plugged it twice. That's how the crazy thing died..."

"Didn't you know that this lady is all alone in this world and that her livelihood depended on the milk she got from this goat?"

The man didn't answer his question, so the *delegado* turned to the old lady:

"How much was your goat worth?"

"Around 350 Cruzeiros, *sen doutor*."

"OK, *sen Melquíades*, give this lady 350 cruzeiros," was the sentence given by "judge" Raimundo.

The man who shot the goat began reaching for his own revolver, but when he saw the glint in the *delegado's* eyes, as well as the thirty-eight tucked behind his belt, he changed his mind.

"Here! Take this *esmola* of three hundred and fifty Cruzeiros! It's yours!"

Melquíades turned around and was leaving when Raimundo called him back: "Just a moment! You haven't paid this lady the three hundred and fifty Cruzeiros for her goat that you killed!"

"I haven't paid?" asked an incredulous Melquíades. "Look at that money on top of the table!"

"You gave the lady an *esmola*. Come on now, get with it! Pay for the goat. Or do you want to be thrown in the jug for disrespecting an authority?"

That's how this poor old lady got seven hundred Cruzeiros for a goat that was worth three hundred and fifty at the most. If you want to check this story out, look up Raimundo Antônio da Silva, today in his fifties, now a baker on Major Sertório Street, number 450, in the center of São Paulo. That is, if he still works there... ▲

Thinking Out Loud

Have Book Will Read

During most of the history of the world, literacy was restricted to a select few. After Gutenberg invented movable type some 550 years ago and the Bible slowly became available to those who could pay the price, the ability to read took on new importance.

Until then literacy was seen primarily as a leadership tool, both in civil and ecclesiastical administration.

We have reason to believe that writers of old wrote very, very slowly. Today we buy paper by the ream and think nothing about wadding up a sheet and tossing it into the waste basket. Nor do our children. (Ask the teachers or custodian at your local school how much paper ends up in the trash dumpster each week.) Back when writing materials consisted of stone (the tables of the Ten Commandments, the Rosetta stone, cave walls with inscriptions), meticulously tanned hides, tree bark, papyrus, slates, and finally limited production of paper as we know it today, special care was taken to not err.

The scribe who methodically etched hieroglyphical symbols into a smooth stone, or with a quill laboriously scratched letters onto a skin, had no eraser or backspace key. Thus it was necessary to think ahead: Is this really what I want to say? Is this how I want to say it? It's possible that a writer would sit with wrinkled brow for an hour, or more, trying to decide exactly how to phrase a sentence.

Similarly, we have reason to believe that readers read very slowly. Anyone who doubts this should pick up a copy of Henry Funk's *Restitution* or of *Dietrich Philip's Handbook*. These books must be read much like one eats a fish full of tiny bones.

With the proliferation of printing presses, daily spewing out thousands of tons of literature, a modern reader probably reads more in one day than our brethren read in a week or a month a hundred years ago.

Modern readers demand easy reading, a milkshake that can be slurped on the run. *National Geographic* has mastered the art serving both milkshakes and full meals simultaneously—milkshakes for those who hurriedly scan the high quality illustrations and their captions, and a meal for those who wish to read up on the latest scientific research.

The current milkshake trend is quite general. People everywhere, including those in religious circles, look for literature that jumps out at them, which they can digest on the run. They expect to absorb concepts and generalities, which relegate Henry Funk and Dietrich Philips to the bottom shelf (in the storeroom).

This is unfortunate. Yet, we must face facts. Times have changed. People have changed. And so literature has changed. *Our* literature has changed. The readability of our literature is constantly increasing. By no means is our literature turning into a milkshake. What we could say, however, is that the small bones are being removed, or maybe, that the fish is being filleted.

Thus, there will probably be few reprints of Henry Funk and Dietrich Philips. We can chalk this up as yet another sign that things are going to the rocks. Or we can conclude that these men skillfully defended the faith during a section of history in which their tight, buttoned-down writing style was suited to readers of that time. We can further conclude that their writings influenced subsequent writers, who transmitted their feelings and teachings in a contemporary writing style. No better proof of this can be presented than *Bible Doctrine and Practice*, which embodies the spirit of past writers, with greatly improved readability.

A visit to the Gospel Publishers bookstore in Moundridge, or a look at their catalog, shows there is a lot of literature available in the English language considered acceptable for Christians, as well as for children in Christian homes.

On the other end of the spectrum, we have Mozambique, with nearly a zero selection of Christian literature in the official Portuguese language. Consequently we in Brazil furnish them with literature from our bookstore, the Publicadora Menonita. Each shipment of books, Bibles, Sunday School books, *Mensageiros*, is a bittersweet experience. We are most happy to furnish them with our literature, but saddened because the postage is considerably more than the price of the material sent, which they receive one to three months later.

There are a number of religious publishing houses in Brazil, the largest being Editora Vida, owned by Zondervan. As we look over their catalog, and those from other publishers, we find there are very few titles suitable for our circles. Most of what they have to offer can be classified as milkshake—with more shake than milk.

One of the very bright spots of the history of the church in Brazil is the interest shown and money invested by the brethren in producing sound literature. This effort has been directed toward adults, youth and children.

We always believed that clothes don't make the man, or in literary terms, that the cover doesn't make the book; that what matters is what is written between the covers. Finally, however, we were forced to wake up and smell the coffee: Books without an attractive, colorful cover don't sell. So we began investing in covers.

We print our own books and design our own covers. The books are then sent to Goiânia, where they are bound. Several weeks ago we sent nearly 2,000 books to Goiânia to be bound, six first editions and one reprint. This week we got the books back from the bindery. This has been a landmark in our work, not only because of the variety and quantity of the books involved, but especially because we now have *Doutrina e Prática Bíblicas (Bible Doctrine and Practice)* in print.

Needless to say, to translate, proofread, print and bind a book the size of *Bible Doctrine and Practice* isn't cheap. Since the sales of this book will probably be largely internal, it's possible we won't get our money out of this investment for many years—maybe never. But how long will it take for this book to pay for itself spiritually? Not very long, and then it will do so many times over.

The six new books we have just put on our shelves—in Portuguese, naturally—are:

Christian Doctrine and Practice, 372 pages, US\$6.73

Pilgrim's Progress, 324 pages, US\$6.06

Visions of Heaven and Hell, 68 pages, US\$2.06

Evangelistas in Chains, 320 pages, US\$6.03

Stories for Children, Vol. 2, 208 pages, US\$4.19

Stories for Children, Vol. 3, 216 pages, US\$4.19

The seventh book was a rerun of *Tip Lewis and His Lamp*, 184 pages, US\$3.81.

Other books we have translated and are now available in our bookstore are:

The Shining Sword, 144 pages, US\$3.14.

The Church and the Faith, 80 pages, US\$1.46,

The Pilot's Voice, 124 pages, US\$2.86.

One Hundred and Three Choruses, 103 children's choruses, US\$0.63.

School Handbook, 68 pages, US\$1.46.

Confession of Faith and Conference Order, 120 pages, US\$5.22.

Conversion, Consecration, Christ-like Service, 76 pages, US\$2.08

Studying the Gospels, 92 pages, US\$0.63.

Keeping the Faith, 258 pages, US\$5.37.

Christian Hymnal (pre-edition with approximately one half the songs it will have upon completion), 295 songs, US\$3.02.

Hurlbut's Story of the Bible, 602 pages, US\$8.89.

Mary Jones and Her Bible, 112 pages, US\$1.59.

Worth Dying For, 260 pages, US\$5.22.

No Proselytes in Zion, 64 pages, US\$1.87.

The Drummer's Wife, 236 pages, US\$4.97.

The Threefold Cord, 136 pages, US\$3.05.

The Mirror of Truth, (pre-edition with approximately one half of the articles translated), 308 pages, US\$7.94.

The Christian Home, 140 pages, US\$3.08.

The Christian Home and Child Training, booklet, US\$1.75.

Hear Their Cry (New edition being prepared).

Preparing for Service, US\$3.17.

Family Financial Record, US\$1.56.

Whether it Be of God, 72 pages, US\$2.13.

A Study of Christian Doctrine, 56 pages, US\$1.03.

Only a servant, 80 pages, US\$2.10.

Books in line to be translated or printed shortly are *The Thirty-Three Articles of Faith*, a biography of Menno Simons, a Mini-Martyrs Mirror and *Children's Stories, Vol. 4*.

Beside this, we put out a 16 page Portuguese Messenger (the exact size of BN) every two weeks. We are now on issue no. 464. Also, we translate and print the Adult & Youth, Intermediate and Primary Sunday School books. At present we are printing approximately 520 Portuguese A&Y SS books each quarter. One hundred of these go to a church in the state of Bahia.

It is said that Napoleon requested that trees be planted along the principal thoroughfares in France so that his troops could march in the shade. A junior staff officer said, "But, Marshal, it will take twenty years for the trees to grow enough to accomplish that," to which Napoleon replied, "Yes, indeed, so we must start at once."

Approximately twenty years back our literature program here in Brazil began wobbling about like a newborn calf. Today we can't say we have shaded all the thoroughfares. We can say, though, that enough trees have been planted to where the brethren in Brazil and Mozambique need not stumble for lack of knowledge.

We hope to continue planting trees. ▲

The Church in Brazil

Marriages

In the last 33 years, we have had 94 church marriages here in Brazil. The first ones were single nationality marriages—Americans with Americans. The 13th wedding was a Brazilian with an American, and the 16th, an American with a Canadian. The 41st marriage was Brazilian with Brazilian, in which neither was adopted.

The following code will be used:

Am=American

Ca=Canadian

Br=Brazilian

AB=American born in Brazil

CB=Canadian born in Brazil

Ad=Adopted

RNA=Returned to N America.

The marriages are listed in chronological order (yr mo).

This list may seem a bit boring to those of you who aren't acquainted with many of the folks living in Brazil. However, if you pay close attention to the code coming after the date, an interesting picture will emerge.

- 71 June–**Am/Am**: Glenn Hibner & Elizabeth Burns.
- 71 Sept–**Am/Am**: Eldon Penner & Bonnie Dirks.
- 74 Sept–**Am/Am**: Stanley Schultz & Mary Burns.
- 75 Jan–**Am/Am**: Mark Loewen & Glenda Hibner.
- 75 Jan–**Am/Am**: Paul Yoder & Rachel Miller.
- 75 Sept–**Am/Am**: Daniel Holdeman & Linda Schultz, RNA
- 75 Nov–**Am/Am**: Lynn Schultz & Kathy Miller.
- 76 Jan–**Am/Am**: Ben Coblentz & Catherine Stoltzfus, RNA.
- 76 Sept–**Am/Am**: Leo Dirks & Mim Burns.
- 76 Sept–**Am/Am**: Elvis Kramer & Barbara Coblentz, RNA.
- 76 Dez–**Am/Am**: Dennis Kramer & Freda Kopel.
- 77 Feb–**Am/Am**: Sam Coblentz & Erma Yoder, RNA.
- 78 May–**Br/Am**: João Souto & Charlene Loewen.
- 78 Oct–**Am/Am**: Dan Kramer & Marlene Yoder.
- 79 June–**Am/Am**: Arlo Hibner & Priscilla Holdeman.
- 79 Nov–**Am/Ca**: Calvin Hibner & Donna Warkentin.
- 80 Jan–**Am/Am**: Stuart Mininger & Linda Miller, RNA.
- 80 Mar–**Am/Ca**: Caleb Holdeman & Joanne Warkentin, RNA.
- 80 Nov–**Am/Br(Ad)**: Fred Dirks & Denise Becker, RNA.
- 80 Nov–**Br/Am**: Cláudio Silva & Susan Kramer.
- 81 Feb–**Am/Am**: Myron Kramer & Martha Yoder.
- 81 June–**Am/Am**: Gene Koepl & Mary Coblentz, RNA.

Brazil ¹³ News

- 81 June–**Am/Am**: Paul Koepl, & Shirley Dirks, RNA.
- 81 Jul–**Am/Am**: Tim Burns & Deanna Schultz.
- 81 Oct–**Am/Ca**: Stanley Holdeman & Kathy Warkentin.
- 83 Feb–**Am/Am**: Harold Holdeman & Irene Miller.
- 83 Sept–**Am/Am**: Jesse Loewen & Delores Miller, RNA.
- 84 Jan–**Am/Am**: Errol Redger & Karen Loewen, RNA.
- 84 Sept–**Am/Am**: Dean Mininger & Esther Lou Miller.
- 84 Sept–**Am/CA**: Bill Miller & Gracie Warkentin.
- 84 Dez–**Am/Br**: Carman Loewen & Celma Furquim.
- 85 Feb–**Br/Am**: Tony de Lima & Juanita Loewen.
- 85 May–**Am/Ca**: Phil Martin & Alfrieda Penner.
- 85 Aug–**Am/Am**: Clinton Unruh & Anna Mae Miller.
- 85 Oct–**Am/Br**: Carlos Becker & Nita Santos.
- 86 Jan–**Br/Br(Ad)**: Jair da Costa & Connie Schultz.
- 86 June–**Am/Br**: Stephen Kramer & Dete Lacerda.
- 86 July–**Am/Br**: Jon Coblentz & Leila Fabiana.
- 86 Oct–**Am/Am**: Sid Schmidt & Irene Holdeman, RNA.
- 87 June–**Am/Am**: Wayland Loewen & Rita Miller, RNA.
- 87 Aug–**Br/Br**: Leonardo Neves & Cláudia Gold.
- 88 July–**Am/Ca**: Dennis Loewen & Vera Penner, RNA. Married in Canada.
- 88 Nov–**Am/Am**: Staven Schmidt & Adeline Holdeman, RNA.
- 88 Dec–**Am/Am**: Stacy Schmidt & Jeanette Martin, RNA.
- 89 Sept–**Ca/Am**: Lowell Warkentin & Sharon Schneider (married in USA)
- 90 June–**Am/Am**: Clinton Unruh & Marie Kramer.
- 90 Sept–**Am/Am**: Lester Holdeman & Sharon Unruh.
- 90 Dec–**Am/AB**: Craig Redger & Monica Penner, RNA.
- 91 Jan–**Am/Ca**: Mervin Loewen & Norma Jean Warkentin.
- 91 Jul–**Br/Br**: Jorge Silva & Dalva Maia.
- 91 Nov–**Br/Br**: Pedro Maia & Wanderlúcia Baldêz.
- 91 Nov–**Br/Br**: Ely Bessa & Vânia Martins.
- 92 Jul–**AB/AB**: John Kramer & Sheila Hibner (first marriage in which both were born in Brazil to American parents).
- 92 Aug–**Am/Br(Ad)**: Myron Unruh & Sheila Loewen.
- 92 Sept–**Am/Am**: Anthony Koehn & Wynelle Loewen.
- 92 Sept–**Br(Ad)/Am**: Milton Loewen & Cindy Martin.
- 93 May–**Am/Am**: Nelson Unruh & Ruth Kramer.
- 93 June–**Br/Br**: Robson Gold & Glauciene Rosa.
- 93 June–**Br/Am**: Wagner Machado & Aletha Mininger.
- 93 Aug–**Am/Am**: Franklin Mininger & Doreen Koehn, RNA.
- 93 Sept–**AB/Br**: David Kramer & Marta Alves.
- 95 May–**Br/Br**: Edinei Alves & Janete Duarte.
- 95 May–**AB/AB**: Roger Hibner & Sherilyn Yoder.

Brazil ¹⁴ News

- 95 June–**Br/AB**: Sérgio Alves & Katrina Schultz.
95 June–**Br/Br**: Sebastião de Sá & Maria José Godinho.
95 June–**Am/AB**: Ben Koehn & Laura Martin.
96 Mar–**Am/Br**: Jonathan Coblentz & Sheila Rosa.
96 June–**Br/Br**: Paulo Rufino & Valéria Gold.
97 Jul–**AB/Am**: Milferd Loewen & Sandra Zimmerman (married in USA).
97 Sept–**AB/AB**: David Miller & Roxanne Schultz.
97 Sept–**Am/Br**: Keith Schultz & Diene Santos, RNA.
98 Feb–**Am/AB**: Kent Holdeman & Karla Holdeman, RNA.
98 Apr–**Br/Br**: João Batista Silva & Adalgisa Ambrósio.
99 May–**Br/Br**: Marcelo Passos & Juliana Gomes.
99 July–**Ca/Am**: Kevin Warkentin & Elizabeth Schmidt (married in USA).
99 July–**Br/AB**: Hallis Silva & Marcia Loewen.
99 Aug–**Br/AB**: Bira Bernardes & Francine Koehn.
99 Nov–**AB/Am**: Jeff Kramer & Marion Unruh.
00 May–**AB/Am**: Delton Holdeman & Amy Stoltzfus.
00 July–**CB/AB**: Robert Warkentin & Angela Martin.
00 Oct–**Am/AB**: Franklin Coblentz & Brenda Hibner, RNA.
00 Oct–**Br/Br**: Flávio Oliveira & Flávia Passos.
01 Feb–**Br/Br**: Fernando Rodrigues & Keila Souto.
01 May–**AB/Br**: Harley Penner & Adriana Soares.
01 July–**Br/AB**: Marcos Duarte & Wanda Schultz.
01 Aug–**Ca/Br**: Darryl Goossen & Lucélia Duarte, RNA.
01 Aug–**Br/AB**: Jonas Marques &
02 Aug–**Br/Ca**: Eduardo Vieira & Susan Koehn (married in Canada).
02 Sept–**Br/AB**: André Passos & Adrienne Hibner.
02 Sept–**Br/AB**: Márcio Ambrósio & Wendy Penner (Announced).
02 Oct–**Br/AB**: Fernando Barros & Teresa Hibner (Announced).

Thirty-three years. That's a full generation. It's also the amount of time since the first settlers set up camp on what is now the Colony. A look at the above list shows us that the first 12 marriages were N American/N American. Then came the first Brazilian/N American marriage. The last 13 weddings, from October of 2000 until now, have been either Brazilian/Brazilian or mixed.

What does that tell us?

First of all it tells us that in the first years, with few Brazilian members in the church, it was only natural that marriages be N American/N American.

Secondly it tells us that the love bug is no respecter of persons.

Thirdly it tells us that for parents who see this trend less than cheerfully, the only way to attempt to douse the love bug is a one-way ticket on Varig Airline... *e olha lá!*

Really, the big question should be: How have mixed marriages turned out? Are they a success?

Positively. In very general terms, we can affirm, by observation, that it is easier to turn a Brazilian into an American (even in his own country), than it is to turn an American into a Brazilian. English tends to surface as the preferred language of both the couple and their offspring. This, however, is slowly changing. I am amazed at how often I stumble on small groups of Am or AB youth who are speaking Portuguese, even though there are no Brazilians present. I have been told that some of the younger mixed couples are making Portuguese their main language, while maintaining the English. Both are important decisions.

In the case of a N American/Brazilian marriage, must there be a lot of adjustments? If they have been well adjusted at home, with parents and siblings, the adjustments will be minimal. While there are undeniable dissimilarities between the two cultures, the basic thinking process and the placement of values are very similar, especially when both are converted. Possibly that explains why all of our mixed marriages are intact. ▲

The One Hundred Real Bill

A man bought a pair of shoes for 60 reals and paid with a hundred real bill. The shop keeper didn't have change, so he took the bill to a nearby shop and had it changed into 10 real bills. He gave the customer 40 reals, and the pair of shoes.

After the customer left, the neighbor who broke the bill rushed in. The hundred real bill was counterfeit! The only solution was for the shop keeper to exchange it for a valid hundred real bill.

Now, how much did the shop keeper lose in this complicated transaction? ▲

This & That

July 2 was the changing of the guard in our local tract office. Clinton Unruh, who has been the office superintendent for the last seven years, was replaced by Dave Miller. Because of the downscaling in the work, an average of one day a week is spent in the office.

On July 4 the Rio Verde Cong. had communion. Ministers Antônio Oliveira from the Pirenópolis Cong. and Mark Loewen from the Monte Alegre Cong. were the evangelists.

Harold Dirks from Idaho spent some time here on business.

On July 5, the youth cleaned up around Carman & Celma Loewen's new house, in preparation to moving in.

On July 6, Luís Fernandes got his first batch of one hundred thousand chicks, thus becoming the sixth one to begin raising broilers for Perdigão on the Colony.

On July 6, Seriema Terraplenagen, owned by Arlo Hibner, began the earthwork for Tim Burns' chicken barns.

The Dan Peaster family spent several days on the Colony on their way back to the US, after spending a number of years on the mission in Patos, Paraíba.

Jerry & Jonsie Buller, and daughter Anne, spent several weeks in Brazil visiting Jerry's sister, Joan, Mrs. John Unruh. They all, together with Clinton & Marie Unruh, took a quick trip to Iguaçu Falls in a rented van.

Alma Penner and daughter Marlys Wicke spent a short time visiting on the Colony.

Edna Loewen and her daughters Velda and Keleda have returned to the US after having lived in Brazil for approximately 33 years. They have made a very positive contribution to the Colony. On July 28, a short farewell was held for them after Sunday evening services at the MA church.

Upcoming presidential elections are throwing our dollar/real exchange rate out of kilter. Lula, a leftist candidate, stands a good chance of winning the election. As he goes up in the polls, the real devaluates. Whenever José Serra, President Fernando Henrique's official candidate goes up a point or two in the polls, the real recuperates some of its lost value. There are few things that scare investors more than the possibility of a leftist government. Yet, there is a general consensus that if elected, Lula won't make shipwreck of Brazil's economy. The high exchange rate—today it hit 3.45—can really upset the apple cart for anyone having a debt based on the dollar, or wants to take dollars out of the country. Fortunately, this turmoil is having a minimal effect on our inflation. On the positive side, now is the time to act for anyone wanting to buy land or invest in Brazil. Dollars go a loooooong way. If nothing else, come spend some time on the Colony and get your teeth fixed with Dr. Luis Fernandes. It will probably be the most pleasant and least expensive dental work you have ever had done.

Some people struggle for years to find children to adopt. For Jorge & Dalva Silva, from the Mato Grosso settlement it is different. They were offered three siblings, ages, 4 years, 2 years, 11 months, which they are now raising. More details in another issue.

Facts & Figures

Rainfall — 22 mm — 0.8 inch

Temperatures

High	34.0°C	93°F
Low	8.8°C	48°F
Av high	30.5°C	87°F
Av low	12.6°C	55°F

Relative Humidity — Hi 74% — Low 43% — Av 55.8%