

# Brazil News

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No. 142  
March 2003

Editorial

## **U.S. SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING**

The American Indians are cited as the original users of tobacco. It is believed that already in the first century *anno Domini*, tobacco was being smoked for ceremonial purposes, a custom that has entered modern day vocabulary as "smoking the peace pipe."

By the time Columbus set foot on the North American continent at the end of the fifteenth century, the ceremonial peace pipe had spawned casual smoking, a practice observed in most of the hemisphere. Not only was tobacco being smoked, but also ground into a fine powder and inhaled through hollow Y-shaped pieces of cane, in which the forked end was placed in the nostrils. The native name for this small instrument sounded like "tobago" or "tobaca," which the Spaniards transmuted into "tobacco" and used to denominate the plant itself.

Tobacco was first cultivated commercially by Europeans when the Spaniards set up plantations in the West Indies in 1535, and shortly after, in Spain.

Tobacco gained popularity in Europe because of supposed medicinal properties. Initially, it was used more in the form of poultices, and in some cases, inhaled as snuff. During the time when Catherine de Médicis was queen of France, the use of snuff became fashionable in her court. In honor of Jean Nicot, the ambassador to Portugal, who introduced the practice, the tobacco plant was later given the botanical name "Nicotiana."

Until 1575, Spain dominated the European tobacco market. Soon the Dutch, in the West Indies, and the English settlers, in Virginia, were vying for their share of the market. As tobacco became more readily available, smoking took on epidemic proportions and by the early seventeenth century, its use was virtually worldwide.

Never, except possibly in its native setting, has the use of tobacco been accepted or vindicated by all. There has always been a segment of society that has disapproved of

its use. Indeed, users themselves often decry the repulsiveness of the habit which they declare themselves unable to shake.

A quick review of what we have just said shows us that for many centuries tobacco was limited to ceremonial use. Then for approximately 450 years, it was believed that tobacco could have curative effects in the case of certain sicknesses, such as asthma. During this period no one, not even medical science, was fully aware of the damage tobacco could do to the human body.

Some 40 years ago a major cigarette manufacturer advertised its product as “The Medicated Cigarette.” Doubtlessly there were those who chose this brand believing it would bring them relief for some of their ailments.

Especially in the last several decades, medical science has dissipated any residue of hope that tobacco, used in any form, can possibly have positive results. Rather, there is a general awareness of the dangers inherent to its usage.

And how could it be otherwise? Legislation in different countries requires that a warning be printed on all tobacco products, as well on all advertisements, that is, where they haven’t been banned.

Some of you readers will remember the first timid warnings which were made mandatory in January of 1966: “CAUTION: CIGARETTE SMOKING *MAY BE* HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH.” (The italics are mine.)

Following are some of the warnings found on TIME Magazine’s back cover:

**U.S. SURGEON GENERAL’S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.**

**U.S. SURGEON GENERAL’S WARNING: Cigarette Smoke Contains Carbon Monoxide.**

**U.S. SURGEON GENERAL’S WARNING: Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result In Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.**

**U.S. SURGEON GENERAL’S WARNING: Quitting Smoking Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks To Your Health.**

Each of the ads show a cowboy, a rugged, handsome, vigorous, outdoor man—the kind of man boys and young men dream of being, and the kind of a man girls would like to marry. In a diabolical transposition of values, these young men and women see the cowboy and ignore the warning.

On the last issue of Time received, there is an unmistakable warning in bold type: **TOBACCO SERIOUSLY DAMAGES HEALTH.**

So why do people keep on smoking?

The tobacco industry has pulled off what is probably the greatest marketing coup of all times. To induce hundreds of millions of human beings to willingly use a toxic substance that has probably killed hundreds of thousands, is no mean accomplishment.

Flávio de Andrade, 54, president of Souza Cruz, one of the largest tobacco companies in Latin America, was recently interviewed by VEJA Magazine. In the following excerpts of the interview, notice carefully the subtle reasoning in his answers:

Q. Doesn't it bother your conscience to sell such a controversial product?

A. What we're discussing, doubtlessly, is risks. Our ethical obligation is to inform [our customers] about these risks. Each one of us must decide if we are willing to live with these risks. I, for example, am a smoker, but every morning I do exercises. My physical condition is such that I drive a race car at high speeds non-stop for two hours. Needless to say, this exposes me to risks. But it happens that I enjoy racing. Naturally, I take precautions, but I enjoy this sport because few other things in life are as fulfilling as racing. Smoking also exposes me to risks, but I find it fulfilling.

Q. Yet, it's a fact that we're talking about a product that can cause cancer. Forgetting the commercial side of things, doesn't that bother you as an individual?

A. This always brings to me the thought that we must constantly improve our products. The fact that we are working with a risk factor causes me to untiringly work toward bringing down the content of certain elements in our products. Over a period of time, we will be successful. Seen from this perspective, no, it doesn't bother me. Rather, it makes me feel good to be working with a responsible, ethical company, and to be a responsible, ethical executive.

Q. How do you deal with the continuously growing campaigns against smoking?

A. The anti-smoking feeling that is being nurtured often is based on unreasonable arguments. A good example is the idea that non-smokers exposed to cigarette smoke are in the same risk factor as smokers. The thinking behind this is to create a strong prejudice against tobacco. What has made this campaign successful is that people actually believe what they hear. Worldwide, 30 percent of the people smoke. That means that 70 percent of the population is pressuring 30 percent. This is discrimination. I am aware that in certain places, when someone lights a cigarette, snide remarks are heard.

Q. How have you been affected by the hideous images that are being printed on cigarette packs?

A. This is something new, so I'm unable to give a definite opinion at this point. Two countries are using these images: Brazil and Canada. The Canadian Cancer Society has done some studies on this, but hasn't come to any decisive conclusions. So we don't know to what extent these images are having a negative effect, or even if they are at all. We notice that the number of new tobacco users is dropping, however it has nothing to do with the restrictions on advertising or with the hideous images. But I do believe that

over a period of time, it will affect the market. I will admit that those images aren't one bit attractive.

Q. The World Health Organization has agreed to work toward totally eliminating tobacco worldwide. Because of this, our minister of health defends the idea of removing tobacco products from 99 percent of the establishments that sell them today. What do you have to say about this?

A. If that happens, it will mean, basically, that about the only place that tobacco products can be purchased will be on the black market. The government has no quality control over the products and gets no tax money. Furthermore, black market cigarettes don't carry the obligatory images that we must use. In the end, the black market will be the big winner.

Q. With so many obstacles, how does the future of your business look to you?

A. Fifty years from now we will be selling the same products, but with modified ingredients. In the last ten years we have made tremendous progress. We have cut tar and nicotine content in half. We are doing research on products that won't be harmful. I'm not trying to say that the cigarettes we're putting on the market today are safe, but we're working in that direction... I'm sure that 50 years from now, when I'm doing my annual report to the shareholders, I will be talking about cigarettes that are much safer than the ones we are producing today.

Q. What kind of advice do you give to anyone wanting to quit smoking?

A. Will power.

That gives us just a glimpse of the cold, calculating minds that are sending tens of thousands to early graves. It is very, very strange to hear them talking about ethics and responsibility.

Our family doctor of more than 30 years is an inveterate smoker. As a physician he knows perfectly well the harmful effects of the cigarette on the human organism. He has examined patients and had the unpleasant task of telling them they have cancer. He tells them to quit smoking, knowing it is already too late.

Yes, he knows he is taking a risk, but apparently believes he is quite safe. Once I overheard him telling someone that his dad smoked for something like 60 years and it never hurt him. He believes the same will hold true for him.

As the pace of life increases, so do the number of risks we take.

The brake pedal on our vehicle gets mushy. Instead of taking the car to the shop for urgent repairs, we give the brakes a quick pump when needing to stop. We promise ourselves to get the brakes fixed, but soon we are giving them several quick pumps. Then one day we have to stop real quick like and there is no time for even one pump...

We know we should have a physical checkup once a year. Two years go by, three, four...

We know we should use safety equipment on the job, but it's such a nuisance.

We know that driving down the road at 80 mph is much more dangerous than staying within speed limit, but we can't afford to get to work late again.

Risks. Life is full of risks. Calculated risks. Risks that we take because we believe the odds are in our favor. And the more risks we take without an accident, the more confident we become that we are capable of dealing with risks. We are—what shall we call it?—a risk-happy generation.

There is nothing laudable about taking risks that endanger our own life and well-being, and that of others. Yet, the fast pace of modern life is cauterizing our senses to where risk-taking has become routine, or, shall we say, a way of life.

Today, for many, smoking has ceased to be a moral issue. The decision to smoke or not to smoke is based on social considerations, and that which we have just described, the risk factor. In most of today's religions, smoking is not an obstacle to membership, nor, sadly, to holding office. Tragically, those filling the pulpits relegate smoking to the realm of personal choice. Sin is not the issue.

We, who from childhood have been taught that smoking is sin, shudder to think of the terrible consequences of believing that smoking is a mere personal choice, a choice that will not need to be answered for on the Final Day.

That assuredly is reason to shudder, but not the only reason.

Mr. Andrade believes that the decision to smoke is confined to the risk-factor. Each one must ask himself: Is the pleasure worth the risk? Such thinking we indignantly condemn, just as King David furiously condemned to death the rich man, who in the prophet Nathan's parable, stole the poor man's only lamb.

Yes, we can easily see through the fallacy of one risking his life for the pleasure of smoking, even moderately, but ignore the times we play a similar Russian roulette with sin.

We must admit that someone who smokes socially, that is, only when the occasion "demands" it, or even moderately, is taking a much smaller risk than a chain smoker. Similarly, we tend to categorize sin. To be a Christian and occasionally indulge in a "social sin," isn't nearly as serious as living in open, brazen sin, with no pretence of religion. The risk factor, we believe, is much lower. So low, in fact, that we, like the smoker, are willing to take the risk.

It's true that the Bible makes a definite distinction between different types of sin. There are the sins unto death (the chain smoker), at one end of the spectrum, and the "sin which is not unto death" (the social smoker), at the other end. But it is also true that exactly the same blood that was spilt for the great sins was also spilt for the small sins. Seen from that perspective, sin is sin.

Furthermore, the majority of those who commit the great and terrible sins weren't raised in a Christian environment. We, on the other hand, who "from a child [...] have] known the holy scriptures, which are able to make [us] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," will be judged far more severely than the one who grew up in the slums of a large city and has committed all the sins in the Book. On the final day,

## Brazil News

our “social sinning” will be judged with far greater severity than the “chain sinning” of the one who was never exposed to the true light.

If what we have just said is true, then how great is the risk of social sinning?

We sing:

*There's a God who's standing at heaven's door,  
He's looking this universe o'er;  
And He sees each mortal with a searching eye,  
You can't do wrong and get by.*

Refrain:

*You can't do wrong and get by,  
No matter how much you may try;  
Nothing hidden can be,  
Everything He doth see,  
You can't do wrong and get by.*

*Yes, he knows your secrets, everything you do,  
He know that your life is untrue;  
You can ne'er deceive Him, there's no use to try,  
You can't do wrong and get by.*

We also sing:

*Heaven is a holy place, filled with glory and with grace,  
Sin can never enter there;  
All within its gates are pure, from defilement kept secure,  
Sin can never enter there.*

Refrain:

*Sin can never enter there, Sin can never enter there;  
So, if at the judgment bar, sinful spots your souls shall mar,  
You can never enter there.*

*If you cling to sin till death, when you draw your latest breath,  
You will sink in dark despair,  
To the regions of the lost, thus to prove at awful cost,  
Sin can never enter there.*

**CAUTION: CIGARETTE SMOKING MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH...** No, enough on that. Read on.

**CAUTION: SINNING MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR SALVATION.**

Not only in nominal religion, but increasingly in our midst, we are losing the concept of total purity. Not surprisingly. We are surrounded by impurity. We see impurity. We hear impurity. We rub shoulders with impurity. Yes, we try to not see, to not hear, to not rub shoulders, but we get the impression we have been caught in a maelstrom from which we can't extricate ourselves. We feel like the person who daily works in an odoriferous chemical plant, who methodically showers after work and changes clothes, yet is unable to cleanse his pores of the penetrating smell.

Modern life erodes our sense of purity. We buy certain products—mineral water, for example—that are labeled 99.9% pure. Really, that seems very, very pure. 99.9% Even 99.8% is a high grade of purity. 99.7%...

99.6%. Then comes the warning: **CAUTION: SINNING MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR SALVATION.** Again we shudder. We want to be saved. So why don't we feel that total freedom we used to feel? We hear two voices. One quietly points out what the problem is. The other, louder, tells us we are setting an impossible standard for ourselves; that if we are going to make the gate that narrow, we're going to have to go live a hermitic life on some deserted island. This same voice tells us that sinning *may* be hazardous to our salvation, *depending* on what we do, but that until now we have nothing to worry about.

95% purity.

5% impurity.

What distinguishes God's church from denominations? Is it a higher purity rating? Is it a lower tolerance for sin?

We have absolutely no reason to believe that maintaining the purity of the church in the last days will be easy. Annual Meeting reports, and others, make it plain that a redoubled effort is being made to keep the world out. The fact that new issues are constantly being addressed is encouraging. In a world in transition, new issues will constantly come to the surface. They must be dealt with.

Less encouraging are the repeat issues that methodically find their way into most agendas. Because of their very nature—or rather, because of *our* very nature—they will never cease to be issues. Yet, if year after year, the same ones are taking the same liberties with the same lack of spirituality, must we not conclude that the purity rating of these individuals is dropping? Have they come to believe that sinning *may* be hazardous to their salvation?

When asked what kind of advice he would give to those wishing to quit smoking, Mr. Andrade said, "Will power." From a worldly man, to worldly men and women, this was good advice (probably the only creditable thing said in the entire interview).

It may be good worldly advice, but it certainly will not solve spiritual problems. It takes more than will power to live a life of total purity.

First of all, it takes vision of what Christian life is all about.

It takes a deeply grateful heart for the price of salvation. And gratitude genders love—or is it the other way around?

It takes determination, which means placing salvation ahead of everything else.

It takes an unmovable conviction that total purity is the only criterion for salvation. 99% won't do, nor 98%, nor...

**WARNING: SIN WILL DEFILE YOUR LIFE AND BAR YOUR SOUL FOREVER FROM HEAVEN.**

This warning isn't from the Surgeon General of the United States of America. It is from the Judge who one day will examine our life to see if we are totally pure. ▲

Thinking Out Loud

## **Lessons Learned in My Broiler Barns**

Animals have an incredible ability to teach us profound lessons. Possibly the most unusual lesson was taught by Balaam's donkey, which was endowed with a transitory gift of speech. A close contender would be the large fish, divinely converted into a rather cramped organic passenger submarine while transporting rebellious Jonah from ship to shore.

Sheep, today—except, possibly, to those who raise them—have an almost holy aura because of the analogy between the Master and a lamb, or sheep.

Innumerable stories and books have been written about animals and the lessons they teach us.

Lessons can also be learned in broiler barns:

### **Huddles**

Because of our subtropical climate in central Brazil, broiler barns have no insulation. Plastic curtains, which can be opened and closed, are the only protection from the elements on either side of the barns. Except in temperature extremes, this system works very well.

During our winter, which is right now, days tend to be quite warm and nights cold... I insert here, that by "warm," we mean up to 30°C (86°F), and by "cold," as low as—rarely—0°C (32°F). With our heaters we can gain approximately 10°C (19°F) on the outside temperature. That means that if the outside temperature is 7°C (45°F), we will have an inside temperature of 17°C (63°F), which, at first glance, seems to be much too cold for small chicks. However, with infrared gas heaters, which project heat downward, the chicks actually make out quite well by remaining close to the heaters.

The scene, often depicted in paintings, of sheep resting in the shade of willow trees beside a quiet stream has a tranquilizing effect on one's spirit. So does gazing on a flock of small chicks basking in the warmth created by the infrared heaters on a cold night. Some of the chicks actually stretch out, much like a child asleep, as they enjoy their comfortable climate.

Less soothing are the small huddles of chicks that sometimes form at the far end of the



brooder area in the barn, where the air is the coolest. There is plenty of room under the heaters, but for some unknown reason they have rejected the warmth provided by the heaters and chosen to try staying warm by huddling together.

Throughout the Bible, it is evident that God wants His children to enjoy the warmth of His love and the fellowship of one another. Thus, a barn can represent a congregation. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in [warmth]!”

Congregations are a natural consequence of the gospel, just as the desire for fellowship is a natural consequence of a conversion experience. Yes, over the face of the earth today there are those solitary souls who must stifle this desire simply because there is no one nearby with whom to fellowship.

As God’s people become increasingly migratory, one of the first considerations when seeking out a new area is: Will it be possible to have a congregation here? If the answer is no, the chances of anything getting started are virtually zero.

An established, functional congregation, can be compared with the *super quadras* in Brasília—large city blocks with high-rise apartments, playgrounds, schools, stores, restaurants, churches, doctors, dentists... In a word, they are moderately self-contained units that interact with other super quadras, and with the city as a whole.

Likewise a congregation is moderately self-contained, all the while interacting with other congregations (when such are near) and with the church as a body. Not only does a congregation provide the basic needs and services for members, but also a controlled climate, as is the case in broiler barns.

When a small group of chicks retreats to a cold corner of the barn, shunning the warm environment which is theirs to enjoy, and huddle together for warmth, the aviculturist becomes alarmed. He knows that the mortality rate of such huddled chicks will be much higher than that of those that remain near the heaters.

Similarly, we have every reason to become alarmed when individuals or families begin retreating to the sidelines. Strangely, as they become more distant from the main body, their fellowship, they say, grows more intense; they feel such a warmth, such a kindred spirit. They can tell experiences that those who remain in the congregational environment are unable to tell.

Little chicks that get too cold often don’t show any outward adverse symptoms, but internally a time bomb has been set and when they get to be 25 or 30 days old, their organism gives out on them.

Small chicks give off enough body heat to make a slight difference in the indoor temperature, but never enough, no matter how much they huddle, to keep warm in cold weather. The bulk of the warmth must come from the heaters.

This is the lesson we learn:

Whenever a small cluster of members in a congregation habitually strays off to the side, huddling together for warmth, usually they are anything but warm. They are cold, and unless aided, stand a good chance of freezing to death.

## **Eating Off the Floor**

Little chicks don't stay little very long. In their short lifespan of 40-45 days, one can almost see them grow. At the end of their first week of life, they have increased their weight four times. This means that feeders and waterers must constantly be raised to accompany the growth of the broilers.

Needless to say, in a barn with 24-25 thousand birds, there are at times some stragglers. This may be because of sickness or genetic problems. When there are just a few, they are eliminated, but when it becomes evident that the problem is more widespread, the company vet becomes involved.

After slowly walking the barns, he selects four or five unhealthy birds (plus one healthy specimen, for comparative purposes). The birds are killed and autopsied. When the crop is opened, the vet will often say, "See, it couldn't reach the feeder, so it has been eating off the floor." Normally, such birds are also dehydrated because of having to jump to reach the waterers and get a minimal amount of water.

Not all Christians grow normally. Some grow weak because of spiritual sicknesses. Others are midgets because of a weak new birth experience. Then there are those who simply lose interest in dedicated Christian living and begin losing spiritual weight.

Christian life is progressive; a life of growth. Young Christians read Psalms, Proverbs, the gospels... This is what they understand. As they grow, they become interested in Paul's letters to the churches, in Old Testament history... There is a desire to study doctrine and church history; church publications become important.

When discouragement sets in, Christians tend to lose their interest in the deeper aspects of Christian life. Their Bible reading becomes perfunctory. Instead of searching out the mysteries of the Word, they regress to snatch readings of the Psalms, Proverbs and the gospels, believing that a low calorie spiritual diet will sustain life until such a time when they decide to reconsecrate their lives.

That isn't the way it works.

In a broiler barn, the feeders are constantly being raised. Birds that don't develop normally slowly starve to death. Similarly in Christian life, the Master keeps raising the "feeders." This means that Christians that hope to survive on occasional doses of Psalms, Proverbs and gospels, end up eating off the floor. And what trash they eat!

Finally the day comes when they say Christian life just isn't worth living. They are offended with the ministry, with the brethren, and critical of the doctrine.

Finally the day comes that it becomes evident they have died spiritually. We wonder why.

They were eating off the floor. ▲

## Life on the Colony

### **When Big Isn't Better**

A local businessman unwittingly paid the Colony in Rio Verde a compliment. He asked one of the brethren, "Why is it that you people aren't expanding?"

When the Colony came into being 34 years ago when the municipality of Rio Verde was largely undeveloped, we created a sensation. Years before, a number of Italian families moved in and set up an agricultural colony, which soon went belly-up. Discouraged, the Italians pulled up stakes and left. So far as I know, not a single one stayed behind.

Now a new group of foreigners was moving in, this time Americans, also hoping to make a living by tilling the soil.

The locals were by no means a lazy people, but neither were they progressive. When the first bags of soybeans (yes, in the beginning all grain products were bagged up in 60 kilo bags) were harvested, they watched attentively, certain that only Americans could coax soybeans out of their native soil. And I suspect that many of them thought this would be a transitory thing—until turning belly-up, like the Italians.

As the Colony became more proficient at raising soybeans on soil that was considered to be virtually worthless, we got national attention. Major magazines ran articles on what was happening in Rio Verde.

Most of the land that makes up the Colony was purchased in its first ten years of existence. After that the price of land increased substantially and the interest in N Americans wanting to move to S America dropped substantially. (Possibly there was a correlation between the two.)

The brethren who made the initial purchases bought more land (approximately 1,200 acres) than they planned on farming. Only a small part of the land was farmed, but as the children grew up and began thinking about making a living, there was land available for them. It worked quite well and a number of our young men got their start in life in this way. Many of them helped clear the land and get it into production, which helped them understand that nothing is really free in life.

Finally, the Colony land wasn't sufficient to support all those who wanted to farm. Increased yields helped to attenuate the problem. Also, land was rented, and still is being rented.

With land prices constantly rising, a more permanent solution to the problem was to relocate where land was till cheaper.

The settlement in Boa Esperança, state of Mato Grosso, had its beginning some ten years ago. It's significant that those moving there didn't sell land here on the Colony to purchase ground there. Families pulled together, paying for their ground with money from crops raised here and there.

It wasn't easy. Because of the distance from market, they had to sell their beans for at least 20 percent less than here on the Colony, and pay more for lime, fertilizer, seeds, machinery...

Today, the Mato Grosso brethren are no longer on a frontier. Civilization has moved in and they are surrounded by successful farmers. Within several months they should have electricity and some have telephones. While no one is on easy street, everything indicates the worst has passed. A number of families from here are planning on moving to the Boa Esperança settlement shortly.

A new settlement, or rather two new settlements, are being started in the neighboring state of Tocantins. Four families have already moved to the first settlement. Several families from here are hoping to buy land and move to the second settlement.

There are some similarities between the beginning of the colony in Rio Verde and the colony in Mato Grosso. In both cases it was a true “back and down” experience, with no electricity, telephones, stable markets, paved roads, or any roads at all, for that matter, on the settlement. The individual tracts of land are sufficient for the owner and his children.

The settlements in Tocantins have some distinctive advantages. There is a good market for grain produced. It is possible to take an evening bus in Rio Verde and be in Tocantins before noon the following day, all on good highway and without changing buses. One family already has electricity and telephone. I don't think it will be too long before the same is true for most of the other families. A distinctive difference is that some of the tracts of ground being purchased are very large in comparison to those bought in Rio Verde or Mato Grosso.

Another difference, very significant, is that some of those buying in Tocantins are selling their land on the Colony in order to finance their venture. Land in the area that will raise soybeans has an astronomical price tag. So much so that it is out of reach for those on the Colony wanting to purchase more land. Thus, the land is being sold to outsiders, which means that the size of the Colony is shrinking.

All this is having an influence on the Monte Alegre and Rio Verdinho Congregations—but in a very different way. The Monte Alegre Cong. is bursting at the seams. While no one wishes that some families will leave, if they choose to do so, the congregation will continue to operate normally. The same isn't true of the Rio Verdinho Cong, which will keenly feel the absence of each family that leaves.

The local businessman's observation that the Colony isn't expanding is accurate. What we have just described would be partially responsible. More important, however, is the fact that many of the Colony farmers have a self-imposed limit on the size of their operations. And I think it is this that impressed the businessman.

The municipality of Rio Verde, and surrounding municipalities, produce very good crops. Very few of the farmers are locals. In fact, most of the land has been sold to *Paulistas*, people from the state of São Paulo, to *Santa Catarinenses*, those from the southern state of Santa Catarina, and *Gaúchos*, from the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul. Especially the Santa Catarinenses and the Gaúchos, are largely of German and Italian descent. They are constantly enlarging their farms, which sets them in contrast with the Americans.

I feel that the low-key position which the church has assumed here leaves a very good witness. Not only does it leave a good witness, but it helps dispel the idea that when an American appears on the scene, he will soon dominate.

We hope that as the church in Brazil grows, we can continue to practice the truth that big is not necessarily better. ▲

## A Book Review

### Visions of Heaven and Hell

Some time ago I suggested that the book, *Only a Servant* be purchased and given to people who seem to be taking a more serious look at life. Today I want to recommend another book—rather, booklet—*Visions of Heaven and Hell*, by John Bunyan, author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Not only is this book excellent for the searching soul, but every Christian home should have a copy, which should be read whenever life begins to lose its seriousness.

Chapter 1 is entitled *Planning Suicide*, and begins:

“When wicked persons have gone on in a life of sin, and find they have reason to fear the just judgment of God for their sins, they at first wish that there were no God to punish and then they set themselves to study for arguments to back their opinion. It is with one of this sort of men that I had the unhappiness to be acquainted, who would be continually impressing me that there was neither God nor devil, heaven nor hell.”

As Epenetus—the name of the one telling the story—listened to this friend and tried to make himself believe God didn't exist, he became so confused that he decided to take his own life.

“Upon this I took a resolution to destroy myself, and in order to do this, went out one morning to a near-by woods, where I inteded to act this bloody tragedy. But methought I heard a secret whisper saying, ‘O Epenetus, plunge not thyself in everlasting misery to gratify thy soul's worst enemy. That fatal stroke thou art about to give, seals up thine own damnation. For if there be a God, as surely there is, how can you hope for mercy from Him when you thus willfully destroy His image?’

“Whence this secret whisper came I knew not, but believe it was from God; for I am sure it came with so much power it made me fling away the instrument with which I had intended to do violence to my own life and showed me in a moment the wickedness thereof... Then, rising from my knees, I went and sat down on a bank, my mind being greatly taken up with the adoring thoughts of that Eternal Goodness that had saved me from the dreadful gulf of everlasting ruin when I was just going to plunge myself into it... Now while my thoughts were taken up thus as I sat upon the bank, I was suddenly surrounded with a glorious light, the exceeding brightness of this was such as I had never seen anything like it before.”

In chapter 2, *Beyond the Sun and Stars*, Epenetus is escorted to heaven by a supernatural visitor, from where he is able to look down upon earth, where he sees “multitudes of black and horrid forms that hover in the air above the world.”

He is told that they are “the fallen and apostate spirits which for their pride and rebellion were cast down from heaven and wander in the air by the decree of the Almighty, being bound in chains of darkness and kept unto the judgment of the great day...they were once the sons of Light, and were arrayed in robes of glorious brightness.”

In chapter 3, *Elijah Explains*, the prophet speaks to Epenetus about heaven. Then,

after a tour of heaven in chapters 4 and 5, we get to chapter 6, *Conducted to Hell*, and then chapter 7, *Tortures of Hell*.

In chapter 8, *A Lost Soul Speaks*, Epenetus is told: “The eye is here tormented with all the sight of devils who do appear in all the horrid shapes and black appearances that sin can give them. The ear is continually tormented with the loud yellings and continual outcries of the damned. The nostrils smothered with sulphurous flames; the tongue with burning blisters, and the whole body rolled in flames of liquid fire.”

In chapter 10, *An Athiest in Hell*, Epenetus meets Hobbs, the very one who led him astray on earth and almost sealed his eternal doom. In chapter 11, he gives his impression of hell: “O that I could but say I felt no fire! How easy would my torments be to that which I now find them! But alas, the fire that we endure ten thousand times exceeds all culinary fire in fierceness; and is of quite a different nature from it. There is no light at all attends it, as does upon such fire as burns upon earth. But notwithstanding all the fire in hell, we are in utter darkenss. But then the fire you burn on earth is of a preying and devouring nature; for whatsoever it takes hold of it consumes to ashes; and when it meets with no more fuel it goes out. But here it is not so; for though it burns with that tremendous fierceness, which none but those that feel it know, yet does it not consume, nor never will. We shall ever be burning, yet not burned. It is a tormenting, but not a consuming fire. Here the fire siezes upon our souls and puts them into pain so tormenting as cannot be expressed. It was my ignorance of this, when upon earth that made me ridicule the notion of immaterial substances being burned by fire; which here, to my own cost, I find too true. And then another difference betwixt the fire that burns us here and that which burns on earth, is this, that you can kindle that whenever you please and quench it when you will. But here it is otherwise; this fire is like to a stream of brimstone and it burns for ever.”

After seeing both heaven and hell, Epenetus’ shining guardian takes him back to earth, to the bank of the river where he shortly before planned on taking his own life. After praising the Lord and thanking Him for His mercy, he returns home.

“Being returned unto my house my family was much surprised to see my countenance strangely changed and looked upon me as if they scarce had known me. I asked them what the meaning was of their unusual admiration. They answered that it was the change in my face that caused it. ‘In what respect,’ said I, ‘is it that I am altered so?’

“They told me, ‘Yesterday your looks were so extremely clouded and cast down you seemed the very image of despair, but now your face appears abundantly more beautiful, and carries all the marks of perfect joy and satisfaction in it.’

“If you had seen,” said I, “what I have seen today you would not wonder at the change you see.” Then going into my closet I took my pen and ink and there wrote down what I had heard and seen, declaring the whole vision from first to last. All which I hope may have the same effect on those that read them as they had on me in writing them.”

Read *Visions of Heaven and Hell*. It may change your life. Or someone elses life, to whom you give it. (A brother here bought 50 copies to hand out.

## This & That

Some of the visitors in the last several months were:

Sid & Irene Schmidt and children, who used to live here,

Cleusa, Mrs. Galen Coblentz, spent some time visiting relatives in Jataí and getting her teeth fixed. Galen spent a few days here and they returned to the US together.

Linda, Mrs. Daniel Holdeman, spent some time here visiting her relatives on the Colony and getting her teeth fixed. Her husband didn't come get here.

(You just got done reading about two intelligent ladies. What they saved on getting their dental work done here probably paid for their tickets. Maybe someday a few more people will wise up to how to get a free trip to Brazil.)

Paulo & Valéria Rufino and daughters from Patos, PB spent several days visiting relatives and the congregations here.

Cameron & Deb Goertzen and children spent several weeks here and in Goiânia, where they spent a number of years on the mission. Irvin & Martha Dirks and sons came with them and spent their time on the Colony.

Visitors for the Holdeman/Passos wedding (see following item) were: the Dale Holdeman family, Waiva Issac, Melvin & Barbara Unruh and children, Aaron Yoder.

On May 25, the Monte Alegre Cong. had another international marriage. Jason, son of Dale & Twila Holdeman, from the Pinecrest Cong., married Sara, daughter of Sebastião & Aparecida Passos. The newlyweds will be spending some time here while their paperwork goes through so that Sara can go to the States.

If you ever want to see a display of Brazilian culture, attend a wedding in which the bride's parents are Brazilian. There is nothing symbolic (read as: sandwiches, tatter chips, pickles, cake, ice cream and tea) about the meal served. There are those who argue that the reception should be sort of an afterthought at a wedding. Not so. Receptions were mighty important in Bible times. And if receptions aren't important, what was Jesus doing at a reception? And why did He go to the bother of making some top class wine when things got tight?

May 27 was the Monte Alegre last-day-of-school program. Since the Rio Verdinho children are being bussed in, it's over 60 students. It was a fine program. The graduates were: Eliel Ferreira, Lincon Becker, Andrea Holdeman, Cynthia Yoder and Cherrie Schultz.

The follow day is what we call play day. (Even Brazilians say play day, with the tonic accent on "day.") These days are sort of like a Brazilian wedding reception. They're really good. For the children and young people (and include a bunch of older folks in that too), the day begins at 9:00 in the morning and ends at sundown. Simultaneously, there is at least one softball game in progress, two volleyball games and one soccer game. In the afternoon there are games for the children. This year everyone was surprised when a local spray pilot and his son, who do work on the Colony and had heard about the play day, decided to make their contribution by barnstorming the area, throwing out kilos of candy. And, of course, there were the

acrobatics. Everyone loved it. I suspect some of the candy that fell in the nearby woods was never found. For lunch there is a mixture of Brazilian and American food, with the *churrasco*—grilled meat—being the center of attention. In the afternoon there is ice cream. These play days were drawing such big crowds that we had to resort to inviting others *not* to attend.

By now you readers know that I consider an adoption to be a noble undertaking. Yet, it's hard to understand why a family, willing to sacrifice, spend money and time, to adopt a child, should have to go through such calvary for things to work out—and worse, go through everything and then things not work out. Lester & Sharon Holdeman, who used to live here, came here to adopt an infant girl. They waited several months for the hearing, only to be told it had been postponed for some three months. They were granted guardianship and, together with the baby, returned to their home in the US. Recently they returned. The hearing was held and in a gesture of goodwill by the judge and county attorney, were immediately given the final adoption decree, with no waiting period, as usually is the case. Anxiously they head to the US Consulate to get an exit visa stamped into the newly acquired Brazilian passport. But lo, instead of returning with a visa, they were told they should return to the US and get the proper papers from INS. When told that other couples, in identical circumstances, have gotten an exit visa and then done the paperwork in the US, they were informed that each case is decided on its own merits, and that this is how they will handle this one. So they had to leave their daughter here with relatives and head back home to try to work things out. We hope officials in the US are compassionate. Oh yes, the name of the baby is Tonya.

On May 7, Wenis, the baby that Euglenis & Andréia Rosa plan to adopt, was born. Fortunately, since they live here, there should be no separations, like in the case just described.

Our president's honeymoon appears to be over. He received representatives from a leftist group called MST, that invades large properties and demands ground for its members. The meeting was too cordial to suit most people, but when a photographer snapped a picture of the president putting a red MST cap on his head, the damage was done. Fortunately, there were no international repercussions and it didn't in any way effect the dollar/real exchange rate, which is always a positive sign.

Another set of Perdigão broiler barns has gone into operation. On July 1 (his birthday), Carlos Becker got his first batch of chicks. That makes a total of 44 barns on the Colony, or capacity for over a million birds.

If you folks have been trying to call Brazil, and not getting through, there is an explanation. Or if you haven't been getting expected calls from here. It is now necessary to include the carrier's two digit code on all long-distance or international calls. Since the phones we use here on the farm are actually cell phones, our phone service has been disrupted while the new system is being implanted. At times we can't even make local calls. I suspect that by the time you read these lines, things will be back to normal,