

# Brazil News



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Editorial

## **Trial by Jury**

James writes: “Beasts and birds of every kind, creatures that crawl on the ground or swim in the sea, can be subdued and have been subdued by mankind...”

We add to this list:

Rivers have been subdued; their waters restrained by mammoth concrete dams and then hurled into the throats of hydroelectric turbines that furnish light and life for hundreds of thousands of people. Fluvial barriers are disdained as tens of thousands of vehicles daily cross over on bridges, some miles long.

The sea has been subdued. At this moment the seas are dotted with gargantuan vessels that are carrying crude oil, raw materials and manufactured products over the waves, oblivious to storms that yesteryear sent tens of thousands of ships and many more lives to Davy Jones’s Locker. Invisible to man, titanium-hulled submarines roam the depths of the seas, laden with armaments capable of wiping entire nations off the map.

Dry land has been subdued. Farmsteads, villages, cities and megalopolises are home to billions. Plains, valleys, hills and deserts yield fruit that sustains life. This entire scene is crisscrossed with a maze of roads: dirt roads, highways, mighty Interstates and railroads that take man wherever he wants to go.

The sky has been subdued. We no longer bother to look up when hearing the sound of a plane flying overhead. Daily, hundreds of thousands of passengers travel between cities, between states, between countries. Men and women eat, drink, read, watch movies, make phone calls, write letters on laptops, at 30 thousand feet. They feel just as safe as in the living room of their house—or used to, at least.

Space has been subdued. At this very instant, millions and millions of voices, images and pieces of data are being bounced about between cities and nations like so many ping pong balls—at the speed of light.

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The moon has been subdued. Man has tread its surface and returned to earth to tell the story. Or rather, the story was told in real time as millions sat glued to their TVs, seeing the historic first step, and hearing, “This is one small step for man...”

The Solar System has been subdued. Hubble, and other powerful instruments, probe the deep mysteries of outer space.

“...but no man can subdue the tongue. It is an intractable evil, charged with deadly venom.”

Untruth is as old as the story of mankind. In the Garden, Eve listened to the serpent’s insidious misrepresentation of truth. After analyzing his words, she decided he was telling the truth.

Then, in what has been the evil one’s modus operandi for the last six thousand years, the serpent enlisted someone else—in this case, Eve—to transmit his untruth so as to give it more credibility. Adam heard her out and decided that what she said was the truth. He ate too. They both died.

From that day on, the evil one has had an abundance of men, women and children willing to repeat his fabrications. And from that day on, men, women and children have been frustrated, trying to figure out who is telling the truth. It has frustrated authorities.

Throughout history, possibly the most widely used method to attempt to discover what is truth has been consensual judgment, or as we say today, public opinion.

The setting is a small village in which everyone knows everyone. One night someone breaks into a house and steals a considerable sum of money. The job is well done and there isn’t a single clue. Villagers are absolutely sure of only one thing: Whoever did it is someone living in their midst, for there were no outsiders in the village on the night of the theft.

The majority of the villagers are bona fide citizens. There are six or eight men whose character is somewhat less than flawless, yet no one believes that even they would lower themselves to stealing.

That leaves only two. Both can be described as shady. No one doubts that either one would steal if there was a good chance of getting by with it.

During the day after the theft, normal routine practically ceases in the village. Everywhere there are small huddles of men or women. They speak quietly, often looking around to make sure they are not being heard. Since neither Lot nor Lars—the suspects—are ever included in a huddle, they sense their trial by consensus has begun.

Most of the villagers are illiterate. Illiteracy, like blindness or deafness, often sharpens other senses. They instinctively know it’s useless to ask a suspected thief if he has stolen, for if he has stolen, he will also lie.

Yet the villagers are just. They don’t want to condemn anyone unjustly, so in their huddles they do a rerun of everything they can remember these two men saying or doing in the recent past.

Then one of them remembers a conversation he had with Lot several weeks ago:

Lot (looking vaguely into space): I’m going to buy myself a team of horses. They’re three-year olds, real beauties.

Villager: They're probably pretty expensive.

Lot: That they are. But I already told the owner to hold them for me.

Villager: Are you going to sell something to come up with the money for those horses?

Lot (again looking into space): When the time comes, I'll figure out something...

To these simple villagers, the evidence is all in. Lars is vindicated. Within ten minutes the entire village has heard the evidence. Everyone knows that Lot didn't have a red cent of his own to pay for a team of horses. They also know that if he sold everything he had the proceeds wouldn't be enough to buy a good team of horses.

Lot is the thief.

Through the centuries, kings and other high public officials were often *ex officio* judges. It was they who heard the most difficult cases and then gave the sentence. Especially in the case of kings, because of their absolute power, they had no need for law books; they *were* the law.

A classical example of regal justice is the case King Solomon heard in which two women claimed to be the mother of the same child. Undaunted by the fact that one of the women had to be lying, in a matter of minutes Solomon discovered who was telling the truth.

As the world emerged from the Middle Ages, a more practical method of establishing guilt was needed. We don't know the year, but in England a solution was found that is now used until in most democratic nations: Trial by jury.

In its original structure, the jurors were witnesses or neighbors who were acquainted with the facts, or could easily become acquainted with them. Thus, the jurors who heard the case probably already had their mind made up as to the accused's guilt before the trial even began.

As this system of determining guilt became more widespread, it underwent a fundamental change. Instead of being chosen because of their knowledge of the case, it now became necessary that jurors know as little as possible and have no emotional involvement with the defendant.

There are three kinds of juries:

The petit jury, usually made up of twelve jurors and one or two alternate jurors, hears both civil and criminal cases. In civil cases the jury decides who is at fault and recommends how much should be paid in damages. In a criminal case, the jury either acquits or finds the defendant guilty. The judge gives the sentence.

A grand jury, in most states is made up of 16 to 23 jurors, hears complex cases and decides if there is sufficient evidence for the case to be heard by a petit jury. Also, in the case of suspected crimes committed by high officials and organized crime, it functions as an investigatory court.

A coroner's jury, usually made up of six members, conducts inquests in the case of deaths in which there is suspicion of foul play.

It is true that not all jurors are honest; some can be bought off. In rare occasions, a jury can be blatantly biased and hand down an obviously corrupt verdict (as happened a few years back in the US in a much publicized trial). The character and honesty

of jurors is reflected in the decisions reached. As society becomes increasingly lax, decisions reached will lose their reliability.

Care is taken in choosing jurors, especially in complex cases. The trial judge, as well as counsel for both the defendant and the plaintiff, are allowed to question prospective jurors in a procedure known as *voir dire*. Lawyers may reject any person for cause, e.g., because of being a relative, having a criminal record, etc. Each lawyer may also reject a pre-established number of prospective jurors through peremptory challenge, that is, without giving a reason. Once the jury is impaneled, the trial begins.

By nature, juries are nondescript. There may be a school teacher, a plumber, a taxi driver, a housewife, a salesman, an accountant, all on the same jury.

For those who have never been in a courtroom, all this may sound a bit vague. But for the one who is being accused, rightfully or wrongfully, those twelve men and women become very important.

The concept of being judged by peers, most of whom are common off-the-street people, is startling. Especially so when highly technical evidence is introduced.

And then there is sheer boredom. Contrary to what many believe, trials can at times be unbelievably boring when motions are presented to the judge and the lawyers haggle at length over technicalities. The jurors must sit through all this.

Nothing, however, compares to the damage that can be done by a lawyer who has learned how to play to the jury. Witnesses can be questioned in a way that renders them as absolute fools and unworthy of credence. In *The Defense Never Rests*, the renown trial lawyer, F. Lee Bailey (who was part of the defense team in the aforementioned much publicized trial) gives an insight into his courtroom tactics that have gotten him acquittals of clients who most certainly were guilty.

And yet, with all its defects, trial by jury has existed for hundreds of years and will probably continue to be the preferred method of establishing guilt so long as time goes on.

It would be interesting to know what goes through people's minds who are being tried in court as they look at the twelve men and women who hold their destiny in their hands.

It must be especially trying—and humiliating—for those of power, position and wealth to be judged by a school teacher, a plumber, a taxi driver, a housewife, a salesman, an accountant... If the earnings and wealth of these twelve men and women were lumped together, it would fall far short of their individual earnings and wealth. But now their power, position and wealth—indeed, their very liberty, and possibly life—are in the hands of twelve people.

Of one thing we can be quite certain: The great majority of those who come before a jury do so unwillingly.

In our circles it is very rare for someone to be arraigned in court and stand before a jury. For a non-resistant people this is no special merit; it is the natural consequence of those who are “the quiet of the land.” It should never be otherwise. Throughout history, when God's children were brought before authorities, it was because of living *above* the law, and not *below*. May it ever be so.

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And yet, within the framework of a true Christian society, trial by jury is a very real situation. Spiritual growth and well-being are directly proportional to one's willingness to accept the findings (read as: counsel and admonition) of brothers and sisters as they observe our daily lives. Possibly nothing has led more souls outside the safety of the fold than an unwillingness to accept the validity of the findings of a spiritual jury.

In Christendom at large, trial by jury—in the sense that we are using the term—has virtually ceased to exist. In fact, if you stop and think just a bit, where there is no feet washing, there is no jury.

About what kind of a jury are we talking?

Contrary to what humanists and modern-day Christians advocate, man is not an independent being, capable of staying on course through his own intellect and spirituality. Just as a good doctor doesn't attempt to diagnose his own illness and an intelligent lawyer doesn't represent himself in court, so a true Christian knows how desperately he needs the help of fellow Christians to remain on course.

Needless to say, the jury we are describing isn't a twelve-man jury. Sometimes it's only one brother or sister. Sometimes it's just a handful of solicitous loved ones. At other times it's the entire congregation. It can be the ministry.

There is a beautiful symbolism in feet washing. During a series of meetings the sincere Christian has examined his life and then during an expression meeting presented his findings to a jury of brothers and sisters. Contrary to a civil jury in which an acquittal usually depends on a unanimous decision, if only one spiritual juror seeks him/her out with a question or doubt, an effort is immediately made to rectify that which is amiss.

Extending one's feet transmits an additional message to the assembled jury: I ask you to remain in session during this coming year and bring to me anything that you feel is hindering my salvation.

The responsibility of holding the Keys of the Kingdom entails the need of formal jury sessions in which situations are presented to the church for a formal hearing. While these sessions are not pleasant, the desired eternal result, when the errant brother or sister is judged and then corrects his/her life, is one of the hallmarks of the Church of God.

The primordial function of a spiritual jury is to determine what is truth. Truth, in its broadest application, is God's will—God's will in the spiritual, social and material aspects of our life.

This, of course, creates a new dimension to what we have said. Most will agree that the spiritual side of our life should be subjected to the scrutiny of the brotherhood. But what about the social and material aspects?

Decidedly, fewer hands will raise to agree with this one. No, we're not referring to our daily decisions and the normal routine of life. We are talking about major decisions, about social or material decisions that will have an influence on our own spiritual well-being or eternal destiny, and possibly of others. A sincere Christian will anxiously desire to submit his plans to a spiritual jury.

Sometimes this merely means being open with plans, avoiding being secretive. This

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gives the brotherhood ample chance to voice opinions. At times another step should be taken and different ones, including the ministry, should be asked, What do you think of my plans?

Let's randomly pick out a few examples:

A relocation. This would be to another congregation, especially to a fledgling congregation. The move to a new area where the church isn't present is never routine or insignificant. The same is true even when there are several families involved in the move. If the Lord's blessings are on such a move, the church will have established a new frontier. If not, the result will very likely be the loss of souls. And possibly families. If ever a decision should be exposed to the scrutiny of a spiritual jury, it is that of a move to a new location.

A change of occupation. We're not talking about a carpenter wanting to become a plumber. Rather we refer to non-traditional Mennonite occupations or professions. And more specifically, to those involving sales of controversial or unproven products. Some occupations are more involving than others. Some require being away from home for periods of time, or an intimacy with the professional world. Anyone contemplating such an occupation should openly state his thinking to both the ministry and the brotherhood. One cannot be overly cautious in this kind of a situation and the proving of a spiritual jury is of utmost importance.

Hobbies. When practiced in moderation, and in one's spare time, a hobby can be therapeutic and beneficial. Hobbies can become expensive, very expensive, time consuming and addictive. There is but one step between a hobby and an idol. Anyone with a hobby should be open with it. If the jury begins to frown, some groves and high places probably need to be demolished. Quickly.

Writing. Writers are, if you will, an open book. They are like frontline infantry, the first to be exposed to opposing fire, prime targets for snipers. The idea that writers—at least Christian writers—must have thick hide and shed criticism like water on a duck's back, is unfortunate. Writers must remember that everyone of their readers is a member in the body of jurors. (Indeed, even non-readers who merely *hear* what has been written squeeze themselves into the jury box.)

A writer must be alert to expressions on the faces of these jurors. Visitors from N America have at times told me of readers' reactions to ideas expressed in this little paper. The result often results in a slight change of course.

The church today has formal juries—proofreading committees—for analyzing material produced for official publication. The results are excellent. While style may not always be top of the line, the content is sound. And after all, that is what is important.

Song writing. We can't help but believe that through the centuries, most of the hymns sung in God's church were composed by its members. Since few of these hymns were probably ever written down, both the lyrics and the music must have changed with time, and from region to region. We have reason to believe that the repertoire was small. Because of this they were probably sung slowly and with intense feeling.

The Protestant reformation, approximately five centuries ago, set the stage for some of the world's greatest song writers. Many of the hymns in our Christian Hymnal

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were written in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries by Protestants. The fact that God chose non-Mennonites to produce these great hymns should not trouble us. After all, no translation of the Bible has ever been made by our church people.

The last quarter century has witnessed a flurry of songs written by church people... which brings us to an important consideration: What is a song? What is a hymn?

A song, reduced to its lowest denominator, can best be described as words put to music. That's a mighty broad definition and includes just about everything. There are tens—maybe hundreds—of thousands of songs recorded.

A hymn, in the most sacred sense, is a sermon put to music. We hear these sermons in church, we hear them while lying in bed, while on the job, while going shopping. A hymn is a song dedicated to God.

We don't have a paid ministry. The sermons they preach are dedicated to the Lord. They dare not begin rating their sermons. They acutely feel their human weakness when too many step up after the service and say, "That was a good sermon." Unless they can tread those words underfoot, their sermons will soon be dedicated to man, and not to God.

Song writers—in the broadest acceptance—dedicate their songs to man. They write to entertain. They sell their songs. They rate their songs according to sales. Such songs are written by human inspiration and inspire the earthly man, not the soul.

A hymn writer—the kind that God uses—like a minister, dares not rate his/her own work. When a hymn is a "hit"—if we may use that term—the writer must bow his head and humbly thank God. When such a hymn becomes a source of revenue for the writer, an important principle has been breached.

This brings us to a second consideration: Hymns are an important part of the ministry of the church. Do we also need "religious songs" for C.E.s and singspirations? Put differently, are hymns no longer appropriate to be sung in such meetings? Do we need a continual new source of songs to keep our special meetings interesting?

Have we as a brotherhood failed in our jury duties? Are we actively, or passively, supporting songs that are watered down to where they are more entertainment than inspiration?

We have said before, and now repeat, that when songs become so complicated that only the best singers can handle them, something has gone wrong. Do we suppose that such songs existed in the Apostolic Church? Did the martyr brethren sing such songs out in the fields and forests in the middle of the night?

We brethren, jurors, must wake up to our duties. When songs are sung that entertain more than they inspire, we should make a point of calling or writing the writer. If they are sold by the church, we should register our concern with the proper ones.

May we pray for the meeting to be held in the near future in which writers, publishers, etc., will be together. May there be a renewal of the vision that hymn writing is a ministry. And may all those involved in such writing feel a new willingness to extend their literary feet to have them washed by a jury of brothers and sisters, even those who understand little about the rudiments of music, but understand clearly the voice of the Spirit.

Trial by jury. In the courts of this world, few look forward to facing a jury. But in the courts of God it is different. It is comforting to know that our sins and shortcomings can be exposed now, during this life, by concerned brothers and sisters. If we find the door closed when we reach the Celestial City, it will be because we refused to accept the verdicts handed down by jurors in Christ. ▲

## Readers Write

### More on Anne Sullivan

*[A reader from Goshen, IN, Orié Miller, sent the following information on Anne Sullivan. To say the very least, I was truly amazed by what I read. I think you will be too.]*

**Birth**—Anne Sullivan was born in April, 1866 in Feeding Hills, Massachusetts, a small village near Springfield, Massachusetts, to Irish immigrants who were very poor. This was a troubled family, because her father drank excessively and worked inconsistently, and her mother suffered from tuberculosis.

**Trachoma**—Ann contracted Trachoma, a disease of the eyes, when she was about five. This disorder is not unusual where there is poor hygiene, and Anne's situation was not good. She was physically strong, but the disease was left untreated and she gradually lost her vision, although she was never totally blind.

**Shaping her character**—The first 14 years of Anne Sullivan's life was the story of a young girl with a dream to escape an indescribable childhood of abandonment and loss. Her mother died while she was still a child. Because her father could not maintain a family, she lived with a series of relatives, and finally, just before her tenth birthday, she and her brother Jimmy were sent to the state "poorhouse" in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. This was a home for charity cases, and Anne roomed and boarded with the mentally ill, with prostitutes, and with people who could not maintain functioning lives in the society of that day. She fought for Jimmy and herself to be together, and they had beds next to each other, but Jimmy had a tubercular hip from birth and he died at Tewksbury, leaving her with no caring family. Despite these problems, Anne held to the dream that she would go to school. She had heard of schools for the blind.

**The committee**—Her chance to go to school came when an investigating committee visited Tewksbury to inspect the institution. Heading the group was Mr. Frank B. Sanborn, Head of the Board of Charities. Anne followed them, and near the end of the tour, she threw herself at the mercy of Mr. Sanborn. She pleaded to be sent to a school for the blind. Soon thereafter, Anne learned she was to be sent to Perkins Institute for the Blind in Boston, unable to read, unable to see clearly, with a scarred childhood, but with her ambition to succeed.

**Perkins School**—Perkins was a world-renowned institution for the blind. Anne's



stay there was a process of softening—some say taming—a highly intelligent young woman with a sharp questioning mind, but with an exceptionally strong will, a narrow point of view, and formative training from the school of hard and bitter experience. She started at the age of 14 at an elementary school level, but graduated at the age of 20 as class valedictorian. At first, she was mocked by her classmates for her lack of social skills, but over time she gained their respect through her perseverance and the strength of her personality.

**Rebellion**—Anne was insecure about her background and excessively defensive toward ridicule, which she covered with rebelliousness. There were teachers who could not tolerate her quick mouth and ready challenge of authority, but a number of key teachers saw her potential and nourished her and shaped her.

*...I know that gradually I began to accept things as they were, and rebel less and less. The realization came to me that I could not alter anything but myself. I must accept the conventional order of society if I were to succeed in anything. I must bend to the inevitable, and govern my life by experience, not by might-have-beens. —Ann Sullivan*

**Valedictorian**—At the age of 20 she delivered the valedictory address for the school graduation. This was a great moment of triumph. Shortly after this the director of the school, Michael Anagnos, learned of a deaf blind student in Alabama who needed a teacher. Anne Sullivan was offered the position and her life then became entwined with that of Helen Keller.

**Educational theorist**—Anne Sullivan developed her own philosophy of teaching as she worked with Helen. She reasoned that a child learns to talk by imitation. As the child is spoken to—typically in sentences or phrases—the child repeats what is said and begins to work out by himself or herself the interconnections and structure of the language. Thus Anne began to give Helen complete, although simple, sentences. Helen, on her own began to understand the nuances of subject, action and object.

**Teacher**—Anne Sullivan came to be known as a great American teacher. Her gift was her dedication. Anne literally gave her life and career to make Helen Keller great. But Helen, in return, also gave to Anne a sense of family, a stability she had never had.

*The sign of a great teacher is that the accomplishments of her students exceed her own. —Aristotle*

## Our Life Is Like a Poem

Some time ago we printed a poem written by Ori Miller's grandson, Dale Eberly, while in the eighth grade. Shortly after writing the poem, he was killed in an accident. We suggested that possibly the poem could be put to music, which is what happened. Ori Miller sent me a copy of the song, with a stick-on note saying the song has no restrictions and can be copied and used by anyone.

# Our Life Is Like a Poem

Anthony Dale Liberly, 2001  
Adapted by EDS, 2004

Finis D. Stutzman, 2004

1. Our life is like a po-em We're wri - ting ev 'ry day. And  
 2. We of - ten meet some tri - als, How - e - ver great or small; It  
 3. If we are e - ver wea - ry Of walk - ing on this road, Re -  
 4. Our life is like a lad - der We're climb - ing ev - 'ry day; teach

6  
 ma - ny kinds of ver - ses Are lived a - long the way; The  
 mat - ters how we meet them, If we shall stand or fall. But  
 mem - ber, there's a Sav - ior Who helps us bear the load; We'll  
 rung will lead us high - er, While strugg - ling on our way; And

10  
 rhyme may be im - per - fect; The met - er may awk - ward ap - pear, But  
 if we look to Je - sus, And trust in His in - lin - ite grace, He'll  
 take His yoke up - on us; We'll find that His bur - den is light; We'll  
 when we reach that ci - ty, And walk on those streets of pure gold, The

14  
 we've a Friend un - to the end; His pre - sence is e - ver near.  
 see us through, and we'll be true Un - til we shall see His face.  
 walk each day a long the way That leads to the land of light.  
 cares of day will fade a - way, As e - ter - nal joys un - fold.

## A Batida do Turco

by Mário de Moraes

*[Mário de Moraes tells us another story today. A batida is a traffic accident. Turco means Turk. Most Arabs in Brazil are generically referred to as Turcos. So we have: **The Arab's Accident.***

*We have a lot of Arabs in Brazil, most of them merchants. Rio Verde is no exception. They are known as shrewd businessmen. However, once they accept someone as a friend, they are extremely loyal and trustworthy. In all the conflicts between the US and Middle East countries, I have never felt any animosity from any of the Arabs—not even in a store in which there is a large portrait of Yasser Arafat hanging on the wall.*

*Interestingly, each nationality has its own peculiar way of mispronouncing a foreign language. The Turcos pronounce the «p» sound as though it were a «b». The one in this story speaks an especially terrible Portuguese. Mário tells his story:]*

Edson Aires, from Vila Nhocuné, in the city of São Paulo, says this story is absolutely true. In fact, he declares that this incident ended up in court. He never found out what the outcome was.

Crash! Two cars hit on an intersection. Passers-by stopped to watch what would happen next. Getting out of their wrecked vehicles, the two drivers began the customary argument that takes place in this kind of a situation. There was no doubt as to who was in the wrong: the Turco, a salesman whose car was full of clothes he hoped to sell. Carelessly trying to make a left turn on a busy thoroughfare, the Turco hit the oncoming car, which had the right-of-way. Totally defenseless, he had to listen to the vociferations of the irate driver of the other car, who demanded he pay the repair bill on his car.

“What ails you to make a turn like this without even checking if someone is coming?”

So began the dialogue between the two, with the Turco answering in his broken Portuguese.

“It habben. Never you make mistake?”

“Well,” the other driver began, happy to see that Salim (that’s the name we’ll give him) recognized he was to blame. “I suppose I’ve made mistakes too – but never anything this serious. Just look at all the damage you have done to my car. Think about the time my car will have to be in the body shop. If you don’t know how to drive, don’t get behind the wheel!”

“You not need be mad. I bay everyting. Need not holler. Tings like this habben.”

“Ya, but if everyone drove like you do, our roads would be a calamity.”

“Take easy. Not sweat. I is merchant. I has money. I bay damage. We be friend. Take car to chop. Fix. All OK. Send bill. I bay all. I give address my store.”

Seeing Salim’s good will, the other driver began to calm down – especially with his promise to pay for all the damages. And to sweeten things up more, he was already making plans to have a number of other items fixed on his car, at the Turco’s expense, naturally. So obviously the best thing to do was accept the man’s offer to pay everything.

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“OK. I’ll take my car to the shop and then we’ll settle up when we know what the bill is. Let me see your car papers.”

“Here. Write on *babar*. Write I bay all. Money not important. Important you is my friend. Come. We take drink for nerves.”

Placing his hand on the other driver’s shoulder, the Turco invites him to a drink in a little bar across the street. They sit down at a table and while the other driver copies pertinent information from his car papers, the Turco continues talking:

“Things like this happen. First time for me. But I bay damage. You not worry.”

When the proprietor came near their table, the Turco said to the other driver, “You like drink? I take drink for nerves.”

“Make it two,” the other added.

The bartender placed two glasses on the table and poured the drinks. The Turco talked nonstop while the other downed the *pinga* [strong home-brew, similar to the *tequila* consumed in Mexico] in rapid gulps. Salim stops talking long enough to smell his pinga.

“Ugh. Terrible pinga. Salim stomach upset... Hey! Bring coffee for Salim.”

The bartender picked up Salim’s glass and served him a cup of *cafezinho* [a small cup of strong coffee]. The conversation continued.

“You can ask *garantia* [surety]. I give *garantia*.”

“Just sign a statement promising to pay. You have a store, don’t you?”

“On Xila Carrão Street. I give you my card. I need know price of repair for bay you. You get fix car.”

Seeing his new friend was still somewhat nervous, Salim offered:

“Drink more pinga. You nervous. You get better.”

After downing another glass of pinga, the Turco insisted on picking up the tab. As they left the bar, he made a suggestion:

“We call police to see wreck. Better *garantia* for you.”

[Just an explanation. Here in Brazil when an accident has no victims, if the parties involved can come to an agreement, it isn’t necessary to call the police.]

“Ya...but I really don’t think it’s necessary. After all, you have promised to pay the damages.”

“But you not trust me. Good call police. He write all on *babar*.”

The other driver didn’t want the police involved in the case, but since the Turco insisted, they called in a cop who was directing traffic near the scene of the accident. After examining the vehicles, he requested, “Your car papers, please.”

The cop examined the papers and seeing everything was in order, asked, “Now, tell me what happened.”

The Turco lost no time. “I drive this way. I but on blinker for turn left. He drive fast. Stoblight turn red. He not can stob. Hit my car.”

“Hold everything!” yelled the other driver. “That’s not what happened at all...”

Salim sidles up to the cop and whispers in his ear:

“He drink pinga. Not know what happen. You smell breath.”

The cop got next to the other driver and sure enough. No mistaking on that one.

“I’ve got the picture,” was all the cop said. That smell told the whole story.

And so Salim, the culprit, turned into Salim, the victim. ▲

## Osvaldinho and the Priest

*[My niece, Caroline Dirks, who teaches school in Tocantins, gave me this little story in Portuguese, taken out of one of her textbooks, which I have translated into English. The Mil-Réis, which you will soon read about is a currency used in Brazil years ago. I have absolutely no idea what a Mil-Réis would be worth today, so just assume it is a fairly large sum of money. This story is to have taken place years ago when there were no banks, which explains why Osvaldinho says he will give his money to the priest for safekeeping.]*

The whole town knew Osvaldinho. Lazy as they come, his main activity in life was playing pool. It was never a good idea to tangle with him, as he could turn nasty in the blink of an eye.

One day Osvaldinho came into the bar with some interesting news: “I’m going to take a trip.”

“Where are you going?” everyone wanted to know.

“Do you mean where I’m going right now? I’m going to church, that’s where I’m going.”

“You’re going to church?” several astonished voices asked. “What would you ever want in church, of all places?”

“I’m going to give the priest 500 Mil-Réis for safekeeping. I’m not about to carry that much money around on a trip.”

“You’re right on that one. It wouldn’t be a good idea.”

Osvaldinho left the bar and headed out in the direction of the church. On the way he met the town mayor. After the usual greetings, he asked the mayor if he knew where he was going.

“I heard you’re taking a trip to Santo Antônio.”

“That’s right. But before I go, I’m going to church.”

“To church...?! I can’t imagine...”

“I’ll tell you why. I’m going to leave 500 Mil-Réis with the priest for safekeeping.”

“That’s a good idea, Osvaldinho. Well, you have a good trip.”

Even though it was but a short distance, it took Osvaldinho over an hour heading toward church. You see, he told everyone he met that he was going to church to give 500 Mil-Réis to the old priest for safekeeping.

Finally Osvaldinho got off on his trip. He spent a number of weeks out of town. Then one Sunday morning he returned. He headed straight to church. The old priest was saying mass. He was saying, “...forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors...” when Osvaldinho strode in and loudly interrupted the old priest.

“Father, I liked what you just got done saying.”

Not a sound was heard in the whole church. All eyes were glued on Osvaldinho. Just who did he think he was interrupting mass in such a rude way?

“Father, I’m really glad to hear you talking about debtors. That’s exactly what I wanted to talk to you about. Since I’m right here, how about giving me the 500 Mil-Réis you owe me?”

“Five hundred Mil-Réis,” the old priest exclaimed. “My son, I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“Oh, come on, come on, Father. You know perfectly well what I’m talking about. I gave you 500 Mil-Réis for safekeeping before going on a trip.”

“My son, you never gave me a single cent for safekeeping.”

An audible gasp was heard from over the entire church. Didn’t the priest remember that Osvaldinho was a dangerous man? It’s true that the old priest was quite forgetful, but would he have forgotten something this important?

“Father, your memory is shot. This church is full of witnesses who can testify that I gave you 500 Mil-Réis.”

Sure enough. Different ones spoke up.

“Yes, it’s true.”

“I know for a fact that he gave the priest 500 Mil-Réis.”

Back in the corner someone said, “Osvaldinho is right. The priest is so senile that he just forgot.”

Poor old priest. By now he was so befuddled that he just stood beside the altar unable to articulate a single word.

One of the worshippers that morning was Colonel Pipico, the richest man in that area. He immediately saw through Osvaldinho’s ploy. Rather than let things get nasty, he would pay the 500 Mil-Réis to keep the priest from getting hurt.

Striding to the front, he faced the crowd and smiled. “I can explain what happened. Osvaldinho really did have 500 Mil-réis, which he left for safekeeping. However, he didn’t leave the money with the priest. He left it with me. I think he just forgot. I will pay him after mass.”

Osvaldinho turned beet red. Once again his word was being doubted. Shaking his finger at the colonel, he shouted, “**The 500 Mil-réis I gave you for safekeeping have nothing to do with the money I gave the priest!**” ▲

## This & That

**Agrishow in Rio Verde.** In the past, this agricultural fair has been held only in Ribeirão Preto, São Paulo and Rondonópolis, Mato Grosso. Last year Rio Verde was added to the circuit. It was a real success, especially this year, with sales of US\$100,000,000 (yep, that’s right, the equivalent of one hundred million US dollars). Even more impressive is the expected combined sales in Ribeirão Preto, Rondonópolis and Rio Verde: a whopping one BILLION US dollars. Since the fair is in each place for some five days, for a total of 15 days, that comes to around 67 million US dollars a day. That gives a bit of a glimpse of what agriculture is up to over here.

**The youth** from both Rio Verdinho and Monte Alegre put on Easter programs in their respective congregations.

**An Annual Meeting** report was given for all three central congregations at the Rio Verdinho Cong. on April 14.

**April visitors** included Dr. Kathy Hayes, physician at Mercy Hospital in Moundridge, Kendra Schultz, Teresa Koehn and Evelyn Koehn. They also visited the Acaraú

and Patos missions in Northeast Brazil, The Tocantins settlement and Iguaçu Falls. Other visitors are Ed & Irene Penner and Wesley & Sherri Holdeman. Interestingly, Ed & Irene were here 23 years ago when Cláudio Silva and Susan Kramer got married. Now they were able to attend the wedding of Cláudio & Susan's first child to get married, Elsie, to Chester Hibner.

**Chester & Elsie's** wedding was held in a large air conditioned auditorium on the fair grounds in Rio Verde. The church in town was too small for the crowd from three congregations, plus visitors. The social hall would also have been woefully inadequate. So, once the service was over, the crowd stepped outside while folding tables were brought in. We like to have our weddings in our own church, but when this isn't possible, we must be thankful for good alternatives, which this definitely was.

**John & Joan Unruh** have moved into their new (retirement?) house. Their children, Nelson & Ruth Unruh, who just returned from the Curitiba mission, will be living in the old house.

**Rent-a-van.** Several weeks ago a number of girls rented a van, complete with driver, to go shopping in Goiânia. The venture was so successful that soon after a number of married ladies tried the same thing. Really, when you stop and think, it is a sort of smart thing to do—so long as you have a personal sponser who stays home and works.

**A new settlement** in the northern state of Roraima seems to be in the embryonic stage. David & Roxie Miller, Bira & Francine Bernardes, Roger & Sherilyn Hiber and Richard Ferrell are over there right now organizing things to plant 240 acres on rented ground. Roger & Sherilyn will remain to take care of the project. The idea of giving the area a trial run before actually buying is a prudent move. If the trial works out okay, I suspect land will be purchased. Because of the distance from Rio Verde, for all practical purposes Roraima is another country. All travel is done by plane. I understand that to send a semi-truck loaded with machinery costs some five thousand US dollars and takes around two weeks to get there. One stretch is by barge on the Amazon River. By next month I hope to have some firsthand reports on this project.

**President Luís Ignácio Lula da Silva** was in Rio Verde on May 5 for the ribbon cutting ceremony of a new soybean crushing plant at COMIGO, the local cooperative, and to be present at Perdigão when employees numbers 5000 and 5001 were officially hired. Also present were the governor of Goiás, the Minister of Labor, the Minister of Agriculture, a senator and the mayor of Goiânia, plus dozens of other officials and Perdigão directors. In his speech, Nildemar Secches, the president of Perdigão mentioned that for every worker employed by Perdigão, three more have jobs in related activities. That means that today there are approximately 20 thousand men and women making their living in the Rio Verde area as a result of the Perdigão industry. It is hoped this number will soon be up to 25 thousand. Rio Verde today is a nation-wide showcase of how private industry can accomplish that which the government often is incapable of doing. It was pointed out that to keep up with

## Brazil <sup>16</sup> News

Brazil's growth, a new plant the size of the Rio Verde Perdigão plant would have to go into operation every three years. Interestingly, the last issue of TIME Magazine is a special edition with a list of the world's most influential people. The president of Brazil is included. More comments on the president's visit next month.

**The energy crisis** that was brought on two years ago when dry weather caused the water level in reservoirs to drop dangerously low is now a thing of the past. Abundant rains guarantee water to run turbines in hydroelectric plants.

**Highways** in our part of the country are in terrible shape because of all the rains. In fact, new road atlases now show these highways with jagged lines so the traveler can plan his trip accordingly. The cost of fixing these roads is more than the government can handle at this point.