

Brazil News



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Editorial

Respect

Respect—true respect—is not a mere social grace. Respect is a mirror that reflects the contents of the soul. It is possible to be unpolished and yet be deeply respectful. Inversely, an unconscious attempt can be made to cover deep disrespect with a heavy coat of politeness.

Respect is a way of life, not a garment we put on when occasion demands it. Respect is a seamless robe that covers the entire body. Respect does not come in trousers and coat, or in skirt and blouse. A man—a woman—cannot be partially respectful, for the soul cannot be divided.

Yet we are humans. Often we are disrespectful, even while our intentions are to be respectful. Aware of this, we decided to dedicate three Wednesday evening Bible Studies to this subject. As teacher of one of the classes, I quickly jotted down some topics to be discussed that evening (twenty-two, to be exact; we discussed only five). They are in no particular sequence and we will discuss them in the order they came to mind:

Respect for life. Life—human life—is very precious. Each life has been handcrafted by the Creator. The aberrations, the deformations, the repulsiveness of some of His creatures cause us to guiltily wonder if maybe He wasn't on duty "the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived." Yet, knowing God makes no mistakes, we assuage our misgivings by attributing what we see to the curse of sin. And certainly, if it weren't for sin, there would be no imperfection.

It is not our calling to seek out the headwaters of these imperfections. But it *is* our calling and highest duty to respect the sacredness of life. As medical science probes deeper and deeper into the mysteries of early life and is able to detect serious defects within the first weeks of existence, we must never, never heed their

Brazil ² News

suggestion, or insistence, that that life should be terminated. Life, all life, is sacred and merits our tender respect.

Respect for the elderly. Some years ago READER'S DIGEST published a story written by a reporter, an attractive young lady, who visited a number of stores and made small purchases. The workers almost stumbled over themselves for the chance of assisting her.

The young lady went home and disguised herself to look like an old woman. Then she returned to the same stores, once again to make small purchases. The same workers who a short time before had so willingly waited on her, now paid no attention to the "old woman."

Growing old is part of God's plan. Aches and pains, memory lapses, brittle bones, fragile lungs, weakened heart muscles, are all part of this plan. He knows that if He would permit us to go through life at full throttle, feeling and looking like early middle-age folks until the end, we wouldn't be able to balance life with death. We would continually prepare for life, but not for death.

As we understand that the aged are in God's plan just as much as we are—teenagers, young men and women, or middle aged—we will understand that very soon we too, if God grants us life, will be where they are. The way we see and treat the aged today, is very likely the way we will be seen and treated when we are aged.

This should do more than simply behoove us to be more tolerant of the aged, to be more kind and understanding. If we treat them well merely because we want to be treated well in our old-age, we have missed the point. We should treasure the aged. We should learn from them. We should ask them, "Grandpa, how were things when you were a boy?" "Grandma, when you were a girl, what kind of temptations did you face?" "Uncle, at what age did you get converted?" There are thousands of questions to be asked. Ask them while they can be answered.

One of my greatest treasures I possess today is the intimacy I shared with my grandparents, with my great-grandmother. Some of my most beautiful lessons in life were learned from them.

Respect for our elders is an obligation only when we are too self-centered to see it as a privilege. He who despises this privilege is covering with thorns the way over which he will someday have to walk.

Respect for the sacred. Magazines are loaded with jokes about heaven and hell, about God, St. Peter and the Bible. Often these jokes have a backdrop of immorality. Businessmen attempt to buddy up to us with "religious" jokes.

And we laugh when we hear or read them.

Oh, shame! Double shame!

Never should we laugh at a joke that makes the Savior weep. It may not always be expedient to reprove a worldly man for having told an inappropriate joke, but we certainly should never laugh or show any amusement. Our silence will be a powerful witness.

God forbid that we ever repeat such a joke.

Respect for the ministry. There can be no ministry without ministers. Thus,

respect for the ministry means respect for the ministers. This isn't always easy. They are human and sometimes they say and do things that are very human. We remember the pre-election instructions given in grave tones, the scriptures read; we remember the ordination sermons. We place all these qualifications on one plate and the servant on the other. Then we stand back to see if the scale is balancing.

Our mortal reasoning tells us it isn't. So we make a point of setting the servant straight. Or maybe we give him the silent treatment. We tell ourselves we believe in the ministry, but not in that particular minister. If David would have believed that way, King Saul would have suffered the same fate in the cave that Goliath suffered on the plain.

If our respect for ministers is contingent on their perfection, then our own sanctity must be above reproach. Thus we set for them and ourselves an unattainable standard. We do not respect our ministry because of their perfection, but in spite of their imperfection.

Respect for authority. Respect for authority is rapidly becoming a museum piece. Reporters maliciously pounce on any tidbits of information that could possibly begrime public officials and launch them into the heavens like so many roman candles for everyone to see. This, it is said, is freedom of press.

The people of God must be very careful of what they believe, and much more careful of what they say. It is easy to mingle with the crowd that calls for the king's head, but it takes courage to quietly point out benefits we are receiving from his reign.

Respect for authority includes the local cop who at times seems to take his duties too seriously. Make friends with him. (He probably doesn't have many.) Invite him over for a meal. (You may be surprised by what you find behind his badge.)

Respect for strangers. We enjoy stories about people who entertained angels unawares. Yet when we have the chance, all too often we look the other way.

Some strangers can be dangerous. But so can driving down the Interstate. (And to be perfectly honest, a lot more of our people have been killed on Interstates than by strangers.)

Who are strangers? Once in a while they come to church. They work in stores. They sit at the table next to ours in the restaurant. We meet them in airports. And in rest areas. Sometimes they knock on our door. Or even ask for work.

The first rule in meeting a stranger is: Remember he has a soul.

The second is: No matter what his appearance, remember that he may be inwardly crying for help.

The third is: Remember that you may be face to face with an angel.

The fourth rule is: Share with him whatever you have to share. Often it will only be a word. Sometimes it may be materially. However it is, when you part ways with that stranger, may *he* feel that he has met an angel.

Respect for the sanctuary. In the time of the children of Israel, the temple, which included the sanctuary, was probably the most sacred place on earth. David lovingly speaks of going into the sanctuary of the Lord, a quiet, holy place.

We would like to believe there is no connection between the old sanctuary and the present church where we worship. Maybe there isn't.

And maybe there is.

In the old sanctuary, God met with His people in a special way. This is also true of our present church. Yes, we believe God meets with us at home, as we rest and as we labor. But—and this we cannot deny—the present day sanctuary continues to be the place where God meets His people collectively. That may be in a mud hut, a wood or masonry structure, and it may be in an immense sports arena which has been rented for this purpose. Be it where it may, if that is where God meets His people, then it is a sacred place.

Decidedly, the sanctuary in which we meet to worship is a sacred place and deserves reverence.

We have a fairly good record and tradition for respecting the sanctuary *during* the service. The problem is *before* and *after*. We have developed a mentality by which the sanctuary becomes holy only five to 10 minutes after the song leader arises to lead the opening song (time for stragglers to hurry in) and loses its holiness immediately after the final Amen (when the sacred atmosphere is soon dissipated by a crescent Babel of voices that all too often aren't even remotely related to the spirit of the meeting).

We say that our church building is no more sacred than any other building. True. The Sports Arena in Wichita with its ice rink floor would hardly be called a holy place. Yet, when God's people fill that building to deliberate, fellowship and worship, it becomes just as holy as Solomon's temple.

Respect for our schools. Only eternity will reveal the comprehensive value of our own schools. They can be compared to the crossing of the Red Sea or of the Jordan River. Our schools delivered our children from outstretched hands that would have placed them squarely in the middle of the road to destruction. Our schools are a miracle. And period.

Why is it so hard to pay school tax?

Why don't some pay at all?

Why is it so hard to get brethren to occasionally come for devotions?

Why do some parents unreflectively lay added burdens on the teachers and board members?

Why do some board members slump in a corner, thus making others work overtime?

Why must teachers deal with unruly children and get no help from the parents, possibly only criticism?

Respect for the privacy of others. It is said that every man's house is a castle. While this concept can be taken to an extreme, the great truth remains that home should have an element of seclusion, because people need privacy.

We are a close-knit people, a characteristic that we should always treasure. But possibly because of this, and certainly because of our human nature, we have lost entirely too much of our respect for the privacy of others. Our school children have an exercise called Show and Tell. Their parents have an exercise called Pry and Tell.

This is not merely an unfortunate little trait that we have developed. It is a deplorable

trait, a calamitous trait that has helped edge all too many brothers and sisters outside the walls of Zion.

The practice of prying and telling can be compared to the thorns that choke out the good seed in the parable of the sower. Pharisaiically, those most adept at prying and telling clothe themselves in long robes of “concern.”

Pry and tell. Why not pray and help?

Respect for the ideas of others. Ideas are personal property. We wouldn't even consider going to our neighbor and hauling his lawnmower to the junk because we can't see how it could ever work. But how many times don't we consign his ideas to the junk?

Ideas love company. Alas, all too often our ideas become our idols. We believe that our ideas are best suited to make the cogs of progress turn efficiently. This happens in the home, in committees, at work, in school...everyplace. Our selfish nature deceives us.

Blessed are those who have a humble nature and understand that when ideas are shared, often a new idea emerges for which no one can take credit. Good ideas shared spawn better ideas. The Almighty must be pleased when He sees His children sitting together in brotherly love, sharing their ideas, willing to give preference to those of others. Such a person, such a committee, such a group, such a church, will prosper.

Respect for nature. Nature is the handiwork of God. Blessed is the man, the woman, the child, who can see the reflection of God in nature. How beautiful when a child comes running to mother and exclaims, “Mom, come see what I found on the mulberry tree.” Mother goes and sees little son or daughter has found a cocoon. Right there mother gives a quick lesson how the cocoon was made, what it has in it, and how that a butterfly will eventually emerge. Thereafter, mother and son or daughter daily go out to check the cocoon. That child will begin to look for other miracles of nature. And see the reflection of God.

The idea that because animals don't have souls they can be beaten, tortured or heedlessly killed, does not show strong character. Neither does picking a rose to pieces and throwing the petals on the ground. Or tearing a cocoon apart to see what is inside.

The story is told of two young boys who entertained themselves by catching frogs and cutting out their tongues. When these two boys grew to manhood and married, their children were born with speech defects.

Adults who believe they are above hunting laws because they are Christians, who believe that animals protected by federal law can be destroyed because they are a nuisance, are in reality constituting themselves legislators and judges. (When such a one is called before authorities to give an account for infractions committed, it is difficult to leave a positive witness.)

Respect for the underprivileged and impaired. Those of us who lead normal lives often find it difficult to empathize with those who are less fortunate. This is especially true of those who live in developed nations with vigorous economies in which government programs have taken the underprivileged and impaired under their wings. This can, and often does, create a sensation of detachment.

God loves everyone alike, but if He should have a special little corner in His heart

Brazil News

for certain ones, I believe it would be for these helpless lambs who so often are at the mercy of others and must live in an atmosphere of rejection.

May we never despise these “little ones” whose happiness depends on the mercy and kindness of others.

Respect for the clock (of others). Most of us wear a watch. We have clocks on our walls, on our desks and dressers. Our microwave ovens and other appliances have clocks. Our cars and trucks have clocks. Clocks everywhere.

There are those nostalgic souls who would abolish clocks and live like people lived during the greater share of history. Unless one is willing to move to the jungles of New Zealand or the Amazon Basin, such regression is hardly possible. For better or for worse, we are children of the clock. Our ability to respect the clock will affect all areas of our life.

While working at Hesston Manufacturing (and then Corporation) I spent time on all three shifts. I soon found I could tell how long it would be until quitting time by watching who was coming in for the next shift.

Thirty minutes before shift change, there would always be a man or two coming in—always the same ones.

Twenty-five minutes and there would be more—again the same ones.

Twenty minutes, fifteen minutes... pretty much the same ones.

Ten minutes, and there would be a flood of men coming in.

Five minutes. These would have a harried look as they rushed in.

And then, just as the buzzer sounded, there would be several more. The same ones.

Through the years I have watched this and concluded that habitually being on time, or late, has very little to do with one's occupation, social position or wealth.

It's a habit.

It's a habit.

It's a habit.

I have also noticed that those who come early are relaxed.

Those who come at the last minute are stressed.

And those who come late are detached.

When we are late, someone must wait.

Sometimes when we are late, a number of people must wait. On a five-man committee, if one man is 10 minutes late, 50 man minutes have been wasted.

When our dentist has to wait 15 minutes for us to show up for our appointment, he/she is losing money, for he/she only makes money while working.

We challenge those who can't seem to keep up with the clock. Break the habit and you will discover it is easier to meet your appointments 15 minutes ahead of time than it is presently to arrive five minutes late.

Respect for the fallen. This is not a pleasant subject. There are those who have fallen, those who have turned their back on that which we consider most precious. In some cases we are moved to a deep pity and concern. But in others, depending on what has transpired, this feeling may not come so easy. When we see those who audaciously take on the ways of the world—sometimes throwing themselves to the

wind in a way that even the world finds strange—we...well, we lose our respect for them. They know it, and no matter how assertive they may appear, it hurts them. And worse, we lose our ability to witness to them. And that, good reader, is a loss we can't afford.

Respect for perverted humanity. The level of perversion in any civilized nation is directly proportional to its standard of living. That makes absolutely no sense, but facts are facts. Where is perversion more widespread than in Holland, France, Sweden, Germany...? (We refrain from mentioning a fifth nation that would touch the tender feelings of some of the readers of this little paper.)

The apostle tells us that “it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.” What would he say today, when the exact sins to which he made reference—and maybe others even worse—are impudently practiced on the housetop and announced to the four corners of the earth for all to see, hear and know?

As we walk the streets today, we come upon nauseous, disgusting, revolting acts being practiced in broad daylight. And then there are those who not only live in perversion, but teach and show. We wonder how the Almighty refrains from striking them with leprosy or sending fire from heaven to purge the earth of such refuse.

But he doesn't. And there is a reason. He loves them. That is the reason we too must love and respect them. We can be absolutely sure that behind their bold front there is a great emptiness, a desperate cry. We have no idea how to help such souls, but as we walk past them we can say a silent prayer. It's not likely any doors will open, but if they do, we must be ready.

Respect for those who don't show respect. This is a tough one. Especially when the chronically disrespectful one is a family member, a brother or sister in the faith, or a co-worker. The first rule to remember is that the disrespectful one probably doesn't see him/herself in the same light as others. Thus, on the positive side, such a one may not be making a deliberate attempt to give others a free ride down the sink drain.

There are several approaches that can be taken in the case of a chronically disrespectful one:

1. Remember that love covers a multitude of “disrespects.”
2. When knowing you will be in the presence of such a person, prepare yourself.

Pray for grace to return respect for disrespect.

3. When there is opportunity, talk to the person about his/her problem. However—and this is very important—do not do this unless your own spirit is totally at rest. If your admonition is an attempt to right a personal grievance, let someone else do the reproofing. But, if you feel your spirit is right, attempt to show the person what his/her behavior is doing to others.

Respect for creditors (especially brethren). A creditor is a creditor, and needs to be respected. It doesn't matter if he has loaned you five dollars or five hundred thousand dollars. Until that debt is paid off you are a debtor. And debtors can't be choosy.

If you simply can't manage to respect your creditor, pay him off and *then* be disrespectful.

Brazil 8 News

Our creditor should be respected not only while we owe him, but afterwards too. Think of that before you ask for a loan.

To disrespect a creditor shows a serious character flaw. It doesn't matter how rich he is, or how much he doesn't need the money, or, indeed, if he has forgotten that you owe him, you must show respect. If Bill Gates loans you ten dollars, you should speak well of Microsoft and use Windows on your computer. That's the long and the short of it.

Alas, at times we seem to feel a greater responsibility toward our banker than we do toward a brother. No, brotherly love does not cover a multitude of debts, *unless* the creditor brother himself proposes to cancel the debt as a personal favor. For such a creditor, respect should be forever doubled.

Respect on the road. If the Wilderness would have been cut into sections and crisscrossed with Interstates, and if the Israelites would have driven Fords and Chevys and Hondas, the Law given to Moses would doubtlessly have devoted at least one chapter to traffic.

But for donkeys and oxen, that was hardly necessary. The New Testament is equally silent on the subject. And so, without a set of Thou shalt and Thou shalt nots, we reluctantly accept the rules and penalties set forth by frail human legislators.

When we drive down the highway at night and the oncoming driver gives us bright lights, we feel justified in giving him a dose of his own medicine, even though this increases the danger of a serious accident.

When someone edges us off the road, we feel better if we can vocally or gesticulatively show our indignation (if not ire).

There are so many situations on the road in which our non-resistance doctrine is tested. But because we don't know the offending driver in the other car, we feel justified in saying and doing things we normally wouldn't do.

Finally, there is our respect for authority, for authorities, for law. Losing one's respect on the road, increases the possibility of also losing one's life on the road.

Respect for the order of the home. A home needs to be organized. It needs to have both a calendar and a clock on the wall. There needs to be a routine. There needs to be a time to come and a time to go. There needs to be a time to be together.

Before dad, mother or teenage children leave home, even if it is only for a few minutes, they should tell another family member, "I'm going to town to get some parts. I plan on being back by noon." The fact that everyone has a cell phone doesn't do away with this common courtesy.

Meal time is meal time. Mother should know who plans on being home for dinner. If something unexpected happens and it won't be possible to be home at the set hour... ah, that is where a cell phone shines. Call: "I'm sorry, Mom, but I won't make it home at twelve. Go ahead and eat without me." That's respect.

Mother, on the other hand, should do her best to have meals ready on schedule. A scheduled family, an organized family, deserves a gold edged diploma that says, "We love and so we respect."

Respect includes little words like please, thank you, sorry, that was delicious pie...A good friend of ours gave us a motto that hangs on oliving room wall:

Brazil News

Rules of the House

- If you drop it, pick it up.
- If you break it, fix it.
- If you eat or drink out of it, wash it.
- If you step on it, wipe it off.
- If you open it, close it.
- If you empty it, refill it.
- If it rings, answer it.
- If it howls, feed it.
- If it cries, love it.
- That says it all.*

Respect for Conference concerns (decisions, if you prefer). The General Conference is the highest deliberative body on earth. The men—tillers of the soil, carpenters, day laborers...—take in hand affairs of the Kingdom that far outweigh the most ponderous cases heard by the togaed justices who sit on the bench of the highest court in the land.

To reject, despise, misinterpret or simply ignore the decisions reached by this deliberative body is serious, an infraction similar to that of the Children of Israel who believed they were merely spurning the old prophet, but in reality were rebelling against God's order.

There must also be respect for lesser deliberative bodies within the church. And respect, as always, means a willingness to obey.

Respect for businessmen. If our local businessmen were consulted before Communion and asked to give their opinion of the brethren who do business with them, it might interfere with the results of our self-examination.

Our worst manners show up in our business deals. When feeling we have been wronged by a businessman, we permit ourselves to say things we normally wouldn't say to other mortals. Our non-resistance stance is tested far more severely when in a place of business than when we suspect an intruder is entering our house.

Businessmen—even unjust and dishonest businessmen—deserve a Christian witness. The fact that they have taken us for a ride does not give us the right to set them straight. No, we're not obligated to continue doing business with them. The fact that they have lost their religion doesn't give us the right to lose ours.

Businesses, especially the little one-horse businesses—mechanics, plumbers, blacksmiths...—sometimes find themselves in a financial bind. We tell them what we would like to have done and they give us a price of one hundred and seven dollars. Our facial features tell him we think his price is too steep. "If you do it for a hundred bucks, you can have the job." He needs the money so badly that he takes the job.

How much better it would have been to not argue price and then when paying, if the job has been well done, give him a hundred and ten dollars and say, "Keep the change. I appreciate your carefulness."

Yes, businessmen know us a lot better than we believe.

Respect for the image of the church. It is sad, sad, sad when someone forgets, or ignores, that he belongs to a holy body.

It's so unpleasant when someone we know in town asks us, somewhat embarrassedly, "Is so-and-so a member of your church?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Oh, just curiosity."

But it isn't just curiosity. With a bit of prodding we find out the reason for the question.

"I thought you people didn't believe in going to races."

There it is.

God's church deserves respect. His doctrine deserves respect. His people deserve respect. When others speak to us about the church, about the doctrine and about the brotherhood, they should sense in us a deep respect.

To discuss weaknesses and problems in the church with the world does not show respect, nor spirituality.

An unwillingness to present and defend the doctrines of the church shows disrespect.

To speak evil of or slander spiritual brothers and sisters, especially to the world, is very, very disrespectful.

We lose respect for a man who trumpets his wife's shortcomings for anyone to hear. The world loses respect for us when we freely discuss the shortcomings of our spiritual brethren.

Respect—true respect—is not a mere social grace. Respect is a mirror that reflects the contents of the soul. ▲

Readers Contribute

News from Ukraine

[Lance Giesbrecht forwarded these letters to me. I understand there are some couples interested in migrating to the Ukraine. At present Roland & Wanda Thiessen, Shanda, Troy and Tiffany, are in the Ukraine, hoping to adopt another child.

Twenty years ago if someone would have told us that foreigners would be going to the Ukraine not only to adopt children, but also to check out colonization possibilities, we would have hardly believed it. Yet today it is happening. I hope those interested will keep us posted on events.]

Hi. Well we've been in Ukraine a full two days now and are starting to feel a bit more settled in. We had an uneventful, albeit exhausting trip over. Vladimir met us at the airport and took us to his apartment so Wanda and the children could rest a bit while he and I secured an apartment and did some business... changed money, bought groceries etc. We went to McDonalds for supper and then settled into our apartment, a nice two bedroom on the third floor in a quiet section of Kiev.

Brazil News

We are situated about a 30 minute walk from downtown, but have markets and banks nearby. We are right next to a Greek Orthodox monastery. There are beautiful domed buildings and we can occasionally hear the church bells. Last night we went for a walk thru the grounds and tried visiting with a young Priest who was also strolling past the apple orchard. He was dressed in black robes and was very friendly. He blessed the children by laying his hand on their heads and fervently proclaiming something in Russian. He told Wanda that she was very beautiful, this in English. We then caught the tail end of the evening service inside a magnificent Cathedral... all the priests and nuns chanting and the people crossing themselves and bowing.

Today we went shopping downtown, caught a taxi for 10 uah, and went through the chic and very modern underground shopping center. Bought new sandals for Shanda and had lunch at McDs. Caught another taxi back but first had to negotiate the price down with the covetous driver who started out at 45 uah and finally settled on 20. Then walked 20 minutes to the market and bazaar for some daily staples, potatoes, broom and dustpan, drinking water, etc.

We find it much easier to get along this time as we are more accustomed to the people and know a few more words of Russian.

The city is bustling, much construction and streets plugged with new and late model vehicles.

The weather here is extremely hot; in the low 30s. Had a thunder shower today but it hardly cools down even when it is raining.

We were unable to visit the Adoption Center this week as they had a surprise audit that lasted a couple days and so were closed to the public. Hopefully we will be able to go early next week.

We have felt God's hand guiding us. Our motto is that tomorrow and yesterday are God's: just do what he places before us today.

We have our email up and running and have two cell phones. We had to change the numbers as the contracts had expired since February. My number is 380-67-422-7583 and Wanda's is 380-67-422-7587. The apartment number is 380-44-216-3373. Our time is 9 hours ahead of Alberta MST. If you wish to call there is a pre code for cheap rates: 101-8888-011 and then the above number. This costs .25 per minute.

It was interesting to watch 5 year old Tiffany as we drove into Kiev from the airport. She is very aware that this is her birth country, and she was very quiet with her big blue eyes wide open taking it all in. What goes on in her mind?

[...]

Here is some communication I had with the lawyer...in Kiev. I hope to go with Wayne Hursh on Friday on a run to some villages near Kiev. Tomorrow we head for Uman. Today was our first language study session. Saturday will be the next one. I gave up on Vladimir to get things arranged.... it is much easier to phone around myself. The ads in the English Kiev Post are generally answered by someone who speaks English.

They say it only takes several hours of language study to learn enough to read the signs. You can rent a new mid sized Octavia European car for \$1000.00 US for one month unlimited kms and insurance included.

Brazil ¹² News

We were in the food court at the big mall for supper. About 10 different food chains all ultra-modern but the only western one represented is McDonalds. Hundreds of people eating. Zero to six people at all the vendors except at McDonalds where the people were lined up six deep all the way across the counter. Workers in a sweat scurrying around while the tills went ka-ching. The other vendors stood looking pretty in their uniforms and bored. There are three Mcds all within 500 meters of each other all doing flat out fulltime business.

So what about Kentucky Fried Chicken in Downtown Kiev? Want to get a franchise and set one up?

Ikea has a store in Kiev. We were in a mall today that went on forever... everything under the sun available... everything gleaming...prices comparable to Canada... swarming with people.

Met a couple today from Ohio adopting. They arrived two days ago and went to the AC today for their appointment. Did not need the director...met directly with the psychologist. They spent two hours looking through the binders but didn't find any children that they were happy with. Will go back in a couple of days to go through more. Americans have more pull????

Well that's enough food for thought for one helping. When digested let me know what you think.

[A letter to Roland from Alex Vinnikov]

Dear Roland,

The situation is currently complicated with the Ukrainian Land code: until 2010, any individual or legal entity might not have property titles for more than 100 hectares of farming land, and moreover, foreign citizens and/or legal entities are prohibited from buying out any farming land (art. 81-82). They could only buy out lots under their buildings or any other real property, but not for farming purposes. Renting lots is possible in any case, so you may use the farming land for short term (up to five years) and/or long terms (up to 50 years).

There are no restrictions on constructing or buying houses for foreign citizens, but please keep in mind that property tax might be imposed since 2005, and VAT exempt for housing is suspended now...

Best regards,

Alex Vinnikov



Ethanol

When Brazil's state-owned oil company announced this month that it was raising gasoline prices to keep up with the rising cost of crude oil, Gutemberg do Brasil Moreira barely blinked. Mr. Moreira is an oral surgeon who spends a good portion of his days battling traffic going to hospitals all over São Paulo, a sprawling metropolis. He drives a car that runs on either gasoline or ethanol, or any combination of the two. But with

ethanol—or alcohol, as most Brazilians call it—selling at half the price of gasoline at the pump, Mr. Moreira does not waste any time deciding which fuel to use when filling up his three-month-old Volkswagen Fox. “When I first bought the car, I tried it out on both gasoline and alcohol,” he said. “But now I only use alcohol, and I’m probably spending 40 percent less a month on fuel because of it. It just doesn’t make any sense to use gasoline if the car runs just as well on alcohol.”

Like Mr. Moreira, hundreds of thousands of Brazilians are skirting the high cost of gasoline by driving these new “flex-fuel” cars, which hit showroom floors late last year and have been selling fast ever since. Lured by the low price of ethanol, Brazilians bought almost 220,000 of these hybrid vehicles in the first nine months of the year, representing 24 percent of all new-car sales in the country. Some analysts and auto industry executives predict that number could jump to as high as 40 percent by early next year, and that eventually Brazil’s auto market will be dominated by flex-fuel vehicles. “In a few years, I wouldn’t be surprised if all new cars in Brazil were equipped with flex-fuel engines,” said João Alvarez, the top engineering executive for Volkswagen’s Brazilian unit. “Demand is only going to increase, especially if oil and gasoline prices keep rising, and it’s already clear that consumers like the product.”

The German automaker was the first in Brazil to roll out a flex-fuel engine, introducing the Total Flex Gol subcompact model in March of last year. Fiat of Italy and the American auto giants General Motors and Ford Motor have all since followed suit, although Volkswagen still holds the biggest share of the flex-fuel market, with 36.5 percent of total sales. The French carmakers Renault and Peugeot are also expected to bring out flex-fuel models for the Brazilian market before the end of the year. “If you want to compete in this market, you’re going to have to offer flex-fuel engines,” said Joel Leite, who owns a Web site called Autoinforme that analyzes Brazil’s auto sector. “Otherwise you’re going to get left behind.”

Brazil first started toying with the idea of non-gasoline-powered cars at the peak of the global oil crisis in the 1970’s, when its military dictatorship began a campaign to reduce dependence on costly foreign oil. With the help of government subsidies and generous tax breaks, automakers here designed and started manufacturing cars that ran exclusively on ethanol. Sugar millers also benefited from the pro-alcohol campaign, getting the equivalent of millions of dollars in government subsidies to refine sugar cane into ethanol. The government no longer offers the subsidies, but demand serves as an incentive to keep making ethanol. By the mid-1980’s, ethanol-only cars accounted for almost 90 percent of all new-auto sales in Brazil, making the country the biggest alternative fuel market in the world. But a poor cane harvest and high sugar prices led to an ethanol shortage in 1990, enraging motorists who eventually migrated back to cars powered by gasoline.

Today, fewer than 20 percent of Brazil’s autos run exclusively on alcohol, but all gasoline here has a 25 percent mix of ethanol. Now, thanks to the emergence of flex-fuel engines, ethanol is making a comeback. According to Datagro, a São Paulo consulting firm that tracks the sugar and alcohol markets, overall ethanol consumption

in Brazil is expected to rise by 4.08 million gallons, to 3.58 billion gallons, this sugar harvest season, because of additional demand from flex-fuel autos.

“The ethanol market here in Brazil was practically stagnant for more than a decade,” said Plínio Nastari, Datagro’s president. “Flex-fuel cars are changing that,” he said, adding that the risk of another shortage was unlikely because the country now keeps a strategic ethanol stock for the off-season, when sugar is not harvested.

Another thing that sets flex-fuel autos apart from their ethanol-only predecessors, which are notoriously slow to warm up on cold days, is a small gas tank under the hood that is used to start the car in chilly weather. Once the engine is running, the car automatically switches back to ethanol or whatever is in the main tank. On the road, most flex-fuel cars perform equally on ethanol or gasoline, but some, like the Ford Fiesta, have turned out to get slightly more horsepower when running on alcohol. “It’s not like you’re using a source of energy that’s worse in terms of performance,” said Luis Salem, general marketing manager in Brazil for Ford, which started selling flex-fuel versions of its Fiesta Sedan and Fiesta Hatchback models in September. “Actually, it’s better.” With oil prices hitting record highs of late, other countries are already expressing interest in importing the flex-fuel technology from Brazil.

Volkswagen, for example, has already been host to delegations from Australia, Britain, China, India, Japan, South Africa and the United States. “Everyone is interested in this technology,” said Mr. Alvarez, the Volkswagen executive. Even so, experts say it will probably take years—if not decades—before flex-fuel cars become as popular in other nations as they are in Brazil. After all, few countries have an ethanol fuel industry and distribution system as advanced as Brazil’s. A fuel mix of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline, known as E85, is available in at least 22 states of the United States, mainly Minnesota and Midwestern states, but it is still hard to find at the pump in most other parts of the country. By contrast, in Brazil, a country nearly the size of the continental United States, ethanol is available at almost every service station. “It may take a while, but there’s no doubt that flex-fuel technology will eventually be used in other countries,” said Mr. Leite, the auto sector analyst. “It’s too good an idea not to be exported.” *(Sent in by Weldon Schultz)* ▲

Answer—If You Can

Isn’t it a bit unnerving that doctors call what they do practice?

When sign makers go on strike is anything written on their signs?

When you open a bag of cotton balls, is the top one meant to be thrown away?

Where do forest rangers go to “get away from it all”?

Why isn’t there mouse-flavored cat food?

Is it possible to be totally partial?

If a parsley farmer is sued can they garnish his wages?

If a funeral procession is at night do they drive with their lights off?

If a stealth bomber crashes in a forest will it make a sound?

If a man speaks in the forest and there is no woman to hear him is he still wrong?

If a turtle loses his shell is it naked or homeless?
Why don't sheep shrink when it rains?
Should a vegetarian eat animal crackers?
If the cops arrest a mime do they tell him he as the right to remain silent?
Why do people who know the least know it the loudest?
If vegetarians eat vegetables what do humanitarians eat?
Tell a man that there are 400 billion stars and he'll believe you. Tell him a bench has wet paint and he has to touch it.
Why is it called a hamburger when it's made of beef?
Why does sour cream have an expiration date? ▲

Why Farming Is So Tough Today (According to a Canadian)

It all started back in 66 when they changed from pounds to dollars—which doubled my overdraft. Then they brought in kilograms instead of pounds; my cows' production dropped in half. After that they changed rain to millimeters and we haven't had an inch of rain since. If that wasn't enough they brought in Celsius and we got frost in August. No wonder my wheat won't grow. Then they changed acres to hectares and I ended up with only one half of the land I had. By this time I'd had enough and decided to sell out. I put the property on the market and then they changed from miles to kilometers. Now I'm too far out of town for anyone to buy the place. ▲

The Devil's Beatitudes

1. Blessed are those who are too tired, too busy, too distracted to spend an hour once a week with their fellow Christians – they are my best workers.
2. Blessed are those Christians who wait to be asked and expect to be thanked – I can use them.
3. Blessed are the touchy who stop going to church – they are my missionaries.
4. Blessed are the trouble makers – they shall be called my children.
5. Blessed are the complainers – I am all ears to them.
6. Blessed are those who are bored with the minister's mannerisms and mistakes – for they get nothing out of his sermons.
7. Blessed is the church member who expects to be invited to his own church – for he is a part of the problem instead of the solution.
8. Blessed are those who gossip – for they shall cause strife and divisions that please me.
9. Blessed are those who are easily offended – for they will soon get angry and quit.

10. Blessed are those who do not give their offering to carry on God's work – for they are my helpers.

11. Blessed is he who professes to love God but hates his brother and sister – for he shall abide with me forever.

12. Blessed are you, who, when you read this think it is about other people and not yourself – I've got you too. ▲

This & That

NEWSWEEK recently carried a feature article entitled Birth Dirth, which reports that in some nations the birth rate is not keeping pace with the death rate, resulting in a population decrease. This is hardly the case in the Holdeman communities in Brazil.

Please notice:

Duane & Luciene Miller, a boy, Dayl, May 5;

Stephen & Dete Kramer adopted a boy, Karson, born May 16;

Jeff & Marion Kramer, a boy, Joel, June 5;

Marcos & Wanda Duarte, a girl, Kyla, June 21;

Kevin & Gisele Hibner, a girl, Milene, June 23;

João Batista & Adalgisa Silva, a girl, Ana Karla, July 21;

André & Adianne Passos, a boy, Randon, July 28;

Fernando & Keila Rodrigues, a boy, Dallas, August 8;

Wagner & Aletha Machado, a girl, Lillian, August 8;

Dave & Marta Kramer adopted a boy, Rodrigo, born August 23;

Joedson & Rosa Bessa, a boy, Henrique, August 29;

Ely & Vânia Bessa, are fostering a girl, born March 18, 2003;

Robert & Élia Kramer, a boy, Chelson, October 18.

July 4, Lawrence Kramer & Patrícia Miranda were married at the Monte Alegre Cong.

Tony & Juanita Lima have moved to California. Two of their children remained while their immigration papers are being processed.

Ben & Laura Koehn and children have moved to the new settlement in Tocantins.

Their mother, Ileen Koehn, has moved into their house by the dam, that used to belong to Earl & Johanna Schmidt.