

# Brazil News



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No. 160  
19 JUNE 5

Editorial

## **The Handwriting on the Wall**

When Belshazzar’s “knees smote one against the other” as he watched a detached hand engraving strange hieroglyphs on the plastered wall of his banquet hall, his fate was sealed. In spite of his desperate gesture of good-will in setting forth Daniel, a man of God, as “the third ruler in the kingdom,” there was nothing he or any other mortal man could do to alter the events that would take place in rapid succession that night.

The handwriting on the wall is revelation of impending doom, a sentence with a timer attached.

Belshazzar’s brazenness in commanding that the “golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem” be used in a pagan feast was certainly a divine felony, worthy of an outburst of holy vengeance. From where we are, out in the audience, seeing a playback of this period of Babylonian history, we shake our heads at the king’s moral amnesia. Did his father, Nebuchadnezzar, never talk about his past? Didn’t others, in whispers, inform him of his dad’s “beastly” episode?

Surely he knew. He had to know. If by no other means, then by reading the royal chronicles about how his father, the king, “was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws.”

Nebuchadnezzar may have personally told his son the story, and ended with the words: “I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation... Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”

Surely Belshazzar knew. He knew there was a true God—not the gods which he and his wives and concubines and mighty lords were honoring that night.

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His wife, the queen, knew: “There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.”

In this case, between the handwriting on the wall and the application of divine justice there were but a few hours.

In King Saul’s case, many years went by. For him the handwriting on the wall were the words of the prophet Samuel: “Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.” Many years—tumultuous year—went by before this sentence was executed in a battle where Saul lost his kingship, his life and his son, the natural heir to the throne.

In Ananias’ case, the words of Peter were the handwriting on the wall: “Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” There was not even a moment of time between the reading of the charges and the execution of the sentence. The same was true of Sapphira, his wife. In the most literal sense, this was instant justice with no timer attached.

In the case of King Belshazzar, the handwriting on the wall was both personal and national. That night Darius the Median rose to the throne.

The ability to read the handwriting on the wall would, at least in some cases, fall into the category of the gift of prophecy. This is especially true when the handwriting appears on the wall of a nation. In this case there can be in the midst of a corrupt generation those sincere souls who either have to flee, find a secret refuge or unjustly suffer with the ungodly.

Our forefathers sojourned in Russia for a number of decades. Only those who were truly there as pilgrims and strangers were able to see the handwriting on the wall. They chose rather to forfeit and leave with only a suitcase of clothes and their soul, than to be caught in the approaching storm and eventually lose everything, including their soul. Like unto the Turkey Red wheat seed that was sorted kernel by kernel and taken to N America, so God elected those who gave heed to the handwriting on the wall and removed them from the path of the storm. Some of those who believed there would be a way *through* the storm, rather than *out*, lost not only their homes and lands, but their lives as well, and worst of all, their birthright.

For Haman, the hand that wrote on the wall was that of his wife, Zeresh, and a group of friends. They said to him, “If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him. And while they were yet talking with him, came the king’s chamberlains, and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.”

It was during this banquet that Esther put the final jots and tittles on the handwriting which Haman had minutes earlier seen on the wall in his own home.

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When the thunderstruck king returned from a short walk in the garden and found Haman fallen upon the bed where Esther reclined, he demanded, “Will he force the queen also before me in the house? As the word went out of the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face.” This covering (hood?) probably remained in place as he took his place on the fifty-cubit high gallows.

In the history of Israel, there were times that two or three generations would pass before divine justice was executed.

If the ability to read the handwriting on the wall requires the gift of prophecy, then we must conclude this is a coveted gift, for everywhere “the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers...the wise men of Babylon [...and] magicians” are frenetically shouting and publishing their interpretations to anyone who will stop and listen or read.

Yet it isn’t in the great and strong winds that rend mountains and break rocks in pieces, nor in earthquakes or fires that the interpretation to the handwriting on the wall is to be found.

The prophet saw all this and was able to understand the Lord only when He spoke in a still small voice.

We are living in a noisy world. Cars pass us on the highway and we hear the sonic booms of what is called music; we go into stores and hear music; a waiting room without music is hardly a waiting room; hundreds of millions of TVs, radios, stereos,... blare out music and voices. With all this background noise, not surprisingly we have trouble hearing the still small voice that interprets the handwriting on the wall.

And worse, it can become a question if we can even see the handwriting, let alone understand its interpretation.

We say that the world is ripe for judgment, that we are living in the last “days,” that the end of the world could come at anytime. But our actions say that time could easily continue for quite a while yet. It is a soothing thought.

When God’s hand writes on the wall, it writes clearly, just as clearly as a voice that came “from heaven, saying, I have both glorified [thy name], and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.” Everyone heard the same voice; to some it was thunder, to others it was the voice of God. Today people see the handwriting on the wall; some try to analyze it in a lab or say it is a quirk of nature; others, just a handful—if that—see the hand of God.

The Early Church believed the end was at hand, as have all true believers since then. It can be argued that they misread the handwriting on the wall—by a long, long ways.

But there is one very sobering fact which we must face: through the ages the torch has been carried exactly by those who believed the end was at hand. Conversely, as man becomes “enlightened,” with one hand he pushes the end into the future and with the other hand he pushes God into the past.

It is a paradox that those who believe the end is at hand are the best prepared in case time should go on another generation, or generations. When the move to Brazil was being contemplated, someone asked the late Min. Reno Hibner what was the point of moving if the end was at hand. He replied, “We are moving just in case time continues.”

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If time continues, as never before we will need the gift of prophecy to read the handwriting on the wall. As the storm clouds roll in and the lightening flashes, we can't afford to console ourselves by saying it is merely thunder, when it is the voice of the Lord we are hearing.

If time continues...

“The 21<sup>st</sup> century will be the century of change. More things will change in more places in the next 10 years than in the previous 100. Most countries aren't ready for this dizzying ride – certainly not the United States of America.” —Fareed Zakaria (as quoted in NEWSWEEK)

We can add, more things will change in the next 10 years than in the first two thousand years of history.

In Third World and developing nations, some of these changes will be beneficial. In the elite club of nations that have reached the top, very few, if any, of these changes will be beneficial to the Christian.

(What about a cure for cancer? Will that cure make us more or less reliant upon God? What about safer transportation? Will that inspire us to spend more time at home? What about...?)

Belshazzar's cup of sin became full the night in which the hand wrote upon the wall. A listing of his transgressions probably filled a fairly good sized celestial parchment. And yet there was a mitigating factor; even though he had knowledge of the true God of heaven, so far as we know, he was always an idolater.

David, on the other hand, was a child of God; never did he bow his knee to an idol. And yet, in spite of being a man after God's own heart, when he sinned, judgment came fast and sure. Interestingly, it was David's own hand that wrote on the wall:

“And David's anger was greatly kindled...and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.”

Nathan answered, “Thou art the man.” He could have said, “What you have written you have written.”

David recognized the handwriting on the wall and repented. His soul was restored, but for the rest of his life he suffered the consequences of this sin.

If time continues... “More things will change in more places in the next 10 years than in the previous 100...”

The handwriting is on the wall: Christians beware! Almost without exception, these changes will bring darkness rather than light. The greater the affluence, the greater the resulting darkness. If we fail to see this handwriting, we shall be swallowed by the darkness.

The handwriting is on the wall: If time continues another 20 or 30 years, a new world order will probably emerge. The war for supremacy will not be fought with infantry, tanks and bombs. It will be fought in factories, in banks, on the stock market... (Suggested reading: *CHINA, INC. How the Rise of the Next Superpower Challenges America and the World*, by Ted C. Fishman, published by Scribner.) The possibility of a historically pagan nation ruling the world is not pleasant.

Today is not a time for clichés or conciliatory speeches: “Oh, that will never happen.” “He’s an alarmist.” “God would never let that happen.”

Today is a time to prepare for the gathering storm. I remember so well the summer nights when my dad would awaken the family: “Get up! We’ve got to go to the cellar.” Our house had no basement, so we had to go to an outside cellar, often through strong winds and driving rain. There we would huddle, waiting for the storm to blow over, hoping and praying it wouldn’t be a tornado.

The dank cellar wasn’t a pleasant place. But it was a safe place.

The handwriting is on the wall. Those whose spiritual eyes are open will read and understand. They will be looking for a safe place to hide. For such, safety will be more important than comfort. Their prayer will not be that the storm will soon abate so they can get on with life. They will pray for grace to endure until the hour of redemption. ▲

## China

### Some Facts

#### EXAME

On a worldwide scale, China produces...

75% of all toys

75% of all watches and clocks

55% of all shoes (7 billion pairs per year)

50% of all digital cameras

50% of all containers

42% of all monitors

35% of all cell phones

33% of all buses

30% of all microwave ovens

30% of all television sets

27% of all steel (300 million tons)

20% of all refrigerators

19% of all trucks

17% of all textile products

14% of all cars and pickups

13% of all ships

Chinese exports total 600 billion dollars annually and are growing at the fantastic rate of 35% per year!

*China’s GNP is growing at 10% per year.*

The population of China is 1.3 billion, which is one fifth of the total world population. With a work force of 750 million, there should be no labor shortage in the foreseeable future. In the last five years, 200 million peasants migrated from rural

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areas to the cities, where they were incorporated into the work force. This becomes even more impressive when we remember that the American automobile industry pays its workers an average 37 dollars an hour. The Chinese counterpart gets two dollars an hour. It's true that the American worker produces more than the Chinese, but with one billion foreign dollars being injected weekly into their economy, the technological gap is rapidly dwindling.

*There is nothing too great or too small for China; nothing they won't tackle. In December of 2004, Lenovo, a Chinese firm, bought IBM's PC computer division. Brazil's Embraer is doing a booming business producing 50-passenger jets (even giving Canada's Bombardier a rough time), but when China decides to produce a 50-passenger jet, both Brazil and Canada can begin laying off workers.*

China has an additional advantage over everyone else. It has little regard for international law and patents. Because of this, as well as cheap labor, Made in China products can be sold in Brazil for a tenth of the value of those made in law-abiding industrial nations.

*There is yet another complication—for other nations. By controlling the exchange rate, China keeps the yen devaluated, which, specialists say, give them another 30 percent advantage in international trade.*

### NEWSWEEK

(Fareed Zakaria)

China is now the world's largest producer of coal, steel and cement, the second largest consumer of energy and the third largest importer of oil, which is why gas prices are soaring. China's exports to the United States have grown by 1,600 percent over the past 15 years, and U.S. exports to China have grown by 415 percent.

At the height of the Industrial Revolution, Britain was called "the workshop of the world." That title surely belongs to China today. It manufactures two thirds of the world's copiers, microwave ovens, DVD players and shoes (And toys, my 5-year-old son would surely want me to add. All the world's toys.)

To get a sense of how completely China dominates low-cost manufacturing, consider Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart is America's—and the world's—largest corporation. Its revenues are eight times those of Microsoft, and make up 2 percent of America's GDP. It employs 1.4 million people, more than GM, Ford, GE and IBM put together. It is legendary for its efficient—some would say ruthless—efforts to get the lowest price possible for its customer. In doing this, it has used technology, managerial innovation, but, perhaps more significantly, China. Last year Wal-Mart imported \$18 billion worth of goods from China. Of Wal-Mart's 6,000 suppliers, 5,000—80 percent—are in one country, and it isn't the United States.

*China's rise is no longer a prediction. It is a fact. It is already the world's fastest-growing large economy, and the second largest holder of foreign-exchange reserves, mainly dollars. It has the world's largest army (2.5 million men) and the fourth largest defense budget, which is rising by more than 10 percent annually.*

There have been two great shifts in global power over the past 400 years. The first was the rise of Europe, which around the 17<sup>th</sup> century became the richest, most enterprising and ambitious part of the world. The second was the rise of the United

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States, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when it became the single most powerful country in the world, the globe's decisive player in economics and politics.

For centuries, the rest of the world was a stage for ambitions and interests of the West's great powers. China's rise, along with that of India and the continuing weight of Japan, represents the third great shift in global power—the rise of Asia.

*When historians look back at the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they might well point to 1979 as a watershed. That year the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, digging its grave as a superpower. It was also the year that China began its economic reforms. They were launched at a most unlikely gathering, the Third Plenum of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, held in December 1978. Before the formal meetings, at a working-group session, the newly empowered party boss, Deng Xiaoping, gave a speech that turned out to be the most important one in modern Chinese history. He urged that the regime focus on development and modernization, and let facts—not ideology—guide its path. “It doesn't matter if it is a black cat or a white cat,” Deng often said. “As long as it can catch mice, it's a good cat.” Since then, China has done just that, pursued a modernization path that is ruthlessly pragmatic and nonideological.*

*The results have been astonishing. China has grown around 9 percent a year for more than 25 years, the fastest growth rate for a major economy in recorded history. In that same period it has moved 300 million people out of poverty and quadrupled the average Chinese person's income. And all this has happened, so far, without catastrophic social upheavals. The Chinese leadership has to be given credit for this historic achievement.*

Even as I write, I hear some of my good readers in N America protesting:

*It will never happen. God won't let a historically pagan nation have dominion over the world—and much less the United States.*

World War II, which ended 60 years ago, snuffed out the lives of nearly 60 million men, women and children, of which approximately 6 million were Jews. The genitor of this war, Adolph Hitler, was worse than a pagan; he was, by all evidence, demonized. Yet God used him (as he also did Nebuchadnezzar, and many other heathen kings) to execute divine judgment.

In retrospect, two things stand out: This demonized man came to power and was removed from power by the Almighty.

The handwriting was on the wall for all to see. While in prison for subversive activities, Hitler made good (or terrible) use of his time by writing *Mein Kampf*, the book in which he explicitly spelled out what he planned to do when (not if) coming to power (he believed from the bottom of his heart that he was called by a superior power, which he called Providence, to wage war on the Jews, Gypsies and all nations—except for Italy—which didn't fit into his megalomaniac plans, and subjugate them. Sir Winston Churchill was the only world leader who from the onset recognized Hitler for what he was. Yet, in his own country and parliament, he was as a voice crying in the wilderness.

When the United States belatedly entered the war, it appeared Hitler might reach his objectives.

We must remember that while the war was being fought on the Atlantic and in

Africa and Europe, another war was being fought on the Pacific and in Asia with a nation of pagan origin.

World War II was much more serious than most of us, allergic to history, can imagine. All this happened in the lifetime of some of you readers.

To see the handwriting on the wall, we must first of all believe it can be there, that times are such that God may have a message for His people.

This brings us to a second consideration. When nations (plural, please notice) dotted with church steeples, openly and belligerently defend abortion, homosexuality, premarital sex, divorce and adultery, will not the cup of sin of those nations (plural) eventually run over?

I don't know what percentage of the Mennonites in Russia read and understood the handwriting on the wall. What we all know, though, is what happened to those who read and believed and to those who didn't.

I also hear:

*No nation in the world even comes close to the United States in military technology and preparedness.*

Today this is true—at a terrible cost. I don't have the statistics, but I believe that the United States' military budget is greater than the combined military budgets of most of the nations of the world. This military superiority depends on economical superiority. Should China, or any other nation, upset the economic apple cart, the world order will rapidly change.

China won't just go away. ▲

## Angola

by Natalie Jeffery, R.N.

## War and Peace

April 2002

The beginning of this month saw a momentous day for Angola. The signing of a peace agreement between the government and UNITA—the rebels. Suddenly there is a sense of hope for the future, a feeling that now things will change for the good. People are beginning to talk of returning to their homes, visiting families separated by years of war and roads full of mines.

What does the future hold for Angola? Will this peace be lasting? This is an exciting time to be here. Please pray for Angola as the government and its people begin to recover. Yet although in the capital a peace agreement is being signed and the people rejoice, the suffering continues. In the eastern province of Moxico, where Medair is starting its programme, there is a little girl called Isabelle...

### Isabelle

We enter the camp, a vast area of mud huts and plastic. There are people everywhere,



a colourless parade of suffering. We come to the clinic where we will be talking to some women about being trained as traditional Birth Attendants. We talk; they tell their stories, how they somehow hope to escape.

Following our discussions, we leave and on the way out encounter a shocking sight: a skeleton-like child, all bones and staring eyes. She was brought to the camp. Recently she had lost both parents, being left an orphan at the age of eight years of age. Near to starvation, we take her into our vehicle. She is so light that she slides around on the seat. I put my arm around her and am struck by the smallness of this young girl. As we ride, she gradually snuggles up to me as if to saturate herself with as much human contact as possible while she has the chance.

The next day we go to the orphanage to hear news of Isabelle—which we discovered is her name—and to our horror we found her close to a smoking fire, desperate for some warmth. I ask why she is not at the feeding centre run by MSF and am told that they are full and she isn't bad enough to qualify for a place. Is there anything worse than this?!

*Arise, Lord! Lift up your hand,  
oh God.*

*Do not forget the helpless.*

*—Psalm 10:12*

## **Luena**

Isabelle is a good example of the state of things in Luena, with the huge influx of people, two thousand having arrived in the first two weeks of March. The area is full of people, the NGOs overwhelmed, the de-mining agencies can't clear the land quick enough; not enough food, medicine, plastic, blankets... Not enough of anything.

Luena itself was a beautiful town before the war, but now is in a state of decay; buildings are falling apart, the train station with its stationary rusting trains. Here in Luena everything has to be flown in by plane, mostly from the capital Luanda, three hours away, so prices are extremely high. It is a military town and there are soldiers everywhere. I have had to get used to the sight and sound of guns.

The government struggles to look after the population crowded into this small town. So the NGOs provide assistance in many areas, clearing mines, making new camps, distributing food and non-food items, community kitchens, schools and supporting the health system. We are working in the health sector, working with the Ministry of Health to support four health posts and one health centre, the Provincial Maternity Hospital.

Along side this is the training and supervision of traditional birth attendants. This is the first time that Medair has worked in Angola. We arrived as a small team of three, which has now increased to four: Luke, our country director; Heather, logistician; Esther, our administrator who recently arrived; and myself, as medical coordinator.

It is a challenge to figure out from scratch how to work in this country with its complicated processes. At the moment we are registering as an NGO here. This means that we cannot officially work until we are registered. We have been told this may be finished in May. So we wait, prepare and pray.

I have spent the past weeks setting up our base in Luena. I will be based here while the other three will be based in Luanda, our logistical base. While we wait for Alice, a midwife, who will join me in Luena, the other three rotate to stay with me in Luena. I have also been gathering information on the humanitarian situation in Luena, attending numerous meetings and visiting the various NGOs and government officials.

Apart from this, I have also been helping another NGO called Goal, with planning and organizing the training of traditional birth attendants in three camps. This has involved identifying potential women to be trained and setting up the training courses.

Medair has been asked to partner an NGO and mission group in the running of a tuberculosis programme in Luena, so I spent two weeks in the province of Benguela attending a course in Tuberculosis, run by the Ministry of Health. This was an interesting two weeks. The course was in Portuguese and I stayed with a Brazilian family; it was total Portuguese for two weeks! If this did not improve my Portuguese, I don't know what will.

I am so thankful to be here. As usual, the sights and sounds of Africa fascinate and draw me. The opportunity to provide needed help and also to serve God make the difficulties and frustrations easier to cope with. I am excited about the future Medair has here in Angola and look forward to the coming months as we continue to establish ourselves and begin our programmes.

### **Lumbala Nguimbo (Feb. 25)**

Today as I tiredly make my way from one of our health centres to our team house, I suddenly realized what a morning I had had, the people I had met and things I had seen.

This week I am in Lumbala Nguimbo, meeting with Laura and Anne, the medical team here and planning our future projects. One of our current projects is the support of the main health centre in this small town.

Lumbala Nguimbo was basically a battle field. With its low scrub, vast areas and dividing rivers, it was a perfect place for fighting. This caused immense devastation to the town and its infrastructure, which is now practically nonexistent. There are hardly any buildings left, and most of those are hardly intact. This caused all the residents to flee, many to the bush, others to other parts of the province, and many more across the border to Zambia.

Due to its battles, it is also highly mined. Now the war is over and the people are beginning to come back, back to absolute devastation: their houses destroyed totally, their fields dangerous due to mines, no health care, no schools. Not much of anything. Late last year Medair arrived in Lumbala Nguimbo as hundreds of people returned per day. A serious situation was building. With careful security measures, we were able to distribute seeds, tools, household items and clothes to over three thousand families. We were also able to rebuild the main school in the centre of the town and provide four water points, enabling the people to be able to collect safe water. Then, where my story begins, we also rebuilt the health centre and equipped it, enabling the nurses to work.

So now I was here for the second time, to meet with Laura and Anne, and also to

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spend some time in the centre with the nurses. Today I was working with Antônio. He has been here for nearly one year, working for the Ministry of Health as a nurse. He hasn't received his salary for the last two months. His wife and children are in Luena, seven days walk away and one hour by plane. He hasn't seen them for nearly a year and there haven't been any planes to Nuema for months. Also, without money, how far can he go?

There are just two nurses here at the moment and they have to provide care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So as you can imagine, Antônio is pretty tired, unmotivated and cross. As we sit down to do consultations, he tells me that the reason he is shaking is because he hasn't eaten since yesterday morning. He is extra tired because they had some admissions during the night.

As we set up, a crowd gathers outside. They hang in the window and make a crowd around the door, all of them wanting to be seen first. As we begin, I am first disturbed by the lack of privacy. Here we do consultations in full view of the waiting crowd, all fighting their way into the room. With ten people in this small room and the windows and doors crowded, I have had enough. "EVERYONE OUT!" I shout. "We are starting again. Only one allowed in this room at a time and the others stay away from the window!"

This is followed by a shocked silence and one elderly man informs me that I cannot say that to him or anyone else. But we don't back down and gradually order is restored once again, with some reproachful glances in my direction.

A young man enters and we ask him what is wrong. "I am in the military and am based here at the moment. Two days ago I heard that my only son died; he was only a little boy and I have no way to get home to be with my wife and family and attend his funeral. Please me, as I can't sleep." He requested a drug that would help him sleep. Oh, what sadness in his face; how tired he is...yet this drug he is requesting not only will help him sleep, but is also addictive. We cannot give this to whoever asks.

I gently inform him that this will not be possible and we have no safer alternatives to offer him. He looks at me in disbelief and repeats his problem. I answer, "I am sorry, sir, but this drug isn't what is best for you." He rests his head on his arms and leans on the desk. My heart hurts and I want to cry. The only thing I can offer him is that I am going to Luena this week where his family lives and can take a message if he likes. His face brightens as he tells me where I will find his wife. But I know this is of little real help to him.

Another patient tells me that she has walked for three days to get to the centre. She shows me her young daughter and my heart falls. She has tuberculosis and we don't have tuberculosis drugs. What can we say? What can we do? Antônio looks at me and shrugs. We give iron tablets and multivitamins. Yet the mother has a strange reaction; she looks resigned, not even shocked or angry at us. This hurts as well... "Mamma, perhaps we can send a message to you when we do get tuberculosis drugs."

Language makes the morning additionally hard going. Lumbala is filling

with people from different places, making a jumble of traditional languages: Portuguese and English. Returnees from Zambia explain in English, struggling to communicate in Portuguese to the nurse. Women and young arrive and explain in many languages, while Antônio struggles to understand. How ironic that I have to translate from English to Portuguese from one Angolan to another. How frustrating for the patients not to be able to tell exactly how they are feeling so that we can know what to do.

Case after case comes in; prescription after prescription is written. Many have illnesses we can treat effectively: worms, malaria, respiratory infections and skin infections. It is wonderful to be able to know that the people have some help, yet we are frustrated by our limitations in drugs and equipment.

Outpatient consultations over, we do an inpatient round: A young man who suddenly became paralysed in his legs, a young boy malnourished and weak after being ill and then having to travel many days to the centre.

I examine a pregnant lady in one of the dark and small inpatient rooms. Most of the patients are lying on the floor, their families sleeping where there is space. The nurses look frustrated as we see patients who we can't diagnose due to lack of diagnosing equipment. As always, there are patients with a diagnosis, but no medicine.

Round over, it's lunch time and I can head back to the team house. My mind is full of patients we have seen and cases I have heard. No wonder I am tired... And our patients, they must also be tired—tired after a long and brutal war, tired of living in poor conditions, tired by the lack of simple services like schools and health units. But as I walk, absorbed in my thoughts, I hear a loud singing, a lot of noise, the sound of laughter. I look in the direction of the noise and see it is coming from the school. Two teachers have arrived! School is starting today! What excitement! What hope in the eyes of the children!

Praise God the war is over. Praise God for His mercies to Lumbala and all the positive things that have happened in just the last few months. What can we expect in the coming months? Perhaps flights will start to Luena and Antônio can visit his wife; the young soldier can be reunited with his grieving family for time together; perhaps tuberculosis drugs will soon arrive and we can send a message to the resigned mother and her young daughter; perhaps soon more beds and paint and furniture will arrive and inpatients and their families will be able to recover in comfort; perhaps we will soon get more funding and we can open more health units so people don't have to walk so far.

As I pass the singing and laughing a smile breaks on my face, my heart lifts. Not forgetting this morning and the patients, but also not forgetting the Almighty and Sovereign God whose heart is full of compassion and mercies for the people here in Lumbala. There is no helping it, where there is belief in God, yes, there will still be hardships, yes there will still be suffering, but an even greater YES, there is hope and peace in our loving God! ▲

Poetry

## Which Are You?

I watched them tearing a building down,  
A gang of men in a busy town;  
With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell  
They swung a beam and the sidewalk fell.  
I asked the foreman: "Are these men skilled,  
And the men you'd hire if you had to build?"  
He gave a laugh and said: "No indeed!  
Just common labor is all I need.  
I can easily wreck in a day or two  
What builders have taken a year to do!"

And I thought to myself as I went my way,  
Which of those roles have I tried to play?  
Am I a builder who works with care,  
Measuring life by the rule and square?  
Am I shaping my deeds to a well-made plan,  
Patiently doing the best I can?  
Or am I a wrecker, who walks the town,  
Content with the labor of tearing down?

—*Unknown*

## Whistling Boy

When the curtain of night, 'tween the dark and the light,  
Drops down from the set of the sun,  
And the toilers who roam, to the loved ones come home,  
As they pass by my window is one  
Whose coming I mark, for the song of the lark  
As it joyously soars in the sky  
Is no dearer to me than the notes, glad and free,  
Of the boy who goes whistling by.

If a sense of unrest settles over my breast  
And my spirit is clouded with care,  
It all flies away if he happens to stray  
Past my window a-whistling an air.  
And I never shall know how much gladness I owe  
To this joy of the ear and the eye,

But I'm sure I'm in debt for much pleasure I get  
To the boy who goes whistling by.

And this music of his, how much better it is  
Than to burden his life with a frown,  
For the toiler who sings to his purpose brings  
A hope his endeavor to crown.  
And whenever I hear his glad notes, full and clear,  
I say to myself I will try  
To make all of life with a joy to be rife,  
Like the boy who goes whistling by.

—*Nixon Waterman*

## **I Met the Master**

I had walked life's way with an easy tread,  
Had followed where comfort and pleasures led,  
Until one day in a quiet place  
I met the Master face to face.

With station and rank and wealth for my goal,  
Much thought for my body but none for my soul,  
I had entered to win in life's made race,  
When I met the Master face to face.

I met Him and knew Him and blushed to see  
That His eyes full of sorrow were fixed on me;  
And I faltered and fell at His feet that day,  
While my castles melted and vanished away.

Melted and vanished and in their place  
Naught else did I see but the Master's face,  
And I cried aloud, "Oh, make me meet  
To follow the steps of Thy wounded feet."

My thought is now for the souls of men,  
I have lost my life to find it again,  
E're since one day in a quiet place  
I met the Master face to face.

—*Unknown*

A Story

## Mother? No, What Is Your Profession?

*[I have translated this story from Portuguese. The editor admits the author is unknown, so there should be no problem in sharing it.]*

A woman named Anne was answering questions to get her driver's licence renewed. "Your profession, please."

Anne hesitated, trying to decide how to answer this seemingly simple question.

The young man showed a trace of irritation. "What I want to know is if you work."

"Of course I work!" she answered, also perturbed by the young man's discourtesy.

"I can't put that down. We don't consider being a mother as work." In a voice devoid of emotion, he informed Anne, "I'll put you down as a housewife."

I forgot all about this story until one day I was also renewing my driver's license. The lady who was taking care of me was obviously a seasoned worker, efficient, sure of herself and doubtlessly had a fancy title attached to her name.

"What is your occupation?"

I don't know how this happened, but I was surprised to hear what I told the lady:

"I have a doctorate in infant development and human relations."

The lady paused; this occupation to her was new. I could see she thought maybe she hadn't heard right, so I slowly repeated my occupation, placing special emphasis on the words that lent dignity to my new title.

My mouth almost fell open. The lady was actually writing, in black ink, my profession on the official form. When she finished, she looked at me, shedding a bit of her formality, and in an almost friendly voice said, "May I ask what your profession involves?"

By now I was thoroughly enjoying this unexpected situation and I heard myself answering: "I am working on a long-range project (that is true of all mothers), both in my laboratory and in the field (normally I would have said inside and outdoors). The team (my family) that I am working with has four projects (all girls) in motion right now."

By now the lady was rapt and so I continued:

"This is a fulltime job (what mother would disagree?) that requires my attention at least 14 hours a day (I figured if I said 24 hours, the lady might get suspicious).

When the lady spoke, I could sense a deep respect in her voice. When the form was filled out and I was ready to go, she got up and chivalrously opened the door for me.

As I walked through my front door, I was welcomed home by my projects (one 13, another 7 and yet another 3). The fourth project (six months) was upstairs and I could hear by her voice that something wasn't quite right.

I felt like a real hero, for I am a mother. What a glorious profession! I guess I feel sort of bad though, that my mother and her mother never were known by their proper

titles of: Senior researchers in infant development and human relations. My aunts should have been known as senior research assistants.

This story I dedicate to all the mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers and aunts that I know, all of them with a doctorate in the art of making this world a better place. ▲

## **This & That**

Approximately a year ago we reported that Wal-Mart was going to open a new store in Goiânia. Finally it is happening. For those of you who know Goiânia, it's right in front of the Carrefour hypermarket (the one next to Flamboyant).

May 25 the Paul Jeffery family left for England, where they plan on living for an indefinite period of time.

A reader, William Miller, from the Monte Alegre Congregation, found the following information on Anabaptist presence in England: "There were anabaptists in England in 1575, according to the Martyrs Mirror, pp. 1008-124. According to the Mennonite Encyclopedia, there were anabaptists in England into the 1530s. and through the rest of the century, but apparently towards the end of the century, they were assimilated by other separatist movements and ended up as Congregationalists and Baptists."

June 4 the Jesse Loewen and Milfred Loewen families sold their goods at auction.

June 5 was the wedding of Daniel Araújo, of the Rio Verde Cong., to Roseane, daughter of Stephen & Dete Kramer, from the Boa Esperança Cong. in Mato Grosso.

Eduardo & Susan Vieira and daughter moved from the Monte Alegre Cong. to Patos, where they will be part of the mission church. Eduardo has been my office assistant for the last several years. He will carry on his translation work in Patos. Information will be shuttled back and forth by e-mail.

June 11, Doetke Jager returned to the Netherlands after spending several months here on the Colony. Doetke is Sipke Hiemester's (who now lives in Georgia) niece. She is a school teacher and would like to teach in the church school system.

President Lula is embroiled in a political scandal that involves close associates and congressmen of the PT, his political party. It is generally accepted, even by his opponents, that Lula is honest and is suffering for the sins of his associates. He has declared he won't seek reelection (although that decision could easily change if this storm blows over).

The exchange rate, in relation to the dollar, keeps dropping. At the closing of this edition, one US dollar was worth 2.39 reals.

For you readers who are involved in publishing, until the last issue, BN was set up on PageMaker. This issue is being done on Adobe InDesign. My first impression is very good. It has all the positive points of PageMaker, plus a whole menu-full of additional tools.