

Brazil News



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Editorial

God has no pets

[As an introduction to our subject, we reprint the editorial from BN no. 42.]

We say that all men are equal, that God is no respecter of persons, and that He loves everyone equally. But way down deep, it's a concept we have a hard time grasping. We would like to believe that if we were sitting in a restaurant where all of mankind was represented, and Jesus walked through, He would stop at our table and chat just a bit, and maybe pat us on the shoulder. Then He would walk on. Occasionally He might smile or briefly wave at someone else. Others would notice that in spite of our plainness, there was something special about us. It would be gratifying.

People with whom we deal give us credit for our honesty and good work habits. Often we are given special treatment because of this. This should be taken as a tribute to our religious principles, and not as a personal achievement.

Obviously not everyone is given this preferential treatment. For us it can be truly devastating to be treated like "anyone else."

Over the years we Americans living in Brazil had excellent relations with officials in the American consulate in Brasília. But one day there rose up an official who knew not Joseph. Then we were no better than anyone else. Our word lost its buying power. Where yea and nay once were sufficient, documents were now demanded.

It's frustrating, to say the least. Yet for us such situations are usually transitory. We look forward to the day when things will change for the better. Which, it seems, they always do. But for the majority of the inhabitants of the earth, this hope doesn't exist. As a Brazilian writer says, "Their hope is stillborn."

One of the most puzzling stories found in the Bible is that of John the Baptist. Let's notice his credentials:

He was "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."

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He was Jesus' cousin. The angel told Mary, "Behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son."

Even as a child his greatness was recognized by men. They said, "What manner of child shall this be!"

His mission in life was to go before Jesus "in the spirit and power of Elias."

He practiced strenuous self denial, living "in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel." His clothes were "raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey."

He was a powerful preacher, "preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

He baptized Jesus, the Son of God, "to fulfill all righteousness."

Now comes the part of John the Baptist's story that is hard to understand. After being imprisoned by the king, he sent Jesus a message. In essence he asked, "Am I suffering for a worthy cause?" That's all.

Can you imagine! If ever anyone qualified to be God's pet, it would be John the Baptist.

He could have written, "Dear cousin, what have I done to deserve this damp, squalid prison...?"

He could have said, "Every day you help people who have never done a thing for you. I'm sure you can help me, your forerunner, your helper, your admirer..."

Or even, "What do men say when they find no effort is being made by my 'friends' to get me out of jail...?"

Stranger yet, after getting John the Baptist's terse message, Jesus didn't say, "How terrible! We have to get my cousin out of jail." Neither did He say, "It isn't right for a man like John the Baptist to be in jail. He has been a very useful man. I'm sure he can do more for us."

None of that. We know the answer, which in essence was, "John, you're suffering for a worthy cause."

We believe that John the Baptist got the message and shortly thereafter died a happy man. In jail.

Where did we get the idea that God has pets? That some deserve better treatment than John the Baptist? Better than the martyrs?

What about Zion, the apple of God's eye? Doesn't it hold a special place before the Lord? Absolutely. Not only special, but also exclusive, in that it has no rivals. To be part of Zion is the greatest honor that can be bestowed on man. But face it, the most faithful member in Zion is not God's pet.

When a Haitian ferry sank offshore and hundreds of lives were extinguished, among them several dozen of our members going to a national church conference, we were speechless. Pastors, leaders, stable men and women, perished along with everyone else.

When a missionary loses a child or a spouse while on duty—and because of duty—we grope for words. For explanations.

When the only pastor of a struggling congregation loses his life in an accident, we numbly accede God's ways are best, but admit we don't understand.

That we should feel we have a special rating with the Lord is quite understandable. This is a predictable consequence of modern living. Epidemics that a century ago still ravaged communities, countries and continents, indiscriminately annihilating saint and sinner, have been vaccinated into oblivion. But the idea that individuals or groups engaged in spiritual activities are immune to death or accident is continually refuted in the *Martyrs Mirror*. Indeed, it was exactly the leaders, the most faithful, who were highest on the hit lists.

No, God had no pets in the past.

A pet believes he deserves special attention. And liberties. Had John the Baptist considered himself to be Jesus' pet, he would never have landed up in jail. What ailed him to tell the king his marriage was out of order? Why make that his business? Why not leave sleeping dogs lie?

The prophet Amos pronounces a woe on "them that are at ease in Zion," or could we say, on those who believe that being a citizen of Zion bestows status.

If Stephen had been at ease in Zion, he would have never been stoned.

Paul had an impressive list of credentials, but he counted it all as dung. Had he watched his words just a bit more, he could have saved himself a lot of problems (stripes, stonings, shipwrecks, hunger, cold...) No, Paul decidedly wasn't God's pet.

Why is it we try so hard to be? We thank the Lord for quiet, peaceful lives. To a point that is good. But what would have happened if John the Baptist had kept his mouth shut, stayed out of jail, and then thanked the Lord for a quiet, peaceful life? What if Paul would have kept his mouth shut? And Peter?

Peter didn't consider himself a pet. Remembering his past, he felt a normal crucifixion would be too good for him. Paul said he was the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called by that name, because he persecuted the church of God.

A pet: Someone who feels worthy of special treatment because of real or imagined merits.

Heaven will be filled with people who felt their unworthiness during this life – who never believed they deserved to be a pet.

...

Countries have a personality just like people, which makes them quite predictable, or calculably—and usually dangerously—unpredictable. And as happens both in human circles and in nature, there are always those who lead the pack, powerful nations that dominate the weak.

When world history is run past us in fast-forward, we see an interminable sequence of nations tumbling and others rising in their place. The benignity of a dominating nation over other states is always directly proportional to its degree of civilization and religious qualities. The most unspeakable atrocities were committed by godless kingdoms, and godless men, such as Nero and Adolph Hitler, who through demoniac power were able to sway the masses.

The United States of America is arguably the most benign nation that has ever exercised world leadership. Detractors are quick to point out what they see as deplorable faults, but when lined up with other nations that have been in a similar position throughout history,

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the United States shines brightly, for truly it was founded as “one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.”

Most of those born and raised under the shadow of the stars and stripes believe that this privileged condition will perpetuate itself...well, until the end of time. Maybe it will.

Yet on the horizon we see some dark, ominous clouds, the kind they used to see in Texas, Kansas and Oklahoma during the Dirty Thirties, that hardly gave time to get the horses into the stable and then get into the house before the storm hit and turned day to a gritty night.

The first lesson we learn as we study secular history is that of gravity—that that which goes up must sooner or later come down. The second lesson we learn, and this in Biblical history, is that “the Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.”

Both of these lessons can be painfully viewed in the story of the Second World War. A few years previous, Germany was thoroughly trashed during the First World War. The terms of surrender reduced it to almost a vassal state. Yet one man, a Bavarian and erstwhile penniless derelict who lived on the street and ate in soup kitchens chafed at this humiliating defeat. His feverish mind gave him no rest. His first attempts to stir up the people landed him in prison, where he dictated *Mein Kampf*, in which he clearly set forth his vision of a pure race that would result in the Third Reich that should rule the world for a thousand years.

Hitler’s book was published and made available, not only to the Germans, but to the whole world. His Machiavellian rise to power left world leaders bewildered, but not unduly alarmed. When the Olympics were held in Germany before the war, with enormous swastikas visible in stadiums and public places, people still showed little alarm. Rather, many went home impressed with German precision, organization and ingenuity.

It wasn’t until panzer units, with until then unheard of blitzkrieg tactics began toppling neighboring countries, that world leaders began scratching their heads (with the exception of Winston Churchill, who from the very onset saw Hitler for what he really was). Even then a united effort by democratic nations could have stopped the thrust, but it wasn’t until it was too late to avoid a World War that action was taken.

And then came Pearl Harbor, that brought the war to the Pacific, there to battle a ruthless, godless nation. There was plenty of reliable intelligence that this attack was pending, but those in power chose to close their eyes to facts and hope everything would blow over.

“God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God.” Approximately 60 million souls perished during World War II, as a direct or indirect consequence of hostilities. We don’t know why God permitted that a godless derelict and a heathen nation inflict such suffering on humanity. What we do know, without a doubt, is that he did permit it. When the tide turned and the Allies won the war, it was by Divine decree. We must not forget that lesson.

Once again the horizon is dark with storm clouds. We convince ourselves that maybe some thunderstorms are on the way. Let’s take a quick view of the current world situation:

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China. Even though missionaries have made incursions into China for well over a hundred and fifty years, numerically the results have been infinitesimal. China has not turned into a Christian nation. Shucked of drab Mao attire and dressed in Western garb, we believe there has been a transformation, which we don't deny. But never believe that if conditions were right that the old China couldn't suddenly resurrect. China today is winning a far greater battle than it could win with bombs and tanks. It is gorging itself with the jobs of workers of democratic nations and using the proceeds to buy up banks, industry and real estate in the very nations it is plundering. An uncomfortable share of the American domestic debt is being serviced by China. Let us not forget that "the borrower is servant to the lender."

India. Over the years there has been a Christianizing influence in India, but by no means can India be considered a Christian nation. Today India is recognized as a strong contender for a prominent place in future world economic, scientific and industrial leadership. Countries in which unions have hammered out stratospheric wages and absurd benefits will have a hard time competing with India, China and other emerging nations.

We have just mentioned two of the most populous nations in the world. It is unlikely they will ever threaten the free world militarily; the big—and very real—threat is economical.

Russia. Some of you readers remember the time when the Cold War was at its zenith. Bomb shelters were being built, not only in public buildings, but in private homes as well. The Soviet Union was seen as the great enemy of democracy. The threat was real.

In a little publicized happening, a handful of top Kremlin brass secretly sent a nuclear sub to sea disguised as a Chinese craft. It surfaced some 400 miles from Pearl Harbor. Assured that it had been detected by US surveillance, it dived. The plan was to launch a nuclear attack on Pearl Harbor, which would result in all-out war with China. After the US and China were in shambles, Russia would reap the spoils.

There are different explanations for what happened next, but the only one that makes sense can be resumed in one word: God. Just as its missiles were in the process of being launched, a terrible explosion, recorded by US sonic equipment, destroyed the sub. The sub, the missiles and all hands tumbled to the bottom of the sea.

Had the subterfuge worked, we can only guess what the outcome might have been. But, unbeknown to the Russians, American intelligence tracked the "Chinese" sub from the moment it left the harbor. Had the missiles reached their mark, the US and Russia—and not China—would have immediately been embroiled in a no-holds-barred war. God said no.

Except for rogue leaders and their henchmen, Russians are a very fine, hard working people. It would be most unfortunate to regard them as an unreasonable or inimical race. Yet, in spite of all the good things we can say about Russia and the treaties that have been signed, their nuclear arsenal has by no means been defanged.

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." The first sense of this verse is spiritual. But who would deny that today it has a very literal application. Let's notice some of the "perils" that the world is facing today:

Irreligion, which can range from hostility to simply not taking religion seriously. In both

traditional Protestantism and Catholicism, few take their religion seriously anymore; it has a negligible effect on their lives and decisions. We are perfectly aware that neither ever fit into God's perfect will for man, yet they were men and women who called upon the name of the Lord and, at least to a certain extent, feared His judgments. Between imperfect Christianity and heathenism, the former certainly is preferable. Yet, as nominal Christianity loses its faith, something almost worse than heathenism emerges. When the salt of nominal Christianity loses its savor, the very foundations of a nation begins cracking.

Religious fanaticism. We used to think of religious fanatics as peoples living way out someplace in a far corner of the world. They concerned us about as much as the annual snowfall in Antarctica. Today the majority of the developed nations of the world have at least a smattering of religious fanatics, or potential fanatics, living in their midst. Exactly because of their fanatical character, it doesn't take many to put a nation in danger. In fact, it takes only a handful to disrupt world order.

What makes religious fanaticism so dangerous is a willingness and often an overpowering desire to die for what is considered a noble cause. As World War II was drawing to a close in the Pacific theater and Japan was in its death throes, a new modus operandi of warfare suddenly appeared: the kamikaze pilots. Flying planes loaded with bombs, they would dive toward a ship out of the sun, thus blinding the gunners. Time and again they smashed into the superstructure of the ship. Miniature one-man submarines loaded with explosive would silently stalk their prey and blow both the ship and the enemy submarine to kingdom come. With such tactics, with just a few planes, submarines and men, a lost war was needlessly prolonged (and doubtlessly tipped the scales in favor of the nuclear destruction of two cities).

An inverted sense of justice. This cannot be pinned to one country or continent. Inverted justice, in a nutshell, means calling right wrong and wrong right; it is human rights in a tail dive. The world fears terrorism and demands that governments do something about it, all the while binding the hands of intelligence agencies and world leaders. Terrorism is not a gentlemanly activity, yet those dealing with the perpetrators of terrorism are expected to wear kid gloves and say please and thank you. The same is true in dealing with common criminals, who must have their rights read to them before they can be taken into custody. The United States government, and the president, are criticized, not only abroad, but internally as well. This does not make for a bright future.

War-torn homes. If a satellite photo could be taken today of homes in the major countries of the world, we would see a scene of devastation similar to that of a city that has been exposed to intense bombing. Yes, more and more couples tell how they separated and continue to be good friends with their former spouse. Educators tell us that children are very pliable and can be shifted from one home to another, with a new parent and siblings, without adverse effects. Evidently such learned behaviorists no longer have any benchmark as to what constitutes a truly happy and functional home.

I have said before that when I go into a store, I have the little habit of trying to make friends with those who wait on me. Of the younger generation, very seldom do I find one who is part of an intact home. Some—most—live with their mother, some

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with their dad, and others live by themselves after a disastrous marriage or live-in experience. That kind of people have never, and will never, be the backbone of a nation. Yet they today are a majority.

Terrorism is the blight of modern society; it is by far the worst form of warfare ever to lurk on the earth. In a tribute to the RAF pilots who daily—and nightly—defended England during her darkest hour, Winston Churchill said that “Never in the field of human conflict was so *much* owed by so *many* to so *few*.” Today, in what could become the world’s darkest hour, it can be said that never in the field of human conflict have so *few* been able to do so *much*, to so *many*. What better describes the terrorist?

For those who believe this to be an overstatement, we point out that the world’s globalized economy is like a woman with child. She may seem strong and healthy, but is nevertheless very vulnerable to jolts and tumbles that would have little effect on someone else. Thus, should terrorism ever manage to destroy tens—or hundreds—of thousands of lives in a bold offensive, the globalized economic system will immediately be in shambles.

May this never happen.

We don’t know what God will permit to befall humanity before the end. There are those who strongly feel that Scripture would indicate a worst-case scenario. We would like to believe—and possibly even hope—that those who believe that way are “radicals.” Even if that should be the case, we must still face facts. If time continues...

> There is a strong possibility that world leadership will fall into the hands of non-Christian nations.

> Just as globalization makes it possible to share progress and profits with the whole world, it follows that a major crisis (an act of terrorism, for example) in any developed nation will send its shock waves out to the rest of the world. A crash of the world financial order will be of an apocalyptic order and will make quick believers of those who said that “since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning.”

> Never in the history of humanity has the “world” sinned as it is sinning today—not even in the time of Noah. It is an eternal fact that God punishes sin in both individuals and nations. This leaves us two possibilities—and one question: The end is at hand and God will punish sin, both individual and national, in the final judgment. The question: Are we ready? The second possibility is that God will permit a global punishment to befall mankind before the end; this could involve many different scenarios, all of which will probably include an economic collapse. The same question: Are we ready?

If we believe that in the second possibility God’s people should carefully reread the Martyrs Mirror, beginning with the Savior, who was crucified, John the Baptist who was beheaded in prison, the apostles, almost all of whom died a martyr death, and then an immense throng of brothers and sisters who gave their lives during fifteen hundred years.

No, God (who spared not His own Son) and permitted, according to some historians, that a million plus brothers and sisters in the faith give their lives, had no pets.

Is there any reason that we should be His pets.



[At five o'clock in the morning, a few hours after I finished this article, the phone rang and Janete, Mrs. Edinei Alves, from the Moçambique mission, called and told us about the terrible accident that had just occurred that snuffed out David Holdeman's life. I remembered Min. Reuben Koehn out in India when his wife passed away. Our tendency is to cry out WHY?

No, God has no pets.]

Taps

Veril Koehn

Either you knew Veril Koehn or you didn't. And if you did, you liked him.

Veril is dead.

In our last visit, Veril mentioned that his mom said that when he and I were babies, we spent time together in the old Lone Tree church nursery. That was about the extent of our early comradeship. His folks moved away from Lone Tree shortly thereafter and over the years we would occasionally see each other during their visits to Kansas. It wasn't until he and Ileen, and their four children, moved to Brazil in 1975, and we were neighbors, that we really became acquainted.

People write essays on the meaning of friendship. Veril effortlessly fit into these descriptions. In spite of a knowledge on a wide array of subjects, he always enjoyed listening. (In fact, I believe that is one of the reasons he knew all that he did.) Before a conversation could lag, he would begin tossing out his tidbits of information, which were always interesting and never self-serving.

Veril loved Brazil. He spoke the language fluently. At heart he was a Brazilian, which accounts for his many friends.

Behind Veril's ready smile and friendly voice there lurked some impulses that I believe he himself detested. He would make friends with people whose friendship was no enhancement to his own character and spirituality. I doubt that anyone knows all the details, but one thing led to another. He was like a child who enters a cave or an abandoned mine and begins to explore. A turn is made off the beaten path, and then another, and yet another, always with the thought in mind of retracing his steps. His light grows dimmer and dimmer and he finally recognizes he is lost, but has no idea how to get back to sunlight.

Different ones had intimate talks with Veril in his closing weeks of life. He would give a clear accurate review of the wrong turns he took. He would admit that he himself was to blame for his situation. He would bitterly deplore what had happened. He told me, "You don't know what it is like to not have felt peace during the last 20 years." There were those who were able to take him by his spiritual arm and lead him right to the mouth of the cave, where he could see the sunlight. They would ask, "Shall we go out?" Not once did he give a clear, unconditional, "Yes, let's go," answer. There is a certain hope that shortly before his death he tried, but was unable to indicate he was ready for the light.

So much good can be said of Veril; we can point out his qualities and say from the bottom of our heart we will miss him. We are thankful that both the community and church in Brazil today are being blessed by his fine family... We just wish that when we sing Blessed Assurance, a calm feeling would come over us as we remember Veril. s

A Brazilian Story

By Mário de Moraes

The Well-Dressed Businessman

We were telling stories about how people got took by some real slick operators, when I remembered this story, which actually happened. It all began with a new car.

“How much does that car over there cost?” the well-dressed gentleman asked the salesman.

“The blue one?”

“Yes, the blue one.”

“Twenty thousand dollars, Doctor.”

[We insert here that we have converted the currency of that time, possibly 40 years ago, into dollars. Also, back then it was very common to address with a certain status as Doctor.]

“I’ll take it.”

This was on a Saturday when the banks were already closed. Even if the banks had been open, it is doubtful that the salesman would have given the banker a call to see if the check was ok. Beside that, back then people trusted each other.

In just a short time the gentleman was on his way with the new car. About an hour later, a man hurried into the agency, obviously quite disturbed. He went straight to the manager’s office and blurted out, “I just bought a brand new Chevy for ten thousand dollars cash. According to the papers the owner gave me, the car was bought here in this agency earlier today. After I had paid the man, I got suspicious and decided to come here to see if everything is above board.”

By now the manager was frantic. “I know what happened! That fellow paid me with a hot check, You gave him ten thousand dollars cash. This is really awful.”

Recomposing himself, the manager asked the man seated in front of his desk, “Do you have any idea where I could find that fellow?”

“Probably in the airport. He told me he was going to catch the next flight for Buenos Aires.”

Picking up the phone, the manager ordered his secretary to put a call through to the police.

In a matter of minutes the police were at the agency to hear the manager’s version of what happened. They too were convinced that the original purchase was fraudulent. Jumping into their cruise car, they headed to the airport with red lights flashing and wailing siren.

Storming into the airport they went directly to the desk of the airline that had a

flight to Buenos Aires. There, waiting at the boarding gate, was the gentleman in the expensive suit that exactly fit the description given by the salesman.

“You’re under arrest!”

“Gentlemen, there must have been some misunderstanding. I’m on my way to Buenos Aires where I plan on signing the papers for a deal that will make me two hundred thousand dollars...”

“You can tell your story to the judge,” the man was told as handcuffs were snapped on his wrists.

The businessman in the expensive suit was booked into the local jail. He made headlines in the Sunday paper.

Monday morning when the bank opened, just for curiosity, the manager of the car agency sent the check to the bank to make sure it was really a hot check. He almost had a heart attack when his man got back from the bank and reported that the check was good. He rushed to the jail and asked the “Delegado de Polícia” to let the well-dressed businessman go; that there had been a terrible mistake.”

When the businessman was brought up from his cell, the manager apologized profusely for what had happened. The well-dressed businessman rebuffed the attempt to make wrongs right. “Beside ruining my reputation, you have caused me to lose a hundred thousand dollars. I am going to sue you...”

The manager made a last attempt at reconciliation. “We simply couldn’t understand why someone would buy a new car for 20 thousand dollars and then minutes later resell it for half that much. What made you do such a thing?”

“I didn’t like the color of the car,” was his laconic answer.

True to his word, the well-dressed businessman took the car agency to law and was rewarded 250 thousand dollars in punitive damages, which was paid.

Some time later the same well-dressed businessman was doing “business” in Rio de Janeiro. It soon became apparent that he was a professional scoundrel who planned out his deals with surgical precision. In the case of the Chevy purchased and resold, the fellow who bought the car from him and then rushed to the agency was one of his gang. Everything was a ruse to create a good case to present in court. That was where the money was. ▲

Zé Mentira

[The following story, taken from issue 27 of this little paper, actually happened here on the Colony some 30 years ago.]

Quite a few years ago, a handful of German Baptist families from the US settled in the neighborhood. After several years they decided to return to the US.

One of them, Wilmer Long, decided to sell his place through a real estate agency in town. It didn’t take long and they came up with a buyer for his place – at a good price.

Our lawyer, Dr. Jerônimo, handled all our land transactions. He had a good nose for smelling a rotten tomato. For some reason, probably at the realtor’s insistence, Wilmer let them choose a lawyer to make up the contract. That was the second mistake. The first

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was to get involved with Zé Mentira. *Zé* is short for José – Joseph – and *Mentira* means lie. So we have Joseph the Liar.

Wilmer wanted me to be present for the signing. That is where I met Zé Mentira. I got a funny feeling when I walked into their office. The atmosphere was almost wild. Zé Mentira wanted to know if he didn't look like Elvis Presley. There was no doubt about that one. He did.

Then there was the buyer, a man possibly in his fifties. His hands were calloused from hard work, his clothes simple. He fit perfectly the description of many of our local *fazendeiros* – land owners. Rich men, some of them illiterate, they looked and worked just like their hired men. These were some of the most trustworthy men that could be found.

So in the middle we had Elvis Presley, acting like a maniac. On one side was Wilmer Long, a fine gentleman, and on the other, a rich land owner from the state of Minas Gerais.

It was during this time that the coffee boom was on in this area. Different ones on the fazenda were getting ready to plant coffee. We found out that the buyer had a coffee plantation in Minas Gerais. He was able to give us a lot of interesting information about raising coffee.

While Zé Mentira certainly cast a shadow on the whole thing, the honesty of the buyer sort of offset all that.

The time came to sign the contract. Since the buyer's money wouldn't become available for several weeks, there would be no title until full payment had been made. That was good. But the realtors had one little item they wanted to discuss. Once the contract was signed, their mission would be fulfilled, which meant they should collect their fees.

That made a certain amount of sense, but Wilmer told them he would give them promissory notes, good for after the final payment was made on the fazenda. Elvis Presley and his cronies agreed to that.

The contract was signed. The promissories were signed and handed out to the individual realtors involved in the deal. Everyone shook hands. Everyone was happy. Especially Elvis Presley.

The due date for the land payment came around, but not the buyer. Wilmer got excited. Here he had paid a high fee to the realtors and their man wasn't paying up. He looked the realtors up. He wanted the notes back. What if the man didn't show up anymore?

Sadly they shook their head. *Impossível!* They no longer had the notes. They had passed them on to others in deals they made.

As days and weeks went by, Wilmer realized he had been swindled. Apparently the entire thing was a carefully planned farse, starting with Elvis Presley and ending with the "honest" fazendeiro from Minas Gerais.

To be able to sell his place legally, Wilmer had to go through court (and here is where Dr. Jerônimo made his money) and get the old contract annulled.

I understand that shortly after that Zé Mentira met his Waterloo when someone shot him, very likely for a similar stunt.

And the "honest" fazendeiro from Minas Gerais? Never again did we see hide nor hair of the man.

No doubt about it, the real professional in this whole deal, the one who made things work, was the "honest" man from Minas Gerais. ▲

Information

Cloned Phones

The phones used out here on the Colony, and in rural areas in different parts of Brazil, are actually hybrid cell phones provided with an interface that makes it possible to use them as a conventional phone with extensions, cordless phones and fax. Although it isn't a perfect system, it has been a successful means of communication.

Our phones still operate on the old analog system, which makes them technologically outdated. We know this and so does the phone company.

Analog cell phones are a cloner's paradise. With a minimum of equipment and effort, they are able to retrieve the necessary codes to invade the system and begin making free calls all over the world—free because the bill goes to the owner. Brasil Telecom, the phone company, has been very good about canceling all such bills.

Once the phone company discovers that a phone has been cloned, it cuts off all service. That means that some of us have been without a conventional phone for nearly five months.

What is the explanation for this epidemic of clonings? One is that some of the workers in the telephone company are making criminal use of the codes. Another is that the phone company is wanting out of what they consider to be an unfavorable contract with users and this is their way to get them to accept their new plan. Strangely, this is happening all over Brazil and is probably affecting more than 50 thousand users. That's a lot of people to be without a phone—although we do have our regular cell phones that still work.

The solution is to go to a digital phone. Brasil Telecom is promising to do the switch for us. It remains to be seen when and on what conditions.

Anyway, on the bright side, it is an excellent little opportunity for us to check out our non-resistant spirit.

Since these cloned phones receive a lot of international calls, we are going to include a list of cell phone numbers you can call until this situation gets straightened up. You will, of course, use the international access code as always. 011-55-64-xxxx-xxxx

Arlo Hibner	9987-8336
Bill Miller	9987-7781
Calvin Hibner	9203-9160
Charles Becker	9987-8522
Clifford Warkentin	9987-2264
Clinton Unruh	9987-7963
Daniel Martin	9907-9112
Dean Mininger	9987-0466
Hallis Silva	9641-4182
Harold Holdeman	9641-1106
Literature Center	9987-8522
Jake Loewen	9987-1390
John Unruh	9641-0261
Kathy Schultz	9283-6581
Mervin Loewen	9641-4215
Milton Loewen	9675-0399

Myron Kramer	9987-0205
Nelson Unruh	9625-9693
Paul Yoder	9987-0675
Phillip Martin	9204-2672
Stanley Schultz	9987-2407
Tim Burns	9987-0960
Wagner Machado	9987-7549
Will Miller	3621-3653



Readers Contribute

Profit Sharing

A Brazilian congressman was made responsible for getting bids for a major remodeling of the Palácio do Planalto, where congress convenes. He spoke to three contractors: a German, an American and a Brazilian.

“I’ll do it for three million dollars,” said the German. “One million for labor, one million for material and one million as profit.”

“I’ll do it for six million dollars,” was the offer made by the American. “Two million for labor, two million for material and two million profit.” He added, “But it will be a top-notch job.”

“I’ll do it for nine million dollars...” was the Brazilian’s offer.

“Nine million dollars! That’s a lot of money,” interrupted the congressman. “How do you explain that kind of spending?”

“Simple. Three for you, three for me, and three to hire the German to do the work.”

“It’s a deal!” ▲

Straight from the Ticket Agent

A Washington, DC airport ticket agent offers some examples of why our country is in trouble!

1. I had a New Hampshire Congresswoman ask for an aisle seat so that her hair wouldn’t get messed up by being near the window.

2. I got a call from a candidate’s staffer, who wanted to go to Capetown. I started to explain the length of the flight and the passport information, then she interrupted me with, “I’m not trying to make you look stupid, but Capetown is in Massachusetts,” Without trying to make her look stupid, I calmly explained, “Cape Cod is in Massachusetts; Capetown is in Africa.” Her response: Click.

3. A senior Vermont Congressman called, furious about a Florida package we did. I asked what was wrong with the vacation in Orlando. He said he was expecting an ocean-view room. I tried to explain that’s not possible, since Orlando is in the middle of the state. He replied, “Don’t lie to me, I looked on the map and Florida is a very thin state!”

4. I got a call from a lawmaker’s wife who asked, “Is it possible to see England from Canada?” I said, “No.” She said, “But they look so close on the map.”

5. An aide for a cabinet member once called and asked if he could rent a car in

Brazil ¹⁴ News

Dallas. When I pulled up the reservation, I noticed he had only a 1-hour layover in Dallas. When I asked him why he wanted to rent a car, he said, "I heard Dallas was a big airport, and we will need a car to drive between gates to save time."

6. An Illinois Congresswoman called last week. She needed to know how it was possible that her flight from Detroit left at 8:30 am and got to Chicago at 8:33 am. I explained that Michigan was an hour ahead of Illinois, but she couldn't understand the concept of time zones. Finally, I told her the plane went fast, and she bought that.

7. A New York lawmaker called and asked, "Do airlines put your physical description on your bag so they know whose luggage belongs to whom?" I said, "No, why do you ask?" She replied, "Well, when I checked in with the airline, they put a tag on my luggage that said (FAT), and I'm overweight. I think that's very rude!" After putting her on hold for a minute while I looked into it (I was laughing) I came back and explained the city code for Fresno, CA is (FAT), and the airline was just putting a destination tag on her luggage.

8. A Senator's aide called to inquire about a trip package to Hawaii. After going over all the cost info, she asked, "Would it be cheaper to fly to California, and then take the train to Hawaii?"

9. I just got off the phone with a freshman Congressman who asked, "How do I know which plane to get on?" I asked him what exactly he meant, to which he replied, "I was told my flight number is 823, but none of these planes have numbers on them."

10. A lady Senator called and said, "I need to fly to Pepsi-Cola, Florida. Do I have to get on one of those little computer planes?" I asked if she meant fly to Pensacola, Fl. on a commuter plane. She said, "Yeah, whatever, smarty!"

11. A senior Senator called and had a question about the documents he needed in order to fly to China. After a lengthy discussion about passports, I reminded him that he needed a visa. "Oh, no I don't. I've been to China many times and never had to have one of those." I double checked and sure enough, his stay required a visa. When I told him this he said, "Look, I've been to China four times and every time they have accepted my American Express!"

12. A New Mexico Congresswoman called to make reservations, "I want to go from Chicago to Rhino, New York." I was at a loss for words. Finally, I said, "Are you sure that's the name of the town?" "Yes, what flights do you have?" replied the lady. After some searching, I came back with, "I'm sorry, ma'am, I've looked up every airport code in the country and can't find a Rhino anywhere." The lady retorted, "Oh, don't be silly! Everyone knows where it is. Check your map!" So I scoured a map of the state of New York and finally offered, "You don't mean Buffalo, do you?" The reply? "Whatever! I knew it was a big animal". ▲

This & That

Jon & Sheila Coblentz had sale on July 22. They are returning to the US for an indefinite time. (Yes, they definitely plan on returning to Brazil.)

Brazil ¹⁵ News

Clifford & Naomi Warkentin and Daniel & Betty Martin were on the recent Heritage Tour to Europe. They gave a report at the Monte Alegre Cong. On August 6.

Our son Otávio married Leila Ambrósio on August 13. Gaylord Becker and Brock Unruh from CA were here for the wedding.

Doreen, Mrs. Frank Mininger, was out for her dad's (Veril's) funeral on August 12.

Errol & Karen Redger and children spent a short time here with her folks, Jake & Betty Loewen.

Richard Mininger spent several weeks here helping with revival meetings on the missions and to visit the home brethren.

The Monte Alegre School began a new term on August 28. The Rio Verdinho children are studying here this year.

David & Roxie Miller are spending some time in the States to seek medical help for one of their children.

Frank & Brenda Coblentz and children are visiting the Colony.