

# Brazil News



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Editorial

## **Are We Prepared?**

According to ancient history, Damocles was a sycophant in the court of Dionysius II of Syracuse, Italy, in the fourth century B.C. Since his official court function was to flatter the king, a tyrant, Damocles didn't miss a chance to extol his virtues. Even flattery has its limits and one day the king, tiring of Damocles' incessant efforts to trumpet his greatness, offered to exchange places with him for a day. Damocles would sit on the king's throne with Dionysius assuming the role of the court sycophant. Damocles was enchanted. For one day he would be king!

On the assigned day, Damocles regally took his place on the throne and the king humbly took his at the foot of the throne. It was all Damocles had hoped for, and more...until he glanced upward and saw that over his head there hung a huge sword that slowly gyrated, first to the left and then to the right—suspended by a single long strand of horse hair.

The knowledge that at any moment the horse hair could part and the heavy sword would plunge through his skull bringing instant death was so disconcerting, that Damocles begged the tyrant to permit him to step down from the throne and resume his position as court sycophant.

The point was well made. Damocles understood that being king was not at all what he believed it to be. He understood that power and authority come at a price and is never as easy or safe as one imagines.

Most major changes are usually preceded by minor changes, often so subtle we ourselves are unaware of what is taking place. That is why a good physician asks many questions when diagnosing certain illnesses, searching for small telltale signs that may have actually begun months, or even years, previously.

When friends or family members make a sudden disastrous change of course in life, we think back and remember a series of lesser decisions or attitudes that had a direct

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bearing on what took place—which we disregarded or were unwilling to address at the time.

On a grand scale, major events such as political upheavals, coups, revolutions and wars are almost always preceded by manifestations of unrest or turmoil that are either ignored or go unchallenged. We call this the smoking volcano syndrome. People living near a dormant volcano hear occasional rumblings, feel tremors beneath their feet, see plumes of smoke rising from the crater. At first they are alarmed, but as time goes by and nothing happens, they accept the rumblings, tremors and smoke as part of their daily life, frequently to the point of ignoring scientific warnings. A case in point is the eruption of Mt. Pelée on the Caribbean island of Martinique in 1902 in which over 20,000 inhabitants died, in spite of repeated warnings.

Today's globalized world is a smoking volcano. Yes, there are nations and cultures where the rumblings are more intense, but no matter where we look we see smoke. We believe the end of time is at hand, but should the Lord tarry, even as men cry peace and safety, the smoking volcano may well erupt. Suddenly.

The history of humanity is the chronicle of the rise and fall of kingdoms, of peoples, of governments, indeed, of entire civilizations, as in the case of the Aztecs and the Incas. If one lesson can be learned, it is that no kingdom or government has ever risen high enough to escape the pull of gravity. If ever there is truth to the adage that that which goes up must come down, it is in the world history.

Five hundred years ago Spain and Portugal were at the helm (literally, in sea exploration) of world events. In the past five centuries, Italy, France and England had their turns at world leadership. Adolph Hitler megalomaniacally boasted that his Third Reich, would last for a thousand years. Twelve years later Hitler and his henchmen, as well as his thousand year reign, were dead or vanquished.

With the exception of Hitler's Third Reich (actually, a political organization within Germany), none of the afore mentioned nations has ceased to exist, nor even to exercise influence in world affairs, but they no longer play center stage. Especially during the last one hundred years, the United States has assumed a prominent role in world leadership.

There of course is no mechanism that permits us to rate the influence nations and empires had on civilization since the dawn of time. Thus, to say that the United States has exerted a greater positive influence on civilization than any other nation in history is a very personal and arguable opinion. Nevertheless, there are some undeniable facts that would give credence to this view:

- In sheer numbers, the world population in the last one hundred years has been far greater than in any time of history. Thus the lives of infinitely more humans have been influenced than in any other time in history.
- In terms of power, comparisons fail. In the time of the Roman Empire wars were waged with bows, spears, swords and ungainly engines that would toss rocks over or against the wall of a besieged city. Today drones fly over battle areas and permit officers half way around the world to target missiles on objects or persons they wish to destroy—with surgical precision. It is true that militarily other nations have become powerful, but the balance of power has ultimately resided in the United States.

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- For many decades the dollar has been the standard currency for international trade.

- No other country in the history of the world has taken in immigrants from the four corners of the earth and given them the opportunity to prosper and occupy the most powerful positions in government, including the presidency, on the scale seen in the United States. In the past, militant nations have conquered peoples and either enslaved them or forced their culture and language on them. Never has there been a “melting pot” comparable to that of the United States in which the most diverse ethnic differences were homogenized into a people called Americans.

We have described briefly the role the United States has played in world events during especially the last one hundred years. During the communist heyday Americans were derogatorily referred to as “imperialists.” Today the term “world policeman” is in style. The United States has never been imperialistic in the sense that Great Britain, France, Spain and Portugal, among other nations, have been in the past. Has America been the world policeman? Indeed it has!

The question isn’t whether that is good or bad. Rather, can world order be maintained without a world policeman? Are Nato and United Nations organizations capable of policing trouble spots and rogue nations? The answer to both is No.

To police the world today is not easy. In fact, it is next to impossible. Let’s notice some of the problems civilized nations are facing:

- Terrorism. Self-explanatory.
- Rogue nations that possess or are developing nuclear weapons.
- Genocides that rage like wildfires unless stopped by outside force. (The recent killings in Rwanda that snuffed out nearly a million lives is a reminder that barbarism still exists on our planet.)

- Muslims. There are today over one billion Muslims on the face of the earth. Needless to say, not nearly all are radical (even if only five percent are radical, that still comes to 50 million) and consider the United States to be the great Satan. To radicals all non-Muslims are infidels.

- Extreme unrest in Arab countries.
- Drugs. No explanation needed.
- The ability to gather accurate intelligence at home and abroad, necessary for both global and national security.

- Crime and immorality. Self-explanatory.
- Untenable individual and governmental debt loads.
- Corrupt politics in which currency counts far more than character when placing men in office.

- Chinese economical dominance.
- Collapse of the family structure.
- Social security, Medicare, Medicaid and other social services costs that have spiraled out of control.

Nothing we have just mentioned is hypothetical. Add all that up and you have a keg of dynamite with a short fuse. It isn’t a matter of if it will blow up, but when.

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There are those who believe the world is capable of taking care of itself. History proves otherwise. Just as countries are dependent on strong leaders, so world events are swayed, often controlled, by strong countries. During the 20th Century, the United States has been this dominant force, the paladin of freedom. Two world wars were fought on foreign soil, both of which, without a doubt, would have had very different outcomes without American intervention. This is especially true of WWII, in which a murderous despot would have gained a foothold for world leadership had the Allies lost the war.

Patriotism is a virtue. Blind patriotism is not. A number of years ago I asked an American visitor if he believed it possible that the United States monetary system could possibly break down. Professorially he informed me of the many government mechanisms that are in place to avoid such a disaster. And he had a point. The FED and other monetary organs have actually done quite well at weathering severe crises. But, taking everything into consideration, including the dark scenario we have mentioned, will the United States lose its position as the global leader? Will there be a power transfer, a change of political priorities?

If we believe that history predicts the future, then yes, it is not only possible, but very probable. What follows is strictly hypothetical, and for the comfort of those who will take issue with what is said, let's say it is a personal opinion, a one-man's opinion, and no offence will be taken if you disagree.

To be the world policeman takes money. Lots of money. Lots and lots of money. According to Bill O'Reilly, a trillion dollars (that is a thousand billion) have been sunk into Iraq over the past years without a cent in return. Yet, little gratitude is shown by the population at large for the opportunity to have a democratic government. After having spent billions of dollars in Afghanistan, the projected withdrawal of American troops will probably signal a return to bedlam.

The United States spends more in one week to build and maintain its military machine than the majority of the countries of the world spend in one year. Please notice:

- The Navy spends a MILLION dollars plus to train one SEAL operative. (It was a Seal team that took Bin Laden down.)
- One Stealth bomber costs over a BILLION dollars.
- Each nuclear aircraft carrier, with a crew of 6,000, has an annual operating expense of over 15 billion dollars.
- The average fighter plane costs in excess of 40 million dollars.
- Each nuclear submarine costs over eight BILLION dollars.
- Tomahawk cruise missiles being shot into Libya today cost approximately a million dollars each.
- Total military expenses come to approximately two BILLION dollars per DAY.
- And finally, again according to Bill O'Reilly, the United States is adding 189 billion dollars an hour, an HOUR, to the national debt to stay afloat.

And the results?

World opinion no longer permits the United States to step into a troubled spot,

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clean up the mess with whatever force is necessary, and get out. Small countries today defiantly “resist arrest,” if you want to use that term. They turn themselves into victims and know full well that world opinion will be on their side. This is lamentable, but a fact.

So, with each passing year, the mammoth US military might that is creating an untenable burden on the economy, is becoming less and less effective. Domestic social programs have spun out of control.

There are doomsdayers who are watching all this and seeing imminent divine judgments about to descend on the United States. Among many other things they will cite is that in 2009 an estimated 332,278 abortions—one every 95 seconds—were performed in the United States. Certainly, this is not an encouraging statistic, but be that as it may. However, and I want to leave this very clear, the analysis we are doing here should be viewed strictly from a commonsensical or sectarian point of view. Can any nation, religious or pagan, free or democratic, survive in the scenario we have just described?

No. The answer is an unequivocal no. Even if you disagree, read on...

Where does this leave us?

It leaves us with the sword of Damocles hanging over our heads. We enjoy our good life, the many benefits of modern life. But, one major incident will be enough to throw not only the United States, but the world into chaos. The horse hair holding the gyrating sword is becoming brittle. We may suddenly discover that living like a king has a downside, that a king has no life insurance.

What is a major incident?

In today’s financial world a major incident can spring from an apparently insignificant happening that creates panic. Panic feeds on itself and can rapidly transform itself into an economic tsunami. When this happens, logic and the ability to think objectively are the first victims. As trading centers collapse around the world, globalization begins to self-destruct. Assembly lines turning out automobiles with components made in dozens of countries from the four corners of the world come to halt when even small parts are no longer being shipped. (Visit a Toyota dealership and see how they are faring.)

Homeland Security has done an admirable job of keeping terrorists at bay in the United States. The price of this is astronomical, but so long as there are positive results, removing shoes in the airport may be part of our daily life. But, even Homeland Security, the FBI, the CIA and other intelligence agencies may be a good tradeoff for a safe flight. However, it will take only one security breach to make the Twin Towers look like a Sunday School picnic. The panic from such an incident can only be imagined.

The Middle East today is a powder keg. There are some problems that don’t go away, that are immune to diplomacy and common sense. In his book, *I Shall Not Hate*, Izzeldin Abuelaish gives us a firsthand view of the conflict between Jews and Arabs—especially Palestinians. The hatred seems to have invaded the DNA of these peoples. An eye for an eye has progressed to a bomb for a bomb. Conflict has become a way of life. The concept of peace as we know it, of getting along with our neighbors, is foreign. In the Middle East, peace is destruction of the enemy, not coexistence.

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The China factor has been accepted by many as a *fait accompli*, as something we will have to live with, or who knows, get to live with. After all, that is where a lot of our cheap goods are coming from. Orientals are some of the most patient people on the face of the earth. They will quietly bide their time for years and decades to reach their objective, which in this case is world dominance. Times have changed and it won't be through bullets and bombs that they will reach their objective. They used to say that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. Today it is the hand that prints the world currency that rules the world. Even though the US dollar is still the world currency, its value is rapidly eroding. By currency manipulation and huge investments in many of the world's nations, and especially in the United States, China is laying the groundwork for a new economic order. Reagan won the Cold War by bankrupting the Soviet Union and the Chinese plan on winning the "Third World War" by supplanting the dollar. That will place world leadership in the hands of an atheistic people. Hardly something to look forward to.

Last, but by no means least, is the Muslim factor. Different from the Chinese, who want to rule the world, the Muslims want to rid the world of infidels, that is, all non-Muslims. They will never reach their objective, but will certainly make life miserable for "infidels" while they try.

Should the scenario we are describing come to pass, how will the lives of earthlings change?

Normally when things go wrong, the poor suffer more than the affluent. In the scenario we are describing, the opposite will occur. Taken to an extreme, a lost tribe in a jungle of Borneo will be totally unaffected by these developments. There will be relatively little change in the lives of those living in poverty stricken areas or third world countries. Industrialized nations, especially those in temperate zones, will be obligated to accept a new way of life. The higher the lifestyle, the greater the fall.

Countries that are not dependent on outside crude oil will be at an advantage, and especially those located in tropical zones in which no winter heating is necessary.

Rather than tire the reader with what might go wrong in the event of a world crisis, look around and answer this question for yourself. Imagine America with potholes in its interstate highways, with the roadsides unmowed, with no medevac service, with gasoline at eight dollars a gallon, with stores stocked mainly with American goods, with...

I have lived in Brazil for nearly 42 years and still consider myself a loyal American with no desire whatsoever to see the greatest nation ever to exist brought down a peg or two. Indeed, it would be foolish to desire this as the shockwaves of such an event will hit Brazil with enough force to thoroughly upset our daily routine. The difference is that we will have less to get used to.

The sword of Damocles is hanging over all our heads. Wishing it away will not make it go away. Neither will predicting that it will fall make it fall. The Japanese know their islands are situated on a fault and that seismic activity is a real possibility. Yet when the earth shook and the sea invaded the land, they were surprised and unprepared.

It is said that "statistics are often used like a drunken man uses a lamp-post—for support rather than illumination." That should be a balm for those of you who are less than enchanted by what you have just read. ▲

## Thinking Out Loud

### Let There Be

Most cultures, even the most primitive, have their own version of how the world came into existence. Some even bear a resemblance to the Genesis account. During nearly six thousand years Judeo-Christians accepted the Biblical account pretty much at face value.

But then knowledge began to increase—and so did doubts. Scientists began discovering fossils millions of years old and stars millions of light years away. And as knowledge increased even more, the Universe was estimated to be a billion years old, then two billion, then three billion... Man was faced with a real dilemma. How do you squeeze billions of years into just six days of creation?

The answer is actually quite simple. You squeeze God out of the creation. After a man by the name of Darwin discovered the secret of all life in a process called evolution, God was no longer needed. In fact, He became a nuisance.

Yes, there are those who try to reconcile God with evolution (godolution). By invoking the “one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day” equation, they come up with various degrees of divine presence in the creation. Commonly, God is relegated to pressing the button that set off the big bang. After that He stands back and lets...well, lets evolution take its logical course. I’m not sure when or how the “and God saw that it was good” observations fit in.

Today hardly anyone tries to convince us that evolution isn’t a scientific fact. It’s simply taken for granted. To not believe is sort of like announcing that the earth is flat. I suspect that even some of us at times feel just a bit uneasy about the whole subject. What we come up with isn’t exactly what we would like to tell our Sunday School class. You can only be inundated with so many scientific “facts” before feeling that surely so many can’t be wrong so much of the time.

To understand the creation we must understand that we can’t understand. That sounds a bit glib, but really it isn’t. We must remember that...

**GOD IS ETERNAL.** Anyone with his mental faculties even reasonably developed will have gone through this little mathematical exercise: God existed a million years ago... God existed a billion years ago... God existed a trillion years ago... Since we probably can’t remember what comes after a trillion, we end up saying, “But somewhere He had to have a beginning.” Then our mind goes into a tailspin as we go back... back...back...back... And God already existed. When we remember that He will ALWAYS exist, we switch to a different channel, for as David said, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.”

If God is eternal, has always existed, then certainly...

**GOD IS OMNIPOTENT,** he is all-powerful. God asked Jeremiah, “Is there anything too hard for me?”

**GOD IS OMNISCIENT.** He knows absolutely everything. He never forgets in the sense that we forget. He knows the past, the present and the future. He knows and remembers every single deed, action and thought of every human being who has lived since the dawn of time. The poet tried to imagine God’s love by saying that if every stalk on earth were a quill and all men scribes, all the oceans transformed into ink

would be insufficient to describe His love. In today's computer society, we could ask the size of a hard disk that would be required to record all that God knows.

God is eternal, God is omnipotent, God is omniscient, so is there anything He can't do, including creating the earth and sky and all that lives in six days?

To attempt to understand God's greatness and power, many times our finite minds can only ask questions. Answers must wait for eternity.

We begin with a question God asked Job: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" and add another question: Where was God before He laid the foundations of the earth?

The statement that time is a brief space between two unending eternities is impressive. We understand that before Genesis 1:1 there was neither time nor space. If there wasn't space, what was there? Whatever it was (or wasn't), it was there (or wasn't there) throughout the entire pre-creation eternity. Again we quote Job: "What shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth."

The Bible creation story begins with the simple words: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The scientific version is: "In the beginning there was a big bang." Isn't it easier to believe that God, from His eternal habitation, simply said, "Let there be heaven!" In other words, "Let there be space and time." In that instant (for the first time the word "instant" can be used) the brief space between two eternities was created. And then He ordered, "Let there be Earth!"

Scientists believe that what happened next spans a period of billions of years. They speak of fossils, of rock formations, of life beginning with one cell, multiplying, and over millions of years emerging from the sea and adapting to land life; they look into the sky and talk about millions of light years. The facts they throw at us begin to resemble so many snowflakes hitting the windshield of our car until we can no longer see the road.

To present our case of "Let there be" we are again reduced to a question: Did God, who is eternal, omnipotent and omniscient, create the universe in six days?

The writer to the Hebrews answers our question: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

Scientists assume that all matter came to exist at the moment of the big bang. Then, knowing the speed of light, they measure the distance stars are from earth and how long it took for them to get to where they are.

When Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes, he started with something. He didn't say, "Let there be." He simply prayed, gave thanks and hundreds of pounds of food flowed from His hands. In the creation, God didn't multiply anything. There was nothing to multiply. That is why He said, "Let there be." I imagine God with His arm upraised, saying, "Let there be galaxies." In that moment there appears in his hand millions of tiny particles. He then thrusts His hand forward and tosses the particles into space. As they leave His hand they begin to expand and fly like arrows to their designated place in space. He repeats this process until all the galaxies are in place. Time elapsed? Maybe a minute... Maybe an hour...



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Scientists say it took millions of light years for these faraway stars to reach their place in the heavens.

And the fossils? The rock formations that scientists say were millions of years in the making?

When God says, “Let there be,” He isn’t constrained to human limitations. The same as He can hurl stars millions of light years in an instant, he can cram millions or billions of years into an instant.

It is interesting to notice that the sequence in which God created the animal kingdom is similar to that which Charles Darwin gives in the *Evolution of Species*. That’s where the similarity ends. Darwin attributes all animal life to the evolution of a single cell.

God, on the other hand, simply said, “Let there be,” and out of nothing (not like the loaves and fishes that were multiplied) there appeared ...who knows, maybe a one-cell amoeba. He repeated, “Let there be” and a more complex form of life appeared—out of nothing. Thus he proceeded until every living creature was created. Was there a genetic similarity in the animals of given species? Of course. But that doesn’t prove that one evolved from the other. It isn’t unusual for two car manufacturers to produce cars that resemble each other. Does that mean both came off the same assembly line?

And so it went: Let there be, until all life, both animal and plant, existed—by God’s word.

Now we come to the most precious part of this whole story. Man.

If God created foxes and trout and robins by His word, “Let there be,” then why didn’t He say, “Let there be man?”

Why was man created out of the dust of the earth? Why not use dust for the animal kingdom and create man by His word? It would seem to make a lot more sense.

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” This short sentence says more than the tens of thousands of books that have been written in an attempt to show the origin of man.

We imagine God kneeling on the banks of a river to form the first man. He takes the dust of the earth and moistens it until reaching the consistency of clay. Then He begins His work. And no! He doesn’t do it like we would, forming the head, the thorax, the abdomen, the arms and legs. He begins on the inside—with the heart. Carefully the fingers of God mold the chambers, the valves, the muscles, vessels...and when finished, He holds in His hands the organ that has served as the prototype for the billions and billions of hearts that have pulsed in the human bosom ever since.

First the heart, that circulates blood, wherein is life, next the lungs, that purifies the blood, and so on, organ by organ, God fashions the first human body. He forms bones, muscles and tissues. The most delicate task of all (at least, from a human perspective) is mapping out all the capillaries, veins and arteries. Of course He did! On a tiny chip, the size of a thumbnail, man can map out a circuit that can store thousands of books, so would building our circulatory system be too complicated for Him?

Finally God says, “It is finished.” The glory of creation, made in His own image, lies on the bank of the river, inert. The Creator kneels and places his lips on the lips of the creature and does the first mouth-to-mouth—no, not resuscitation (“to revive from apparent death or from unconsciousness” —Merriam Webster), for man was not dead nor unconscious. The Almighty breathed into man “the breath of life” and Adam became a living soul. Next came Eve, taken from Adam’s side.

In fairy tales people live happily ever after. Not so with the crown of God’s creation. That perfect, crafted clay vessel, made after God’s own image, was shattered, reduced to dust. Thus, that which was created from dust returned to dust—figuratively, of course.

The first dust used to create man was pure. When man sinned, not only was the dust used to form him corrupted, but the earth itself was cursed. His situation was hopeless. He was totally unable to restore himself. God was unable to contemplate sin. His doom was sealed. Until...

Until God’s only begotten Son offered to glue the pieces back together with His own blood. ▲

## Readers Contribute

### **Overheard in the Year 1955!**

*(A Little Over 50 Years Ago!)*

I’ll tell you one thing, if things keep going the way they are, it’s going to be impossible to buy a weeks groceries for 20 bucks.

If cigarettes keep going up in price, I’m going to quit smoking. A quarter a pack is ridiculous.

Did you hear the post office is thinking about charging a dime just to mail a letter?

If they raise the minimum wage to one dollar an hour, nobody will be able to hire outside help at the store.

When I first started driving, who would have thought gas would someday cost 29 cents a gallon. Guess we’d be better off leaving the car in the garage.

Kids today are impossible. Those duck tail haircuts make it impossible to stay groomed. Next thing you know, boys will be wearing their hair as long as the girls.

I’m afraid to send my kids to the movies any more. Ever since they let Clark Gable get by with saying D- - - in *Gone With the Wind*, it seems every new movie has either H - - - or D - - - in it.

I read the other day where some scientist thinks it’s possible to put a man on the moon by the end of the century. They even have some fellows they call astronauts preparing for it down in Texas

Did you see where some baseball player just signed a contract for \$75,000 a year just to play ball? It wouldn’t surprise me if someday they’ll be making more than the President.

I never thought I'd see the day all our kitchen appliances would be electric. They are even making electric typewriters now.

It's too bad things are so tough nowadays. I see where a few married women are having to work to make ends meet.

It won't be long before young couples are going to have to hire someone to watch their kids so they can both work.

Marriage doesn't mean a thing anymore, those Hollywood stars seem to be getting divorced at the drop of a hat.

I'm afraid the Volkswagen car is going to open the door to a whole lot of foreign business.

Thank goodness I won't live to see the day when the Government takes half our income in taxes. I sometimes wonder if we are electing the best people to congress.

The drive-in restaurant is convenient in nice weather, but I seriously doubt they will ever catch on.

There is no sense going to Lincoln or Omaha anymore for a weekend, it costs nearly \$15.00 a night to stay in a hotel.

No one can afford to be sick anymore, at \$35.00 a day in the hospital it's too rich for my blood.

If they think I'll pay 50 cents for a haircut, forget it. ▲

## **How Much Does a Miracle Cost?**

A little girl went to her bedroom and pulled a glass jelly jar from its hiding place in the closet. She poured the change out on the floor and counted it carefully. Three times, even. The total had to be exactly perfect. No chance here for mistakes.

Carefully placing the coins back in the jar and twisting on the cap, she slipped out the back door and made her way 6 blocks to Rexall's Drug Store with the big red Indian Chief sign above the door. She waited patiently for the pharmacist to give her some attention, but he was too busy at this moment.

Tess twisted her feet to make a scuffing noise. Nothing. She cleared her throat with the most disgusting sound she could muster. No good. Finally she took a quarter from her jar and banged it on the glass counter. That did it!

"And what do you want?" the pharmacist asked in an annoyed tone of voice. "I'm talking to my brother from Chicago whom I haven't seen in ages," he said without waiting for a reply to his question.

"Well, I want to talk to you about my brother," Tess answered back in the same annoyed tone. "He's really, really sick...and I want to buy a miracle."

"I beg your pardon?" said the pharmacist.

"His name is Andrew and he has something bad growing inside his head and my

Daddy says only a miracle can save him now. So how much does a miracle cost?"

"We don't sell miracles here, little girl. I'm sorry but I can't help you," the pharmacist said, softening a little.

"Listen, I have the money to pay for it. If it isn't enough, I will get the rest. Just tell me how much it costs."

The pharmacist's brother was a well dressed man. He stooped down and asked the little girl, "What kind of a miracle does your brother need?"

"I don't know," Tess replied with her eyes welling up. "I just know he's really sick and Mommy says he needs an operation. But my Daddy can't pay for it, so I want to use my money."

"How much do you have?" asked the man from Chicago.

"One dollar and eleven cents," Tess answered barely audibly. "And it's all the money I have, but I can get some more if I need to."

"Well, what a coincidence," smiled the man. "A dollar and eleven cents—the exact price of a miracle for little brothers."

He took her money in one hand and with the other hand he grasped her mitten and said, "Take me to where you live. I want to see your brother and meet your parents. Let's see if I have the miracle you need."

That well-dressed man was Dr. Carlton Armstrong, a surgeon, specializing in neurosurgery. The operation was completed free of charge and it wasn't long until Andrew was home again and doing well. Mom and Dad were happily talking about the chain of events that had led them to this place.

"That surgery," her Mom whispered, "was a real miracle. I wonder how much it would have cost?"

Tess smiled. She knew exactly how much a miracle cost...one dollar and eleven cents.

Plus the faith of a little child. ▲

## Publishing

### Portuguese Literature Meeting

Which is correct?

Brazilians aren't big readers because there is very little good literature available in Brazil.

Or:

There is very little good literature in Brazil because Brazilians don't like to read.

Correct answer?

Neither. Brazil was founded by Catholics. While there were mission schools which educated an infinitesimal part of the population (probably hoping to produce future clergy), it was definitely within the overall plan of the church to keep the masses, if not illiterate, then away from books—especially the Bible. And so it goes: Train up a child

in the way he should NOT go: and when he is old, he will probably not depart from it. After nearly 500 years, reading is by no means the favorite pastime of the masses here in Brazil.

However, and this is revealing, the children of Brazilians raised on the Colony and that have studied in our schools, become voracious readers. So, the problem is not genetic.

Here on the Colony literature has been prioritized right from the beginning. While there were hopes of penetrating the outside market, in reality the Sunday School quarterlies translated and printed, the Mensageiro—Messenger—(published bi-weekly, now on issue no. 692), and the 40 plus books translated and printed, or about to be printed, were first of all for internal use. The tracts, of course, were for outside distribution.

I once overheard someone involved in printing in the US remark to a friend that our setup was what one would expect in a basement in China. He said it sort of as a compliment. That was quite an accurate assessment. We did our own translation, revision, typesetting, printing and binding. What we didn't manage to do, though, much to our frustration, was get our books on the national market.

Some 10 years ago Daniel Huber, working for Lamp & Light Publications, wrote me asking for a sample of our books. I sent them to him and the upstart was that he and Seth Bauman, from Mount Zion Literature, came to Brazil for a short visit. More visits were made that led up to an agreement to permit MZL to commercially print and sell some of Publicadora Menonita's books.

On May 3 to 5, a meeting was hosted by Mount Zion Literature at their Brazil headquarters in Boituva, state of São Paulo, that brought together people involved in different aspects of publishing Gospel literature. Represented were:

Seth Bauman, MZL,  
Daniel Huber, Lamp & Light Publications,  
Nathan Kreider, superintendent for MZL in Brazil,  
Ron Yoder (Costa Rica), coordinator for MZL program in Brazil,  
John Hartzler & his wife, Christian Light Publishers,  
David Miller, Christian Light Publishers,  
Joseph Yoder, Financial director MZL,  
Abner Esh (Boituva), MZL sales,  
Seth Showalter (Boituva), support,  
Elmer Esh (Boituva), support,  
Verle Troyer (Boituva), support,  
Oscar Carrivale (São Paulo), translator,  
Myron & Martha Kramer (Rio Verde), translator,  
Stephen & Dete Kramer (Rio Verde) Publicadora Menonita,  
Clinton & Marie Unruh (Rio Verde), board member Pub. Menonita,  
Charles Becker (Rio Verde) translator,  
Faith Becker (Rio Verde) reviewer,

What I appreciated in the meeting was that there were no Sam Walton type pep

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talks. Rather, it was constantly pointed out that the increase comes from the Lord.

In the US, each book sold is read by four people; in Brazil, by 10; in Cuba by 20. Needless to say, many more books are sold in the US than in Brazil or Cuba.

Mount Zion Literature is investing heavily in literature distribution in Brazil. They have a fine center of operations in Boituva with dedicated workers.

Their greatest challenge is not only to place their books at the right places to be sold, but also to show the people that reading is important. And that the message they have is even more important. ▲

### Life in Brazil

## **Tecnoshow Comigo**

Tecnoshow Comigo is the annual farm show staged each April by the local co-op. The numbers resulting are impressive. This year sales topped \$300,000,000 USD (that's 300 million US dollars). There were over 70,000 visitors from all over Brazil and a number of foreign nations, including the United States, Canada and Germany. Approximately 22,000 cars and pickups, as well as 426 busses brought visitors to the grounds. Over 5,000 temporary jobs were created for the event. The enormous combines on display were especially impressive to those of us who moved here in 1969 and remember the tiny little combines with an 8-foot header and run by a VW engine. For those of you hoping to someday visit Brazil, how about next April to get in on the Agrosnow that will take place from the 9th to the 13th. ▲