

# Brazil News



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Editorial

## **Give Me Tomorrow**

In the transition from Law to Gospel, “eye for eye” was replaced with “turn the other cheek.” This about-face surely was the object of frequent discussions in the early church as God’s people attempted to adapt themselves to a new and radically different set of rules.

In the old dispensation able-bodied men were de facto militiamen. In the event of aggression or war they were expected to take up arms and march against the enemy. An example of this is the extended household of Abram. “And when Abram heard that [Lot] was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.”

King David was a man of war. His distinguished career as a warrior began with the slaying of the giant Goliath. Later, as he returned from battle, “the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” This hyperbolic greeting as he returned from a successful campaign helps us understand God’s refusal to let him build the temple in Jerusalem. In spite of being a man of war, he was honored with the distinguished recognition of “being a man after God’s own heart.”

Israel’s civil law was severe, swift and sure in the punishment of evildoers, with no provision for appeals and seldom for clemency. The death penalty—often by public stoning—was applicable to a wide range of offenses. Even in times of peace, there were constant reminders that justice and death often walked hand-in-hand.

Walled cities, watch towers, sentinels, blaring trumpets, were a continual reminder that peace was maintained by war.

All this had a direct influence on the migration from Law to Gospel. Even while under Jesus’ influence and exposed to His teachings, the disciples failed to grasp the import of “Blessed are the peacemakers.”

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“Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?”

“Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear.”

One of the principle identifiers of the New Testament Church through the ages has been the doctrine of non-resistance. Thus, it seems logical that Jesus and the apostles would have taken advantage of their encounters with military men to point them out of the service and onto the road of non-resistance. Let’s notice what really happened... But first, just a word on centurions.

Centurions were Roman officers, thus gentiles, with command over a hundred soldiers. It is hard to know what their equivalent rank would be today, but by the number of men they had under them, we can suggest they would have been at least a lieutenant.

In Matthew chapter 8 we have the story of the centurion whose servant was “sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.” Jesus immediately agreed to go to the servant’s home and heal him. The centurion declined the offer, saying “I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” Deeply moved, Jesus told His followers, “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” Turning to the officer, Jesus said, “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, *so* be it done unto thee.”

He said, “Go thy way,” and not “Change thy way.”

In Acts chapter 10, we read about Cornelius, a Roman centurion. This is what commentator Matthew Henry has to say about him: “Cornelius was an officer of the army. He was at present quartered in Cesarea, a strong city, lately re-edified and fortified by Herod the Great, and called *Cesarea* in honour of Augustus Caesar... Here there was a band, or cohort, or regiment, of the Roman army, which probably was the governor’s life-guard, and is here called *the Italian band*, because, that they might be the more sure of their fidelity, they were all native Romans, or Italians. Cornelius had a command in this part of the army. His name, *Cornelius* was much used among the Romans, among some of the most ancient and noble families. He was an officer of considerable rank and figure, a centurion.”

It was exactly this “officer of considerable rank and figure, a centurion,” that God chose as the means to introduce the Gospel to the gentiles. After hearing the Apostle Peter preach the word, he was so impressed, together with his household, that the Holy Spirit fell upon them. Peter asked, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?”

We have no record that the infilling of the Holy Spirit was dependent on a promise or decision to leave the army.

Then there is the incident when Paul and Silas were in prison when “there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.”

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During this period of history jailors were guarantors of the prisoners under their watch. Should a prisoner escape, the jailor paid with his own life, which explains the violent reaction of the jailor at the time of the earthquake. Seeing the prison doors open, Paul and Silas could easily have said, “Let’s get out of here!” unmindful of the welfare of the keeper of the prison. What followed was the beautiful scene of the conversion of the jailor and his household. Even though they were now brethren in Christ, the apostles continued recognizing the authority of the keeper of the prison.

In Luke chapter 3, John is beginning his ministry as the forerunner of the Messiah. He had no pollster to tell him what the crowds would like to hear. As the saying goes, he fired from the hip:

“O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance... And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.”

The injunction to “do violence to no man” may be interpreted by some as suggesting they leave the service. Possibly, but not very likely. Even today police violence is a nagging problem. If that was what he meant, the blunt John would hardly have told them to be content with their wages.

We understand that these soldiers continued in the service—now as better soldiers.

Other New Testament references to centurions usually place them in a favorable light.

So what are we trying to say? That maybe we are placing too much emphasis on non-resistance?

Never!

My grandparents lived in Moundridge, Kansas, across the street from the city park, where many civic, religious and family activities took place. In a way, this park was the heart of the sleepy little plains town. Right in the middle of this park, in front of the bandstand, was a monument erected in honor of the local fallen sons during recent wars. My cousins and I would often play in the park and on one particular day we crawled up on the monument and tried to climb the flag pole. A neighbor, who possibly lost a loved one in the war, was irritated by our desecration of the civic shrine and headed straight to my grandparents’ front porch, where our parents sat visiting, and demanded they put a quick stop to our reproachable behavior. They did.

Now, over a half century later, I believe the gentleman had every right to be unhappy with us. And I wish our parents had explained to us the significance of the monument beforehand so as to avoid this unpleasant incident.

Maybe I remember that incident—actually, quite insignificant—because it causes me

to wonder if possibly, on a larger scale, we fail to truly appreciate the high cost of our national freedom.

My dad had a local young man help him on the farm during the busy season. Then the Korean War began and he was sent overseas. Once, when he was home on furlough, we went to his house to pay him a visit and I still see him standing erect in his starched uniform. The war ended and the young soldier was discharged from the Army. So far as I know, he suffered no injuries and was able to reintegrate himself into civilian life.

He was fortunate. Tens of thousands of soldiers were wounded or killed in this small war—as compared with World Wars I and II. What very few know today is that the Korean “conflict,” as some call it, was actually a very vicious war with an extremely high casualty rate. The men sent overseas were not defending their homeland, but the liberty of people of a different race and culture from the enslavement of communism. In spite of what critics say, this was yet another noble gesture of greatness by the United States.

In his book, *GIVE ME TOMORROW The Korean War's Greatest Untold Story — The Epic Stand of the Marines of George Company*, by Patrick K. O'Donnell, we get a glimpse of the suffering of the soldiers from one company in just one of the tens of thousands of wars fought since Genesis.

The title to this book is the reply given to photojournalist David Douglas Duncan:

*Dawn was just over the horizon. A Marine...kept prodding with his spoon, trying to break loose a single, frost-coated bean from the others in his can. He could neither move it nor long continue holding the spoon between his gloved but almost rigid ringers. He found one, and slowly raised it to his mouth. He stood unmoving, waiting for it to thaw.*

*“What would you want if you could have any wish?” Duncan asked.*

*The Marine continued to stand motionless, with empty eyes. Then his lips began to open...(and) his eyes went up into the graying sky.*

*“Give me tomorrow.”*

The Korean War was especially brutal for several reasons:

1) The North Koreans were communists. It requires only a cursory knowledge of history to know that the choice method to implant and maintain communism is sheer brutality. Two cases in point are the Stalinist and Maoist purges during the last century that destroyed the lives of tens of millions of the finest of their own countrymen. North Koreans showed a similar disregard for human life.

2) The North Koreans were armed and funded by the Soviet Union. The Cold War was at a high pitch and the Soviets were intensely interested in seeing the United States both defeated and humiliated in what was touted as yet another act of imperialism. Thus North Korea, a poor country, was able to press the war effort with a constant supply of arms and munitions.

3) Communist China believed that an American victory in neighboring Korea would endanger their own national security. Their entry in the Korean War was especially brutal, for it combined communist ruthlessness with the cold-bloodedness common to many oriental tribes. To make things worse, in this overpopulated country, to lose a hundred thousand, or two hundred thousand soldiers, was of no consequence. There were other hundreds of thousands ready to take their place.

4) The Korean climate and mountainous terrain turned winter warfare into a nightmarish experience, in which the thermometer was often more lethal than bombs and bullets. This was especially true in the case of non-native troops from milder climates unaccustomed to these rigors, which included both North American and NATO fighters.

5) Finally, there was the psychological effect of fighting a war on foreign soil for a foreign cause.

The term, “War is hell,” is attributed to Civil War officer, Major-General W. T. Sherman. The Korean War certainly comes under this classification. In fact, a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge in WWII, fighting in Korea, said, “I survived the Battle of the Bulge, but this is worse.”

On October 15, 1950, the controversial General MacArthur, commander of the war in Korea, informed President Truman that “Victory was won in Korea.” What he didn’t know, or failed to recognize, was that members of the PLA (People’s Liberation Army) were spying on American troop movement and sending vital information to the Chinese via clandestine radio. General MacArthur also informed the president that a mere 50,000 to 60,000 Chinese troops had crossed the Yalu River, that they had no Air Force and that they would be slaughtered as never before seen in human warfare.

The truth was that approximately ten times that amount, some 600,000 soldiers were hiding in the mountains waiting to spring their trap and annihilate the unsuspecting American and NATO troops. George Company was in the middle of all this. And First Sergeant Rocco Zullo was part of George Company. Sergeant Zullo was known as the “heart and soul” of George Company. He was admired, almost reverentially, by his men who unhesitatingly followed him where he lead—for lead he did.

The officers of George Company understood what General MacArthur didn’t, that they were outnumbered at least ten-to-one and that to hold their ground meant sure slaughter (not of the Chinese, as MacArthur proclaimed). They also knew that to retreat could still end with the same result. The order was given to retreat. And that is when General Sherman’s description of war became a terrible reality.

Night temperatures were falling to -20°F. The men had no shelter and to keep warm wore up to four sets of clothes, and if fortunate, a sleeping bag. (The call of nature was in itself torture session.) At best, rest was fitful.

Proceeding on narrow, tortuous mountain roads at five miles an hour, George Company was hit by rifle and bazooka fire at nearly every turn of the road where the enemy was lying in wait. The men would have to crawl out of the canvas-covered truck beds, take cover behind the wheels, and defend themselves. Casualties skyrocketed. In the sub-zero weather, corpses were stacked in makeshift morgues like so much cord wood.

And then the unthinkable happened. Sergeant Zullo, the heart and soul of George Company, was struck in the abdomen, leaving a gaping wound the size of a fist. As he breathed his last, he was taken to the morgue, but instead of being placed on the stack of corpses, was given a slightly more dignified resting place until his body could be removed.

(Thirty-six years later, at the Thayer Hotel, a stone’s throw from the U.S. Military

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Academy in West Point, N.Y., the survivors of George Company reunited for the first time since the war. One of the Marines was approached by a balding, gray-haired man who asked:

*“Have you talked to Rocco Zullo?”*

*“No. Rocco was killed on the road to Hagaru in November 1950.”*

*“No, he wasn’t,” responded the man, sternly.*

*Another Marine overheard the conversation: “Why, he’s dead!”*

*“He’s not dead.”*

*The confident figure then added with an unmistakable bellowing voice, “You’re talking to Rocco Zullo.”*

As the sun was setting on the road to Hagaru in November 1950, when Sergeant Zullo was supposed to be dead, a medic entered the makeshift morgue with yet another body. His hair stood on end when he heard a faint cough from one corner of the morgue. He approached and found...yes, he found Sergeant Rocco Zullo still alive. He was taken to the surgeon’s tent and after hours of surgery his condition was stabilized. After a number of years spent in hospitals and rehabilitation, he went on to get his degree and became a high school principal. With this amazing discovery, the reunion took on new life.)

We won’t tell the story of George Company’s terrible march for survival in which so many brave men were wounded or lost their lives. The full account can be read in *Give Me Tomorrow*, and yes, please overlook the “military language” so characteristic—and unbecoming—of American soldiers.

The story of George Company is only one of thousands of stories—many worse than this one. So, why do we mention it? Let’s review Romans 13:1-4.

*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*

*Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

*For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

*For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

According to the Apostle Paul, the soldiers of George Company were “ministers of God.” We tend to judge the military by the Gospel. By that criteria, military chaplains would be impostors giving false hope to lost soldiers. Are we missing something?

I think so.

After reading what Paul had to say to the Romans, as well as the scriptures already quoted concerning centurions, can we think of any place in the New Testament in which the Military and government officials are chalked off as ineligible for eternal life—even while they are serving?

We believe there are two kingdoms: the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. We want to suggest a third kingdom, which we will call the civil kingdom that

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would englobe both the Military and officialdom, which is exactly what the Apostle Paul is writing to the Romans. Furthermore, each individual who is part of the civil kingdom will also be part of either the kingdom of light or the kingdom of darkness.

In Israel all adult, able-bodied males were expected to take up arms in times of national crises, in spite of not being part of the regular army. In a sense—and notice that we say, “in a sense”—today as well, all adult citizens are expected to be active in civic duties, or in other words, be part of the civil kingdom. For some this means simply exercising the right to vote; for others to take active part in government, and for others to take up arms to defend the homeland.

If this is true—which we leave as a question mark—to not be part of the civic kingdom there needs to be some kind of exemption. Think of a family with six children. There are chores to do and everyone is expected to do his part. Unless, of course, there is a reason why one or more should be exempted. Little Joey is only three years old, so he is exempted. The other children all have their duties. That is how a successful family operates.

The same is assumed to be true in the civil kingdom.

We believe we are exempt from civil or military obligations in the civil kingdom. We believe it so thoroughly that some of us don't know why for sure. That's just the way it is.

This blind faith may have some merit, but when facing an ardent patriot, “Well, that is the way we have always believed,” hardly hits the mark.

The question, and that is what this article is all about, is simply: On what do we base our exemption from civic and military responsibility? What answer can we give to a civic-minded citizen wanting to understand our position? This may be to a stranger we meet on the plane or to a neighbor whom we have known for years.

Rule 1) Eighty percent of your answer will be in what you don't say. In the case of the stranger, these eighty percent will be your demeanor, *even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit*. Without that, the twenty percent you say will have little or no impact. In the case of the neighbor, it will be the reputation you have established over a period of years or decades.

Rule 2) Keep your explanation simple. Don't quote every scripture you can possibly think of, starting with “Thou shalt not kill.” Rather, open your heart. Tell of your conviction, of how you feel the Lord has called you to a life of special dedication...of which you feel unworthy.

Rule 3) Especially when speaking with military men or individuals with strong civic feelings, do not condemn them, but tell them you appreciate what they are doing for their country, that you pray for them.

Rule 4) If there is opportunity for a deeper conversation, tell them that just as they are willing to die for their country, you are willing to die for you faith. Give the example of the Martyr brethren and how that hundreds of thousands gave their life for the same faith which is precious to you.

For us to truly be worthy of our non-resistant faith, we should never, never feel good or smug that our peace doctrine keeps us out of Korea or Iraq. Non-resistance is not

a legal loophole to get us out of taking up arms and going to war. We should be aware that like all other citizens of our country, the civic duty of taking up arms applies to us too, *but* because of a higher calling, we *volunteer* for a greater mission—the mission of true peace.

Men and women who join the Military take an oath:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulation and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.

We suggest the following vow for those claiming exemption from Military service:

*I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly vow that I will support and defend the Doctrine Once Delivered to the Saints against all enemies, which include sin, self, Satan and the world, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and I will obey the orders of the Supreme Commander, the Almighty God of Heaven and of the Bride, according to the Doctrine, Conference decisions and regulations of His Church on earth. So help me God.*

If you have made this solemn vow and are living in accordance, you are worthy of the exemption you claim from the Armed Forces of your nation. Should this not be the case, you have no right to claim this exemption and it would be cowardly indeed to refuse to serve your country in uniform.

With no draft and with a volunteer army, what we have just discussed may seem to be a moot issue. But that could change. Overnight. In the event of another world war, it will in all probability be the *war of all wars*. Should this happen, as the faithful look upward they will cry out for the dawn of a new and better day. Their prayer will be: *Give me tomorrow!* ▲

## Thinking Out Loud

### **The Letter**

You older readers remember what it used to be like to anxiously await the mailman. Or to insert the key in your post office box. And then... The letter! Or the disappointment of no letter.

For millennia people have communicated by letter. Back before UPS, it could take months, even years, for a letter to be delivered.

When sea exploration began in earnest some 500 years ago, ships sailing around the tip of Africa would stop at Cape of Good Hope for resupplying. At the base of Table Mountain in Cape Town, there was a ledge that served as a post office. Ship captains were often given letters to be delivered in faraway ports. However, since their own destination did not always coincide with the address on the letter, when arriving in Cape Town, they would place these letters under a rock under the ledge on Table Mountain. Captains from other ships resupplying would check the ledge and take with them letters addressed to someone in their destination. Doubtlessly, many letters



were forever lost at the bottom of the sea and others took years to be delivered, but it worked—sort of, at least.

Some letters were delivered by personal courier. In *A Message to Garcia*, written in 1899, Elbert Hubbard tells the story of such a delivery. Following are the first several paragraphs of the book:

In all this Cuban business there is one man stands out on the horizon of my memory like Mars at perihelion. When war broke out between Spain & the United States, it was very necessary to communicate quickly with the leader of the Insurgents. Garcia was somewhere in the mountain vastness of Cuba—no one knew where. No mail nor telegraph message could reach him. The President must secure his cooperation, and quickly.

What to do!

Someone said to the President, “There’s a fellow by the name of Rowan will find Garcia for you, if anybody can.”

*Rowan was sent for and given a letter to be delivered to Garcia. How “the fellow by the name of Rowan” took the letter, sealed it up in an oil-skin pouch, strapped it over his heart, in four days landed by night off the coast of Cuba from an open boat, disappeared into the jungle, & in three weeks came out on the other side of the Island, having traversed a hostile country on foot, and delivered his letter to Garcia, are things I have no special desire now to tell in detail...*

Possibly one of the greatest strokes of genius and entrepreneurship—a story we all know—was that of the Pony Express in which letters were rushed across the country by relays of horses galloping through the day and night to deliver their precious missives in far less time than it would take to go by ship around Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America.

In her Little House books, Laura tells of Ma writing letters (with a quill, of course) in her beautiful script, turning the page a quarter turn and then begin writing again, thus creating a crisscross letter for her relatives back East.

Then came Rural Free Delivery with mailmen sitting in the middle of their car seats so they could reach out the right window of their vehicle and place mail in the mailboxes in front of each farm—as well as retrieve letters when the little red flag was up. It is hard to imagine what life would have been in the country without RFD, back in the days when people didn’t run to town two or three times a day.

Alas, the venerated letter has gone the way of the Mohican.

I mean the real letter, the one that begins with Dear so and so, with a message written specifically for so-and-so from start to finish, and then ending with Truly yours, or whatever, with an actual signature that will smudge if you rub a damp finger over it.

A letter like this, written by hand with a pen or pencil, to YOU, is rare. Such a letter has a personality. You feel that the writer is sitting down with you in a one-on-one and sharing what is on his or her heart.

Now days if you get a letter that starts with Dear (your name) and ends with Yours truly, chances are it was written on a word processor that makes it possible to personalize the Dear opening with your name and maybe even add a personalized paragraph or two at the end, but all that comes in between is probably being sent to 10 or 15 or 20 people—and of course, never written by hand.

A lot of these letters are sent by e-mail, some by fax, and a very few by snail mail. There's nothing wrong with this kind of community letter—in fact, my wife thinks they are wonderful. She sends them too.

When I studied typing over half a century ago, I learned how and where to place the address of whoever was getting my letter, (space) then the inside address (my address), (space) the date, (space) and then Dear Sir/Madam, or whatever, in the case of a business letter (space), or in the case of a friendly letter (not all business letters are friendly), Dear So and So... (New paragraph) and finally the letter, followed by Sincerely, Love, or whatever.

(I insert here that even back then I seldom wrote letters with pen or pencil, preferring the old Remington manual typewriter, mainly because that way people could read what I wrote.)

Today almost all my mail is electronic. Yes, there are occasional cards that come by snail mail, but a letter—I mean, a real letter—well, as we have said, it has gone the way of the Mohican. That is, until several weeks ago, when I received a real letter, the old-time letter, written in what appears to be an ink pen, that begins with Dear... and ends with Love & Best Wishes Always, and then the signature Norma Litwiller.

My recollections of Maynard & Norma Littwiller go back over 60 years. They lived in Michigan, but each time they came to Kansas, my folks and Glenn & Luella Koehn would get together with them. They were special times. It has probably been half a century that I haven't seen Norma—and I had no idea she still remembered me. Following are several excerpts from her four-page letter:

*Dear Charles & also Dear Wife—I've forgot your name, sorry...*

*My Dear Maynard has been gone since Aug. 25, 2001, seems much much longer and I'm here in this Foster Home will soon be 4 yrs and I'm now 95 yrs old and fairly in shape except for bad arthritis & failing memory, but as a whole much to be thankful for "yet"!...*

*[After reading your article in BN] The Golden Rule, I just thought I would write you a note...*

*You are sure welcome to come to Michigan...to see us before too late and we would treat you as best we know how.*

*Love & Best Wishes Always,*

*Norma Litwiller*

Thanks, Norma. This letter will be stored in my safe as a reminder of the days when we still had time to write personal letters. ☒

## Life in Brazil

### **We Ride the Metro**

The city of São Paulo, in the state of São Paulo, with its metropolitan area, is the sixth largest megalopolis on the planet, with approximately 20 million inhabitants. It is the financial and industrial center of Brazil.

The Expocristã is an annual religious literature and music fair held in the center of

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São Paulo. This year it was from September 20-25, with approximately 250 stands.

For the fourth year, Literatura Monte Sião (Mount Zion Literature) had a stand in the Expocristã. They display their own literature, as well as some of Publicadora Menonita's (the church's miniature "Gospel Publishers" in Brazil) books.

Since Faith and I have been involved in the literature work here in Brazil for quite a few years, we decided to attend the Expocristã. We drove to Goiânia and took the plane to the Congonhas Airport, located right in the middle of the city.

We arrived toward evening, got our hotel and the following morning took a taxi to Imprensa da Fé, where some of our books have been printed, including our new *Hinário Cristão* (Christian Hymnal), now in hard cover. We had a pleasant chat with one of the owners, who then gave us a tour of the shop. He explained that an average of a million, eight hundred thousand books and Bibles are printed per month, a tremendous increase from 15 years ago when they printed that amount per year. Seventy percent of their production are Bibles and religious books.

When we finished our tour, we told Jair, the owner, that we were heading to the Expocristã and asked if it would be possible to go by metro, since a taxi ride across town would be quite expensive. He thought a bit and said he had to pick up a friend and would drop us off at the nearest train station, where we could catch a train to the metro. It sounded like a winner, except that we had no idea at which stations we would have to get on and off to get to our destination.

Not to worry. Jair dropped us off at the train station and our first pleasant surprise was that anyone over 60 years of age can ride free on the São Paulo transit system.

As we went through the gate into the boarding area, we asked a young man which train to take and where to get off. He turned to a middle-aged friend, who was going to be traveling on the same train and asked him to take us under his wing. On the train, there wasn't room for him to sit next to us, so he sat a short distance from our seat, where he was busily writing on a scrap of paper. Since he was getting off before we were, he found a young man who would be taking the metro that we should be on and asked him to look out for us. In addition to this, he handed us the scrap of paper with instruction for the entire trip. By his writing, it was evident he didn't have a lot of education, but his goodwill made up for it many times over.

The young man got us to our next ride and since he too was getting off before the end of the line, he told us to stay aboard until the final stop. Here we asked about how to get to the Expocristã and were told there was some large passenger vans shuttling passenger for free. In a matter of minutes we were aboard one of these vans and soon arrived at our destination. All for free.

The São Paulo metro system is very well organized, efficient and immaculately clean. When we boarded, if there were no available seats, passengers immediately arose and offered us theirs.

I don't know how many people visited the Expocristã—tens of thousands, by the looks of things, which belies the belief that Brazilians don't read.

I was impressed by Literatura Monte Sião's stand. I have no doubt but what the literature they had on display was the soundest, most enriching, in the entire fair.

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An interesting fact is that their best seller is *O Espelho dos Mártires*, a condensed version of *The Martyrs Mirror* with a number of illustrations. They were selling a package made up of *The Martyrs Mirror*, *The Drummer's Wife*, *Worth Dying For* and *Evangelists in Chains* (in Portuguese, of course), at a promotional price, all published by Publicadora Menonita.

Another highlight for Faith and me was meeting two translators, one of which is already working for Literatura Monte Sião. In a future visit to São Paulo, we are hoping to meet with them, plus another translator whom we learned to know in a previous visit, and talk shop. There is a lot to be learned in this interchange of ideas and trends in the Portuguese language.

For us the trip was enjoyable from the time we left home until we returned nearly a week later. Best of all was seeing solid Christian literature on the Brazilian market. Literatura Monte Sião was able to make contact with a number of book distributors who plan on selling their literature.

Last but not least, we enjoyed very much our contact with Nathan Kreider, LMS's office manager, and Abner Esh, whom some of you know, responsible for sales in São Paulo and surrounding area—a BIG job.

Literatura Monte Sião is investing a lot of money in their Brazil Project. They understand that carving out their niche in the market is not done overnight. The truth is that selling sound literature isn't as easy as selling unsound music.

We hope to be there next year again. ▲

### Readers Contribute

## The Old Dented Bucket

Our house was directly across the street from the clinic entrance of Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. We lived downstairs and rented the upstairs rooms to out-patients at the clinic.

One summer evening as I was fixing supper, there was a knock at the door. I opened it to see a truly awful looking man. "Why, he's hardly taller than my 8-year-old," I thought as I stared at the stooped, shriveled body. But the appalling thing was his face, lopsided from swelling, red and raw.

Yet his voice was pleasant as he said, "Good evening. I've come to see if you've a room for just one night. I came for a treatment this morning from the eastern shore, and there's no bus 'til morning."

He told me he'd been hunting for a room since noon but with no success, no one seemed to have a room. "I guess it's my face... I know it looks terrible, but my doctor says with a few more treatments..."

For a moment I hesitated, but his next words convinced me: "I could sleep in this rocking chair on the porch. My bus leaves early in the morning."

I told him we would find him a bed, but to rest on the porch. I went inside and finished

getting supper. When we were ready, I asked the old man if he would join us. “No, thank you. I have plenty.” And he held up a brown paper bag.

When I had finished the dishes, I went out on the porch to talk with him a few minutes. It didn’t take a long time to see that this old man had an oversized heart crowded into that tiny body. He told me he fished for a living to support his daughter, her five children, and her husband, who was hopelessly crippled from a back injury.

He didn’t tell it by way of complaint; in fact, every other sentence was prefaced with a thanks to God for a blessing. He was grateful that no pain accompanied his disease, which was apparently a form of skin cancer. He thanked God for giving him the strength to keep going.

At bedtime, we put a camp cot in the children’s room for him. When I got up in the morning, the bed linens were neatly folded and the little man was out on the porch.

He refused breakfast, but just before he left for his bus, haltingly, as if asking a great favor, he said, “Could I please come back and stay the next time I have a treatment? I won’t put you out a bit. I can sleep fine in a chair.” He paused a moment and then added, “Your children made me feel at home. Grown-ups are bothered by my face, but children don’t seem to mind.”

I told him he was welcome to come again. And, on his next trip, he arrived a little after 7 in the morning. As a gift, he brought a big fish and a quart of the largest oysters I had ever seen! He said he had shucked them that morning before he left so that they’d be nice and fresh. I knew his bus left at 4:00 a.m. And I wondered what time he had to get up in order to do this for us.

In the years he came to stay overnight with us, there was never a time that he did not bring us fish or oysters or vegetables from his garden.

Other times we received packages in the mail, always by special delivery; fish and oysters packed in a box of fresh young spinach or kale, every leaf carefully washed. Knowing that he must walk 3 miles to mail these, and knowing how little money he had made the gifts doubly precious.

When I received these little remembrances, I often thought of a comment our next-door neighbor made after he left that first morning.

“Did you keep that awful looking man last night? I turned him away! You can lose roomers by putting up such people!”

Maybe we did lose roomers once or twice. But, oh!, if only they could have known him, perhaps their illnesses would have been easier to bear.

I know our family always will be grateful to have known him; from him we learned what it was to accept the bad without complaint and the good with gratitude to God.

Recently I was visiting a friend, who has a greenhouse, as she showed me her flowers, we came to the most beautiful one of all, a golden chrysanthemum, bursting with blooms. But to my great surprise, it was growing in an old dented, rusty bucket. I thought to myself, “If this were my plant, I’d put it in the loveliest container I had!”

My friend changed my mind. “I ran short of pots,” she explained, “and knowing how beautiful this one would be, I thought it wouldn’t mind starting out in this old pail. It’s just for a little while, till I can put it out in the garden.”

## Brazil <sup>14</sup> News

She must have wondered why I laughed so delightedly, but I was imagining just such a scene in heaven.

“Here’s an especially beautiful one,” God might have said when he came to the soul of the sweet old fisherman. “He won’t mind starting in this small body.” ▲

All this happened long ago—and now, in God’s garden, how tall this lovely soul must stand.  
*The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)*