

# Brazil News

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Editorial

## **The Rock and the Pit**

During the centuries man has believed that departed souls will spend eternity in one of two regions: the region of the saved or the region of the lost. Not only did true Christians believe in the eternal destiny of man, but nominal Christianity as well, indeed, men and women who gave themselves over to their baser desires, down deep believed that heaven and hell existed. And they feared.

Together with this belief came the knowledge that to neglect salvation was a risk that would bring serious consequences. We read of the terrible deathbed experiences of some of those who spurned the Savior during life and couldn't find Him at death.

Today this has changed. The concept of two distinct and certain destinies has eroded into a "Happy Hunting Ground" type of place, to which everyone will somehow or another go and enjoy varying degrees of happiness according to their virtuous or depraved life here on earth.

We, of course, have been talking about nominal Christianity and the world. Now let's talk about us.

We firmly believe in two destinies, heaven and hell, and that each one of us will spend eternity in one place or the other. There is very little danger we will ever change our thinking on this. The very real danger which we face today is becoming confused on exactly what will determine whether we are placed on the left hand or on the right hand during our hearing on the last day, when we will receive our eternal sentence.

We know that we were born in sin and that by nature we are sinners. We know that once we reach the age of accountability, without a conversion experience we can't be saved. We know that Jesus died for our sins and that without His sacrificial death on the cross there would be no salvation. We know all this. But salvation depends on more than knowledge. If we would be saved, sin must become painful.

Painful?

Sin *is* painful. Every sin ever committed since man fell in the Garden has caused pain. It doesn't matter how great or small the sin, whether intentional or unintentional, whether it was an actual deed or just a thought, that sin has caused pain.

We would like to believe that little sins cause a little pain, bigger sins cause bigger pain and really big sins cause really big pain. All wrong. Or to say it more graphically, big, serious sins would be paid for with large, cruel spikes. Small sins, unintentional sins, would be paid for with needles, the kind you see sticking into people during acupuncture sessions—painless, or almost painless needles, that don't even draw any blood. Yet as we read the crucifixion story, we find only spikes, no painless needles.

This is the danger we are facing today, of failing to “look unto the rock whence [w]e are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence [w]e are digged” (Isaiah 51:1).

The rock and the pit in the above verse may have more than one interpretation. The rock we will identify as the one from which man was hewn—created—in purity. It was the pit that swallowed man when he was contaminated by sin, and from which he must be rescued to be saved.

In a broad sense, God is the Father of all, of the just and the unjust. In a more restricted sense, He is the Father only of those who enter into the kingdom through the new birth experience. Only these can truly call Him Father.

Sin is the transgression of the law. So when we transgress, we feel badly because we haven't kept the law like we had hoped to. This is good, but our remorse should go deeper than that; it should go right down to the rock from which we were hewn.

God the Father is so much higher than any earthly father that we hesitate to even suggest that He feels any of the same emotions we feel. But then, if we were created in His image and likeness, if He is the rock from which we were hewn, surely there is at least a bit of kinship on what we feel.

When a father tells his child to stay clear of a fence he just painted, he hopes to be obeyed. When the child puts his little hands on the wet boards, and then on his clothes, he realizes he has done wrong. He feels badly because of the punishment he will probably get when discovered. Finally he hits on a plan. Instead of hiding out, he will “turn himself in” and confess his wrong. He may even shed some tears in the process.

That is different from the disobedient child who confesses, not because he fears punishment, but because he knows how it pains his dad when he is disobedient. This child may go so far as to suggest that the rod be applied, in an unconscious effort to share the pain with his dad.

You good readers who are parents know the pain you feel when your child deliberately disobeys. This is especially true when you take your child on your lap and very carefully explain, not only the rule, but the reason behind the rule, as well as the punishment that will be meted out in case of disobedience. You ask, “Sonny, did you understand?” He answers, “Yes, I understand.”

We don't like to see someone in pain, to hear them groaning. Return to your childhood (and then to your adolescence) and remember the times your dad or your mother was in great pain. Now imagine that each time you disobeyed, your parents

would bend over in pain. Think about the times you stomped out of the house in a rage, and imagine them bent over in pain.

This is the vision we are losing. We see our sins as a transgression of the law, and that if serious enough, will take us to hell. So we try to do what is right. But when we fail, which we all do, then what? Do we quickly pray, “Lord, forgive me. I’ll try and do better from now on,” and hope that with this confession we have cleared our way to heaven? (And then do we wonder why so soon we do the same thing again?)

All sin is painful. Whether or not it pains us—and no matter how much it pains us—it pains the Savior more. He doesn’t bend over in pain. He extends His hands and feet and feels the pain of large nails piercing His flesh.

We sing, “Does Jesus know when my heart is pained?” Maybe we should also sing, “Do *I* know when *Jesus’s* heart is pained for me?” Yes, even those sins which we commit unwittingly pain the Savior. Those unkind thoughts which flit through our mind pain the Savior.

Sin is painful.

A pit isn’t a pretty word. It conjures no pleasant thoughts. Rather a pit brings to mind death, torment, possibly hard labor. We think of a pit as either being cold or hot, never comfortable. Indeed, when used with the word *bottomless*, we have the setting for hell.

There are parents who have had the unfortunate experience of having their child perish in a pit through some type of an accident. We can but weep with them, for words fail us.

Our emotions are deeply touched when we think of loving parents losing a child in a pit. If the body is recovered, possibly mangled and disfigured, we look away. Because of one child that perished.

Do we ever stop to think about what the Creator felt when he saw His creation—billions of souls—slide into the pit? Do we consider how He must have felt as he saw those countless souls irreparably mangled by sin, covered with slime and blood? Does what we have just said mean anything to you?

It should.

When man sinned, the Creator didn’t only see Adam and Eve sliding over the brink into the pit. He saw every soul that has ever been born, and that will still be born, until the last moment of time. He saw you. You weren’t a pretty sight. If you could have seen yourself, you would have looked away. But your Father didn’t.

The Father knew there was no possible way you would ever get out of that pit. Not in a hundred years. Or a thousand years. Not in a million years. Not during all eternity.

The Father knew that spending eternity in the pit would be a terrible thing, far more terrible than anything we can even begin to imagine. So He said, “I will send my only Son down to earth, down into the pit, and rescue those souls from eternal suffering. He did this for billions of souls. He would have done it for a million souls. For a thousand souls. For a hundred souls...

When Sodom and Gomorrah were to be destroyed, God told Abraham that if he could find 50 righteous souls, the city would be saved. We know the story, of how

Abraham pled until God agreed that if there should be but ten righteous, the city would not be destroyed.

God would have sent His Son to the pit for a mere 50 souls. For 40 souls. For 30, 20, for ten. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, but God would have sent His Son down to earth, to the pit, for just one. For you.

Isaiah said, “Hearken to me, *ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD*: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.”

The world, nominal Christianity, has lost the vision of a Holy God and the depravity of man. Heaven and hell have merged into a Happy Hunting Ground. Unless we take care, we will follow suit—like Peter, at a distance. Or are we already headed in that direction? In funerals we sing about “running through the fields of green clover.” That may appeal to our emotions, but it’s taking us too close to the Happy Hunting Ground. Let’s stick with the beautiful, inspirational, time-tested hymns that take us above the clover fields, into the realms of light.

Sin is painful. Every sin inflicts pain. We may cease to feel the pain of sin, but our Savior doesn’t. We may cease to look to the Rock from which we were hewn, but the Rock continues. We may look away from the pit, from its terrible sights, and forget that we were once entrapped in its deathly mire, but the pit continues.

May God grant us vision to see the holiness of the Rock whence we were hewn, and the terribleness of the hole of the pit whence we were rescued. May He help us to feel the pain of our sins today, so that we need not feel the pain during all eternity. ▲

## Lessons from the Past

*by Wilmer Unruh*

### **Life in C.P.S. Camp**

In order to make my life’s story more complete, I must write a little about my C.P.S. days and what life was like for those boys that had to leave home and be gone for the “duration” as they said in those days, because nobody knew how long this would be.

In the winter of 1944, I found myself in the Denison Iowa C.P.S. camp no. 18. This was a camp known for its winter time drudgery in work. Because of the severe erosion problem the Soil Conservation Service built many diversion dams to help close the big gullies that had formed across the country. They didn’t have very accurate excavating machinery back then, so they used a machine called a dragline to scoop out a bowl shaped depression where the next dam was supposed to be and then they sent us C.P.S. boys down in these holes to dig out and shape up the footers for the dam. This was not the most pleasant work, for in the winter time some of these holes were deep enough that we worked in the shade all day. As the days got colder, the ground began to freeze

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and we would pick and chip frozen dirt all day long and load it on wheelbarrows, and then two guys, one pulling and one pushing up a ramp, would dump it on the bank.

This is the kind of work that tries men's souls, but what often made this work bearable was a sense of humor. I guess youth and humor go together. Sometimes when we were all busy picking and chipping frozen dirt down in a hole, hidden away from the warmth of the sun, somebody would wonder, "What had we ever done that we should deserve something like this?" It really wasn't funny and yet, for some reason, we would all laugh. And then there was always the subject of what was going on at home. These young men, being from all parts of the country, had a lot of interesting things to say.

Of course, the most interesting and popular subject was girls. Bear in mind that these boys were almost all in the 18–25 year range, just when the urge to find a mate and start a home is strongest. But here we were taken out of our home environment, against our desire, and placed in isolated parts of the country where there were no girls. So what could you expect? Quite a few of these boys left girlfriends at home. To make matters worse, we didn't know how long we'd be gone. We knew it could be years, and in lots of cases it was. Would these girls remain true during all these years? Every once in a while somebody would get what they called a "Dear John Letter," a girl writing and calling it quits because she had found somebody else and was getting married.

In some cases this caused extreme anxiety, but here again a lot of times it was humor that made the situation bearable. Somebody would say maybe she married a rich man's son who could keep his son out of the draft because he had enough points, or another one would say, "Well maybe she married a flat-footed boy who couldn't pass his physical," or another one would say, "Cheer up ole fella, there's more pebbles on the beach." This kind of humor helped us get by, and I was kind of amused by it because I couldn't see myself having that kind of a problem. But for some of the boys this was serious business. They would talk about how all the rich guys who could afford to stay home and the "4Fer's" (physically unfit) were marrying all the prettiest girls while we were hung in the mud holes of Denison. Once again humor would come to the rescue and someone would say, "Oh well, a hundred years from now it won't make any difference." That was supposed to really be funny. Now I see how very true that was. Today, 50 or 60 years later, we hardly remember what went on.

To illustrate, just recently we had the funeral of a man and in the obituary it stated that he had spent four and a half years in the C.P.S. camps during the war. I couldn't help but wonder if anybody took note of it. To me it spoke volumes, simply because I realized what a big chunk of his life this man gave up, working without pay, while others in this age bracket were totally obsessed with finding a mate and feathering a nest for themselves.

While this kind of talk was going on, there were wild rumors floating around that they were going to draft 30 men out of our camp in the spring to go to California to the fire camps for the summer. They were also saying that a single man wouldn't have a chance to stay out. All this time I'd been getting letters from my sister and she filled me in on what was going on among the young people at home. One day I got a letter and

she told me this girl that I was confident the Lord had for me had other suitors. Say! This was a real wake-up call for me. I knew I'd have to leave soon and nobody knew for how long, so I finagled a pass out of the camp director and made a week-end trip home with a couple of buddies from Goessel, Kansas and I proposed to her thinking maybe we could get married and I could even stay out of that draft to California. Well, things seldom work that fast. This was a complete shock to her; she said she'd have to have some time to consider. My future mother-in-law asked me, just in case the answer would be yes, if I would be able to wait, because at this point she wasn't ready to let her daughter go.

So here was another test of faith. We had to go back in the morning. I remember we had an old dilapidated 33 Chevy with no heater. It was a cold overcast, blustery day in March. I was kind of lightly dressed and it seemed to me my teeth chattered and my knees shook all the way back to camp.

Well, it's a sure thing that if we have faith in God, life has its compensations. This young lady took my proposal seriously and in a few days I had a short reply from her stating that in answer to her prayers she believed we belonged together. This filled me with such a sacred trust for her that it lasted me a life time, but talk about a man "being on a high!"

It wasn't many days until we received our itinerary for our trip west and we realized the government doesn't do things half way. We were traveling by first class Pullman Sleeper coach with our own personal porter who would accompany us all the way.

Well we 30 guys began to feel like VIPs with that kind of treatment, and besides the government was transferring us clear across the continent to protect our west coast forests. At this time we also heard rumors that in many of the eastern and Midwest C.P.S. camps, 30 guys out of each camp were also being transferred out west. This made us wonder what was really going on and we began to feel more and more like VIPs. We didn't realize it then, but later when we got to our destination we found out this really was quite an important mission. They told us that the jet stream would be centered over northern California, Oregon and Washington, with dry conditions and extremely high danger of fires. But most important of all was that the Japanese had devised an uncanny method by which they wanted to start forest fires all over this country. More about this later.

The day of our departure soon arrived and of course the Denison Camp gave us a royal send-off with speeches, stories, and lots of good natured ribbing and razzing, not to mention the joke playing among the guys. Before long we were down by the depot. Our itinerary showed we would board toward evening and be on the rails for 3 nights and 2 days. This was quite a change for us guys who a few days before were digging and picking and hauling dirt out of the muddy holes of the dam sites. Here we were traveling first class across the continent and all we had to do was eat scrumptious meals with government meal tickets, visit, play games and look out the windows at the continually changing vistas flashing by.

In those days there was a lot of glamour and flair attached to transcontinental train

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travel, and to make it more impressive, many of these trains were named after the main west coast cities. Ours was “the City of San Francisco.” We disembarked at Sacramento, a large terminal at that time. Again we were treated like VIPs. All 30 of us were ushered into a large Harvey House restaurant—by reservation—and treated to a first class breakfast. We were soon on a bus and arrived at Camp Camino, where we got a royal welcome. There seemed to be a sense of urgency to get the men out to the fire camps all over the forest, but they also announced there would be a timber surveying party chosen. I applied for that and became one of the chosen ones.

In a few days 12 of us were on our way to the coast range in a forest service truck. We travelled all day, till late at night, and got to a place called Soda Creek Rangers Station, far up in the coast range where we took our training. This consisted of how to fight forest fires and survey timber. Then came the really important information: The Japanese were planning to burn our forests down. They knew all about the jet stream and had developed a small incendiary bomb which they would attach to a small balloon, send it up and let it ride the jet stream until it reached our west coast. Then the change in atmospheric pressure would trigger a release and the bomb would fall to the ground and explode, starting a fire. They were launching hundreds of these balloons and of course the destructive potential was very real. The government was most concerned, to say the least. This made it plain why they had sent so many C.P.S. men to the west coast for the fire season.

There were a lot of fires all over that summer but nobody knows how many were started by these bombs. Our group found one, but it was a dud that didn't go off. They showed us pictures of them and told us if we ever found one not to touch it, but report the location to headquarters and they would take care of it. It's ironic that the only casualties ever recorded of these bombs happened about 40 years later. There was a story in the Reader's Digest a number of years ago about a teacher who took her Sunday School class up in the hills someplace in Oregon. While the children were playing in the woods, they came upon this strange looking object. They had no idea what it was, so one of the boys gave it a kick. The thing exploded and killed or maimed some of those children. This story helped me to see that we C.O. boys did have a little part in saving this country from destruction during the war. Even to this day when I see timber products coming in from the West on trucks or trains, I get a little satisfaction thinking maybe its some of that stuff we helped save during the war.

Our designated work for which we were especially trained was timber surveying. But we were also on call around the clock for fires, in case we were needed. One of the guys who kept track said we had been on 10 fires that summer. Fire fighting was hot, dirty, grimy work and it taught us how to survive and endure discomfort, like being aroused any time of the night and heading out to a fire, or working around the clock, shifting meals, enduring thirst, sleeping on the hard ground with a jacket for a pillow, working for days without being able to clean up—which was about the worst—or maybe even finding out one had spent the night with a rattlesnake that had innocently been seeking a warm place to spend the night.

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The Bible says it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth. This certainly was the case for those of us who had to struggle for survival during the Dirty Thirties and the war years of the forties. This helped harden us to the little discomforts of life, to where we didn't "have to sweat the small stuff."

I loved the forest and the woods, and the longer I was there the better I liked it. This surely was man's natural habitat. I loved the night sounds when bedding down somewhere in the fire line. I was amazed at how many nocturnal creatures there are in a forest and how that when night comes they come alive and begin foraging around.

This was real to me when we had to spend a night out in the woods. Toward fall one day there was a father and his 12 year old son out deer hunting and somehow they got separated. The father was very anxious and so the forest service called on us timber surveyors. They fitted us with miner's lamps and divided us into four groups of three. They gave each group a gun, with instructions that if we found him we should fire three shots in rapid succession.

We were out all night and didn't have any luck. By then the father was almost beside himself so after breakfast we went out again and about three o'clock in the afternoon we heard three shots that seemed kind of far away. But sure enough, they found the boy calmly walking along a trail that led to our camp. Well this little guy knew how to survive. He said when night came he quit wandering, built himself a lean-to shelter, scraped all the pine needles away from in front and built himself a little fire. That way he was safe from any wild animals—and he said he slept. Was that man ever glad that he had sent his boy to the scout camp to learn survival techniques. Also, he appreciated our help very much.

But what I remember the most about that night out in the woods was how many animals were watching us. As we shone around with our lights their light sensitive eyes almost looked like two little lights shining back. Our work as timber surveyors was in the Mendocino National Forest in the coast range of northern California, about a million acres of beautiful virgin timber, made up of pine, spruce and cedar. Our camp was located on Log Springs Ridge, the main ridge that goes up to the highest peak in the coast range called Anthony peak. Basically our job was to find the original section corners that had been established when the first surveyors came through. They went to the county courthouse and got the original notes kept by those men and assigned a certain section to each party of us. From then on it was up to us.

There was one main road up the Log Springs Ridge and all our sections were found from this road. We were twelve men and worked two by two, in six parties. In the morning, the driver would haul us up the road and each party would get off by their stake, where they had come out the night before. Some times the biggest challenge was to find the exact location of the original section corner, for without that we couldn't survey that section. Sometimes we'd find a little pile of rocks, but often not even that. Then we'd look for 2 trees that had scars on them that the notes said had been marked. Of course we had to allow for about 75 years of growth. Most always we'd find at least one of them. The notes said how many feet and in which direction the corner was.



Then we'd chop out the scar about 3 inches wide by 20 inches long and there, just as plain as the day it was marked, 75 years earlier, was the exact location of that corner. Then we'd measure back to the center of the first 40 acres and there cruise a strip a chain wide, which is a surveyor's unit of measurement, 66 and 2/3 feet wide. We would count all the trees in this path, getting their diameter and height, all the while taking note of the undergrowth, which we had to learn to identify and record. ▲

## A Brazilian Story

*by Mário de Moraes*

### **A Different Kind of Beggar**

Years ago when Ubiratan de Lemos and I worked as reporters for the *Cruzeiro Magazine*, he decided to do a little research on human nature. He let his beard grow, put on some old, raggedy, dirty clothes and then, doing his best to imitate a real-life beggar, he headed out to a busy street corner in the middle of Rio de Janeiro.

One of the first things he learned was that his biggest problems were the veteran beggars, who resented anyone who tried to invade their turf. So far as his study of human nature, he observes, "The people who were dressed up and evidently were very well-to-do, would turn up their noses and not so much as look at me. Most of the donations came from the poorer folks."

It's a fact that by nature we shy away from beggars, forgetting that beneath the rags they are wearing there is a human being just like us. Only God knows what misfortunes brought them down so low. It's entirely too easy to write them off as a bunch of incorrigibles and walk right past them without extending a hand. "If I give them anything," we reason, "they'll just use it to buy more drink." More often than not this may actually be the case.

One day when I was thinking about all this, I read an article about the governor's wife from the state of Rio de Janeiro, Rosinha Matheus, who decided to do an experiment with Luz do Mundo Presbyterian church, where she is a member. For this she went to church dressed like a beggar woman.

The day she chose to do this was exactly the Sunday in which the sermon would be on loving our neighbor. She got this idea when talking with Clinton Sathler, the pastor of the church, about the miserable life of the poor.

On the given day, only the pastor knew what was happening and from on the rostrum he watched everything. He tells it like this: "Rosinha tried for quite some time to come in, but the ushers, baffled by such an unusual situation, kept her out. They didn't mistreat her and went so far as to offer her a cup of coffee and ask if there was anything else they could do for her. She didn't say a word, just stayed put where she was at the back of the church.

“When I finished my sermon I told my parishioners that we had someone in church who was creating a certain disturbance, whom I wanted them to meet. I had Rosinha come to the front and then, as everyone watched wide-eyed, I slowly removed her beggars’s outfit, which she wore over her normal clothes. I told them that that is how God can transform a dirty sinner into a saint. Many of them wept as they saw what was happening.”

The first lady puts it this way: “Even I don’t know how I would react in a situation of this kind. Our first reaction when we come near a dirty, foul smelling person, is to be afraid, isn’t it? But if all of us could realize that these too are people with a soul, this world be a better place.”

You’re right, Rosinha. ▲

## Life in Brazil

### Hay Bales

Traveling northward from Kansas, into Nebraska and then South Dakota, one is impressed by the thousands of hay or alfalfa bales seen in the fields or stacked on farm yards, not to mention the tons of bales that are deteriorating in the weather and will never be used. I asked someone for an explanation on the unused bales and was told that because of long, hard winters, Dakotans always prepare for the worst, so when the winter is mild a lot of hay is left over.

I liked this explanation for two reasons: First of all because a mild winter is probably a lot easier on livestock than a rigorous cold season. Secondly, think of all the wildlife that finds shelter in those bales...

Here in Brazil the dry season is our winter—tropical winter. The intensity of our winter isn’t measured by the temperature, but by the amount of rain we get, although a hard frost can do pastures a lot of damage, especially if early in the season.

While local stockmen by no means prepare for a hard winter like Dakotans do, things are changing. It used to be that virtually no preparations were made for the dry season. It was just taken for granted that most of the cattle would get skinny and that some would die. About the only thing done was to plant a patch of sugar cane or elephant grass that could be run through a small chopper and fed to a few very special animals or to those it seemed were about to die.

Then came improved grasses that stood up better in the dry season. Next were trench silos. Not nearly everybody had, or has, them, but a good stockman no longer needed to lose a single animal because of the dry weather.

Enter hay bales. It is amazing how fast hay bales—the large, round bales—made their appearance. Several years ago stockmen hardly knew there was such a thing as a hay bale. Today they are very much in evidence. In fact, I even saw a dozen bales rotting in a pasture, which made me feel good. Maybe we’ll catch up with the Nebraskans and Dakotans yet.

Because of our high rainfall—70-100 inches a year—and consequent high humidity, I suspect that our bales here will have a short shelf life. They probably will have to be made at the tail end of the rainy season—March through May—and then used until pastures are up to handling heavy traffic again, which can, in a worst case scenario, be toward the middle or end of October.

As has already happened in N America, cattle raising in Brazil is rapidly becoming a science. Now, approaching the end of our dry season, one often sees the difference in cattle in adjoining pastures. On one side of the fence we see skinny cows and calves, and fat vultures; on the other, fat cows and calves, and no vultures.

The scientific approach to farming is rapidly eliminating the unscientific farmer. The same is becoming true of the unscientific stockman. The truth of the matter is that six billion plus mouths can't be fed by unscientific methods. Farming used to be an art. Today it is a science. And tomorrow...? ▲

## Monkeys

Today, coming home from town, as I neared the new tomato processing plant, a number of monkeys scampered across the highway. On other occasions I have seen monkeys in this same vicinity, so I suspect there must be quite a few in the nearby woods.

When this area was opened up to agriculture, it seemed some of our most noble wildlife was doomed to extinction. Unhappily, for some species this has really become the case. This hasn't happened only because of loss of habitat when land was cleared, but also, and very much so, because of the ingestion of treated seeds and the use of herbicides and insecticides, which incidentally are part of the scientific package for higher yields.

When we moved here 30 years ago, it wasn't unusual, when walking through the woods, to see monkeys swinging from branch to branch. For those of us who lived near streams or rivers, it was a common occurrence for a troop of monkeys to come through, jumping from tree to tree, from palm tree to palm tree. A baby monkey could often be seen riding piggyback.

The government is requiring that farmers refrain from clearing 20 percent of their land and setting it aside as an ecological reserve. In case they have cleared all their land, they must either reforest that amount or buy an equivalent amount of land at another site and set it aside as a reserve. While most farmers are understandably disgruntled about this measure, it doubtlessly is contributing to the rebounding of our wildlife.

The federal agency responsible for monitoring ecological reserves and wildlife is called Ibama. Some of you may remember that possibly a year ago I wrote about the baby parrots in the church attic of the Monte Alegre Congregation. Because of all the noise they were making, even during services, the trustees were going to get rid of them. Our son Otávio heard about this and wanted to raise them. Since it is illegal to

raise native animals in captivity, we stopped at Ibama and asked if it would be OK if we removed the baby parrots and raised them at home and then returned them to the wild. They readily agreed and I mentioned to them at the time that if they ever had any animals needing a temporary home, we would be glad to help.

They accepted the offer and soon orphan, injured and emancipated animals began to show up. At this time we will comment only on the monkeys we have received, five to date.

The first two were full-grown, one a *macaco prego* (I don't know what this species is called in English) that would be some 18 inches tall when standing up, and the other a marmoset, some six inches tall.

The macaco prego, called Chicão, was being raised loose in Rio Verde, but it was causing such a disturbance in the neighborhood, that Ibama was called in to pick it up. When turned loose here, it decided it didn't like the looks of our Siberian Husky dog and promptly hit the road...that is...the trees, and began visiting the neighbors. Chicão loves children and children love Chicão. This became evident when Chicão decided to pay the Monte Alegre School a visit. He found himself a plastic container with a piece of cake in it, removed the lid and sat down on the table in the breezeway to enjoy this unexpected repast. This is how he was found. And the party was on.

It appears that Chicão has adopted a family living a little ways upstream from us. It has been there for quite some time now and seems to be getting along fairly well, except for when it manages to get into the house when they are all gone and turn things topsy-turvy.

Just one word, before we go to the next monkey. Monkeys like teachers better than teachers like monkeys. Teachers...no, I won't say it...

Now comes Chico, the marmoset. Marmosets are tiny little monkeys with a long, ringed tail that they use for balance, but not for gripping objects or as a locomotion aid. Extremely curious, they would like to be everywhere at once. And there is practically no place they can't go.

Marmosets, like most monkeys, are very expressive. When contented, they emit a shrill shriek, almost a whistle. When irritated, they chortle. And bite.

Since the animals brought to us from Ibama are to be conditioned to return to the wild, we raise them loose, unless, because of age or injury, they aren't ready for that. Since Chico was full grown, he was loose. When he got a notion he would come into the house and pester us. One day when we had company, he was coming into the house when one of the guests accidentally stepped on him. Several hours later he died.

Next came two baby howler monkeys. According to the Ibama agents, the mother monkey was crossing the highway with the babies on her back when she was hit by a car. The driver stopped and seeing the mother was dead, took the babies to Ibama, and they brought them to us. That was some six weeks ago. For the boys this has been an educational experience. In the beginning it was necessary to get up every two hours to give them the bottle. Now they go the whole night without a feeding.

It has been interesting to watch the development of these baby monkeys. They

develop much more slowly than baby cats. The noise they make somewhat resembles that of a bullfrog, only more shrill.

The boys had the idea of putting a large teddy bear in their box, which they promptly adopted as their mother. They would cling to it for dear life. Since there is no one at home to feed them during the day, when the boys would leave on their bikes in the morning to go to work, they would string the teddy bear over their shoulder with the little monkeys hanging on.

Only recently have the monkeys begun leaving the teddy bear for brief moments. In the beginning they would get down on the floor, but maintain tail contact. Not only do they leave the teddy bear now, but they are beginning to want to play. During the day they play with our baby kittens. I suspect that once we can turn them loose in the trees, some interesting things are going to happen.

Several days ago the people from Ibama showed up at work. This time they had a half grown monkey. Even they weren't sure what species it is. Some municipal workers found it hanging from a tree with a rope tied to its middle and took it to Ibama. It was quite badly bruised and, needless to say, deathly scared of people.

We put the monkey in a large cage in our orchard and the warm tropical air has practically healed up its sores. With each day that goes by it is becoming more friendly. I'm hoping that within a couple of weeks we'll be able to turn it loose. ▲

## Brazilian Brethren Write

*by Luiz Duarte*

### **Only One Explanation**

I became a Christian approximately 20 years ago. During this time I have gone through a lot of struggles, but also have received many blessings. My failings have brought me to tears, but victory has caused me to smile.

One day in 1985 I lost my wallet with all my documents, including my check blanks. I reported my loss and had it published in the paper, but the days went by and nothing showed up. I was too hard up to get new documents, so that really left me in a difficult situation.

Three weeks went by and one night I was thinking how that God had saved me when I was bogged down in the miry clay and placed my feet upon the solid rock. The problem I had now wasn't nearly as serious, so why was I so downhearted? That same night I prayed to God and said, "Lord, if this has happened to test my faith, then help me to be victorious. If it's your will that I find my wallet, then help me in that too."

I realized that through this all I had lost my peace. But as I was praying, it came back. I felt certain that I could trust in the Lord and that He would do that which would be best for me.

Two days later I was on the tractor working in a field near a road. It was more or less two o'clock in the morning. Out in the distance, possibly a kilometer from where I was working, I saw truck lights coming my way. It seemed I heard a voice say, "Go and stop that truck!" My heart began to throb and I realized that God was speaking to me.

I stopped my tractor and walked to the road. In just a little bit the truck got there and I flagged it down. When the truck stopped, I asked the driver if he had found a wallet along that road. He answered, "Yes, I found a wallet near that cattle guard over there. Is it yours?"

Hardly able to answer, I said, "Yes, it's mine."

I think the man saw the tears in my eyes. He said, "Your wallet is in the office of the company I work for in town. After dinner I'll be coming back this way and I'll bring you your wallet."

The trucker left and I went back to work on the tractor. The thought came to me: Do you suppose God is trying to show me something? I prayed, "Lord, help me so that I can really look my life over."

At approximately four o'clock that same afternoon the truck showed up with my wallet. I wanted to give the driver something, but he refused to accept anything. He said, "Take a look at your wallet to see if everything is there."

I gave it a quick going-over and said, "Yes, everything is here. Thank you very much."

The man started his truck and was on his way. I looked through my wallet again and this time I found an old photo of myself before I was converted when I had long hair. I threw the photo away. In my mind I saw the image of Christ. I was certain that the Lord is my Shepherd and that I shall not want.

*[Luiz Duarte is a member at the Rio Verdinbo Congregation and works for Walter Redger. Can you think of more than one explanation for how he got his wallet back?]*

## **This & That**

On Sept. 3, the Stephen Kramer family moved to their farm on the colony in Mato Grosso. We will miss them. I will miss Stephen. He and I often got our heads together on questions related to Portuguese grammar or computers, plus we worked together for several years in the Literature Center. We wish them the best in their new venture.

Calvin Hibner was elected to replace Stephen Kramer on the tract board (subject to approval in our next annual meeting).

Adriana, Tony & Maria Soares' daughter, has left for the Goiânia mission, where she is teaching Mervin & Norma Jean Loewen's children.

On Sept 7-8, Victor Weins, a Mennonite Brethren minister and missionary from São Paulo, was on the Colony. He is doing research on how a mission post develops into

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a full-fledged congregation. We enjoyed the time spent with him. He is hoping to return in the near future with his family for another visit.

On Sept. 10, several local businesses had a field day and a churrasco at the Paul Yoder farm. In the afternoon an accountant gave some pointers on the legal aspect of a farm tax that is being paid by farmers.

Now figure this one out. I have written about Leo Dirks's fish ponds and how that he is selling his fish directly to the customer, or rather, fishermen, who buy them right out of the water. Well I needed to go there today and what do you suppose I saw right in the middle of his first fish pond, along side his lane? A big dual tire tractor, pulling a scrapper. In the water. Yep, I saw it with my own eyes. (Call Leo and ask him yourself if you are doubting my sanity. The number is 011 55 62 613 9187.) I've never visited a fish pond in the US, so I'm curious to know: How do you seine for fish? With a net? Or do you go in with your scrapppers to catch'em? I'm starting to wonder if Brazil and Texas don't have something in common...

On Sept. 25, the Brazil Mission Board, staffs and local leaders, met with a number of Brazilian brethren to discuss mission work in Brazil. An effort is being made to get them more involved in the work.

On Sunday evening, Sept. 26, there was a tract rally at the Monte Alegre Congregation. It was really good. The opening was a talk by Min. Mark Loewen. Following was a talk by Paulo David, the chairman of the Brazil Tract Board. Clinton Unruh, the office superintendent, gave a report on how the work is functioning. Then different ones told experiences they had with handing out tracts. Mim Dirks told of how she threw out a tract to several men walking along the road. They ignored the tract and kept on walking. A little wind caught up the tract and it began tumbling along, following the men. When they realized they wouldn't be able to get away from it, one of them stopped and picked it up. The meeting was a success. The brethren are enthusiastically taking an active part in this great work. Today a youth brother was at the Literature Center picking up tracts and tract racks for a trip he and some other young brethren plan on taking into the state of São Paulo.